



Ömer Seyfettin—The Balkan Wars, World War I, and His Criticism of Ottomanism and Minority Nationalisms

Umut Uzer

To cite this article: Umut Uzer (2019): Ömer Seyfettin—The Balkan Wars, World War I, and His Criticism of Ottomanism and Minority Nationalisms, Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, DOI: [10.1080/13602004.2019.1652412](https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2019.1652412)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2019.1652412>



Published online: 11 Aug 2019.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Ömer Seyfettin—The Balkan Wars, World War I, and His Criticism of Ottomanism and Minority Nationalisms

UMUT UZER 

Abstract

Ömer Seyfettin (1884–1920) was one of the significant ideologues of Turkish nationalism disseminating his ideas through his activism and his literature by invoking Turkish history. In the journal Young Pens, published in Ottoman Salonica between 1910–1912, Seyfettin together with Ziya Gökalp laid the foundations of Turkish nationalist thought as well as national policies toward the Turkish language. While Gökalp developed a more systematic ideology of Turkism with his writings, Seyfettin appealed to the sentiments of the Turkish people with his short plays arguing that Turkish nationalism was the only viable option for the Turkish speaking people of the Balkans and Anatolia. A literary figure as well as an ideologue, Seyfettin's ideas against Ottomanism and Islamism were clearly expressed in his plays and articles focusing on Ottoman Turks, their heroism and their betrayal by the subject peoples living under the Ottoman state. Consequently, nationalism was the only natural solution to the plight of the Turks and for the prospects of their salvation against imperial encroachments and minority separatist movements. His literary production, however, had strong nationalist tones making ideological considerations to be more important than any intention to produce belles-lettres. Seyfettin's influence can be observed as his plays are still included in the curriculum of Turkish primary and secondary education as devised by the Ministry of National Education in Turkey.

Keywords: *Ömer Seyfettin; World War I; minority nationalism; Ottoman Empire; the Committee of Union and Progress; literature; pan-Turkism*

Introduction

Ömer Seyfettin (1884–1920), who was one of the influential propagators of Turkish nationalism, had closely collaborated with Ziya Gökalp in the articulation and advocacy of Turkish nationalism. In the journal *Young Pens* [Genç Kalemler] published in Ottoman Salonica between 1910–1912, he and Gökalp laid the foundations of Turkish nationalist thought as well as national policies toward the Turkish language. While Gökalp developed a more systematic ideology of Turkism with his writings, Seyfettin appealed to

Umut Uzer is an associate professor at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey. He received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Virginia and his MA in international relations from Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey. He has published on Turkish foreign policy, Turkish nationalism, and Israeli-Turkish relations. He is the author of two books: *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism* (2016) and *Identity and Turkish Foreign Policy* (2011).

the sentiments of the Turkish people with his short plays. In his plays as well as in his articles and books, Ömer Seyfettin had been critical of the Ottomanist ideology and was aware of Albanian, Bulgarian and Greek nationalisms, denoting the irrelevance of the Ottomanist territorial nationalism and the dominance of ethnic nationalisms throughout the empire. As a consequence, Seyfettin argued for an ethnic form of Turkish nationalism as the only viable option for the Turkish speaking people of the Balkans and Anatolia.

In this study, in order to analyze Ömer Seyfettin's thought, primary sources will be utilized including his diary of the Balkan Wars as well as his plays, books and articles. These will provide direct access to the ideas and *Weltanschauung* of Ömer Seyfettin. His ideas are noteworthy for their clarity as far as the formula for the future of the Turkish people is concerned. Undoubtedly, his death at an early age prevented him from having more influence on Turkish literary life. Having said this, his thoughts still have a certain amount of impact as his short stories that continue to be read at secondary schools in Turkey, which might inculcate in the students sympathy toward Turkish nationalism, even though it would be incorrect to give too much weight to his sway over Turkish political discourse. Ömer Seyfettin's place among the ideologues of Turkish nationalists and literary figures should be analyzed within its historical context as this study purports to do.

Minority nationalisms of the Ottoman Empire included Serbian, Greek and Bulgarian nationalisms aiming to establish their own nation-states in areas where they constituted majorities. Their objective was very much commensurate with what Ernest Gellner wrote about nationalism that it was "primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent".¹ Furthermore, "ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones"² which is exactly what the minorities in the Ottoman state aimed for, as they no longer wanted to live in a multinational state, which they perceived as a Turkish state, even though Turkish nationalism has never been the dominant idea in the Ottoman polity and that the effort to create an Ottoman nationality failed as a result of minority nationalisms.

All nationalisms in the Balkans were ethnic nationalisms which were historically embedded. Ethnic belonging and memory are used to provide "a firm base for the nation-to-be"³ not only in the Balkans but in most regions of the world. And the Turkish nationalism which emerged and supported by Ömer Seyfettin was similarly an ethnic-based form of national allegiance not forgetting the strong emphasis on culture, religion and language.

His Life

Ömer Seyfettin (1884–1920) was born in Western Turkey in the small town of Gönen in the contemporary province of Balıkesir. His father Ömer Şevki Bey, whose family was originally from the Caucasus with Turkish origins,⁴ had authoritarian tendencies and served as a major in the Ottoman army. His mother Fatma Hanım, on the other hand, hailed from Istanbul. Ömer moved to Istanbul at an early age and later enrolled at the Veterinary School in the Eyüp neighborhood of the city. After his graduation, Seyfettin studied at Edirne Military School graduating in 1896 and at the Royal Military Academy in Istanbul completing his studies in 1903. He was appointed to Kuşadası in the Aegean region between 1903–1906⁵ and later to Izmir in 1907 as an adjutant to the Italian general Degiorgis who was organizing the gendarmerie as well as establishing schools for that institution. Seyfettin at the time became a teacher of religious studies at the gendarmerie school. It is noteworthy that during his Izmir days, the future novelist

Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu was brought under the spell of Ömer Seyfettin. Moreover, he started learning French in Izmir so as to expand his intellectual scope and met a number of nationalist intellectuals such as Necip and Baha Tevfik.⁶ In other words, his Izmir days contributed to his intellectual and ideological development in a substantial manner.

In 1909, Seyfettin was appointed to Salonica as a lieutenant where he had firsthand experience in the guerrilla warfare of the Balkan nations. Interestingly, during the campaigns against the Bulgarian irregulars, he carried his French and Turkish books on a mule along with him. He also served in the Action Army which had the mission to suppress the counterrevolution of 1909 and consequently entered the capital Istanbul with this army. In 1911, he left the military to join Ziya Gökalp in Salonica to write for the journal *Young Pens* aiming at creating a “New Language” with as few Arabic and Persian words as possible. He personally met Gökalp at a theater in the city and from that time on Gökalp, Ali Canip and Seyfettin spent time together at the iconic White Tower gardens and at other restaurants and cafes discussing their plans for a new Turkey.

Later during the Balkan Wars (1912–1913), he was enlisted in the army once again during which he fought against the Serbs and the Greeks, eventually being captured by the latter as a prisoner of war. After a year of captivity, he was released and came to Istanbul to work as a teacher at Kabataş School.⁷ During the First World War, he joined a group of nationalist figures such as Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, and Mehmet Emin Yurdakul to go to the Gallipoli front to support the soldiers. During this time, he expressed his wishes of success to Mustafa Kemal on the phone, who was fighting at the front.⁸ However the veracity of the latest information cannot be corroborated at this time. The important point about this visit was that it was organized by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP)⁹ so as to boost the morale of the soldiers demonstrating once again the affiliation of Seyfettin with the CUP, which had started out as a secret society with the objective to force Sultan Abdülhamid II to reinstate the constitution and to reopen the Parliament.

Personal Life

As regards his personal life, in 1915, Ömer Seyfettin married Calibe Hanım, the daughter of Dr. Besim Ethem, who was one of the influential figures in CUP. She was educated at a French school with Western tastes, of which Seyfettin was aware but hoped that he could change her ways. His statement to the effect that there was no national Turkish woman, who were either traditional or emulators of the West was evidently partially targeting his wife. They terminated their marriage in less than two years and got a divorce in 1918 due to her extreme inclinations for Western culture.¹⁰ This explanation seems to be valid as similar views had been expressed by different authors. Even though Seyfettin was a modern enlightened individual and by no means a traditional man, he despised anti-nationalist Western imitators as well as Islamic fanatics who denied nationality. Therefore, he was against extreme forms of Westernism in manners and outlook as well as against Islamists for whom the only source of identity was Islamic rather than Turkish.

He spent his last years in Istanbul in a mansion in a fashionable neighborhood of the Anatolian side of Istanbul, namely Kalamış where his friend from his Salonica days Ali Canip lived a few streets down the road. Between the years 1916–1920, the Anatolian section of Istanbul especially the area between Kadıköy and Erenköy was the residential location of numerous artists and intellectuals among whom Fuat Köprülü, Reşat Nuri Güntekin, and Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu can be mentioned.¹¹

Ömer Seyfettin died in 1920 at an early age due to complications from diabetes and after an initial burial at a cemetery was eventually buried in the Zincirlikuyu Cemetery in Istanbul.¹² All the major dailies in Istanbul characterized his death as a day of national mourning for all Turks.¹³ Evidently, he was not able to see the victory of the national struggle led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk which realized some of his nationalist objectives but probably in a more Westernized path than he had earlier envisaged.

Ömer Seyfettin's Political Affiliations

To emphasize his political affiliations, it is important to note that Ömer Seyfettin had close contacts with the CUP headquarters, which he visited quite often and personally knew Talat Pasha among other leaders. Yet, he was not a fanatical follower of the party ("a non-politician Unionist") but rather was devoted to its cultural policies including the war literature movement aiming to create a new Turkish nation by writing in simple Turkish. He also belonged to a group of intellectuals who have undertaken a translation endeavor from the Western classics.¹⁴ Regarding his approach to writing in simple Turkish, he called upon the youth to discard the old language full of Arabic and Persian words with these words "let's write in the language of the nation and make Istanbul Turkish the literary language of all Turks".¹⁵ Also, in his letter to Ali Canip dated 28 January 1920, Seyfettin was adamant that there was no need to have Arabic and Persian composites which were used by individuals just to sound pompous because they had nothing substantial to say anyway. Arguing that he could not achieve this on his own, he invited Ali Canip "Come on Mr. Canip, let us create a revolution in literature and language".¹⁶

However, his style was criticized for what has been called as using too much slang or was even characterized as "vulgar" reminiscent of street talk by the fellow nationalist Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver.¹⁷ Undoubtedly, Ömer Seyfettin seemed to have preferred the common people as he saw himself part of a fighting officer corps who had experienced war first hand as opposed to those privileged well-dressed salon officers who stayed in Istanbul with all pomp and condescension. In fact, CUP was instrumental in recruiting the former "proletarian military officers" as the supporters of the party. He also sided with the wisdom (*irfan*) of the common people as opposed to the scholarship (*ilm*) of the literati.¹⁸ By this, he meant that he was of the opinion that life itself was superior to any form of scholarly study and "truth was to be found in life not in books".¹⁹ Here we can observe an anti-intellectual side of Ömer Seyfettin aligning closely with the common people while not denying their egotistical behaviors either.

On occasion, he advocated closing down schools which taught in foreign languages such as the Robert College whose language of instruction was English and Galatasaray where classes were taught in French.²⁰ Therefore, he loved the simplicity of the Turkish people and their language but he did not shy away from criticizing the selfish inclinations of the villagers either. In other words, there were elements of realism and populism in the ideas of Ömer Seyfettin, praising the common folk on the one hand but also not denying their egotistical behavior on the other.

Even though there were allegations of his membership in the intelligence agency *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* (Special Organization), his association with the CUP government has been more on the cultural sphere than a direct involvement in its decision-making. However, his relations with the party is unequivocal, as Gökalp was instrumental in his resignation from the army to join him in Salonica to publish the journal *Young Pens*. Salonica as the center of the Committee Union and Progress was the place where Ömer Sey-

fettin, together with Ziya Gökalp and Ali Canip published this particular journal between 1910 and 1912. The latter date denotes the loss of the city by the Ottomans resulting in the termination of the publication of this journal.

Significantly, his compensation to the army was paid through his contacts in the CUP because he still owed the army five more years of service. Interestingly, the author of the definitive biography of Seyfettin, argued that the central branch of the CUP directly paid his outstanding debt to the army.²¹ If this is indeed correct, then it demonstrates that his links with the CUP were rather strong and the leadership had a high regard for him. On the other hand, as mentioned above, his intellectual collaboration with Ziya Gökalp was rather tight and consequently, he supported his comrade Gökalp during his incarceration by the occupying forces in Istanbul by visiting him in jail and helping his family on a number of occasions.²² In other words, Seyfettin belonged to the nationalist wing of the CUP as opposed to the Ottomanist and Islamist factions, of which the latter two were quite strong if not stronger than the nationalists.

The Ideational World of Ömer Seyfettin

Ömer Seyfettin, throughout his writings, had quite clearly expressed his desire to unite all the Turks living in the world under the leadership of the Ottoman state, especially during World War I during which time he hoped that the Turkish armies would reach all the way to Turan—labeling it as the motherland,²³ therefore liberating the captive Turks. In other words, he was a supporter of pan-Turkism aiming to unite all the Turkish-speaking peoples in the world under a single banner. It would be correct to say that he wanted nationalism to rule supreme in all aspects of social and political life including language and national identification. Similar to earlier and later nationalists he talked about the concept *mefkure* (the ideal), arguing that all ideals should be aggressive rather than passive as it was the natural rights of nations to enlarge the territories they possessed.²⁴ Therefore, he advocated territorial aggrandizement and irredentism.

Ömer Seyfettin was openly opposed to the idea of racism as he was of the opinion all nations were sure to have had a certain degree of intermarriage with other nations.²⁵ Instead of searching for the family backgrounds of people, it would be preferable to accept all those who had accepted the Turkish way of life, customs, the Turkish language and interestingly, in addition to the above traits, those who were Muslims as Turks. Discussing the Circassians, Seyfettin argued that they had forgotten their original language and instead assimilated into Turkish culture and language.²⁶ From the discussion of Ömer Seyfettin's ideas above it is interesting that being Muslim is presented as the *sine qua non* of being Turkish in addition to adopting Turkish language, manners and customs. This is noteworthy as he is not much concerned with religiosity but rather presents Islam as the marker of national identity. In other words, for both Ömer Seyfettin and his comrade Ziya Gökalp, language and religion were two significant elements constituting the national identity of a people. They both quoted the common people's approach to nationhood which entailed language and religion as the two determining factors of a nation. It should also be added that Ömer Seyfettin was very much attached to Ziya Gökalp and the basic principles of Union and Progress. His plays on war heroes were in line with the ideological proclivities of the party and should be considered as war literature supporting the war aims of the Ottoman Empire. His other plays were to a large extent based on his diary and the stories he heard from his friends,²⁷ which include village life in Western Turkey or guerrilla warfare in the Balkans.

To paraphrase Seyfettin's ideas about nationalism in addition to religion and language mentioned above, shared education and upbringing were also central in the makeup of a nation. Furthermore, in his judgment a nation extended beyond the borders of a single state to neighboring countries, where ethnic kin were living.²⁸ This is evidently a clear definition of irredentism and in the case of Turkey, Turks residing in Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Macedonia as well as Cyprus, Syria, Iraq, Iran could be enumerated for areas to be liberated according to a pan-Turkic and irredentist approach. On the point of the significance of education for nation-making as well as pan-Turkism, and ideals, he seems to have been influenced by Ziya Gökalp even though it is not easy to determine who had a greater impact on the other that is Gökalp on Seyfettin or Seyfettin on Gökalp. Of course, their ideas could have emanated from their mutual interactions. However, it appears from his writings that Gökalp's ideas seem to have had more impact on Seyfettin and he developed them in a more sophisticated and academic manner using Western philosophy and social theory.

To further continue the discussion of Gökalp's impact, Ömer Seyfettin was also critical of the occupiers of the Turkish World, namely Russians and the Chinese, using pejorative terms for both peoples.²⁹ Needless to say, liberation of these areas was of paramount importance for Ömer Seyfettin and that is why he included poems from Gökalp in his short plays, the most important of which was the inclusion of Gökalp's: "The land of the Muscovites shall be destroyed. Turkey shall grow and become Turan"³⁰ which appeared on the first page of his book *Tomorrow's Turan State* published in 1914. Evidently, both Ziya Gökalp and Ömer Seyfettin believed that First World War would bring about the decimation of Tsarist Russia and the establishment of a Turanian state composed of all the oppressed Turkic peoples in that empire including Kazan and Crimean Tatars, Azerbaijanis, Turkmens, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and possibly the Uighurs.

Nationalism Through the Use of Poems

A number of Gökalp's influential poems including the one on Turan as well as numerous short plays of Seyfettin such as *Primo the Turkish Child* and *The Bomb* first appeared in the pages of *Young Pens*. The authors wrote in the colloquial language of the Turkish people, consciously avoiding the grandiloquent and tortuous Ottoman employed by the old literati. They were adamant that the written language should be comprehensible to the common people not forgetting to espouse the Turkish spoken in Istanbul to be the common language for the Turkic World.³¹ In other words, linguistic nationalism was an important part of the *Young Pens* journal so as to establish linkages between the educated class and the common people.

Of course, discussing nationalism in this study should not make us believe that this idea was hegemonic in Turkish political thought. In fact, both the CUP and the *Young Pens* were at the end of the day supporting the survival of the Ottoman Empire³² and even though it might be argued that "Turkish nationalism acquired its modern content during the Young Turk period", it only became the "dominant" or the official ideology of the state after the establishment of the Turkish republic in 1923.³³ Quite naturally, espousing Turkish nationalism would bring the end of the multinational Ottoman state thus it had to be propagated quite delicately. Furthermore, Islamism, Ottomanism and Westernism as well as nationalisms of Armenians, Greeks, Kurds, and Arabs were also developing during this time period.

To conclude the section on the *Weltanschauung* of Ömer Seyfettin, he perceived Muslims in Ottoman Turkey as potential Turks which needed to adapt to Turkish man-

nerism and culture. Turks outside the boundaries of Turkey were also the focus of his attention which were to be united under a pan-Turkic empire. In sum, he advocated a cultural ethnoreligious form of nationalism without propagating racism whatsoever. The Turkish-speaking Muslims were to be the dominant group in the nation-state to be established in the near future but assimilation was open to most people living in that polity.

Ömer Seyfettin's Participation in the Balkan Wars

In his *Balkan Wars Memoirs* written during his captivity by the Greek army between 1912–1913, Ömer Seyfettin emphasized the drama of Turkish and Muslim immigrants from the Balkans into what was left of the Ottoman Empire. He argued that around two and a half million immigrants arrived in Turkey as a result of this war. He also mentioned the desertion of Christian troops from the Ottoman army,³⁴ which Seyfettin experienced during his commission in the Balkans with the rank of lieutenant as he fought against Serbs in Komanova and against the Greeks in Yanya. Eventually, he was captured by Greek forces trying to defend the hill as his captain was killed during the fighting.³⁵ He would later be released and returned to Istanbul where he would face rising living costs and financial difficulties. Seyfettin would point out that even during his captivity or under financial duress, conditions which were not conducive for literature, he continued his literary endeavors.³⁶

As a result of the Balkan Wars, the Ottomans initially lost Edirne but recaptured it in the second war but lost the rest of the territories in the Balkans whereas Greece captured Kavala, and Serbia acquired the region of Macedonia.³⁷ For all practical purposes, the Ottoman state lost almost all its European territories except a small portion of Thrace, including the European side of Istanbul, which to this day constitutes the European territory of Turkey.

One interesting note would be his mention of the pharmacist Dikran in the Ottoman Army³⁸ in a rather neutral manner, disproving those who claim that he was anti-Armenian. This information is important to remind us that there were non-Muslims serving in the Ottoman army both in the Balkan Wars and World War I and that Seyfettin did not harbor any anti-Christian or anti-Semitic sentiments toward them. For instance, during his incarceration by the Greek army as a prisoner of war, he occasionally, shared his room with Greek officers, and ate with them.³⁹ He met General Batapulos of the Greek army and spoke in French with Greek officers, characterizing them as polite and humanitarian gentlemen.⁴⁰ In February 1913, Seyfettin was brought to Athens and incarcerated in a military prison. Interestingly, he was allowed to receive clothes from the post office sent by his mother.⁴¹ From this narrative, it seems as if his experience as a prisoner of war was not all that bad. During this time as a POW, he wrote a number of plays and sent them to publications in Istanbul, including *Hürriyet Bayrakları* (Flags of Liberty), *Piç* (Bastard) and *Mehdi* (The Messiah).⁴² Quite clearly, writing was a professional endeavor for him as well as a hobby even during his incarceration.

In his memoirs, we can read the fact that Ömer Seyfettin did not appreciate numerous Ottoman soldiers for lacking a patriotic attachment to their homeland as Turks or Ottomans. Furthermore, discipline was lacking among the troops, who spoke various languages at the barracks—a state of affairs he portrayed as reminiscent of the Tower of Babel. He particularly denounced the Albanian and Pomak soldiers who could not speak Turkish at all. Moreover, he even observed the raising of the Albanian flag in the

small city of Berat in December 1912, instead of the Turkish flag and thus experienced feelings of hostility from them toward the Turks.⁴³ He felt traumatized at the defeat in the Balkans and recognized that the region has been severed from Turkish hands never to be regained and pessimistically wrote that the war proved that Turks have no right to live in that region. Seyfettin also expressed his exasperation by adding that he never imagined they would retreat, in fact flee the Balkans, a situation unthinkable a few years ago⁴⁴ when he was serving in the region full of idealism and enthusiasm. All these experiences, proved to him that Turkish nationalism was the logical and the natural response to all these minority nationalisms. In fact, he had reached that conclusion much earlier but after having fought in the Balkans a number of times, his conviction became all the more solid.

Kazım Karabekir, who was to become one of the significant generals of the Turkish National Struggle between 1919–1922, expressed similar feelings about Albanians who did not exactly feel fraternal sentiments toward the Turks. He has come to realize that belief in Ottoman nationhood was an illusion and each nation was to go its own way. In Karabekir's judgment, Turks too should establish their own nation-state similar to the minorities living in the Ottoman State.⁴⁵ In other words, the analyses of many commissioned officers were almost the same as those of Ömer Seyfettin. In many ways, the experiences of numerous Turkish nationalists in the Balkans, be it in direct confrontation with the Balkan committees or experiencing their national development, resulted in the consolidation of their own Turkish nationalism. Furthermore, the Ottoman defeat in the Balkan wars was one of the important turning points influencing the rise of Turkish nationalism.

The Short Plays and Other Literary Writings of Ömer Seyfettin

During the end of the nineteenth century Turkish political thought was expressed in various forms of literature including novels and short plays which were used to propagate particular ideas for the literati as well as for the common people. In this regard, Ömer Seyfettin served as a significant figure in the transition from "Muslim universalism toward a particularistic national Turkish pattern".⁴⁶ His short plays, in particular are almost documentaries of the period between 1908–1920 depicting the important developments in Ottoman history⁴⁷ as well as the main currents such as Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism. When Seyfettin died in 1920 at the young age of 36, he left behind 135 short stories, remarkable for their "simple, but expressive language used in everyday life".⁴⁸ The main themes of the stories were heroism of the Turks, cultural alienation, and the obsolescence of Ottomanist ideology and consequently the need to embrace nationalism as the necessary idea for the salvation of the Turks. In most of these plays, Turks are presented as a heroic people. Furthermore, the negative aspects of artificial Westernization as well as religiosity (*Beynamaz*⁴⁹ [Irreligious]) and how the latter has become a cover of immoral behavior (*Yemin*⁵⁰ [The Oath], *Tos*⁵¹ [To Butt] and *Havyar*⁵² [Caviar]) are depicted. There are also love stories (*Harem*)⁵³ and even ones which are sexually explicit (*Tarih Ezeli Bir Tekerrürdür* [History is an Eternal Repetition]).

Before analyzing his plays, I would like to start with his novel *Our People of the Cave* (*Ashab-ı Kehfimiz*) published in 1918, where he criticized certain intellectuals for having mistakenly fallen for the territorial patriotism of Ottomanism. In the preface of the book, Seyfettin chastises those statesmen ever since the Tanzimat reforms of the nineteenth century and after the 1908 Revolution, who argued for the creation of the Ottoman nation regardless of ethnicity and religion. This "antinationalist" worldview had no

chance of success⁵⁴ according to Ömer Seyfettin. It should be reiterated that this theme is repeated throughout his plays and other writings. Seyfettin pointed out that he had written this novel after the Balkan Wars and that the truth of the matter was “we are genuine Turks”. He argued that everybody should adopt the Turkish peasant’s delineation of the boundaries of the nation as “those who belong to my religion and speak my language”⁵⁵ as the correct definition of the Turkish nation.

More specifically in the novel, Dikran Hayıkyan, the main character of the book who happens to be an Armenian, praises the 1908 revolution for having ended the despotism of Abdulhamid II, who was responsible for the massacre of his Armenian brothers by using the Kurds and that now “religions have made their peace, nations have integrated, priests kissed the imams” and that Greeks of Istanbul have adopted the Ottomanist ideology.⁵⁶ Hayıkyan initially was a revolutionary who supported the establishment of Greater Armenia, who has come to adopt Ottomanism making his current predisposition comparable to the “happy Americans”. He also viewed Turks to be genuine in their beliefs as they have given up their Turkish identity at the expense of Ottomanism.⁵⁷ Consequently, Hayıkyan joined the Ottoman Integration Club (Osmanlı Kaynaşma Kulübü), which aimed to dismantle Turkishness and replace it with Ottoman patriotism.⁵⁸ He questioned himself about his new identity particularly since his father had been killed “during the revolution”. However, he has come to realize that only the Turks themselves believe in this ideology as all other nationalities pursued their own nationalisms. This club even advocated the creation of the religion of Abraham (din-i İbrahim) and the replacement of Turkish with Latin which could be revived or even Hebrew which was the most excellent language⁵⁹ in the world. Hayıkyan goes so far to declare that there are no pure Turks in the Ottoman state but rather converted Greeks or Armenians.⁶⁰ However, due to the propaganda of the Ottoman Integration Club, there were demonstrations by the Turkish Hearth⁶¹ as well as by Arabs, Greeks and Armenians who had reacted to these kinds of ideas.⁶² In other words, due to the artificiality of the Ottomanist creed, all the ethnic groups in the empire rejected this idea and called for the development of their own nationalisms.

Eventually, Hayıkyan reverted back to Armenian nationalism due to his fiancée’s urging as he realized that “without women, there could not only be no love, no happiness but also no nationality” and that there was a strong relationship between family and nationalism⁶³ in the words of one of the main protagonists of *Our People of the Cave*. As should be evident from the discussion of the novel, there were no sentiments of hatred directed against Armenians, rather Ömer Seyfettin was more critical of Turks who were unaware of the idea of nationalism. Eventually, everything reverted to the natural state of affairs, as the main character returned to Armenian nationalism and the Ottomanist society was rejected by all the nations of the empire. For Seyfettin, nationalism was the only acceptable ideology of his time so there is no condemnation of those who espoused this creed.

The Flamboyant Mr. Efruz

Efruz Bey (Mr. Efruz), was another novel by Seyfettin which was published in installments in the newspaper *Vakit* in 1919. It was presented by the paper as a “fantasy novel” full of exaggerations. In fact, Seyfettin started the book by addressing the fictional character Efruz Bey by admitting his overstatements about him and asked for his forgiveness. More importantly, he admitted that Efruz was very much alive in every one of us⁶⁴ demonstrating the potentiality of being an impostor in all the people. In fact, one would

characterize Efruz as a man adaptable to different environments and a man ready to exploit the popular ideas of his time.

For instance, Efruz pretends to be one of the instigators of the Declaration of Liberty, meaning the reinstatement of the 1876 constitution in 1908, otherwise known as the Young Turk revolution. Quite fantastically, he claimed to have dug a tunnel all the way to Yıldız Palace, where Sultan Abdülhamid II was residing and at gunpoint forced him to declare the constitution to be operational once again. Incredibly, people believed him and he was paraded throughout the city as one of the heroes of liberty. However, after three days the CUP called him for questioning and later arrested him. And the masses forgot him quite easily as “society is such a horrible thing that they crucify a person whom they had praised as a prophet”⁶⁵ demonstrating the fickle nature of the people. After this failure, Efruz advocated the necessity of nobility for Turkey and presented him to be an aristocrat. While this also proved to be short-lived he has reincarnated himself as an ardent Turkish nationalist⁶⁶ and later as a teacher. Needless to say, Mr. Efruz is an opportunistic character without any depth of knowledge or attachment to any idea and who is successful to temporarily convince the people around him that he possessed exceptional qualities. The lack of nationalism of Efruz and people around him is also another common theme throughout the book. This is a satire of those who tried to hijack the 1908 revolution and the noble ideas of liberty and patriotism as well as those who claim to have mastered scholarship and pedagogy.

Heroism, War and Identity in the Plays of Ömer Seyfettin

Moving on to his plays, I had earlier mentioned that Turkish heroism was a common theme in most of them. Furthermore, his ideas of a pan-Turkist form of nationalism were buttressed by the imagery of Turan—i.e. the future state uniting all the Turks in a single country or the term was also used as a geographical entity particularly synonymous with Turkestan. For instance, in the play *Teselli* (Consolation), he wrote: “This brave army shall spread lights of justice to rotten Iran which occupies a place right at the center of Turan”.⁶⁷ In *Pembe İncili Kaftan* (The Caftan with Pink Pearls) he continued to portray Iran as an ancient enemy of Turkey and depicted Shah Ismail dating from the early sixteenth century as a destructive monster and a person who spoke no language but Persian.⁶⁸ Of course, the latter statement is false as Shah Ismail wrote poetry in Turkish under his pen name Hatai, which is still popular in Turkey and Azerbaijan. The fact that Ömer Seyfettin was unaware of this fact is rather surprising for a nationalist and pan-Turkist figure. Maybe it could be explained by his interest to be more focused on Anatolia and Balkans rather than the Turks of the East.

As part of nationalist ideology, he also employed the concept “Red Apple” (*Kızıl Elma*)⁶⁹ which in his writings is synonymous with the ideal of Turan. In Ottoman parlance, this concept denoted the Sultan’s military endeavors wherever he took the Ottoman army as lucidly expressed in Seyfettin’s Play *KIZILELMA Neresi?* (Where is the RED APPLE?). According to this play, regular soldiers always yelled “On to the Red Apple” as a result of which the sultan asked all his scholars and statesmen where this Red Apple was. There was no consensus on the topic as some said China, others alluded to Manchuria or India. Consequently, the sultan asked the recruits what they meant by this term to which they all answered “Our sultan knows it the best” and “Wherever your horse takes us”.⁷⁰ In this play, we can observe the wisdom of the common people as far as their desire to follow the sultan who had a

higher understanding of the common good. Of course, this portrayal does not have a nationalist content but it can easily be adopted for the policy of the unification of the Turks as well.

In another play, *Büyücü* (The Magician) Salahaddin's conquest of Jerusalem is defined as a very positive development for Muslims while at the same time defining his army as a Turkish army.⁷¹ This is another example of Islam and Turkishness as being integral and commensurate with each other. And to demonstrate his affiliation and ideological sharing of pan-Turkism with Ziya Gökalp once again, Seyfettin included Gökalp's poem *Turan*, quoted below, in his play *Primo, the Turkish Child* (published in 1911 in *Young Pens*):

For Turks, the homeland is neither Turkey nor Turkestan.

The Homeland is a large and eternal country: Turan.⁷²

Primo, the Turkish Boy

In his play, *Primo, the Turkish Boy*, Seyfettin narrates the story of a family composed of a Turkish father and an Italian wife (Grazia) living in Salonica. The main character of the play, Kenan was a Turk who was educated in France who ironically hated Turks and their culture. He was a freemason rejecting all forms of tradition, past, homeland and nationality. What was worse, he was also a pacifist.⁷³ In fact, Kenan was characterized as a "fanatical mason" belonging to the Italian Grand Lodge. Moreover, according to the narrative, masons in Salonica were mostly Jews or Levantines.⁷⁴ In another play, he listed the negative characteristics of a person as being pretentious, an atheist, and being a freemason.⁷⁵ From his portrayal, we can easily assume that Seyfettin perceived pacifism or freemasonry negatively, in fact in his writings masons were presented as being non-Turks. Those Turks who belonged to the fraternity, according to the play, were anti-nationalists and Turcophobes. In this play, we see a more vulgar and propagandist side of Seyfettin with xenophobic feelings toward Jews themselves as can be comprehended from the discussion below.

The Turkish neighborhoods of the city of Salonica were defined as "brave and silent" whereas the happy Jewish quarter is portrayed as having dreams about gold and interests.⁷⁶ These typical anti-Semitic stereotypes are particularly surprising as the Young Turks with whom Seyfettin was on good terms had a number of Jewish members in their Committee of Union and Progress. Needless to say, there were countless freemasons among the Young Turks most important of which was Talat Paşa, the grandmaster of the newly-constituted grand Lodge of the Ottoman State. Seyfettin seems to be opposed to these kind of affiliations as he perceived freemasonry as an anti-nationalist creed.

Kenan, the main protagonist in the play, as a result of European imperialism has come to understand the fallacy of his internationalism emanating from Freemasonry but it took some time to admit that he was a Turk. In fact, his Italian wife and his father in law assumed that he was not a Turk but a Turkified Greek which made him more acceptable for them. And Kenan accepted this proposition as he no longer had any affinity with Turks and had earlier argued there were no real Turks in Turkey⁷⁷ anyway. However, gradually he experienced a born-again process, remembering his childhood and his grandfather. Moreover, occupation of Turkish lands and war with Italy has made him realize that his wife also belonged to the enemy camp. He gave her the choice of becoming a Turk by changing her name, learning Turkish and wearing the veil. She refused by

saying that she could not become a “primitive” person. Interestingly, their son Primo who spoke no Turkish but had also met certain Turkish kids who told him that since his father was Turkish he himself was also Turkish told her mom in broken Turkish that “I child Turk” (*sic*), which made her understand that “the grand Turkish spirit was born again in the new generation, in the new life”.⁷⁸

As a reaction to Kenan’s ultimatum his wife got a divorce and returned to Italy. Primo learned Turkish in a month and changed his name to Oğuz. His father taught him that many names which were considered to be Turkish were originally derived from Arabic, that is why he decided on a genuinely Turkish name.⁷⁹ Here, we even see a nationalist approach to private names some of which have Arabic origins and trying to avoid them by adopting purely Turkish names.

Teaching his son about the enemies of the Turks, Kenan enumerated Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbians and Albanians for having rebelled against their state. As Salonica was occupied by the Greek army, Jews started having a pro-Greek attitude coloring their shops in blue and white, the colors of the Greek flag. However, the biggest criticism was directed toward those Turks who lacked a grand and sublime idea and focused on their private interests as opposed to Greeks with their Megali Idea and Bulgarians with their desire to capture Istanbul and rename it as Tsarigrad, or more precisely with pan-Hellenism and pan-Slavism.⁸⁰ Primo realized that the aim of the Balkan nations as well as the Great Powers was to eradicate Turkish presence in the Balkans, and decided to take revenge by attacking the occupation army. Concomitantly, he remembered the *Revenge* poem by Emin Bülent⁸¹ which defined the Western states as unjust and professed his hatred toward them. In the character of Primo, we can observe the rebirth of a nation by the instigation of nationalistic feelings against the European powers aiming to dismember the Turkish homeland.

The Failure of Ottomanism: Banners or Red Peppers

Hürriyet Bayrakları (Banners of Liberty) is another significant play as far as the failure of Ottomanism is concerned. In that play, one of the main characters who was traveling alongside another person argued that all Ottomans, namely Arabs, Armenians, Albanians, Jews, Greeks, Serbs, and Turks constituted the Ottoman nation. Whereas the main character opposed the tenth of July 1908 celebrations of reinstatement of the constitution as calling it a national day was redundant because there was no such thing as Ottomans as you could not add different ethnicities and form a new one. To call them all as Ottomans would be nothing but an illusion. This concept could be a state identity but there was nothing more natural and reasonable than Greeks and Bulgarians living in the Ottoman state to join their respective homelands which had earlier gained their independence.⁸² Here once again we see the author’s perception of nationalism as a normal state of affairs even if it works against the interests of the Turkish nation. In other words, according to Seyfettin minority nationalisms cannot be condemned since it was natural for a nation to demand its independence.

As the two travelers approached a Bulgarian village, the Ottomanist person was happy to discover red Turkish flags in the distance which in his judgment proved that Ottomanism was alive and well among the Bulgarians and all the national groups had fraternal feelings toward each other. Feeling vindicated, he approached the village only to realize that what he thought to be banners were nothing but red peppers hung to dry under the sun.⁸³ This play, thus has a critical narrative about the futility of an Ottoman national identity which was rejected by non-Turks anyway.

Religion and Pan-Turkism

Even though Seyfettin gave Islam an important place in the makeup of the Turkish nation, in his play *Memlekete Mektup* (Letter to the Homeland) he was opposed to what he called as “reactionary” individuals who denied nationality and who falsely accused Enver and Cemal Pashas for being Turkish nationalists whereas in fact they “lacked any form of nationalism”.⁸⁴ Whether this characterization is correct or whether they adequately represented Ömer Seyfettin’s ideas is another matter. However, it can be argued that Turkish nationalism was not as strong as Ottomanism and Islam in the ideas of Enver and Cemal or for most members of the CUP for that matter.

In the above-mentioned play, the character called for a nation-building beyond Ottoman Turkey all the way to Azerbaijan, the Caucasus, Turkestan as they were brothers sharing the same religion and language (*dini bir dili bir kardeş olduklarını*). Consequently, he argued that political boundaries had no meaning as they were man-made whereas “nationality was created by God”.⁸⁵ This rejection of the borders and the aim to expand beyond the current boundaries was a common theme for Seyfettin as part of the pan-Turkic ideal.

It should be evident from the narrative above that national identity was at the center of the writings of Ömer Seyfettin. Relevantly, in his play *Bir Kayışın Tesiri* (The Influence of One Belt), he wrote about a Turk pretending to be a Circassian who eventually lost his culture and spoke with a Circassian accent.⁸⁶ At this point, it would be in order to write about the Islamist press’ especially *Sebilürreşat* journal’s characterization of all Turkish nationalists, including Seyfettin, to be non-Turks as well as being anti-Islamic and being against the institution of family. In the case of Seyfettin, he had been called a Circassian to which he responded with a letter to the editor of the journal *Eşref Edip* laying out his understanding of nationality as being non-racist based on “religion, language, ethnicity”. He explicitly wrote “I am not Circassian”, and clarified the point that his father did not speak a word of Circassian and that he was a Turk from the Caucasus.⁸⁷ There was no evidence available regarding the other allegations of immorality and irreligiosity but Seyfettin probably did not dignify them by answering them.

Returning to his worldview, from time to time we can observe xenophobic arguments as can be seen in the sentence: Greeks, Armenians, Jews and swindlers could not enter the town,⁸⁸ whereas toward Arabs, he seems to have had a more positive approach than he had toward Christian nations. He called “the Noble Arabs” as the sacred wing of Turkishness and expressed his sorrow that the Western nations have occupied Egypt. Consequently, he called for the East to reawaken,⁸⁹ which can be a call for the liberation of Islamic lands from Western imperialism or alternatively the decolonization of all the Eastern nations. Nonetheless, his focus seemed to be more on Turks since he perceived Turkishness and Islam as going hand in hand in the definition of nationhood as mentioned above. Seyfettin also praised the Ottoman army as being a Turkish and Muslim army possessing Turkism and Islam as their two ideals.⁹⁰ Even though, Ziya Gökalp died only four years after Seyfettin, he had a stronger dimension of Turkishness in his world view and lesser focus on Islam even though they do have common approaches to the definition of the nation.

To conclude, I also want to point out that in Seyfettin’s poetry we can again detect nationalist ideas and symbolisms such as the gray wolf, that is the Turks, which should get out of its lair to confront the bear, meaning the Russians; or his ode to the nationalist poet Mehmet Emin Yurdakul for having awakened and resurrected the Turkish nation.⁹¹ His nationalism and pan-Turkish idealism are quite evident from all his plays and his criticism of anti-nationalists, be it the Westernists or the Islamists, is also always emphasized throughout his writings.

Conclusion

It would be in order to say that Ömer Seyfettin still influences some and haunts others in modern Turkey. For those who find pure evil in him, one can give examples from two contemporary writers, Halil Berktaş and Murat Belge. They present Seyfettin as a propagator of xenophobic and anti-Muslim sentiments culminating in their destruction at the hands of the Ottoman state machinery.⁹² The discussion above should make it clear that such arguments are not objective at all since they stretch his ideas so as to suit their own agendas.

Halil Berktaş, who no longer writes academic articles or books but rather commentaries at newspapers argues that Ömer Seyfettin is more important than Ziya Gökalp as the former even in the 1920s was more read than Gökalp—an assertion which is indeed impossible to quantify. As Seyfettin talked about national pain and national enemies he presented the Turks as the underdog and consequently demonization of Armenians, Bulgarians and Greeks resulted in the ethnic cleansing of Turkish territory.⁹³ Of course, it is hard to respond to Berktaş as he longer writes in academic platforms and certainly not with a scholarly mindset but rather in a polemical and instrumental way so as to prove that the ideological background of the “Armenian genocide” existed in Turkish nationalist thought.

Murat Belge in a similar manner characterizes Ömer Seyfettin as a writer with feelings of hatred toward Armenians. He gives the example of *Our People of the Cave* (*Ashab-ı Kehfimiz*) where the author implied that the Armenians attempted to destroy the Turks so the latter annihilated them,⁹⁴ in other words preempted them. The above-mentioned authors who support Armenian genocide allegations seem to cherry-pick ideas and seem to discover feelings of animosity toward Armenians and justifications for genocide. They also conflate nationalism with racism. However, in the ideas of Ömer Seyfettin no hatred toward the Armenians or the Balkan nations could be depicted, rather the description of the natural state of affairs, namely the rejection of Ottomanism by Bulgarians and others.

As this article purported to demonstrate, Ömer Seyfettin was a nationalist, a pan-Turkist and a supporter of a simple written and spoken Turkish purged of excessive Arabic and Persian vocabulary. Furthermore, he supported the jettisoning of Ottomanist ideology and the establishment of a Turkish nation-state. While he viewed the Balkan nations and Armenians as the rivals of the Turks, he also considered their espousal of nationalism to be normal and natural. In that sense, he did not have a racist perception of these nations but rather viewed them as adversaries with whom there was a nationalistic competition over the same pieces of territory regarded by some or all as their homelands.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Mehmet Arısan, Nadav Solomonovich and Neşe Şahin for their contribution to this article.

NOTES

1. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996, p. 1.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Anthony Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998, pp. viii, 40.
4. Ömer Seyfettin, “Ömer Seyfettin’e Dair”, in *Balkan Harbi Hatıraları* [About Ömer Seyfettin, Memoirs of the Balkan Wars], ed. Tahsin Yıldırım, İstanbul: Dün Bugün Yarın Yayınları, 2011, p. 11.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 14–16. Kemal Karpat, *Studies on Turkish Politics and Society: Selected Articles and Essays*, Leiden: Brill, 2004, p. 469.

6. Tahir Alangu, *Ömer Seyfettin: Ülkücü Bir Yazarın Romanı* [Ömer Seyfettin: The Novel of an Idealist Author], İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010, pp. 84–85, 87–89, 95.
7. Seyfettin, “Ömer Seyfettin’e Dair”, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–19, Alangu, *Ömer Seyfettin, op. cit.*, pp. 105–106, 143–144, 155.
8. Seyfettin, “Ömer Seyfettin’e Dair”, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–21, 24.
9. Alangu, *Ömer Seyfettin, op. cit.*, p. 316.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 311, 370–371, 373–374.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 243.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 336.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 115–116, 442–443.
15. Ömer Seyfettin, *Efruz Bey* [Mr. Efruz], Ankara: Bilgi, 2015, p. 86.
16. Alangu, *Ömer Seyfettin, op. cit.*, p. 261.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 149, 368–369.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 381.
19. Karpas, *Studies on Turkish Politics, op. cit.*, p. 478. Alangu, *Ömer Seyfettin, op. cit.*, pp. 267–269, 271.
20. Alangu, *Ömer Seyfettin, op. cit.*, pp. 274–277.
21. Seyfettin, “Ömer Seyfettin’e Dair”, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
22. Alangu, *Ömer Seyfettin, op. cit.*, p. 492.
23. Ömer Seyfettin, *Yarınki Turan Devleti* [Tomorrow’s Turan State], İstanbul: Su, 1977, (First published in 1914), pp. 12.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 17–19, 24.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 22. In his play, *Bir Kayışın Tesiri* [The Effect of a Belt], he talked about a Turk who pretended to be a Circassian, therefore even according to his own writings it is not clear that Circassians totally assimilated to Turkish culture.
27. Alangu, *Ömer Seyfettin, op. cit.*, pp. 13, 342.
28. Seyfettin, *Yarınki Turan, op. cit.*, p. 17.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 37.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
31. Yusuf Sarıay, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi Gelişimi ve Türk Ocakları (1912-1931)* [The Development of Turkish Nationalism and Turkish Hearths (1912–1931)], İstanbul: Ötüken, 1994, pp. 102, 105.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
33. Karpas, *Studies on Turkish Politics, op. cit.*, p. 474.
34. Seyfettin, *Balkan Harbi Hatıraları* [The Memoirs of Balkan Wars], *op. cit.*, pp. 91, 106.
35. Alangu, *Ömer Seyfettin, op. cit.*, p. 229.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 237.
37. Seyfettin, *Balkan Harbi Hatıraları, op. cit.*, p. 110.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 165. It is noteworthy to point out that Seyfettin ate ham which would demonstrate that he was not particularly a religious person. Furthermore, in his play, “*Sultanlığın Sonu*” (End of the Sultanate, referring to a Turkish saying which denotes being single amounting to being a sultan), one of his characters mention a tavern which would not be affected by earthquake as the place was sanctified by a Saint, clearly making fun of religion or superstitious beliefs of the people. See Alangu, *Ömer Seyfettin, op. cit.*, pp. 44–47.
40. Seyfettin, *Balkan Harbi Hatıraları, op. cit.*, p. 166.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 171–172.
42. Alangu, *Ömer Seyfettin, op. cit.*, p. 245.
43. Seyfettin, *Balkan Harbi Hatıraları, op. cit.*, pp. 126, 132, 149, 152, 166.
44. Alangu, *Ömer Seyfettin, op. cit.*, p. 193.
45. Kazım Karabekir, *Hayatım* [My Life], İstanbul: Emre, 2000, pp. 375, 393.
46. Karpas, *Studies on Turkish Politics, op. cit.*, pp. 418, 421.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 422.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 425–426.
49. Ömer Seyfettin, *Harem*, İstanbul: Erdem, 1984, pp. 95–108.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 67–72.
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 57–66.
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 89–94.

53. Seyfettin, *Harem*, *op.cit.*, pp. 7–47.
54. Ömer Seyfettin, *Bir Ermeni Gençin Hatıra Defteri* [The Notebook of A Young Armenian], Istanbul: Malazgirt, 1972, (originally published in 1918 as *Ashab-ı Kehfimiz*), p. 9.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 19.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 54, 67.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
61. Toward the end of the Ottoman Empire, Ziya Gökalp and other Turkish intellectuals founded the Turkish Hearth Association (Türk Ocağı) in 1911 to promote nationalism, especially Gökalp's synthesis of Turkism, Islamism, and modernism. See, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/turkish-hearth-association>.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 79, 81.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 88–89.
64. Seyfettin, *Efruz Bey*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
65. *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16, 20–22, 52–53. Quote from p. 121.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 92.
67. Ömer Seyfettin, *Topuz* [The Mace], Istanbul: Erdem, 1984, p. 36.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 49.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
70. *Ibid.*, pp. 95–104.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
72. Ömer Seyfettin, *Bomba* [The Bomb], Istanbul: Erdem, 1984, p. 7.
73. *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
75. Ömer Seyfettin, *Yalnız Efe* [The Lone Brave], Istanbul: Erdem, 1984, p. 62 in the play *Mehmaemken* [As much as Possible].
76. Seyfettin, *Bomba*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
77. *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 20–21.
78. *Ibid.*, pp. 30–32, 36–37. Quote from p. 41: “Büyük Türk ruhunun yeni nesilde, yeni hayatta tekrar doğduğunu anlıyordu” [(He) understood the Turkish soul was regenerating in the new life].
79. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
80. *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 58, 61. For pan-Hellenism and pan-Slavism, see Seyfettin, *Yalnız Efe*, *op. cit.*, p. 60. In fact in the play *Nakarat* [Refrain], the main character mistakes a Bulgarian woman singing as flirting with him, whereas she was singing “Istanbul will be ours”. Again a depiction of the failure of Ottomanism.
81. *Ibid.*, pp. 69–70, 75.
82. *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 81–83.
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 85–87.
84. Seyfettin, *Yalnız Efe*, *op. cit.*, pp. 106–107.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
86. Ömer Seyfettin, *Kaşığı* [Currycomb], Istanbul: Erdem, 1984, pp. 124–125.
87. Alangu, *Ömer Seyfettin*, *op. cit.*, pp. 345–346, 349.
88. Seyfettin, *Yalnız Efe*, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
89. *Ibid.*, in the play *Piç* [The Bastard], pp. 75, 77.
90. *Ibid.*, In the play *Mehmaemken*, p. 57.
91. Seyfettin, *Kaşığı* [Currycomb], *op. cit.*, pp. 156–157.
92. For Halil Berktaş, see <http://arsiv.taraf.com.tr/yazilar/halil-berktay/once-omer-seyfettin-sonra-isik-kosaner/1791> (accessed 5 February 2018 – but this link is no longer available). For Murat Belge see, *Edebiyatta Ermeniler* [The Armenians in Literature], Istanbul: İletişim, 2013, pp. 61–62.
93. Belge, p. 61.
94. Belge, *Edebiyatta Ermeniler*, *op. cit.*, pp. 61–62.

ORCID

Umut Uzer  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5828-9597>