



**European
Journal of Turkish Studies**
Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey

16 | 2013
Demographic Engineering - Part III

(Social) Darwinism for Families

The Magazine Muhit, Children and Women in Early Republican Turkey

Uğur Bahadır Bayraktar



Publisher
EJTS

Electronic version

URL: <http://ejts.revues.org/4837>
ISSN: 1773-0546

Electronic reference

Uğur Bahadır Bayraktar, « (Social) Darwinism for Families », *European Journal of Turkish Studies* [Online], 16 | 2013, Online since 10 December 2013, Connection on 30 September 2016. URL : <http://ejts.revues.org/4837>

This text was automatically generated on 30 septembre 2016.

© Some rights reserved / Creative Commons license

(Social) Darwinism for Families

The Magazine *Muhit*, Children and Women in Early Republican Turkey

Uğur Bahadır Bayraktar

Introduction and a Few Historiographical Concerns

- 1 The impact that Darwinism in general and social Darwinism in particular had on the mentalities of the late Ottoman and early Republican periods is beyond question. Implicit or explicit references to 'race' and 'family' were widespread during the period of the Committee of Union and Progress. While this Late Ottoman era might be considered an introductory phase, the victory of the Kemalist struggle resulted in the realization of various facets of (social) Darwinism.
- 2 What the present study attributes to social Darwinism is related to positive eugenics more than to racial struggle; that is, it focuses on attempts at improving the stock of the nation by means of encouraging the procreation of valuable individuals. In short, in this study social Darwinism is related to being individually fit. In this context, this study will critically analyse the core of the (social) Darwinist ideas prevailing in the early Republican era. The reason for 'social' being in parentheses is one of the arguments of this study. As it will be shown below it appears that the extent as well as the understanding of social Darwinism was very vague. Even though the fundamentals of Darwinism and the nucleus of social Darwinist principles concerning population, reproduction and childcare was present, there was no clear and direct mentioning of the term social Darwinism, let alone eugenics. In short, the period was somewhere between Darwinism and racist and class-biased social Darwinism.¹ The primary source *Muhit*, a pictorial monthly family magazine, excellently demonstrates the transition from Darwinism to (social) Darwinism. The explicit presentation of the fundamentals of evolutionary ideas to the audience the magazine addressed was understandable. The new nation-state wanted to enlighten the Turkish family with the Darwinist principles, but when it comes to the overt eugenic projects the presentation become blurred. In this sense, this paper will argue that the nucleus of a mostly positive eugenicist discourse in

line with the doctrines of Kemalist ideology was dominant in the circles of middle class families.²

- 3 There are a few significant historiographic points that need revision. First of all, it is apparent that the employment of 'race' and similar terms were very beneficial for Turkish nation-state building. The term 'race' was employed mostly in accordance with social Darwinist thought but it is very doubtful that the period can be merely explained by this ideology. Of course the prevalence of anthropometrics and biometrics in this period attests to the accordance with social Darwinist principles, if not racism, and finding the social Darwinist nucleus of the policies of the periods is path-breaking in terms of historiography. However, this paper will argue that the racial connotations of social Darwinism were far from completing the picture of Turkish nationalism. That is, popularisation of the social Darwinist discourse, I argue, was essential prior to the establishment of grand myths such as the Sun Language Theory and Turkish History Thesis. Reading the developments that took place in the early Republican period just from this perspective may lead us to miss the details. Modernisation and the making of the nation-state are familiar concerns in social Darwinism, yet crude 'biological determinism' does not seem to cover every social aspect of the period.³ As the current literature indicates, current historiography is mostly shaped in this manner.⁴
- 4 The Republican elite's idea of national superiority in the 1930s is well known, as are the consequent methods of both improving the privileged stock of the nation and sterilising it from degenerative elements. While the alleged superiority of the Turkish race was not in question, one should be aware of the severely restricted influence of the elites in these years. Otherwise, the rest of society is removed from the picture and what remains is the individual enlightened Republican idealists, most of whom graduated from medical schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵ In line with these concerns, this study will elaborate on the (social) Darwinist preoccupations of middle class families on reproduction and childcare. Departing from the eugenics discourse that is mostly associated with Turkish nationalism, the study will show the (social) Darwinist recommendations of the Kemalist elite. While the Turkish state implemented social Darwinist ideas through laws such as the Law for Public Health (1930) and the Law for Physical Education (1938), it also aimed at public indoctrination. The magazine *Muhit* provided a more straightforward, popularised articulation of the (social) Darwinist principles of the Kemalist regime. Clear-cut arguments attributable to (social) Darwinist discourse were absent, but a significant number of pages was devoted to rudimentary discussions. Considering the fact that it was a family magazine addressing the middle class of the Republic, it is to be expected that the eugenic discourse was very mild, but its emphasis on health, reproduction and childcare cannot be denied. Neither the politicisation nor the popularisation of social Darwinism can be comprehended without its context and its reception among late Ottoman-early Republican intellectuals.

The Popularisation of (Social) Darwinism in Late Ottoman and Early Republican Eras

- 5 What is known about the Ottoman intellectuals who were interested in evolutionary and eugenic ideas in the middle of the nineteenth century is unfortunately limited.⁶ Darwinism and evolutionary terms first appear in an Ottoman context in the late 1860s (Alkan 2009: 336). Various figures of the Ottoman elite became interested in Darwinism,

including Ahmet Midhat Efendi, Ali Suavi, Beşir Suad and Şemseddin Sami. However the diffusion of evolutionary terms into the Ottoman realm should not be read as indicative of a lively milieu debating evolution and its counterpart, creation. These figures were more likely to follow the popular debates than to actually investigate or add to new findings to evolutionary theory (ibid.). The influence of Western modernisation on the minds of the Ottoman literati was evident, and their interest in evolutionary theories was in accordance with this profound admiration for the West. The ideas presented to the Ottoman audience were mostly shaped along the lines of ‘encyclopedianism.’ As Doğan states, the purpose of these prominent figures was ‘to transfer the “useful” developments taking place to the people without touching their sore spot’ (Doğan 2006: 150) Similarly the works of these intellectuals were mostly translations of prominent Darwinists in Europe, such as Büchner, Darwin and Haeckel.⁷

- 6 While there were no exhaustive discussions of evolutionary terms, this does not mean that these prominent pioneering Darwinists did not have certain affinities with respect to Darwinist ideas. In an era when monotheistic religions were shaken by developments in biology, positivist ideas were accompanied by the rise of materialism.⁸ Beşir Fuad was known to be influenced by Herbert Spencer while writing *Beşer* (the Mankind) (Doğan 2006: 167). Ahmed Midhat Efendi, a prominent historian of the nineteenth century with his masterpiece *Kainat* (the Universe), is similarly believed to be one of the pioneering (social) Darwinists of the period according to Doğan. Ahmet Midhat, relatively dominant in the existing literature on evolution with an emphasis on Lamarckism, worked intensively on the fundamental questions that evolutionary issues raised.⁹
- 7 Indirect references to Darwin became direct in the late 1880s and 1890s when his name started appearing alongside the name of Lamarck. Evolutionary theories and terms expanded significantly both among intellectuals and popular readers. The idea was discussed that man evolved from apes in general and orangutans, chimpanzees, and gorillas in particular. The tradition of pointing out mankind’s similarities to animals began with Münif Paşa and continued with Ahmet Cevat’s magazine *Muhit* (Doğan 2006: 172). This tradition was to continue even into the early 1930s. Not preoccupied with the fundamentals of the theory (excluding Ahmed Midhat Efendi and a few others), the discussions on evolutionary theory and its (social) Darwinist aspects remained at a basic level. This distinction between evolution and (social) Darwinism seems to be important: The period from the last quarter of the nineteenth century to the early 1910s was very rich in terms of (social) Darwinist ideas but they were also accompanied by more superficial elaborations with the intention of expanding these ideas to the public opinion. The ‘encyclopedianist’ motivation was also apparent in the articles of the magazine *Muhit*. There were of course slight differences emanating from the Republican ideology as well as its strong emphasis on materialism.
- 8 In a global context, the visibility of eugenics was more apparent. While those nations most involved in eugenics, the US, Britain and Germany, advanced to actual eugenic policies, Turkey hesitated well into the early twentieth century. Both the Unionist and Kemalist ideologies shared the ‘biological determinism’ of their Anglo-Saxon and German counterparts and adopted eugenics as socio-political instruments. During the Unionist years family and women increasingly became objects of interest. Emphasising the interaction between family and state during the Young Turk Period, Toprak argues that ‘sociology as a newcomer to Ottoman intellectual life influenced the making of Turkish nation-state and provided for its ideologues about the social prerequisites of a new

society.¹⁰ In a sense, the founding pillars of the Turkish nation owed much to social Darwinism which, according to Hanioğlu, facilitated authoritarian Unionist policies.¹¹ There were differences with respect to the Anglo-Saxon world and Germany. Firstly, while the primary concern of those countries was the lower classes, the 'unfit' and the immigrants, Turkish thinkers' use of social Darwinism was oriented towards racial notions. The constraints of the eugenicists in the United States with a view to creating the eugenics movement was related to 'industrialisation, the growth of big business, the sprawl of cities and slums, the massive migrations from the country side and (in the United States especially) from abroad' (Kevles 1995: 72). As a result of the struggle with the fact of belonging to an inferior race in the course of modernisation, 'the spread of eugenics in Turkey occurred in just such a context, and was a movement both for and against the West' (Ergin 2008: 282). The threat that the West constituted was 'degeneration' but the rise of the Republic following the turmoil in 1910s eliminated any significant degeneration threats despite a great population loss. The principal concern of the Turkish elites was to define and create a national identity and modern society (Alemdaroğlu 2006: 127-8). In a different context, the differentiation in terms of ideology was not clear. Even though Lamarckian arguments emphasising nurture over nature held their place in the Turkish context in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, they were joined by (social) Darwinian arguments in the early twentieth century. This was due to the salience of (social) Darwinism in the Turkish context and its employment by the Kemalist regime. While the radical right in Britain, rejecting the term parasitology, made degeneration a hereditary process, a breeding of the 'unfit,' the parasitology argument sought the cause of degeneration in the interaction between an organism and its environment.¹² Political fluctuations between thanks to the discussions such as parasitology, however, did not become prevalent in countries which recently established their nation-states. The Central European nations were no different than Turkey in terms of national identities.¹³ The newly created nation-states were in need of national 'legitimation,' if not superiority, and the metaphors of social Darwinism were one of the prevailing frameworks utilised in the early twentieth century.¹⁴ (Social) Darwinist discourse in Turkey evidently had more in common with the nation-states of the Balkans than with the West.¹⁵

- 9 Nevertheless all eugenics movements in the world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had one trait in common: the class bias of the eugenicists caused by their professional backgrounds. Firstly the eugenicists belonged to middle classes who were raised in relatively well-to-do families, mostly white-collar workers, doctors or academicians. This facet of the eugenics movement and its substantial importance in terms of political activities has usually been taken into account in the historiography of eugenics. It is not this paper's purpose to trace the class backgrounds of all eugenicists in the West, Central and Southeast Europe as well as Turkey, but considering the fervour of middle class ideals, the eugenic movements and the following political movements can be more clearly comprehended.¹⁶ More importantly, the conclusions drawn by the eugenicists reflected their own class standards.¹⁷ Eugenics provided the middle class with 'biological' material not only ensuring their superiority over the so-called unfit but also imposing their moral and sexual standards over the underclasses (Kevles 1995: 107). The gender expressions formulated during the period also contributed to shape women's identity in accordance with Kemalist ideals.¹⁸ In other words, once the pro-natalist concerns of the Second Constitutional period had been inherited by the eugenic movement of the Republican elites, the necessity of improving the population not only in

terms of quantity but also quality was advanced against the threat that an unhealthy and crowded population would constitute to the national economy (Alemdaroğlu 2008 : 414).

- 10 After discussing the eugenic discussions in a more nuanced context, it can be argued that while the early twentieth century was still rich in terms of the social Darwinist principles that shaped the mentalities of the Unionist as well as Kemalist intellectuals, there were also more shallow elaborations of (social) Darwinism in publications apparently not that political. *Muhit* was no exception. As opposed to Ahmed Midhat Efendi, who hesitated in his encounter with the issue of evolution versus creation, the language employed by the authors of the magazine was quite straightforward and presented the evolution of man from apes as a given. While the evolutionary fundamentals were accepted as fact, the nuclei of (social) Darwinist concerns were more disguised. That is what necessitates a close reading with a view to shedding light on the mentality of early Republican families and thus inevitably also of the very elites who had a profound interest in shaping these families' attitudes and lives.

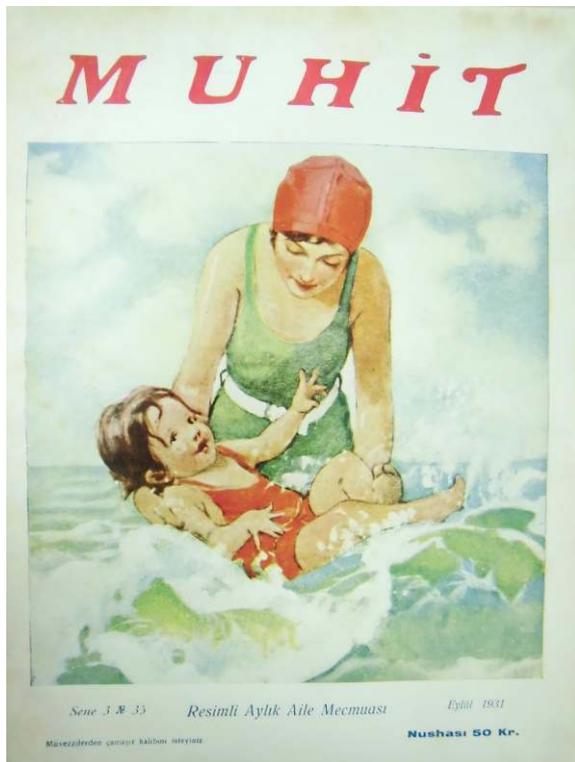


Figure . Cover of the 35th Issue of *Muhit*

- 11 The magazine *Muhit* was started in November 1928 by Ahmet Cevat and its publication came to an end in 1933.¹⁹ The magazine was a pictorial monthly magazine with sections on politics, almost all of which were written by Ahmet Cevat, and other sections on poetry, national and international literature and short stories, as well as economics, science and miscellanea.²⁰ Since Ahmet Cevat was very close to Mustafa Kemal and his ideals, the magazine was a means of popularising these ideals.²¹ The audience, whom Ahmet Cevat expected to like the magazine, was welcomed in the following lines:

There is no organ to meet the needs of the families belonging to the middle class and above, members of whom have more or less education or are at the age of education for reading and learning; for benefiting from literature and arts, science and knowledge; for following the progress of Turkey and the realm of civilisation;

and providing them guidance on general hygiene (*hıfzısıhha*), housekeeping, childcare, practical works of life.²²

- 12 The magazine was composed of eighty pages with different sections, as Ahmet Cevat indicated. Most of the parts were reserved for the literary pieces, either translations from other languages or Turkish fictions including the episodes of Reşat Nuri Güntekin. There were introductory discussions on Western writers, poets, intellectuals.²³ It should be noted that the magazine provided a sewing pattern in every issue as a supplement. There was an extensive section reserved especially for women including sections on childcare, housewives, and practical methods of housekeeping, recipes, and explanations for the sewing patterns. The first pages of the magazine were reserved for Ahmet Cevat's editorials addressing the changing agenda of the Kemalist elites, which he explained in a simplified manner.²⁴
- 13 When it comes to the legacy of evolutionary theory, however, the magazine seems to have advanced a step further. Elaborations of Darwinism owed much to Ahmet Cevat, who admitted that he was influenced by Herbert Spencer's 'First Principles' while in Tripolitania.²⁵ The 'adventure of humanity' now originated not from divinity but directly from the chimpanzees. In an introductory representation of Darwinism, differences were remarked in terms of humans' skull size and ability to stand.²⁶ Apart from these distinctive differences, the similarities to chimpanzees were emphasised in terms of the resemblance of limbs and their functions and of vestiges. The most important vestige was the eye lid that both chimpanzees and humans had. Having more perfect eye lids than chimpanzees and humans, cows and rabbits were far away from the former in terms of evolutionary theory and secondly the latter two were close relatives. Strengthening the argument with references to *caecum* and *sacrum*, Darwin had established an analogy with letters becoming null in the old words.²⁷ Both articles in a sense furthered the reception of evolutionary theory and popularised the awareness of the origins of mankind. The emphasis on materialism and the evolution of humankind seems worthy of note to the extent that it concerned families of the new republic.²⁸
- 14 The political aspects that might be associated with social Darwinism were not that clear in the rest of the articles even though Darwinist news and developments were continually published in the magazine. Even popular hoaxes were published in the journal. An example is the discovery of the *Ameranthropoides loysi*, a so-called large primate encountered by François De Loys in Venezuela in 1920. The subheadings were interesting: 'A new human-faced ape discovered in America – Does Dr Montandon's new theory turns the old theories upside down? – How was life on earth born? – What is the ologenism theory?'²⁹ Although the purpose of the theory was to prove the missing link between South American monkeys and Indians, the article was presented with naivety.³⁰ Considering the profound interest in science in general and evolution theory in particular at that time, the editors of the magazine did evidently not hesitate on this development whether it could be fraud or not.³¹

Science in the Service of Mothers and Children of the Republic

- 15 *Muhit* published new findings, hoaxes or not, but the majority of its pages was reserved for children, marriage, and motherhood. The purpose of the 'translated' articles was to

teach families scientific knowledge.³² Continuing the ‘encyclopedianist’ movement of the previous periods, these articles mainly served to popularise Darwinist fundamentals. Another subject discussed perpetually throughout the publication period of the magazine was motherhood.³³ Again a translated article from Kathleen Norris, who was a popular novel writer in the US, emphasised the bliss of motherhood. Even though the article was a literary piece, its publication was no coincidence:

Neither constructing scary bridges nor laying down great railways nor making the armies walk under the banners, no, none of them are as important as being pregnant and raising a child, a duty of a mother, in the world!³⁴

- 16 More important than these translated articles were the original articles that corroborated the (social) Darwinist concerns of the elites. In every editorial of the magazine Ahmet Cevat underlined the importance of youth in a political as well as philosophical manner. Having realised that the twentieth century brought new perspectives on child rearing³⁵, he exalted the belief in the ‘*übermensch*’ (*insandanüstün*) and underlined the importance of children for the creation of this overman, for contemporary mankind, he thought, considered children, not capital, as its most precious mold.³⁶ Ahmet Cevat argued that the need for child discipline was not confined to individual children but applied to the children of the masses, for the twentieth century was ‘democratic’ in its path towards the ‘*übermensch*.’ The differences between classes were evident as Cevat stated: ‘How deep the differences are between the peasant and the citizen, aristocracy and bourgeoisie, and bourgeoisie and proletariat – lumpenproletariat. Differences in body and brain!’³⁷ The twentieth century developments were, Ahmet Cevat argued, eliminating the differences between the classes and elevating all of them to the level of the ‘*übermensch*.’ However, Cevat was acutely aware of the Republic’s shortcomings in terms of railroad networks, electricity stations, irrigation systems, harbours and docks and of course national industries such as locomotives, airplanes, ships and factories. Accordingly, on child discipline he proposed

1) Combining practical and industrial methods with theoretical methods.

It is a very beautiful work to establish different art and vocational schools. It is a necessity for the country. In our opinion, however, there is one more thing very necessary, and that is the introduction of industrialised crafts to all elementary and high schools.

Every Turkish child at the age of fifteen or sixteen should be able to make planes, submarines, actual ship models as toys, to play with machines with engines, turbines (of course in the form of toys), and make them with his own hands by means of the equipments available in school workshops.³⁸

- 17 The Republican ideals, despite their lacklustre compared to those of Ahmet Cevat, were profoundly invested in shaping the children of the newly established nation-state. Furthermore, this ‘discipline’ was not confined to moral and political aspects; in accordance with Ahmet Cevat’s account, economic aspects were also very prominent. The need to create a new generation did not immediately mean eugenic or social Darwinist ends.
- 18 Engagement was also discussed. An article translated by Dr. İhsan Nadi discussed the duration of engagement.³⁹ Underlining the legal deficiencies of the engagement period, he argued that the deficiency should be blamed on young people’s lack of personal responsibility toward society rather than on laws.⁴⁰ What he understood by responsibility indicates the marriage ideals of the Republican elites.

[...] A parent is very wrong in considering the state of engagement as a prolongation of virginity. Some young impertinent men, however, consider the

engagement as the beginning of marriage, probably as a result of the new era.

Engagement is a passage, a period of transition having its particular traits, especially health dangers.⁴¹

- 19 Engagement was especially meant to restrict sexual relationship between prospective wives and husbands. While the prolongation of engagement was not welcomed, the violation of these special boundaries was related to the marriage:

Fiancées may meet freely, but the female fiancée should be aware of the limits of her feelings and love towards her prospective husband; and a young man should avoid any acts that would violate the sacredness of female virtue. A false step taken now will lead to heavy consequences in the future. That is, if the girl remains indifferent to the things that the man could only claim as a right of marriage, the young man loses all respect for his fiancée. Or he makes her aware of this fact once they are married.⁴²

- 20 The Republican elites' concern in the context of engagement and marriage was twofold. Firstly, the possible influence of western culture in creating freer sexual relationships was considered an impediment to the nation's moral values. Secondly, the prolongation of engagement was seen as an impediment to marriage, which was considered as the key to increasing the population of the country.⁴³ These deleterious effects also disturbed Besim Ömer Akalın, the founder of modern obstetrics and paediatrics in Turkey. Prolongation of engagement, and hence the decrease in marriages, according to him, were due to increased opportunities for women in education and work which in turn made them less inclined to create families. Similarly the images of luxury in novels and films were spoiling women's natural characteristics as mothers and discouraging men from getting married (Alemdaroğlu 2006: 137-8).⁴⁴

- 21 As already seen, engagement and marriage were not merely considered in terms of population measures. Instead, these institutions were used in order to shape the role of women in line with the ideals of the Republican elites. The women who were emancipated by the Republic were not supposed to be so 'modern' that they would neglect their duties in the household.⁴⁵ Since the magazine addressed families and advocated for certain gender relations, it is easy to observe the materialisation of these ideas. Helping women on and off automobiles and kissing women's hands were clear examples of how men were supposed to treat women in public spaces.⁴⁶ Furthermore on the section reserved for housewives, an article on the house medicine chest states the role of women plainly:

[...] It is an attribute of a housewife to have twenty skills on ten fingers (*on parmağında yirmi marifet*). A woman is obliged to become a doctor and a nurse, besides being a nanny, cook, finance minister, protocol director, consultant, consolatory, laundry-woman and ironer.⁴⁷

- 22 The Republican elite's considerations on urban women was evidently conservative and therefore in conflict with the modernisation reforms. Even though women were actually emancipated from their secondary position during previous centuries, the expectations placed on them only increased. While they became socially visible and eligible for employment outside of house, they were still expected, if not obliged, to accomplish the housework on their own.⁴⁸ The Kemalist regime's double discourse on women was therefore suited to the population measures of the following years.⁴⁹
- 23 This emphasis on womanhood was entailed by the biological policies of the Republic, the aim of which was to increase population. Besim Ömer Pasha (Akalın) was one of those who first called attention to 'the child question.' In an interview in the magazine, which was more like an autobiography, Akalın stated that the question of children was

fundamental to the population policy and added that the solution should be sought in terms of decreasing death rates instead of increasing births.⁵⁰ Accordingly he described the aims of the Republican government as ‘decreasing death, improving the Turks.’ Making a simile of youth with the sun, Akalın described the youth as disseminating heat, light, strength, vitality, joy and merriness. The longevity of suns was largely related to their health:

Today, every crop of the climate, every product of art, every capital of land is under the youth’s feet. There, the means of benefitting from them necessitates strength, and strength necessitates health. Here, I would like to repeat a sentence of Spencer “Above all, be a good animal,” and to add to that the proverb “Be strong like a Turk.”⁵¹

- 24 The prominence of health was nationalist as well as social Darwinist, for Akalın exalted the health of the Turkish youth, dismissing those excluded from the ‘expected’ majority:

The Republican government no longer wants to see the humpbacked, feeble, weak, dumb, or foolish among its children. Our children must be strong, fit, and clever. The future of the country, the perpetuity of our Republic should be upon the strong Turkish shoulders.⁵²

- 25 Sports were also encouraged for becoming fit, not only for children but adults. Frustrated after encountering a young married woman suffering from tuberculosis, Selim Sırrı offered tips for becoming fit in ten steps. He argued that exercises, contrary to the common belief, helps people become fit and gain weight.⁵³ In addition to general education, the Kemalist elites were profoundly interested in physical education, which they regarded as a social Darwinist tool in order to stay strong against enemies.⁵⁴ Whereas being fit was regarded as a weapon against outside threats, defence was by no means the only end. The education of children also had a moral purpose. In May 1931, Ahmet Cevat, this time explicitly referring to Malthus, pointed out that the question of children would be resolved by Kemalism by giving Turkish children mental virtues that were not yet present in the country.⁵⁵ Yet the question was not merely confined to the small number of educated prospective mothers.⁵⁶ As opposed to some European countries that had no need for standing armies, Turkey, Ahmet Cevat underlined, did need an army. This justified the policy of population increase, but also required developing children’s moral discipline, instilling in them the moral principle of ‘realising a better production for everyone, doing good for the public’ instead of following materialist and individualist careers.⁵⁷ According to Ahmet Cevat the latter was the more common aim of Turkish parents (an artefact remaining from the self-involved morals of the Ottomans) and moral duality was the crucial difference between Turkish society and the West.
- 26 These physiological and moral concerns were not only aimed at the generations of future leaders, but also the peasant masses. Though one might expect that the peasantry masses were seen as inferior to the urban classes, the goal of population increase seems to have been more important than such distinctions. Ahmet Cevat, upset by the peasantry’s sorry state, proposed a few provisions with a view to improving its conditions. This emphasis on peasantry, distinctive in its emphasis on ‘pure’ population, was shared by Fahrettin Kerim Gökay, who emphasised the necessity of survival and reproduction of the human species.⁵⁸ Ahmet Cevat stated that giving every poor peasant family a tax-exempt cow and thirty acres of land was the most efficient way to ensure their welfare.⁵⁹ Realising the underdeveloped state of Turkey with respect to Britain and Germany, Ahmet Cevat emphasised Turkey’s poor agricultural infrastructure, of course marking its particularity compared to earlier periods. Conceding the traditional tithe as the trouble descending

from God for its origin was divine, he welcomed the new agricultural policies of the Republic. However, his concern became obvious when he stated that:

The poorest strata of the peasantry has to sell the food that they or their children could eat, and as if that is not enough, they have to work in portage, service, and agricultural labour. The poorest parts of the peasantry cannot find any bread for their hearths, provide their children with milk or feed them with eggs. This very distressing state of the peasant masses that constitute the body of the nation is the most influential factor underlying the *race's failure to get rid of its physiological misery and failure to increase the population*. Let organisations be established at great costs aiming to teach the peasantry how to take care of children in desired numbers, how to protect [them] from malaria and tuberculosis... It's all meaningless unless mothers cannot feed the babies they just weaned.⁶⁰

- 27 The nutrition problem had another, aesthetic side. Selim Sırrı (Tarcan), who wrote extensively on sports, related beauty to biological factors. He described the principles underlying beauty thus:

While the species of the nations comprised of the people who know to take care of themselves evolve day by day, it is certain that the nations that remain without care experience degeneration and also that their species become interrupted. [...] It should be well known that the most beautiful people grow in the nations that are most in compliance with the rules of general health.⁶¹

- 28 Starting from May 1932, the magazine devoted less space to scientific developments in favour of literary pieces.⁶² However it was evident that the Republican elite's interest in questions of pedagogy and public health did not end. For instance, the journal *Yeni Türk*, which was the official journal of the Istanbul Peoples' House (*İstanbul Halkevi*), continued discussions on evolution and pedagogy.⁶³ İsmail Hakkı (Baltacıoğlu) was very interested in the youth question and wrote extensively on the matter in a series of articles called 'The Great Dangers for the Youth?' in the magazine *Yeni Adam*.⁶⁴ Needless to say the question of population and children was one of the primary political issues of the period, and its elaboration and analysis owed much to evolutionary notions as well as to social Darwinist principles.

The Implicit Targets of Negative Eugenics

- 29 The Republican elite's desire to create fit generations was mostly couched in terms of nutrition and general health. However, along with the measures to improve the genetic stock of the country, the existence of the 'unfit' caused unease. The discipline and education of 'abnormal schoolchildren' was one such issue. Describing them as a social group debated by the eugenicists, Nevzat Mahmut reviewed developments within the pedagogy of abnormal schoolchildren in various European states.⁶⁵ He challenged the argument that no matter how much money and effort is invested in such children they will ultimately be socially devalued, thus outright rejecting the eugenicist concerns. Instead, he considered the issue from a pedagogical, social, and humanitarian perspective, and called for a solution illuminated by the advances in pedagogy for normal children. Nevzat Mahmut attributed responsibility to the society for improving these abnormal children, and argued that special schools should be established for them because 'common schools' were 'literally a place of anguish and agony.'⁶⁶
- 30 Even though there is no negative aspect attributable to eugenics in his account, Dr. İhsan şükrü analysed the causes of insanity in order to demonstrate effects of insanity on

future generations. The subheadings – ‘We should try not to transfer bad heritage to our children,’ and ‘Alcohol mania and terrible diseases are the greatest enemies of the mind, the brain’ – already underlined the genetic aspect of insanity. Discussing the laws of heredity by way of a tribute to Mendel, İhsan Şükrü identified two sets of causes for insanity, bodily and external factors. As one would expect, heredity comes first of among the bodily factors, followed by poisoning and infectious diseases. Syphilis was noted by İhsan Şükrü as the most important infectious disease causing insanity.⁶⁷ However, external causes were more interesting: ‘In terms of external factors we will find the aforementioned alcohol, morphine, marijuana, syphilis and some other diseases, deprivation such as hunger and captivity, and sudden and violent mental breakdowns.’⁶⁸ Warning against harmful habits, Şükrü concluded that heredity, syphilis and alcohol were the most important causes of insanity.

- 31 Apart from these popular science articles, significant issues were the population question and the implicit discussions on ‘the unfit.’ Fahrettin Kerim dealt with the reasons why children fail in school. Having acknowledged the necessity of health evaluations before children were admitted to schools, he underlined that intelligence and character reports could also be beneficial.⁶⁹ Although he warned parents about ‘idiots,’ ‘imbeciles,’ and the ‘feble-minded’ as well as the physically disabled (those with polyps, difficulties in seeing hearing etc.), he explicitly stated nothing against mental deficiencies except to note the need for special schools as existed in Europe. However, it was clear that Fahrettin Kerim believed that mentally deficient schoolchildren had to be separated from the ‘normal’ ones. While describing ‘idiot’ children, he indicated that ‘Even some of the idiots do not know anything, what they learn is merely repetition as if they were a carrot. They make weird noises, do not care about hygiene; of course, children of this kind cannot go to school.’⁷⁰



Figure . Memnune and Sabiha, sisters diagnosed with Chorea, an involuntary movement disorder.

32 This general issue was articulated through emphases on population and children, and extended to a study of parents. Paying a visit to a hospital for children and an almshouse, Mebrure Hurşit (Sami Koray) was impressed by two sisters when she noticed that they suffered from Chorea and she immediately wondered whether the disease was hereditary or not. After looking at the files, she determined that their parents were healthy.⁷¹ Therefore it was not unlikely to suggest that the only purpose of marriage was increasing population, but a healthy population. An article translated from *Physical Culture* argued in this manner:

It is very important to be aware of the physiological duties of marriage. One of the first conditions necessary for setting up a home is health and strength.

A diseased person can never become a good husband or wife. Weakness [malnutrition] is a deficiency that cannot be tolerated.⁷²

33 While the desired prerequisites for marriage and child discipline were articulated in the magazine, some actual measures were undertaken with a view to establishing separate schools for school children deemed to be mentally unfit. Adnan Naci, paying a visit to the Izmir School for the Deaf-Mute and the Blind, informed that ‘in 1931 an experimental class was opened for the stupid.’ Soon a branch for ‘psychopath’ children would be opened.⁷³ The School was opened in 1924 with only the section for the mute, the blind section was added in 1926 and finally the section for the ‘stupid’ was opened in 1931. Naci, discussing the purpose and ends of the institution, described the conditions for admittance to the school thus:

Every student between the ages of 8 and 12 is admitted provided that they are not very stupid, do not suffer from an infectious disease, and are Turkish. The duration of education is seven years. A fee of 15 Liras a month is charged from those whose families are better off. However, currently the majority of the students are admitted free of charge. The number of student paying fee is very little.⁷⁴

34 Children were also discussed in terms of criminality. Considering centuries-old practices of crime prevention in Britain, it was stated that locking children up was not an ideal way to rehabilitate them. Rather, as an article originally published by *Pictorial Review* stated, ‘countries that are sensitive to this matter do not lock up children alongside grown felons, but act as if they want to prevent them from learning the various crafts of crime. The seeds of crime do not grow out of nowhere; the crafts of murder are learned in the prisons. Many quarters of society are considered the seedbed of crime.’⁷⁵ Although the ultimate aim seemed to be rehabilitation, ‘evil’ evidently carried class connotations. Thieves were also considered. In a translated article from *Popular Science*, the possibility of curing thieves by means of surgery was discussed. Determining the points on a body that lead someone to become delinquent, the article discussed the possibility of such operations.⁷⁶

35 Articles dealing with these questions of children and population declined in *Muhit* beginning from 1932. From then on essays of Turkish doctors or intellectuals decreased, and the only article concerning child health was ‘The Contagion of Tuberculosis’ by M. Remzi Turan.⁷⁷ Naively informing readers about the methods to protect the children from tuberculosis, Remzi Turan did indeed question the heredity of tuberculosis but not elaborate, preferring instead to focus on preventative measures.

The Rise of Turkish Racism and Conclusion

36 Ahmet Cevat's interests, and thus the orientation of *Muhit*, shifted from pedagogy to anthropology and linguistics from 1931 onwards. Inspired by studies dealing with the origin of the Turks *vis-à-vis* the Arian races, he published a few articles on the Hittites and the Sumerians.⁷⁸ Only after this date did the relatively naive discussions of positive eugenics give way to social Darwinism in the crudest sense of survival of the fittest. In spite of lacking a detailed anthropological discussion, Cevat's discussion of Hittites dealt with the question of whether Turks were one of the Caucasian races and whether the Caucasian races originated from Central Asia. The similarity of Turks with the Hittite artefacts was striking: 'The lion-headed man published in this issue seems highly important to us. If one looks at this head carefully, it is impossible not to notice the Turkish nose.'⁷⁹ Ahmet Cevat then turned to the Sumerians, enthusiastically asking in the subtitle 'whether the nation that invented writing and used it in daily practices, saved humanity from primitivism, and advanced to high civilisation was the Turks.'⁸⁰ Hittites, Ahmet Cevat believed, inherited the Sumerian traditions and thus spread civilisation throughout history thanks to other ancient civilisations such as Babylonians, Assyrians, and Phoenicians. According to him, Anatolian Hittites were believed to be of the same race as Sumerians and Turks, and the similarity between Sumerians and Turks was their agglutinative languages. Though he admitted it did not constitute conclusive proof, he then described Sumerian civilisation and its significance.⁸¹ The anthropological and linguistic discussion of the origins of the Turkish race remained at a popular level. Since Ahmet Cevat was a linguist himself, his discussion of Sumerians dwelled on language similarities.⁸² The discourse he constructed culminated in his claim, based on the studies of the Society for the Research of Turkish History, that the cuneiform script of the Sumerians somehow developed into the old Turkic script.⁸³ In this context, Ahmet Cevat's articles were one of the cornerstones in the construction of the national and racial mythology that would rise rapidly in the late 1930s.⁸⁴



Figure . One of the Gudea's statues in Ahmet Cevat (Emre), 'Sümerlilerin Menşei,' *Muhit*, no. 36 (October, 1931).

The caption in Turkish is 'Gudea's statue. In Louvre Museum. Body of this statue has not been found. There is a scarf-like turban on his head. Despite the broken nose, it shows the characteristics of Central Asian Turks. There is nothing Sumerian here.'

- 37 The early Republican era was full of questions related to nation formation and it is apparent that these concerns drew significantly on (social) Darwinist principles. However, the period was not entirely 'hardcore' in terms of political aspects of social Darwinism. Instead, the encyclopaedianist movement, a legacy of earlier periods, was prominent in the popular press. The expansion of evolutionary theory and (social) Darwinism to the middle-class families of the Republic was one of the primary ends of the magazine *Muhit*. While relatively simple notions of Darwinism were presented to readers, the elites of the period were not entirely devoid of social Darwinist prejudices against the so-called unfit. *Muhit* did indeed entertain the notion of positive eugenics, but it did not exclude the victims of negative eugenics main priority of which was women and children. First of all, although the women of the Republic were formally emancipated, in practice their emancipation was restrained. In other words, the Kemalist discourse, while proposing modernisation reforms, heavily conflicted with the state of women and resorted to the social Darwinist notions in effect to materialise the 'ideal' women of the Republic; that is present and an equal in the public sphere and a qualified housewife in private sphere. Accordingly, both engagement and marriage were defined in terms of their material end of increasing productivity and ensuring the survival of the Turkish race. Secondly, children became the tools of the very same concerns.. The aim of bringing up a politically 'conscious' generation of youth both physically and morally for the emergent nation-state was enriched by a deep interest in biological explanations. The constant use of the word 'discipline' (*terbiye*) served to raise children not merely in terms of political but also of biological fitness.

- 38 The social Darwinist principles leading to negative eugenics was almost absent in the articles of *Muhit*. Since the essential question of the time was increasing population and not purifying degenerated elements, the absence is understandable. Even though it was the same period that witnessed a more negative stance toward the so-called unfit in other publications or policies, the explicit aspects of negative eugenics were only in a core form. That is, while expressing discontent regarding ‘unfit’ people, alcoholics, feebleminded schoolchildren, the insane, etc., the magazine focused on mainly on positive eugenics. Rather than an explicit hostile attitude towards lower classes, the period was mostly shaped by elites’ ideals of women and children, which they considered to be the most fundamental factors in the preservation of the race. Being a family magazine, *Muhit* de-emphasised the political aspects of social Darwinism and lacked biological sophistication. But its contribution to the social engineering of the day cannot be denied. The Republican elites believed in and furthered the (social) Darwinist ideas even in a comparatively naive family magazine. It was only from 1931 onwards that Turkish racism turned to explicit social Darwinism. These ideas were employed to establish the foundations of the emergent nation-state, and in this respect the magazine *Muhit* was no exception with its perpetual emphasis on women, children, and the racist anthropology of the 1930s.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Akın, Yiğit (2004) “*Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar*”: *Erken Cumhuriyet’te Beden Terbiyesi ve Spor*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Alemdaroğlu, Ayça (2005) ‘Politics of the Body and Eugenic Discourse in Early Republican Turkey,’ *Body & Society* 11 (3), pp. 61-76.
- (2006) ‘Eugenics, Modernity and Nationalism,’ in Turner, David; Stagg, Kevin (eds.) *Social Histories of Disability and Deformity*, London, Routledge, pp. 126-141.
- (2008), ‘Öjeni Düşüncesi,’ in Bora, Tanıl; Gültekingil, Murat (eds.) *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasî Düşünce*, vol.4: *Milliyetçilik*, İstanbul, İletişim [1st ed. 2002], pp. 414-426.
- Alkan, Mehmet Ö. (2009) ‘Osmanlı Darwinizmi,’ *Cogito* 60: *Darwin Devrimi: Evrim*, pp. 333-358.
- Arslan, Emre ‘Türkiye’de Irkçılık,’ in Bora, Tanıl; Gültekingil, Murat (eds.) *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasî Düşünce*, vol.4: *Milliyetçilik*, İstanbul, İletişim [1st ed. 2002], pp. 409-426.
- Atabay, Efe (2009) ‘Eugenics, Modernity and the Rationalization of Morality in Early Republican Turkey,’ Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University.
- Doğan, Atilla (2006) *Osmanlı Aydınları ve Sosyal Darwinizm*, İstanbul, Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.
- Duben Alan; Behar, Cem (1991) *Istanbul Households: Marriage, Family and Fertility 1880-1940*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Ergin, Murat (2008) ‘Biometrics and Anthropometrics: the Twins of Turkish Modernity,’ *Patterns of Prejudice* 42 (3), pp. 281-304.

- Ertan, Temuçin F. (1997) 'Ahmet Cevat Emre ve Kemalizm'de Öncü Bir Dergi: *Muhit*,' *Kebikeç* 5, pp. 17-34.
- Hanioğlu, M. Şükrü, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908*, New York, Oxford University Press.
- (2005) 'Blueprints for a Future Society: Late Ottoman Materialists on Science, Religion, and Art,' in Özdalga, Elisabeth (ed.), *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*, London, Routledge Curzon, pp. 27-116.
- (2006) *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Zihniyet, Siyaset ve Tarih*, İstanbul, Bağlam Yayıncılık.
- Jay Gould, Stephen (1996) *The Mismeasure of Man*, New York, Norton.
- Kevles, D.J. (1995) *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.
- Mishkova, Diana (ed.) (2009) *We, the People: Politics of National Peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*, Budapest and New York, Central European University Press.
- Öktem, Ülker (1992) 'Charles Darwin'in Evrim Kuramı'nın Tanzimattaki Etkileri,' *Araştırma Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Felsefe Bölümü Dergisi* 14, pp. 1-13.
- Öztan, G. Gürkan (2006), 'Türkiye'de Öjeni Düşüncesi ve Kadın,' *Toplum ve Bilim* 105, pp. 283-300.
- Salgırlı-Güvenç, Sanem (2009) 'Eugenics as Science of the Social: A Case from 1930s İstanbul,' Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York.
- Stack, David (2003) *The First Darwinian Left*, Cheltenham, New Clarion.
- Toprak, Zafer (1991) 'The Family, Feminism, and the State During the Young Turk Period, 1908-1918,' in Eldem, Edhem (ed.), *Premiere Rencontre Internationale sur L'Empire Ottoman et la Turquie Moderne*, İstanbul, ISIS, pp. 441-452.
- (2012) *Darwin'den Dersime: Cumhuriyet ve Antropoloji*, İstanbul, Doğan Kitap.
- Turda, Marius (2004) *The Idea of National Superiority In Central Europe, 1880-1918*, Lewiston, NY, The Edwin Mellen Press.
- Turda, Marius; Weindling, Paul J. (2007) 'Eugenics, Race and Nation in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900-1940: A Historiographic Overview,' in Turda, Marius; Weindling, Paul J. (eds.), *Blood and Homeland: Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900-1940*, Budapest and New York, Central European University Press, pp. 1-20.
- Ünder, Hasan (2008) 'Türkiye'de Sosyal Darwinizm Düşüncesi,' in Bora, Tanıl; Gültekingil, Murat (eds.) *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasî Düşünce*, vol.4: *Milliyetçilik*, İstanbul, İletişim [1st ed. 2002], pp. 427-437.
- Yalansız, Nedim (1998) '1930'lar Türkiye'sinde Demokrasi ve Kemalizm Tartışmaları,' *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları* 3 (8), pp. 25-48.

NOTES

1. In order to avoid confusion, 'social' will be in parentheses only when referring to social Darwinism in the context of *Muhit* where references to racist and elitist connotations of social Darwinism were implicit. In other general discussions there will be no parentheses at all. It should be also noted that the 'social' in parentheses does not indicate a variation between

Darwinism and social Darwinism but instead a positive eugenicist social Darwinism and a negative eugenicist one.

2. Although the Republican elites were preoccupied with these ideals, the primary concern of this study is (social) Darwinist and eugenic ideas among middle-class families. This distinction is essential, because if this 'limited' sphere is disregarded then writing the history of the early Republican period from a (social) Darwinist perspective loses one of its most important objects, families.

3. The term 'biological determinism' is used here in accordance with Gould's very important work *The Mismeasure of Man*. Focusing on the innate abilities of intelligence and avoiding eugenics, he nevertheless states the causes of the 'biological determinism' underlying the eugenics movement as well. Resurgences of biological determinism 'correlate with episodes of political retrenchment, particularly with campaigns for reduced government spending on social programs, or at times of fear among ruling elites, when disadvantaged groups sow serious social unrest or even threaten to usurp power.' For further details of biological determinism in terms of historical and current discussions, see Jay Gould 1996: 19-50 (the quote is on p. 28).

4. For attempts analysing Turkish modernisation on the basis of social Darwinist ideas, see Alemdaroğlu 2005, Ergin 2008.

5. Most of the scholarship on eugenics, both within and outside of Turkey, is confined to the works and ideas of intellectuals and their conflicts with each other. Writing the history of eugenics in this manner renders the very masses that these idealistic figures aimed to transform 'invisible.' Understanding eugenics through its ultimate end, society, avoids making society into the 'object' that it was in the eyes of eugenicist idealists. The need for revision seems evident. See Kevles 1995, Turda 2004. For the Ottoman Turkish contexts, see Doğan 2006; Atabay 2009; Salgırlı-Güvenç 2009.

6. For an introductory discussion on the impact of Charles Darwin and evolutionary theory on Ottoman intellectuals, see Öktem 1992.

7. For Ottoman materialists in general and Darwinists in particular prior to the Second Constitutional period, see Hanioğlu 2005; Doğan 2006: 147-203.

8. Ünder (2008: 428-9) sees the interest in social Darwinism as occurring in two fields, the intellectual and political. Social Darwinism was introduced in intellectual circles during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and intellectuals armed themselves with social Darwinism during the first decades of the twentieth century.

9. His articles 'What Would Be If Man Lived Alone?' and 'Man (The Emergence of Man on Earth)' go beyond most thinkers of the period in tackling these questions. Ahmet Midhat's 'Preface' in *Universe* is meticulously rich in terms of its distinct emphasis on natural history with overtones of materialism. Although the volume is a translation of the French work *L'Univers*, which deals with general world history, Midhat's preface underlines the tendency towards a materialistic standpoint of historiography with an emphasis on natural history on a global scale.

10. Zafer Toprak (1991: 442) adds that women and family were brought onto the agenda of the new regime during that period.

11. The interest Unionists had in materialism and social Darwinism was evident during the formation of the new nation state. Hanioğlu brilliantly shows the relation between the Unionists as empire savers who viewed the problem from the viewpoint of the state and their subsequent inclination towards authoritarian theories. For the influence of materialism and social Darwinism on Unionists, see Hanioğlu 2001 and 2006.

12. The differentiation in the political wings was almost absent in the Turkish eugenic discussions. While British as well as Soviet eugenicists were preoccupied with the 'political' aspects of the eugenic policies, Turkish eugenicists were not. For the discussion on parasitology as a link between the eugenics and the Left in Britain, see Stack 2003: 87-9.

13. For 'völkisch' nationalism utilising racial metaphors and Darwinist notions of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest in Central Europe, see Turda 2004: 23-7.
14. Instead of the crises of modernity, 'eugenic movements in Central and Southeast Europe reflected the aspirations of a segment of trained professionals dependent upon the state for funding and legitimacy, and whose main goal was strengthening of their newly created national states' (Turda and Weindling 2007: 7).
15. In this context, it is not surprising to see that discourses on Southeastern European countries underwent similar changes firstly in terms of emergence of national identities, and then of national superiority. For the 'long nineteenth century' shaping national identities to be followed later by national superiorities, see Mishkova 2009.
16. It is no coincidence that 'The primary spokesmen of eugenic discourse in Turkey were a group of medical doctors who had similar educations and political careers' (Alemdaroğlu 2006: 134). Accordingly, the case of the eugenicists in Central and Southeast Europe was no different.
17. On both sides of the Atlantic statistics on mental deficiency were strongly class-biased. The more wealthy families somehow escaped the statistics while-lower income groups were recorded. Thus, 'poverty could with ease be attributed to mental deficiency' (Kevles 1995: 131).
18. Considering the fact that most sections in *Muhit* concerning marriage and conservative gender roles was mostly translated from American magazines of the period, one can discern a common interest in transforming women in line with population concerns in the United States. See the next section.
19. In order not to lead to any confusion it should be added that the magazine that Ahmet Cevat started published had 'New' (*Yeni*) prior to its name. However for convenience we will refer simply to *Muhit* instead of *Yeni Muhit*. In a similar vein, Ahmet Cevat's surname, Emre, will be omitted for simplicity.
20. Temuçin F. Ertan (1997: 23) claims that *Muhit* rapidly evolved from being a magazine to a political and social review. Yet such discussions were almost entirely confined to the editorials of Ahmet Cevat. The subheading of the magazine 'Monthly Family Magazine' was replaced with 'Monthly Family and School Magazine' from September 1932 onwards.
21. Graduating from the Ottoman Military College (*Harbiye*), Ahmet Cevat (Emre) was among those officers of the Hamidian era who were discontent with the authoritarian regime. He was one of the officers exiled to Fezzan, Tripolitania. Following World War I, he became the assistant to Professor Giesse, a scholar of Ural-Altaic languages, and was admitted to Istanbul House of Liberal Arts (*Dârülfünûn*). Two years later Ahmet Cevat was in Baku in order to participate in the Language Committee studies. He then established close relationships with communists. Having met Mustafa Kemal only in 1928 and then become a member of the Alphabet Commission, Ahmet Cevat became a very prominent figure in the construction of Kemalist ideology in the early 1930s. He is believed to be one of the first to utilise the term 'Kemalist.' For brief information on him, see Ertan 1997; Yalansız 1998.
22. Ahmet Cevat (Emre), '*Muhit* Ne İçin İntişar Ediyor?', *Muhit*, no. 1 (November 1928): 1. All translations from the magazine are mine.
23. Charles Darwin was one of these 'Famous Men.' 'Meşhur Adamlar: Charles Darwin,' *Muhit*, no. 3 (January 1929): 172.
24. Ertan (1997: 25) rightly states that *Muhit* was not merely interested in the hot topics of the day, but also contributed to the systemisation and consolidation of the Kemalist ideology
25. Furthermore he regarded Herbert Spencer as the founder of positivism and evolutionary philosophy: Ahmet Cevat Emre, *İki Neslin Tarihi* (Istanbul: Hilmi Kitabevi, 1960), p. 77. In the same vein, his flirtation with Communism was short-lived. His interest in socialist ideas was close to evolutionary socialism rather than revolutionary socialism (Ertan 1997: 22).

26. Ahmet Cevat described human evolution giving examples of *homo erectus: pithecanthropus erectus* (the Jawa Man), *homo heidelbergensis* ('Heidelberg Man'), and *Homo neanderthalensis*. Ahmet Cevat (Emre), 'Beşeriyetin Sergüzeşti,' *Muhit*, no. 3 (January 1929).

27. 'Beşeriyetin Sergüzeşti İnsanla Maymun Arasındaki Akrabalık,' *Muhit*, no. 4 (February 1929): 277-8. Even though this article lacks author information as well as other references, it is probably a continuation of the article in the previous issue (see above).

28. *Muhit* was, in a sense, a pioneer in popularising materialism, particularly Darwinism. In an attempt to challenge religious views and make room for emergent Turkish nationalism in history, a four-volume history book influenced by Darwinist principles was published in 1931 by the Society for Research of Turkish History (renamed the Turkish Historical Society in 1932). While the volumes were intended to be high school textbooks, textbooks based on the volume were published from 1933 onwards for primary and elementary schools (Toprak 2012: 362-67).

29. 'İnsana Benzeyen Yeni Bir Maymun,' *Muhit*, no. 8 (June 1929). The article was published by courtesy of Scherl's *Magazin* and *Illustration*.

30. Being a racist and anti-Semitist, Montandon evidently assembled the hoax on the basis of racist ideas about the origins of the man. Montandon used the hoax to support his view that human races evolved from different primates. While the white race evolved from *Homo sapiens*, the primate François de Loys found in 1920 served to argue that native American people had evolved from that primate. The article in the magazine made no references to François De Loys. Isabelle Girod and Pierre Cenlivres, 'George Montandon et le grand singe américain. L'invention de l'Ameranthropoides loysi,' *Gradhiva*, no. 24 (January 1999).

31. Popular science articles on human evolution and population continued to appear until the end of the magazine. Translated articles dealing with creation of mankind, creatures acting like humans, anthropoids, and inherited similarities served to popularise the materialist/Darwinist discourse that the Kemalist regime attempted to spread. See, 'İnsan Gibi Hareket Eden Mahlûklar,' *Muhit*, no. 40 (February 1932); 'İnsanımsı Maymunların İnsan Oluşu,' *Muhit*, no. 41 (March 1932); 'Miras Alınan Benzeyişler - İrk ve cinsiyet meselesinin îzahı,' *Muhit*, no. 42 (April 1932); 'Nüfus ve Hayat Meselesi - Medeni Dünyada İnsanın Vasati Ömrü Uzuyor,' *Muhit*, no. 42 (April 1932). In a similar vein, the origins of mankind in apes were demonstrated by Ilya Ilyich Mechnikov, a Russian microbiologist who was awarded a Nobel prize. 'Bir Fen Adamının Nikbin Felsefesi,' *Muhit*, no. 18 (April 1930). 'Haşarat ve İnsanlar,' *Muhit*, no. 19 (May 1930).

32. The magazine's translation portfolio was quite rich. Most articles on science, health, and beauty were translations. The repeated emphasis on motherhood and womanhood was thus part of a more global trend. The translated articles come from various magazines, including American ones such as *Woman's Pictorial Review*, *Home Companion*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Good Housekeeping*, *The House Beautiful*, *American Magazine*, *Graphic*, *Reader's Digest*, *Sphere*, *Child's Magazine*, *The World Tomorrow*, *Wide World*, *World's Work Parents' Magazine* *Modern Priscilla*, *Atlantic Monthly* and French ones such as *La Femme de France*, *Lectures pour Tous*, *Le Miroir du Monde*, *Je Sais Tout*, *Science et la Vie*, *L'art Vivant*, *L'illustration*, *Lisez moi Bleu*. The translations from German were confined however to only a few magazines, namely *Scherl's Magazin*, *Uhu*, and *Das Magazin*.

33. Also marriages were covered as much as motherhood. The articles in the fourth issue elucidate this case. The headings were, 'Successful Marriages,' 'Parents Successful in Disciplining Children,' and 'What do you complain about in your marriage life?' Articles about marriage might have been intended to influence the marriages of the Republican families against the impact of the 'American' culture of the period. 'Muvaffak Olmuş İzdivaçlar,' 'Evlat Terbiyesinde Muvaffakiyetli Anababalar,' 'Evlilik Hayatında şikayet Ettiğiniz şey Nedir?,' *Muhit*, no. 4 (February 1929).

34. Kathleen Norris, 'Anne Olmak Bahtiyarlığı,' *Muhit*, no. 6 (April 1929). The quotation is on pp. 408-9. Tributes to motherhood were not confined to the conservative American discourse of the

period. 'Becoming a good mother,' stated Tunakan in 1938, 'and raising fit children should be the greatest pride for a young girl' (quoted in Öztan 2006: 275).

35. The Turkish word *terbiye* is very difficult to translate into English. The original phrase is *çocuk terbiyesi* and what Cevat meant is to a certain extent related to pedagogy, but his discussion goes beyond the scope of that discipline. In this article we will translate this word – the meanings of which cover upbringing, training, educating, maintenance, teaching manners, correction, punishment, culture, good manners, decency, proper way of conduct, socialization, and discipline – as 'discipline.' See 2005: 74 n. 1.

36. Ahmet Cevat (Emre), 'Çocuk Asrı,' *Muhit*, no. 6 (April 1929): 401. The subheading of the editorial was 'The Ideal of the Overman – The Need to Create Creative Minds.' Although Ahmet Cevat did not explicitly acknowledge the Nietzschean term, the latter issues thanks to an author's reference to Ahmet Cevat on this notion, shows that the term is used regardless of references to Nietzsche.

37. The original statement is as follows: 'Köylü ve şehirli, aristokrat ve burjuva, [sic] ve burjuva ve proleter - proleter ve serseri bu sınıflar arasında ne derin farklar var. Bedence ve dimağca farklar!' Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. The original author was a female doctor named 'Zelheym' in Turkish. İhsan Hadi, 'Nişanlılık Nedir? Ve Uzun Sürmeli midir?,' *Muhit*, no. 8 (June 1929).

40. By legal deficiencies Nadi meant the absence of legal provisions protecting husband and wife. For instance, the author was discontent that there was not legal protection for a woman who divorced her husbands but was transmitted syphilis or gave birth to children by an epileptic and drunk husband. Young people', as the author indicates is in line with the ideas of Havelock Ellis. For a brief discussion on this British intellectual see Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity*: 85-92. For the postulates of evolutionary thought on sex, one of the major topics in which Ellis was profoundly interested, see Stack, *The First Darwinian Left*: 58-60.

41. Hadi, 'Nişanlılık Nedir? Ve Uzun Sürmeli midir?,' 617.

42. The original statement is 'Nişanlılar serbestçe buluşabilirler; fakat nişanlı kız, müstakbel zevcine karşı göstereceği temayül ve aşkın derecesini bilmeli; genç erkek de kadın faziletinin kudsiyetini ihlâl edecek herhangi bir taşkınlıktan sakınmalıdır. Çünkü bu esnada atılmış yanlış adımların cezası ileride pek ağır çekilmektedir. Yağni [sic.] eğer kız, erkeğin ancak hakkı zevciyetle tesahup edebileceği şeylere karşı nişanlı iken lakayt kalmışsa genç erkek nişanlısına olan bütün hürmeti kaybeder. Veyahut evlendikten sonar bunu hissettirir.' Ibid.

43. This concern was to solidify in the 1930s and early 1940s. For a section called 'Why do they not Marry?' ('Niçin Evlenmezler?'), see Sadi Irmak, 'Kemmiyet ve Keyfiyet Bakımından Nüfus ve Sağlık Meseleleri' in *Kendimize Doğru Memleketimizin Bazı Meseleleri* (Istanbul: Foto Magazin Basımevi, 1943), 61-67.

44. The publication of an interview with Besim Ömer (Akalin) in the magazine was thus not surprising. 'Besim Ömer Paşa - 44 Senelik bir Profesörümüz,' *Muhit*, no. 12 (October 1929).

45. According to Gökalpian thinking, the idea of the nuclear, family, which was based on egalitarian principles and upheld the components of national morality, was important since it constituted the cell of the social organism and the building-block of the nation state in a Durkheimian sense. Toprak, 'The Family, Feminism, and the State During the Young Turk Period, 1908-1918,' p. 444. According to Duben and Behar, the ideal family here was an extension of Gökalpian thinking, which urged adapting European elements while maintaining the basic elements of the Turks' own culture in which the family was a local cultural element (Duben and Behar 1991: 211-13).

46. 'Muaşeret Adabı,' *Muhit*, no. 8 (June 1929). The article, enhanced by illustrations, was taken *Scherl's Magazin*.

47. 'Ev Eczahanesi,' *Muhit*, no. 8 (June 1929).

48. Alemdaroğlu (2006: 138) argues that Turkish eugenicists' ideas on women echoed the German eugenic policies, and states that 'the majority of women were still expected to contribute to modernisation by being good mothers and housewives.'

49. This 'double discourse' was not entirely confined to population concerns. 'The nationalist discourse still imposed on women the duty of enlightened motherhood and 'rationalized' housekeeping, which provided the ultimate justification for their education' (Alemdaroğlu 2005: 66).

50. 'Besim Ömer Paşa - 44 Senelik bir Profesörümüz,' p. 893. In fact both methods were simultaneously employed during the first decades of the Republic.

51. The statement in Turkish is: 'Bugün her iklimin [sic.] semeresi, her sanatın mahsulü, her toprağın sermayesi gencin ayağı altındadır. İşte bütün bunlardan istifade ancak kuvvette, kuvvet ise sıhhattadır [sic.]. Burada meşhur İngiliz Filozofu Spenser in [sic.] "Her şeyden evvel iyi bir hayvan olunuz" cümlesini tekrar ve buna "Türk gibi kavi olunuz" darbı meselini ilâve etmek isterim.' Ibid.

52. Ibid., 893. The quotation in Turkish is: 'Cumhuriyet hükûmeti, artık, evlâtları arasında kanbur, cılız, zayıf, budala, ahmak görmek istemez. Çocuklarımız kavi, zinde, zeki olmalıdır. Memleketin istikbali, Cumhuriyetimizin bakası kavi Türk omuzlarında olmalıdır.'

53. For thin people, *semirmek*, gaining weight in a healthy way, was a must for becoming fit. Selim Sırrı (Tarcan), 'Zayıflar Nasıl Kuvvetlenir?,' *Muhit*, no. 5 (March 1930).

54. The emphasis on the physical education of youth would reach a peak in the late 1930s following the enforcement of the Law for Physical Education in 1938. With that regulation, sports was no longer seen simply as a means for health and beauty, as Selim Sırrı did in the account above, but as a method to create a militarized society. See Akın 2004: 87-121.

55. Ahmet Cevat (Emre), 'Çocuk Meselesi,' *Muhit*, no. 31 (May 1931): 1. The Population question was to persist until the late 1930s. For a similar discussion, see Saraç Ömer Celal, 'Avrupanın ve Türkiyenin Nüfus Meseleleri,' in *C.H.P. Konferanslar Serisi 9* (Ankara: Recep Uluoğlu Basımevi, 1939), pp. 51-68.

56. [...] German and American women are very skilled in the art of motherhood. Generally, European women's childcare skills are higher than ours. In our country, only the girls who graduate from high schools and colleges have been prepared to a certain extent to become good babysitters and mothers, yet even if we assumed that all of them receive an ideal motherhood training, their numbers are limited.' Ahmet Cevat (Emre), 'Çocuk Meselesi,' 1. It is apparent that the class that was meant to increase was that of the educated, notwithstanding its limited size. In a similar vein, this statement underlies Ahmet Cevat's discontent with this minority's low marriage frequency.

57. Ibid., p. 3. The totalitarian shift associated with children's education and morality was on the rise in the 1930s. As with physical education, the Kemalist regime envisioned a child morality in organic solidarity with the nation. For such authoritarian developments in the field of physical education, see Akın 2004: 142-90.

58. Although the idea of increasing the peasant masses seems at odds with eugenicist thought, Fahreddin Kerim Gökay's remark is in line with the fundamentals of pro-natalist policies. From the viewpoint of eugenic principles, protecting genetic material from extinction and degeneration required a population increase. The emphasis on peasants may also have been due to their relatively pristine genetic material. For a discussion of the survival of the species see Fahrettin Kerim Gökay, 'İrk Hıfzısıhhasında İrsiyetin Rolü ve Nesli Tereddiden Korumak Çareleri,' in *C.H.P. Konferanslar Serisi 12* (Ankara: Recep Uluoğlu Basımevi, 1940), 11.

59. Ahmet Cevat (Emre), 'Köylüye Biraz Refah Vermek için Küçük Tedbirler,' *Muhit*, no. 15 (January 1930): 1121.

60. The quotation in Turkish is 'Köylünün en fakir tabakaları devlete o cûz'i vergiyi verebilmek için kendi yiyeceği ve çocuğuna yedireceği gıdayı pazara götürü satmak, bâzan bu da kifayet etmiyerek [sic.] şehre geli hammallık, uşaklık, ırgatlık etmek mecburiyetindedir. Köylünün en fakir kısımları

doyasıya ekmek bulamıyor, çocuğuna süt veremiyor, yumurta yediremiyor. Millet in cüssessini teşkileden [sic.] köylü kütlelerinden bu elim vaziyeti Irkın Fisiolojik sefaletten kurtulamamasına, nüfusun artmamasına en müessir amillerdir. Köylüye istenildiği kadar çocuğa nasıl bakılacağını, sıtmadan veya veremden nasıl korunacağını öğretmek için büyük masraflarla teşkilatlar vücuda getirilsin... analar memeden kestikleri yavrularını besliyemedikten [sic.] sonar hepsi nafiyledir. Ibid., 1122. Original emphasis.

61. Selim Sırrı (Tarcan), 'Güzel ve Güzellik,' *Muhit*, no. 17 (March 1930): 1302-03. The Turkish word *hıfzısıhha* is translated here as 'general health' despite its frequent translation as hygiene. Apparently the meanings that Selim Sırrı gives go beyond mere hygiene measures.

62. The 43rd issue groups these kinds of articles under the heading 'Knowledge and Science.' This heading does not occur again, except the 46th issue, which has the headings 'Scientific Discussions' and 'Scientific Pages'.

63. (Social) Darwinist principles were not common, but there was a certain degree of Lamarckian arguments. As İsmail Hakkı argued, 'Therefore what determines the future is not heredity. It has been argued that children sometimes inherit a strong tendency towards particular acts such as suicide, murder, theft or abuse.' İsmail Hakkı (Tonguç), 'Tekamül Vetiresi ve Pedagoji,' *Yeni Türk Mecmuası*, no. 4 (January 1933).

64. İsmail Hakkı (Baltacıoğlu) wrote six episodes on the issue between July 1935 and September 1935. For the first article of the episode see İsmail Hakkı (Baltacıoğlu), 'Gençlik için Büyük Tehlikeler Var mıdır?,' *Yeni Adam*, no. 79 (July 4, 1935): 10.

65. Nevzat Mahmut, 'Anormal Mektepçocukları,' *Muhit*, no. 6 (April 1929).

66. The article was quite contradictory. On the one hand, Nevzat Mahmut appraised the developments in pedagogy that bridged the gap between methods aimed at normal and abnormal children, and thus relegated differences to a minor importance. On the other hand he proposed separate schools for the abnormal who, he believed, deserved to lead the happy childhood that they would not otherwise have. The Turkish reads: 'Taliin yüzçevirdiği [sic] bu yavruları çocukluklarında olsun biraz bahtiyar etmek, hayatta bulamiyacıkları [sic] saadetten biraz olsun tattırmak insanî bir vazife değil midir?' Ibid., p. 439.

67. İhsan Şükri (Aksel), 'Deliliğin Sebepleri,' *Muhit*, no. 18 (April 1930): 1382.

68. Ibid.

69. Fahrettin Kerim (Gökay), 'Mekteplerde Çocukları Sınıfta Bırakan Sıhhi Sebepler Nedir?,' *Muhit*, no. 19 (May 1930): 19, 79.

70. Ibid., 19.

71. Mebrure Hurşit (Alevok), 'Etfal Hastanesinde ve Darülacezede Gördüklerim,' *Muhit*, no. 31 (May 1931): 10-12.

72. 'Evlenmeden - Evlenmenin Bütün şartı: Sağlamlıktır,' *Muhit*, no. 33 (July 1931): 58-9.

73. Adnan Naci described 'psychopathic' children as children 'who are very fit in terms of intellect but lacking in morals. In other words, they are the kids who started stealing when very young, made a habit of lying, absconded from school.' Adnan Naci, 'İzmir Sağır Dilsizler ve Körler Mektebinde Gördüklerim,' *Muhit*, no. 35 (September 1931): 17. There were 65 students in total and five of them, who were classified as 'stupid,' attended an experimental class along with ten blind children. 'Stupid' here refers to 'aptal' in Turkish.

74. Emphasis added. 'Stupidity' appears indeterminate even in a school specialised for the 'stupid.' Ibid., 18. The School also focused on the hereditary 'stupidity.' For further information on this school, see Necati Kemal (Kip), 'Sağır, Dilsiz, körler ve aptalları ihtiva eden Anormal çocuklar müessesesinin onuncu yıl dönümü,' in *Sıhhat Almanakı* (ed.), *Mazhar Osman* (Istanbul: Kader Matbaası, 1933). The requirement of being Turkish and the consequent acceleration of racism was evident in the 1930s. In addition to this school, the Mineral Research and Exploration Institute, Military Colleges and War Academies indicated 'being of Turkish race' as one of their admission prerequisites (Arslan 2008: 410).

75. 'Sokak Çocuklarını Cinayetlerden Kurtarmak için Çocuk Mahkemeleri ve Kurtarış Tecrübeleri,' *Muhit*, no. 37 (November 1931).
76. 'Hırsızların Cerrah Neşteriyle Tedavisi,' *Muhit*, no. 26 (December 1930): 34-37. As the article pointed out, the most important spot was believed to be the thyroid gland.
77. M. Remzi Turan, 'Veremin Sirayeti,' *Muhit*, no. 37 (November 1931).
78. At the first congress held by the Society for Research on Turkish Society, a couple years before the formation of the Turkish Historical Thesis and the Sun Language Theory, there were two hypotheses awaiting evidence. The first was that Turkish was the first mother language of all the world's languages, and the second one was the hypothesis that Turks were representatives of the Arian race that created civilisation (Arslan 2008: 412).
79. 'Hititlerin San'atından Birkaç Numune,' *Muhit*, no. 27 (January 1931): p. 56.
80. His response was 'perhaps.' Ahmet Cevat (Emre), 'Sümerliler ve Medeniyete Hizmetleri,' *Muhit*, no. 35 (September 1931): p. 3.
81. A pseudo-scientific proof came in the next issue. Basing himself on archaeological remnants of the Sumerians, Ahmet Cevat argued that Sumerians were of a white race instead of the Semitic race. The justification was that 'the statutes and reliefs show them [Sumerians] as a beautiful white race. Even though Semitic races were represented with sharp and long beards, Sumerians are mostly without beards.' Ahmet Cevat (Emre), 'Sümerlilerin Menşei,' *Muhit*, no. 36 (October, 1931): p. 5.
82. Ahmet Cevat (Emre), 'Sümerlilerin Lisani,' *Muhit*, no. 37 (November, 1931); Ahmet Cevat (Emre), 'Sümerlilerin Lisani,' *Muhit*, no. 38 (December, 1931); Ahmet Cevat (Emre), 'Sümerlilerin Lisani,' *Muhit*, no. 39 (January, 1932). Although Ahmet Cevat indicated that the discussion would continue, there was no continuation. Ahmet Cevat called Mohenjo-daro, an ancient archaeological site discovered in Baluchistan in 1922, the 'sister' of Sumerian civilisation. More importantly, he stated that 'it was discovered that the pictographs, which were not decrypted then, had a very close relationship with the Sumerian civilisation, also known as the first Turkish civilisation.' Ahmet Cevat (Emre), 'Hindistan Mesopotamyası,' *Muhit*, no. 42 (April 1932): p. 17.
83. Ahmet Cevat (Emre), 'En Eski Türk Yazısının Tarihi - 1,' *Muhit*, no. 52 (February 1933). Not only was the Sumerian language incorporated into the mythic Turkish past, the Sumerians themselves became 'Sumerian Turks.' Ahmet Cevat (Emre), 'En Eski Türk Yazısının Tarihi - 2,' *Muhit*, no. 53 (March 1933).
84. Ahmet Cevat's articles on (social) Darwinism were last articles of *Muhit* before publication ceased in May 1933, after the 55th issue. It is probable that Ahmet Cevat no longer had time to administer it, as his title on the back page of the magazine, 'franchise owner,' was followed by 'Deputy of Çanakkale' in March 1933. Ertan claims that Ahmet Cevat withdrew from political discourse since the consolidation of the single-party regime meant that it no longer needed such legitimisation (Ertan 1997: 34).

ABSTRACTS

The impact of Darwinism on the formation of modern Turkish state is indisputable. Social Darwinist theories were employed to consolidate a homogenous Turkish entity in early Republican Turkey, and were promoted not just within political spheres, but also in popular culture. Against this background, this paper analyses the role of social Darwinism in an

illustrated monthly family magazine, *Muhit*. The magazine included sections on literature, popular science, and tips on housekeeping. Ahmet Cevat (Emre), who wrote the editorials of the magazine, paid special attention to the Kemalist agenda of the day. While popularising science in general and social Darwinism in particular, *Muhit* also included sections that were meant to shape the children and women of the Republic in line with Darwinist concerns. Kemalist conservative ideals with respect to the gender roles of women were thus reproduced through a stress on the idea of marriage and raising up healthy children. Although such articles were mostly translations from Western magazines, *Muhit* still served the Kemalist ideology of creating modern women with traditional roles at home and fit and healthy children for the future of the Republic. From 1931 onwards *Muhit* shifted from pro-natalist discussions of social Darwinism to a full-fledged racist social Darwinism. The five-year-publication life of the magazine was in that sense an important witness to the change in the Kemalist ideology.

INDEX

Keywords: social Darwinism, Kemalism, Turkey, *Muhit* magazine, family policies, racism, eugenism, gender, reproduction

AUTHOR

UĞUR BAHADIR BAYRAKTAR

Boğaziçi University, Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History