YOUNG TURK REVOLUTION

The Young Turk Revolution refers to the events that occurred in 1908 under the initiative of the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) and carried out in Macedonia by young Ottoman army officers, who restored the constitution shelved in 1878 by the sultan Abdülhamit II. (There remains some disagreement about describing these events as a “revolution.”) The uprising led to elections and a reconvening of the parliament, which the committee hoped would enable the survival of the Ottoman Empire against rival imperial powers (Britain, France, Germany, Austro-Hungary, and Russia). The CUP, initially a secret society that became a political organization, did not overthrow the sultan at first, preferring to rule behind the scenes. The uprising can be considered a continuation of the constitutionalist movements of the nineteenth century, but it also heralded changes to socio-political life, such as the rise of a new elite, the increasing involvement of the army in government, and the emergence of party politics. The revolution was enthusiastically received for a time, and a vibrant socio-political life emerged with the dismantling of many of Abdülhamit’s authoritarian policies. However, the Committee’s increasingly authoritarian and later nationalist stance spurred opposition, resulting in new rebellions.

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