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POLAT SAFI

The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP, *İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) was a heterogenic mass party that established subsidiary organizations in an effort to extend its own reach and influence. The Special Organization (SO, *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*) was one of the most important products of this endeavour. The SO emerged primarily out of the experience of the CUP in the Tripolitanian and Balkan wars. As an early type of unconventional warfare organization, the SO, which officially existed from 13 November 1913 to 30 October 1918,¹ had no precedent in Ottoman history. Its operations included the recruitment, training, and supervision of armed groups tasked with conducting asymmetric warfare to weaken enemy morale and fighting strength. The SO also engaged in small-scale intelligence activity aimed both at strengthening solidarity among Muslims and revealing internal and external threats to Ottoman interests.

Despite its importance to Ottoman history and the breakthroughs that have taken place in other branches of Ottoman historiography, little progress has been made on the subject of the SO over the past few decades. This state of affairs is largely the result of four related factors: the weakness of early studies on the SO, the weight that these studies still carry in contemporary scholarship, the post-Cold War ideological polarization that has taken place in Turkey, and the fact that current research on the subject is ineffective in contributing to a more mature understanding of the organization.

The formative period in SO studies ran from the 1960s through the 1980s, and was dominated by a handful of scholars. Their work was plagued by serious methodological flaws, but later scholars have by and large accepted their conclusions wholesale. This, in turn, has led to a distorted conception of the organization in the scholarship. Additionally, the fact that the SO was formed and carried out its operations during the politically charged period from the final years of the Ottoman Empire and the formation of the Republic of Turkey has left the organization inextricably linked to contemporary political debates. The role of the SO in the Armenian question, its anti-imperialist activities during the First World War, and its debated status as a forerunner to the Turkish ‘deep state’ have all left the organization mired in the quagmire of ideological divide that formed in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union between the old Kemalist establishment and its liberal critics, as both sides began to stake out their positions on the question of the

foundation of modern Turkey. This ideological polarization has pushed historical romanticism to the fore at the expense of impartial historical inquiry, with the result that the history of the SO has become tied up with debates on current affairs. As the divide between the two main ideological camps in Turkey crystallized over the past two decades, it has become more and more difficult for third parties to make their voices heard and for new, impartial scholarship on the SO to come to light.

The political morass that hinders research in the field is not totally to blame for this. Aside from a few exceptional works, relatively impartial studies emerging since the 1990s have added very little in the way of new analysis to discussions of the SO, and are marred by confusing, vague, and irregular sets of assumptions regarding the organization. It is thus not surprising that central theoretical issues in the field continue to be marked by a great degree of contention and ambiguity.

Research on the late Ottoman and early Republican eras is ill served by such shoddy scholarship, as studies pass over methodological depth and the critical use of sources in favour of polemic and historical revisionism. The fact that no comprehensive review of the literature on the SO has been written since 1963, however, does not make the task of rectifying the deplorable situation of SO scholarship an easy one. As an initial step toward arriving at a more objective view of the SO, then, it is essential to examine the literature more closely so as to both better understand the difficulties inherent to research in the field and invite experts to approach the subject from a perspective free of the baggage that has so long weighed it down. That is the aim of this study.

This article will begin by examining the formative period of SO studies from the 1960s to the 1980s. It will then move on to an account of the impact of the ideologically motivated debates that emerged after the end of Cold War. Thirdly, the position of the relatively impartial scholarly studies that have emerged from the 1990s onwards will be discussed. The final two sections are devoted to a critical evaluation of memoirs and archival sources relating to the SO.

The SO has long been the subject of immense public interest in Turkey, particularly from the early 1960s onward; its political–military dimensions and legitimacy have excited many columnists and experts. For many years, and perhaps still, the SO has been depicted as some sort of superhuman power, the product of deep and unspecified forces. Despite the enigmatic lure of the topic, the concrete and theoretical problems that arise in the examination of the SO appear to have come to outweigh its appeal. Historians have been more attracted to the major strategic decisions of the Ottoman ruling class leading to the eventual disintegration of the empire than they have to subjects of secondary importance like the SO. This lack of scrutiny has created a moat of confidentiality around the subject, which stands as one of the most significant obstacles against any sound assessment of the SO. This historiographical vacuum has also paved the way for a myriad of speculations and aesthetic and ethical concerns to dominate historical analysis of the subject. Aside from studies by Tarık Zafer Tunaya and Stanford Shaw,² the absence of the SO in standard histories of the First World War and general works on the late Ottoman Empire is essentially a reflection of this obstacle in the literature.

On the other hand, this neglect is also the natural product of extremely limited access – or none at all – to the relevant Turkish archives until the early 1990s, when a

period of relative openness began. Difficulty in accessing the archives also contributed to the scarcity of such topics as the unconventional warfare, special forces and intelligence services in historical narratives and analyses, thus contributing directly to the limited level of knowledge concerning the SO. The undisputed status of Philip H. Stoddard's PhD dissertation,³ submitted to Princeton University 47 years ago, stands as an excellent example of scholars' inattention to the field. For years researchers have treated Stoddard's thesis as some sort of treasure, plunging into its depths and returning with new materials. Stoddard's thesis was only translated into Turkish 30 years after it was originally written,⁴ and it is still not published in English.

Stoddard's discussion of the SO within the context of Arab separatism and Western imperialism is worthy of attention. He wrote his dissertation in the aftermath of the Second World War, at a time when orientalism was taking hold in the American academia and was being reshaped according to the dictates of the new global political reality of the Cold War. It was probably as a result of orientalism's impact in academia that Stoddard preferred to focus on the relation between the SO and Arabs in the Middle East and North Africa rather than its activities in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Anatolia.

Yet Stoddard's study was more than an area study pointing out the activities of the SO in various Arabic-speaking regions like Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and Libya. The limited information he had about these regions forced him to employ a more holistic approach, focusing not only on the actions of the SO itself but also on the ideological and political motivations out of which these actions sprang. Although Stoddard qualified his dissertation as a 'preliminary study', recognizing that any study of the SO could only be a modest effort, later experts seeking to capture the secrets of this mysterious organization have transformed Stoddard's findings into indisputable facts.

Despite Stoddard's role in constructing the paradigm through which later experts have treated the SO, pseudo-journalistic studies in subsequent decades came to form a separate tradition that has increased in popularity since the 1990s. Especially noteworthy in this regard are studies by Cemal Kutay,⁵ who had access to the personal archive of Eşref Kuşçubaşı (a 'hero' of the SO), and Ergun Hiçyılmaz.⁶ These studies popularized the SO by presenting it in an eye-catching and easily digestible form, and have led to the emergence of an alternative paradigm that seems to enjoy as much acceptance among experts as does Stoddard's work. Despite the shaky foundations of this alternative paradigm, it is often used as basic source material without any analytical scrutiny.

The emergence of this alternative paradigm is alarming for a number of reasons. This distorted conception of the SO has begun to find adherents in the academic world. The fact that so many historians lend their approval to such popular studies leads to more of them being written, and this in turn makes it more difficult for proper historical studies to make their voices heard. Historians' work goes unnoticed as popular studies multiply. As genuine histories on the subject become rarer or harder to find, the hallmarks of popular history – the careless use of sources, the uncritical acceptance of analysis contained in memoirs, the indiscriminate and opportunistic presentation of facts supporting one's argument without discussion of conflicting information, and the use of anonymous sources – become more widespread.

The winds of liberalization blowing through Turkey and the rest of the world after the Cold War, on the other hand, have had a stimulating effect on SO studies. Politics in Turkey has come to question the historical stages through which the country has passed and what course it should take in the future. Both liberal and Islamist critiques of official Kemalist ideology are advanced on the basis of a transformation of historical understanding, or at least the presentation of alternative historical theses. The threat these different understandings of history poses to the Kemalist establishment, coupled with the failure of Turkish historians to maintain a reasonable degree of scholarly detachment, has led to the politicization of any discussion of recent history.

Within the context of this ideologically charged atmosphere and constant worries as to the 'survival' of the Turkish Republic, populism and vitriol abound in public debate, and discussions of history are inevitably swept up into heated debates on current issues. One of the historical dimensions of such debates, moreover, is directly related to the role of secret services in the Ottoman decision-making process and military operations during the late Ottoman period. In this context, the SO, with all of its mystery, has taken its place at the centre of these debates.⁷ Had the SO been a harmless bureaucracy, one might have come across a different picture. Nevertheless, the fact that the SO was part of a tumultuous and pivotal period of Turkey's past makes it impossible to separate the subject from the ideological and political concerns of Turkey's present.⁸

The most significant problem here is that narratives of the SO have assumed an ahistorical character, denying any shades of grey. This is true both of official histories, long regarded as holy and brooking little criticism, and of alternative narratives that have emerged attempting to cast Turkish history in a different light. These anti-pluralistic views bring with them one-dimensional historical narratives, historical drama better suited to a novel than a history book. This tension is most clearly visible in the theses that have sprung up concerning the relation of the SO to the forcible relocation of the Armenians (and also deep state and band warfare in this context) and anti-imperialism. These have not only exacerbated conflicting views on these subjects, but have served to ossify and polarize these conflicting positions. Unobtrusive contrary positions that first emerged in the 1990s had by the 2000s crystallized and merged into unified fronts.

On the one hand there is the argument, advanced by those who believe that the Armenian relocations constituted genocide, that the SO was a central actor in the events in question. Support for this thesis, mainly developed by Vahakn N. Dadrian,⁹ among liberal-left circles in Turkey merits attention, especially when one takes into account the great lengths Turkish leftists are willing to go to avoid siding with nationalists.¹⁰ Dadrian's thesis, though rich in evidence with regard to the description of the SO and its role, is noticeably inspired by the Armenian nationalist discourse and often assumes the character of a propaganda text; it also commits a serious methodological error by omitting the activities of the SO abroad.

On the other hand there is the argument, advanced by many opponents of the genocide thesis, that the SO was an anti-imperialist revolutionary organization. This approach mainly developed around the National Revolutionary Development programme of Doğan Avcıoğlu, who was also close to the understanding of National Democratic Revolution aimed at liberating Turkey from capitalism and

imperialism.¹¹ This conception has led to the emergence of a historical discourse based on an interpretation that regards the ‘dissolution’ of the Ottoman social order up to the ‘Kemalist Revolution’ as a process of colonization, and subsequent efforts as a struggle for the independence of Turkey. It is likely that such efforts directed toward the abolition of foreign dependence (especially in the economic field) laid the groundwork for his focus on the SO’s activities in fields subjugated by the chief imperial power of the period, Britain.¹² Just as the followers of Dadrian avoid questioning their own theory, followers of Avcioğlu do not harbour any doubts about their theory’s applicability to the subject of the SO, and accordingly do not have any misgivings about ignoring its domestic activities.

These two diametrically opposed and reductionist approaches are examples of the methodological pitfalls entailed when approaching the SO with political motivation in tow. Both approaches oversimplify and overgeneralize the nature of the SO and its activities. Such characterizations of the SO require further justification, which would inevitably involve questions like whether the activities alleged to have happened in the colonies of the Entente powers or against the Armenians were really the key or only components of the SO. The elaborate and complex nature of the SO cannot be understood in isolation from its administrative and operational experiences both within the boundaries of Anatolia and in other areas where Entente powers were effective. As a matter of fact, the dossiers maintained by the Translation and Composition Branch (*Tercüme ve Telif Şubesi*) of the successor of the SO, the Office for Eastern Affairs (OEA, *Umur-i Şarkiye Dairesi*), indicates that the SO conducted activities in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Tripoli, Egypt, Iran, Baluchistan, India, Afghanistan, Bukhara, Khiva, Southern Caucasus, Northern Caucasus, Crimea,¹³ and Rumelia.¹⁴ Thus, in order to fully grasp what the SO was and what it did, broader geographical and deeper historical knowledge are required than reductionist approaches, developed within the context of the Armenian question and anti-imperialism, seem willing to offer.

Besides such methodological handicaps, this tension also leads some revisionists to attempt to prove the SO to be what they already think it is, seeking out proof for their preconceived ideas in the sources of the SO. Examples of this include both experts who are firmly attached to the memoirs of Ahmet Refik¹⁵ and the military tribunals of 1919–22,¹⁶ which provided the SO with its bad reputation, and those who focus exclusively on the narratives of Eşref Kuşçubaşı and Arif Cemil,¹⁷ which lend an epic character to the history of the SO. Both sets of historians fail to go beyond their pre-conceived notions because of their use of unhistorical methods in their search for answers to their research questions.

This unhistorical approach on the part of authors is largely to blame for the polarized, even schizophrenic, depiction of the SO in the literature. On the one side standard quotes and epic narratives unduly flatter the SO, while on the other side formulaic and repetitive criticisms unreasonably deprecate the organization. Oftentimes the leanings of any given work are not apparent at first glance, but upon closer inspection the deep and widespread nature of bias concerning the SO is clear. For instance, Cemil Koçak criticizes scholars’ widespread reliance on epic narratives, or heroes, and in doing so he attempts to demystify the relations between the SO and the CUP. While his criticisms are valid, his one-sided focus prevents him from dealing with the unreasonable criticisms many scholars levy against the

organization.¹⁸ Hikmet Özdemir, on the other hand, portrays the SO as a patriotic organization in his work and comes out against many scholars' blind criticism of the organization. Like Koçak, although his work is laudable in some respects, his exclusive focus on the unthinking criticisms other scholars advance against the SO actually serves to legitimize the epic narratives in the literature.¹⁹ Similarly, there is little difference between the approach of Halil Berktaş, who sees in Bahaeddin Şakir a modern criminal like Yeşil or Abdullah Çatlı,²⁰ and that of Hikmet Çiçek, who does not flinch from portraying the same figure as a heroic Turkish Jacobin.²¹

Such approaches, though open to evidence that supports their authors' accounts, are unfortunately hermetically sealed against each other. None of this means that researchers should avoid subjects that touch on current political issues. On the contrary, scholars should bring the SO to bear on the questions of anti-imperialism and the Armenian question. Their findings will inevitably place them in line with or in opposition to official ideology, or on this or that side of contemporary political debates. But researchers must bear in mind that to set out on a research project with the goal of propping up a preconceived political agenda is to put the cart in front of the horse. When authors employ problematic methodologies, overgeneralize based on isolated sources, and exclude sources that are inconsistent with their political agendas, they discredit their own scholarship in particular and the field of history in general. If authors could discard their present preoccupation with historical romanticism in favour of an emphasis on historical consciousness the difference between today's historians and historical novelists would disappear.

The 1990s marked the beginning of a period of relatively easy access to archives relating to the SO. In tandem with this development a number of monographs on the SO emerged and have come to occupy a central place in the field. Historians such as Vahdet Keleşyılmaz, Mustafa Balcıoğlu, Sadık Sarısaman, Hamit Pehlivan, and İsrail Kurtcephe all published works during this period.²² Their studies are based on the original documents housed at the Archive of Turkish General Staff Directorate of Military History and Strategic Studies (ATASE) and dismantle the popular arguments, partly rooted in political bias and partly in academic laziness, that all archival documents relating to the SO had been burnt.²³

Most of the historians mentioned above did not, however, make use of other archives or alternative types of sources. The narrowness of their selection of source material, coupled with descriptive narrative hardly concerned with historical criticism or analysis, ultimately led these historians to unintentionally produce works that merely reflected the old Ottoman point of view. This approach is most clearly seen in regional studies describing developments in the operational bases of the SO. Allegations of the discovery of one or another SO operational base abound in the literature, but these 'discoveries' are often based on very limited archival documents and the studies that advance them are written in a descriptive rather than critical manner. Tilman Lüdke's case studies, based on German, Australian, Turkish, and British archives, are noteworthy here for their success in portraying the geopolitical and geostrategic depth of the SO.²⁴

Researchers' concentration on regional studies is related to the nature of the archival records in the ATASE archives, where most of the SO documents are

housed. Despite the weakness of studies describing developments in the operational bases of the SO, this area of study seems to be richest in terms of archival material. Studies based on this material have the potential to provide both new insights into the regional aspects of a crucial organization and valuable information that might prepare the ground for future comparative studies on the different operational bases of the SO. It is only through comparative examination of these different bases that scholars will be able to improve their understanding of the various dimensions of the organization and the extent of its role in the military and politics of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War.

Similarly, analysing the SO from the perspective of other similar organizations in Europe, like *Sturmtruppen* Units and *Reparti d'Assolto*, might well help to place the SO in context. Doing so would in turn pierce the shroud of mystery surrounding the SO. The sparsity of research in the field means that most studies concerning the SO are of necessity merely descriptive in character. It is high time, however, to begin developing research questions that will allow us to see SO in its entirety. This will require a critical re-evaluation of both the available archival material and secondary sources. None of this should be taken to mean that existing studies have no value. In spite of their flaws they are of vital importance in making use of the basic source materials, and thus stand to contribute greatly to efforts to bring the subject to a state of maturity.

Another similar problem is the fragmentary nature of almost all studies concerning the SO, excepting those of Tunaya, Shaw, and Stoddard.²⁵ The strength and the weakness of such studies lie in their attempt to view the whole through the lens of but a fragmentary part. Whether this is a strength or a weakness depends on the nature of the subject. In the face of lack of data bits and pieces of information, even if they are vague, may make it easier to get a glimpse of the historical reality. On the other hand, the danger common to any such approach is the risk of overgeneralizing on the basis of insufficient data. Fragmentary information on a multifaceted and multifunctional organization like the SO tends to result in misunderstanding more often than insight, thus seriously distorting the historical reality.

A common mistake, for example, is the view that the SO was an intelligence service. It is true that the SO, much like modern intelligence services, engaged in small-scale intelligence activities in collaboration with other state institutions.²⁶ It should, however, be noted that the SO only analysed intelligence gathered by its own offices, did not have codes for its own correspondence even a year after its foundation, and had to make up for this deficiency by using gendarmerie codes.²⁷ Furthermore, the basics of intelligence, counterintelligence, espionage, and counter-espionage activities were set not by the SO but the Second Branch (2. *Şube*) of the Ottoman General Staff.²⁸

In addition, the SO used the intelligence it gathered to aid its own operations. The information it gathered was passed up the chain to the Second Branch, which was the real military intelligence service, collecting information from a host of other organizations in addition to the SO. The SO, then, can only be said to have been an intelligence agency to an extent that the Ottoman embassies and governorates were. They were both sources of intelligence, not intelligence services in their own right.²⁹ At any rate, an analysis of the outgoing documents from the office of the SO reveals

that they were mostly related to the details of SO operations in the colonies of the Entente powers and some parts of the Empire. The flow of information into the SO from a number of governmental institutions and the operational character of the outgoing documents, when assessed together in light of the information above, at least explains what the SO was not. Hence, attributing every intelligence matter during the First World War to the SO can only be understood as the product of overgeneralization on the basis of fragmentary information.

Treating the SO as the precursor of modern Turkish intelligence services complicates matters further. To do so is to establish a direct and chronologically contiguous relation between the SO and the intelligence services of the Turkish Republic. Studies that seek to establish such a connection generally elide the differences between the structures of the two governments and the SO and modern Turkish intelligence. The recent increase in the number of studies intending to establish a connection, positively or negatively, between the SO and the secret services of the Republican period is thus not entirely coincidental. Such works include those by Tuncay Özkan, Emin Demirel, Cemal Anadol, Kaya Karan, İlhan Bahar, and Gültekin Ural.³⁰

The ‘continuity’ between the SO and later Turkish intelligence services is the deceptive result of an exclusive focus on the exterior structures of these organizations. The SO’s immediate successor was the OEA, which was founded most probably during the second week of May, 1915.³¹ This transition witnessed a number of important internal changes, such as the elimination of the administrative board of the SO and termination of the organization’s reliance on armed bands of irregular forces. The extent of the internal changes that took place in the transition from the SO to the OEA has never been the subject of concerted study. This, coupled with the fact that a host of different organizations followed the OEA in rapid succession, as one after another were closed down and replaced by a new organization, makes it incredibly problematic to compare the SO directly with later Republican intelligence services. To do so leaves one with the misguided impression that the old structures and leadership remained intact. There are simply too many unknowns in between.

This problematic approach, on the other hand, gives the impression that the static Ottoman intelligence system underwent a total change in a very short period of time without any preliminary preparation. Based on the simple hypothesis that the Ottoman State had no other choice but to modernize, the SO is interpreted as the institutional form this modernization took within the intelligence field. The problem with this account, too, lies in the fact that there is ample evidence that the SO was not simply an intelligence service, as mentioned earlier, but also an early form of unconventional warfare organization. Another problem with the modernization thesis is a lack of convincing works documenting earlier examples of intelligence services in the Ottoman State. Even if the necessity of Ottoman modernization led to the creation of the SO, such necessities should not legitimize overlooking the internal dynamics that were instrumental in its foundation. Alternative, internal factors like an aversion to conscription and an increase in draft dodgers in the Empire,³² the necessity of recruiting qualified people, an interest in achieving victory by cheaper, non-military means, and the existence of formidable topographical challenges that made the use of the army impractical should be taken into account when evaluating the foundation of the SO.³³

Although the portrait of the SO studies painted thus far seems pretty negative, several works deserve mention for having successfully broken away from the problematic attitudes plaguing standard histories on the subject. Şükrü Hanioglu, for instance, develops an interesting argument by pointing to the intellectual background of some of the members of the SO. To him, the ideas of Buchner, Nietzsche, and particularly those of Schopenhauer affected some Unionist members of the SO. Lying behind this interest were Schopenhauer's ideas emphasizing the need for individuals to become more involved in civilian political life.³⁴ This approach might well exemplify the extent to which political anthropology can enrich historical studies. Indeed, questioning why Hamza Osman Erkan deemed it suitable to begin his memoirs with Schopenhauer's statement on heroism, or why a letter sent to Dr Bahaeddin Sakir contained a commentary on Nietzsche's idea of *volonté*, may help to demystify the SO's foundational dynamics, its ideological identity, and its philosophy of action. Thanks to a lack of data and interest, however, such analysis still has a long way to go before reaching its full potential.

The well-balanced approach Nur Bilge Criss adopts in her account of the SO lays stress on a dimension normally ignored in the literature: although the SO was ostensibly annulled with the Mudros Armistice of 1918, it continued to carry out its paramilitary and intelligence activities. This is to say that the SO represented a transition toward later underground organizations. Such a relation of continuity reveals itself, for instance, in the support the SO provided to the Sentinel Association (*Karakol Cemiyeti*), which was attended by activists such as Baha Sait, Yenibağçeli Nail, and Şükrü Beys, all of whom worked for the SO during the First World War in Iran, the Caucasus, and Western Thrace.³⁵ Criss's approach can also be read as evidence of how oral history can enrich historical narrative.³⁶ Studies like hers are important because they highlight the potential value of utilizing different sources of information in a field where written sources are a rarity.

Finally, it should be noted that the standard history of the First World War prepared by ATASE includes a considerable amount of information on the agents of the SO, including the platoon they were attached to as well as the quality and quantity of the soldiers its agents commanded.³⁷ Additionally the *Askeri Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi*, also published by ATASE, provides researchers with archival materials directly related to the SO, including the methods the SO employed in psychological warfare, the nature of its relations with the tribes in certain regions, and the intelligence reports of its agents.

The greatest strength of Stoddard's study lay in his openness to all the sources available to him at the time. He did not bring a pre-conceived agenda to his research. Unlike authors today, Stoddard let his sources dictate his findings rather than letting his presumptions dictate his sources. Looking back on his work after half a century, Stoddard's greatest strength was his greatest weakness. His access to the memoirs of Eşref Kuşçubaşı and Stoddard's correspondence with him are what made Stoddard's work so valuable. His dependence on these and the degree to which they colour his conclusions are what limit the value of his work for scholars today. This overdependence is understandable, considering the closure of the Turkish archives

when Stoddard was conducting his research and the fact that Kuşçubaşı was one of the few survivors of the SO, though his activities were substantially limited to Syria, Egypt, and the Arabian Peninsula. Though Kuşçubaşı is a valuable source, Stoddard seems to have taken most of the information he provided at face value. This led him to eulogize the figure. Stoddard argues, for example, that Kuşçubaşı was the real founder of the SO, and that he took command of voluntary squadrons in the Suez campaign (1915) in addition to commanding the SO's missions in Arabia, the Sinai, and North Africa.³⁸ Researchers who fail to approach such assertions with a critical eye risk being misguided.

Given the shortage of secondary sources, the memoirs of people who were engaged in the activities of the SO and who can interpret its programme and activities can prove invaluable. In this context, various memoirs are worthy of note.³⁹ On the other hand, though they generally provide a first-hand account of the SO and its operations, such memoirs by and large reflect the personal attitudes of their authors. And separating out personal attitude from historical fact is easier said than done. The difficulties inherent to such an endeavour become clear when one examines the case of Hüsameddin Ertürk, who claimed to be one of the heads of the SO.

Hüsameddin Ertürk made contradictory statements regarding the chiefs of the SO. He stated that he, Süleyman Askeri, and Ali Başhamba had all headed the organization.⁴⁰ Elsewhere in his memoirs, however, he states that he was a stand-in for Ali Başhamba and that he was charged with officially dismantling the SO,⁴¹ which was later on changed into the Worldwide Islamic Revolt Organization (*Umum Alem-i İslam İhtilal Teşkilatı*). To ascertain which one of these claims is true, if either, we must turn to the literature.

Mustafa Balcıoğlu, a specialist on the administrative structure of the SO, writes that Ertürk headed the organization from 31 October 1918 to 5 December 1918.⁴² This seems to confirm Ertürk's first claim, and because the source upon which Balcıoğlu bases his assertion is an archival document housed at the ATASE, other SO specialists like Atilla Celiktepe have accepted it as true.⁴³ Despite its widespread acceptance, however, there are a number of reasons to doubt this claim.

When one looks at the dates for when Ertürk is alleged to have presided over the SO, one notices that Ertürk was appointed chief the day after the Mudros Armistice was signed (30 October 1918), and occupied the position for the next five weeks. While antipathy toward the SO on the part of the Allies and anti-CUP circles within the empire made it clear that the organization was to be abolished after the armistice, one wonders why a new leader would be appointed to the SO on the very same day that the organization should have come to an end. Ertürk's second claim, that he was not the chief but rather a stand-in for Başhamba, raises further doubts about the exact nature of his relationship with the organization. In addition, no mention is made of Ertürk's leadership in any of the memoirs or by any of the Ittihadists court-martialled at the end of the war. To answer the question of whether Ertürk did in fact head the SO, as he himself claimed, and whether his leadership can be documented, as Balcıoğlu claims to have done, we must turn again to the archives.

Turning to the ATASE archive, with Balcıoğlu's article as a starting point, one is immediately confronted with several problems. In the introduction to his article Balcıoğlu provides the transcription of an archival source detailing the reasons behind the establishment of the SO. His failure to provide the ATASE classification

number of the document makes locating the original, rather than the transcription he provides his reader, difficult. Comparing his transcription to the original document, one begins to wonder whether Balcioğlu might have intentionally left out the classification number to make it more difficult for his reader to access the original. While maintaining the general sense of the original document, it leaves out those parts of the documents Balcioğlu failed to transcribe, collapses sentences together by removing the missing parts and pasting the remaining pieces together, and replaces words Balcioğlu could not read with the author's own.⁴⁴ Incomplete at best and downright misleading at worst, Balcioğlu's article gives its reader further cause for concern as it progresses.

Later in the article Balcioğlu cites eight different documents as proof of his list of the chiefs of the SO, including Ertürk, and his description of the organization's central administrative structure. He only provides one classification number for the documents, however, and that number does not correspond to any file at the ATASE archive.⁴⁵ Since he does list the correct file number and dossier, it is still possible to locate the documents he refers to despite the incorrect index number he provides for them.⁴⁶ And one of these documents does contain information about the dates of the establishment and abolition of the SO, the identity of its leaders, and the person responsible for the closure process after the Mudros Armistice.⁴⁷

One again finds discrepancies when comparing Balcioğlu's article to the sources upon which it is based. The documents show that Hasan Tosun was the actual head of the SO during the time Ertürk claims to have been in charge of the organization. This leaves Ertürk as at best the stand-in for Tosun, not for Başhamba as Ertürk had claimed, since Tosun is listed as the last chief of the SO in the documents. Yet the documents describe Ertürk as having been not a leader of the SO, but rather an officer appointed on 5 December 1918 to oversee the closure of the organization.

What can account for these discrepancies? Balcioğlu's failure to even transcribe Tosun's name, his claim that Ertürk headed the SO during the dates that Tosun was its leader, and his assertion that Ertürk left his post on the very same day as the documents he relies on state that he began his duty all lead one to suspect something more than mere negligence on Balcioğlu's part. On a more charitable reading, Balcioğlu may have chosen to 'nudge' the facts to support Ertürk's claim because he simply could not transcribe enough of the documents to offer any other conclusion. In any event, whether because of academic dishonesty or a failure to properly transcribe the documents on which he based his article, Balcioğlu both mischaracterizes the nature of Ertürk's involvement in the SO and omits the names of several actual heads of the organization listed in the documents.

Even if the documents Balcioğlu relied on paint a different picture of Ertürk than Balcioğlu does in his article, there is reason to question the veracity of their account too. They were written after the SO was closed and placed among the archives of the organization. But it is not clear why these documents were written, or who authored them. Before they are given a potentially undeserved weight, the statements they contain should be cross-checked against other sources from the period.

The archival documents record that during the period Ertürk claims to have stood in for Başhamba, roughly between 31 October and 15 November 1918, his position was not 'Chief of the OEA'. He is instead referred to as 'lieutenant colonel

Hüsameddin from the OEA' (*Umur-i Şarkıye Dairesi'nden Kaymakam Hüsameddin*).⁴⁸ In the documents after 5 December he is mentioned as 'lieutenant colonel Hüsameddin in charge of the liquidation of the SO' (*Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'nın tasfiyesine memur Kaymakam Hüsameddin*).⁴⁹ Another noteworthy point is that reports dispatched to Ertürk before Başhamba's death on 31 October only dealt with SO operations in North Africa and not those of the SO's other regional boards. Ertürk is in fact listed as having been the director of the Africa Board, one of the subdivisions of the OEA, from at least the beginning of 1918 up until 31 October.⁵⁰ This would explain the detailed accounts in his memoirs of events concerning North Africa, like the kidnapping of Sheikh Ahmad al-Sanusi from Tripolitania and the establishment of the Africa Groups Command, compared with his laconic treatment of the Caucasus, Anatolia, Rumelia, etc.

Moreover, according to Tunaya, Başhamba and Hasan Tosun were once directors of the Africa and Tripolitania boards of the SO.⁵¹ Tosun should have remained in the office as director when Başhamba was appointed as chief of the OEA. Ertürk, in turn, seems to have been appointed to direct the Africa Board when Tosun became the final head of the organization.⁵² Finally, after the organization was abolished, Ertürk seems to have been charged with the duty of overseeing the closure process. If Ertürk was the head of anything, it would have been an underground successor to the OEA, the Worldwide Islamic Revolt Organization.⁵³ Ertürk's contradictory claims that he was the head of the SO and that he was a stand-in for Başhamba both turn out to be false. This same conclusion may be drawn from documents contained in the rarely used archive of the Pension Fund (*Emekli Sandığı*).

On 15 January 1943, Ertürk petitioned the Ministry of Defence to be allowed to retire with the rank of colonel rather than lieutenant colonel.⁵⁴ Colonel Hilmi Özgören and judge advocate Rıza Olgaç were the ones tasked with evaluating the petition. Though they noted that Ertürk had undertaken important tasks in the SO, they did not mention anything about him leading or standing in as leader of the organization. More importantly, they conducted their evaluation on the basis of OEA documents and of information previously provided by Sheikh Ahmad Sanusi and Fevzi Çakmak, chief of the General Staff. In other words Ertürk's claims are confirmed neither by OEA documents, nor by Sheikh Sanusi, with whom Ertürk worked closely during the First World War, nor yet by Fevzi Çakmak, who knew the activities of the SO well and who commented on drafts of Ertürk's memoirs in his own handwriting.⁵⁵ Some ten years before Ertürk's petition Atıf Bey (Kamçıl), in a petition he drew up for his retirement, declared proudly his duty in the administrative board of the SO. His petition was confirmed immediately upon inspection.⁵⁶ During a period when talking about one's place in the SO was a badge of honour rather than an admission of criminal conduct, Ertürk's silence in his petition about leading or standing in as leader of the SO can only be read as evidence that he never occupied any such positions.

This article has addressed the problems related to how researchers approach popular studies and historical memoirs dealing with the SO. Another significant problem that confronts researchers interested in the SO lies in the fact that entire archives are believed to remain closed to the public. This in turn has become an excuse for the

poor quality of studies dealing with the SO. Irrespective of the archives believed to be closed, the portion of the archives that is open to the public has by no means been fully utilized.

The Security General Directorate (*Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü*), the Ministry of National Defence (*Milli Savunma Bakanlığı*), and the National Intelligence Agency (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı*) are all uncompromising on the issue of access to their SO archives. There are, however, other places to turn. Although they have never been extensively utilized, a number of documents on the SO have long been available to the public in the Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archive in İstanbul. These documents relate to the cooperation between the SO and the above organizations and show that they worked together to some extent in the creation of operational units. The Prime Ministry's archive also contains materials associated with the directorate of the Special Office (*Kalem-i Mahsusa*) from 1913 to 1922 and Cipher Office (*Şifre Kalem-i*), which are again highly significant for researchers. The details these sources provide on guerrilla units and operations, the appointment and dismissal of state officials, and the decoration of soldiers might well supply the conscientious researcher with constructive ideas on the interaction between these diverse organizations at both administrative and operational levels, as well as shedding light on the relations between the Ministry of the Interior (*Dahiliye Nezareti*) and of the Ministry of War (*Harbiye Nezareti*). The Republican Archive (*Cumhuriyet Arşivi*), too, is useful for tracking employees of the SO during the post-war period.

The Pension Fund Archive of the Social Security Institute (PFA), containing the records of military and civil officials who served between 1914 and 1927, constitutes another important source of material for researchers. These registry files cover information on the position of civil and military officials, their salaries, promotions, identities, and places and dates of birth and death. In addition, because the registry files contain information about the pensions of martyrs, veterans, widows, and orphans, information about an individual's relatives can also be identified from these sources. The PFA's value increases when one takes into account the uncompromising attitude of the Archive of Ministry of National Defence, which houses the personal accounts and life histories of the SO personnel. Rarely used in Ottoman historiography, these sources stand to prove especially valuable in the context of biographical studies and oral and institutional history. Documents in PFA might complement the biographical studies of Mehmet Tahir, Mahmut Kemal İnal, Ali Çankaya, and Mehmet Süreyya, or add to the information available in the Personal Registers of Ottoman Functionaries (*Sicill-i Ahval Defterleri*) and Retirement Registers (*Tekaüd Defterleri*). The archive of the Turkish Red Crescent (*Türk Kızılayı*) has recently accelerated its classification process, and holds the promise of offering researchers into the relationship between the SO and Ottoman Red Crescent (*Hilal-i Ahmer*).

The ATASE archive, discussed above, is also indispensable for researchers. Material contained there details the roles of some of the SO's leading personalities during the Tripolitanian and Balkan Wars. That the groups who organized the resistance in these campaigns joined the SO shortly before the First World War highlights the significance of original documents relating to the wars. When this particular context is combined with the fact that the Ottoman government benefited fundamentally from the SO during the First World War, the immense value of the ATASE archive is driven home again.

In this context, the Special Branch (*Şube-i Mahsusa*) registers found in the First World War Collection, though only partially open to access, stand out as the most important source of information on the SO studies. The records in this branch are composed of the compilation of correspondence, telegrams, and orders exchanged between the SO headquarters and the Ministry of War, and between the administration of the SO and its different departments and field agents. The series also contains original letters exchanged between the Ministry of War and Berlin relating to the SO, as well as reports concerning the internal structure of the organization. There are tables of appointments and promotions, identification accounts, and records pertaining to personal dealings. These Special Branch registers both offer fruitful insights into the diverse spread of the SO activities and, when taken as a whole, provide a solid base for better understanding the multifaceted structure of the SO. The records offer historians access to the important strategic and tactical decisions taken by the Ottoman government as well as information about how these decisions manifested themselves in the field. Accordingly, they shed important light on the plans of the SO's Central Command. They contain the military and political intelligence reports of SO agents, which offer profound insights into factual developments in the field. They are extremely valuable in examining the demands and requests of SO personnel and the organization's administrative machinery. As long as such materials continue to be overlooked no proper historical assessment of the SO is possible.

This article has argued for the necessity of developing a comprehensive approach to the SO with a focus on both its geographical and historical depth and both the character of the organization and the individuals that composed it. To focus on just one aspect of such a complex organization without developing questions to see the SO in its entirety might result in misunderstanding it entirely. In this context, the multidimensionality and intricacy of the organization as well as the many dead-ends that hound the researcher must be faced squarely. In order to achieve a better understanding of the SO researchers must set their own biases aside and return to the wealth of archival material available to them with a fresh set of eyes. Letting the sources dictate the history one writes rather than allowing them to be dictated by the history one wants will serve to free discussions of the SO from the political quagmire in which they are currently mired. The time is ripe to produce an historical account of the SO, not another entertaining novel or invidious polemic, and to thereby help both academics and members of the public come to terms with this important chapter of Turkey's past.

Notes

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1. The Archive of Turkish General Staff Directorate of Military History and Strategic Studies (ATASE), First World War Collection (FWW); file (F): 1846, dossier (D): 79, index (I): 13/4.
2. T.Z. Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler*, Vol.III (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000), pp.337–68; S.J. Shaw, *The Ottoman Empire in World War I*, Vol. I (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2006), pp.353–476.
3. P.H. Stoddard, 'The Ottoman Government and the Arabs, a Preliminary Study on the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa' (PhD thesis, Princeton University, 1963).

4. P.H. Stoddard, *Osmanlı Devleti ve Araplar 1911–1918: Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa üzerine Bir Ön Çalışma* (İstanbul: Arma, 1993).
5. C. Kutay, *Trablus-Garb'de Bir Avuç Kahraman* (İstanbul: Tarih, 1963); *Ana-Vatan'da Son Beş Osmanlı Türkü* (İstanbul: Kervan, 1962); *1913'de Garbi Trakya'da İlk Türk Cumhuriyeti* (İstanbul: Ercan, 1962); *Lavrens'e Karşı Kuşçubaşı* (İstanbul: Tarih, 1965); *Necid Çöllerinde Mehmet Akif* (İstanbul: Tarih Yayınları Müessesesi, 1963); *Birinci Dünya Harbinde Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa ve Hayber'de Türk Cengi* (İstanbul: Ercan, 1962); *Enver Paşa Lenin'e Karşı* (İstanbul: Ekici, 1955).
6. E. Hiçyılmaz, *Osmanlıdan Cumhuriyete Gizli Teşkilatlar* (İstanbul: Altın Kitaplar, 1994); *Belgelerle Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa ve Casusluk Örgütleri* (İstanbul: Ünsal, 1979); *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'dan MİT'e* (İstanbul: Varlık, 1990); *Belgelerle Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Casusluk Örgütleri* (İstanbul: Yüce, 1981).
7. The SO's impact on the Republican regime has frequently been stressed. Orhan Koloğlu, for instance, discusses the transition from the SO to the National Security Organization (*Milli Emniyet Teşkilatı*), and Murat Belge argues that a considerable number of the members of CUP, which was actually no different from the SO, took active part in the foundation of the Republican regime. See in order Orhan Koloğlu, 'Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'dan Milli Emniyet'e geçiş', *Birikim*, Vol.93-4 (1997), pp.145-9; M. Belge, 'Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa', *Birikim*, Vol.116 (1998), pp.16-20.
8. This attitude can be most easily tracked in the articles published in newspapers and popular magazines. To cite a few, see M.A. Eren, 'Cumhuriyeti Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa kurdu', *Aksiyon*, Vol.49 (1995), pp.24-9; H. Öngören, 'Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'dan MİT'e Osmanlı' dan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye'de gizli servis hanedanlığı', *Nokta*, Vol.30 (1996), pp.20-25; Y. Küçük, 'Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa bir itihâl örgütüdür', *Aydınlık*, 17 June 2001; A. Özgürel, 'Yeni Osmanlılık, altında Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'nın projesiydi', *Radikal*, 29 Nov. 2009; A. Çarkçı, 'Milli şairimiz Mehmet Akif Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'ya çalışmış mıydı?', *Milli Gazete*, 5 Sept. 2008; E. Keskin, 'Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa işbaşında!', *Birgün*, 26 Jan. 2007; H. Berktaş, 'Vecdi Gönül, Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa, Diyarbakır Cezaevi', *Taraf*, 20 Dec. 2008; M.G. Kırıkkanat, 'Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'dan CIA'ye', *Vatan*, 6 June 2006; A. Bayramoğlu, 'Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa ve Zabitler', *Yeni Şafak*, 25 March 2009.
9. V.N. Dadrian, 'The Naim-Andonian Documents on the World War I Destruction of Ottoman Armenians: The Anatomy of a Genocide', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.3 (1986), pp.311-60. Also see idem, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Providence, RI: Berghahn, 1995); *Ermeni Soykırımında Kurumsal Roller: Toplu Makaleler 1* (İstanbul: Belge, 2004).
10. Although Taner Akçam appears to be the most remarkable example in this context, his recent study differs explicitly by a more down-to-earth approach. Specifically his discussion and analytic use of the documents related to the Ministry of Interior Cipher Office (*Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi*) that offers a fresh insight into the role of the SO on the Armenian relocations should not be skipped over by the specialists. See T. Akçam, 'Ermeni Meselesi Hallolunmuştur' *Osmanlı Belgelerine Göre Savaş Yıllarında Ermenilere Yönelik Politikalar* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2008). At this recent transformation of the subject into a state of relative maturity, recent participation, in the discussions, of historians like Guenter Lewy and Edward J. Erickson, who seem to contribute to the official Turkish thesis, has indisputably become effective. See G. Lewy, 'Revisiting the Armenian Genocide', *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol.4 (2005), pp.3-12; E.J. Erickson, 'New Records Undercut Old Blame', *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol.3 (2006), pp.67-75. Also see V.N. Dadrian, 'Correspondence', *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol.1 (2006), pp.77-8.
11. For the *Yön* movement and the development theory of Doğan Avcıoğlu, see G. Atılgan, *Yön-Devrim Hareketi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı, 2002); H. Özdemir, *Kalkınmada bir Strateji Arayışı: Yön Hareketi* (Ankara: Bilgi, 1986); *Doğan Avcıoğlu-Bir Jön Türk'ün Ardından* (Ankara: Bilgi, 2000).
12. D. Avcıoğlu, 'Türkiye'nin İngiliz emperyalizmine karşı dünya çapında verdiği çığır savaşı. Gerillacı Türk Subaylarının yönetiminde bütün İslam Dünyasında antiemperyalist örgütler', *Milli Kurtuluş Tarihi 1883'den 1995'e*, Vol.1 (İstanbul: Tekin, 1998), pp.59-73.
13. ATASE, FWW; F: 1844, D: 72, I: 10.
14. The central command of the OEA had also a branch dealing with the organization's activities in Rumelia, the Rumelia Branch (*Rumeli Şubesi*). See ATASE, FWW; F: 1846, D: 79, I: 13/7.
15. The book was first published in 1919. A.R. Altınay, *İki Komite İki Kıtıl* (İstanbul: Bedir, 1999).
16. For the latest and the most precise transcription of the Turkish military tribunal, see T. Akçam and V.N. Dadrian, *Tehcir ve Taktül, Divan-ı Harb-i Örfî Zabutları, İttihat ve Terakki'nin Yargılanmaması 1919-1922* (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2008).

17. P.H. Stoddard and H.B. Danişman (eds.), *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa Arabistan, Sina ve Kuzey Afrika Müdürlüğü Eşref Bey'in Hayber Anıları, Hayber'de Türk Cengi* (İstanbul: Arba, 1997); A. Cemil, *I. Dünya Savaşı'nda Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* (İstanbul: Arba, 1997). First published serially in the newspaper *Vakit* between 2 Nov. 1933 and 7 Feb. 1934.
18. C. Koçak, "'Ey Tarihçi, Belgen Kadar Konuş!': Belgesel Bir Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa Öyküsü", *Tarih ve Toplum*, Vol.3 (2006), pp.171–214; 'Teşkilat-ı Mahsusacı bir subayın öyküsü: Mission Impossible', *Toplumsal Tarih*, Vol.128 (2004), pp.26–33. These articles are severely criticized by Emel Akal. See E. Akal, 'Bir belge, iki makale, bir tebliğ: Cemil Koçak'ın yazısı üzerine bir değerlendirme', *Tarih ve Toplum*, Vol.4 (2006), pp.295–99. Cemil Koçak replied her in the same tone. See C. Koçak, 'Bir kritiğin kritiği', *Tarih ve Toplum*, Vol.4 (2006), pp.301–6.
19. H. Özdemir, 'Yurtsever Bir Örgüt: Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa', *Teori*, Vol.138 (2001). In this context, his insight into the SO is barely different from the approach maintained in an archival document that details the reasons behind the foundation of the SO by lending an epic character to the organization. See ATASE, FWW: F: 1846, D: 79, I: 13, 13/1, 13/2, 13/3.
20. H. Berktaş, interview by Neşe Düzel, *Radikal*, 9 Sept. 2000.
21. H. Çiçek, *Dr. Bahattin Şakir, İttihat ve Terakki'den Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'ya Bir Türk Jakobeni* (İstanbul: Kaynak, 2004).
22. V. Keleşyılmaz, *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'nın Hindistan Misyonu (1914–1918)* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1999); 'I. Dünya Savaşı'nda Ulusal Güvenlik ve Dil Bilir Eleman İhtiyacı', *Askeri Tarih Bülteni*, Vol.48 (2000), pp.143–7; idem, 'Kafkas Harekatının Perde Arkası', *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, Vol.16, No.47 (2000), pp.367–95; M. Balcıoğlu, *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusadan Cumhuriyet'e* (Ankara: Asil, 2004); S. Sarısan, 'Birinci Dünya Savaşı Sırasında İran Elçiliğimiz ile İrtibatlı Bazı Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa Faaliyetleri', *OTAM*, Vol.7 (1996) pp.209–18; idem, 'Trabzon Mıntıkası Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa Heyet-i İdaresinin Faaliyetleri ve Gürcü Lejyonu', *XIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi* (Ankara: 4–8 Oct. 1999), pp.495–534; H. Pehlivanlı, 'Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa Kuzey Afrika'da, 1914–1918', *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, Vol.47 (2000), pp.421–40; idem, 'Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa: Türk Modern İstihbaratçılığının Başlangıcı mı?', *Osmanlı-Teşkilat*, Vol.6 (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 1999), pp.285–94; İ. Kurtcephe, 'Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa belgelerine göre 1917 Rus İhtilali sırasında Türkistan', *Atatürk Yolu*, Vol.12 (1993), pp.393–409; idem, 'Birinci Dünya Savaşı Başlarında Romantik Bir Türk Alman Projesi: Rauf Bey Müfrezesi', *OTAM*, Vol.3 (1992), pp.247–69; 'Türk Belgelerine Göre Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Almanya'nın İran Siyaseti', *OTAM*, Vol.3 (1992), pp.271–84.
23. This argument should not necessarily lead us to the conclusion that all the SO documents are available. Some of them might have been destroyed, lost, become unusable or closed to accession. In this context, Taner Akçam's insight into Turkish archives, including the ATASE, might prove useful and illuminating. See Akçam, 'Ermeni Meselesi Hallolunmuştur', pp.20–34. Yet it is obvious that some part of the SO documents were taken under protection by the Turkish General Staff Thirteenth Branch Office. See V. Keleşyılmaz, 'Türk Ordusunda Bir Vefa Örneği ve Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa Belgeleri', *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, Vol.44 (1999), p.647.
24. T. Lüdke, *Jihad Made in Germany: Ottoman and German Propaganda and Intelligence Operations in the First World War* (Münster: LIT, 2005).
25. Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler*; Shaw, *The Ottoman Empire in World War I*; Stoddard, 'The Ottoman Government and the Arabs'.
26. A noteworthy example might be the intelligence gathering activities of the SO in Egypt. For the nature of the information asked from the SO agents in Egypt by the Second Branch of the Ottoman General Staff, see ATASE, FWW: F: 1868, D: 174, I: 1/2 and 1/3.
27. ATASE, FWW: F: 1836, D: 35, I: 1/1.
28. For a few intelligence summaries and reports delivered by the Second Branch to other governmental institutions, see Prime Ministry Ottoman Archive (BBA, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi), DH.EUM.VRK.; F (File): 82, D (Dossier): 14; BBA, DH.EUM.3. Şb.; F: 32, D: 4; BBA, DH.EUM.VRK.; F: 24, D: 5; BBA: DH.EUM.KLH.; F: 82, D: 14; BBA: DH.EUM.VRK.; F: 76, D: 14; BBA: DH.EUM.VRK.; F: 74, D: 14; BBA: DH.EUM.VRK.; F: 55, D: 14.
29. The same sort of information asked from the SO agents in Egypt were, for example, demanded from Bekir Bey, the governor of Beirut, and Nabi Bey, Ottoman Ambassador to Rome by the Second Branch. For a number of examples, see ATASE, FWW: F: 248, D: 1031, I: 2/12, 2/44, 2/49, 2/50.
30. T. Özkan, *MİT'in Gizli Tarihi* (İstanbul: Alfa, 2003); E. Demirel, *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'dan Günümüze Gizli Servisler* (İstanbul: IQ, 2008); C. Anadol, *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'dan MIT'e Susurluk Dosyası*

- (İstanbul: Bilge Karınca, 2009); K. Karan, *Türk İstihbarat Tarihi: Yıldız İstihbarat Teşkilatı ve Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'dan MİT'e* (İstanbul: Truva, 2008); İ. Bahar, *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa, MİT ve İstihbarat Örgütleri* (İstanbul: Kum Saati, 2009); G. Ural, *Abdullah Çatlı ve Susurluk Dosyası, Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'dan MİT'e* (İstanbul: Kamer, 2008).
31. For a sentimental depiction of the reasons behind the foundation of the SO and its change into the OEA, see ATASE, FWW; F: 1846, D: 79, I: 13, 13/1, 13/2, 13/3.
 32. The SO agents appointed to certain recruiting offices were charged with catching draft dodgers, one of the most important human resources for the organization, and enlisting those who fit for guerrilla warfare to the SO. For an example, see BBA, DH.ŞFR: F: 67, D: 66; ATASE, FWW; F: 1831, D: 139A, I: 16/7, 16/8.
 33. Mehmet Beşikçi's PhD thesis about the voluntary activities in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War has the potential to present illuminating results for the specialists. See M. Beşikçi, 'Between Voluntarism and Resistance: The Ottoman Mobilization of Manpower in the First World War' (PhD thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2009).
 34. Ş. Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1986), pp.53–4.
 35. N.B. Criss, *İstanbul under Allied Occupation 1918–1923* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), pp.94–8.
 36. From 1986 to 1987 Criss interviewed a number of people who had either direct or indirect knowledge about the SO, such as General Fahri Özdilek, Nuri Conker's daughter, Kıymet Tesal, Ahmet Esenal, and Nihat Akçam.
 37. *Birinci Dünya Harbinde Türk Harbi*, 12 vols. (Ankara: Genelkurmay ATASE, 1979).
 38. Stoddard and Danişman, *Hayber'de Türk Cengi*, pp.222–3; Stoddard, 'The Ottoman Government and the Arabs', p.52, 170. There are objections about the impact of Eşref Kuşçubaşı on the SO. See P. Safi, 'The Ottoman Special Organization – Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa: A Historical Assessment with Particular Reference to its Operations against British Occupied Egypt (1914–1916)' (MA, Bilkent University, 2006), pp.137–41; A. Efe, *Efsaneden Gerçeğe Kuşçubaşı Eşref* (İstanbul: Bengi, 2007).
 39. Stoddard and Danişman, *Hayber'de Türk Cengi*; K. Karabekir, *Gizli Harp İstihbarat* (İstanbul: Kamer, 1998); idem, *Birinci Cihan Harbine Neden Girdik, Nasıl Girdik, Nasıl İdare Ettik?*, Vol.4 (İstanbul: Emre, 1994); A.İ. Sabis, *Harap Hatıralarım: Birinci Dünya Harbi*, Vol.1 (İstanbul: Nehir, 1992); A.F. Erden, *Birinci Dünya Harbi'nde Suriye Hatıraları* (İstanbul: İş Bankası, 2003); idem, *Paris'ten Tih Sahrasına* (Ankara: Ulus, 1949); Cemal Paşa, *Hatırat* (İstanbul: Arma, 1996); see also idem, *Hatıralar: İttihat ve Terakki, I. Dünya Savaşı anıları* (İstanbul: Çağdaş, 1977); T. Paşa, *Talat Paşa'nın Anıları* (İstanbul: İş Bankası, 2000); G. Vardar, *İttihat ve Terakki içinde dönenler* (İstanbul: Yeni Zaman, 2003); H. Ertürk, *İki Devrin Perde Arkası* (İstanbul: Sebül, 1996); F. Balkan, *İlk Türk Komitacısu Fuat Balkan'ın Hatıraları* (İstanbul: Arma, 1998); Cemil, *I. Dünya Savaşı'nda Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*; C. Bayar, *Ben de Yazdım, Milli Mücadele'ye Gidiş*, Vol.4–5 (İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1967); M.R. Esath, *İttihat ve Terakki Tarihinde Esrar Perdeleri ve Yakup Cemil Niçin Öldürüldü?* (İstanbul: Hür Yayın, 1975); A.R. Refik Altınay, *İki Komite İki Kıtıl*; J.P. al-Askari, *a Soldier's Story, From Ottoman Rule to Independent Iraq: The Memoirs of Jafar Pasha al-Askari*, ed. W. Facey and N.F. Safwat (London: Arabian Publishing, 2003); also see M. al-Hatib, *Ja'far al-'Askari, Mujaz Hayatihi – wa Sada Masra'ih fi'l-Sharq wa'l-Gharb* (Cairo: al-Matba' al-Salafiyye, 1936); A. Bey, *Suriya wa Lubnan fi'l-Harb al-'Alamiyya: al-Istihbarat wa'l-Jasusiya fi'l-Dawlat al-Othmaniyya* (Beirut: al-Ahrar, 1933); Al-Yakzan al-Hajj Ibrahim, *Sulaiman al-Baruni Pasha, fi Atwar Hayatihi* (Dimashq: Maktabat al-Asad, 1956); N. al-Baini, *Dhikriyat al-Amir Shakib Arslan 'an al-Harb al-Kawniyye al-Ula wa 'an al-Maja' fi Suriya wa Lubnan* (Dimashq: Maktabat al-Asad, 2001); Abidin Nesimi, *Yılların İçinden* (İstanbul: Gözlem, 1977).
 40. Ertürk, *İki Devrin*, p.4.
 41. *Ibid.*, pp.165–7.
 42. Balcioglu, *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'dan*, p.4.
 43. A. Çeliklepe, *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'nın Siyasi Misyonu* (İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat, 2003). The main part of the book, 'Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa', pp.71–119, appears to be complete plagiarism from Stoddard and Pehlivanlı. See for a detailed analysis P. Safi, 'Bir ihtimal daha yok: düpedüz intihal!', *Kılavuz*, Vol.42 (2006), pp.7–9.
 44. This document, entitled 'Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa, ahiren Umûr-i Şarkiye nâmı alan ve müteakib tarihte ilgâ edilen dairenin esbâb-ı teşkîli' (Reasons of the foundation of the SO Department, lately entitled OEA and subsequently abolished) actually carries the following classification number: ATASE, FWW: F: 1846, D: 79, I: 13, 13/1, 13/2, 13/3.

45. The classification number that Balcıođlu cites but does not correspond to any file in the ATASE archive is as follows: ATASE, FWW; F: 1846, D: 79, I: 20.
46. The documents he actually made use of are as follows: ATASE, FWW: F: 1846, D: 79, I: 13/4, 13/5, 13/5a, 13/6, 13/6a, 13/7, 13/7a, 13/8.
47. ATASE, FWW: F: 1846, D: 79, I: 13/4.
48. ATASE, FWW: F: 1855, D: 127, I: 6/1 (9 Nov. 1918); F: 1858, D: 136, I: 3/87 (10 Nov.1918).
49. ATASE, FWW: F: 1869, D: 127, I: 177/15.
50. ATASE, FWW: F: 1846, D: 79, I: 13/6a.
51. Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler*, p.342.
52. ATASE, FWW: F: 1846, D: 79, I: 13/4.
53. Ertürk, *İki Devrin*, pp.166-7.
54. This document is also located in the Republican Archive (RA, Cumhuriyet Arşivi). See RA; classification number (c. no): 030.11.1–161.11.19 and 030.11.1–157.33.8.
55. Archive of Pension Fund (PFA); file (F): Hüsameddin Ertürk.
56. PFA; F: Atuf Kamçıl. Also see RA; c. no: 030.11.1–155.21.1.