

Acceptable women of Müfide Ferit: A blend of nationalism and feminism

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Abstract: From the Second Constitutional Monarchy to the early years of the Republic, Müfide Ferit Tek was one of the significant woman writers. Her feminism is a fusion of nationalism and feminism, which is quite different even if she is cited among feminist writers. Her conception of feminism differed from that of many of her counterparts and from what is understood now. Her works presented a strong, patriotic, self-reliant woman who was loyal to her own principles and stood on her own two feet as the ideal of an acceptable lady. This article is particularly interested in the feminist views of Müfide Ferit. The purpose of this study is to examine how Müfide Ferit Tek contributed to the history of feminism in Turkey by fusing nationalism and feminism from the late Ottoman era to the Republic. Müfide Ferit, a significant woman author of the late Ottoman and early Republic period, approached feminism from a unique angle and made a clear contrast between women who were acceptable and those who were not in her writings.

Keywords: Müfide Ferit, Ottoman feminism, nationalism, feminism

Introduction

The Tanzimat Edict of 1839 marked the beginning of the Ottoman Empire's modernization and innovation process, which continued with the establishment of the Constitutional Monarchy.¹ During this process, the Ottoman women begin to assume public roles. Among other significant advancements, women were allowed to pursue careers in business, education, and intelligence (Toprak 1988, 34).

The country's constitution was changed for the first time with the Second Constitutional Monarchy (1908), and as a result of the increased freedom of opinion at this time, the topic of women also

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¹ Tanzimat and Constitutional Monarchy were the periods in which social freedoms increased, as the Ottoman Empire recently restricted the sultan's powers.

started to be discussed. During this period, women tried to make their voices heard by establishing associations and publishing newspapers (Özcan Demir 1999, 107). The battles to legalize women's rights and provide Ottoman women the same rights as women in the West are what spring to mind when discussing feminism in the Ottoman Empire. In this context, women such as Halide Edip, Nezihe Muhiddin, Emine Seniye, and Fatma Aliye organized conferences, founded organizations, and tried to express their views through the media (Çalışkan 2002, 321). Müfide Ferit Tek, a woman author who championed women's rights during this time, elevated feminism to a new level. She established the groundwork for nationalist feminism in Turkey by fusing feminism with nationalist concepts.

The purpose of this research is to expose Mufide Ferit Tek's method of combining feminism and nationalism in her own writings. Ottoman feminism, which has a cosmopolitan framework, loses the idea of nationalist feminism, which is not frequently utilized in Turkish feminist literature. This research will raise awareness of this idea and add to the body of feminist literature. Primary and secondary sources will be used in a literature review.

Ottoman feminism

Feminism is derived from the Latin word 'feminine', meaning 'woman'. Feminism is an approach that includes the liberation of women, the prevention of their oppression, the legitimation of their rights, their actions in public and private spheres and equal rights (Sevim 2005, 7). The perception of feminism first emerged in England in the 18th century. It entered the academic field with "A Vindication of the Right" by Mary Wollstonecraft, published in 1792 (Taş 2006, 74).

It is well known that since the beginning of time, women have fought for some of their own rights. With the rise of the "first wave" feminist movement, calls for equality in public life become more apparent. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, calls for legal equality served as the foundation for the feminist and women's movements. They started to express their calls for women to be included in the definition of citizens in order to achieve 'equal citizenship,' which is what nation-states guarantee. The feminist movement known as the "first wave" is therefore also known as "egalitarian feminism." (Berber 2017) Among the demands in the first stage were demands for being visible in the public sphere, such as the

right to education, the right to work outside the home and the right to vote. Women's movements and demands that emerged in the West spread to other parts of the world in waves, and the Ottoman Empire was also affected by these developments simultaneously (Çakır 1994).

Demands for the right to citizenship, education, and the ability to vote were paramount in the Ottoman Empire and the women's movements that existed at the time the Republic of Turkey was founded. As subjects of the women's movement, women's organizations from many localities started their own journals, formed associations and foundations, and actively participated in the fight (Zihnioğlu 2016). Educated, middle-class women started talking about women's status in Ottoman society through associations and media like newspapers and magazines, beginning with the problems that most affected them. Discussions cover a wide range of subjects, including married couples with several wives, men's right to divorce, women's social marginalization, and dress codes. Along with demanding their right to exist in social, professional, educational, and public spheres, they often critique the conditions of femininity within the family. But several women of that era also called for personal liberty and self-determination (Berber 2017).

At the beginning of the 20th century, demands were gradually met, and legal changes took place on some of the discussed issues: such as the registration of the institution of marriage, raising the age of marriage for women, the end of the right to unilateral divorce and women's right to divorce. (Zihnioğlu 2016) During this period, educational opportunities for women were gradually increasing. In 1914, women were granted the freedom to attend college. Women who were educated spoke foreign languages, even if they were few in number. They initiated the first feminist movement in the Ottoman land with the establishment of the Constitutional Monarchy and the impact of the voting rights movement (Suffragette Movement) that persisted in the West during the similar time period (Çakır 1994).

Ottoman feminism is the term used to describe the work done by women in the liberated Ottoman Empire after 1908 and their public participation. Ottoman feminism was dubbed the "Three Styles of Feminism" by Akşit (2008). The first was the conservative feminist view pioneered by Fatma Aliye. It was a view based on the Islamic religion, in which efforts were made to improve the situation of women in the family and to ensure that women's rights were guaranteed by law. Another view was the feminist view, which had

many connections with the rising feminism in Europe, led by writers such as Halide Edip. This style, which wanted the reorganization of areas such as social life, law and education that were in the hands of men, was considered to have an elitist perspective (Durakbaşı 2000, 209). Another type was the type led by Sabiha Sertel. This view was against the authorities and close to anarchism. It was struggling with the bourgeois aspects of feminism (Shissler 2007).

Women with nationalist views may also be seen when Ottoman feminism was brought up. This concept, which blends feminism and nationalism, came into being particularly during the First World War, when the nation was occupied. The problem of women became a requirement for intellectuals throughout those years. During the war years, when their husbands were serving at the front, women were forced to labor. This setting led to the emergence of feminist and nationalist ideologies (Şermet 2019).

Some woman writers combined nationalism with feminism after seeing the country's freedom through Turkish nationalism. One of these authors is Müfide Ferit Tek. Her name is more commonly associated with being a nationalist, even a Turanist writer. However, from the late Ottoman period to the early years of the Republic, while emphasizing the importance of women's entering the worklife in the books she wrote, the conferences she gave, and the studies she conducted, she also defined an ideal type of woman suitable for Turkey, laying the foundations of nationalist feminism by explaining the ideal and the non-ideal in his works.

Important fragments of Müfide Ferit's life

Born in Kastamonu on April 29, 1892, Müfide Ferit passed away in Istanbul on March 24, 1971. Because of her father's constitutionalist views, Şevket Bey was exiled to Tripoli, where Müfide Ferit spent her early years. She was educated in the Italian nuns' school because there was no Turkish school for girls in this area. At home, her father taught her French, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. She studied the piano on her own. He later sent her to France to attend Versailles High School. She returned to Tripoli following her father's illness and married Ahmet Ferit Bey, the first Internal Affairs Minister and former ambassador (Ekşi and Çelik 2024). Both his father and her spouse influenced Müfide Ferit's political beliefs because they were both related to the political life (Er and Özcan 2012, 293).

Müfide Ferit Tek's life is filled with various changes due to her husband's job. Her husband was sent to the exile due to his political ideas. They returned to Istanbul with the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy. Müfide Ferit's husband, Ahmet Ferit Bey, begins his writing activities in the last periods of the Ottoman Empire. Thereupon, Müfide Ferit wrote in *İfham* newspaper published by Ferit Bey. She also wrote articles in magazines such as *Türk Kadını*, *Türk Yurdu* and *Şehbâl* with the nickname Süyüm Bike. During this period, she joined the Turkish Nationalist movement with her husband, in this context she began to stand out as a defender of the idea of Turkism. Based on this ideology, she wrote *Aydemir* and made a splash for her time (1918) when she was only twenty-four years old (Esin 1972, 14).

Those years were the years when the Ottoman Empire was under occupation and salvation was sought from this situation. After the Balkan Wars, when *İttihatve Terakki* (the *Committee of Union and Progress*) realized that the idea of Ottomanism would not be a solution to the situation of the country, some intellectuals put forward the idea of Turkism. Müfide Ferit and her husband, Ahmet Ferit, traveled to cities like Sinop and Bursa and authored books about the state of the nation there after he was banished due to issues inside the Committee of Union and Progress Party (Demircioğlu 1998, 7).

Ahmet Ferit and his wife Müfide Ferit were the first to support the War of Independence because they believed that the nation's peace and prosperity came first, along with the state's existence and independence. Müfide Ferit, a conference speaker in this context, participated as a speaker in anti-occupation demonstrations. She conducted research and authored essays arguing that Turkish women ought to be in the position they deserve (Er and Özcan 2012, 293).

Müfide Ferit wrote the novel *Aydemir*, based on her memories of the period in which she lived, in 1918, with the encouragement of her sister Selma's husband, Yusuf Akçura. This was followed by the novels *Pervaneler* in 1924, *Leyla* in 1925, and *Affolunmayan Günah*, whose German translation was published in 1933. After the Ankara Government appointed Ahmet Ferit Tek as ambassador in Paris between 1919 and 1922, Müfide Ferit gave conferences and wrote articles on the subjects of the War of Independence, Turkish Thesis, Turkish Women and Feminism (Zengin 2016, 559).

Müfide Ferit also enrolled in Sorbonne Oriental Literature courses to complete her education, which was left unfinished after the death of her father. During the period when Ahmet Ferit was serving as

ambassador in London, she resided in Paris and completed her higher education at the Paris École Libre des Sciences Politiques Diplomatique in 1928. During 1921, 1923, and 1943, Müfide Hanım lived overseas as Ferit Tek served as an ambassador in Paris, London, Warsaw, and Tokyo. When her husband retired, she went on working for woman. Between 1945 and 1948, she and her friends started the Turkish Soroptimist Club, which she continued to grow until her death in 1971 (Zariç 2022, 106).

Following the founding of the Istanbul Soroptimist Club in 1948 Müfide Ferit Tek, the Federation of Turkey was established in Ankara, 1953. As a member of the International Soroptimist European Federation and now has around a thousand members, it is an organization dedicated to the public good. It works with women and young girls in five key areas: health, a sustainable environment, education, economic development, and the abolition of violence against women (Turkey Sorophimist Federation 2025).

Since Müfide Ferit is mostly recognized as a Turkist and nationalist woman writer, she is not among the first woman authors and activists who spring to mind when Ottoman feminism is brought up. The ideal Turkish woman type she portrayed in her lectures and novels, is criticized arguing that it was not connected to true feminism. Despite the criticism she received from some quarters, her lifelong efforts to empower women and assure their independence, particularly in the economic sphere, are truly impressive.

Müfide Ferit ‘s conception of nationalism

Some intellectuals turned to Turkism during the last years of the Ottoman Empire when it was searching for answers and ideas like Islamism and Ottomanism failed. With the Ottoman Empire on the verge of collapse, Turkist intellectuals were at the forefront of initiating the National Struggle, which would result in the establishment of the independent Republic of Turkey, and they fought intellectually and put their ideals into the service of the nation and homeland (Köçer 2003). During this period, Gaspıralı İsmail’s slogan “unity in thought, work and language” has been accepted throughout the Turkish world. “Turkists” are a group of intellectuals who focused their research on Turkish mythology, history, and culture. Among them was Ziya Gökalp, who stressed the value of Turkish unity (Bars 2017). A broader form of Turanism was a view that dreamed of the

unity of Turks living not only in the Ottoman lands but all over the world (Meral 2022).

Müfide Ferit Tek's nationalism can be described as the transformation of nationalism and Turkism into Turanism. We can infer this from the ideal or non-ideal characters she develops in her books and stories.

In one of the most famous novels of her, *Aydemir* (1918), she bears the traces of Turanist thought and the novel was written with the desire to embrace Turks outside Turkey. It deals with the political and social problems of the Eastern Turks under Russian captivity. A young man named Demir makes his ideal decision in the book, following a struggle between his ideal and his affection. He is someone who travels to Turkestan to fulfill his goal of Turan, leaving behind the girl he is in love with and all of his loved ones in Istanbul. One evening, Demir talks about his dreams to the girl he loves:

I will wander around, Miss Hazin! I intend to start from Haifa. Haifa, Bukhara, Samarkand, Kashkar and provinces. I want to make Samarkand the first centre. Even in places I can't reach, I will send the assistants I will find. But the main thing is always one: Awake Turks. I will try to use every means to achieve this. I want to set up a community in the city, wherever I pass by (Tek 2002, 40).

Demir goes to Turkestan and realizes most of his dreams. Even if he wants to return to Istanbul and marry the girl he loves, his dream of Turan prevents him. When people ask him the reason, he says that his hometown was everywhere that is Turkish (Tek 2002, 30).

Following Halide Edip Adivar's book *Yeni Turan* written in 1912, *Aydemir*'s book is regarded as the second Turanist work (Karataş 2013, 39). As a result, *Aydemir*'s novel holds a place in the annals of national literature.

In her book titled *Pervaneler* (1924), Müfide Ferit emphasizes that Turks should not break away from national consciousness, culture, and morality. The novel describes the cultural problems experienced by Turkish men and women who marry foreigners and warns about the missionary activities carried out by foreign schools in Turkey. The novel focusses on the regret experienced by Burhan Ahmet, who married a Catholic French woman. She expresses in the novel that Burhan's real sin is he raised his children in an upbringing with two religions, two mentalities, two temperaments and two nationalities (Tek 1924, 155). Furthermore, the extent of the harm done to Turkish

culture and religion by the missionary schools that were established in the last periods of the Ottoman Empire is described in the book. The devaluation of Turkish-Islamic civilization and the promotion of a consumption-based lifestyle of Americans are described. She expresses her ideas as:

Growing up in these schools makes one an American fan. Their neighbourhoods, hometowns, and families start to see them as foreigners. After they graduate from this school, what will happen? Entertainment is the primary goal. These schools' primary goal is to distance children from Turkish identity (Ibid, 156).

She employs the following phrases in reference to Bizans High School, a missionary school:

There was no Turkishness here, America in the midst of Turkey's poverty. This is the world that spreads its ease, money, and limitless pleasures like a joke. American control over young brains is evident even in the physical layout of the school. Even the material organization of the school demonstrates American dominance over young minds. Turkish girls deny their nationalities and beliefs (Ibid, 51).

Pervaneler is a book that was written with sensitivity to both national and religious issues (Çetin 2018, 22). The author Müfide Tek's nationalist side comes out in the book. She aims to raise awareness of the issue by explaining how foreign schools set up in the nation cause Turkish kids to become estranged from their own identity. A national and religious approach to education is the answer to this issue for her.

During the occupation years, Müfide Ferit wrote articles trying to revive nationalism and oppose the occupation. She wrote articles in the newspaper *İfham*, published in 1912. In the article titled *Milli Vazifeler Karşısında Günahlarımız*, she talks about the misery and dereliction in which a Turkish soldier was left on the streets of Istanbul and she expresses that he was a hero of Anafartalar, Çanakkale, the Caucasus and he became a veteran, but he fainted from hunger in Istanbul. She thinks it is offensive that a soldier who fought for her nation in Istanbul would go hungry and suffer. (Tek 1919, 22)

In her work titled *From Edirne to Bursa* (1913), which describes the occupation of Ottoman lands during the Balkan Wars, she explains how the days were full of brutality by saying that human blood stood out like a red belt. In the seized Ottoman land, she recounts the horrific sights she witnessed, including the bloodied bodies on the ground and the predicament of all the women and children who had to flee. (Tek

1913) The articles she later wrote in *Hâkimiyeti Milliye* newspaper to encourage and morale the Turkish soldiers in the war can be given as another example of her nationalist views. She addresses the Turkish soldiers as magnificent floods and a blessed river in the land where everyone said they were dead (Ibid, 2).

Antep was one of the most important cities that resisted the occupation during the War of Independence. In the article titled *Gaziantep*, published in the same newspaper, Müfide Ferit explained how the city of Antep resisted the occupation, and for this reason, she made a proposal to the Turkish Grand National Assembly to grant the title of veteran to Antep. Her proposal was accepted by the Assembly (Demircioğlu 1998, 17).

Müfide Ferit's Turkish nationalism is like a synthesis of Turanism and nationalism. Her views advocating the unity of the world's Turks were combined with her love for Turkey, and she supported the Turkish nation with her novels, stories, columns and other works during the war years when the Ottoman lands were under occupation. She always worked to preserve the national consciousness and fought Turkish youngsters who were being raised in an environment that was alien to their own identity. She also underlined that Turkish women currently bear a lot of responsibilities.

Müfide Ferit's feminism

In order to understand Müfide Ferit's views on feminism, women's rights and the ideal woman type, it is necessary to first look at the female characters in the books she wrote and the missions she assigned to them.

In her book titled *Pervaneler*, written in 1924, Müfide Ferit fictionalized alienation from national culture through women. A character, Leman, one of the female students studying in missionary schools opened by foreigners to degenerate Turkish culture, is aimless and fond of fun. She does not want to marry men, but to travel and live a comfortable life. Nesime, who is studying at the same school, does not want to be "aimless" like the women she sees in the lodge, even though her family is a member of the lodge, and she was raised with a religious education. She wants to compete with men in every sense. Leman and Nesime are women without identity awareness, and it is obvious that the author does not see them as acceptable women (Tek 1924). Leman, Nesime and Bahire leave the school they entered as foreigners. After graduating, each of them marries foreign men and

moves further away from their Turkish identity. They can neither be locals nor remain Turks in the countries they go to. The striking point here is that these characters are women. For instance, even after marrying a foreign woman, Doctor Burhan Ahmet maintains his Turkish identity. Stated differently, the narrative consistently depicts women as non-national and males as national. Male characters retain their personality even if they marry foreign women (Erkoç 2021, 421).

Another feature of Bahire's character is that she represents a male-type woman. Bahire is a woman with short hair and dresses like men. She even disguises herself as a man while dancing tango. She depicts her as:

She was a 'sportswoman' in every sense of the word and she would do whatever was necessary to announce this to the world. She always walks around in her underpants, has a male attitude in her movements, and is also more attractive than men. With her best friend, Miss Hare, they decided not to get married and fight against men. (Tek 2002, 38).

Bahire is very different from the male type of women envisioned by other writers of the period. The male-type women mentioned in other novels try to demonstrate equality, competing with men by playing the same sports with them or wearing the same style. Bahire rejects marriage and denies her femininity. She represents a very extreme example of feminism. She does not accept her femininity. According to Müfide Ferit, women becoming masculine, deny their femininity, but due to their creation, they cannot be a man either. The author focuses on this aspect of feminism that attracts attention. These girls who deny their femininity can be neither men nor women. Furthermore, Müfide Ferit thinks that this way of thinking is a kind of extreme feminism, and it gives a harm to future generations (Yılmaz 2016, 35).

Non-ideal female characters in Müfide Ferit's novels are either characters who live in Western imitation and lack their own national culture or they are characters who cheat on their spouses by ignoring their own national and religious values. In this case, Müfide Ferit's feminism is a feminism that has not broken away from its own values.

In her book *Affolunmayan Günah*, published in 1933, she does not include nationalist discourses, but rather describes a forbidden love. It tells the longing of Sevda, a married woman, for her former love, Kurt. She criticizes the desire of women who have gained their social rights through the female characters in the novel to become sexually liberated

and be with different men. Sevda, the heroine of the novel, is a member of the Turkish Foundation (Türk Ocağı), a nationalist association. As a woman who appears both conservative and nationalist, she is criticized for having an illicit relationship (Özcan 1991, 25).

In her book *Aydemir* (1918), the woman character, Hazin, opened a school and started teaching. Her aim is to raise a young generation with national feelings such as love of homeland and nation. The teachers she trains will follow Demir's path and serve the same purpose (Tek, 2002). Here, Müfide Ferit emphasized the importance of the education of Turkish women. For her, the education of women is an important element in the destiny of society. Their ability to be present, to work for their country and to be a partner in the struggle expresses Müfide Ferit's thoughts on the women's movement (Çonoğlu 2022, 31). Hazin is a nationalist woman who is a member of the Turkish Foundation (TürkOcağı) and always supports Demir, the man she falls in love with. Hazin's life is dedicated to the cause of Demir, who is the ideal man in the novel. Because as a strong woman, she will always support the man she loves from behind the front (Yeter and Yeter 2020, 298).

In her stories called *Hayat Hanım* (1913) and *Gonca Kalfa* (1923), she included the situation of Ottoman society and women in the Tripoli and Balkan Wars. In the story called *Hayat Hanım*, Hayat, an idealist woman, is a self-sacrificing Turkish woman who sacrificed herself for the education of women during the difficult times of the country. She founded a school named Ev Hanımı Mektebi (Housewife School). Women studying at this school start a business for themselves and now take their place in society. HayatHanım, a woman who gives life to other woman in Ottoman Society, brings a prestige to the women who were ignored for years. In this school, women are given lessons such as sewing and cooking. Müfide Ferit asserts that it is critical for women to understand their basic feminine responsibilities in addition to not being reliant on anyone. The family, the foundation of society, will be safeguarded in this way (Atay 2022, 113). In the story, the main character Hayat Hanım says:

Just as every individual in the world has a duty towards society, a woman also has a duty, too. Her duty is to be a mother and housewife. How can a society that neglects each individual's duty survive? The woman will manage her home, raise her children well, and learn an art and skill without neglecting her children and husband. It is very important to learn the

innovations that benefit Turkishness and to know the etiquette for a woman (Ferit 1913, 442).

In the story, *Gonca Kalfa* (1923), she tells the story of Gonca, who was brought from Yemen to Istanbul by her uncle and sold as a servant to a mansion. In this story, she criticizes the fact that women are sold as slaves and draws attention to this problem. She tells about nameless, anonymous, and lonely women who are sold for money (Tek 1923). She also touches upon the women's issue in her articles written in different places and in the conferences she gave. For instance, she gave a conference on feminism at *Türk Kadını Dershanesi* which was opened in 1918 to provide education to Turkish girls. The text of her long speech at the conference was published in the 20th issue of the magazine called *Türk Kadını Mecmuası* dated 17 April 1335/1919 and in the 21st issue dated 8 May 1335/1919. In her speech, she expresses:

If our women are not going to work, they should start a clean, moral and heart-warming family; if they are going to start business life, they should work with men under suitable conditions. Half of humanity is female, and half is male. What is the point of excluding a part of this whole? Just as when half of a body remains paralyzed and idle, that body cannot walk, cannot survive vigorously, and is ultimately doomed to die. A society that does not lead, advance, and elevate its women cannot progress or live. What is feminism? They call feminism the profession of demanding that women be equal to men in civil, social, and political rights. While nations are working, societies are being born and formed, women are always assistants and companions to men, their position is completely equal to men, then as the nation becomes richer and tends towards debauchery, they expel women from their places and reduce them to the level of instruments of pleasure, tokens of wealth and let them live like that. There are also some inappropriate actions of women here. Nothing can be more natural than this. Women who are always kept under the restraints, without purpose and responsibility, sometimes as slaves, sometimes as toys, sometimes by being worshiped, sometimes by being beaten, of course cannot be responsible or capable of managing themselves. When they first find their reins free, they will naturally take their heads and run. Maybe in good ways, maybe in dangerous ways, probably the fault lies with those who keep them under control and prevent them from learning the ways (Tek 1919, 1).

And:

Feminism can occur only in three conditions. First, women will have the civil rights. The second condition is that they will have social rights and lastly legal rights. In this context, in her opinion, it is difficult for feminism to exist and be accepted in every society. Women cannot receive equal wages even if they do the same job as men. Additionally, women living in cities are not as

free as those living in villages. In villages, women can work in the fields with men, but in cities, women mostly stay at home. Women should not be isolated from the public sphere. Turkish culture is not a culture that isolates women, Turks should return to their essence. (Ibid, 1)

During her speech, she also touched upon religious issues. She examined the position of women in terms of different religions as follows:

In the 15th century, it was examined in the Christian world whether a woman had a soul or not. Could such a situation be possible? Half of humanity is male and female, the other half is female. How can half of humanity have a soul and the other half not? In the Jews, women are exalted in difficult times, but they are forgotten when they fall into pleasure. Islam, on the other hand, protected women in the Arab society, where women were not valued. Arabs could marry as many women as they wanted, and their daughters were buried alive. (Ibid, 2)

Müfide Ferit, who criticized societies' perspective on women under the guise of religion, also evaluated the place of women in different civilizations:

In Indian culture, women were first of all men's companions and then became their belongings. So much so that after the man dies, his wife is burned along with his belongings. When the Egyptian Civilization was first established, women were very valuable, but as the civilization weakened, the value of women decreased. In Arab culture, women have never been valuable. In the Greek Civilization, in the Middle Ages, women lived under the protection of their husbands, fathers or sons, without any legal rights. In Roman Civilization, women were also confined to the home. However, Roman women could not tolerate this issue and struggled on this issue. It is a fact that women are valued initially when states are being established, but when the danger passes and order is established, women are pushed to the background, and they are no longer needed. (Ibid, 2)

In her speech, she expressed what she believes. Turkish feminism should bring to Turkish women as follows:

First of all, Turkish women must have the right to work. A society or situation has not yet emerged that would allow Turkish women to be given political rights. Women and girls should be educated. Education should be given so that they can have a profession and get rid of being dependent on men. Women need a profession. (Ibid, 2)

Another place where she expressed her thoughts about feminism was her article called *Hanımlar Darülfunun'da Erkeklerle Aynı Dershanede Ders Yapmalımı Yapmamalımı?* (Should Ladies Study in

the Same Classroom as Men in Darülfunun?), published in the magazine *Büyük Mecmua*, in 1919. This was the date when there were discussions about women being educated in the same class with men at the country's first university called Darülfunun. She expresses her ideas as:

Women and men are obliged to act together in this difficult period when the country is in a difficult situation. The solution to this situation is not education in different places. New needs cannot be met with old customs (Tek 1919).

After examining feminism mostly from a Turkist standpoint, Müfide Ferit had a dream of a woman who could support herself and be financially independent. The association he founded in the first years of the Republic for the empowerment of women and their employment was an association that worked in this sense.

Conclusion

Müfide Ferit was a writer who believed that nationalism, the Turkish Union, and even the Turan ideal would save the occupied nation in the late Ottoman era. She is more well-known for her Turkist writings and opinions than for her feminist ones, but her perspective on feminism, however, is also striking. In her writings, the ideal female character is a Turkist, nationalist woman who constantly supports the man and is devoted to her customs. If a woman is a mother, she must raise a clean generation. She must give patriotic children to this country, but being a mother is not a woman's sole responsibility. A woman needs to be employed, have a talent, or have a profession. She must therefore be financially stable.

On the other hand, the non-ideal woman she describes in her novels is an unconscious European wannabe who is disconnected from her own culture. By marrying foreign men, these women either fully alienate themselves or they choose not to get married and even oppose marriage. Some of the women who refuse marriage dress and behave like men, believing that they are free. Müfide Ferit also takes issue with individuals who refer to this as feminism. This is genderlessness, not feminism, and it will undoubtedly lead to major issues for society down the road.

She contends that women should not be granted legal rights at this time. Women's labor is the top focus for her. Political rights are subordinated to economic power and independence. Women should

own a craft and work. Thus, they should support men. Therefore, Müfide Ferit's feminism is a feminism in which women stand behind men, support them, and raise individuals who are nationalists, loyal to their traditions, and who serve Turkishness.

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