TURKISH NATIONALISM: FROM EMPIRE TO REPUBLIC

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At the dawn of the 19th century, nationalism began to permeate multi-religious and multi-national empires and remained important for nearly 150 years. In the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, questions of how people define themselves and who they are became the main agenda item in political debates and power struggles. In its most general form, nationalism can be defined as a matter of belonging to a community. Nationalism refers to a particular community to which one feels one belongs, to which one defines who one is socially. When this reference has a specific ethno-cultural nomenclature and content, and when this content is transformed into a political program, it falls within the scope of nationalism.[1] Turkish nationalism also developed within the two multinational empires of the 19th century. The Ottoman Empire and the Russian Tsardom were the 19th-century owners of the historical spaces where Turkish nationalism took shape. In this study, the focus on the development of Turkish nationalism will be on the Ottoman Empire. From the 18th century onwards, the Ottoman Empire was challenged internally by the "ayans" and externally by various European powers, notably the Russian Tsardom. In the early 19th century, the Ottoman lands witnessed the first nationalist uprisings. The

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[1] Smith, A. D. (2010). Nationalism, Theory, İdeology, History, 2.Ed. Politiy Press. 5-7

general causes of internal and external challenges are beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, the study will focus only on the modernization and nationalist policies that the Ottomans implemented to deal with these challenges.[2] In order to deal with the problem of protecting the territories under its sovereignty, the Ottoman Empire had to both modernize and resort to a new ideology that could hold the society together. However, both continuing with the multinational imperial regime and building a modern state created a contradiction. In the 19th century, there was no healthy country other than the imperialist Great Britain that could solve this problem. Under these circumstances, Turkish nationalism emerged as a result of the aim to resolve the aforementioned contradiction. In this article, the historical adventure of Turkish nationalism will be analyzed within the framework of this contradiction.

Russia's invasion of Crimea in 1792 and France's invasion of Egypt in 1799 resulted in the loss of territories whose populations were predominantly Muslim and which had been considered important political centers before the rise of the Ottoman Empire. Accompanying these losses was the deterioration of central authority and the Ottoman territorial system, which crippled the state's ability to raise troops and collect taxes. When the Ottomans determined that ideological and political supremacy could no longer be sustained, they recognized the need for a more comprehensive implementation of reform. This also meant experimenting with new procedures from the West.[3] When the Ottoman Sultan Selim III attempted to introduce various reforms in finance, the army and the system—referred to as "nizam-ı cedit" (new order)—it was clear that this was not a return to the ancient laws of the Ottoman golden ages. Sultan Selim III sought to recapture the traditional power of the sultans through modern political means. He introduced some practical innovations without destroying tradition.[4] However, his efforts did not last long, and he was deposed in a rebel-

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[2] Karpat, Kemal H. (1972) "The transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908." International journal of Middle East Studies 3.3: 246-247

[3] Turan, N. S. (2004) "Osmanlı Diplomasisinde Batı İmgesinin Değişimi ve Elçilerin Etkisi (18. ve 19. Yüzyıllar)." Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 6 (2)., 57-86

[4] Başaran, Betül. (2014) Selim III, Social Control and Policing in Istanbul at the End of the Eighteenth Century: Between Crisis and Order. Brill, 78-80

lion. Unlike his predecessors, Mahmut II, who ascended to the throne with the support of the ayans and the penal administration, successfully overcame the ayans and the political actors in Istanbul. However, in the last years of his reign, the Egyptian issue caused him to interrupt his reform projects.

The Tanzimat Period was a product of the consensus between the palace and Bab-ı Âli that the problems faced by the Ottoman Empire could not be solved solely through administrative and military reforms. The necessity for new and comprehensive arrangements in the relations between the state and society was clearly reflected in the spirit of the Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayun (Tanzimat Fermanı).[5] On the other hand, the statesmen of the Tanzimat period had no doubt that the internal and external problems of the Ottoman Empire could not be separated from one another. The Ottoman rulers believed that in the imperial struggle known as the "Eastern Question," a balanced policy should be pursued in accordance with their domestic and foreign policy objectives.[6] Beginning in the early 19th century with the Serbs and Greeks, a series of revolts continued until the establishment of the republic, and the problems initially viewed as internal revolts became subjects of foreign intervention by European states. The idea that these problems had international ideological and cultural motivations, as well as administrative and financial discontent between the state and society, was brought to the forefront in the Treaty of Paris after the Crimean War (1854-1856) and was reflected in the text of the Islahat Fermanı (Royal Reform Edict). While the Edict of Reform stipulated equality between Muslims and non-Muslims, it also provided indirect advantages to non-Muslim communities. Through consulates, non-Muslims were de facto granted more freedom in education and the economy than Muslim subjects. This was met with backlash from the nascent Muslim middle classes.[7]

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[5] İnalcık, H. (2006). "Tanzimat Nedir?". Tanzimat: Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu (Ed). Seyidanlıoğlu, M. ve İnalcık, H. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.

[6] Çiçek, N. (2010). The Young Ottomans. London: I.B. Tauris.

[7] Findley, C. V. (2019). Modern Türkiye Tarihi. (Çev:Güneş Ayas) İstanbul:, Timaş Yayınları, 118-120

Tanzimat, Bureaucrats and Ottomanism

Since the beginning of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire underwent a massive transformation process in order to preserve its political existence. Two fundamental issues intersected this process. The first issue was the concern for maintaining the multi-ethnic and multi-religious structure of the Ottoman Empire due to its status as an empire. The second issue was the modernization of state and social life to preserve independence. Both issues are interconnected and intertwined to a great extent. The process that began with the Tanzimat Edict marks the abandonment of customary structures concerning both issues. The Ottomans had organized different religious groups side by side within the framework of the "millet system" and loyalty to the sultan.[8] Accompanying this was a socio-economic system of "erkan-ı erbaa", or four strata.[9] This classical order was replaced by disorder by the 19th century. The revolt in 1829, when Greek nationalists organized themselves with the Ethniki Eteria organization and eventually separated from the Ottoman Empire to establish a new state, is a concrete reflection of the ideas spread by the French Revolution. In the face of these and similar situations, the Ottomans felt the need to change the nature of their ideology of coexistence.[10] The socio-economic order, on the other hand, began to deteriorate rapidly at a time when the effects of capitalism had already crossed traditional customs. The process following the 1838 Treaty of Balta Port transformed the Ottoman economy in favor of capitalism and began to alter traditional social relations in the Ottoman port cities. The 1840 Vidin Rebellion and the 1860 Lebanon Revolt were events in which socio-economic and ethno-religious tensions were intertwined.[11]

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[8] Ortaylı, İ. (2008). Türkiye Teşkilat ve İdare Tarihi. Ankara:Cedit Neşriyat, 449-451. "Millet" doesn't mean nation in Ottoman Empire in 19th centruy. Millet, means religious community.

[9] Karpat, K. (2018). Osmanlı'da Milliyetçiliğin Toplumsal Temelleri. İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 32

[10] Hanioğlu, Ş. (1985). Osmanlıcılık. Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi, 5,, 1389-1393

[11] Wallerstein, I., Decdeli, H. ve Kasaba, R. (2002) The incorparation of The Ottoman Empire into world-economy. The Ottoman Empire and Word-Economy. (Ed) İslamoğlu, H.C. Cambridge University Press., 88-91

It did not take long for the Ottomans to realize that they needed a new principle for coexistence. The idea that dominated the Tanzimat Period was the formulation of the new unifying principle under the name of "Ottomanism". Ottomanism refers to a relationship of subordination and loyalty based on the concept of Ottomanism, prioritizing loyalty above all ethnic and religious affiliations that might tend toward separatist tendencies. Ottomanism was an attempt to adapt Western-type institutions to the Ottoman Empire while simultaneously responding to the nationalist ideas emerging in Europe. Ottomanism also points to the effort to produce a "Tanzimat man" as a human profile whose individuality is legally registered and who knows his responsibilities. Leaving ethnic and religious differences at the level of the individual, the idea of an artificial and abstract collective entity such as Ottomanism as a new collective structure became the main principle of the "order". For non-Muslims, especially the Orthodox ethnic communities in the Balkans, Ottomanism was largely an identity policy aimed at preventing their independence. Muslim groups such as Albanians and Arabs began to break with this Ottoman identity at a later stage, towards the end of the 19th century. When the masses in Egypt chanted "Down with the Turks" in 1881, they knew that these Turks were Ottomans.[12] The Tanzimat was conceived in the writing sets in the offices of Bab-ı Âli. However, in order to spread its innovations and principles to society, innovations were also needed in the field of culture and communication. In the words of Şerif Mardin, this situation points to the necessity of creating a public at the level of the state and the people. What is meant by "public" here is an integrated social sphere that emerges as a result of the relationship between language and the political institution. Mardin draws attention to the public at two levels. The first is the bureaucratic public functioning at the state level. The second is the general public, which also includes the bureaucratic public.[13] Until the last quarter of the 19th century, Ottoman bureaucratic elites, unlike their counterparts in Europe, did not have the support of a particular social class. Consequently, they lacked

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[12] Hanioğlu, Ş. Osmanlıcılık, 1390

[13] Mardin, Ş. (2006). Some consideration on the building of an Ottoman public identity in the nineteenth century. In Religion, Society and Modernity inTurkey. Syracuse University Press., 126-130

legitimate ideological and social bases other than the authority of the sultan when faced with a crisis of both their own power and the coexistence of society.

The search for belonging and loyalty beyond the sultan's charisma has been clearly reflected in edicts and minutes since the reign of Selim III (c. 1789-1807). Selim III, in his address to the men of state in the council of meşveret, felt the need to underscore the importance of belonging to an abstract idea of the state beyond his own existence by defining them as "shareholders of the state".[14] In 1810, Mahmut II delivered a speech to senior administrators during a divan convened to overcome the crisis created by the Ottoman-Russian War, explaining the importance of "the spirit of the ummah and the solidarity required by state affairs".[15] The main issue, reflected in the official minutes from the beginning of the Tanzimat, was the spirit of unity and integrity to be achieved at the state level. In order to achieve this, some modern concepts and reforms were employed. The formation of the bureaucratic public began to take shape within the work learning and work culture of the "kalemiye".[16] From there it moved on to army units and educational institutions. Therefore, the products of the aforementioned effort to create symbols of loyalty and belonging beyond the sultan's charisma also flourished in these institutions. In sum, with the Tanzimat Period, Ottomanism emerged as a response to the need for an integrative ideology and bureaucrats became the carriers of this ideology.

Islahat Edict and Patriotism of the Young Ottomans

The expansion of the press and publishing in Istanbul, along with a deeper understanding of social issues by Muslim students sent to Europe compared to the first generation of the Tanzimat, allowed for the emergence of intellectuals who could channel the reactions of the Muslim middle classes on a political level. As the Ottoman rulers sought to implement sweeping reforms to realize their vision of a modern state and sustain the empire, the traditional millet system was redefined,

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[14] Karal, E. Z. (1999) Selim III.'ün Hattı-ı Hümayunları. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları.

[15] Mardin, Ş. (2006) op.cit., 127-128

[16] Findley, C. V. (2011). Kalemiyyeden Mülkiyeye Osmanlı Memurlarının Toplumsal Tarihi. (Çev: Gül Çağlalı Güven). İstanbul: Türkiye Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları.

and the status of Muslims as "millet-i hakime" was diminished. Jour-nalists, as a new intellectual group, began to increase the sensitivity and solidarity of the Muslim middle class regarding identity and be-gan to oppose this reform project and the reformist Bab-ı Âli (Sublime Porte). Thus, the tension between the requirements of the modern state and the traditional codes of the spirit of unity began to be openly dis-cussed in the Ottoman capital.

When we examine the traditional political instruments of the Ot-toman Empire, we can see that instruments such as advice books, po-litical treatises, justice texts, and Sharia itself do not provide sufficient philosophical infrastructure for creating a modern political whole and collective spirit. One of the most concrete examples of this is that the numerous reforms aimed at modernizing the Janissary Corps, which continued for nearly two centuries, did not yield sufficient change in the motivation and mindset of the corps members as late as 1826.[17] Therefore, a new unifying principle required the gradual and selective absorption of Western liberal ideas. Efforts to strengthen the ideology of Ottomanism and provide it with a more fundamental motive emerged in the 1860s as a result of the reinterpretation of Western political ideas through an Islamic lens. Throughout the 1860s and 1870s, the influence of the Young Ottomans, as an oppositional group, began to be felt in newspaper circles, among exiles, in literary works, and in all areas that shaped Ottoman cultural life. The idea of Ottomanism also evolved in a different direction in the hands of the Young Ottomans.

Unlike the first generation of the Tanzimat, the Young Ottomans operated within the constraints of public opinion and new communi-cation techniques. İbrahim Şinasi founded Tercüman-ı Ahval (1860), which he considered essential for the dissemination of Istanbul Turk-ish. According to him, journalism is a public enlightenment activity. By using the term "general public," he refers to a concept that transcends the obedient connotation of "subjects." This horizon opened by Şinasi would lead to the idea that "the people are the only legitimate inter-locutor" on the path to constitutionalism. In the poems of this period, Tanpınar underscores the change in the way poetry is addressed to an

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[17] Berkes, N. (2017) Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma. (Çev: Ahmet Kuyaş). 25. Baskı. İstan-bul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları., 174-176

audience, rather than solely to the reader as in the past.[18] Şinasi highlights the distinction between subjects and the people from a liberal perspective, emphasizing the right of the people to express their opinions about the country in exchange for obeying the law and fulfilling their duties.[19]

The Young Ottomans, who initiated Turkish journalism in Europe with newspapers such as *Muhbir* and *Hürriyet*, used colloquial English and French in their publications. As was fashionable in Europe, the Young Ottomans were referred to as "Jeunes-Turcs" (Young Turks). In the political landscape of the period, the title "Jeunes" (young-new) was commonly applied to groups that transcended personal affiliations and infused concepts such as people, homeland, and constitution into political discourse and community life. Conversely, they appeared under different names in various newspapers. In the February 21, 1867, issue of *Muhbir*, the Young Ottomans were referred to as "Efkâr-ı Cedide Eshabı" (group of new ideas), and in an article by Namık Kemal in *Tasvir-i Efkar*, they were called "Erbab-ı Şebabı of Turkistan" (young community of Turkish hands). As Tütengil states, the core of the conscious or unconscious manifestation of ideas of freedom and nationality can be observed in the Young Ottomans.[20]

The emphasis on the language of the people served as an infrastructure for individuals to participate in politics as political actors. Through the concept of "homeland," the Young Ottomans endeavored to create the motivation for all Ottoman elements to remain united. For Namık Kemal, the concept of homeland encompassed more than just a limited geographical area. He invoked a romantic image that transcended the land referred to by the dynasty as "property." The homeland is "a binding space in which the memories of ancestors reside, and in which the memories of one's own youth and past experiences all have a place."[21] In his essay entitled "Vatan," Namık Kemal depicts

[18] Tanpınar, A.H. (1988) 19.Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi. 7.Baskı. İstanbul:Çağlayan Kitabevi., 251

[19] Mardin, Ş. (2006) op.cit., 129

[20] Tütengil, C. O. (2011) Yeni Osmanlılardan Bu Yana İngiltere'de Türk Gazeteciliği 1867-1967. İstanbul:Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları., 20

[21] Mardin, Ş. (2015) Yeni Osmanlı Düşüncesinin Doğuşu. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları., 362

the homeland as an object of conscientious and emotional love. With this love for the homeland, he advocates for social unity, the foundation of a new unifying principle. According to Namık Kemal, a person loves their homeland because it is where their life begins; because it is where their material existence unfolds; because it holds traces of their past; because it is where they find their freedom, comfort, interests, and well-being; because it is the home of those with whom they share language and interests; because it is the playground of their future children; and because they share in the sovereignty over this land.[22] Many of the reasons for love of the homeland listed by Namık Kemal aim to encourage ordinary people to cherish the homeland, rather than loyalty to a ruler. For example, the comfort of individuals is mentioned alongside their freedom. The unity of homeland, language, and interests was considered more important than merely being subjects of the same sultan. Namık Kemal transformed the notion of "stakeholder" that Selim III had conferred upon statesmen into a partnership of the people in sovereignty.

Considering the popularity of the concept of homeland and the meanings attributed to it by Namık Kemal, it can be said that Young Ottoman thought encompasses three aspects. First, the idea of human beings as individuals—where the homeland is the place where the sum of these individuals resides—has a liberal tone. Secondly, the common values around which all Ottomans would cluster are expressed as the unity of language, interests, and homeland. We can refer to this as a form of Ottoman patriotism. This is because neither Namık Kemal nor the other Young Ottomans included a principle related to Turkishness in their political program and objectives. They viewed Turkishness as a cultural phenomenon. Thirdly, they perceived the public as the social counterpart of public opinion. For the Young Ottomans, the legitimate source of sovereignty was the approval of the people. In determining the approval of the people as the main principle for sovereignty, they drew from both Islamic and Western sources, creating a kind of synthesis.

These ideas began to gain popularity after 1856. The Young Ottomans disseminated these ideas through newspapers. For many Muslim

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[22] Namık Kemal, "Vatan", İbret, 12 Mart 1873.

Ottoman subjects, who felt that their position as "millet-i hakime" (sovereign nation) was endangered after the Edict of Reform, there arose a need to respond to non-Muslims' efforts to legitimize their separatist demands with administrative and political negativity. This Muslim middle class perceived traditional answers as inadequate. Therefore, they found new arguments in the newspapers of the Young Ottomans. The Ottoman bureaucrats recognized the necessity of developing a new policy towards the interventionist European states. Constitutional rule became a desirable solution for urban Muslim subjects. After 1871, Ottoman bureaucrats gradually accepted the necessity of constitutionalism as a survival strategy. Thus, by 1876, both wings of Ottoman public opinion—the upper wing, the bureaucrats, and the lower wing, the literate Muslims—were reconciled around the ideas of the Young Ottomans. The Young Ottomans based the ideological foundation of their survival strategy on Muslim-Ottoman patriotism. The institutionalization of this ideology marked the transition to a constitutional regime. The first constitutional step in Ottoman-Turkish modernization was implemented in 1876. The background of this institutional-constitutional innovation is significant in illustrating the close relationship between patriotism and democracy in the Ottoman Empire.

The Young Ottomans' arguments included theses about the relationship between a modern state and its society. According to them, a modern state derives its power first and foremost from its own people. The administration is strictly responsible for the happiness and security of the people. The people have rights and duties towards the state that are defined by law. The legitimate foundations of the state are based on the principles of Sharia, which, in turn, is grounded in the "allegiance" of all subjects. The sultan-khalifa has the right to rule; however, the sultan-khalifa must consult the representatives of the people in his governance. The allegiance is not absolute but is contingent upon the protection of individual rights. All these determinations led to the realization that the legitimate basis of power is the people, and the legitimate will of the people is embodied in a "parliament." The Young Ottomans' ideas on political representation reference the social contract tradition. This social contractualist content is framed by Islamic norms and customs. Therefore, while the idea of a unity

of elements (Ottomanism) can be defined as patriotism in ideological terms, the concept of a parliament representing this unity emerged in institutional terms. Ziya Bey (Pasha), one of the leading figures of the Young Ottomans, wrote in the 99th issue of the Hürriyet newspaper, "In the administrative republic, there is no sultan, emperor, grand vizier, or foreign minister. The sultan of the country is (...) the people of the country."[23]

It can be said that the period leading up to the Young Turk era presented primitive manifestations of nationalism and modernization in the political sphere. With the expansion of the new public opinion created by the Young Ottomans, the idea of Ottoman patriotism, as a proto-nationalism, continued to grow in influence. Ottoman patriotism, like other ideas proposed throughout the 19th century as a survival strategy to prevent the dissolution of the empire, was primarily embraced by Turks. As Hanioğlu points out, very few groups other than the Turks leaned towards Ottomanism.[24] On the other hand, in institutional terms, the constitution and parliament were seen as the only political arrangements that could hold the various elements together. The experience gained from the Tanzimat's "Şura-yı Devlet"[25] and provincial assemblies yielded positive results during Mithat Pasha's governorships in the Danube and Iraq. Relying on this experience, the constitutionalist Ottomans envisioned the constitutional order as the tool that would accelerate modernization and ensure "ittihad-ı anasir" when they succeeded in declaring constitutionalism through a revolutionary attempt.[26]

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[23] Eraslan, C. (1994). Yeni Osmanlılar'dan Atatürk'e Türk Aydınında Cumhuriyet Düşüncesi. İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi. Takdim Tezi., 13

[24] Hanioğlu, op.cit., 1391

[25] Tarık Zafer Tunaya gives the following information about the Şura-yı Devlet. The Şura-yı Devlet (1868) gathered the powers to supervise the state budget and to personally deal with the reform demands of the provincial administrative councils. Moreover, the first Şura-yı Devlet was in line with the principle of Ottomanism in that it was composed of 28 Muslim and 12 non-Muslim members, representing the Ottoman elements in general. The institution was an important step in the preparation for the Constitutional Monarchy.

[26] Ortaylı, İ. (2018). İlk Osmanlı Parlamentosunun Yapısında Eyalet İdare Meclislerinin Etkisi. Batılılaşma Yolunda içinde. Ortaylı, İ.. 4.Baskı. İstanbul: İnkılap Yayınları., 79-83

Abdülhamid II and the Islamic Community Nationalism

The Ottoman Empire began the year 1875 with a financial and political crisis. On April 13, rebellions erupted in Herzegovina, followed by uprisings in Bosnia and Bulgaria in May, which rapidly strained the atmosphere in the Balkans. In the same year, Britain's policy of protecting the territorial integrity of the Ottomans against Russia, a stance maintained since the beginning of the 19th century, changed.[27] The rising anti-Turkish sentiment in Britain should be added to this shift. These rebellions, combined with the change in British policy, led the Ottoman Empire to take swift and radical measures. Public opinion, which had been developing for nearly forty years and whose voices could be heard through newspapers, also played a significant role in this context. In the foreign press, the orientalist discourse on Ottoman/Muslim identity began to focus specifically and directly on the Turks. Dr. George Washburn, a missionary teacher at Robert College in Istanbul, repeatedly informed British and American diplomats that the Turks were ignorant, barbaric, and inferior people from Asia, that they were not inclined towards progress and civilization, and that this perception was also rooted in their Islamic beliefs. The information received by the foreign press through missionaries and embassies in the Ottoman Empire was full of allegations regarding the horrific massacre of Turks in Bulgaria.[28] Domestic public opinion, in contrast, emphasized the massacres committed by Bulgarians against Turkish peasants and framed the issue as a defense of Muslim identity against the rebellion. Against this backdrop, it was decided to convene a conference in Istanbul under the leadership of Britain and Russia. The conference aimed to openly intervene in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire.

The policy of Ottomanism underwent changes due to international developments and the fact that Muslims constituted the majority of the population in the Ottoman lands. In 1878, the results of the Ottoman-Russian War were disastrous for the Ottomans. Based on these

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[27] Rautsi. I, (1993) The Eastern Question Revisited: Case Studies in Ottoman Balance of Power. Helsinki: Helsinki Printing House.

[28] Çiçek, N. (2017). "Bulgarian Horrors" Revisited: the Many-Layered Manifestations of the Orientalist Discourse in Victorian Political Construction of the External, Intimate and Internal Other. Belleten, 81(291), 52

circumstances, the sultan-caliph consolidated power in the palace. In 1878, when Abdülhamid II consolidated his power, the constitution was suspended, and the activities of parliament were halted for 30 years. At a time when authority was concentrated in the palace and the Young Ottomans were exiled along with their ideals, the politics of Ottomanism evolved in an Islamic direction by emphasizing the caliphate. Although Ottomanism had always persisted as an ideal until the end of the empire, it had lost its social relevance after the Tanzimat Period.[29] The unifying principle that had evolved into Ottoman patriotism with the Young Ottomans was transformed into a discourse that emphasized the spirit of the Islamic community and highlighted the Ottoman caliphate during the reign of Abdülhamid II.

It can be said that the Abdülhamid II period had two main ideological axes. The first is the palace-centered and ummah-based discourse that emphasizes the caliphate and has a Pan-Islamist tone. The second is the formation of a populist reflex in response to socio-economic problems. Both found expression in a reactionary manner on the political ground. Both ideas aimed to mobilize the objections of ordinary people against the hegemony of the West. The Abdülhamid II period was dominated by a more closed ethic that emphasized discipline and a turn inward, contrasting with the liberal and tolerant social ethic of the Tanzimat. Additionally, it contained elements that emphasized the cultural characteristics of the Muslim lower and middle classes. Therefore, the ethical understanding of the period aimed to establish a connection between ordinary people and the center of power through symbols. The bureaucratic public of the Tanzimat had expanded to a public of literate people with the Young Ottomans. The Abdülhamid II period broadened this public to include illiterate segments, with the concept of homeland extending beyond their villages into regions where the European economic system spread.[30]

In his article on the change in the public image of the state during the reign of Abdülhamid II, Selim Deringil points to the influence of "pan-ideologies" (Pan-Slavism, Pan-Germanism, etc.). Abdülhamid II carried out ummah-based propaganda from a Pan-Islamist framework.

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[29] Hanioğlu, op.cit., 1391
[30] Ahmet Cevdet Paşa. (2021). 19.Yüzyılda Osmanlı Devlet Yönetimi Tezakir 1. Cilt. 2.Baskı. İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınları.

However, unlike other "pan" ideologies, this propaganda was not expansionist but defensive. Pan-Islamist propaganda covered Africa, India, Turkestan, and Arab regions.[31] Karpat categorizes the nationalism of the period into two types. The first is nationalism that evaluates those within the borders of a certain country based on the principle of a single nation. The second, which he conceptualizes as communal nationalism, is the nationalism that includes the responsibility of being the protector and guardian of ethnic and religious relatives outside the borders of the country. It can be said that a kind of Muslim community nationalism was emphasized during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid.[32] In addition, an attempt was made to respond to the claims of an Arab caliphate, which were circulated with the encouragement of the British. Therefore, the ideological tone of the unifying principle shifted in an Islamic direction. The reflections of this Islamic emphasis can also be seen in domestic politics. There was a shift from the Ottomanism of the Tanzimat period, which emphasized the equality of all elements, to an ummahist Ottomanism that underlined the universal concerns of Muslims during the reign of Abdülhamid II. The leading statesmen of the period, Ahmet Cevdet Pasha and Şirvanizade Rüşdü Pasha, were also proponents of the nationalist campaign against the Muslim community[33] Abdülhamid II engaged in defensive counter-propaganda at a time when imperialism and biological racism were on the rise in Europe. Since this propaganda activity required a certain intellectual capacity and practical thinking, it facilitated the development of more systematic thought practices in the Ottoman Empire. While modern schools trained cadres who could compete with their Western counterparts, they also allowed new ideas to flourish. Initially, the intellectual efforts brought about by propaganda worked in favor of the palace, but over time they also allowed the development of dissenting ideas. The Sultan not only had the works of Muslim philosophers such as al-Ghazali simplified and distributed but also allowed modern science

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[31] Deringil, S. (1993). "The Invention of Tradition as Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1808 to 1908" Comparative Studies in Society and History. (35)1., 4-12
[32] Karpat, K. (2004). Balkanlarda Osmanlı Mirası ve Ulusçuluk. (Çev:Recep Boztemur). Ankara:İmge Yayınları., 13
[33] Duguid, S. (1973). "The Politics of Unity: Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia," Middle Eastern Studies, (9)., 139-155.

to be included in school curricula. This attitude of Abdülhamid II is a concrete example of the tension mentioned at the beginning of this article. The tension between the requirements of modernity and the preservation of tradition can be clearly seen in school curricula.[34]

Secondly, the socio-economic reaction that developed outside the official propaganda fermented populist reactionism among the Muslim Ottoman subjects. Populism expressed the collective reaction of the Ottoman productive class, especially artisans and peasants. The privileged position of the Ottoman court and foreign entrepreneurs led to the rapid politicization of economic problems. As the Muslim middle classes and peasants were caught between the identity propaganda of the Ottoman court and the requirements of the new economic relations, the crisis among the literate spread to the wider masses.

This tension is between remaining the same and changing. Traditional social codes were based on Islamic principles and local customs. Modernity, on the other hand, involved the necessities of survival for the Ottomans. To overcome this tension, alternative theses were put forward from the Tanzimat period onwards. Another alternative thesis gradually began to develop in the field of culture. Turkism emerged in this period not as a political program but as a cultural curiosity. Although the Ottomans' interest in Turkish history as an element of their own, outside the known traditional codes, began with the Tanzimat period, it spread among the literate masses during the reign of Abdülhamid II.

Cultural Turkism in Late Ottoman
The 1860s witnessed a series of developments in which the Ottoman public became increasingly interested in the Central Asian Turks. Ahmet Vefik (later Pasha) translated Abu-l Gazi Bahadır Khan's "Evşâl-ı Şecere-î Türkî" from Chagatai Turkish into Ottoman Turkish in *Tasvir-i Efkar* during 1863-1864. In his *Dictionary of Ottoman Turkish*, written in 1876, he stated that Ottomans spoke a dialect of Turkish. Ali Suavî, also a Young Ottoman in the 1860s, wrote articles about the language and history of Turks in the newspaper *Ulûm*, published in Paris.

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[34] Mardin, Ş. (2012). 19.yy'da Düşünce Akımları ve Osmanlı Devleti, Türk Modernleşmesi. (Der: Türköne, M. ve Önder, T.). İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları., 81-100

Mustafa Celaleddin Pasha's book *Les Turcs anciens et modernes*, written in French, was influential for the future Young Turks due to its theoretical background and historical material. With its anthropological assertions, the book expresses the influence of material developments on the nature and outlook of societies. Another noteworthy work of the period before Abdülhamid II, which contributed to the transition from cultural Turkism to political nationalism in terms of its results, is *Tarih-i Âlem* by Süleyman Hüsnü Pasha, the commander of the Mekteb-i Harbiye. The emphasis on the army maintaining the original traditions of the Turks, references to the Turkishness of the Ottoman dynasty, and the qualities of the Turks in the human world influenced the Ottoman officers who were tasked with saving the state and basing this salvation on a certain social ideology and institutional framework.

Sultan Abdülhamid II attempted to make Arabic the official language of the state in 1878, but Mehmet Said Pasha prevented this attempt by saying that "this would be the end of Turkishness and the collapse of the state".[35]

During this period, studies on cultural nationalism were not subjected to any significant restrictions. In his articles published in *Sabah* and *İkdam* newspapers, Şemseddin Sami classified Ottoman Turkish as "garb-i Türkler" and the Turkish dialects of Central Asia as "şark-i Türkler," positioning the Ottomans as members of the Turkish family. From 1893 onwards, *İkdam*, one of the most important newspapers of the period, was published with the subtitle "Türk gazetesidir." In 1897, Mehmet Tahir, in his work titled "Türklerin Ulûm ve Fünûna Hizmetleri" (*Services of Turks to the Sciences and Arts*), stated that one-third of the people who contributed to the spread of Islam and the acquisition of scientific knowledge were Turks. In 1898, Necip Asım translated Ali Şir Nevaî's "Muhamatu'l Lügateyn," in which he compares Persian and Turkish, into Ottoman Turkish. Based on this work, Necip Asım asserted that the original Turkish language was "fantastically" adequate for life in modern times.[36] At the beginning of the 20th century, although tightening censorship restricted the study of Turk-

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[35] Karal, E. Z. (1983) Osmanlı Tarihi Cilt 8. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları. 402
[36] Kuran, E. (1995) "19.yy'da Milliyetçiliğin Türk Eliti Üzerindeki Etkisi". (Ed). William Pork and Richard L. Chambers. Ortadoğu'da Modernleşme. İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları., 157-167

ish culture in the Istanbul press, it was still possible to find newspapers publishing articles on Turkish language and culture in important provincial cities such as Izmir, Thessaloniki, and Trabzon. The 1897 Ottoman-Greek War reinforced the emphasis on Turkishness in a romantic tone. Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul) prepared a series of poems for the newspaper *Asır* in Thessaloniki to motivate the soldiers. The second of these poems contains an explicit national declaration: "*I am a Turk; my religion and my ethnicity are great.*" Heyd highlights an important feature of Mehmet Emin's poems and writings. According to him, Mehmet Emin writes in a tone that mobilizes the poor and desperate peasants of Anatolia. Heyd's assessment is largely correct.[37] The poetry and writings of this cultural phase of Turkish nationalism expressed the opposition of Turkish peasants in Anatolia, who were frustrated by the regime and the government's tax oppression. These peasants were well-informed enough to compare their situation with both non-Muslims and foreigners. Moreover, Ahmet Mithat's novels in the folk tale genre expanded the aforementioned general public by voicing the problems faced by ordinary people in various centers of the Ottoman provinces. Writing about the daily lives of ordinary people made it easier for these individuals to take an interest in public opinion.[38] Therefore, the nationalist-populist call, which would later emerge as the "towards the people" movement, did not go unanswered by Anatolian Turks.[39]

Article 18 of the 1876 Constitution recognized Turkish as the official language. This was accompanied by a mobilization to use plain Turkish in *iptidai*, *rüştiye* and *idadiye*. *Harbiye*, *Tıbbiye* and *Mülkiye* were conscious of using Turkish. Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz Pasha wrote in his memoirs that Turkishness was the main motivation that accompanied the efforts of cadets and privates to regain their strength. However, he notes that this motivation was very weak in 1883 but de-

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[37] Heyd, U. (1950). Foundations of Turkish nationalism: The life and teachings of Ziya Gökalp. <u>Luzac And Company Ltd.,</u> 108

[38] Mardin, Ş. (1991). Kültür ve Kitle. Türk Modernleşmesi. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları., 297. Also see: Mardin, Ş. (1974). "Super Westernization in Urban Life in the Ottoman Empire in the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century". In *Turkey*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.

[39] Karal, E. Z. (1983) Osmanlı Tarihi Cilt 8. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları. 402

veloped over time. In 1897, Goltz Pasha, referring to the influence of ethno-symbolist Turkism among the literate, stated that the Turks had found the unifying principle they were looking for and that they could establish their own "kulturstaat" (state inspired by Turkish and Islamic values).[40]

It cannot be said that this kind of nationalism, which developed at the cultural level, transformed into a political program during the reign of Abdülhamid II. However, it has a remarkable aspect. At a time when Ottomanism maintained its official supremacy and Islamism legitimized this supremacy, Turkism emerged as a distinct and vibrant cultural phenomenon.

Jeune Turc, From Secular Patriotism to Turkish Nationalism

The Young Turk (Jeune Turc) Movement can be divided into two distinct phases based on a unifying ideology. The first phase spans the years 1889 to 1909, while the second extends from 1909 to 1922. During the first period, secular Ottoman patriotism was prominent, whereas Turkish nationalism gained greater significance in the second phase. The concept of secular Ottoman patriotism in the first phase corresponds to the time when the movement was in opposition. In the second phase, the movement functioned either as the protector of the constitutional monarchy or as a governing entity. These two phases will be analyzed below, highlighting their continuities and ruptures.

The Young Turk movement exemplifies the concrete impact of the expanding Ottoman public opinion over nearly half a century. In the last decades of the 19th and early 20th centuries, both wings of Ottoman public opinion deliberated on the state of affairs in the country. After 1878, the Ottomans were increasingly convinced of the need for urgent and permanent solutions. This led to a heightened significance attached to the concepts of homeland, freedom, and representation. The foremost issue was the loss of territory, which represented not only a loss of living space but also a loss of historical honor. Rebellions were perceived as internal causes of these territorial losses. Non-Muslim subjects were thought to have weakened their loyalty to the state by

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[40] Karpat, K. (2005) Tarih Süreklilik, Kimlik Değişimi ya da Yenilikçi, Müslüman, Osmanlı ve Türk Olmak. Osmanlı Geçmişi ve Bugünün Türkiye'si (Der) Karpat, K. (Çev: Sönmez Taner). 2.Baskı. İstanbul:İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları., 46

lacking representation, which led them to seek protection from European powers. The primary reason for the revolts was identified as poor governance. For the Young Turks, poor governance signified a lack of freedom. In response to this situation, secret organizations that considered themselves the heirs of the Young Ottomans began to emerge. The first phase of the Young Turk movement was shaped around one of these secret organizations.

France's acquisition of Tunisia in 1881 and Britain's acquisition of Egypt in 1882, along with the revolt of the Bulgarians in 1885 and the establishment of the Armenian insurgent organizations named Hunchak in 1887 and Dashnaktsutyun in 1890, illustrate that the Ottoman Empire continued to lose its political power rapidly. For the Ottoman intellectuals of the period, the causes of the structural problems created by this situation pointed to two main categories: modernization and the issue of the unifying principle of society. The nomenclature of the Union and Progress is noteworthy as it reflects the search for a solution to this fundamental problem. The Ittihad-i Osmani organization, founded in 1889, although it had a cell-type organization, exhibited a predominantly intellectual outlook until the Armenian terrorism of the 1890s. The founders of this first organization at the Military Medical School were students named İshak Sukûti, Mehmet Reşit, Abdullah Cevdet, İbrahim Temo, and Hüseyinzâde Ali. These students were Ottoman patriots who aimed for the proclamation of a constitutional monarchy. They were all Muslims and came from cosmopolitan areas of the Ottoman Empire, specifically from middle and lower-middle-class families.[41]

The Young Turks do not constitute a coherent and homogeneous structure in general. Different currents of ideas and prescriptions for salvation managed to find a place within the Young Turk movement. The organization developed from 1889 to 1908, becoming more concentrated in terms of ideas. Founded in 1889 at the Military Medical School under the name "Union of Ottomans", the group was renamed the "Committee of Union and Progress" in 1894. Despite the influence of various individuals and ideas, the common goal of the Young Turk

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[41] Akşin, S. (2017). Jön Türkler ve İttihat ve Terakki, 8.Baskı, Ankara: İmge Yayınevi.,48-52

movement was shaped around the question of "how to save this state." The various answers given to this question constitute the ideological aspect of the leadership struggle within the Committee of Union and Progress.

The leadership conflict between Ahmet Rıza Bey and Prince Sebahaddin Bey in 1902 caused a split in the movement. The background to this tension was disagreement over what the reform prescription should be and how it should be implemented. Intellectuals like Ahmet Rıza and Prince Sebahaddin represented secular Ottoman patriotism as the unifying principle. The main difference between the two thinkers lay in whether to integrate the Ottoman subjects through equal, centralist political citizenship or a federal, individualist reform program that preserved privileges and prerogatives. This tension surfaced in the Young Turks' publications and debates in Europe. Unlike their predecessors, the Young Ottomans, Ahmet Rıza and Prince Sebahaddin shared a more secular program.

The Young Turk movement gained real momentum in 1895 when Ahmet Rıza, the former agricultural director of Bursa, published the newspaper *Mechveret* in Paris. A year earlier, Ahmet Rıza had been in contact with the Ittihad-i Osmanî organization in Istanbul, and the name of this organization was changed to the "Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress." It is no coincidence that this momentum began in 1895 with a propaganda mechanism. In 1894, the British consul in Van organized a trip to Bitlis to inspect the reforms in the Armenian areas. Shortly thereafter, the Sason Rebellion broke out and was brutally suppressed. When Britain's protest and open interference in Ottoman internal affairs were rejected by the Ottoman government, Armenians in Istanbul began to agitate and riot. Violent protests between Muslims and Armenians lasted for three days and could only be suppressed with difficulty.

In May 1895, a Christian governor was appointed to Crete, where tensions had been escalating for two years, under pressure from Britain. In response, members of the Committee of Union and Progress secretly distributed two leaflets in Istanbul, emphasizing that the acts of violence and foreign intervention in the Ottoman realm were the consequence of "istibdat." At the same time, Ahmet Rıza in Paris presented Abdulhamid II with six papers on the state of the country and

a "prescription." He began publishing *Mechveret* in French, addressing international public opinion. Sultan Abdülhamid II responded to these reactions and suggestions with arrest orders, leading many prominent members of the society—such as Mizancı Murat, Temo, Sukûti, Tunalı Hilmi, Âkil Muhtar, and Dr. Nazım—to flee to Europe. Although various action plans were formulated, no significant results were achieved.

Between 1896 and 1902, the society made efforts to organize and establish a unity of purpose. In 1897, the center of the student organization shifted from the Military Medical School to the Harbiye Mektebi (Military School). This change is significant for two reasons. First, on a practical level, Harbiye had a much higher potential for action compared to Tıbbiye and Mülkiye. Second, at the theoretical level, the education at Harbiye included much more Turkish culture and history than the other two institutions. The harmony between modernization and the ideology of unity was more pronounced at Harbiye than in any other school. It was the only high school where the alignment between modern individuals capable of using Western tactics and equipment and the unifying ideology needed by Ottoman society was achieved. Secular practices and shared convictions about Turkish culture were defining characteristics of the officers trained there. The effects of this before and after 1908 are significant for Turkish nationalism.

Although this first generation of "cemiyet" had ideologically different characteristics, their commonalities can be summarized as follows: Rather than loyalty to a dynasty, Ottomanism expresses the effort to preserve the historical unity of the people who have lived in this homeland. Liberty is defined as the absence of any arbitrary power that limits individual goals. Human life, like that of objects, exists in a material world, which can only be understood through the methods and principles of science. An educational program should be prepared in accordance with this understanding. The Ottoman country can be saved by a program based on scientific principles, which can only be created by a parliament composed of enlightened individuals. Ottomans should be able to express their wishes and complaints in the political arena through their representatives.

From these commonalities, it is clear that the first generation of Young Turks emphasized the proclamation of constitutionalism, the inculcation of scientific principles in the public through education, ad-

herence to the requirements of modern governance in their projects, and the insistence that there would be no exceptions to the rules in the identification and solution of social problems. Thus, Ottomanism began to move toward a secular and contractual foundation.

The first generation of Young Turks understood the social aspects of these problems better than their Young Ottoman predecessors. Their conviction that institutional modernization alone is not enough is striking; however, unlike their predecessors, their secular tendencies were much more pronounced. The idea that life is a matter of struggle and will, as well as a divine gift, entered political and social discourse as a result of the Young Turks' publications. Consequently, they gave new meaning to the concepts of individual and nation by emphasizing alternative ties such as interest, history, language, race, age, and political comradeship, moving beyond the religious ties that constituted the principle of loyalty in the traditional millet system of Ottoman society.

The Congress of Ottoman Liberals, held from February 4 to 9, 1902, was marked by a rivalry between Sebahattin, the son of Damat Mahmut Pasha, and the Ahmet Rıza group. The congress began by underscoring an important situation: the distinction between the Turkish people and the Ottoman government. Prince Sebahattin emerged as the main figure of the congress. In his speech, he asserted that the nation-i hakim (the ruling nation) and the Turks, who constituted the numerical majority, favored granting equal rights to everyone, regardless of whether they were Muslim or non-Muslim. These statements reflect that "Turk" as a political category was accepted by other community organizations and the Young Turks.

Conversely, a distinction was made between the Ottoman administration and the Turkish people, indicating that the rights and interests of Turks were not upheld during the reign of Abdülhamid II. Nevertheless, it was clear that the ideals of Ottomanism persisted. In the final declaration of the congress, it was emphasized that peace and agreement should be established "between citizens of different religions and races, without any discrimination" in the Ottoman lands. This article, which explicitly references social contract theory, underscores that Ottomanism was formed on a secular basis with a political bond. In the congress declaration, the addressed audience was identified as "patriotic Ottomans." Among the demands highlighted were the restoration

of the country's integrity, the cessation of terrorist movements, and the promulgation of a constitution.

Disagreements emerged regarding reforms in accordance with the provisions of the Berlin Treaty and the supervision of foreigners. The Ahmet Rıza group rejected this article, asserting their opposition to any intervention that would undermine the independence of the Ottoman Empire. Meanwhile, Ahmet Rıza raised the issue of Turkish rights, pointing out that all non-Muslims had patrons, while the Turks had neither the support of the Sultan nor the protection of Europe. The Armenians also clarified their aims, stating that they agreed on a regime change but would pursue their own plans following the establishment of a constitutional government.[42]

As a result of the congress, it is evident that the Ahmet Rıza group shifted towards a new direction within the Young Turk movement, placing greater emphasis on themes of an independent state, rational administration, and constitutional order. In contrast, Sebahattin focused on sociological studies with a decentralized, individualistic approach that was favorable to foreign intervention under certain conditions.

The 1902 congress serves as an important starting point for the Young Turks' stance on the idea of Turkish nationalism. For the first time in a political congress, the rights of the Turkish people were explicitly highlighted, and the Turkish character of the state was discussed, albeit implicitly. However, it cannot yet be said that Turkish nationalism had evolved into a fully-fledged political program. While these developments in Paris influenced the realm of ideas, the second generation of the Young Turk movement was flourishing in the Rumelia provinces. This generation was predominantly composed of soldiers, civil servants, and teachers in bureaucratic positions. Being on the ground in the Balkans, they had a clearer understanding of the Ottoman Empire's deteriorating situation and pursued more practical objectives than their counterparts in Paris.

In 1903, escalating tensions in Thessaloniki, Bitola, and Kosovo led to the convening of a congress in Vienna on February 21. Russia and

[42] Ramsour, E. E. (2013) Genç Türkler ve İttihat Terakki: 1908 İhtilalinin Hazırlık Dönemi. (Çev: Etkin Yayıncılık.78-83

Austria, using the unrest in Macedonia as a pretext, proposed measures to eliminate the de facto control of the Ottoman Empire over these provinces. Bulgarian and Serbian gangs detonated explosives at the Thessaloniki branch of the Ottoman Bank, while the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization initiated a general revolt. These events persisted until 1904, resulting in the displacement of many Muslims. In exchange for mediation, Britain and Germany extracted new financial concessions from the Ottoman government.

The gang activities in the Balkans, Armenian persecution, foreign interventions, and the temporary occupation of certain areas in the Aegean Sea by European navies under flimsy pretexts provoked a serious reaction among the Ottoman public. Collectively, these processes generated an urgent need among the Young Turks to take action against the dire situation facing the Ottoman Empire.[43]

As was customary, government officials in Istanbul viewed these revolts as provocations by Europe, perceiving them as disputes that could be resolved between the sultan and his subjects. However, this perspective was not shared by the young officers serving in the armies of Rumelia, many of whom were sympathetic to Young Turk ideology. These officers had closely observed the motivations and organization of the revolutionary gangs. In this atmosphere, the second generation of the Young Turk movement began to develop ideas centered on modernization and unity, which they deemed essential for the survival of the state. Unlike their predecessors, they emphasized activism, considering public support to be secondary.

In 1906, a society called the "Ottoman Freedom Society" emerged, quickly gaining traction among military and civilian bureaucrats in the Rumelia provinces. Among its founders were Bursalı Tahir, Naci (Yücekök), Mehmet Talat, Mithat Şükrü (Bleda), Ömer Naci, Kazım Nami, İsmail Canbolat, Hakkı Baha, and Edip Servet. This movement, whose founders would later become prominent figures in Turkish nationalism, established contact with the Committee of Union and Progress in Paris. Upon learning of their activities, the government swiftly demanded their arrest. In 1907, Talat, Ömer Naci, and Hüsrev Sami

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[43] Shaw, S. J. ve Shaw, E. K. (1994). Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Modern Türkiye Cilt 2. (Trans: Mehmet Harmancı). İstanbul: e Yayınları., 261-263

fled to Paris, where they met with Ahmet Rıza's team. On September 27, 1907, the Ottoman Freedom Society merged with the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress. This new structure adopted the name of the former organization and assumed its legacy, while also choosing to maintain its activist character and secretive nature.

In October 1906, Enver (Paşa), who would later become a significant figure in the Turanist movement, joined the society. In the fall of 1907, İsmet (İnönü) and Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), who would later lead the Turkish nationalist movement, became members in 1908.[44] The merger of these groups laid the groundwork for the emergence of the main cadre that would bring about the Constitutional Monarchy in 1908. The new organization of the Committee of Union and Progress became a crucial platform for the development of Turkish nationalism. While secular Ottoman patriotism persisted as an official discourse among the Unionists, the idea of Turkish nationalism began to flourish, initially asserting claims to leadership in the Orient and, following the Balkan Wars, emphasizing the rights of the Turkish nation.

Unionism can be divided into two distinct phases: before and after 1908. Prior to the proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy, Unionism functioned as a revolutionary organization limited to a relatively narrow cadre, existing primarily as a secret society. After 1908, however, it shifted toward a legal framework and expanded its organizational base. Between 1908 and 1910, the number of its branches increased from 83 to 360, while membership surged from 2,250 to 850,000.[45] This transition highlights a dual strategy: the organization emphasized secrecy when in opposition and mass mobilization when in power.

The society, which later evolved into a political party, emerged as a rival to traditional intermediary structures, such as the orders and the ayans. This shift in political sociology was filled by the emergence of a "cemiyet" or modern political organization.[46] This change indicates

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[44] Zürcher, E. J. (1984). The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement, 1905-1926. Brill., 45-50.

[45] Hanioğlu, Ş. (2009). İttihatçılık. .Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 9, Dönemler ve Zihniyetler (Ed) Bora, T. ve Gültegingil M. 1st ed. İstanbul:İletişim Yayınları., 249-252

[46] Berkes, op. cit., 403. Politics parties as a modern political organization combined both public opinions.

that traditional identity codes and representations were replaced by a modern sense of party identity. Consequently, it opened the door to new developments in the consciousness of ordinary individuals regarding their identity and sense of belonging.

Turkish nationalism began to supplant the old patterns of dissolving solidarity, coinciding with the establishment of democratic institutions within the traditional social structure. Some generalizations can be made to understand the mentality of the Unionists after 1908. For them, the priority was not individual rights but duty; society took precedence over the individual. The cult of leadership, which had dominated propaganda during the reign of Abdülhamid II, was supplanted by the cult of the institution of the Union and Progress organization, known as "Cemiyet-i Mukaddes." They established scientific foundations for concepts such as "man for the cause" and "solidarity for the cause."

The Unionists instrumentally viewed the people, perceiving them not as competent but as a sacred entity worth fighting for. The public, essential for legitimacy, was not yet considered capable of governance. In the Bab-ı Âlî raid, although Kamil Pasha noted in his resignation letter that he resigned at the military's request, Enver Bey had the phrase "the people" added to strengthen the legitimacy of his actions. This incident illustrates that action and administration resided within the organization, while its legitimacy derived from public approval. Undoubtedly, by 1913, this "people" referred to the Turkish nation. Thus, the Unionists believed that legitimacy stemmed from the nation, but the ability to represent the national will extended beyond mere voting.

The Unionists remained on constant alert, playing a pivotal role in the proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy in 1908 and its preservation in 1909. They were instrumental in permanently entrenching the principles of constitutionality and representation in Turkey's political life. Believing that a radical approach was necessary to resolve the ongoing tension between modernization and the unifying principle of society, they found the ideology to overcome this conflict in the concept of Turkish nationalism, which they embraced after the Balkan Wars.

Two key points should be emphasized regarding their shift toward this ideology. First, they did not accept Turkish nationalism as the official ideology. For the Unionists, Ottomanism remained the primary

official identity, albeit with a predominant emphasis on Turkishness. Secondly, while Islam consistently maintained its presence as a motif within Turkish nationalism, its political influence was subordinated.

The second phase marked a period during which the Unionists had significant influence in the administration of the country. During this time, the tension that the Ottoman Empire experienced between modernization and a unifying ideology was, for the first time, addressed by Turkish nationalists through a durable compromise. Throughout the 19th century, the order established by modern institutions was based on unifying principles and convictions that did not effectively support this order. While initial efforts to resolve this tension focused on constitutional and representative processes, the situation proved to be more complex.

Instead of starting with institutional arrangements, Akçuraoğlu Yusuf first contended that the unifying principle should be redefined to promote a minimum level of harmony between the state and the nation. Turkism defined the Turks, as the millet-i hakime, as the determining social category in power relations. The modern world necessitates nations, and modern nations enable the development of new institutions. Thus, this political design comprises political and social elements that complement each other—something that had been previously denied. According to him, the first rule of being modern is to create a modern nation.[47]

This perspective served as an important foundation for the executives of the Union and Progress Party, who distanced themselves from the idea of Islamism following the religious uprising of 1909. Many political, literary, and philosophical organizations and publications, such as Türk Derneği, Türk Ocakları, Türk Yurdu, Yeni Hayat, and Genç Kalemler, developed close relationships with the Unionists after the proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy. In the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, Turkish nationalism was elevated to the status of an official ideology.

During this period, two important intellectuals significantly influenced the Unionists' transition from secular Ottoman patriotism to Turkish nationalism: Ziya Gökalp and Akçuraoğlu Yusuf. In 1904, the

[47] Akçura, Y. (1998). Türkçülüğün Tarihi. İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat., 160-163

Egyptian newspaper *Turk* published a series of articles by Akçuraoğlu Yusuf, in which he discussed the social principles that could enable the Ottoman Empire to ensure its survival. These articles were later compiled into a booklet titled *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*. In these writings, Akçuraoğlu Yusuf examined the benefits of the movements of Ottomanism, Islamism, and Turkism for the Ottoman Empire.

Ali Kemal Bey, a British ally, responded to Akçuraoğlu's articles with a sarcastic rebuttal. The ideological struggle between these intellectual currents intensified after 1905 with the publication of reciprocal articles. Akçuraoğlu Yusuf argued that Ottomanism contradicted the principle of nationalities, which serves as the political foundation of the modern world. Consequently, he asserted that no matter how much the political institutions of the Ottoman Empire were reformed, the necessary benefits could not be realized. According to him, Ottomanism was doomed to fail because non-Muslims had already developed their national consciousness internally, compounded by the external intervention of foreign states.

Islamism, while having made some progress due to the majority Muslim population, faced challenges as it often conflicted with the interests of many European states. In contrast, Turkism presented no serious obstacles, as both the population and the dynasty were Turkish, and it was relatively insulated from French and English interference since it primarily engaged with Russian interests. Thus, Akçuraoğlu Yusuf deemed Turkism the most advantageous in terms of practical results, supported by the idea of Turkish unity. He argued that once the Turks achieved unity, they would become the strongest branch of Islam, positioning them to advocate for the liberation of other Muslim nations.[48]

Akçuraoğlu Yusuf's conclusions were not only straightforward and accessible but also grounded in the experiences of the recent past and the expectations of the near future. His writings, which advocated for Turkism from a realistic perspective, were directed at the Ottoman public. However, his thoughts on Turkish nationalism were underpinned by a more profound philosophical background. To fully grasp this, it would be beneficial to consider his educational experiences in Paris.

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[48] Akçura, op.cit., 160-163

Akçuraoğlu, who wrote various articles for Ahmet Rıza's *Meşveret* during his time in Paris, specifically avoided using the term "Ottoman nation" in these writings. Instead, he employed the expression "heyet-i müctemia-yi Osmanye" to refer to the people living within the Ottoman realm. This concept, derived from the root *cem*, signifies "gathered." Therefore, for Akçuraoğlu, the concepts of nation and *delegation-i müctemia* are distinct. He did not consider an aimless community without common cultural values or genealogical bonds — standing side by side but separated — as a true nation. Furthermore, he argued that a nation cannot be reduced to a mere bond of religion. According to him, a true nation is only possible through unity shaped around lineage, ideals, values, and goals that reference a shared past. This new understanding of "nation" is situated on a secular foundation. However, the emotional solidarity attributed to the nation bears formal similarities to the romanticism of Muslim Ottoman patriotism. Thus, it can be said that Akçuraoğlu reformulated both the Young Ottoman and Young Turk legacies.

During his time in Paris, Akçuraoğlu also received his university education in Political Science. The thesis by Albert Sorel, which posited that nations are the real basis of the modern world, alongside Emile Boutmy's assertion that the psychology of a nation is determinative in the political and social institutions of a country, provided a significant theoretical foundation for Akçuraoğlu's analysis of the problems within Ottoman institutions. His education in political science equipped him with the ability to approach issues through the lens of power relations. This perspective is evident in his approach to analyzing the reforms of the Ottoman Empire. He argued that to assess the reforms in the Ottoman Empire, it is essential to consider which elements a reform benefits, what advantages and disadvantages the government incurs, and how the state is affected by such reforms. Akçuraoğlu contended that Ottomanism does not benefit the Turks, as the government is continually losing economic and political power, leading the state to the brink of collapse. Therefore, he argued that a radical change is necessary. The critical question then becomes: what will be the starting point and foundation for this change?[49] It was around these determinations

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[49] Akçura, op. cit., 160-163

and questions that Turkish nationalism gradually emerged as a political program following the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy.

1911 is a pivotal date for Turkish nationalism. The journals *Genç Kalemler* and *Türk Yurdu* brought together key intellectuals of the nationalist movement, including Ziya Gökalp, Akçuraoğlu Yusuf, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, Hüzeyinzâde Ali, and Köprülü Mehmet Fuat. The common aim of these writers was to establish a national identity for the Turks that transcended Ottomanism. The Turkism movement, which its opponents derisively labeled "Genghis disease," quickly garnered social support. This was largely due to the works of European Turkologists aimed at the educated elite, as well as the publication of literary and poetic works intended for both the gentry and peasants. Individuals from all walks of life found something relatable in Turkist publications. The surge of publications that followed the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy created significant opportunities for Turkish nationalism. These opportunities gained serious momentum during the Balkan Wars. In the words of Ziya Gökalp, after this war, Turks were able to collectively assert, "I exist, not we (Ottomanism)."[50]

Gökalp occupies a significant position after the Constitutional Monarchy as the thinker who addressed the question of what kind of social structure the Unionists' aspirations for a centralized and modern state should be based on. Said Halim Pasha, a member of the Committee of Union and Progress and influenced by the Egyptian philosopher Muhammad Abduh, argued in an article criticizing Westernization that the remedy in the social and moral sphere was Islamization. He bases this argument on a historical reference, asserting that societies that did not know what to abandon from their previous lifestyles before embracing Islam struggled to understand what to adopt from the West. According to Said Halim Pasha, this phenomenon was evident in the Ottoman Empire.

In contrast, Ziya Gökalp, also a Unionist, opposed Said Halim Pasha's views in his criticism published in *Yeni Mecmua*. Gökalp contended that if the reason for the current backwardness of Islamized tribes was their old customs, these customs should have been a cause

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[50] Hanioğlu, Ş. (1985). Türkçülük. Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi, 5., 1397-1398

of backwardness from the very beginning. However, he argued that this assertion is evidently not true for the Turks. Gökalp's second criticism targets Said Halim Pasha's thesis that Muslims began to decline as a result of the Crusades. According to Gökalp, the Crusaders did not exhibit any "bigotry" in embracing the science and good customs of Muslims, which allowed them to progress. In contrast, contemporary Muslims are too puritanical to accept the requirements of modern civilization. Gökalp believes the reason for backwardness is clear: Muslims have failed to interpret their religion in accordance with the demands of new conditions. The ignorant ulema, under the guise of religion, neglected customs that were outside their sphere of influence and derived from the culture of the tribes themselves, thus leaving no cultural space for innovation.[51]

Turkist intellectuals such as Zeki Velidi argued that nations that lost their material power and could not sustain their economic and political life through new material means directed their efforts to the spiritual sphere. This perspective indicates that Turkish nationalist intellectuals viewed the West as the model for material power, while spiritual power was considered within the framework of a compromise between religion and custom.

The Gökalpian interpretation of Turkish nationalism represents a compromise between Turkishness, Islam, and modernization. In this respect, he formulated a form of Turkish-Islamic modernism. His views addressed, to some extent, the primary tension of the long 19th century, namely the disconnect between modernization and the unifying principle. On the other hand, he did not neglect the facts; experiences, inter-party struggles for power, intra-party conflicts, and the current state of culture and civilization found a place in Gökalp's program. Following Akçuraoğlu's declaration of the bankruptcy of Ottomanism, Gökalp's theses and Islamism took an ideological backseat to Turkish nationalism.

The Kazan-Crimean-Azerbaijani intellectual typology represented by Akçuraoğlu Yusuf adopted criticism and elasticity as methods within Turkish nationalism. In the Akçuraoğlu school, socio-economic issues are important factors for understanding society. According to

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[51] Berkes, op. cit., 416-419

this perspective, Islam should be reformed to reinterpret society and the world, as religion should allow for the development of nations within it.

Anatolian Turkish nationalism, as represented by Gökalp, is synthesizing in method. In terms of content, it aims to preserve the beliefs and values of the existing people. According to Gökalp, national identity cannot be constructed in opposition to the existing beliefs of society. Culture is the most important social field for fostering a nationalist consciousness. Although religion is an inseparable part of national identity, the effort to turn toward modern civilization, which is necessary for material strength, is equally essential. For Gökalp, religion exists only with the presence of a community, and a community exists only with a shared vision. If the community aims to achieve these goals and survive, it must possess civilized capabilities. The development of civilized capability in a society is only possible through internalization of these attributes.

In Gökalp's context, the civilized capability was rooted in the Western world, which necessitated the adoption of its essential capabilities. Akçuraoğlu, as a product of the conditions in Russia and his education in Paris, utilized modern concepts of freedom and equality more explicitly. In contrast, Gökalp emphasized solidarity and development—*ittihat* and progress—within the framework of the needs of the Ottoman Empire.

It can be said that both schools found their place in the future of Turkish nationalism during the republic. Akçuraoğlu's school was adopted when Turkish nationalism was in opposition, while Gökalp's school was embraced when Turkish nationalism assumed the responsibility of power. Between 1912 and 1922, Turkish nationalism had already been embraced by the Unionist cadres of the Young Turk movement. Many theorists, such as Akçuraoğlu and Gökalp, along with key figures like Talat, Enver, Mustafa Kemal, İsmet, and Fevzi Pasha, embraced Turkish nationalism during the decade of war, thereby contributing to the foundation of the republic.

The republican regime accepted Turkish nationalism as the fundamental unifying ideology. The two public sectors—military and civilian bureaucrats—along with the general populace, were brought together during this war period. Unionists actively engaged in political activism within a non-industrialized context, with their primary

objective centered on preserving the integrity of the state. Consequently, their efforts were directed toward consolidating public sentiment, prioritizing cohesion over reliance on a fragmented national economic framework. Although they did not achieve full integration and cohesion in society, they made significant progress in this regard. The architects of the Republic were members of the Young Turk movement, instrumental in galvanizing public sentiment while bridging the historical chasm between the ethos of social cohesion and the exigencies of modern statehood.

The Republican regime attributed independence to the Turkish nation and declared that sovereignty had been transferred from the sultan-caliph to the Turks. The modern state was grounded in Turkish national identity, shaping a new life based on this identity. The National Assembly in Ankara institutionalized the sovereignty of the Turkish nation. Turkishness became the "soul-force" of the new state and way of life, functioning not only as a conscientious and cultural phenomenon but also as an institutionalized political program. The most significant characteristic of Turkish nationalism is that it emerged from a simultaneous struggle against both imperialism and the sultanate. Therefore, unlike Turanism, Turkish nationalism was shaped as a product of defensive reflexes and a survival psychology.

Conclusion

Nationalism is essentially a question of belonging. In the 19th century, nationalism was an option that people turned to in order to understand who they were and what kind of human community they belonged to. This program of coexistence and belonging was also valid for the various nations living within the borders of the Ottoman Empire.

Turkish nationalism developed at a time when coexistence within the Ottoman Empire was being problematized. For this reason, new ideologies were first created by bureaucrats and the palace, significantly influencing the Ottoman upper class. The response of the intellectuals to this policy came through newspapers. In order to sway public opinion, the written language was simplified, leading to the formation of a general public discourse.

Turkish nationalism emerged as a result of individuals who identified with the Turkish identity feeling a sense of belonging to the Turk-

ish nation. It developed in response to the Ottoman rulers' search for a unifying principle and ideology for coexistence. Throughout the 19th century, these rulers were aware of their position, yet they gradually moved away from defining their affiliation solely in terms of religion and dynasty. In the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, defining oneself politically and culturally as Turkish became a normal and motivating behavior.

The development of Turkish nationalism occurred in three distinct periods from the beginning of the 19th century to the foundation of the republic. The main tension that characterized all three periods was the mismatch between modernization and the unifying principle. The historical journey of Turkish nationalism also reflects the history of the "three styles of politics" aimed at overcoming this incompatibility.

The Tanzimat period was characterized by two primary goals: the establishment of a centralized modern state and the internalization of Ottoman identity. The bureaucratic *esprit de corps* (spirit of unity) necessary for the centralized state was achieved through the modernization of bureaucratic functions and classical etiquette. Military and civilian bureaucrats constituted the only modern organized group in the empire. They were not a distinct class but rather an autonomous social category within the power bloc. This group essentially posed the question of how to save the state. Around this question, the bureaucratic public developed rapidly.

The new schools and civil servants in the capital city created a literate human resource pool sufficient for the formation of a general public. The identity policy of the Tanzimat period was Ottomanism, a project initiated by the Bab-ı Âli (Sublime Porte). This Ottomanism was critiqued by the Young Ottomans in their newspapers. Their efforts to influence public opinion led to the formation of a new and broader public discourse. The Young Ottomans developed an alternative approach to the state-centered identity policy of the Tanzimat period by advocating for Muslim Ottoman patriotism and constitutionalism.

This emerging public opinion, which developed under the leadership of the Young Ottomans, placed the concept of homeland at the center of Ottoman identity. Politically, it defined Ottomanness within a constitutional framework and sought to transcend the traditional nation system by referencing coexistence in the homeland. Ottoman-

ism asserted that individuals should feel a sense of belonging to their homeland as strongly as they did to the sultan. However, the Young Ottomans also aimed to raise the consciousness of the Muslim middle class. Therefore, it would be more accurate to refer to them as Ottoman patriots. For them, this homeland represented not only the land they lived in together but also the rights of the "Muslims" who had sacrificed their lives for it. The unifying principle during this period was the Ottoman homeland.

During the reign of Abdülhamid II, an Islamic consciousness emerged among the Muslim middle classes, stemming from their concern over losing their status as a sovereign nation following the Edict of Reform. Two significant developments translated this consciousness into the political sphere. The first was the 1878 Treaty of Berlin, which resulted in the establishment of new states in the Balkans and triggered massive migrations toward Anatolia. The second was the colonization of nearly the entire Islamic world by Western imperialism. The office of the Caliphate and the political independence of the Ottomans prompted the Ottoman elites to leverage their influence over Muslims worldwide. These developments led to the codification of Islam as an essential component of Ottoman identity. An anti-imperialist and defensive propaganda process became embedded in the identity of Ottoman Muslims during this period.

The era following the Berlin Treaty, during which the population of the Ottoman Empire was predominantly Muslim, also saw the flourishing of cultural Turkism. Although the Turkishness of the dynasty was not explicitly emphasized, the cultural identity of the Turk began to be rediscovered. Turkish history was traced back to pre-Islamic times, and in military schools, Turks were defended as an oppressed nation. Conversely, Abdülhamid II's reign marked a crucial turning point for the Ottoman peasantry. Confronted with the influx of thousands of Muslims due to immigration, along with mounting debts and administrative challenges, the Anatolian peasantry reacted with a sense of urgency and involvement in public opinion. Unlike the literate class, these Anatolian peasants had practical concerns. Although they were susceptible to religious romanticism, they learned to engage in a common endeavor with individuals beyond their villages, influenced by the epic characters of war and heroic tales.

The Young Turks bore traces of both preceding periods. On one hand, they inherited concepts of constitutionalism, freedom, homeland, and romanticism from the Young Ottomans. On the other, they were shaped by an education system modernized and popularized by Abdülhamid II and exposed to "pan" ideologies that fostered resistance and revival. However, there were many aspects in which they differed from their predecessors. The belief that collapse was imminent drove them to seek radical and urgent solutions. They directed their allegiance and loyalty toward the "community of the sacred" and Turkish nationality rather than toward dynastic or bureaucratic patrons. They embraced principles of biological materialism and rationalism in their understanding of life. The political ideas and attitudes now conceptualized as Unionism emerged from these conditions and inspirations, shaped amidst continuous rebellions and wars.

This situation led to the idea of *millet-i müselleha* (armed nation) after 1913, which refers to the total preparation of a nation for war. Thus, it became urgent to align the unifying principle with modernity to acquire the technical and moral strength necessary for combat. Turkish nationalism was central to this solution, as it was grounded in the majority population and based on the modern principle of nationality. The aforementioned tension between modernity and the unifying principle was resolved by the cadre that emerged from the Unionists and ultimately founded the Republic.

Turkish nationalism defines Islam as a motif that the Turks carry from the past to the present, while modernity is viewed as a material force for the future of Turkishness. However, it rejects excesses from both sides. Consequently, Turkish nationalism attempts to overcome this tension with the expression "the future whose roots are in the past." For Turkish nationalists, the contradictions of Ottomanism and Islamism fundamentally arise from the fact that the state is not based on Turkish identity.

The Young Turk movement marked a significant shift in the sociology of politics. Traditional intermediary institutions were replaced by national parties and societies. This transition was a logical consequence of the aim to establish a constitutional unity based on representation, rather than a division grounded in religion. Political parties, through their organizational and propaganda activities, not only broadened public opinion but also contributed to the establishment of democra-

cy by enriching the ideas present in the public sphere. Consequently, they advanced the notion that the political body should be redefined to encompass the entire nation. In this respect, the Republican regime can be viewed as the logical outcome of the development of Turkish nationalism.

The Young Turks, more specifically the Unionists, embraced a secular identity between 1908 and 1913. For the Young Turks, the idea of a secular identity was a necessity in the modern world. They sought a foundational identity grounded in the disciplines of sociology and history. They adopted Akçuraoğlu's criticism of Ottomanism and Gökalp's interpretation of Islamism, establishing Turkish national identity as the legitimate basis of a unifying ideology with a scientific perspective.

The process of harmonizing the two publics was achieved by the Turkish political leadership at the end of a decade of simultaneous struggle for independence and popular sovereignty. A homogeneous community, which forms the basis of the modern nation-state, was thus created, allowing for the adaptation of this community to modern institutions without tension between the unifying principle of society and modernity. The two separate publics that existed in the Ottoman Empire merged into a national public with the republican regime after nearly a century of development. Consequently, it can be said that a historical process characterized by two different cultural worlds with distinct agendas came to an end. Turkish nationalism resolved the decline and internal conflict that lasted throughout the 19th century. It served not only as the ideological basis of the new state but also as the driving motivation for its rapid development. This motivation was made possible by the harmonization of the ideologies of modernization and unity, alongside the unification of two different publics.

The historical flow of Turkish nationalism from the Empire to the Republic, along with its qualities and the needs that gave rise to it, has been explained above. Each of the political programs that emerged to overcome the tension between modernity and the unifying principle has been experienced throughout history. When the cause of independence and the future became an inevitable reality, Turkish nationalism emerged as the final decision. The foundations of the new republic were built upon this final decision.

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