

THE “TURKISH IDEOLOGY”: FROM ABDUL HAMID II TO ERDOGAN’S TURKEY

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Abstract

This article examines the long-term continuity of what may be called the “Turkish ideology” from the Hamidian period to Erdogan’s Turkey, arguing that beyond changes in regimes, elites, and political vocabularies, a durable ideological and institutional matrix has structured state violence and perceptions of internal enemies. By tracing the internal transmissions between Hamidianism, Unionism, Kemalism, and contemporary nationalist-Islamism, the article highlights the persistence of a state-centered worldview shaped by social Darwinist assumptions, racialized conceptions of nationhood, and the logic of *raison d’état*. Through a comparative reading of 1914-1915 and 2014-2015, it demonstrates how similar mechanisms of exclusion, coercion, and enemy construction were mobilized against Armenians and later against Kurds. The study further questions the analytical adequacy of concepts such as “late Ottoman Empire” and “Neo-Ottomanism,” suggesting instead that the continuity lies less in imperial restoration than in the enduring ideological foundations of Turkish state praxis.

Keywords: Turkish ideology; Armenian Genocide; Kemalism; Erdoganism; continuity of state violence

This article was submitted on 05.02.2026 and accepted for publication on 15.05.2026.

How to cite: Hamit Bozarslan, “The ‘Turkish Ideology’: From Abdul Hamid II to Erdogan’s Turkey,” *International Journal of Armenian Genocide Studies* 11, no. 1 (2026): 72-81.

Late Ottoman Empire and Republican Turkey: A Brief History

The Hamidian massacres of 1894-1896, the Ilinden massacre in Macedonia in 1903, the 1909 Adana massacres, the 1915 Genocide, which targeted namely but not exclusively the Armenian community across Asia Minor, the 1915-1916 "reign of terror" in the Arab world, the 1919 Pontus genocide, the 1920-1921 campaigns in order to destroy the extremely fragile Armenian Republic, and the republican massacres of the Kurds, including the 1938 Dersim genocide, organized by Unionist cadres converted to Kemalism, the brutal invasion of Cyprus in 1974, Ankara's massive military support to Baku in Nagorno-Karabakh, and mass violence against the Kurds in Turkey and Rojava... How could such an inexhaustible force of destruction maintain itself over such a long period, and how can one explain that a state ideology, which is entirely synonymous with state praxis, could have been kept alive with its "memorial regimes"¹ from the end of the 19th century to the first quarter of the 21st century?

The answer to these questions lies, at least in part, in the continuity and internal transmissions between the state's structures and/or the men from the Hamidian period to our days. It is true that the Unionists did not only overthrow Abdul Hamid II (1909) but also his main bureaucrats; yet they were children of Hamidianism, and for most of them, its coercive agents in Ottoman Macedonia. They had been formed in its military or medical schools, where they initiated themselves into Social Darwinism, and had a love-hate relationship with him. In 1917, Talaat, the mastermind of the genocide, paid a visit to the fallen Sultan: "I was saddened to realize the true nature of the legacy he had left us only now, at this very moment when the ruins [of the Empire] began to fall on our heads. As a consolation, he told me that the verdict of history does not change."² The infamous Bahaeddin Shakir, the operational architect of the genocide, too, celebrated him as the "only Übermensch," i.e., a superior man able to transcend the ordinary human condition of the Empire.³ And when the "Red Sultan," whom they wanted the death during their opposition years, passed away a couple of months later, they all mourned him in tears.

The Kemalists were, for their overwhelming majority, members, ideologues, or operative cadres of Unionism. Abdulhalik Renda and Shukru Kaya, for instance, who were in charge of the Kurdish politics of the Kemalist Republic, had been active members of Talaat Pasha's ministerial team, as well as organizers of the Armenian Genocide. As Tuncay Sur shows in his PhD thesis,⁴ unlike the founders of the Republic, who were mostly from the Balkans, the post-1960s generations of Turkish leaders were born in Asia Minor, and many of them had conservative or Islamized nationalist worldviews. But they were either educated by the Kemalist state institutions, including the military

1 Duygu Tasalp, *Cent ans de négation. Les régimes mémoriels en Turquie de l'Unionisme à l'islamisme* (Paris: Karthala, 2025).

2 Cemal Kutay, *Şehit Sadrazam Talaat Paşa'nın Gurbet Hatıraları* (Istanbul: s.n., 1983), 16 and 847.

3 Cited in Raymond H. Kévorkian, *Le génocide des Arméniens* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2006), 244.

4 Tuncay Sur, "Redefining the Kurdish Question: A Socio-Historical Analysis of Turkey's Nationalist and Conservative Intelligentsia in the Late Twentieth Century" (PhD diss, EHESS, 2026).

ones, or were strongly influenced by the state's security-based discourses. Moreover, the mainstream conservative movements had developed their own *conspiratorial* narratives concerning Turkey's past, reading it as an unending Western and/or Jewish plot to destroy the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. The Islamists of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP*), who took power in the wake of the November 2002 elections, were certainly not Kemalists, but they shared the idea of the superiority of Islamic Turkishness or of a Turkified Islam and accepted, although subconsciously, the fundamental assumptions of Social Darwinism.

What one could call the "Turkish ideology" can take diverse aspects, from the most radicalized nationalist ones to the "left-wing" oriented ones, constitutes indeed the structuring ground of state policies. However, it also allows the formation of a hegemonic bloc on Turkey's "sensitive issues."⁵ This ideology is certainly not powerful enough to allow the suppression of internal conflicts among the Kemalists, Islamists, nationalists, and leftwing movements, but it is federative enough to offer a common ground for these different "families": either racist-ethnicist Kemalists or "modernists," the nationalists can define the "minorities" as the internal enemies of Turkishness; the nationalist-Islamists or conservatives can consider them as infidels at the service of foreign powers; and the left-wing movements can designate them as simple tools of "imperialists". One should bear in mind that in his letters to the Soviet leader Lenin, Mustafa Kemal himself frequently used the concept of "imperialism," but his first strategic goal was to crush independent Armenia, this "insulant and ingrate race" (17.9.1919).⁶

Ziya Gökalp, a sociologist and poet, is without any doubt the intellectual who has incarnated the "Turkish Ideology" in its most radical form and left a long-lasting legacy. Born in Diyarbakir in 1876, Gökalp became a young opponent of Abdul Hamid, and after the overthrow of the Sultan, imposed himself as the principal ideologue of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). A proud advocate of the extermination of the Armenians, he was arrested by the British after the occupation of Istanbul and jailed in Malta for a short period, but was released when London recognized the Ankara government of Mustafa Kemal. He also played a decisive role during the inception period of the People's Republican Party of Kemal.⁷ His 100th anniversary was widely celebrated in 1976 by the then-ruling "Nationalist Front" of Süleyman Demirel. As we will see on various occasions in this article, in the long run, one can consider Republican Turkey as more profoundly "Gökalpist" than simply Kemalist.

⁵ Hamit Bozarslan, "Ontologie, vitalisme et délivrance : quelques pistes de recherche sur le négationnisme d'Ankara," *Résomances* 5 (2023): 40-44.

⁶ İsmet Gorgu, *Atatürk'ten Ermeni Sorunu* (Ankara, Bilgi Yayınevi, 2002), 93.

⁷ Hans-Lukas Kieser, "Europe's Seminal Proto-Fascist? Historically Approaching Ziya Gökalp, Mentor of Turkish Nationalism," *Die welt des Islams* 61, no. 4 (2021): 411-447.

1914/1915 and 2014/2015: Sharp Similarities

The existence of a "Turkish ideology" can explain that in spite of brutal, and in some cases extremely violent shifts within the ruling cadres belonging either to the well-educated and wealthy "élites" or coming from the plebeian strata, the *raison d'état*, the famous *hikmet-i hükümet*, remains intact and can even be radicalized when the power-holders deem that *Kairos* offers them an important opportunity to "resolve" what they consider a vital question, compromising the very existence of the "Turkish nation". The comparison of the Unionist politics vis-à-vis the Armenians in 1914 and the AKP politics vis-à-vis the Kurds in 2014 sheds a cruel and yet crucial light on this double phenomenon of violent rupture and radicalized continuity.

In 1908, in spite of the fact that it was still inexperienced and did not master all the levers of the state apparatus, the CUP was able to dismantle the entire Hamidian state within a couple of months; the old generals, governors, and diplomats with decades of careers behind them were replaced by those who were around 30. Yet the CUP had no other *raison d'état* to perpetuate than the one it had inherited from Hamidianism. This *raison d'Etat* could not be maintained without being radicalized through the incredible energy of the Unionist leaders, but also thanks to the Social-Darwinist learning that created a feeling of urgency among them. This ideology was already there, aggressively one should say, with its threats of using exterminatory violence as Djemal openly expressed them in 1913, and was taking the Armenian community into hostage.⁸ The only thing that was missing was the moment of *Kairos*, "God of the opportune time," which offered itself with the perspectives of the irruption of the Great War and the Dashnak Congress of Summer 1914.

No doubt that between 1908 and 1913/1914, the CUP legalized their political parties. In spite of the Adana massacres, there was also a *de facto* alliance between the CUP and the Dashnaksutyun, which lasted at least until the end of 1912. In exchange for this recognition, however, it urged them to enter the service, not of the Ottoman Empire, but of the Turkish nation. In the conditions of summer 1914, this claim was not limited to the sole Ottoman Empire but also concerned Russia. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation refused this demand, explaining that the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire would certainly accomplish their "duty" vis-à-vis their homeland, but that they would not organize any kind of subversion on the other side of the border nor mobilize the Russian Armenians against their country. This refusal created conditions in which the genocidal option ceased to be a simple threat as Djemal formulated it in 1913, and became a feasible process: indeed, the CUP henceforth had a *casus belli*, a concrete "proof" that the Armenians were "betraying" their "homeland."⁹ As we know, the genocide, in fact, did not start in April 1915 but already in the winter of 1914, in the wake of this summer Congress and the first military backsets on the Caucasian front.

8 Quoted in Gaïdz F. Minassian, "Les relations entre le Comité Union et Progrès et la Fédération Révolutionnaire Arménienne à la veille de la Première Guerre mondiale d'après les sources arméniennes," *Revue d'histoire arménienne contemporaine* 1(1995): 37.

9 Arthur Beylerian, *Les grandes puissances, l'Empire ottoman et les Arméniens dans les archives françaises (1914-1918)* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1983), XXV.

As it is well-known, the Armenian community has been annihilated along with its identity, subjectivities, history, capacity to read itself in the present as a component of the Ottoman Empire, which its political leaders wanted to rebuild on new and egalitarian principles, and its ability to project itself into the future. Indeed, the Armenians were not killed because they “betrayed” their homeland: the number of Armenian *fedayi*, among them a majority of non-Ottoman Armenians, joining the Russian Army did not exceed, according to the Ottoman-Turkish estimations, 8,000 men, compared to 13 million troops mobilized by the Russian Army during the war. Similarly, there was no Armenian revolt to “stab the homeland in the back” in any part of the Empire, Van and Urfa included. The Armenians were exterminated because their “homeland” considered them as “foreign” or a “biological threat” to the nation.¹⁰

One hundred years after the genocide, one faces a similar scenario concerning the Kurds. Obviously, the context of 2014-2015 was not a genocidal one, but it presented many similarities to that of 1914-1915. First, the AKP regime had succeeded in dismantling the post-Kemalist state in a relatively short period, and after more than one decade in power, it seemed to be unchallenged. Second, as the Unionists who had recognized the existence of the Armenians, condemned the Hamidian massacres of the 1890s, and legalized their political parties as well as their institutions, the AKP, too, had accomplished an act of recognition, accepted the existence of the Kurds, and even condemned the injustices that they had been victims of under the Republic, such as the mass violence of 1938-1939 in Dersim. In turn, the Kurds were asked to serve the Sunni Turkish nation and the regime, not only in Turkey but also in Syria. That meant that the Kurds should stop having an identity separate from the Turkish-Islamic one, a will, and an agency, and even less exist as a collective subject, i.e., *für sich*. The Kurdish refusal to obey this injunction led to the tragedy of Kobane (2014), during which the AKP government had de facto collaborated with ISIS and the end of the so-called “2013-2015 Peace Process.” Thus, Ankara deployed massive coercion against the Kurdish militants and did not hesitate to destroy urban centers, as in Cizre and in Diyarbakir’s historical mural area. As there was no Armenian betrayal nor any Armenian separatism in 1914, in 2014-2015 there was no Kurdish “betrayal” nor any Kurdish separatism. Like the Armenian political parties during the late Ottoman period, the Kurdish actors simply wanted to rebuild Turkey on a new and egalitarian basis.

A “Late Ottoman Empire”?

It is commonplace to use the concept of the “late Ottoman Empire” to describe the post-Tanzimat period (1876-1918/1922). Many scholars also define the Erdoganist policies as “Neo-Ottomanist.” In reality, the concept of empire can hardly be applied to the post-

¹⁰ For the Social-Darwinist and explicitly anti-Armenian arguments in the “Turkish ideology” under the Unionist, Kemalist and post-Kemalist regimes, see, namely, Hamit Bozarslan, Vincent Duclert & Raymond Kévorkian, *Comprendre le génocide des Arméniens* (Paris: Editions Tallandier, 2015).

Hamidian period. My impression is that after the devastating "93 War" (1877-1878), Abdul Hamid was aware that what remained of the Ottoman Balkans could be lost and, to some extent, mourned it in anticipation. He, as well as his state apparatus had an imaginary of Asia Minor composed of a Turkish nucleus, protected by an Islamic periphery including the Kurds. In the eyes of Abdul Hamid, the non-Turkish lands of the empire constituted simply the Ottoman colonies.¹¹ Hamidianism could not accept the biological materialism as it was advocated by Ernst Haeckel, Georg Büchner, Ludwig Woltmann, or Georges Vacher de Lapouge, which denied the very principle of the existence of God; but it did not reject Social Darwinism, which considers nations as quasi-biological species struggling for survival and advocates that only the strongest could survive.¹²

The Balkans were indeed lost in 1912-1913. The First Balkan War ended with a collective humiliation, including for the CUP, which was not in power during this period but had been involved in a very aggressive pro-war campaign. After the war, the CUP, which seized power through a coup d'état (23 January 1913), had the opportunity to envision the future of the Ottoman lands as a plural empire, integrating its major communities—Arabs, Armenians, Greeks, and Kurds—through a social contract. Sabahaddin, Lutfi Fikri, and Shériff Pasha... were among the liberal figures calling for a decentralization of the empire and a profound transformation of the "social structures" of the Turkish community. A disciple of Edmond Demolins, the main figure of the "School of Social Sciences," Sabahaddin also insisted on the necessity of demilitarizing the very self-perception of Turkishness. Instead, the CUP, dominated by young officers and some civilian figures of the Turkish intelligentsia, opted for an extremely radicalized Turkist line, advocated mainly by Ziya Gökalp. Turkism had always been present in the CUP's ideological identity ever since its opposition years,¹³ and had become almost official after the 1908 boycotting movement of Austrian goods, which transformed itself into a boycotting praxis against Asia Minor's Christian merchants. This current, which defined Turkishness not only as the dominant ethnic group but as an exclusively dominating group, had also developed a worldview in which this "Great but Disparate (Turkish) Race"¹⁴ was presented as a victim, as a Third Estate (Tiers État) or a "proletarian nation" oppressed by the Greek and Armenian "ethno-classes." It designated the Armenians and Greeks, who were subjected to ethnic cleansing already by 1913, as internal enemies of Turkishness; the Arabs as a colonized people and the Kurds, who were themselves oppressed during the Bitlis uprising of Mullah Selim in 1914, as proxies. Ziya Gökalp, already the theorist-in-

11 Cf. Selim Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains. Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998).

12 "Le Moment moderne de l'islam' ou ce que les réformistes doivent aux traditionnalistes: quelques remarques sur l' 'islamisme' ottoman," in P. Vermereen & P. Petriat (dir.), *Une histoire du Proche-Orient au temps présent. Etudes en hommage à Nadine Picaudou* (Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne, 2015), 163-178.

13 Sukru Hanioglu, "Turkishness and the Young Turks, 1889-1908," in *Turkey Beyond Nationalism. Towards Post-National Identities*, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser (Londres, I.B. Tauris, 2006), 8-9.

14 Umit Kurt, "Türk'ün Büyük Biçare Irkı." *Türk Yurdu'nda Milliyetçiliğin Esasları (1911-1916)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012).

chief of the Committee, played a decisive role in this evolution, which culminated in the well-studied episode of the genocide.

This genocide was a largely assumed act of mass violence. It is true that the architects of the genocide and their successors at the head of the Turkish state publicly denied the very existence of genocide of 1915, but as many Unionist and Kemalist documents attest, they were in reality absolutely proud of having exterminated the Armenians.¹⁵ Many Unionists reminded even that they were ready to start again.¹⁶ In 1918, in Yerevan, Halil Pasha, one of the leading military commanders and well-known Unionist figures, addressed a message not only to the Armenian Republic but broadly speaking to the “Armenian nation,” in which he made the most complete confession of a proud responsibility for the guilt:

O Armenian nation, with whom I collaborated to overthrow an oppressor *padişah* [Sultan Abdul Hamid II] and to found a free and happy homeland! O Armenian nation that I tried to wipe out until the last member because you tried to erase my homeland and make her a prisoner of the enemy when she lived her most terrible and painful days. ... If you remain faithful to the Turkish homeland, I will do everything at my disposal for you. But if you again follow certain unconscious *comitadji* [of their acts] and try to betray the Turkish homeland, I will give the order to my arms surrounding your homeland, and I will not leave a single Armenian on the surface of the earth.¹⁷

An Erdoganist “Neo-Ottomanism”?

A century later, Recep Tayyip Erdogan appears to be the one who expresses best the very essence of Turkish ideology. The Turkish President has never taken any personal risks in his life, but he emphasizes often in his discourses that “a land can become a homeland only on the condition of being watered by blood.” He is also known for his great admiration for the Ottoman legacy, for the three “Great Sultans” (Mehmed the Conqueror, Selim I, and Suleiman the Magnificent) and for Abdul Hamid II. According to him, “our homeland,” which covered either 18 or 20 million square kilometers, has been reduced to its actual size of 780,000 as a consequence of external aggressions and internal betrayals. By this, he does not mean that only Turks lived in this Empire, but that the Empire was the *homeland* exclusively to the Turks, the other linguistic and religious communities being there almost as hosts, whose existence was, so to say, tolerated by the Turkish nation. The CUP ideologist Gokalp, according to whom the nation could be incarnated only by the

15 See, namely, Taner Akcam, “Ermeni Meselesi Hallolunmuştur”. *Osmanlı Belgelerine Göre Savaş Yıllarında Ermenilere Yönelik Politikalar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008).

16 For an extensive documentation, see Akcam, “*Ermeni Meselesi Hallolunmuştur*.”

17 Halil Kut, “Eylül 1918’de Erivan ve Ermeniler,” in *Ermeniler Hakkında “Makaleler-Derlemeler”* (Erzurum: Erzurum Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1978), 150-151.

genius (to start with himself) and heroes such as Talaat and Enver, assigned a mystical attribute to Turkishness. Erdogan, too, sees himself as the very incarnation of the Turkish nation; similarly, according to him, Turkishness had received, in its very inception, the historical mission to dominate the world. This mission has also been certified by God and by science: it consists of bringing civilization, administration, and harmony to the universe, but the accomplishment of this mission requires heroism, a sacrificial spirit, and the ability to wage war. According to the Turkish President, war has been a part of human history since Abel and Cain, and will remain so until the end. Behind this theological interpretation, one can, however, easily see the legacy of Social Darwinism describing nations as biological foes engaged in a struggle for survival.

In his own time, Gokalp insisted that Turkishness was determined by its unchanging *hars*, a term, which, in his definition, designates more "essence" than culture. The nation, according to Erdogan too, is determined by its ontology, which ensures its durability, explains its force understood as a *Macht* as the 19th-century German geopoliticians defined it, and not only as power, and is incarnated in a leader. Gokalp considered himself a distant disciple of the founder of French sociology Émile Durkheim, but was strongly opposed to the Westernization of the country, if not through simple initiation into the technological and scientific civilization of the West. Notwithstanding Turkey's alliance with the USA and his strong personal links with American President Donald Trump, Erdogan, who ignores the very name of Durkheim, is also profoundly anti-Western and explains even the country's demographic decline as a Western plot against the Turkish-Islamic nation. In reality, like the Social-Darwinist CUP cadres, he too is profoundly westernized: while he strongly rejects liberal European traditions, he replicates in his discourses the syntax of Western radical rights of the 1920s-1930s. According to the Turkish President, while always remaining immaculate, the ontology of the Turkish nation is constantly threatened by external forces, namely the West, as well as by internal betrayals, those of the non-Muslim communities that it protected, some Muslims who have been manipulated by external forces, and last but not least, by the Turkish elites themselves, who, through their westernization, have alienated themselves from their own nation. Thus, the recovery of this ontology at a collective level appears to be a precondition for the future strength of the nation.

During the years, Erdogan underlined the importance of three symbolic dates, or rather commemorative moments, in the understanding of the history of the Turkish nation and in the shaping of its future. The first one is 2023, the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Erdogan has always had an ambiguous position vis-à-vis this Republic, which, on the one hand, stopped the process of decline of Turkishness, but on the other hand, has renounced claiming back past territorial losses. Moreover, the Republic was founded by the alienated or westernized elites, who denied their past, criminalized the very legacy of the Empire, and abolished the caliphate. In spite of this ambivalence, the Republic constitutes, in his eyes, a historical landmark. The commemorations of 2023, however, have been dull and colorless, not least because the longstanding promises of Erdogan to

transform Turkey into one of the ten major powers in the world have not been fulfilled.

The second date, yet to come, is 2053, the 600th anniversary of the conquest of Constantinople, which allowed the Ottomans to realize their transition from a simple Turkish *beylicat* (“principality”) coexisting with others in Minor Asia into an Empire, thus assuming the legacy, on the one hand, of the past Islamic Empires, and on the other hand, of the deceased Roman and Byzantine Empires. The last date is 2071, the 1000th anniversary of the Battle of Manazkert, the first Turkish military victory against Byzantium, which opened the doors of Asia Minor to the Turkish forces, thus constituting the beginning of the Turkish historical mission. Erdogan reminds quite frequently that the nation is divided between the friends and foes of 2071, the final moment of not only the ontological recovery but also of renewed strength, a new historical mission.

Republican Turkey One Century Later: a “New Life”?

The consequences of such a worldview are huge both in terms of state’s coercion and mass violence, as we mentioned at the beginning of this article, and in terms of perception of time and space. For many decades, in its secret reports, republican Turkey recognized the existence of the Kurds and defined them as internal, if not biological, enemies. In its external discourse, however, it simply denied their existence.¹⁸ This was even more the case for the Armenians and the Greeks, who were not only expelled from space through mass violence, but also from time. In his well-known speech in Adana in 1924, Mustafa Kemal emphasized strongly that the Armenians had no historical existence in Turkey. In response to a question from one of the auditors, Kemal said:

Our friend said that different groups, including Armenians, have occupied our artistic homes and act as if they are the owners of this country. There is no doubt that one cannot imagine a greater injustice and a greater insolence. Armenians have no rights in this prosperous country. The country is yours, you Turks. This country was Turkish in history, remains Turkish now, and will therefore be eternally Turkish and live as a Turkish country. The country was, finally, liberated by the hands of its true owners. Armenians and others have no rights here. These fertile lands are overwhelmingly and in essence a Turkish country.¹⁹

¹⁸For the documents, see Mehmet Bayrak, *Kürtler ve Ulusal Demokratik Mücadeleleri. Gizli Belgeler - Araştırmalar - Notlar* (Ankara: Öz-Ge, 1993). See also Mehmet Bayrak, *Açık-Gizli / Resmi- Gayriresmi Kürdoloji Belgeleri* (Ankara: Öz-Ge, 1994).

¹⁹Quoted in Rıfat N. Bali, *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri. Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni (1923-1945)* (İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2000).

In place of a conclusion

The constancies that we observe in Turkish history since Abdul Hamid II constitute an illustration of the master and slave dialectic: the master cannot live without slave, or rather without internal enemies and “betrayers,” thanks to whom he can have an identity, an ego, an existence. He is obviously dominant, but the more he vanquishes and the more he dominates, the more he is scared; the more he needs to remind himself that he has enemies.

In his well-known poem “New Life,” CUP’s Ziya Gokalp, wrote:

A country where the ideal, language, and religion are common to each of its individuals. Clean are its deputies. Where the Bochos [anti-nationalist Greek-Ottoman deputy] do not have the right to speak. A country where Turkish is all the capital that circulates in its market, just like the science and technology that guide its industry. Its merchants help each other. The arsenals, factories, ships, and trains belong to the Turks! There you are, son of Turks... This is your country.²⁰

More than one hundred years later, while violence remains a constant element of a society paralyzed by economic crisis and a permanent feeling of internal and external insecurity, this ideal of “pure” and “new” life seems to be more difficult to reach than ever.

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²⁰ Ziya Gokalp, *Yeni Hayat, Doğru Yol* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1976), 11.

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