

The Young Turks – Children of the Borderlands?

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Empires and borderlands – Although the history of the continental empires of Europe, the Habsburg Empire, Prussia, Russia and the Ottoman Empire, can be written in terms of a strong imperial centre trying control diverse peripheries, it is also true that those peripheries have been extremely important in defining the central characteristics of each of these empires. Cases abound: Prussia came into existence in the Easternmost regions of the German-speaking world, in constant confrontation with Baltic and Slav populations. Its military and political traditions were shaped in an environment, which was totally different from (and alien to) the inhabitants of Saxony, the Rhineland or Württemberg; Russia's view of the world and of itself was shaped to a large extent by, first, its emancipation from, and later, its conquest of the successor states to the Mongol Golden Horde. From the beginning, it was quintessentially a state on the borderline of Christianity and Islam. Although the roots of Habsburg power lay elsewhere, it is nevertheless no exaggeration to say that it was the struggle against the Muslim Ottoman Turks, first at the gates of Vienna in 1529 and 1683 and later during the conquest of Hungary and the Northern Balkans, which gave the Habsburg Empire its unique character, both as “defender of the faith” and as multinational state. In the emergence and growth of the Ottoman Empire since the Fourteenth Century the border between Islam and (Byzantine) Christendom was likewise of crucial importance. From Paul Wittek in the Nineteen Thirties¹ to Cemal Kafadar in the Nineteen Nineties², all historians of the early Ottoman Empire have emphasized the importance of the cultural climate of the border. Wittek especially became known for his thesis (published in *The rise of the Ottoman Empire*) that the ethos of the warrior for the faith (the *gazi*) determined the culture of the early Ottomans. William McNeill, in his seminal work *Europe's steppe frontier*,³ launched the notion that the Ottoman Empire was dependent on constantly pushing outward its borders to find enough sources of revenue to keep up its state apparatus and that when conquests came to an end, the subsequent necessity to raise the pressure of taxation on the existing population caused social dislocation.

While it can thus be said that the phenomenon of the border was a formative influence in the emergence of these empires, it is also true that they played an important role in the final stages of their decline. The most obvious example is of course the political murder of the Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. This murder, the product of nationalist agitation in the Habsburg periphery, after all unleashed the chain of events, which would bring an end to all four great empires – the Russian in 1917, the Austro-Hungarian and German in 1918 and, finally, the Ottoman in 1922.

In this article I will try to show that in the final decade of the Ottoman Empire it was also a group of people from the periphery which decisively influenced the course of events in these last years of empire as well as the direction of Ottoman and Turkish politics after the war.

¹ Paul Wittek, *The rise of the Ottoman Empire*, London, 1938.

² Cemal Kafadar, *Between two worlds. The construction of the Ottoman state*, Berkeley, LA, 1995.

³ William Hardy McNeill, *Europe's steppe frontier, 1500-1800*, Chicago, 1964.

The Young Turks – The group of people we are dealing with in this article is that of the so-called Young Turks. ‘Young Turks’ has now, of course, become a generic term denoting rebels attacking an established order, but primarily it is the name used in Turkish historiography for the groups which strove for the regeneration of the Ottoman Empire in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. They saw the key to this regeneration in the restoration of constitutional and parliamentary rule, which had been introduced in the Ottoman Empire in 1876, but had been suspended by the increasingly autocratic Sultan Abdülhamit II in 1878, after the defeat in the great war against Russia, which brought the Russian army to the outskirts of the capital İstanbul. In the centennial year of the French revolution, 1889, a group of young students in the army medical school founded a secret committee, which would later become known as the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, C.U.P.) and which had as its express goal to restore constitution and parliament. The thinking behind this was that the empire was threatened by the centrifugal forces of separatist minority nationalism, which could be both stimulated and used by foreign powers with designs on Ottoman territory. The Young Turk ideal was that of the “Unity of the (ethnic and religious) Elements” (*İttihadi Anasır*) and they felt this could only be achieved by giving all communities a stake in the empire through parliamentary representation.

Between 1889 and 1896 this C.U.P. slowly gained adherents, primarily within the Ottoman bureaucracy. At the same time a number of constitutionalists who had to flee the country or left voluntarily, conducted a publicity campaign from Europe against what they saw as the tyranny of Abdülhamit. By 1896 the movement had gained such a following (at a time when Sultan Abdülhamit was beleaguered because of the bloody repression of the Armenians he had instigated)⁴ that it could consider taking over power. Literally on the eve of a coup d’état its secret network was exposed by the Sultan’s secret police. Large numbers of arrests followed and for the next decade the Young Turk movement within the empire was silenced. The opposition abroad continued, but it was divided and the factions spent as much time fighting each other as attacking the Sultan.⁵

The situation changed from 1905. Newly arrived activists reorganised the émigré movement into a far more effective force, with a cell structure and secure communications, while in 1906 in Salonica, an independent group of conspirators, some of whom had been members of the C.U.P. before 1896, founded a secret committee, which, within two years, managed to gain an important following among the officers of the Ottoman garrisons in the Balkans. In July 1908 some of these officers, on the orders of the committee, took their troops into the mountains and sent ultimatums to the palace. When his half hearted attempts to suppress the revolt were unsuccessful, the sultan capitulated and the constitution was restored on 24 July.

After the revolution the C.U.P. reorganised itself in a political party, which took part in elections and parliamentary debate, but the secret organisation also remained in being and real power remained in the hands of the Central Committee of this organisation. In April 1909 a counterrevolution in İstanbul drove the C.U.P. from power, but the insurgency was suppressed with the help of the army after a fortnight. In the three years that followed, the Young Turks lost a large part of their support in the country and in 1911 they actually were ousted from the government, but during the crisis engendered by the

⁴ Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923. A study in international relations*, London, 1966, 254 ff; Hilmar Kaiser, *Imperialism, racism and development theories. The construction of a dominant paradigm on Ottoman Armenians*, Ann Arbor, 1997, 6-7; Geoffrey Lewis, *Modern Turkey*, London, 1974, 51.

⁵ Two ground breaking studies by M. Şükrü Hanioğlu together constitute a definitive account of the Young Turk movement in exile: *The Young Turks in opposition*, Oxford, 1995 and *Preparing for a revolution. The Young Turks, 1902-1908*, Oxford, 2001.

de defeat in the Balkan War of 1912, the C.U.P. carried out a coup d'état (in January 1913). From then on until the end of World War I, parliamentary government was a matter of form and to all intents and purposes the Ottoman Empire was a one-party dictatorship. The C.U.P. used its power monopoly in these years to carry out far-reaching secularising and modernising reforms, which foreshadowed those of the Turkish Republic.

In spite of their enormous importance in the modern history of Turkey, the social, geographical and ethnic background of the Young Turks remains largely unstudied. In the major works on the history of the period generalizations abound. Feroz Ahmad calls them "lower middle class"⁶ and "newly emerging professional classes"⁷; Allen says they were "young officers"⁸, which is also how Geoffrey Lewis sees them.⁹ Bernard Lewis talks about "Muslim Turks, mostly soldiers" and "members of the ruling elite"¹⁰, while, by way of contrast, Stanford Shaw typifies them as "lower class" and even "subject class".¹¹ The anthropologists Richard Robinson describes them as "new technicians, newly awakened intelligentsia, western-oriented army officers"¹², while Sina Akşin, finally, has summed up the common denominators of the Young Turks as "Turks, youngsters, members of the ruling class, western-educated with a bourgeois mentality".¹³

At best, these are very broad generalizations, but they are also contradictory. Were they professionals or soldiers? Ruling elite or subject class? Let us make an effort to see what was the reality behind these generalizations. In doing so we cannot base ourselves on data for the rank and file of the Committee of Union and Progress. After the C.U.P.'s victory in the constitutional revolution, thousand, possibly even tens of thousands joined it, but we have little or no information about this membership. At the same time, however, the leadership of the movement was in the hands of a relatively small group of people, not more than a hundred or so, about whom we can know quite a bit.

Within that leadership we can discern several groups. First of all, the leaders of the opposition movement against the rule of sultan Abdülhamid between 1889 and 1908. This group includes the founders of the movement at the Military Medical School in 1889 and the early members as well as those Young Turks, who kept up the publicity campaign against the sultan's autocracy from Paris, Geneva or Cairo. Some, but not all, of these re-emerged in the second group, that of the members of the Central Committee of the C.U.P., which was the most powerful political body in the Ottoman Empire from the constitutional revolution of 1908 until the defeat in World War I ten years later. A third group is that of the administrators or party bosses (governors, inspectors, party secretaries (or in the terminology of the C.U.P. "responsible secretaries"), who were entrusted by the leadership with the control over provinces and cities. Finally, we have the activist, politicised army officers, who ultimately gave the C.U.P. its power through their

⁶ Feroz Ahmad, *The making of modern Turkey*, London, 1993, 34.

⁷ Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks. The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish politics 1908-1914*, Oxford, 1969, 6.

⁸ Henry Elisha Allen, *The Turkish transformation. A study in social and religious development*, Chicago, 1935, 6.

⁹ Henry Elisha Allen, *The Turkish transformation. A study in social and religious development*, Chicago, 1935, 6.

¹⁰ Bernard Lewis, *The emergence of modern Turkey*, London, 1961, 201, 208.

¹¹ Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. Reform, revolution and republic. The rise of modern Turkey 1808-1975*, vol. 2, Cambridge, 1977, 263-264.

¹² Richard D. Robinson, *The first Turkish republic. A case study in national development*, Cambridge, MA, 1963, 5.

¹³ Sina Akşin, *Jön Türkler ve İttihat ve Terakki*, İstanbul, 1987, 78.

influence in the army and who came to the rescue each time the C.U.P.'s hold on power was threatened. Some of these held formal positions in the Committee and even served on the Central Committee but most did not. As the Turkish independence movement after World War I, led by Mustafa Kemal Pasha (the later Atatürk) was also completely dominated by former C.U.P. members, we could also include the members of the leadership of this movement, the "Representative Committee" and the commissars of the first Great National Assembly in Ankara among the leading C.U.P. cadres whose background we want to investigate, but for the purposes of this article I have left these post-World War I leaders out of consideration.

The "typical" Young Turk – On the basis of the biographies of these leading Young Turks it is possible to discern a number of shared characteristics, which together make up a "typical Young Turk profile". They were males and they were Muslims (with the exception of one single Sabbataic Jew or *dönme*)¹⁴ of different ethnic backgrounds: Turk, Arab, Albanian, Kurd or Circassian. Their social background varied (some of them being sons of landowners, others of great dignitaries or generals, yet others sons of small-time civil servants), but it was urban and literate, with most fathers being in the service of the Ottoman state. Almost without exception, they were educated in modern schools, which had been founded after European examples in the second half of the Nineteenth Century.

The Young Turks on the whole deserved their name: they were quite young when they joined the movement and even at the time of the constitutional revolution (1908) very few were over forty years old. They also wanted to be young. Youth, with its associated qualities of dynamism, activity and progressiveness, was seen by the Young Turks as a very positive characteristic and one which gave legitimacy to their actions. Theirs was the voice of modernity. A striking example of this awareness of being a new and youthful generation is given in the memoirs of the Young Turk officer Kazım Karabekir, when he relates how, together with three friends, he founded a secret society the General Staff college in 1904. They adopted the expression "Jeunes Gens" as password, after a cartoon in the French review *Le Petit Parisien*, which showed spies who were eavesdropping and had the caption "Jeunes gens, prenez garde aux choses que vous dites."¹⁵ In his standard work on the C.U.P, Tarık Zafer Tunaya also says that the Young Turks valued youth above anything else.¹⁶ In this, their habitus was strikingly at odds with the traditional Ottoman value system in which authority was closely linked to age and experience.

Even if as a group they were quite young, there were important differences among them. The Young Turks were a mixed group of civilians and military officers and among the civilians we find medical doctors, educators and administrators. Equating the Young Turks with military officers is clearly an oversimplification. Before 1906 the civilians dominated the movement and it was only between 1906 and 1908, with the establishment of C.U.P. cells in the second and third Ottoman armies that the officers became the most important element. Hence, the civilians among the leadership formed a significantly older group than the officers – in 1908 their average age was 38 as opposed to 29 for the military men. Within the two groups, and among the second group especially, the age differentials are very small – in other words: when we talk about Young Turk officers, we are definitely dealing with an identifiable generation, born around 1880.

¹⁴ This was Cavit Bey, the later finance minister of the Young Turks. The *dönmeler* lived outwardly as Muslims but preserved a number of Jewish traditions and a strong sense of community. They were an important element in Ottoman Salonica, where they were particularly prominent in trade and in education. Cf. Leskovikli Mehmet Rauf, *İttihat ve Terakki ne idi*, İstanbul, 1991 (originally published 1911), 81 ff.

¹⁵ Kazım Karabekir, *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti neden kuruldu, nasıl kuruldu, nasıl idare olundu*, İstanbul, 1982, 67.

¹⁶ Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de siyasal partiler. İttihat ve Terakki. Bir çağın, bir kuşağın, bir partinin tarihi*, cilt 3, İstanbul, 1989, 214.

These are only very broad characteristics, of course, and a lot more detailed research remains to be done, but in this article I now want to focus on one aspect of the Young Turk profile, that of the geographical origin of the leading Young Turks and its implications.

Geographical origins – The birthplace, or more precisely the geographical origins of the family, was an important distinguishing mark among the Young Turks, as indeed it is among the Turks of today. This is shown by the many references to origin we find in the *lakaps*, the nicknames which were widely used before the introduction of family names in Turkey in 1934: Filibeli Hilmi (Hilmi from Plovdiv), Selanikli Mustafa Kemal (Mustafa Kemal from Salonica), Resneli Niyazi (Niyazi from Resen) or Rodoslu Süleyman. A caveat is in order, though: because the Young Turks were often sons of officers or bureaucrats, their birthplace may be the place their fathers were stationed at a given time. I have as yet not been able to systematically separate birthplace and the origin of the family, but the importance of this distinction should be recognized: the later second president of the Republic of Turkey, İsmet İnönü, was born in İzmir, but in a Kurdish family hailing from Malatya in Eastern Turkey and in the Turkish context this would make him a man from Malatya much more than one from İzmir.

Let us first of all look at the first group mentioned above, that of the founders and early members in the period between the start of the Young Turk movement in 1889 and its suppression in 1896. This is a group of 20 persons, whose origins were as follows:

İstanbul	2
Balkans	7 (this includes 2 from provinces lost in 1878)
Aegean	3 (Rhodes, Smyrna and Crete)
Arab provinces	2
Kurdistan	2
Caucasus	4 (all from the Russian Empire)
Anatolia	0

Of the seven actual founders themselves, four came from the Russian Caucasus, one from the Albanian area in the Western Balkans and two from Kurdistan. Ethnically, not one was an Ottoman Turk. Surely, it is not an exaggeration to say that this is highly significant. It suggests that the fundamental questions regarding identity and loyalty were being asked earlier among the non-Turkish Muslim communities than among the ethnic Turks (but later than among the Christian communities of the empire).

The second group in our population, that of the members of the Central Committee (*Heyeti Merkeziye*) between 1908 and 1918 breaks down as follows:

İstanbul	4
Balkans	11
Aegean	4 (Lesbos, Crete, Smyrna, Milas)
Arab provinces	0
Kurdistan	1
Caucasus	1
Anatolia	4 (excluding Aegean coast and Kurdistan)
Unknown	6

The group of most prominent politically active officers, who obviously form a less strictly circumscribed category than the members of the Central Committee, have their birthplaces in the following areas:

İstanbul	8
Balkans	11
Aegean	1 (Smyrna)
Arab provinces	0
Kurdistan	0
Caucasus	0
Anatolia	1
Unknown	5

The composition of the group of C.U.P. administrators, who can also be considered Young Turk leaders is as yet not clearly enough defined to include them is this statistical overview.

When we take the three groups of leaders, whose origin we have charted, together, the picture that emerges is very clear. Of the 66 persons whose background we know, 29, or fully 44 percent, hail from the Southern Balkans, or in Ottoman parlance: from Rumeli. Another 14, or 21 percent, hail from İstanbul, but this number should be treated with special caution. There were special reasons why having your baby born in the capital was advantageous. Medical care was available more readily than in most other places, and, besides, natives of İstanbul were exempt from the feared military conscription. Eight persons, or 12 percent hailed from the Aegean islands or coastal region. The other Asiatic parts of the empire, which taken together constituted the vast majority of the Ottoman lands, contributed no more than 15 percent of the Young Turk leadership. The Russian Caucasus contributed 7.5 percent, but primarily to the first generation of Young Turk leaders.

The predominance of the southern Balkans as origin especially of the post-1908 leaders, civilian and military, is clear. 48 percent of them came from this relatively small part of the empire, with another 26 percent born in the capital. 11 percent came from the islands and coast of the Aegean, while the vast Asiatic possessions of the empire taken together produced only 13 percent of the second-generation leadership. Within the general category of “Balkans” three areas stand out: Salonica, the area from Monastir (Bitola) to Ohrid and the area around Prishtine (modern Kosovo). The number of military officers hailing from the Western Ottoman Balkans is especially remarkable: 11 out of 21, which compares to one from the Aegean and one from Anatolia.

Fathers of Turkish nationalism – A slightly different pattern emerges when we look at one special category among the Young Turks – those who, as writers and teachers, contributed to the emergence of Turkish nationalism. If we look at this group, which comprises Mehmet Ziya Gök Alp (1876-1924), Tekin Alp (real name: Moise Cohen, 1883-1961), Yusuf Akçura (1876-1933), Hüseyinzade Ali Turan (1864-1941), Ahmet Ağaoğlu (1869-1939) and Mehmet Emin Yurdakul (1869-1944), we are struck by one remarkable phenomenon: not one of them hails from an area with a solid Ottoman-Turkish majority. Four of them were born in the Russian Empire (one in Kazan, the others in the Caucasus region), one in a part Turkish, part-Kurdish family in Kurdistan and one in a Jewish family in Macedonia. It would seem that in each case, their awareness of the problems of national identity was sharpened by the fact that they grew up in ethnically mixed areas where Turks were a minority (as in the case of Gök Alp and Tekin Alp) or where Turks lived under Russian domination (in the case of the others). This is perhaps not surprising. As we saw in the case of the founders of the C.U.P., young intellectuals belonging to Muslim communities outside the dominant Ottoman-Turkish one, were sensitised earlier to problems of identity and political loyalty.

Turkish nationalism (as opposed to the Ottoman patriotism of the early Young Turks and the Ottoman-Muslim proto-nationalism of the C.U.P. after 1906)¹⁷ gained in strength during the period of World War I, but it remained a minority ideology. It became the dominant ideology, supported by the state, only after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. Thus, we can say that there are two distinct ways in which the periphery had a decisive influence on the way modern Turkey took shape. Ideologically, the Turkish nation-state was the product of the agitation of intellectuals who hailed either from the Muslim borderlands of Russia or from ethnically mixed provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Politically, the early republic was both brought into being and ruled by former Young Turk officers and administrators, a disproportionately large number of whom hailed from Balkan provinces which were no longer Turkish. Thus, the emergence of the Turkish republic can be seen as an interesting example of the periphery determining the course of events in the centre.

The legacy of the borderlands – Having established, even on the basis of this fairly superficial scan that the Young Turk leadership predominantly had its origins in the ethnically mixed area of the Southern Balkans, we have to ask ourselves how this background has influenced their worldview and their politics.

It is undoubtedly true that there is a discernible and very typical Young Turk mentality and worldview. In part, this has nothing to do with their geographical origins. Their Western orientation, secularism, materialism and the elitist and authoritarian outlook they derived from popularised positivism have their origins in their education in the modern schools of the empire, in their extra-curricular reading and, especially among the first-generation Young Turks, in their experience during their stay in Europe.¹⁸ But some of their shared characteristics are linked to the area in which they spent their youth and adolescence.

Living the urban centres of the southern Balkans made this generation acutely aware of the increasing gap between the Christian bourgeoisie on the one hand and the Muslim middle class on the other. This gap was evident in education, with superior schools being established both by the non-Muslim communities themselves and by European missionary organisations. These schools were so attractive that by the end of the century, Muslims also started to send their children there (although they always remained a minority). The gap was also increasingly evident in the economy. The modern sectors of the economy, with its railways, tobacco factories, breweries and export-oriented farms, with its banks, insurance companies, hotels and department stores, was the almost exclusive domain of the non-Muslim communities and of foreign investors. Partly because of their better-developed skills and partly because of ethnic prejudice, all positions from management down to the level of skilled workers were in the hands of non-Muslims. The sons of the Muslim middle class who sought employment outside the traditional sector of the *esnaf* (small traders and artisans) increasingly found their place in the state bureaucracy (which grew thirty fold in the Nineteenth Century) and the officer corps of the armed forces. As such, they were in a paradoxical situation: they represented the authority and prestige of the state, but at the same time they lived in relative poverty, wages often being in arrears for months if not years. They could see with their own eyes the impotence of the state, which they were taught to revere, in the face of the representatives of foreign powers and of the Ottoman Christians who fell under their diplomatic protection. In Macedonia in particular, after the Mürzsteg agreement between

¹⁷ Erik Jan Zürcher, "Young Turks, Ottoman muslims and Turkish nationalists: Identity politics, 1908-1938", in Kemal H. Karpat (ed.), *Ottoman past and today's Turkey*, Leiden, 2000, 150-179.

¹⁸ Erik Jan Zürcher, "Kemalist düşüncenin Osmanlı kaynakları", in Ahmet İnel (ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de siyasi düşünce: Kemalizm*, cilt 2, İstanbul, 2002, 44-55.

Austria and Russia in 1903, the erosion of Ottoman power and sovereignty could be felt, with the gendarmerie being placed under an Italian commander assisted by European offices from each of the great powers.

Young Turk memoirs show us very clearly how aware they were of the growing gap between Muslims and non-Muslims. Born in the traditional Muslim quarters they gazed in awe at the villa's the Greek and Armenian industrialists built along newly laid-out avenues with tramways and streetlights. The contrast defined their loyalties and when the secret committee that would bring about the constitutional revolution of 1908, was founded in Salonica in 1906, it accepted Ottoman Muslims without question, but non-Muslims only in exceptional cases after screening. The Young Turks developed a fierce Ottoman-Muslim nationalism, which defined the "other" very much in religious terms. In the years that followed, particularly between the outbreak of the Balkan War in 1912 and the end of the Turkish independence struggle in 1922, the Muslim – Non-Muslim divide would completely dominate politics and lead to the tragedies of the expulsion of Muslims from the Balkans and Greek-Orthodox from Anatolia, as well as to the wholesale slaughter of the Ottoman Armenians.

Most of the Young Turk officers also served in the Balkans, with the Third Army in the West or the Second Army more to the East. They were employed in the constant small-scale warfare against Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek guerrilla bands and against Albanian clans and tribes. They learned their lessons in this atmosphere, both negative and positive. Negative in the sense that their first-hand acquaintance with the activities of the Christian Balkan nationalists left them with few illusions about the loyalties of the Christian communities; positive, in the sense that they learned lessons about guerrilla warfare from the Serb chetes and the Bulgarian komitajis, which they would themselves later employ against the Italians in North Africa in 1911-12 and more generally in the decade of war after 1912.

In 1912-1913 all of the Young Turk officers and civil servants who had been born in the Balkan provinces some thirty years earlier, lost their ancestral homes. In many cases their families had to flee and became refugees (*muhacirs*) in what remained of the Ottoman Empire. Perhaps surprisingly, this did not give rise to a strong irredentism or revanchism among the Young Turks. It did lead them to adopt Anatolia, which to many of them was a completely foreign country as their new fatherland. There was an upsurge in interest for the population and culture of Anatolia, as expressed in research and in articles in the press. At the same time, the feeling that what had happened should never be allowed to happen again; that Anatolia should not go the way of the Balkans and was in a very real sense the "Turk's last stand" was certainly instrumental in the decisions to embark on the wholesale extermination of the Armenians and the expulsion of the Greek Orthodox. Armenian scholars usually seek the explanation for the persecution of the Armenians in 1915-16 in the Pan-Turkist dreams of the Young Turk leadership, but in fact the experiences of ethnic warfare in the Balkans and in the Caucasus had far more to do with it. After all: at least a quarter of the inhabitants of Anatolia in 1915 were either Muslim refugees (*muhacirs*) themselves or children of refugees.

As we know, the Young Turks were successful in turning Anatolia into their new fatherland. Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Pasha they went on to found the Republic of Turkey in 1923 with Ankara as its new capital. People from the Balkans, with a shared background in the Committee of Union and Progress, made up a very important part of the leadership of the new republic and they took their Balkans heritage with them to the new capital in the heart of the Anatolian steppe. Next to nationalism, modernization, or rather "being contemporary" (*muasır*) was the central plank in the Kemalist programme. Usually, the Kemalists have therefore been seen as imitators of the

West, who took their cue from Paris and London. While catching up with the most advanced nations was certainly the avowed aim of the Kemalists, we should not lose sight of the fact that in concrete terms the way of life which came closest to their ideal and which they tried to imitate, was that of the bourgeoisie of the urban centres of the Balkans. The esplanades, parks, tea gardens, cinemas and villas they constructed in each and every Anatolian town in the thirties actually bore more resemblance to the modern sections of Salonika, Bucharest or Sofia than to French or British examples.

There was nostalgia too. The names of shops and restaurants bore witness to it and during the all-night drinking parties which were a regular feature of life in Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's presidential mansion in the thirties, nothing pleased and moved the president and his friends as much as the playing and singing of folk songs remembered from Ottoman Macedonia.