

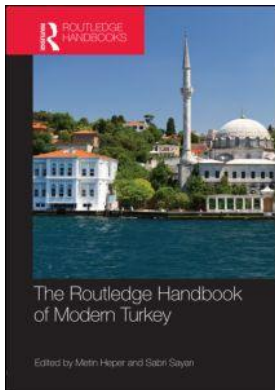
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### **The Young Turks And The Committee Of Union And Progress**

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### 3

# THE YOUNG TURKS AND THE COMMITTEE OF UNION AND PROGRESS

*Hasan Kayali*

The term “Young Turk” characterizes a string of cognate sociopolitical platforms and associational affiliations in the late Ottoman Empire. Already in the 1860s, the literary political dissident group that had formed in Istanbul and called itself the “New Ottomans” was becoming known to Europe as the “Young Turks” after the more familiar progressive movements that had previously sprung up across the continent: “Young Italy,” “Young Germany,” “Young Irish,” and the like. The strongest association of the term “Young Turk” is with the group that appropriated as its name and slogan the positivist motto “union and progress” in 1895, and with this group’s various incarnations and offshoots, which left a profound collective imprint on the political life of the Ottoman Empire in its last three decades. Even after military and political failures and denunciation and persecution by post-Ottoman successor states relegated Union and Progress, as an organized entity, to the dustbin of history, significant continuities in ideology, organization, and political cadres have provided a compelling reason for some historians to characterize the early nation-state period in Republican Turkey as a continuation of the “Young Turk” era (Zürcher, 1997).

#### **The first phase of the Young Turk movement (1889–1908)**

Despite its ideological, organizational, and tactical affinities with the New Ottomans (later known as the Young Ottomans), the Committee (or Society) of Union and Progress (CUP) represented a new generation of dissidents responding to the relatively novel internal and external circumstances associated with New Imperialism, the rise of nationalism, and Sultan Abdülhamid’s (r. 1876–1909) autocracy. Motivated by new strands of social thought, they came from a wide cross-section of Ottoman society. They appropriated the designation “Young Turk” coined in Europe, albeit in its French rendering “Jön Türk” (*les Jeunes-Turcs*). They did so in affirmation of their stance within the genealogy of “Young” movements, and not because they understood the term as corresponding to any self-view based on ethnicity.

The movement’s nucleus was a secret group called the Ottoman Union (İttihad-ı Osmani), formed in 1889 at the Imperial Medical School (Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Şahane) in Istanbul in opposition to Sultan Abdülhamid’s repressive regime. The early leaders came from diverse geographical and ethnic backgrounds and were trained for positions of prestige in the

bureaucratic and military ranks. The nucleus in the medical school included Albanians İbrahim Temo, the founder of the group, and İshak Sükuü; Abdullah Cevdet, a Kurd and future champion of positivist secularism; and Circassian Mehmed Reşid. They established contact with like-minded critics of Abdülhamid's rule from an older generation of Ottomans, including officials and intellectuals influenced by contemporary European social thought, members of the religious establishment, and journalists of varied ethno-religious backgrounds in forced or self-imposed exile. Ahmed Rıza, an Ottoman official in voluntary exile in Paris, assumed the leadership of the Ottoman Union and Progress Society (Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti), which became the principal and most durable organization within the Young Turk movement after 1895. Ahmed Rıza published the newspaper *Meşveret* (Consultation) in association with Khalil Ghanem (a Christian Arab) and Alber Fua (an Ottoman Jew). The Society's leadership remained contested, and its stance shifted from Ahmed Rıza's staunch positivism toward advocacy of a coup against Abdülhamid. Murad Bey, an émigré from Russia, former teacher at the Civil Service Academy (Mekteb-i Mülkiye) in Istanbul, and publisher of the liberal newspaper *Mizan* (Balance), briefly took the helm while based in Geneva, until he accepted a peace offer from the sultan in 1897.

Union and Progress, with Ahmed Rıza now its leading light again, did have rivals within the Young Turk movement, chief among them a faction in Paris that was led by a disaffected member of the royal family, Sabahaddin Bey, son of the sultan's sister. "Prince" Sabahaddin and his followers, including some older statesmen and non-Muslim Ottomans, looked to British intercession for the removal of Abdülhamid. In contrast to the generally centralist program of the Union and Progress, this faction favored a decentralized administrative system, with Sabahaddin forming his own liberal group, the League of Private Initiative and Decentralization (Teşebbüs-ü Şahsi ve Adem-i Merkeziyet Cemiyeti). The division between the centralists and the decentralists continued through two congresses of anti-Hamidian elements held in Paris in 1902 and 1907 (Ramsaur, 1957; Hanioglu, 1995).

The domestic branches of Union and Progress remained secret, with an organization based on cells. In addition to Union and Progress, there were other clandestine and activist clusters within the Young Turk movement. In Damascus, Mustafa Kemal, as a young officer in the Fifth Army, joined a group called Fatherland (Vatan), renamed it Fatherland and Liberty (Vatan ve Hürriyet), and sought to transplant it to Salonika, the hub of domestic revolutionary activity. A parallel organization in that city called the Ottoman Freedom Society (Osmanlı Hürriyet Cemiyeti)—constituted by future leaders of the Young Turk movement already active within the Unionist movement and including both officers and civilians such as postal employee Talat Bey—merged in 1907 with Union and Progress (which was utilizing the inverted name "Progress and Union" at this juncture). Its secret cells agitated against the regime within the Macedonian cauldron of ethnic militia activity (Ramsaur, 1957; Hanioglu, 2001).

### The second phase: the Revolution of 1908

Clandestine Unionist clusters within the army corps headquartered in the European provinces were responsible for the Young Turk Revolution of July 1908, which launched the Second Constitutional Period of the Ottoman Empire. Defections and defiant insurrectionary actions led by Major Niyazi Bey in Monastir, and then also by other officers including Major Enver and bolstered by the cooperation of civilian bands, forced Sultan Abdülhamid to restore the constitution of 1876. Historians have argued about whether 1908 constituted a revolution. It was not the result of a mass outburst at the grassroots level, nor did it remove the sultanate, its incumbent, or even the grand vizier, Said Pasha. A meeting at Reval between King Edward VII and Tsar

Nicholas II, which consolidated the rapprochement between England and Russia once and for all, thus removing Britain as a bulwark against Russian ambitions in the Ottoman Empire, may have triggered the Unionists to action, particularly because the two powers addressed the issue of “reforms” they wished to see made in Macedonia. Yet, unrest had been palpable in diverse parts of the empire and provincial disturbances had escalated prior to July 1908 (Kansu, 1997: 30–72). Sultan Abdülhamid was compelled to restore the constitution on 23 July, opening the way to elections in the fall and the resumption of parliamentary politics; within less than a year, he was deposed in favor of his cowed and ineffectual brother, Mehmed Reşad (r. 1909–18). The public sphere flourished following the removal of restrictions on associational activity and the initial lifting of press censorship. Even though the liberal impulse of the revolution—the proclamation of which was accompanied by such high-sounding slogans of freedom, justice, and equality and hailed so enthusiastically by many segments of Ottoman society—weakened progressively, the July 1908 events were nonetheless transformative for the empire (Ahmad, 1969).

The young officers, emblemized by Enver and Niyazi, emerged as the heroes of the revolution. These officers had social and educational backgrounds, ideological developments, and political objectives similar to those of their counterparts in the Imperial Medical School some 20 years before. Yet, over these two decades the vicissitudes of an evolving liberal movement had brought into the struggle diverse segments of the society and equally diverse ideological orientations. Once the common objective of ending Abdülhamid’s autocracy was achieved, the brief honeymoon between the CUP and Sabahaddin’s group ended. New politics revealed new cracks in the relationship. The decentralist faction in the Young Turk movement founded the Liberal Party (Ahrar), a precursor of the Liberal Entente (Hürriyet ve İtilaf) that emerged as the main political adversary of the CUP in the new regime. Among the Unionists themselves, the younger cadres still basking in the glow of the revolution relegated the CUP’s ideological vanguard to a secondary role. Ahmed Rıza assumed the presidency of the Chamber of Deputies in the new parliament, but was left out of the CUP’s inner circles as it constituted itself as a political party and incorporated military officers into the political leadership (Turfan, 2000: 143–72). Nonetheless, for all its achievements in effecting the revolution, the CUP lacked leaders honed in statecraft. It chose, even after a decisive election victory, to remain in the background and govern from behind the scenes (Ahmad, 1969: 18). In the immediate aftermath of the revolution, the Young Turks witnessed Bulgaria’s declaration of independence, Crete’s union with Greece, and the Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The impulse driving the Young Turks had been a determination to preserve the empire’s territorial integrity, and they had believed a constitutional parliamentary order would ensure that integrity. The annexations and secessions that now took place belied these expectations, and also showed the non-Muslim populations, abetted by their perennial European supporters, as willing to forsake a regime that had been poised to enhance their freedoms. As ethno-linguistic segments of the population still within the confines of the empire increasingly identified with the decentralists, the Unionist outlook privileged the Muslim and Turkish elements. New territorial losses during the Balkan Wars of 1912–13 hardened this outlook further. The CUP suppressed its opposition and by the outbreak of World War I exhibited the same autocratic tendencies it had opposed in its nemesis, Sultan Abdülhamid, during the pre-revolutionary period.

### **The CUP’s consolidation of power**

Elections and electoral politics both manifested and widened the fissures among the Young Turks. In the first elections, held in the fall of 1908 before the deposition of the sultan, electoral lists endorsed by the CUP prevailed. The new chamber, which consisted of deputies elected from

those lists, many of them independents or co-opted local notables who were unknown quantities, reflected the long-existing fault lines among the constitutionalists, as well as other divisive socio-political tendencies. Furthermore, the young cadres of the CUP, unable to produce and promote their own candidate for the chief cabinet post, acquiesced in the appointment of Kamil Pasha, a statesman of the old regime and increasingly more sympathetic to the Liberals, as grand vizier, and soon came into conflict with him.

In April 1909 army units loyal to the sultan and religion students led a conservative reaction to the new regime in the capital. Apart from provocateurs such as Derviş Vahdeti, a leader of the Mohammedan Union (İttihad-ı Muhammedi) Society and the editor of its organ, *Volkan*, the constellation of forces behind this uprising has not been identified with any great certainty (Akşin, 2007: 57–59). It was contained by Rumelian army regiments that rallied under the command of Mahmud Şevket Pasha to preserve the constitution and the parliament. The 31 March Incident, as the insurrection and its immediate aftermath came to be called (in accordance with the Ottoman calendar then in use), discredited the Committee's opposition and propelled the Unionists, with the renewed support of the army, to a more assertive role in government. It also resulted in the deposition of Sultan Abdülhamid, who was implicated in the counter-revolutionary uprising. Even though the 31 March Incident impelled the CUP to curb freedoms of speech and association, multiple new parties came into existence in 1910 and 1911. As early as November 1909, İsmail Kemal Bey, the future president of Albania, and Nafi Pasha al-Jabiri, a deputy from Aleppo who served in both the 1877 and 1908 parliaments, formed the Moderate Liberal Party (Mutedil Hürriyetperveran Fırkası) (Tunaya, 1988: 208).

By the end of 1911, Young Turk factions had coalesced into two camps along formal party lines. In the opposition, the Liberal Entente proffered decentralization, appealing to a wide cross-section of Ottoman society including conservative groups, and in particular to the political predilection of non-Muslims and ethno-linguistic communities in areas where they constituted majorities. Many Arab, Albanian, Armenian, and Greek politicians and notables were troubled by the CUP's increasingly authoritarian centralism. Party leaders included future grand vizier (1919) Damad Ferid Pasha, then a member of the Chamber of Notables; Abdülhamid al-Zahravi, a deputy from Syria, later hanged for alleged Arab nationalist activity during World War I; Mithat Fraşeri, an Albanian and future anti-Communist activist; and Nazaret Dagavaryan, an Armenian deputy from Sivas (Tunaya, 1988: 263–64). In the CUP, the top ranks came to include civilian officials and professionals such as Talat and Cavid Bey, Drs Nazım and Bahattin Şakir, journalists and intellectuals including Hüseyin Cahid and Ziya Gökalp, and members of the empire's cosmopolitan elite, among them a scion of the Egyptian Khedivial family as well as the Islamist intellectual Said Halim Pasha. Although the CUP had insinuated itself into the executive branch, the government, led by the sympathetic old-timers Grand Vizier İbrahim Hakkı (1910–11) and Said Pasha (1911–12), included only a few of the CUP's strongmen: Talat as minister of the interior and Cavid as the minister of finance. In addition to the younger officers, generals like Mahmud Şevket Pasha supported the CUP. Nonetheless, the Unionists could not keep the army under their control, as events in 1912 would demonstrate (Turfan, 2000: 184–91).

The campaign for the 1912 elections occurred against the background of a series of domestic revolts in outlying provinces of the empire (e.g. southern Syria, Yemen, and Albania), and the war between the Ottoman Empire and Italy that followed Italy's occupation of Libya. Despite the government's and the army's resolve to retain the last Ottoman foothold in Africa, the difficulties in waging war against a technologically superior European military in remote Libya, handicapped by weak supply and communication lines, doomed the Ottoman effort. The dim prospects of success in the war and the increasingly more strident and organized domestic

opposition led the government to tamper with the elections, assuring a CUP majority but also triggering a crisis of confidence and the suspension of the parliament. The government succumbed to a putsch from a faction of the army sympathetic to the Liberals, allowing the formation of a star-studded cabinet under Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Pasha composed of venerable officials and long-time officers. On 17 October 1912 the Ottoman government had to accept a treaty with Italy and relinquish Libya in order to be able to turn its attention to an impending joint attack by Balkan countries. The sultan now appointed Kamil Pasha as grand vizier once again in the expectation that his diplomatic skills would avert a full-scale war with the Balkan powers.

If internal unrest and war in Libya energized partisan politics within the ranks of the Young Turks, the Balkan War and the state of emergency brought the movement to a definitive end. Defeat on the war front prepared the ground for Albania's secession, as the empire's first predominantly Muslim region seeking independence and sovereignty. The Kamil Pasha government failed to keep the Balkan armies in check. By the beginning of 1913, the Ottomans had lost nearly all their European possessions, including Salonika and Edirne, with the only exception being Istanbul's immediate hinterland. The impending threat to the capital prompted the Unionists to stage a coup d'état in January against Kamil Pasha, denouncing his conduct of the war. None other than Enver, the Unionist icon, wielded a gun in the raid on the seat of government, which left a cabinet minister dead. The CUP at first placed Mahmud Şevket Pasha at the head of the new government. Upon his assassination in June, the Committee itself took over the reins of government. An auspicious turnaround in the fortunes of the war due to internecine struggle within the Balkan coalition allowed the Ottomans to reverse some of the losses against Balkan powers and to recover Edirne, former capital of the empire, while at the same time providing a timely veneer of legitimacy to the CUP's usurpation of power (Ahmad, 1969: 131–33).

The CUP increasingly gained control over the civic order that the Young Turk revolution had launched. Social and cultural forces released in 1908, along with Young Turk reformism, transformed Ottoman society, at the same time as the CUP felt compelled to curb such forces through legislation, co-optation, or repression in order to preserve its ascendancy. Even after the freedoms of speech and assembly were curtailed, journalistic and intellectual activity continued to flourish. Writers set out and urged the adoption of policies consistent with diverse ideological formulations. Often categorized under the rubrics of Westernism, Islamism, Arabism, Turkism, and the like, the various outlooks overlapped in their offering of alternatives for Ottoman modernity (Berkes, 1964: 337–66). Journalistic and intellectual activity proliferated not only in the capital, but also in the provinces and among all ethnic and religious groups. The era witnessed labor and women's activism, even though the flurry of strikes in the early years of the Second Constitutional Period led to restrictive legislation for labor unions, and the women's movement remained under government patronage rather than achieving autonomy. The Hamidian era's educational advancements continued and diversified with the founding of new schools at every level, including schools for girls and teachers' institutes. Subjects such as physical education, music, and the fine arts were incorporated into the curricula. Among the reforms that presaged those of the early Republican period in Turkey were experimentations with a script more amenable to the structure of Turkish.

The onset of the wars stirred a new kind of patriotism. Utilizing its own popular journal, the Naval Society (Donanma Cemiyeti) campaigned for contributions toward the purchase of naval ships, and elicited a patriotic response that made possible the purchase of several vessels. The newly formed Special Organization (Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa) engaged in propaganda and intelligence work as an arm of the CUP both within and outside of the empire. An extensive

network of CUP branches permeating the empire facilitated the co-optation of urban elites and the implementation of populist policies as the Committee gained in power.

### **The CUP dominion**

The CUP's one-party rule started in 1913. Both the imposition of Mahmud Şevket Pasha as Kamil Pasha's successor in the immediate aftermath of the January coup, and Şevket Pasha's replacement with Said Hilmi Pasha, were consistent with the CUP's predilection to elevate its older and venerated associates to the highest offices. By the end of 1913 the CUP had neutralized by imprisonment, exile, or execution its opposition deriving both from conservative elements and from former fellow travelers in the Young Turk movement, and taken over the reins of state power by way of a collective leadership that would last throughout the course of World War I. At its annual congress in 1913 the Committee for the first time declared itself a political party, having until then used the designation "party" only in reference to the group of CUP deputies in the Parliament. Thus, no sooner did the CUP constitute itself as a political association than it established one-party rule. The previously postponed elections were held in 1913–14, The Unionists ensured representation of ethno-religious groups in the new parliament. Any prospect that the elections might have re-democratized the Ottoman body politic was quashed by the outbreak of World War I. Young Turk political activity remained on hold until the end of the War, when the Liberal Entente resurfaced to contest a decapitated CUP.

The exigencies of war provided a pretext for the concentration of executive and legislative powers in the hands of the CUP. Less obvious was the way that authority was structured and power concentrated within the Committee's organs. The triumvirate of Talat (minister of the interior, 1914–17, as well as grand vizier, 1917–18), Enver (minister of war, 1913–18), and Cemal (minister of the Navy, 1914–18, and governor of Syria and commander of the Fourth Army, 1914–17) was certainly powerful, but so were members of the secretive CUP Central Committee, among them Bahattin Şakir and Ziya Gökalp. The government passed legislation by decree; the parliament did meet, although sporadically. The Ottoman entry into the war in alliance with the Central Powers brought existential uncertainties as well as opportunities for the CUP to refashion the Ottoman polity, society, and economy.

The Committee viewed the concessions granted to foreign countries and nationals, known as the Capitulations, as inimical to political and economic sovereignty and took advantage of the outbreak of war to abrogate them unilaterally. The Capitulations restricted the government's ability to regulate tariffs and gave extraterritorial rights such as tax exemptions and legal immunity to foreign nationals. An important motive in abrogating the Capitulations was the strengthening of the indigenous economy (Toprak, 1982). Non-Muslim Ottomans bore the brunt of the new policy. A segment had managed to forge relationships with foreign merchants and had taken advantage of the Capitulations extended to non-Ottomans. Still worse for the non-Muslim population, though, Ottoman defeats in the Balkan Wars and the dislocation and pauperization of Balkan Muslims stigmatized Christians as the enemy. Recrimination against Greek and Armenian citizens of the empire increased in the heat of the Balkan Wars and World War I, particularly in the context of trumped-up charges of complicity with enemy powers and armies. A process that began with large-scale uprooting of Greek Muslims immediately after the Balkan Wars culminated in the deportation of virtually the entire population of Ottoman Armenians in Anatolia and the extermination of several hundreds of thousands (Bloxham, 2005; Dündar, 2008: 248–349).

Discontent with the regime's iron rule in the famine-ravished Arab provinces behind the southern fronts of the war was associated with a perception of Turkification as strangulating the

Arab lands, with the decentralist opponents of the CUP being rounded up in Syria, scores executed in Damascus and Beirut, and many others deported into Anatolia. British contacts with the Amir of Mecca, Sharif Husayn, elicited an uprising in the Holy Places in June 1916. Confronted with threats, pressure, and incentives, Husayn made a virtue of necessity and dynastic ambition by raising the flag of the Arab nation. As the moral authority of the CUP governments declined in the Arab provinces, the revolt eased British advances into Syria from their Egyptian base, cutting off the Arab provinces from the empire by pushing back the Ottoman forces. Groups of Arab officers, many of them former cohorts of the military leaders of the CUP in the military academies and constituents of the Young Turk movement, switched sides and joined the Anglo-Sharifian forces. The geopolitical vagaries of the war split along geographical and ethnic lines the Young Turk generation that had come of age to occupy high positions (Kayalı, 1997).

The CUP's political repression notwithstanding, the intellectual currents that had been taking shape in the empire since the turn of the century, and had found new opportunities of expression after 1908, proliferated against the background of war. They were inflected by changing geopolitical, demographic, and military circumstances and distilled in the thought of intellectuals, journalists, and politicians in different, often seemingly oppositional, terms. The multifarious intellectual trends influenced the diffuse Young Turk leadership, and indeed the individual leaders, to various degrees. Young Turk-era intellectuals were fascinated by nationalist thought, modernist Islamic formulations, and scientism. Thus, they were equally motivated by Ottoman patriotism, ethnic pride, positivist convictions, and Muslim religious allegiances. The CUP governments implemented policies against the backdrop of this gamut of ideological influences. They led a war effort by appealing to Muslims both inside and outside the empire, remaining cognizant of the increasing preponderance of Muslims within the empire. The Turkish-speaking top cadres nurtured a cultural pride and elevated to their ranks thinkers like Ziya Gökalp, who embellished theories on the centrality of the Turkish element in the state and posited this notion as a corollary of the quest to accommodate modernity. Committed as it was to the maintenance of the empire and preservation of the Ottoman regime, the political vision of the CUP remained Ottomanist. On the institutional level, it implemented and advanced secularization as the means toward progress. It privileged Turkish as the apparatus of its centralizing agenda, and Muslim commonality as the mainstay of the shrinking empire.

Having managed to repulse an Entente push from the west in the Gallipoli campaign in 1915 and with the fortuitous exit of Russia from the conflict after the Revolution of 1917, the CUP found respite during the war to further its agendas. A total lapse into authoritarianism, including the neutralization of political opponents and the institution of rule by a camarilla, stunted political reform and liberalization, the very essence of the Young Turk movement since its inception. Social transformations, however, continued to unfold well into the war years. War made popular mobilization even more important. The National Defense Society (*Müdafaa-ı Milliye Cemiyeti*) organized by the CUP fostered material and ideological support for the regime. The Family Law of 1917 enhanced women's rights in marriage and divorce by appropriating to the state some of the traditional prerogatives of communal religious leaders and circumscribing the Sharia law.

### **Persistence of the Young Turk era beyond the imperial collapse and the Young Turk legacy**

The Central Powers succumbed to the Entente in October 1918. The CUP government resigned on October 1918, and Sultan Vahidedin (r. 1918–22), who had ascended the throne in



July, asked elder statesman and general Ahmed İzzet Pasha to form a new government, which, within two weeks, signed the Armistice of Mudros. Several CUP leaders fled the country. Other Unionists were rounded up by the British, tried, and sent into exile. The Armistice was the end neither of Union and Progress as an empire-wide organization nor of the constitutional regime it had established, nor indeed the end of war. While the CUP formally disbanded itself, the newly founded Renovation Party (Teceddüd Fırkası) regrouped Unionists and sympathizers under a new roof. The Liberal opposition to the Unionists revived, propped up by the sultan and his new cabinet under Damad Ferid Pasha. When the Ottomans held elections in 1919, many former Unionists returned, prompting in March 1920 a raid upon the parliament under British supervision and the arrest and exile of another contingent of deputies, resulting in the parliament's closure (Zürcher, 1997: 139).

Both the organizational structure and the local leadership of the CUP played a pivotal role in the Anatolian resistance movement and in the formation of the Defense of Rights (Müdafa-ı Hukuk) groups (Zürcher, 1984). Unionists constituted the core membership of the Grand National Assembly that convened in Ankara in 1923. Thus, the cadres, organizational structures, socioeconomic vision, and ideological outlook of the CUP were instrumental in the construction of the Turkish nation-state. In Republican Turkey, the execution of those of Mustafa Kemal's rivals who were tried for complicity in the 1926 assassination attempt against him purged a segment of the Unionist leaders, while other Unionists were absorbed into the Republican People's Party, the mainstay of the Kemalist regime. The treatment in Turkish historiography of Mustafa Kemal's relationship to the CUP is indicative of the conflicted outlook regarding the Young Turk legacy in the Turkish Republic. Mustafa Kemal not only belonged to the Young Turk generation but also embraced Young Turk constitutionalist objectives before 1908. His political activities in Damascus on the eve of the 1908 Revolution attest to this. He attained the rank of general in the army during the Second Constitutional Period. Indeed, Turkish historiography ascribes a spurious leadership role to Mustafa Kemal within the Union and Progress organization at the juncture when it brought down the Hamidian autocracy. On the other hand, it jealously places the founder of the Turkish state at a remove from the CUP's subsequent agenda and the legacy that was formative for the new state. Nonetheless, the ideological tenets and reformism of the Kemalist era as well as its political structures, chief among them single-party rule, are rooted in the Young Turk period.

The Young Turk era, of course, claims a significant slice of the chronology of Middle Eastern institutional and ideological transformations subsequent to the beginning of the Tanzimat in the 1830s. Thus, by virtue of their ascendance in the period immediately preceding the formation of the Ottoman successor states, it is only natural that the Young Turks should have bequeathed a potent legacy to the modern Middle East. There remains a disjuncture, however, between the extent of this continuity and its discursive disavowal by the successor states. Indeed, Arab officials and officers who were in the mainstream of the Young Turk movement, such as the Syrian Sa'î al-Husri, a principal Young Turk educator, later became guiding lights of an Arab nationalism the central trope of which became condemnation of the CUP (Cleveland, 1971).

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