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# The Still Enlightened “Late-Comers”: A Comparison between the Proto-Modernist Nationalisms of Giuseppe Mazzini and Ziya Gökalp

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## Abstract

In contrast with the distorted and romanticized images reproduced by far-right narratives, we argue in this study that the constructive ideals of “nation” held by Italy’s Giuseppe Mazzini and Turkey’s Ziya Gökalp, from two later examples of European nationalism, could fit into what might be called a “proto-modernism” within nationalism theories. It is proposed that both Mazzini and Gökalp went through ideological transformations that made them firm opponents of German Romanticism and ardent believers of the Enlightenment, as shown in their non-exclusionary approaches to nationalism. They both rejected essentialist (religious, ethnic, racial, etc.) rationales for the backwardness of their respective countries and maintained the necessity of constructing nations that would initially provide civic equality among citizens and then aim at normative equality among nations at the civilizational level. In that sense, our analysis finds four fundamental similarities between Mazzini and Gökalp with regard to their national ideals: loyalty to the principles of the Enlightenment, national self-determination, civic-legal equality among citizens, and normative equality among all nations.

**Keywords:** Giuseppe Mazzini; Ziya Gökalp; nationalism; modernism; enlightenment

## Introduction

Tracing his subject’s ideological progression over a little more than a decade from the early 1910s, Bora identifies four different lines of thought that could be associated with the famous Turkish thinker Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924): Romanticist pan-Turkism, political sociologism, middle way populism, and a synthesis between conservatism and modernism (Bora 2017, 202–209). The irreconcilable differences in these lines, however, did not alienate his readers but, on the contrary, earned him a strange popularity and sometimes unrestrained appropriation within a variety of ideological groups both during and after his lifetime. Even in today’s Turkey, it is not unusual to see Gökalp’s name or hear his poems and slogans in political messages of every stripe and color. Secularists, for instance, refer to him as “the father of Mustafa Kemal’s (Atatürk) ideas” (Parla 1985, 93). The far-rightists cite his famous poem – “Its ground is an idea / Its sky is an image / One day it will arrive / But right now it is only a fairy tale” – while conjuring up their pan-Turkist “Red Apple” ideal (Bağçeli 2018). The political-Islamists call attention to the assertion that the current president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was imprisoned and banned from all political activities after reading one of Gökalp’s poems in 1999 (Bardakçı 2002).

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Such “eclectic,” if not unstable, instrumentalization of former intellectual figures is certainly not unique to the case of Gökalp in Turkey. The legacy of the spearhead of Italian unification (*Risorgimento*), Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872), could be said to have received similar treatment by later political movements in Italy. For instance, it is well documented that Mazzini was rediscovered and “called to the rescue against the enemies of the Axis” by Benito Mussolini and Giovanni Gentile during a period of deep cultural and political crisis of Fascism (Sullam 2015, 2). Recently, the instrumentalization of Mazzini has gained a new impetus amid the rise of the populist far right, where “romantic anti-capitalism” has found fertile ground to resurface as romantic anti-neoliberalism (Breschi 2012; Terezakis 2020).

It could be argued that such processes of instrumentalization have in fact been a significant part of “the creation, dismantling and restructuring of images of the past” (Hobsbawm 2000, 13) that Hobsbawm referred to when he explained how new political regimes or innovatory political movements invented their traditions. Bearing in mind that “Romanticism represents a critique of modernity, that is, of modern capitalist civilization, in the name of values and ideals drawn from the past” (Löwy and Sayre 2001, 17), the reinvention of nationalist figures is mostly inclined to presume a Romanticist outlook, particularly in periods of political and cultural crises. Appropriated and distorted representations of intellectual figures from the past not only provide a sense of continuity between the past and the present but also empower the present political discourse about what went wrong in between and how it could be corrected by those who supposedly understood the real value of these intellectuals.

With this study, we propose that these two seemingly quite different figures, Mazzini and Gökalp, actually share common ground in terms of their understanding of nations and nationalism and could also offer valuable terrain for theoretical comparison. Both were central figures in two countries that could be regarded as late-comers in terms of their state-building and nation-building – Italy at the second half of the 19th century and Turkey at the beginning of the 20th. While the Kingdom of Italy was established in 1861 and a variety of nationalist ideas had been already circulating across the peninsula since the Napoleonic period, a common categorization is made up for Italian nationalism, along with German and Turkish nationalisms, under the label of “late-comers” or “second generation” to European nationalism, in the sense that these later experiences went through processes “of integration of the masses of the people into a common political form [based on the...] ideas of popular sovereignty” (Kohn 1939: 1001-1002), following the examples of the Great Britain, France, and the United States. That fact should make this a rich comparison for exploring how they learned from the accumulated ideals of European nationalism of the 19th century and also how they tried to put their mark on these ideals with their distinctive theoretical and/or practical touches. We argue that both Mazzini and Gökalp went through ideological transformations that resulted in their being firm opponents of German Romanticism and ardent believers in the Enlightenment, as could be seen from their proposals of non-exclusionary nationalisms. This study further shows that they both rejected essentialist (religious, ethnic, racial, etc.) rationales for the backwardness of their respective countries before the great powers of their time and that they believed in the necessity of “constructing nations” that would initially provide equality among citizens and then aim for equality among nations at the civilizational level. In that sense, contrary to the distorted and romanticized images of far-right narratives, the nationalist accounts of Mazzini and Gökalp could instead fit into what might be called a “proto-modernism” within the theories of nationalism, one later famously echoed in the studies of Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, and Benedict Anderson.

### Is Romanticism the Fate of “Late-Comer” Nationalism?

The overwhelming rise of populist politics worldwide has added new dimensions to the tension between the particular and the universal. Although “particularistic claims, such as self-determination, ultimately appeal to universal principles” (Aretxaga et al. 2004, 10), populists tend to produce a

discourse in which their own national history always represents a unique case framed with exclusionary categories of religion, sect, ethnicity, race, and so on, depending on the context. Brubaker (2020, 48) argues that, because modernist theories of nationalism focus on structural conditions and factors in explaining the emergence as well as the protean nature of nationalism and the nation – be they political, social, economic, or cultural (Brubaker 2020, 48) – the nationalist ideas, nationalist ideologues, and “the language of nationality” (or the subjective components of nation-formation)<sup>1</sup> are largely left to nationalist interpretations of the populists reminiscent of the idealistic tradition of the “great man theory.”<sup>2</sup> Concerning the far right, this further increased the popularity of the primordialist approaches to nationalism, where the distance between the past and the present is reduced to such an extent that the aforementioned exclusionary categories of the particular have become accepted as the primary determinants of national identities. To back up this discourse, nothing works better than the romanticized speeches or works of an already highly acclaimed figure, an intellectual, from the past.

We argue in this study that one such appropriation of an intellectual figure is taking place in Turkey with the case of Ziya Gökalp. His thought is generally seen as representative of the “‘late-comer’ nationalisms” and viewed as such through the dichotomy of ethnic and civic nationalisms (Kadioğlu 1996; Keyder 2005). Here, the case of Gökalp is emblematic, because he is considered, alongside Yusuf Akçura, as one of the founding fathers of Turkish nationalism, following the example of German Romanticism (Nefes 2018). In this vein, Gökalp’s thinking is generally associated with the particularist, primordial, or cultural (Herderian) definition of a nation (Barlas 1998), emphasizing “religion, ethics, aesthetics, and socialization” or the land (*vatan*) and ethnicity as the constructive denominators.<sup>3</sup> According to Goldner, Gökalp used “Herderian and broadly German romantic cultural ideas to create a Pan-Turkic equivalent of Pan-Slavism” (2016, 63-64). Thus, to paraphrase Heidegger’s famous *boutade*,<sup>4</sup> when the Turks began to define the nation in French, they thought in German.

This interpretation has recently found fertile ground in Turkish public discourse with the reemphasis of the Turkish nation’s particularity and, hence, the supposedly unique case of Turkish nationalism. Indeed, as various modernist scholars have already observed, the particularity and authenticity thesis (or “paradox,” to use Anderson’s [2006, 5] expression), encompassing a central place in any nationalist imagination, is, ironically, generated almost universally from the German Romanticist repertoire. By comparing respective thoughts of nation and nationalism by Mazzini from Italy and Gökalp from Turkey, we argue that Gökalp’s ideas on nation and Turkish nationalism are more complex than generally suggested. In other words, Gökalp’s thought cannot simply be viewed as belonging to a romantic repertoire focusing on the particularity and primordial character of the nation(al spirit) yearning for a lost “Golden Age.” Rather, it was highly similar to Mazzini’s Enlightenment universalism, as well. More importantly, Gökalp’s thought is permeated by the tension and contradictions stemming from a need to reconcile the particular and the universal in the context of a falling empire alongside its peripheralization within the emerging capitalist world system and intensifying inter-capitalist rivalry. Against this structural setting of uneven modernization, Gökalp more closely resembles Nairn’s (1981, 440) “new middle-class” intellectuals of nationalism, who “had to invite the masses into history” but still had to write “the invitation-card in a language they understood.” This is why, Nairn contends, “romantic culture” and “enlightenment rationalism” went hand-in-hand with the spread of nationalism (1981, 440). Hence, instead of accepting the notion of antagonism or distance between particularism and universalism as a given, with this article, we built on the modernist accounts that emphasize structural conditions, defined as social relations that enable and restrict particular ideas to emerge, be effective and spread. As Breuilly puts it, “Nationalism as emotional motivation, as cognitive map and as institutionally shaped political action linked to pursuit of interest all matter, but they do so in different combinations in various cases” (2009, 443). It is, in other words, the combination of social relations and a variety of cases, which has pride of place in modernist explanations. As Hroch observes, “the diffusion of national ideas could only occur in specific social settings” and

intellectuals could ‘invent’ national communities only” under certain objective preconditions that were largely independent of their wishes (1993, 4). It is no coincidence that the latter emerged as an heir of counter-Enlightenment thought embodied in the German Romanticism and “historicism” that marked German historiography in the 19th century (Iggers 1983, 6). Both Mazzini and Gökalp are regarded by causal observers as nationalist ideologues *à la* German Romanticism or “‘engineers of men’s [bodies and] souls,’ to adapt the phrase of one of them (Stalin)” (Hobsbawm 2004, 467), while for Mazzini—and, as we hope to show, for Gökalp as well—a return to tradition is problematic, to say the least. These influential ideologues’ conception of the nation was ready to break with the past rather than seeing it (as Novalis saw medieval Europe) as an idyllic time of “unity and order.”

To better understand the complexity of their thought, we situate them in the political and social conditions from which—and in debate with which—Mazzini and Gökalp developed their understandings of the nation and nationalism. In short, we place their thought in its historical context, explaining why their engagement with the condition of the national question transcended the dichotomies between civic and ethnic nationalism, as well as between particularism and universalism.

Giuseppe Mazzini remains one of the most controversial and complex figures in the study of nationalism. He has been praised as the father of the League of Nations by Lloyd George, hailed as the “apostle” of the 1848 revolutions, accused of being a radical and conspirator, condemned to death by his political rivals, and seen as the ultimate figure of “romantic nationalism” (Anderson 1996, 2; Costigan 1973). He is further described in the mainstream International Relations literature as “the archetype of the crusading *liberal interventionist*” or a forerunner of “liberal Wilsonianism,” and his internationalism has been interpreted as a kind of “messianic interventionism” heralding “neoconservative” ideology (Recchia 2013, 237). These latter interpretations of his internationalism, apart from resulting from ahistorical readings, are often rooted in intellectual presuppositions influenced by classical (political) realism – philosophically an heir of early-nineteenth-century idealist and romantic thought (Palan and Blair 1993). Such presuppositions were based on a nostalgic vision of the early Westphalian system and traditional early modern European affairs, which were conducted by a handful of statesmen unaffected by democratic pressures (Scheuerman 2008). Yet, as far as the theories of nationalism are concerned, such diverse interpretations can be said to emerge because of one of the most entrenched dichotomies in the field: that between civic nationalism, as the heir of the Enlightenment, and cultural nationalism, following the principles of German Romanticism.

The distinction between civic and ethnic nationalisms posited by Hans Kohn (1946) has been subject to intense debates and criticism in nationalism studies. Kohn most conspicuously argued that among the “late-comer” countries, “nationalism found its expression predominantly in the cultural field” (Kohn 1939:1002), highlighting, that ideas deriving from German Romanticism differentiated the later and former examples of nation-building in Europe. Instead of taking this distinction as a given, nationalism studies since the 1980s seem to have reached an agreement on the “Janus-faced” nature of nationalism, thus moving beyond dichotomies such as political and cultural nationalisms (Nairn 1981; Anderson 2006, 159). Instead, the idea of nationalism is rooted not only in the emancipatory and revolutionary tradition of the French Revolution – where “nationalism merged with the democratic impulse” (Winock 1998, 6) that demands “a complete revision of the position of ruler and ruled, of classes and castes” (Kohn 1946, 3) – but also in the tradition of “conservative modernization” (Riley and Desai 2007) or “official nationalism” denoting a “self-protective policy, intimately linked to the preservation of imperial-dynastic interests” (Anderson 2006, 159). Thus, while nationalism initially went hand-in-hand with revolutionary changes paving the way to the democratization of political life, it later turned into the new “heart of a heartless world” in the context of the crisis and contradictions of modernity unfolding with the uneven development of capitalism. Conservative modernization took the form of “passive revolutions” (managing democratic change) or the restoration of social hierarchies in the face of the

delegitimization of traditional rule, the toppling of the monarchies, and the secularization of society brought about by the advent of industrial society. In this historical setting, nationalism turned into the “official” ideology of “conservative modernization” projects, where, on the one hand, the ruling class had to “grant certain demands to forestall and avoid revolution”, and on the other, the revolutionary forces were “eroded and politically integrated into the system” (Hobsbawm 2011, 327).

Nowadays, democracy and nationalism are often seen as two mutually exclusive concepts – a view that owes much to the reactionary or anti-democratic tradition of counter-revolution mentioned above, not to mention the experience of fascism (Femia, 2001). Nevertheless, modernist scholars have been attentive to the close historical link between democracy and nationalism, at least in the context where nationalism was associated with the struggle for political and social emancipation against dynastic empires and social oppression. For example, Hobsbawm has noted the democratic character of the nationalisms of the 19th and early 20th centuries, defining them as “unificatory as well as emancipatory” (Hobsbawm 2013, 169-170). Indeed, when Hobsbawm argues that nowadays (from the 1980s onward), nationalism, though still important politically, has lost its role as “a major vector of historical development”, he suggests that the link between democracy and nationalism is no longer relevant.

As Goodliffe observes, “The destruction of traditional social and economic structures due to the pressures of industrialization and urbanization fundamentally altered people’s consciousness and had a profoundly disorienting effect on how they defined their social roles and identities” (Goodliffe 2012, 32). By the late 1880s, “The triumph of the universal ideals of individual rights, political equality, and popular sovereignty... all concepts deriving from the application of Enlightenment rationalism and scientism to politics, notably in the form of social contract theory [began to give way to] a nationalism based on an exclusive and particularistic definition of the nation” (Goodliffe 2012, 32). Under these circumstances, the French “conservative nationalists, imbued with anti-Germanism,” began to conceive their nation in “German” terms of *Blut und Boden* (blood and soil) (Winock 1998, 12). This new (conservative) conception of nation, in contrast to the original inclusionary one, imagined the nation on romantic grounds as a pre-political organicist whole (*Kulturnation*) emerging from unique physical and spiritual traits of people (*volk*) (Greiffenhagen 1979, 613).

As Hutchinson claims, while in theory it was helpful to distinguish between “a cultural nationalism imbued with an ‘organic’ romantic conception of the nation as a historical community and a political nationalism, arising from an enlightenment ‘voluntarist’ vision of the nation as a political autonomous community...of equal citizens,” in practice those known as cultural nationalist intellectuals “encouraged the rise of a civil society, of an educated citizenry engaged in a diversified ‘public’ sphere in which all could participate no matter what their social, economic, religious status,” hence “constructing a new [ideal] nation” (Hutchinson 2013, 76). Ironically, while cultural nationalist intellectuals are moved in theory by a primordialist conception of nation, in practice they materialize the “social construction” of their respective nations. What is more important is the fact that “late-comer” nationalists were drawn primarily by the universalist potential and appeal of nationalism rather than the particularism it implied. In the face of imperialism, the appeal of human progress—meaning that any nation once subjugated to dynasty and tradition could, in principle, free itself and elevate itself to the level of contemporary civilization—served as the guarantee for a better social organization.

Thus, structurally speaking, the majority of cultural nationalist intellectuals were indeed modernists engaging in social construction/engineering of the “souls and bodies” of the members of a particular community. In sum, a categorization of the East-West divide in Europe regarding nationalist movements might be considered more as a construct of the later nationalist historiography rather than an accurate historical description of social relations that conditioned and enabled the fusion between civic and cultural conceptions of nationalist projects.



### “The Specter of Mazzinian Republicanism”: Moving Beyond the Particularism-Universalism Dichotomy

Based on this background, Giuseppe Mazzini seems an observant student of revolution. He was a political activist and a man of deeds, but his policies in practice did not drift far from his theories and ideas. He practically and ideologically contributed to the destruction of “the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm” (Anderson 2006, 7). He stands out as a representative figure of “*Risorgimento* nationalism” developed in opposition to the papacy and the Kingdom of Naples, or as an apostle of the “Springtime of the Peoples”.<sup>5</sup> The latter is also referred to, by Hobsbawm, as the “Mazzinian phase of nationalism” (Hobsbawm 2013, 102). Mazzini’s thought, political agitation, and activism transcends the boundaries between romantic nationalism and civic nationalism by reshaping “the European political order on the basis of two seminal principles: *democracy* and *national self-determination*” (Recchia and Urbinati 2009); hence, it urged “a democratic nationalism” (Urbinati 1996). Naturally, these claims were “extremely radical” at a time when most of continental Europe was still dominated by “hereditary kingships and multinational empires” (Recchia and Urbinati 2009). As Halliday argues, the “Mazzinian idea of a harmony of nations, a family of independent states, that would be produced by the attainment of freedom” produced the “nationalization of the idea of revolution” (Halliday 1999, 39). Thus, in a Europe dominated by five great powers, Mazzinian nationalism stood for the “sixth great power”—the one that would overwhelm the other five (Halliday 1999, 39).

According to Urbinati, Mazzini’s most important legacy was making “democracy at home [...] the premise for democracy abroad” (Urbinati 1996, 214).<sup>6</sup> In a similar vein, Rowley argues that Mazzini not only represented the “democratic logic of nationalism” but could even be considered a pioneering modernist who “did not believe in the nation as a primordial, natural phenomenon but as a social construction imagined by those who would create it” (Rowley 2012, 39). Indeed, Mazzini has also been credited with one of the arguments considered the *differentia specifica* of nationalism: the idea that nations must be governed by themselves and not by foreign states or dynasties (“every nation a state – only one state for each nation”) (Hermet 1997, 159; Hobsbawm 2013, 170). This idea was later formulated as the defining principle of nationalism by Gellner as “primarily a political principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent” (1983, 1). Similarly, Mazzini’s assertion that “Men are the creatures of education, and they act only according to the principle of education given to them” (Mazzini 2009a, 81-82) fully resonates with Gellner’s argument that “Modern man is not loyal to a monarch or a land or a faith, whatever he may say, but to a culture” (Gellner 1983, 36) that he gains through education. Anthony D. Smith also considers Mazzini one of the nationalists who defied the principles of German Romanticism so popular in his era. Smith regards him as someone who saw “political action and the mobilization of the people” as more essential than the so-called objective factors determining the essence as well as the fate of the nation – like geography, history, ethnic descent, language, and religion – “if the nation was to be ‘reawakened’ ” (Smith 1998, 11).

Whether the issue of the modernist view of the nation shared by Mazzini is open to debate, the relationship between democracy and nationalism in Mazzini’s thought and activism is important for understanding the fusion between particularism and universalism. Thus, while the Romantics expressed their criticism of modern bourgeois civilization by privileging premodern/precapitalist social and cultural values (Löwy and Sayre 2001, 17), Mazzini tended to see European civilization not as decadent and doomed to fail but as the culmination of human progress, which gave birth to civil and political liberties. Human progress for him was “the primary element and timeless law of life” (Mazzini 2009b, 128). Mazzini, while aware of the existing social inequalities exacerbated by the advent of the Industrial Revolution, did not reject the latter on behalf of an idyllic past but saw modernity as ameliorable through the application of human reason and science and, therefore, through republicanism and secularism. Indeed, it can be argued that to the extent that Mazzini’s thought and activism is associated with the support of various progressive causes such as the

struggle for political and social emancipation in the context of dynastic empires, it fits the universalist Enlightenment ideals embodied in the French Revolution better than the reactionary particularism of German Romanticism that emerged as a reaction to the Enlightenment's rationalism and cosmopolitanism. In the words of Geoff Eley (2002, 111):

Nationalist forms of radical democracy resonated through the international popularity... [of] Giuseppe Mazzini... The ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, with their celebration of participatory democracy and local self-government, also permeated these midcentury national intelligentsias, subtly displacing the ideal of the citizen democrat onto the collective image of the oppressed patriot-people struggling for national freedom.

This link also helps us to correct the generally held, but historically mistaken, view that Mazzini was a proponent of “liberal nationalism” (Viroli 1995; Canovan 1996). As Sarti notes, to describe him as a liberal nationalist “is to ignore his explicit rejection of liberalism” (2000, 76). Indeed, Breuille has already posited Mazzini as the “radical equivalent” of a “liberal nationalist such as Cavour” (Breuille 1996, 17), very much like Gramsci, who describes Mazzini as a Jacobin. Indeed in Gramsci's influential account of “passive revolution” or “revolution-restoration”, Mazzini, leading the *Partito d'Azione* with Giuseppe Garibaldi, represents the democratic impulses of the *Risorgimento*, which were neutralized by the *Partito Moderato*, led by Vincenzo Gioberti and Count Cavour, “establishing alliances between big landowners in the *Mezzogiorno* and the northern bourgeoisie”, resulting in the “restoration” of class rule (Gramsci 1996, 110, Q3§125; Bieler and Morton 2018, 18).

In this setting, as Breuille notes, “The most systematic advocacy of a Europe of nations asserted against dynasties came from Mazzini's ‘Young Europe’ ” (2013, 152). In the case of Mazzini, national sentiment and universal ideals are complementary and not mutually irreconcilable. For Mazzini, a nation meant a democratic association of equals, a political association of citizens represented by elections. In other words, a nation was not merely a polity but indeed a principle that stood “for equality and democracy” (Recchia and Urbinati 2009, 12). Yet, a nation, for him, was not an end in itself but “a necessary intermediary step in the progressive association of mankind, the means toward a future international ‘brotherhood’ among all peoples” (Recchia and Urbinati 2009, 2). As Mazzini puts it, “Now, what is nationality if not exactly a division of labor at the level of humanity as a whole?” (2009c, 62). Mazzini argues that for a democratic nation to develop, language, ethnicity, and religion (pre-political factors) could be cohesive but are not always required (Recchia and Urbinati 2009, 12; Mazzini 2009c, 65). What is essential is political equality and popular consent, meaning that Rousseau's law is the key to transforming a populace into a nation. Otherwise there “could be neither peoples nor nations, but only castes and privileges” (Recchia and Urbinati 2009, 12; Mazzini 2009d, 48). However, the national will and national law should be restricted by the universal laws of humanity. Mazzini emphasizes the primacy of a moral duty toward humanity because its absence “would drive national policy into a particularistic egoism” (Urbinati 1996, 203).

As Breuille puts it, Mazzini “believed that Europe was divided into a number of distinct nationalities and that the establishment of a series of nation-states expressed both the will of God and the will of the People” (Breuille 1993, 102). Here his reference to God must not be interpreted as a sign of Romanticism. The religious aura surrounding Mazzini's national ideal was not romantic but modern, in the spirit of Anderson; nation was imagined as “being free, and, if under God, directly so” (2006, 9). Mazzini's unorthodox God created “a religious republicanism in which the Republic would be identical with its church” and, hence, a “Rome of the People” (Rowley 2012, 45). Mazzini's ambition was to see the Rome of the Caesars and the Rome of the Popes pass away and “be succeeded by Rome of the People, the most glorious of them all” (Seton-Watson 1977, 106). For Mazzini, a republic was “the logical form of democracy” (2009b, 127). Moreover, his ambition to advance humanity “through the turbulent violence of those who are at

the bottom” (Mazzini 2009e, 161) brings his God closer to Robespierre’s Supreme Being rather than the conservative Divine Providence of Joseph de Maistre, whose secret force “mocks human intentions” (Hirschman 1991, 18). As Sarti notes, “Progress, for Mazzini, was the law of God” (Sarti 2000, 76). Thus, Mazzini’s “religious” language (invocation of God) must be interpreted as an expedient political tactic to attract popular support among a predominantly peasant population that was not politically mature. The fact that “nationalism clothed itself in well-entrenched sentiments of family and Catholicism suggests that it was these that achieved popular resonance” (Breuille 2013, 153). For Mazzini, “the secularization or confiscation of church property by the State... will inevitably happen in the future, when the State shall take over all educational functions from the church” and this “will place a vast sum of wealth in the hands of the Nation” (Mazzini 2009, 106). In other words, Mazzini had a very peculiar approach to the religion of duty, which had nothing to do with the organized practices of the Catholic Church.

It is no coincidence, then, that the “specter of Mazzinian republicanism” (Mayer 1981, 149) haunted not only the dynasties of Europe but also the Vatican. Indeed, “his view of nationality as expressing the will of the people alienated figures such as Pope Pius IX and Charles Albert of Piedmont” (Breuille 1993, 202). In the eyes of the Church, he was a dangerous conspirator, a label the Church used loosely since the days of the French Revolution to explain the inexplicable, that is, the causes of change. Yet, although Mazzini was once a member of the *Carboneria*, a secret association with Masonic roots founded in Italy in 1814, he soon realized that “a national self-determination movement would require open popular mobilization rather than a secret society” (Mazzini 2009f, 36).

For Mazzini, the failure of Europe’s democratic movements in 1848 could be traced to the lack of common symbols, united centers, and clear plans/organizations, as well as a mutual mistrust, but also to the secrecy of associations. For the same reason, he rejected the Italian-Prussian secret agreement against Austria in 1866. He advocated an open and fully nationalist war against Austria to be led by Garibaldi and rejected the Piedmont’s secret alliance with France (the Plombieres Agreement) in 1859. “Every secret agreement may contain the seeds of treason,” he said (Mazzini 2009g, 173). In a similar vein, Mazzini despised diplomacy, as it obscures (corrupts, discourages, and divides) and forces people into passivity; hence, he supported full transparency and publicity in foreign affairs (2009, 170). Here again Mazzini’s view of diplomacy (as the law of the powerful) contrasts starkly with the realpolitik tradition of “*primat der aussenpolitik*” (the primacy of foreign policy), which offered a deeply nostalgic vision of the early Westphalian system (Scheuerman 2008). Thus, Mazzini’s view of nationalism openly defies Heinrich von Treitschke’s particularist and anti-universalist nationalist pathos, which reduced nationalism to an edifice of the *Kaiserreich*’s imperialist and militaristic agenda.

According to Mazzini, “The Holy Alliance [between the despotic monarchies of Austria, Prussia, and Russia] initiated a new policy in God’s desecrated name [where] the masters of the world had united against the future” (Mazzini 2009b, 117). Mazzini sees the Holy Alliance as “The enemies of Liberty and Progress” (Mazzini 2009h, 133) or the “[un]Holy Alliance of Despotic Monarchs vs. Holy Alliance of Peoples” denying any national insurrection; so the Treaty of Vienna was basically a document against humanity (the principle of association through nations) and thus doomed to fail. To use Gellner’s argument about the Czech president-liberator Tomas Masaryk—whom he describes as if “Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi had all been one and the same person”—Mazzini “justified his nationalism because it made a contribution to the overall trend of history” (Mazzini 1997, 99).

Mazzini sees both civilizational and practical benefits in the dissolution of the Austrian and Ottoman empires. As he puts it:

The breakdown of the Austrian Empire and the Turkish Empire... should be hastened for the sake of general civilizational progress and for Italy’s future benefit.... If Italy were to aid



the uprising of the Illyrian Slavs and of those who form the greater part of European Turkey, she would be rewarded with the affection of the entire Slavic family. (Mazzini 2009i, 237)

To conclude, by defending the establishment of democracy and national self-determination against the dynastic empires and seeing the politics of nationality as a process that would redefine the legitimacy of sovereign power (Recchia and Urbinati 2009, 15), Mazzini continued the Enlightenment ambition “to see the last king throttled with the entrails of the last priest” – a verse attributed to Diderot (Gellner 1997, 19). Yet in contrast to the Enlightenment thinkers who tended to see the oppression and superstition of the world they rejected “to be simply the fruit of human stupidity, of lack of ‘Enlightenment,’” Mazzini, by insisting on the destruction of imperial-dynastic interests – one of the pillars of the agrarian world – seems to have grasped Gellner’s lesson that “[t]he strangling of monarchs with the guts of clerics, attractive though the picture may be, would not on its own terminate the agrarian world and its system of values and illusions... [because t]hat system is rooted in the logic of the agrarian world, and not in human stupidity” (Mazzini 1997, 19). Mazzini’s democratic nationalism, in the words of Urbinati, sought to change “both the rules of the game and the identity of the players” (Mazzini 1996, 202). It was a defense of democracy against the logic of the world that saw social and political hierarchies and various forms of inequality as natural. Thus, Mazzini was an heir of the Enlightenment; he saw nationalism/national self-determination as the continuation of Enlightenment ideals by other means.

### From “Uniting the Turk” to “Constructing the Turk”: Gökalp’s Acrobatics with Culture and Civilization

The said ambivalence in Gökalp’s ideas has resulted in the emergence of two distinct lines of thought with respect to his conceptualizations of nation and nationalism. On the one hand, there are scholars who argue that there never was a discontinuity between Gökalp’s so-called pre-Republic phase, when he was not only a member but indeed the primary ideologue of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) – responsible of the authoritarian governance and the anti-non-Turkish (that is, Kurdish, Armenian, etc.) politics in the last decade of the Ottoman Empire – and his Republican/Kemalist phase, when he was accepted to the administrative and executive bureaucracy of the newly founded Republic, after his careful re-evaluation by the Republican cadres due to his proximity with the CUP and particularly about his approach to the ideal of *Turan*, the great eternal country of Turks all over the world (Bozarslan 2009; Gingeras 2016, 143-152; Kieser 2018, 98-106). According to those, Gökalp’s nationalism had shades of organicism/culturalism and a totalitarian tendency to forcefully teach each member of the nation about their duties, instead of rights, to be a part of the great Turkish nationality. In Kieser’s words, “right from the start, Gökalp’s Turkism contradicted a social contract, because for him, the Turkish *millet* possessed bonds stronger than any negotiated covenant: It was based on pre-existing Turkishness and Islam” (Kieser 2021, 31-32). In fact, Gökalp’s non-contractual social imagination was so appreciated and instrumentalized by the Republican cadres that “what the youth in the 1910s embraced as the ‘religion’ of (Islamic) Turkism [*Türkçülük*], including the adulation of heroes, prepared the way for the ‘religion of Kemalism’ and led to a personality cult of Atatürk” (Kieser 2021, 35).

On the other hand, those who constitute the second line of thought in Gökalp’s approach to nationalism argue that there was in fact a salient discontinuity between Gökalp-the-poet, a zealous member of the war-torn country, that is, the Ottoman Empire, who daydreamed about a higher entity beyond the ever-shrinking borders in pan-Turkism, and Gökalp-the-essayist after the end of the World War I, who made a strong turn from the extremist CUP politics and ideology and corrected his earlier expansionary arguments in his magnum opus, *Türkçülüğün Esasları* [*Foundations of Turkism* – 1922], with more emphasis on the civic character of the nation (Parla 1985; Davison 1995; Özdoğan 2009). Accordingly, “in parallel with the changing political

conditions, [Gökalp's Turkism] had evolved from its backbone in Turanism to an Anatolia-centered nationalism, without racial or blood-related foundations, and rather depending on linguistically, educationally, religiously, morally and aesthetically similar ideals" (Özdoğan 2009, 395). Whether this evolution was ideologically authentic or purely pragmatist is still unknown as Gökalp only served as an advisory to the Republican cabinet for a year and his sudden death in 1924 did not provide enough time or service for a straightforward conclusion. His obvious connection with the CUP and its inner circle, in addition to his vigorous writings (especially as poems, pamphlets and journal articles) between 1909 and 1918 cannot be dismissed simply; however, it is still arguable that his only product with a full theoretical content was *Türkçülüğün Esasları*, which was specifically tailored for the new Turkish Republic, on the relationship between its society and the state, as well as on nationalism, secularism, and political economy. Because the primary aim of the present study is to make a comparison between Mazzini and Gökalp on these latter subjects, it would be more meaningful to focus on this particular book and its antecedent essays, albeit still bearing in mind the CUP baggage and ambivalences in Gökalp's thought in general.

Just like Mazzini, who had established the task of his activist/practical sociology to synthesize the particular and the universal, that is, the Italian nation and European civilization, Gökalp too discovered in this synthesis a potential to enter the developed world as a member of a falling empire. Accordingly, humanity was "nothing but a synthesis of national culture and international civilization" (Gökalp 1959d, 289), and these two spheres did not necessarily exclude each other. The non-exclusion idea was particularly encouraging for Gökalp, because he was a firm believer that international civilizations after the Enlightenment were transforming from their previous ideology of religious cohesion to today's scientific orientation. In Davison's words, "Gökalp argued that the commonality which modern nations shared was increasingly based on modern science.... Being modern meant becoming scientifically equal to the most scientifically and technically advanced nations of modern civilization. These were the nations of Europe" (Davidson 1995, 204).

This junction between the particular and the universal was indeed where Gökalp drew the path for his national ideal (*mefkûre* – a socialized idea), through which the highest social grouping of the 20th century, that is, the nation, should emerge. It is important to note here that Gökalp did not arrive at the outcome of nations by going from the particular to the universal; in fact, he reversed this German Romanticist narrative around the primacy of the particular and began his theoretical attempt from the universal category of civilizations. Accordingly,

The hostility between conscience and reason, between culture [*hars*] and civilization, did not have to be unavoidable... The former would answer the question "why to live?" by saying "for the sake of national ideal", whereas the latter would answer the question "how to live?" by saying "rationally...." In short, the former would give us the ends and the latter the means. (Gökalp 2019f, 38)

In this definition, Gökalp deliberately avoids using the common word *culture* (*kültür*) but instead uses *hars*, which has no specific meaning in today's Turkish (see also Meriç 2013, 87-92). With this, he anticipates the tension between the German concept of *Kultur* and the French concept of *civilization* put forward by German sociologist Norbert Elias almost two decades later. In his book *The Civilizing Process*, Elias makes the distinction that "civilization can refer to political or economic, religious or technical, moral or social facts. The German concept of *Kultur* refers essentially to intellectual, artistic, and religious facts" (Elias 2000, 6). Like Elias, Gökalp took advantage of the inclusivity and technical rationality of the concept of civilization, which played "down the national differences between peoples" (Elias 2000, 7), while he emphasized the exclusivity of the concept of *hars*, "the spiritual and collective characteristics of the society that holds them together" (Nefes 2013, 344).

Behind the difference between civilization and *hars*, there lies the distinction between traditions (*anane*) and mores (*örf*). For Gökalp, “a tradition is a pattern of thought or of action which suggests a judgment of goodness or badness” (Gökalp 1959b, 171). Such value judgments might be classified as religious, legal, aesthetic, ethical, and so on, and they need not be specific to any one group of people; instead, they are shared by different societies. “The sum total of these traditions”, says Gökalp, is “called a civilization” (Gökalp 1959b, 171). On the other hand, mores are only *nationally* accepted or rejected patterns of thought and action, representing a national social conscience. Because there is no a priori reason for traditions and mores to conflict, Gökalp initiates a nation-building project for the post-Ottoman Empire Turks to establish a *hars*, in which non-conflicting traditions and mores should become institutionalized. Critiquing the Tanzimatist Ottoman elite, who throughout the 19th century had attempted to modernize the country, Gökalp argues that they had failed to understand that East-Roman civilization (an odd combination of Byzantine, Iranian, and Arabic mores) guided the Ottoman state. They mistook it for the civilization of Islam and then tried to introduce elements of European civilization incompatible with Eastern civilization. Gökalp’s solution was simpler: it was not the society’s religion, Islam, per se that was not compatible with the rising European civilization after the Enlightenment. The problem was rather, was that the age-old and corrupted Eastern civilization in the Ottoman state resulted in the demise of the empire (Gökalp 2019e, 50-51). Therefore, only by addressing Islam as part of the *hars* and not as a separate civilization was it possible to adopt European civilization in the newly founded Turkish state.

Mazzini came from Europe, in which societies’ religious similarities outweighed their differences. But Gökalp faced different circumstances; he knew that it was essential to reposition Islam within society to construct the Turkish nation. This strategy included not only reducing the idea of civilization to its technical/technological aspects but also stripping away the civilizational dimension of Islam and separating the Turkish nation (*millet*) from the Islamic imaginary of *ümmet*, in which “spiritual institutions could function properly but secular, material institutions indeed had the potential to harm the collectivity” (Gökalp 2019b, 53). Coming from an “unorthodox, Sufi brand of Islam, with its emphasis on ethics rather than politics” (Parla 1985, 26), Gökalp was one of the early proponents of French-type secularism (laicism) in Turkey, openly claiming that “the separation between religion and state is an ultimate goal pursued by all civilized nations” (Gökalp 2019a, 55). The integration of the Islamic faith into other technical (legal, educational, etc.) institutions of social life was, in fact, causing the most damage to the religion itself. Hence, getting rid of the monopolistic and over-reaching aspirations of the Islamic elite, Gökalp maintained, would, in turn, strengthen the position of Islam within the (private) hearts of Turkish Muslims.

Those who argue that Gökalp’s imagination of nationality rejected a Rousseau-type social contract within the Turkish borders suggest further that this also implies his non-cosmopolitan attitude and rejection of international, peaceful coexistence. Kieser, for instances, states that “just as he refused negotiation of social contracts domestically, because he rejected the equality of non-Turks, he did not think of the international order in constitutional, egalitarian terms, based on universal standards. His faith in a universal civilization, but devoid of universal principles, failed to meet such a challenge” (Kieser 2021, 31; see also Bozarslan 2009, 318). This interpretation might be true for Gökalp’s CUP years, but apparently changed later on. In *Türkçülüğün Esasları*, Gökalp repeatedly acknowledges the supremacy of the European civilization, particularly in terms of reaching universal standards vis-à-vis rationality, positivism/science, and technology, and he also stood for a type of internationalism (Gökalp 2019c). As early as 1917, he had already admitted that “humanity [was] heading toward an international society by the federation of free nations” (Gökalp 1959d, 289). His internationalism was in fact quite reminiscent of Rousseau’s understanding of *man as a citizen*, meaning that, in the age of nationality, “every person is first of all a member of a nation and then of an international community” (Gökalp 1959d, 287). Mazzini in fact had reversed this logic by saying that “you are human beings before you are either citizens or parents” (Recchia and Urbinati 2009, 92). This, however, should not suggest that a Mazzinian reading of internationalism was based on human rights or individual principles, as they are understood today. As already

discussed, in Mazzini's mind, equality of men (and women) came from the assumption that they were created by (the Christian) God and not from the democratic, universal principles lacking (also) in Gökalp's theory. In fact, they both were fond of the age of nationalism and strong believers in that the establishing nation-states would correct the mistakes that cosmopolitan empires had made in the past and brought up the long-awaited international peace. Mazzini's theory was fortunate and simpler in the sense that it did not have to deal with clashing religions in the federal European (nation-)state system whereas Gökalp had to contemplate on the mismatch between Islam and the rest of Christian Europe by denoting the European civilization into a technical-scientific internationality. As Davison put, "Gökalp's thought exhibits to some extent a crucial anticolonial element of rejecting – his term – the normative applicability of European cultural norms as universally applicable in modernity, while also exhibiting philosophical tolerance, appreciation, and respect for them" (Davison 2006, 387).

It was obvious at this point that Gökalp's major task was to find an intersection point between Turk's Islam and European civilization. His purpose, however, was not to restrict Islam to individuals' private spheres but to allow its infusive and cohesive aspects to be expressed within the mores of the society. Although scholarly studies tend to link Gökalp's mores with Ibn Khaldun's concept of *asabiyya*, with both implying "the source of a society's strength and vigor" (Topal 2017, 306), it is argued here that Gökalp understood mores to be historical, material constructions upon which people were consciously educated to feel the "togetherness" that they supposedly shared with others, and went beyond Khaldun's *asabiyya* as "the realm of illusion" (Michel Seurat, quoted in Orhan 2018, 267). In that sense, Gökalp's mores stand closer to another line of Italian social thought – that of Antonio Gramsci and his representation of "common sense." For Gramsci, common sense "means the incoherent set of generally held assumptions and beliefs common to any given society" (Gramsci 1971, 626). He describes its relation with religion as follows: "It is to be observed that religion and common sense do not coincide either, but that religion is an element of fragmented common sense" (Gramsci 1971, 630). By putting religion into the common sense (in other words, the mores) of the society, Gökalp manages both to give Islamic faith a practical purpose in Turkish society – "the social conscience is predominantly operated by the great power of religion" (Gökalp 2019a, 54), he says – and to avoid Islamic mores' possible conflict with the traditions of European civilization that are imported into the Turkish nation. Gökalp's Islam, therefore, represents "an Islam whose laws governing conduct (as opposed to the fundamentals of the faith) should evolve, or live with, the evolving culture of the Turkish nation" (Davison 1995, 211).

At this point it is safe to argue that, similarly to Mazzini's definition, Gökalp's nation was regarded as an external reality to individuals. Hence, he too might be said to take a proto-modernist stance in terms of understanding nationalism. In other words, neither religion nor shared primordial elements in a given group of people would suffice to constitute a functioning nationality. Instead, a conscious effort had to be made to catch that national ideal, especially in "a time of crises, which would eradicate all personal interests" (Gökalp 2019g, 63), in favor of a common nation-building and, thus, would lead to the birth of a functioning nationality. For Gökalp, once put into practice, the national ideal would generate a nation, "a community of sentiments" (Gökalp 2019i, 31) composed of "individuals, who had gone through the same education in language, religion, morality, and aesthetics" and must not be mistaken for "racial, ethnic, geographical, political or administrative groupings" (Gökalp 2019i, 32). All these factors, however, required a conscious program of nation-building, which Gökalp called "Turkism" (*Türkçülük*), and which had to be carried out by two key actors: a political leader and a national educational program.

Even right after the War of Independence, in 1923, Gökalp stated clearly that

Turkism is not a political party movement [but instead] a movement of cultural drive and regeneration... [However, it] cannot remain altogether indifferent to political ideals because Turkish culture, in addition to other values, implies certain political ones. For example, Turkism can never reconcile itself with clericalism and theocracy. Turkism is a

secular movement and can reconcile itself only with movement of a secular nature. (Gökalp 2019h, 175)

Unlike Mazzini, whose political activism was integral to his ideal of nation-building, politics for Gökalp had to be instrumentalized for a greater, civilizational transformation. To achieve this end, first, the literary elite had to go “towards the people,” “to train them about the civilization and to receive an education from them about culture” (Gökalp 2019d, 53). Achieving a balance between the people (the holders of culture) and the elite (the carriers of the civilization), however, required a *populist* (*umumcu*) (Parla 2009, 164-168) account of political leadership, which “presupposed sincere acceptance of the supremacy of the people, its culture and its political sovereignty,” yet, at the same time, put the Enlightenment ideals of “scientific rationality and individual reason” (Parla 1985, 93) above all else during the process of social transformation. Therefore, a leader of a nation must be able to speak the same language as the people and convince the elite to go “towards the people,” understanding the necessity of fundamental cultural-religious aspects as well as the importing of civilizational traditions to the incipient nation (see also Dressler 2015).

As Parla notes, although Gökalp lived “in an age when theories of charismatic leaders, plebiscitarian dictators, duces and Fuhrers” (Parla 1985, 93), dominated the practice of political leadership, Gökalp once again deliberately abstained from attaching a Romanticist mission to the leader of the country, Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), whose name was already associated with “the independence of Turkey from invasions and... of politics from the last traces of absolutism and cosmopolitanism” (Gökalp 2019h, 176). Instead, Gökalp addressed Atatürk in the context of either his People’s Party (*Halk Fırkası*) or the Union of the Protection of Rights (*Müdafaai Hukuk Cemiyeti*), institutionalizing his name with organizations representing the sovereignty of the people. The institutionalized image of Atatürk was shaped to embody the reforms of the newly founded Turkish Republic. Many of the photos/images published of Atatürk—as, variously, a strict follower of Western fashion, a dancing *Zeybek* (local Aegean guerrilla fighter), a teacher of the Latinized alphabet, or a proud consumer of Turkish *rakı* (Çetin 2019)—represented the directions Gökalp had envisioned for Turkish society while it was regenerating itself as a combination of Turkish culture and European civilization.

Once the leadership was established, the remaining task was to foster the social transformation nationwide by means of mass education. From the diverse educational system of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey inherited three different strata: (i) the uneducated ordinary people (*halk*), stuck within ancient Asiatic Eastern civilization; (ii) the *medrese* students, still living in medieval Eastern civilization; and (iii) the students of secular *mekteps*, trained in modern European civilization (Gökalp 2019c, 70). The resulting civilizational overlap not only made a proper social interconnection impossible but also caused serious damage to the cultural fabric of Turkish society. To solve this overlap and to rejuvenate common mores, Gökalp proposed a tripartite national education system, in parallel with his formula of social idealism (*içtimai mefkûrecilik*), which would be a synthesis of Turkism, Islamism, and modernism. He summarized a possible curriculum in which students are

(i) [taught in] Turkish language, literature, and history; (ii) they are educated in the Qur’an..., catechism, and the history of Islam and Islamic languages; (iii) they are also trained in mathematics, natural sciences, and foreign languages, which will aid them in their further studies in these sciences, as well as such skills as handicrafts and gymnastics. (Gökalp 1959c, 233)

Even the carefully selected verbs “taught in,” “educated,” and “trained” reemphasized Gökalp’s differentiation between culture and civilization, as “education simply means inculcating this culture in the habitual attitudes of the individual members of that people.... Training[, on the other hand,] consists of instructing individuals in particular techniques [of a civilisation]” (Gökalp 1959a, 235). Such a national educational structure would help recast Turkish society as members of the new



national ideal, as well as making possible a social mobility weakening the Ottoman Empire's rigid borders of social stratification between the elite and the people. Because a nation was defined as a set of cultural "institutions in harmony with each other" (Gökalp 1959a, 238), Gökalp highlighted the capacity of national education to break down linguistic barriers within a society, and he deemed a common language to be the key factor in reinstating the national culture and catching up with European civilization through educational reforms. It should also be noted that, in Gökalp's vision, education was not limited to schools or universities but, as was later echoed in Anderson's (2006, 163-186) modernist account of nationalism, also involved the establishment of institutions like national museums, conservatories, theatres, national archives, and bureaus of statistics, "which, by rehabilitating the Turkish culture retained in 'secret corners of oblivion', had to make it capture the attention of the thinking people" (Safarian 2004, 223).

## Conclusion

Our analysis has indicated four fundamental similarities and two noteworthy distinctions between Mazzini's and Gökalp's approaches to the idea and practice of nation-building. First and foremost, what framed their respective accounts was the underlying pro-Enlightenment tone and the rejection of German Romanticism in all its forms. For both intellectuals, nationalism was not a God-given mission to any nation (let alone each one's own nation) that would take control of the destiny of a Hegelian world. Instead, it was a sign of global progression toward the ideals of the Enlightenment: rationalism, science, secularism, and democracy. Hence, nations were not to be found anywhere and instead had to be constructed through the conscious efforts of the enlightened elite of each country all over the world. This would bring about, second, the *sine qua non* of the 20th century: national self-determination. This meant overthrowing dynasties, monarchs, and religious authorities and replacing them with sovereignties that would govern on behalf of the national will (Mazzini called them "republican," while Gökalp called them "populist"). For this to occur, third, each nation should provide civic-legal equality for its citizens, which should transcend racial, ethnic, religious, biological, and other such differences among them and be brought to fruition through mass education and culture. Fourth, transferring this non-essentialist national account to the international context, both leaders assumed a non-expansionist version of nationalism that would indeed result in a normative equality among all nations. However, there is one obvious difference between Mazzini's and Gökalp's approaches. Mazzini's strong activism both in politics and on the battlefield meant that his theories could be collected only through scattered notes and sketches. This separates him from Gökalp, who remained in the realm of theory-making and elaborated his thoughts in a more structured form, in books and journal articles. The second major difference between these figures lay in their approach to religion and civilization. Whereas Mazzini was already a part of European civilization, which had largely resolved its dispute with politically weakened Christendom, Gökalp had to spend more time on the relationship between nationalism and religion and to search for ways to resolve the mismatch between his nation's Islamic ties and the West of the Enlightenment, with its Christian history and identity. This is why religion seldom stood out and was regarded as a catalyst for peace among nations in Mazzini's works, while it was frequently discussed as a problem in Gökalp's articles.

Based on this summary, we argue that the accounts of Mazzini and Gökalp not only offered radical yet applicable approaches to the issues of identity and politics in Italy and Turkey at the *fin de siècle* but also contain valuable references for the modernist theories of nationalism. In the latter sense, we further propose that, as they emerged from the need to construct nations based on culture and mass education, and they were led by elite figures in times of crisis, both accounts could be regarded as proto-modernist approaches to nations and nationalism.

Despite this theoretical pioneering, however, Mazzini and Gökalp could not avoid being frequently co-opted and hailed by far-right political-intellectual propaganda at various times since the beginning of the 20th century. This propaganda became so effective at times that its influence

went beyond popular culture and into scholarly studies. For instance, Davison criticizes Heyd by saying that, while reading Gökalp, “Heyd believed he was interpreting Mussolini” (Davison 1995, 195). We might as well read this remark as “Heyd believed he was interpreting *Mazzini*,” since there was not much difference between the two names in Italian Fascist propaganda between the 1920s and the 1940s (Moss 2004, 57-61). As the secular and nationalist nature of the state is being questioned as never before, similar match-ups have been made at an increasing pace in the popular and scholarly discourse between Gökalp and his long-renounced pan-Turkism (Landau 1995, 148-179) or his re-invention by the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis (Kurt 2010) through his poetry or early essays in Turkey today. The far right deliberately misrepresents their accounts of nationalism according to essentialist, racist, ethnicist, political, religious, and/or extremist themes. This Romanticist misrepresentation certainly is not only necessary for the far right to use Mazzini’s and Gökalp’s strong rhetoric and historical popularity but also provides evidence of their lack of intellectual reproduction. As an attempt to shed light on the similarities and ties between modernist nationalist accounts, this study seeks to call attention to the potential hazards of transferring this far-rightist discourse on Mazzini and Gökalp into the scholarly literature, as well as reinvigorating the possibilities of future studies of historical-political comparison between Italy and Turkey as the late followers of the nationalist turn in the 19th and 20th centuries.

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## Notes

- 1 For the need to incorporate the “subjective” dimension in structural analysis of the “objective” factors that lead to nation-formation, see Păltineanu (2010).
- 2 Here it must be noted that Benedict Anderson and Michael Billig, to mention just two examples, have not been indifferent to the “language of nationality”. On the other hand, scholars who have focused on the discourse of nationality while successfully resisting the primordialist narratives – because of their tendency to reduce the historical reality to discursive practices – have paid little attention to the issue of how discursive practices are related to historical social relations and structural transformations emphasized by modernist scholars.
- 3 According to Çağaptay, it was indeed the Kemalists who “turned to ethnicity as the underlying factor of Turkishness” (2004, 82).
- 4 The original phrase is “When the French begin to think, they think in German.” See Rockmore (1992, 249).
- 5 The term (sometimes referred to as the “Springtime of Nations”) is generally used to denote the revolutions of 1848.
- 6 This principle resonates with the famous principle “peace at home, peace in the world” put forward by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, as well.

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