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The pathologies of Turkish republican laicism

Abstract   This article reveals the pathologies of the Turkish republican project of laicism by focusing on the differences between the ideas of Ziya Gökalp and the leading architects of this project. Ziya Gökalp reasoned within the logic of the empire and envisioned a synthesis among Turkism, westernism and Islam. The logic of the republic *à la Turca*, on the other hand, was shaped by a radical break from Islam. The distaste that the architects of the republican laicist project had developed towards Islam became apparent during the years between 1920 and 1925. Accordingly, the republican project of laicism nurtured a highly visible control of the state over religion rather than a separation between the affairs of the state and religion. This article also discusses the possibilities of reforming the republican project of laicism that is congenial with democratization processes in Turkey.

Key words   Ziya Gökalp · the Ottoman Empire · republican laicism · Turkish nationalism

He was born in 1876 in Diyarbakır. He learned Arabic and Persian from his uncle and was able to read Ghazali, Ibni Sina, Farabi, Muhiddin Arabi, and Celaleddin Rumi. He also studied French. He was introduced to European sociology by a medical doctor who was one of the founders of the Committee of Union and Progress – the committee that aspired to topple down the Ottoman monarchy. He had studied Herbert Spencer, Gustave LeBon, Gabriel Tarde, Alfred Fouillee, and Emile Durkheim. In his last year in high school, he began to write revolutionary poems. He was caught between the contradictory influences of eastern and western ideas. He could not cope with it. He fell into a deep depression. He tried to commit suicide and shot himself in the head. He was operated on by the medical doctor who introduced him to the western canon of thought. Saved despite the fact that the bullet could not be removed, he lived the

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rest of his life with a bullet stuck in his skull. His name was Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924) and the bullet in his skull could just be the most powerful symbol representing the tension between the eastern and the western canons of thought that was endemic to many of the ideas that emerged during the decline of the Ottoman Empire.[1] According to some authors, Gökalp's ideas about religion and nationalism provided the intellectual basis for and constituted the forerunner of the secularist policies of the Turkish Republic (Heyd, 1950; Berkes, 1959). In the following article, I argue, on the contrary, that the differences between Gökalp's views about religion that represented the logic of the empire and the ideas of some of the key republican elites are indicative of the pathologies of laicism (*laiklik* – after the French term *laïcisme*) in Turkey.

In the first part of this article, a framework of analysis is drawn by juxtaposing the logic of the empire against the Turkish republican search for a singular national identity. In the second part, the nature of the Turkish republican laicism is described. Thirdly, the differences between the views of Gökalp and the republican laicist ideas and policies are portrayed in an effort to underline the pathologies of Turkish republican laicism. This article refers to republican laicism as a project. Republican laicism did not *accompany* modernization, but, rather, became a *project* in order to realize the goal of becoming western. In the last part of this article, the possibility of reforming republican laicism by attuning it in line with the democratization processes in Turkey is laid out as the basis for further discussion. The main endeavor in this article is not to generate nostalgia for the age of empires. This article rather aims at revealing the limitations of the republican parameters of laicism. An assessment of the pathologies of Turkish republican laicism can lay the foundations of the prospective policy reforms that are congenial with democratic discourses in Turkey. It is possible to benefit from the multicultural aspects of an empire without necessarily advocating a yearning for it.

Framework of the study: empire and republic

In the course of the past two decades, Turkey has been going through a process of 'decentring of the official Turkish identity' due to the explosion of multiple identities that were stifled earlier by way of attachment to an official, monolithic, absolute Turkish identity (Kadıoğlu, 1998: 1; 2007).[2] This process made it possible to renew interest in a synthesis of various public identities.

The logic of the republic *à la Turca* was distinguished by an emphasis laid on a 'singular and unitary' definition of Turkism that was based on a 'radical break from the former religious definition' (Yıldız, 2001: 139). Despite the fact that Gökalp was critical of the Ottoman state for taking

'an imperialistic course, which was harmful to the culture and life of the Turks', his views on religion still represented the logic of the empire due to his stress on a 'synthesis' between Turkism, Islam, and westernism (Gökalp, 1959d[1923a]: 107). While the logic of the empire made it possible to embrace and synthesize national, religious, and westernist currents, republican laicism evolved at the expense of the autonomous development of religious identities and by making religion subservient to the nation-state after the proclamation of the Turkish Republic in 1923.

In her contribution to the volume that she co-edited, Karen Barkey maintains that ethnic warfare is not the automatic result of the decline of empires (Barkey, 1997: 99). Instead, she underlines the significance of comparing the emerging nations from the core and the periphery of the empires as well as the way they compare with the earlier routes to nation-statehood in western Europe. She maintains that the rump states breaking off from the core of the imperial domain inherit the strong state apparatus of the empire whereas the national states that break from the periphery of the empire adopt an ethnic nationalism despite the fact that they resort to the rhetoric of 'pursuit of democracy and self-determination' (ibid.: 107). In the latter cases, the elite cling to an ethnic nationalism since that seems to be the only way to mobilize the masses in the absence of a strong state apparatus and an institutional 'vacuum'.[3]

In a recent study, I have compared the evolution of the Greek and the Turkish national identities, especially with respect to how they shape the parameters of the current issues of citizenship (Kadıoğlu, 2009). The Turkish case clearly represents the nationalism of a rump state. Most of the early proponents of Turkish nationalism advocated it for the sake of the preservation of the Ottoman state.[4] Greek nationalism, on the other hand, emerged as a peripheral 'revolt' against the Ottoman state.[5] A comparative review of the essential issues of citizenship in Greece and Turkey shows that while the loss of a pure Greek *genos* (*fyle*, descent) is the most visible fear in Greece, the fundamental fear that shapes the contours of citizenship politics in Turkey is the disintegration of *devlet* (state).

The nature of the Turkish republican laicism

In their widely quoted analyses of secularization, Roy Wallis and Steve Bruce (1992) assert that the social significance of religion diminishes in response to the operation of three salient features of modernization, namely social differentiation, societalization, and rationalization.

Social differentiation refers to the process by which specialized roles and institutions are developed or arise to handle specific features or functions such as education, healthcare, welfare, and social control. These

functions were previously carried out by the religious institution. This process increases the role of lay professionals at the expense of religious officials. Social differentiation also embodies economic growth and the emergence of classes, different occupations, and plurality of life-experiences which pave the way to the fragmentation or traditional organic conceptions of moral and supernatural order. Societalization refers to a process that leads to the organization of life societally rather than locally, especially around the category of the nation-state. Since religion has its source in the community, the advent of a complex society diminishes its legitimating role. Finally, rationalization refers to changes in terms of the way people think and act. It involves the pursuit of worldly goals by using technically efficient machinery and procedures that reduce uncertainty and thereby reliance upon faith. All three processes constitute salient features of modernization and diminish the role and social significance of religion.

The secularization thesis is based on a review of various analyses of secularization in western societies, within the Judeo-Christian as well as Catholic traditions. In the modernizing contexts such as Turkey, it was not the three salient processes of modernization, namely social differentiation, societalization, and rationalization, that were expected to lead to secularization. It was rather hoped that secularization as a project itself would pave the way to a modern society.

In the eyes of the republican elite in Turkey, secularization became a project in order to fulfill the goal of modernization and westernization. Such a constructed and controlled project was aptly called *laiklik* (laicism). Secularism and laicism do not refer to the same set of institutional arrangements. Secularism is derived from the Latin *saeculum*, meaning 'of the world' as opposed to 'of the church'. Secularism, then, refers to a distance between religious and worldly matters. Laicism, on the other hand, is derived from the French word *lai*, or *laique*, meaning 'of the people' as opposed to 'of the clergy'. *Lai* (lay) refers to non-clerical people who could still be religious while secular stands for non-religious (Davison, 2003: 333–4).

The abolition of the caliphate in 1924 was perhaps the most significant step in giving legitimacy to the new Turkish state on the basis of a national identity that is above religion (Berkes, 1998: 450–60). This was followed by a series of reforms in 1924 within legal, educational, and cultural institutions, such as the bill abolishing the Ministries of *Şeriat* and *Evkaf*, and another bill closing institutions of religious education (*medrese*) and unifying all education under the Ministry of Education, as well as the abolishing of religious orders (*tariqas*) (Berkes, 1998: 463).

The abolition of the caliphate was accompanied by the foundation of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı – in short, Diyanet*) that was designed to place religion under the author-

ity of the state. *Diyanet* became responsible for the administration of all the mosques and the appointment of all the religious employees of the state such as preachers (*imams*), callers to prayer (*müezzins*), and orators (*hatibs*) (Tarhanlı, 1993). In fact, there was continuous interest in incorporating religious instruction into the national education system of the state in Turkey. Religious education in state schools was funded by the state. Hence, laicism did not only not prevent the mixing of religious instruction and state education but ironically made their mixing possible (Davison, 2003: 339). In fact, laicism in Turkey did not lead the way to a separation between the matters of the state and religion. It rather made religion subservient to the state. It stopped the political abuse of religion by all institutions other than the state and turned religion into the state's exclusive political instrument. Laicism '"rescued Islam" as a matter of "belief" and "conscience" by institutionally supporting, financing, and promulgating a different version of Islam . . .' (ibid.: 341). Laicism produced an official state Islam by excluding all other types of Islam. By being placed in the service of the state, religion in republican Turkey was turned into a tool that would ensure obedience to the state. Hence, it is possible to argue that with the onset of laicism, religion – as expressed in the famous words of Karl Marx – practically became the 'opiate of the masses' in Turkey since it ensured obedience to the state. Laicism in Turkey did not lead to secularism, i.e. separation of religious and worldly matters. Davison goes as far as arguing that laicism could be seen as an 'obstacle' to secularization in Turkey (ibid.: 344).

Republican laicism in comparison with Ziya Gökalp's search for a synthesis

The differences between the views of Gökalp and the republican elite regarding religion are relevant in understanding the pathologies of laicism in republican Turkey. Gökalp's ideas were wavering between the three trends of Turkism, Islamism, and westernism, hence reflecting the political climate of the context in which he was located (Gökalp, 1959a[1913]). As Niyazi Berkes (1959: 20), who translated most of Gökalp's works into English, puts it: 'He was fighting within himself the battle that intellectuals and politicians were raging on other levels.'

Gökalp produced his basic writings between the years 1911 and 1923, a period laden with nationalist movements among the non-Muslim and non-Turkish-speaking peoples of the decadent Ottoman Empire. While on the one hand, there were those intellectuals and politicians who opted for a social reconstruction by way of reversion to *Şeriat* (Islamic law), there were those who staunchly supported the idea of westernization, on the other. In addition to these two groups, there were others who

longed for the romantic ideal of a pre-Islamic Turkic unity. Gökalp was influenced by all these trends. In the words of Berkes (1959: 21), Gökalp thought 'that only the material civilization of Europe should be taken and not its non-material aspects'.

Gökalp thought that civilization simply became a matter of mechanical imitation without a cultural basis. The source of cultural values was located in the social unit that he called 'nation'. He tried to give momentum to the rise of the concept of a modern Turkish nation as an independent cultural unit, and 'to graft Western civilization in its entirety and with all its living forms on to [*sic*] the national culture' (Gökalp, 1959e[1923b]: 289). He said: 'A civilization becomes a [*sic*] harmonious unity only when it is incorporated into the national culture' (Gökalp, 1959d[1923a]: 108). For him, the Turkists were 'those who aim at Western civilization while remaining Turks and Muslims' (Gökalp, 1959e[1923b]: 290).

The contours of Gökalp's views on religion were largely shaped by the ideas of Emile Durkheim (1858–1917). Durkheim (1976) pointed to the significance of religious rituals and beliefs in enhancing bonds and leading to social cohesion. Gökalp's interest in religion was also driven by its social integrative function (Davison, 1995: 217). The early republican elite were also well aware of the social function of religion. Yet their larger goal of westernization paved their way to institutionalize state control over religion. Their view of laicism involved the state's utilization of religion in order to ensure social solidarity. They thought that the establishment of national solidarity was necessary in order to achieve the larger goal of becoming western (Ağaoğlu, 1992[1923]). Religion had a utilitarian value for the nation-building elite of the early republican era. They were interested in disestablishing folk Islam that was not under the jurisdiction of the state and in its place establishing state Islam which was ready to serve national solidarity. Even today the *Diyanet*, as the state authority responsible for religious affairs, continues to aim primarily at furthering national solidarity and integrity.[6] Laicism in Turkey really is the establishment of the monopoly of the state over the right of use and abuse of religion. The republican elite tried to rationalize such a view of laicism by blaming Islam as the source of backwardness of the Ottomans. The state control of religion was needed in order to attain the goal of elevating Turkey to the level of contemporary civilization, i.e. westernization. Hence, laicism not only became a set of policies leading to state control of religion but also ensured that Islam would not get in the way of the larger goal of westernization.

It is obvious that, since the republican elite chose the track of westernization rather than a 'synthesis' among Turkism, Islamism, and westernism as Gökalp had envisioned, they ended up developing a 'strong distaste for religion' (Mardin, 1990: 21). Some of the republican elites thought that morality could replace religion. In the words of one of the Members of Parliament, Şükrü Kaya:

> The country suffered a great deal in the hands of prophets and irresponsible people who acted upon people's consciences and who undertook matters of the state and the nation. . . . Given that we are historical determinists and pragmatic materialists in action, we should make our own laws. . . . For spirituality, the development of a Turk's clean morals should suffice. That is why, prior to anything else, we have announced our laicism. (Özek, n.d.: 483)

In fact, some republican elites went as far as discussing the possibility of converting to Christianity for the whole nation, on the basis that Islam is an obstacle in front of progress. One of them, Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, said: 'Islam hinders progress. We cannot proceed with this religion, we shall be doomed. And no one will give us any importance.'[7] Gökalp, on the contrary, did not think that elements of culture, including religion, could be copied. He maintained that elements of culture were mainly 'emotional', and hence 'not conscious and rational products of men' (Gökalp, 1959d[1923a]: 108). Contrary to those social engineers who considered transforming the religion of a nation *en masse*, Gökalp (ibid.: 108) said: 'A nation cannot imitate the religious, moral, or aesthetic feelings of another nation.'

Gökalp who underlined the social function of religion argued for the complete separation of religion from the formalizing powers of the state. He maintained that: 'The separation between religion and state is a goal sought by all civilized nations' (Gökalp, 1959b[1919]: 102). Gökalp envisioned folk Islam rather than laicism as the basis of social solidarity in Turkey. By placing religion in culture, he wanted to 'find a secure, vital place for Islam within Turkish nationalism' (Davison, 1995: 214).[8] He did not have the negative opinions of the republican elite about Islam and he was interested in a synthesis between civilization and culture rather than a *transformation of culture* in the name of civilization, i.e. in order to westernize.

It is the contention of this article that Gökalp's effort to strike a synthesis between culture and civilization, as well as religion and nationalism, represents the logic of the empire, i.e. westernization, without denouncing the significance of Islam in the local culture. It is important to underline that the logic of the empire does not indicate a yearning for the empire. It rather refers to codes of thinking that underline synthesis at the expense of mutually exclusive categories. As a matter of fact, Gökalp was clearly critical of the Ottomanist currents. He despised Ottoman literature and music. He referred to the Ottoman language as 'artificial' while glorifying the natural character of the Turkish language. For him, Turkish was 'the language of the common people' (Gökalp, 1959d[1923a]: 105). He thought Ottoman poets lacked 'originality', had no 'aesthetic inspiration', and were 'imitators' of Persian poetry. He referred to them as 'sceptical, pessimistic, despairing, sickly spirits' (Gökalp, 1959d[1923a]: 106). Gökalp was even scornful of the Ottoman

morality that he described as presumptuous and pretentious. He praised Turks as heroes who were 'unaware of the heroism in their heroic acts' (ibid.). He clearly referred to everything in Turkish pattern as 'beautiful', and Ottoman as 'ugly' (ibid.: 107). Still, despite his loathing for the cosmopolitanism of the empire, he was a Turkist who understood the significance of religion in culture and could envisage a 'synthesis' among Islam, Turkism, and westernism. In that sense, he was still thinking with the codes of the empire. The logic of the republic *à la Turca*, on the other hand, was distinguished by virtue of a categorical distance from such a synthesis.

Some of the key republican elites had already moved away from an interest in such a synthesis before Gökalp passed away in 1924. İsmail Kara (2008) argues that republican Turkey had abandoned the policy of modernization that was in touch with religion by 1923. He thinks that while the architects of Ottoman modernization were aware of their responsibilities as leaders of a Muslim state in an Islamic world, the republican ideology denounced Islam and advocated a type of modernization that placed 'Islam and Muslimhood in a parenthesis' (Kara, 2008: 28). Kara points to several speeches of the key republican elite between 1920 and 1925 that portray the change away from the logic of the empire towards a national republic. Mustafa Kemal, for instance, who would be the first President of the Turkish Republic in 1923, defined the entity of nation on the basis of Islam in 1920 (cited in ibid.: 29). By 1925, Mustafa Kemal was already emphasizing Turkish national identity over religion (cited in ibid.: 30). According to Mardin, Mustafa Kemal assumed that secular education and nationalism – the twin foundations of the Turkish Republic – could constitute a substitute for Islam and 'would fill in for all the functions of Islam' (Mardin, 1997: 126).

İsmet İnönü, who would be the second President of the Turkish Republic, clearly denounced religion in the aftermath of the Lausanne Treaty (1923) by saying: 'If we do not totally get rid of the *hodjas* [local religious leaders], we can do nothing.' (cited in Kara, 2008: 31). He maintained that despite the fact that they fought against the Entente powers, Hungarians and Bulgarians were able to maintain their independence since they were Christians. He thought that the colonizing powers and especially the British would continue to view the Turks as inferior as long as they stayed as Muslims. Such views make it clear that there was a shift of gears after 1923 among the republican elite who began to engage in a type of modernization by denouncing Islam and placing it under the control of the state. By 1925, they had clearly given up on the idea of a 'synthesis' between culture and civilization, religion and national identity, as well as Islam and modernization.

In the years after 1923, the republican elite instigated policies that were geared towards creating a social amnesia and prohibition. Accord-

ingly, religious leaders such as *hodjas* who were loyal to the imperial state were pushed underground while various local Islamic practices were prohibited. In a fascinating study conducted in the small town of Of (on the eastern shore of the Black Sea), Michael Meeker (2002) presents the readers with a microcosm of the impact of the logic of the republic in the local history of this town. This is a logic that forced even the descendants of the imperial powers to act like nationalists, forgetting, after a while, the roots of their own families.

Turkish laicism adopted in the early years of the republic had the goal of establishing control over religion in order to prevent it from becoming an obstacle in front of westernization. In the end, laicism began to signify progress while religion was associated with backwardness. In sum, there were two fundamental pathologies that distinguished the Turkish republican project of laicism. The first pathology was the establishment of a causal relationship between an understanding of laicism that denounced folk Islam and the westernization of the society. This approach has led to a fetish of the non-religious and western outlook of Turkish women and men as the yardstick of laicism, westernization, and progress. It glorified a 'cosmetic westernization' at the expense of a set of arrangements that would separate religion from the formalizing powers of the state and uplift the autonomy of the Turkish citizens (Kadıoğlu, 1994). Secondly, Turkish republican laicism had embraced the development of a discourse of state Islam geared towards furthering national solidarity and integration in order to attain the larger goal of westernization.[9] Accordingly, the state's relations with its non-Muslim citizens involved increasingly more discriminatory practices. Moreover, all conflicts between the state and folk Islam were assessed in terms of progress versus reaction. Islam that was not controlled by the state began to be viewed as the symbol of backwardness. Headscarves have become a symbol of backwardness since they represent an Islam that is not subservient to the state. Today, women with headscarves are viewed as dangerous not simply because they are religious but rather because they represent a challenge to the control of the state over Islam (Kadıoğlu, 2008).

In February 1997, the Turkish military defined Islamic fundamentalism as the biggest enemy of the state and pressured the government with a Muslim base to resign in June. After this, the headscarf ban on university campuses began to be applied more severely. Most of the civil societal organizations expressing demands about the right to education of women with headscarves were formed in 1999 (Kadıoğlu, 2005). Some women agreed to wear wigs on top of their headscarves in order to attend their classes. Some universities established 'persuasion rooms' at their gates where women were 'convinced' to take off their headscarves. At times, even elderly women with headscarves who came to the graduation ceremonies of their children on university campuses were not

allowed through the gates. In 1999, the first woman Member of Parliament wearing a headscarf was elected to the Turkish Parliament. She tried to enter the Parliament amid protests, but failed to do so. In a rather interesting case in 2003, a woman wearing a headscarf was expelled from the courtroom by a judge for refusing to take off her headscarf despite the fact that she was in the courtroom as the accused person.

These cases portray that, in Turkey, women who choose to wear headscarves for religious reasons are unable to enjoy certain basic rights of citizenship. These are not subservient women. They are trying to be active in the public realm. In doing so, they shatter the myth about the submissiveness of religious women.[10] Their ordeal represents how the pathologies of republican laicism are reflected in the daily lives of the people.

How to reform republican laicism?

This article maintains that republican laicism does not necessarily promote secularism in the Turkish society. It rather opts for the placing of religion under the sole authority of the state apparatus. Instead of realizing a synthesis among Turkism, Islamism, and westernism as envisioned by Gökalp, republican laicism created a state Islam while opting for establishing control over and eradicating folk Islam. Such a characterization of republican laicism places it at the opposite end of democratization of state polity in Turkey. Female university students with headscarves are mainly seen, in this view, as backward rebels who challenge the authority of the state rather than adult citizens who demand their right to have higher education (Kadıoğlu, 2008).

Republican laicism not only impedes the formation of a secular society, it has also been holding back democratization in Turkey. The state not only controls religion but also favors Islam over other religions in Turkey. What, then, could be a constructive way to think about it in an effort to formulate policy proposals for a democratic disclosure?

Turkish *laiklik* has often been compared with French *laïcité* (Stepan, 2001). Yet, state control over religion in France has never been as detailed and long-lasting as in the Turkish case. But it is possible to draw some lessons from the French *laïcité* for the Turkish case.

Cecile Laborde's (2002) highly inspiring article on French *laïcité* can constitute a reference point for thinking about Turkish republican laicism in a comparative and constructive way. Laborde refers to three main strands of the French *laïcité*. Accordingly, *laïcité*, first of all, implies 'neutrality' by way of suggesting an institutional separation between church and state. Laicism as neutrality prohibits all the privileges of a particular religion and forbids all forms of governmental assistance to any religion. Neutrality could be in the form of abstention indicating that

the state neither hampers nor promotes expression of religious identities. Active neutrality, on the other hand, refers to making the state an active institution in subsidizing private religious schools. Laborde argues that, recently, there is interest in neutrality as abstention as the basis of cultural diversity and multiculturalism in France. Yet, at the time of its introduction in France – similar to the Turkish case – 'laïcité was less a consensual compromise than a fighting creed' (Laborde, 2002: 170). It was fighting against the Catholic Church in France. Similarly, laiklik in Turkey has become a fighting creed for it contains an effort to substitute a national identity in place of Islamic allegiances.

The policies of republican laicism in Turkey were mostly 'active' but hardly 'neutral'. State-funded religious education almost always favored Islamic education. Hence, today, it seems promising to argue for active neutrality of the state in Turkey. Neutrality as abstention does not seem plausible since primary and secondary school education, including all public and private schools in Turkey, is centralized and under the control of the state. Accordingly, there cannot be private religious education and religious affairs cannot be relegated to the private realm in Turkey. As a result, changing the centralized state curriculum in the direction of active neutrality seems like a plausible policy suggestion. A change in this direction should allow the students to 'choose' to have religious education in accordance with their religious affiliations in their respective schools. This would require a fundamental reform of the existing practice of mandatory religion classes in the primary and high school curricula of the Turkish educational establishment.

The second strand of laïcité in France is 'laïcité as autonomy' (Laborde, 2002: 171–5). Laicism as autonomy uplifts human emancipation rather than neutrality. Accordingly, laicism plays the role of substituting values of Enlightenment such as 'individualism, egalitarianism, and rationalism' in place of the 'mystical, conservative, and hierarchical ethos of the Church' (ibid.:171). The chief mission of the state schools in republican France, then, is to inculcate such autonomy in students by encouraging them to distance themselves from their family or community beliefs and to reflect critically on them. Such an approach to education will set the students on the track with respect to rational self-determination. The aim is to get the students to think as they wish provided that they think by themselves.[11]

Autonomy can only be achieved if the republican state education in Turkey avoids the role of building and glorifying an exclusively Turkist and Muslim identity. Any move in the direction of a democratic disclosure should embrace non-Muslim (such as Armenian or Jewish) as well as non-Turkish-speaking (such as Kurdish) citizens of Turkey. Such a movement undoubtedly involves a definition of citizenship outside of the parameters of an exclusively Turkist and Muslim identity. It signifies

a divorce between citizenship and nationality as well as citizenship and religion while attesting to the rise of a concept of citizenship based on a constitution which upholds multinational allegiances. Hence, divorce of nationality and citizenship involves the redefinition of allegiances and loyalties outside of the framework of all types of – religious and national – communities. This involves a movement towards a multicultural state that uplifts the idea of the rule of law and stays at an equal distance from citizens of all national communities and religious faiths.

The third strand of *laïcité* in France is '*laïcité* as community' (Laborde, 2002: 175–7). This is the most problematic view of laicism. Laborde argues that laicism as community calls for 'a communitarian state fostering a civil sense of loyalty to a particular historical community' (ibid.: 175). In this capacity, laicism opts for replacing religion in promoting the solidarity of citizens.

Can laicism constitute a bond among the citizens of a modern state? Can it be the basis of a civic bond replacing religious mores in a modern society? In Turkey, the community-fostering role of laicism is highly visible among the elite who embrace state Islam. In fact, laicist policies opt for neither neutrality nor autonomy but rather solidarity among Turkish citizens.

To conclude, it seems as if a movement in the direction of democratization of republican laicism in Turkey would involve efforts that would emphasize the first and second strands of laicism, namely active neutrality and autonomy. It should simultaneously involve an effort to lessen the significance of a view of laicism as the basis of national solidarity in Turkey. Laicism as community had produced a strange mix of nationalism and state Islam. Republican laicism can only become more secular if it emphasizes active neutrality and autonomy within the centralized education system while at the same time denouncing laicism as a community bond and leaving some breathing space for multi-religious affiliations in the society. Gökalp's views clearly acknowledged the significance of such a breathing space for folk manifestations of Islam.

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Notes

1 Incidentally, the cause of his death in 1924 – almost 30 years after his unsuc-
   cessful attempt at suicide – was the inflammation of the brain. It seems as if
   the bullet had finally killed him. For Ziya Gökalp's life, see Parla (1985).

2 I have earlier referred to the 'decentring of the official Turkish identity'
   (Kadıoğlu, 1998: 1). In a more recent article, I have used the expression
   'denationalization of citizenship' in Turkey (Kadıoğlu, 2007) in referring
   to the policies that were geared towards making multiple public identities
   possible.

3 Barkey refers to the expression used by Ernest Gellner: 'nationalism in the
   vacuum'. See Gellner (1992).

4 Yusuf Akçura, who spelled out Turkism as a political project in 1904, evalu-
   ated all the possible policies that could be followed by the Ottoman state,
   namely Ottomanism, Islamism, and Turkism from a utilitarian perspective.
   His main interest was to ensure the 'power and progress' of the Ottoman
   devlet (state) (Georgeon, 1999: 38). He pointed to the inadequacies of Otto-
   manism and Islamism in quelling the prevailing ethnic disturbances and in
   ensuring the unity of the empire. He thought the most rational policy to
   follow was Turkism. Akçura's historically significant article titled 'Üç Tarz-ı
   Siyaset' where he laid down his ideas on the necessity of Turkism raised
   some criticisms at the time of its publication. The criticisms written by Ali
   Kemal and Ahmet Ferit that were also published in the same newspaper
   pointed to the dangers of prompting the nationalist feeling among the Turks
   since it was believed that this would have a domino effect on various other
   nationalisms and would bring the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire.
   Yet, the disintegration came not from the Turkist political nationalism but
   as a result of various other nationalisms within the empire of both the non-
   Muslim and Muslim groups. The emergence of these nationalisms pointed
   to the inability of the Ottomanist vision to keep the empire intact and hence
   the inevitability of its disintegration. See Yıldız (2001: 72).

5 When the Greek revolution was proclaimed by Alexander Ypsilantis on
   24 February 1821, it signified a breach of contract between the *zimmis*
   (protected minorities within the Ottoman Empire) and the Ottoman state.
   As such, it turned the Greeks into *harbis* (warring non-Muslims within the
   Ottoman Empire) in the eyes of the Ottoman state (Erdem, 2005). This
   nationalism contained highly ethnic motifs as expressed in the works of
   nationalist thinkers like Adamantios Korais. At the turn of the 20th century,
   during the Macedonian struggle (1904–8) when the Bulgarians emerged as
   the 'other' of the Greek national identity, the idea of a secular Greek nation
   as *genos* (*fyle*, descent) that is dissociated from Orthodoxy became quite
   visible.

6 See article 136 of the 1982 constitution about the functions of the *Diyanet*.
   See also Davison (2003: 340).

7 See the views of Mahmut Esat Bey and Fethi Bey in a discussion in 1923.
   Cited in Yıldız (2001: 273).

8 In fact, Davison is not so sure whether Ziya Gökalp would consider the
   abolition of the caliphate in 1924 as part of the secularization policies of
   the republic. He argues that Gökalp was 'optimistic' about the survival of
   the caliphate after the elimination of the sultanate. It seems as if Gökalp saw

a possibility in the elimination of the sultanate in order to envision the spiritual independence of the Islamic institutional organization from national political concerns (Davison, 1995: 216). See also Gökalp (1959c[1922]).

9 Perhaps one of the best evidences of state Islam in Turkey can be observed in funerals. The *imam*, while surrounded by the loved ones of the dead person, recites a funeral prayer in Arabic by the grave as the body is lowered into its resting place. At the end of his prayer, he praises the spirits of the deceased heroes of the Turkish War of Independence as well as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkish.

10 Interestingly, laicist urban elites too think of themselves as Muslims. Yet, they are not troubled by a republican laicism that involves a state controlling religion as well as the dress codes of its female citizens. In a series of demonstrations held in 2007 in the name of defending the republican regime, some of the laicists went so far as approving military intervention, viewing it as aligned with the interests of the republican regime. These demonstrations were sparked by the candidacy of Abdullah Gül for the position of the President of the Turkish Republic because his wife wears a headscarf. After securing about 47 per cent of the votes in the July 2007 national election, the Justice and Development Party re-established itself in government. Afterwards, Gül was elected by the parliament as the new President and the headscarf ban in university campuses was lifted in 2008 by a reform in the constitution that was undertaken by the combined efforts of the Justice and Development Party and the Nationalist Action Party. The decision was immediately taken to the Constitutional Court by the main opposition political party. On 5 June 2008 the Constitutional Court ruled against the lifting of the ban. This decision is highly controversial since it re-evaluated the 'content' of the constitutional amendment rather than its 'form' which is itself an unconstitutional act. With this decision, the Constitutional Court defied the very basis of constitutional law since it curtailed the powers of the Turkish Grand National Assembly to undertake constitutional amendments. Therefore, the issue went well beyond the controversy over the ban and became a crisis of the political regime.

11 Laborde cites Claude Nicolet who said: 'a republican can think what he wishes, provided he thinks by himself' (cited in Laborde, 2002: 173).

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