HAUNTING PRESENCE:

AN ANALYSIS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT IN TURKEY

VIS-À-VIS THE RULING NATION IDEOLOGY

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BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY

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vis-à-vis the Ruling Nation Ideology

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ABSTRACT

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This study has a double objective, one theoretical and one historical: The theoretical objective is to present a formal and generic theory of social antagonism and revolutionary act informed by the dialectical materialist framework represented by names like Žižek, Zupančič, and Badiou that draws from German Idealism, Marxism, and Lacanian psychoanalysis, which enables one to conceptualize different class structures such as capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy without reducing or dismissing any of them. Arguing that society is constructed not purely symbolically but through the organization of social *jouissance*, this dissensus-based framework is positioned as a critical alternative to the consensus-based explanations of structural inequalities (e.g., racial contract theories and subaltern studies). The historical objective, on the other hand, is to illustrate the theoretical argument by presenting a structural explanation for the continuity of the ruling nation ideology from the Ottoman *millet* system onwards. Especially focusing on left organizations, this work examines the superegoical character and the symptomatic blindness of the masculine-hegemonic logic of the ruling nation (*millet-i hakime*) towards the colonial issue, and it demonstrates the feminine logic of the relationship between the symptomal element and the revolutionary subject through two examples of the emergence of the revolutionary subject from the symptomal position of the colonial order, first from the Armenian nation, then from the Kurdish nation.

ÖZET

"Haunting Presence:"

Türkiye'de Hakim Ulus İdeolojisi ve Devrimci Solun Bir Analizi

Bu çalışmanın biri teorik, diğeri tarihsel olmak üzere iki amacı mevcut: Teorik amaç, Žižek, Zupančič, ve Badiou gibi isimler tarafından temsil edilen ve Alman İdealizmi, Marksizm, ve Lacancı psikanalizi birleştiren diyalektik materyalist çerçeveyi kullanarak toplumsal antagonizma ve devrimci eylemin, kapitalizm, kolonyalizm ve patriyarka gibi farklı sınıfsallıkların hiçbirini göz ardı etmeden yahut birbirine indirgemeden kavramsallaştırılabilmesini sağlayan tamamen formal ve jenerik bir teorisini sunmaktır. Toplumun salt sembolik olarak değil, toplumsal keyfin (*jouissance*) örgütlenmesi yoluyla inşa edildiği esasından yola çıkan bu dissensus temelli çerçeve, yapısal eşitsizlikleri konsensüs üzerinden açıklamaya çalışan ırksal sözleşme teorileri ve madun çalışmaları gibi alternatiflere karşı eleştirel bir katkı olarak önerilmektedir. Çalışmanın tarihsel amacı ise teorik argümanın tarihsel bir gösterimini yapmaktır. Buna binaen, millet-i hakime ideolojisinin Osmanlı millet sisteminden bu yana sürekliliğine ilişkin yapısal bir açıklama verilerek, sol hareketleri odağa alan bir perspektiften millet-i hakimenin maskülen-hegemonik mantığının süperegoik karakteri ve kolonyal meseleye ilişkin semptomatik körlüğü inceleniyor. Bunun karşısında ise, devrimci öznenin iki defa kolonyal düzenin semptomal konumundan, yani önce Ermeni milletinden sonra ise Kürt milletinden çıkmasının analizi vasıtasıyla, hem bu iki tarihsel mesele arasındaki, hem de semptomal eleman ile devrimci özne arasında olan yakın ilişkinin feminen mantığının bir gösterimini sunuyor.

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Dedicated to all revolutionaries

from

Paramaz (Matteos Sarkissian)

to

Paramaz Kızılbaş (Suphi Nejat Ağırnaslı)

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ABBREVIATIONS

AANES: Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria

ADYÖD: Ankara Demokratik Yüksek Öğrenim Derneği (Ankara Democratic Higher Education Association)

AKP: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)

ARF: Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksutyun)

ASALA: Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia

ASD: Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi (Aydınlık (Enlightenment) Socialist Journal)

BDP: Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi (Peace and Democracy Party)

DDKD: Devrimci Doğu Kültür Derneği (Revolutionary Cultural Eastern Association)

DDKO: Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları (Revolutionary Cultural Eastern Hearths)

DEHAP: Demokratik Halk Partisi (Democratic People's Party)

DEM: Halkların Eşitlik ve Demokrasi Partisi (Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party)

DEP: Demokrasi Partisi (Democracy Party)

Dev-Genç: Devrimci Gençlik (Revolutionary Youth)

DG: Devrimci Gençlik (Revolutionary Youth)

DGDF: Devrimci Gençlik Dernekleri Federasyonu (Federation of Revolutionary Youth Associations)

DHKP-C: Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi (Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front)

DHP: Devrimci Halk Partisi (Revolutionary People's Party)

DKP: Devrimci Komünarlar Partisi (Revolutionary Communard Party)

DS: Devrimci Sol (Revolutionary Left)

DTH: Demokratik Toplum Hareketi (Democratic Society Movement)

DTK: Demokratik Toplum Kongresi (Democratic Society Congress)

DTP: Demokratik Toplum Partisi (Democratic Society Party)

DY: Devrimci Yol (Revolutionary Path)

EB: Emeğin Birliği (Unity of Labour)

EHP: Emekçi Hareket Partisi (Labourist Movement Party)

EMEP: Emek Partisi (Labour Party)

FKF: Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu (Thought/Idea Clubs Federation)

HADEP: Halkın Demokrasi Partisi (People's Democracy Party)

HB: Halkın Birliği (Unity of People)

HDK: Halkların Demokratik Kongresi (Peoples' Democratic Congress)

HDP: Halkların Demokratik Partisi (Peoples' Democratic Party)

HEP: Halkın Emek Partisi (People's Labour Party)

HK: Halkın Kurtuluşu (Emancipation of People)

İT: İttihat ve Terakki (Committee of Union and Progress)

KCK: Koma Civakên Kurdistanê (Kurdistan Communities Union)

KD: Kürdistan Devrimcileri, Şoreşgerên Kurdistan (Kurdistan Revolutionaries)

KDP: Kürdistan Demokratik Partisi (Kurdistan Democratic Party)

KİP: Kürdistan İşçi Partisi (Workers' Party of Kurdistan)

KSD: Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi (Kurtuluş (Emancipation) Socialist Journal)

MDD: Milli Demokratik Devrim (National Democratic Revolution)

MHP: Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Movement Party)

MLKP: Marksist-Leninist Komünist Parti (Marxist–Leninist Communist Party)

ÖDP: Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi (Freedom and Solidarity Party)

PASS: Politikleşmiş askeri savaş stratejisi (Politicized military war strategy)

PDA: Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık (Proletarian Revolutionary Aydınlık (Enlightenment))

PKK: Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê, Kürdistan İşçi Partisi (Workers' Party of Kurdistan)

PSK: Partiya Sosyalîst a Kurdistan, Kürdistan Sosyalist Partisi (Socialist Party of Kurdistan)

SD: Sosyalist Devrim (Socialist Revolution)

SDP: Sosyalist Demokrasi Partisi (Socialist Democracy Party)

SHP: Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti (Social Democratic Populist Party)

SMF: Sosyalist Meclisler Federasyonu (Federation of Socialist Assemblies)

SPS: Spontaneous philosophy of scientists

SVP: Sosyalist Vatan Partisi (Socialist Homeland Party)

T-KDP: Türkiye'de Kürdistan Demokratik Partisi (Kurdistan Democratic Party in Turkey)

TDGF: Türkiye Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu (Revolutionary Youth Federation of Turkey)

TDKP: Türkiye Devrimci Komünist Partisi (Revolutionary Communist Party of Turkey)

TDP: Türkiye Devrim Partisi (Turkey Revolution Party)

TEP: Türkiye Emekçi Partisi (Labourers' Party of Turkey)

THKO: Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu (People's Liberation Army of Turkey)

THKO/MB: THKO/Mücadelede Birlik (THKO/Unity in Struggle)

THKP-C: Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi (People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey)

THKP-C/HDÖ: TKHP-C/Halkın Devrimci Öncüleri (TKHP-C/People's Revolutionary Vanguard)

TİİKP: Türkiye İhtilâlci İşçi Köylü Partisi (Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Party of Turkey)

TİKB: Türkiye İhtilalci Komünistler Birliği (Revolutionary Communist League of Turkey)

TİP: Türkiye İşçi Partisi (Workers' Party of Turkey)

TKDP: Türkiye Kürdistan Demokratik Partisi (Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey)

TKDP-KUK: TKDP-Kürdistan Ulusal Kurtuluşçuları (TKDP-Kurdistan National Emancipationists)

TKEP: Türkiye Komünist Emek Partisi (Communist Labour Party of Turkey)

TKHP-C/MLSPB: TKHP-C/Marksist-Leninist Silahlı Propaganda Birliği (TKHP-C/Marxist–Leninist Armed Propaganda Unit)

TKP: Türkiye Komünist Partisi (Communist Party of Turkey)

TKP/ML: Türkiye Komünist Partisi/Marxist-Leninist (Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist)

TMMOB: Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği (Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects)

TÖP: Toplumsal Özgürlük Partisi (Social Freedom Party)

TSİP: Türkiye Sosyalist İşçi Partisi (Socialist Workers' Party of Turkey)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Can you feel their haunting presence?"
– System of a Down, *Holy Mountains*

In contemporary Turkey, calling a non-Armenian person Armenian is one of the most offensive things that would be met with aggression in most cases and places. Without the need for many specific examples, one can remember the outrage the slogan "we are all Hrant, we are all Armenian" raised in protest of the assassination of Hrant Dink created on the general public, or Erdoğan's annoyance of being called an Armenian, which he put into words as "excuse me but [they said] much uglier things, they said [that I am] Armenian" (Milliyet, 2008; Bianet, 2014). Similarly, calling someone who does not belong in those communities Greek, Jew, Kurd, or Alevi has offensive connotations to different degrees in many parts of the country. However, the case is not at all the same as calling someone a Muslim or Sunni. Furthermore, whereas the previously mentioned identities can be degraded and denigrated with impunity in many cases, a similar attempt against the Sunni Muslim identity would meet with harsh opposition and possible aggression in almost every context within Turkey. Yet, curiously, the primary opposition, the fundamental axis of polarization in Turkey, is purported to be the opposition between secular Kemalists and Muslims, in which Muslims are cast as the historically oppressed section, which is also reflected in the political landscape dominated by these two tendencies. This discrepancy betrays the fact that this opposition is false because it is founded upon the repression of a more fundamental antagonism. In any political field, there are two main categories of opposition: The first is the official antagonism,

which is a definite opposition between the legitimately included/counted elements of the political field. The second is the Real antagonism, which stands for the contradiction between the political field as a Whole (viz., the totality of official antagonism) and the excluded/uncounted element of the political field. In this sense, the official antagonism emerges through the repression of the Real antagonism. Now, the solution to the initial enigma becomes apparent: The official antagonism in the context of Turkey is produced through the ideological unification of the ruling nation (Turk-Muslim), and it is based on the repression of the colonial *truth* of the regime. This repression is based on a regime of double denialism: The denial of the colonial and genocidal truth of the past (the legacy of the *millet* system culminating in the Armenian Genocide) and of the present (the Kurdish issue). However, the operation of repression never fully succeeds; therefore, the repressed *truth* returns as a specter that haunts the socio-political field.[1] Hence arises the stark difference between calling someone an Armenian or Kurd and calling them a Muslim.

Accordingly, this work is deployed as an intervention, as an attempt to "subtraction from the Two of hegemonic politics" described above, with several major aims (Žižek, 2008b, pp. 383-384): By presenting a generic theory of antagonism and revolutionary subject, it aims to demonstrate the theoretical underpinnings of the fundamental connection between different class structures such as capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. Building on this framework, on the one hand, it aims to present a class-based (*dissensus*-based) alternative to the consensus-based frameworks (such as contract theories) that are widely used to explain the

[1] It also literally haunts the public imagination exemplified by local stories and superstitions about the ghosts, curses, etc. relating to the genocide.

structural inequalities but cannot go beyond the description of the phenomena (symptomal analysis) and especially fall short in conceptualizing a transformative option. On the other hand, it aims to provide a criticism of reductionist theories that attempt to reduce the social antagonism into a definite opposition, for instance, the reduction into economic class (such as "orthodox" Marxism and economism) or the reduction into identity politics (such as subaltern studies).

Furthermore, applying the framework and its criticisms to the context of Turkey, this study aims to provide a structural explanation of the continuity of the colonial regime and the ruling nation (*millet-i hakime*) ideology from the *millet* system until today through the examination of the organization of national *jouissance*. Utilizing this conceptualization of ruling nation ideology as the organization of the national *jouissance* through the national fantasy, it presents a systematic account of the inherent denialism and structural blindness that characterizes the masculine-hegemonic position of the ruling nation, primarily focusing on the Turkish left's symptomal blindness towards the colonial situation. In contradistinction to this blindness of the ruling nation, through the concept of symptomal element (*part-of-no-part*) as the embodied impossibility of a given field, it aims to demonstrate the structural equivalence between the Armenian revolutionaries and the Kurdish Freedom Movement as two examples of the emergence of the revolutionary subject from the symptomal position of the colonial order. This also amounts to the exposition of the fundamental connection between the Armenian issue (regime of denialism) and the Kurdish issue, which amounts to the fact that the colonial regime of the ruling nation ideology makes it impossible to separate the conceptualization and solution of the two issues.

To that end, a twofold argument will be pursued, one of which is a historical argument that examines the dominance of the ruling nation ideology, mainly focusing on the revolutionary left and its relationship with the colonial regime starting from the Ottoman *millet* system. The other is a theoretical argument that formulates a formal and *generic* understanding of social antagonism, social/political revolutionary practice, and the revolutionary subject. This theoretical argument underpinning the historical argument is based on the psychoanalytically informed dialectical materialist understanding of the primacy of social antagonism (i.e., class struggle) as Real, as well as the principle of the *unity of theory and practice* that results from it. Through this double argumentation, the work aims to illustrate the dialectical materialist understanding of the irreducibility of social antagonism as well as the fundamental relationship between the symptomal element and the revolutionary subject through the example of the emergence of the revolutionary movements from the nations occupying the symptomal place in the colonial regime (first Armenians, then Kurds) in contrast to the ruling nation's structural blindness towards the colonial regime. In sum, the primary aim of this work is to present a class-based framework that enables one to analyze the continuity of the colonial regime and the ruling nation ideology as well as the logic of emergence of revolutionary politics throughout diverse periods.

As such, the historical argument comprising chapters five and onwards forms the main content of the analysis, but it is presented as an illustration of the theoretical part preceding it. Therefore, the historical argument and primary materials (despite forming the subject matter of the work) are to be considered as corollary to the theoretical argument, which is to say that this is not a historical work or survey,

nor is it an attempt at historiography. Instead, this work aims to present a structural/theoretical model that makes it possible to present a critical reading of both history and the current conjuncture, informed by the primacy of antagonism (viz. a historical materialist[2] analysis informed by dialectical materialism). Certainly, this does not mean that the work or its conclusions are purely theoretical. On the contrary, the existence of a rigorous theoretical framework enables one to formulate precise material criticisms about the different readings of history and the current conjuncture. For instance, it enables one to track the continuity of the exceptional masculine logic of the ruling nation ideology and national fantasy that regulate social *jouissance* across apparently very diverse periods and doctrines (such as the continuities between Ottoman colonial ideology and the modern republican ideology; or the hegemony of the ruling nation ideology not only in the right but also in the left), which are usually analyzed as (paradigmatically) separate entities.

As the following three chapters will deal with the presentation and demonstration of the theoretical argument as well as the critical examinations of alternative frameworks in detail, I will, in this introduction, mainly present the outline of the historical argument with some brief theoretical comments that are to be explicated on in the following chapters. It has to be noted in advance that although the historical argument is presented more or less chronologically from chapter five and onwards (which is necessary for the order of presentation to make sense), it has to be read synchronously with the theoretical framework introduced in the preceding

[2] As we will see in the section on Althusser, the term historical materialism involves a redundancy in the sense that it simply means history approached in a materialist way; and we do not qualify, for instance, biology or chemistry undertaken in a materialist way as "biological materialism" or "chemical materialism" but simply as biology and chemistry. In the same way, historical materialism simply means history undertaken from a dialectical materialist point of view.

chapters. This also means that although primary materials were utilized for the research, they are included selectively and not exhaustively, as only to illustrate the argument on the point. This is, in a sense, a shortcoming of the present work regarding historicization and contextualization, because both the primary material and the historical sources are used minimally, without engaging with the many intricate debates among historiographers. But at the same time, this is a deliberate compromise, primarily to make the overarching theoretical/structural argument apparent and prevent it from being drowned among the discussions and disputes over facts, while also keeping the work in a reasonable length. As such, this work is not an exercise on the "history of a certain logic" (of ruling nation ideology) from an external/objective standpoint, but rather, it is an initiative to think about the "logic of a certain history" from within the very conjuncture being analyzed. Therefore, besides not being an attempt of historiography, a historical survey, or a chronology, this work is not a catalogue of the primary material either.

With these in mind, let us turn to the outline of the historical argument. Since this argument involves two elements, namely the ruling nation ideology and the revolutionary left, one must start from a double beginning: The historical argument of this work properly encompasses the nineteenth century and onwards; thus, a detailed historical/chronological account of the genesis of ruling nation ideology (and the *millet* system) cannot be given. Instead, following a summary of its prehistory and a logical account of its genesis, the analysis will mainly focus on the forms it took starting from the nineteenth century. As for the emergence of the revolutionary left in Turkey, both its logical and historical genesis can be presented,

which consists in the emergence of the Armenian Marxist parties in the late nineteenth century from the Armenian nation occupying the symptomal position.

The periodization followed by the argument can broadly be stated in four parts (which correspond to a Hegelian "triad"[3]): First, the *positing reflection*, the emergence (and subsequent repression) of the first generation of revolutionary left, namely, the Armenian revolutionary parties (Hunchakian Revolutionary Party and Armenian Revolutionary Federation or Dashnaksutyun) in the nineteenth century against the domination of ruling nation ideology and the *millet system* (and the guises it reproduced itself under in the post-Tanzimat period).[4] This is an Event in which both the colonial and the capitalist antagonism materializes, and the revolutionary subject arises for the first time. Furthermore, as the first emergence of the revolutionary left from a colonial nation in Turkey, it forms the basis of the *repetition* undertaken by the Kurdish Freedom Movement a century later. In addition to their socialist commitments, the Armenian revolutionaries not only exposed the ruling nation ideology but also undertook a severe critique of it and organized militant revolutionary action, the examples of which we are going to enumerate in the respective parts. Another crucial dynamic of this period is the passage of the ruling nation ideology from the domain of explicit Law to the unwritten superegoical domain starting with the Tanzimat reforms. This transformation made it possible to

[3] The Hegelian dialectical triad can be counted as either three or four, depending on from where one starts to count, or more exactly, if one counts the moment of *negation of negation* as a single or a double moment (Žižek, 2012, pp. 313-314, 501). But this already implies that the full structure of the dialectical process has four moments, which is to say that a Hegelian triad is in fact a tetrad.

[4] It should be noted that the unions and worker's organizations founded in the Western parts of the empire by the Greek, Jewish, and Bulgarian socialists such as the Socialist Workers' Federation of Thessaloniki (*Selanik Sosyalist İşçi Fedarasyonu*), *Türkiye Sosyalist Merkezi*, (and *Ergatis* journal) have a very important and repressed place in the history of the left movements in Turkey; but they are out of the scope of this analysis due to the fact that they do not primarily engage in illegal and armed revolutionary struggle.

sustain the privilege of the ruling nation after formal/legal equalities started to be introduced and reorganized the ruling nation ideology towards its characteristic genocidal and denialist proto-fascist form which is familiar today. This period ends with the paradigmatic (but not the only, the first, or the last) *founding crime*, the Armenian Genocide, in which a whole nation was eradicated. This moment corresponds to the arbitrary and violent founding act that inaugurates a new order, erasing the traces of the prehistory of its own genesis, after which there was virtually nothing of the first generation of revolutionary left in Turkey remaining.

The second period, that of the *external reflection*, is the interval in which the ruling nation ideology and the regime of denialism dominated, which coincides with the outset of the dominant mythical narrative about the beginning of left in Turkey, namely the formation of TKP (*Türkiye Komünist Partisi*, Communist Party of Turkey) in 1920. This era is characterized by a building of the "pure" and national pacifist left movement via the erasure of the previous generation of Armenian revolutionaries[5] and the articulation to the ruling nation ideology, as well as the complicity in the colonial practices and crimes of the state (both against remaining non-Muslims and Kurds who took the place left vacant by the extermination of non-Muslims). This is a period of silence in which an authentic revolutionary movement was absent until around 1968, when a new generation of revolutionary left was born from the crisis of ruling nation ideology.

The third period, the moment of the *determinate reflection* or the *vanishing mediator*, happens precisely in the period between the emergence of revolutionary

[5] There are also figures like İştirakçı Hilmi in the period between which are also usually ignored, but not for the same symptomal reason that Armenian revolutionaries are erased.

left organizations in the late 1960s and the killing and imprisonment of all elite cadres of the leading revolutionary organizations by 1973. This period is characterized by the cracks that particularly developed in the ruling nation ideology. These cracks emerged as ambiguities culminating in conflicts and later splits within the left. Furthermore, these fault lines were symptomal points in which different antagonisms that were repressed since the Armenian Genocide returned (albeit some under different guises). This rupture of ’68 created the three revolutionary organizations that constitute the second generation of revolutionary left in Turkey, THKO (*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu*, People's Liberation Army of Turkey), THKP-C (*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi*, People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey), and TKP/ML (*Türkiye Komünist Partisi/Marxist-Leninist*, Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist), which are the first revolutionary Marxist parties since the Armenian revolutionaries. Although this break did not develop into full autonomy from the ruling nation ideology, it nevertheless created a massive rupture in it, resulting in the denouncement of reliance on the military and the state (which were seen as above class antagonisms by wishful Kemalists), and also the denouncement of the nationalist views of classical ideologues of MDD (*Milli Demokratik Devrim*, National Democratic Revolution) regarding the colonial question and Kemalism. This period produced the most systematic and to-the-point critique of the ruling nation ideology and Kemalism to that date, especially seen in Kaypakkaya’s work, which includes the brief but important (unique for the period) mention of founding crimes such as the Armenian Genocide (albeit he called it a mass massacre) for the first time. This is an analysis the level of which many leftist organizations today have yet failed to attain. This moment came to an end in the

short period following the 1971 coup in which all leader cadres were either killed or imprisoned by the state.

The following period, that of the emergence of the *reflexive determination*, is broadly referred to as post-1971 but could be considered as the aftermath of the general amnesty of 1974, when many imprisoned cadres were released, and the revolutionary left began reconstituting itself based on the lessons taken from the preceding defeat. In addition to the proliferation of many illegal/semi-legal leftist revolutionary organizations, this period is also characterized by a corresponding proliferation of discussions and literature on the fault lines regarding the ruling nation ideology that reemerged in the prior period, paradigmatically crystallized by the Kurdish national question and the issue of the colonial status of Kurdistan. This period also can be regarded in the light of two splits: First, the split *within* the "Turkish left," not in the sense of the usually considered divisions regarding their alignments to different world powers and so on, but concerning the national-colonial question. Looking at this split, one encounters many attempts of obfuscation of the colonial question as well as some genuine considerations of it. But the more important split, the proper Event that stages the transformation of the symptomal element into the revolutionary subject, is the subsequent separation of the Kurdish left from the Turkish left, and the emergence of a revolutionary left movement from a colonized nation. This moment marks definitively the return of the national-colonial question and the founding crimes back to the scene, and it can be argued in a way that echoes the logic of the return of the repressed, that the Armenian revolutionaries return as the Kurdish Freedom Movement in this period. This thesis

devotes one chapter each to the analyses of the split within the Turkish left, the Kurdish left's split from the Turkish left, and the post-split conjuncture.

In addition to a multitude of historical sources, archival primary material was used especially for the analysis of the period after the 1960s. The analytical framework deployed follows a psychoanalytically informed two-step analysis, the first step of which consists in a symptomal analysis (in which the contradiction of the discourse with its own universal dimension is explored). The second step is an analysis-intervention on the level of the organization of *jouissance* (analogous to the *traversal of the fantasy* or the signification of the lack in the Other – s(Ⱥ)); specifics of which will be introduced in the second and third chapters. Especially with regard to the symptomal analysis of the discourse of the left organizations, the key defining factors will be the presence and absence of discussions regarding the colonial regime and the founding crimes against non-Muslim populations before, during, and after the genocide, and those against non-Turkish populations, mainly in the post-genocidal period (i.e., Kurds). It would be obvious to any reader with a rudimentary consciousness of the denialist regime in Turkey that the issue of founding crimes is almost entirely absent from the discourse of the Turkish left of this period. Therefore, regarding this era, the main focus will be how the Kurdish national-colonial question emerged as a matter of discussion for the left, which also functioned like an ersatz-discussion for the founding crimes, determining the organization's position vis-à-vis the national-colonial question.

Now, in order to be able to undertake this task, we have to establish the general definitions regarding the methodological approach (which might be called the conditions of scientificity of this work), which will be undertaken in Chapter 2.

This will be followed by the introduction of the general theoretical framework that will be used to explain the notional structure of the ruling nation ideology, which will be the subject matter of Chapter 3 and will require a short detour through philosophy, political economy, and psychoanalysis. After which, the ground will be ready for the discussion of literature that will follow in Chapter 4, which will engage with the relevant literature and its criticism, completing the preparation of the ground for the historical argument that will be presented from Chapter 5 and onwards.

CHAPTER 2

ON SCIENTIFICITY AND PARTISANSHIP

"There is a war between the ones who say that there is a war
and the ones who say that there isn't"

– Leonard Cohen, *There is a War*

This chapter presents this work's fundamental theoretical approach to science, scientific method, and scientificity; while introducing critical theoretical concepts that will be explicated in the following chapter. The starting point of the presentation will be two seemingly conflicting principles: First, the understanding of "social science" that is going to be defended in this thesis upholds a scientific claim to *truth*; and second, it explicitly takes a position vis-à-vis the social antagonism, i.e., it is a class-based framework. Demonstrating the connection between the claim to truth and *partisanship* in the sense of having a class-based perspective will be the primary task undertaken here, after which a brief discussion specifically related to social and political sciences will follow.

2.1 Scientificity

First, an elaboration is needed for the first principle, the understanding of science, scientificity, and the claim to truth. A discourse is called scientific to the extent that it produces its object through symbolization (such as formalization and mathematization) in such a way that it does not represent the object but instead reduces the object to the *letter* (e.g., the formula itself), as a result of which the *letter* replaces the referent completely, hence creating a new reality (i.e., a *semblant*) that strictly corresponds to the formulas (Zupančič, 2017, pp. 77, 80). It is because of this

that all properly scientific[6] (materialist) definitions are radically non-substantial. In other words, they do not refer to a deeper essence beyond or beneath the definition or the formula; instead, the definition or the formula replaces the essence itself. That is why science can never be purely descriptive; therefore, materialist definitions are never descriptions. They are rather *reductions to the letter* as is called in Lacanian psychoanalysis: the object is nothing more than its definition, which is in turn comprised of the properties or postulates that this object satisfies.[7]

One of the most prominent sources of (idealist) error in this regard stems from dissatisfaction with the reduction and an expectation that the object should correspond to a deeper/more substantial level of reality. The history of mathematics is filled with errors of this kind, from the expectation of Pythagoreans that the all numbers should be expressible in rational form (because they assumed numbers should reflect or match the deeper substantial reality which is rational[8]) which prevented their incorporation of irrational numbers to mathematics, to the fact that negative numbers (and polynomials with negative coefficients) were considered absurd for a long period of time (because numbers were generally associated with

[6] As can be deduced from the definition "scientific" is used in a very broad sense here so that it also includes logic, mathematics etc.

[7] Marx defines this Hegelian process of formalization/abstraction (*Aufhebung*) as following: "Is it surprising that everything, in the final abstraction (…) presents itself as a logical category? Is it surprising that, if you let drop little by little all that constitutes the individuality of a house, leaving out first of all the materials of which it is composed, then the form that distinguishes it, you end up with nothing but a body; that, if you leave out of account the limits of this body; you soon have nothing but a space – that if, finally, you leave out of the account the dimensions of this space, there is absolutely nothing left but pure quantity, the logical category? If we abstract thus from every subject all the alleged accidents, animate or inanimate, men or things, we are right in saying that in the final abstraction, the only substance left is the logical category" (Marx, 1955, p. 47).

[8] Very briefly, according to Pythagoreans, ultimately only the One exists; all the other numbers are either composites of One (natural numbers) or parts of One (fractions), or their combinations (all rational numbers). Zero and negative numbers are non-existent. Combined with their belief that numbers reflect the order of the substantial reality, the discovery of irrational numbers easily becomes a scandal.

magnitudes such as the length of something, and negative magnitudes did not seem to correspond to anything substantial or real for them) which also shares similarities with the history of zero, or lastly, to Descartes' dismissal of the imaginary numbers by deliberately giving the name "imaginary" to emphasize their unreality (because, again, the idea of square root of negative one did not seem to correspond to anything substantial for him), and the complex numbers being left unexplored until Euler, for one more century (Lacan, 2006, p. 694).[9] We can also add one relatively recent example from physics, the famous Einstein against Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics debate, in which Einstein could not accept the fundamental indeterminacy of nature (again, because a probabilistic nature was absurd for him)[10], epitomized by the statement attributed to him "God doesn't play dice;" whereas Bohr allegedly gave him the properly materialist answer: "Don't tell God what to do" (Žižek, 2005; Žižek, 2014, pp. 222, 388).

In each of these cases, the error arises from a kind of *horror vacui* that causes the search for "more" positive or substantial properties of elements (numbers, for instance) beyond the axioms they satisfy; in other words, it arises from an expectation of meaning against the pure senselessness of the formula. However, the scientificity of a discourse consists in the fact that anything positive about the thing is reduced to senseless formulae (*quid*) so that nothing positive regarding the thing's one-ness or self-identity (*quod*) remains (which is not a trivial but a specific nothing, which will be explicated on shortly after) (Žižek, 2008c, p. 193). This is the reason

[9] We can also mention the discussions about differential calculus and specifically the concept of *infinitesimal*; in which even Marx wrote amateur mathematical treatises that defends the "conservative" side against the "absurdities" in differential calculus (Marx, 1983).

[10] Similarly Einsteinian notion of relativity of spacetime was absurd from a Newtonian framework, and Newtonian law of conservation of momentum (i.e., inertia) was absurd for the prior Aristotelian understanding of physics.

that Nature appears full of meaning when considered from an idealist (traditional or new age) point of view, whereas from a materialist point of view (e.g., in modern science) it appears as senseless formulae (Žižek, 2017a, p. 15)[11]. This is to say that a scientific discourse consists of "empty" elements that are not described or defined in allusion to something substantial, but they only consist in the postulates they satisfy. Since these postulates state properties about the relationship of elements among themselves, the elements turn out to be nothing more than moments of this relation.[12] That is why all properly materialist definitions are minimally tautological, in the sense that since they cannot refer to something "outside" or beyond, they have to be minimally self-referential, as famously exemplified by the definition of subject and signifier in Lacanian psychoanalysis: A signifier is that which represents the subject for another signifier.

Up to this point, what has been presented is only one half of the story; and if left at this point, it could be read as a variant of positivism. What distinguishes this dialectical materialist understanding of science from positivism is not the emphasis on formalization but the distinction concerning the status of the letter/formula that replaces nature, specifically in its relation to the dimension of the Real: From a positivist point of view, the conclusion would be the formula replaces nature in the sense that it positively and completely renders the objective reality in a non-contradictory way, hence the scientific truth consists in the positive correspondence of the concept with the object (*adaequatio rei*); in short, the scientific discourse itself

[11] According to Bohr, "the microscopic system, the atom, [does not exist] in and of itself. (…) although physicists talk of atoms and other microscopic entities as if they were actual physical things, they are really only concepts we use to describe the behavior of our measuring instruments" (quoted in Žižek, 2012, p. 917).
[12] This logic is also the gist of structuralism.

is claimed to be positively a discourse of truth. In contrast, from a dialectical materialist point of view, the operation of reduction to formula, although it leaves nothing behind, does not capture the truth positively, since inconsistency and/or incompleteness remains: On the one hand, the discourse produced has the status of a *semblant* (semblance) so that it is not truthful in an absolute sense (i.e., it only *seems*); but on the other hand, the rigorous formalization and reduction to the letter makes it so that the "nothing" that is left behind (which appears as incompleteness or inconsistency within the discourse) negatively opens a way to truth (which can be exemplified by the founding of a new axiom or overcoming of the current paradigm). In brief, for positivism, the formula stands directly and positively for the Real; whereas for dialectical materialism, the Real appears where formalization encounters its own limits or inconsistency.

Thus, when we combine these two pillars, rigorous formalization and reduction to the letter on the one hand, with the status of the scientific discourse as *semblant* and truth as negative on the other, we arrive at the dialectical materialist formula for science, which is defined brilliantly by Lacan in a much-quoted part in Seminar 18:

> What is real is what opens up a hole in this *semblant*, in this articulated semblant which is the scientific discourse. The scientific discourse progresses without even worrying if it is a discourse of semblance or not. All that matters is that its network, its texture, its lattice, as one is used to say, *makes the right holes appear at the right place*. The only reference reached by its deductions is the impossible. *This impossible is the real*. In physics, *we aim at something which is real with the help of the discursive apparatus which, in its crispness, encounters the limits of its consistency*. (quoted in Žižek, 2012, p. 779 and Zupančič, 2017, p. 81; emphases mine)

Rigorous formalization is pursued to the limit to render visible the point it necessarily fails, hence "making the right holes appear at the right place." This is

why Lacan defines logic as "making holes in writing" (quoted in Badiou & Cassin, 2017, p. 19). In other words, this formalization is not the formalization of a positive thing, but the formalization of the impasse of formalization itself; an impossibility that directly corresponds to the Lacanian category of the Real (Zupančič, 2017, p. 67, 69). Therefore, the Real is, in Žižek's words, the nothing out of which a Symbolic structure emerges, a nothing that can nevertheless be specified (Žižek, 2020, p. 33). Thus, it cannot directly be a positive object of knowledge (otherwise, it would be a mere *semblant*): "Real cannot be known; it must be demonstrated" through the impasse of formalization itself (Badiou & Cassin, 2017, p. 59).

This practice of formalization of the impasse of formalization, which could easily be called *critique* in the Kantian sense of the word, is strictly immanent to the field it investigates, and it attempts to render the (transcendental) limits of the field from within the field itself. One example of this is the fact that there is no meta-mathematics that examines the objects and limits of mathematics from an external point of view,[13] but rather the mathematical *critique*, or the exploration of limits of mathematics is strictly internal to mathematical practice (and one of its foundational areas).[14] This is attested by Gödel's incompleteness theorem(s): It is not through an external standpoint nor by reference to an external standard that the necessary incompleteness or inconsistency of a given axiomatic system like mathematics is shown, but rather, it is shown through the demonstration of the limits of formal provability from within the system itself. Gödel achieves this through the

[13] Which was the dream of analytical philosophers like Frege and Russell who attempted to give logic the role of being meta-mathematics; this attempt famously failed, signaling the incompleteness theorem and its variants on the horizon.
[14] The same inseparability of critique and practice will come into play later in a political sense.

mathematization of mathematics itself to the limit: By creating an encoding system in which all mathematical statements can be expressed in mathematical terms (by their respective Gödel numbers) and their connections can be examined by looking at the relationship between these numbers. Through this rigorous formalization, it becomes possible to demonstrate *within mathematics* that mathematics fundamentally cannot be formulated as a complete and consistent axiomatic system.[15]

Numerous examples can be found in the history of science regarding this, but to conclude the prior discussion about numbers (and expectations about what they should be), one can start with the example of Cantor and the beginning of set theory. As we have seen some examples, until the late nineteenth century, numbers (and infinity) were still somehow mystical entities that lacked proper mathematical definitions (hence prompting various *myths* and naturalizations about them)[16] although they were used extensively. It was only with the arrival of a psychotic, Georg Cantor, that for the first time, a systematic (and purely abstract) understanding of numbers and infinities was born. Whilst breaking the ground for the later axiomatic versions of set theory (such as Zermelo-Fraenkel) that provided an axiomatic definition for numbers, Cantor presented the definitive argument against Pythagoreans: Although the exceptionality of One was already disturbed by the acknowledgement of the existence of irrational numbers, the "metaphysical" idea of One infinity that contains all mathematical objects could still be seen as viable. But

[15] We might underline its similarity to Kant's transcendental revolution in philosophy.
[16] For instance, Galileo Galilei simply dismissed the concept of infinity as an absurdity imported from philosophy when he discovered the proof that the cardinality (or the "size") of the infinite set of natural numbers $\mathbb{N}$ equals that of the squares of natural numbers, $\{n \mid n^2 \in \mathbb{N}\}$, whereas for a naturalized/naïve understanding the former set should be "larger" since it "contains" the latter set.

Cantor demonstrated that there was not One infinity, but an infinite multiplicity of infinities with infinitely different cardinalities, through the fact that a set always has more subsets than its elements (which means the cardinality or "size" of the set of all subsets of a set A is always greater than the cardinality of A). This is, in turn, proven by a diagonal argument that shows the necessary existence of a set among the subsets of a set A, which is not covered by any mapping from A to its subsets (Žižek, 2017a, p. 7; Žižek, 2012, pp. 227, 849). It should also be added that Cantor's revolution paved the way for Gödel's discovery of incompleteness while investigating the paradoxes of set theory.[17]

Another example that can be presented is Turing's formalization of computation through his concept of Turing machine, and his subsequent demonstration via *reductio ad absurdum* (just like Cantor and Gödel) of the halting problem (the fundamental undecidability that makes it impossible to know in advance whether an algorithm with a terminating condition would terminate in a finite amount of time for a given input, without actually running the algorithm and waiting for the result) through it, which can be seen as an analogue of Gödel's incompleteness theorem in the science of algorithms. In addition to this, we can give two very prominent examples from physics; the mathematical singularities emerging in Einstein's theory of general relativity predicting the existence of actual physical singularities (viz. black holes), and the aforementioned Copenhagen interpretation of quantum physics and its successors which insert contingency into the physical causality itself, which breaks away with the traditional understanding of

[17] It is interesting to note the lineage of Hilbert, Von Neumann, Gödel, and Turing. The *Entscheidungsproblem* (decision problem) which can be considered as the ancestor of Gödel's incompleteness theorems and Turing's halting problem comes from Hilbert and Ackermann.

deterministic causality, starting with Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, it ultimately led to the developments such as Bell's theorem which necessitated the abandonment of the realism part of the principle of *local realism*[18] which was indisputably accepted before.

All these examples are *scientific revolutions* in the strong sense of the term. In each of them, we can detect the two pillars that we have enumerated before regarding the scientific discourse, which we can now formulate through the psychoanalytical couple alienation-separation: First, the stage of *alienation*, the acceptance of the signifier as the medium through which the symbolization happens, which corresponds to the rigorous formalization as well as the production of an articulated *semblant*. This aspect of the primacy of formalization[19] is emphasized when Badiou claims that set theory is ontology, or when Lacan directly equates the structure with topology: "Topology is not 'designed to guide us' in structure. It is this structure –as retroaction of the chain-like order in which language consists" (Badiou, 2001, p. 25; Badiou, 2007, p. 42; Lacan, 2010, p. 14). As was shown, this rigorous formalization does not give us the truth directly, but rather another twist is needed: This is called the stage of *separation*, in which the formalization bears its fruit, in the form of paradoxes, contradictions, antinomies, inconsistencies, and incompletenesses through which the dimension of the Real transpires; resulting in the radical revolutionizing of the existing paradigm. This is to say that truth arises as a

[18] Principle of locality means that two points in spacetime are fundamentally separate so that only objects adjacent to each other can influence one another (or a medium should carry the interaction), in other words, there can be no action-at-a-distance. Principle of realism means that all physical phenomena are completely determined by real physical variables even though these variables might be hidden or unmeasurable, that there is no gaps or chance events in the most fundamental level of physical causality. Whereas the principle of locality still holds today, the principle of realism is not valid in modern physics.

[19] What Badiou calls the "urpresentation of the void" (Badiou, 2007, p. 14).

contingent byproduct of rigorous formalization. That is why Lacan states in his late work *L'Étourdit* that "no logical development, and this has been the case from before Socrates and from elsewhere than in our tradition, has ever derived from anything other than a kernel of paradoxes" (quoted in Badiou & Cassin, 2017, p. 15).[20] This means that there is not a fundamental difference between stumbling upon an undecidable contradiction and the instantiation of a new axiom.[21]

To conclude the presentation of the dialectical materialist position concerning the scientific claim to truth, let us present a differentiation of the usual understanding of science (which generally means positive sciences) and the logic of the scientific breakthrough or proper dialectical materialist understanding of science using Žižek's analysis of Lacan's application of Aristotle's four causes[22] to the category of truth: Lacan argues that the domain of "day-to-day" science is usually between truth as material cause, which corresponds to verifying the adequacy of a Notion to reality; and truth as formal cause, which corresponds to verifying the adequacy of reality to a Notion. Truth as final cause corresponds to religious discourse, which provides a meaningful and all-encompassing *telos* to existence; and lastly, truth as efficient cause properly designates the domain of dialectical materialism because it concerns the moment "symbolic falls into the Real," the moment symbolization/formalization produces a Real effect in its limit, it "makes the

[20] A very good example of this "kernel of paradoxes" can be found in Frege's utilization of contradiction in *Foundations of Arithmetic*, defining the zero/empty set as the set of things that are not identical to themselves, hence founding a whole logical system upon a logical contradiction (Tupinambá, 2021, p. 32).

[21] For instance, what appeared as the problems of the fifth axiom (the parallel postulate) of Euclidean geometry was revealed in the mid-nineteenth century (through the work of Gauss, Bolyai, Lobachevsky and later Riemann) as not absurdities or pure contradictions, but rather the existence of alternative axioms that result in different, non-Euclidean geometries (e.g., elliptic, hyperbolic).

[22] Material cause (cause as the matter or substance; e.g., for a table, wood), formal cause (cause as the idea; e.g., the idea/form of a table), final cause (cause as *telos*; e.g., the use of table) and efficient cause (cause as the productive activity; e.g., the work put into transforming the material into a table).

right holes appear at the right place" (Žižek, 2022, p. 139). It is in this sense that the Real, as the gap that separates the Universal from the Particular (or more correctly, the Universal from itself; which returns in the Particular), is the *singular*, and can only be touched upon by a failure of symbolization (Žižek, 2003, p. 129; Žižek, 2020, p. 289). This moment corresponds to the stage of *separation* in psychoanalysis, and to Absolute Knowing in Hegelian philosophy, both of which amount to the fact that there can be no external measure of truth since it is absolutely immanent to the discourse as its necessary point of failure (Žižek, 2014, p. 244; Hegel, 2015, pp. 670-753).

2.2 Partisanship

This definition of the *singular* concludes the discussion of scientificity and provides a connection to our second main principle, that of taking a position with regard to social antagonism, namely, partisanship. To resolve the apparent conflict between the two principles, it is enough to state that by following our approach to the scientific truth, i.e., by admitting the singular impossible-Real, the field of science reveals itself to be *political* (not in the narrow sense that it is related to politics but in the strict sense that it is a field in which the founding principles of the field is fundamentally undefined and open to new definitions), in which there is no neutral position. From Marx's basic political-economic thesis that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," Althusser derives the fact that the history of theory (of philosophy and sciences) is not exempt from this; which gives birth to the understanding of conflictual sciences (which admit the antagonism, corresponds to what we defined as the dialectical materialist understanding of

science) as well as an understanding of "partisanship in philosophy," or what we might simply call partisan science (Althusser, 1971a, p. 54; Althusser, 1990c, p. 13, Althusser, 1996, pp. 105-124; Marx & Engels, 1969). By introducing the impossibility or lack into the theory, the conflictual sciences "resubjectivize the universe of science," since the subject is nothing but the fundamental impossibility of a given field to totalize itself (Žižek, 2017a, pp. 164-5). The resubjectivization of the structure happens, i.e., the Real impossibility appears within the structure, when we extract the singular from the relationship between the Particular and the Universal; reflected in Lacan's claim in *Science and Truth* that science properly started when Descartes "extracted the function of the subject from the strict relationship between S_1 and S_2" (quoted in Grigg, 2009, p. 136).

The two main examples Althusser gives for the conflictual sciences are Marxism and psychoanalysis (which were born outside of the university, as "parallel" or "critical" university in Badiou's terms); which stand on a legacy of "ignored" or caricaturized names in mainstream philosophy and academia, which are Marx, who formalized the fundamental impossibility of capitalism; Freud who did the same for consciousness; and Hegel, who ruined it for everyone by deploying the same logic in the domain of metaphysics (Althusser, 1971a, p. 29; Badiou, 2015, p. 58). But in addition to these names, the specific focus of Althusser is on another great dialectician who is ignored to an even greater extent: Lenin (Althusser, 1971a, p. 27).[23]

[23] To these names that are repressed by academia, today we can easily add Althusser himself, Lacan, and Žižek (and Ljubljana school).

Althusser explains this avoidance towards these theoreticians by claiming that philosophers cannot accept the existence of objective knowledge about philosophy's mode of being (to which we might easily add scientists[24]) (Althusser, 1971a, p. 32). That is why, for instance, "social sciences" are scandalously blind to Marxism and "with a few exceptions, they are still 'dabbling' in political economy, sociology, ethnology, 'anthropology,' 'social psychology,' etc., etc." (Althusser, 1971c, p. 16). In addition to this, Althusser argues that the reason for academic philosophy's specific intolerance towards Lenin also bears on the fact that they are unable to learn from a "politician" (because philosophy represses politics) in addition to the standard avoidance of the field itself becoming an object of theory; and claims that Lenin did for philosophy what Freud did for psychology (Althusser, 1971a, pp. 32-33).

To give the recognition Lenin deserves, Althusser lists in several places the theoretical innovations that are specifically of Lenin's, and which are indispensable for dialectical materialism: The theory of imperialism, the Party (vanguard), transition to communism (the State and revolution), and the concept of *conjuncture* (or "present moment") that allows one to read the effects of *overdetermination* (a concept coming from Freud) resulting from the articulation of various instances as well as to develop an understanding of the *unity of theory and practice* (Althusser, 1990c, p. 19; Althusser, 1990a, pp. 64-65). In sum, what materialized in Lenin's discoveries was the fact that Marxist theory leads to a novel way of practicing

[24] For example, there are mathematicians that ignore Gödel and uphold some form of Platonism, or some physicists that still try to uphold realism with theories of quantum realism such as pilot-wave theory; both of which ignore the theories that point towards the objective limits of their respective fields.

philosophy based on the proletarian position; that philosophy consists in political intervention in theoretical form, and fundamentally, it cannot be non-political (free from or above the antagonism) (Althusser, 1971b, pp. 107-108). Althusser summarizes this by stating that "philosophy itself is therefore part of the conjuncture in which it intervenes," so that "philosophy cannot entertain an external, purely speculative relation, a relation of pure knowledge to the conjuncture, because it takes part in this ensemble. That suggests that a [philosophical] Thesis does not have an 'object' but a stake" (Althusser, 1990b, p. 104).

Here, we can once more return to the difference between the logic of the usual, "day-to-day" practice of science, which we may call the *constituted* dimension of science that remains on the level of the *semblant*;[25] and the *constitutive* dimension of science, which we presented before as the logic of scientific revolution or breakthrough. Althusser argues that whereas science in the former sense has a proper object; the latter logic that draws the line, which is revealed to be that of philosophy, has no positive object (as we have already seen in the negative definition of the Real), instead, it has stakes so that it does not produce knowledge that is to be judged according to *adaequatio rei* but states theses positing a correct (*justes*) position concerning scientific or political practice (Althusser, 1990b, pp. 72-75). From this, it becomes apparent that there is no pure content (e.g., pure science without the philosophical shenanigans) nor pure form (since theory is always "haunted by practice") (Althusser, 1990a, p. 60; Althusser, 1990b, p. 75). That is why, although theory has no positive objects, through its relation to the negative, it bears on

[25] And science "works" even the majority of the scientists remain on the level of the *semblant*; i.e., naively believe the paradigm.

possible real objects (formal/*abstract* objects that can go beyond any given) that are not reducible to "pure ideas" etc. since they open the way for the knowledge of the *concrete*; so that philosophy is not something to be illustrated or applied externally, but it can only be *exercised* (Althusser, 1990a, pp. 51-52; Althusser, 1990b, p. 84). Moreover, because of its special relation to negativity, because it can go beyond any given, theory has the unique property of being able *to speak the truth*; which amounts to a "general theory of unity of theory and practice," which is another name for *revolution* (Althusser, 1990a, pp. 66-67; Althusser, 1971c, p. 19).

As classical philosophies repress the category of the *singular*[26] or the fundamental ontological negativity, philosophy is unable to think of its own history until Marxism emerges as a "double scientific doctrine" (both as a science and as a philosophy) which puts an end to the repression of history and politics in philosophy (Althusser, 1990a, p. 45; Althusser, 1990c, pp. 6-11). This double scientific doctrine of Marxism consists in the chronologically prior *historical materialism* as the science of the modes of production (or science of "history"), and the logically prior *dialectical materialism* as the philosophy of contradiction (Althusser, 1971c, p. 13; Althusser, 1990c, pp. 6-8). Specifically, *materialism* implies two fundamental axioms that relate to the theoretical aspect, namely that there is a gap between knowledge and Real (that Real does not have to conform to any schema of Understanding), and the being has primacy over thought (in other words, the Real has primacy over the Symbolic); whereas *dialectics* specifies the methodological aspect that the theory is concerned with its own relationship with its object (i.e., it is

[26] The trajectory of this repression can be found in more detail in the unpublished manuscript *The Obstinacy of the Singular* (Akar, 2022).

self-reflexive) and thus it examines the law of transformation of "real processes" (Althusser, 1990c, p. 9). As a result of the inclusion of the Real, the impossibility of a complete or whole system of truth (which is the hallmark of idealism) becomes apparent, and therefore, Althusser reaches the conclusion that the "dialectical materialist philosophy must itself be constituted in the struggle," or to hint at the argument that is going to be put forward in the next chapter, we can formulate it as that it must be *non-All* (*pas-tout*) (Althusser, 1990b, p. 143).

So, what does dialectical materialist philosophy do? Precisely what we have been doing from the outset, that is, drawing a line between the scientific and the ideological, between truth and semblance; in line with Hegel's claim that "the activity of separating is the force and labor of the understanding, the most astonishing and the greatest of all the powers, or rather, which is the absolute power" (Althusser, 1990b, p. 83; Hegel, 2018, p. 20). The ideological is the constituted dimension of any field with the traces of its constitutive dimension (negativity) erased or repressed; and as such, forms the *obviousness* of the "lived experience" that relates the subjects of the field to their conditions of existence and their practice; and it is false by definition because it is a total system of representations that excludes the dimension of the Real (Althusser, 1990c, pp. 24-25). In addition to this, it has the appearance of an "objective structure" in the sense that it affects subjects' reality and conduct without them knowing it (which is to say it is an *unconscious* structure, the psychoanalytical name of which is *fantasy* as we will elaborate on later) (Althusser, 1990c, p. 24). But ideology is not simply a representation in the usual sense of the term, since it primarily constitutes a *bond* (this bond gains the name *discourse* in the theory of four discourses in Lacan) which is the social function of ideology, which,

for instance, enables the domination of one class over the others by naturalizing or justifying the existing state of things (as a complete and meaningful whole) both for the exploiters and the exploited (Althusser, 1990c, pp. 25, 28). Furthermore, because the constitutive negative dimension (the impossibility) of the structure has to remain invisible to its inhabitants, this necessitates the production of *myth*s as to obfuscate the fundamental antagonism/impossibility (Althusser, 1990c, p. 29).

All of these does not mean that ideology is trivial, that it can be surpassed or replaced by purely "scientific" practice, because as we have seen, the stage of *alienation* (the semblance), the rigorous formalization and reduction to the letter, is necessary for the second stage of *separation* to happen as the naming of its impossibility (as we will see, that *les non-dupes errent*, meaning that one cannot *bypass* the fantasy but can only *traverse* it by going right through it); or in Althusser's terms, ideology is not simply an illusion but it is also an allusion to the Real, thus, an ideological proposition "is the *symptom* of a reality other than that of which it speaks" (namely, the necessary dimension of negativity that it represses) (Althusser, 1990c, p. 29; Althusser, 1990b, p. 79; emphasis mine). To sum it up, ideology is always related to a social reality that is external to scientific practice, in other words, ideology is first and foremost a "practical ideology" that shapes "notions-representations-images into behaviour-conduct-attitude-gestures" (Althusser, 1990b, p. 83).

This practical dimension of ideology reveals itself in scientific practice as what Althusser calls the "spontaneous philosophy of scientists" (SPS) that does not necessarily designate a conscious world-outlook (although it can develop into one, such as economism and humanism) but an unconscious set of presuppositions that

govern scientific practice (such as (neo-)positivism and empiricism) (Althusser, 1971c, p. 17; Althusser, 1990c, p. 12; Althusser, 1990b, pp. 109, 132, 140). Since the SPS arises in the denial of the ideological dimension of science, it is incapable of self-reflection and self-criticism; thus, it cannot be changed purely internally (Althusser, 1990b, p. 136). That is where philosophy steps in. As Althusser claims, science is either "exploited" by the idealist philosophies for the sake of practical ideologies (religious practical ideology in the case of religious philosophies, and moral practical ideology in the case of spiritualist philosophies); or it is assisted by dialectic materialist philosophy through the drawing of the line between science and ideology. This is the fundamental point that results in an understanding of "partisanship in philosophy" with Marxism as its "guide to action" (Althusser, 1990c, p. 13).

With this in mind, we can return to the initial statement that the history of philosophy is, in fact, a history of the struggle between two tendencies, idealism and materialism, which means that "philosophy has no history" (just like ideology and the unconscious) and that it is a "strange theoretical site where *nothing really happens, nothing but this repetition of nothing*" (Althusser, 1971a, pp. 54-55, emphasis mine). This "repetition of nothing" will be clarified and will take a central position when we introduce the psychoanalytical notion of *death drive* in the next chapter. For now, it suffices to state that through Lenin, Althusser argues that all the history of philosophy with all its nuances could be reduced to a *Kampfplatz* (in Kant's terms) of this struggle between the two tendencies (idealism and materialism), in which there is no possible third way, nor is there a half-measure between them (Althusser, 1971a, p. 56). That is why the Leninist understanding of "partisanship in

philosophy" or partisan science is not only a maxim for the dialectical materialists, but it is also simply the statement of a fact: namely, the fact that all philosophy is partisan whether it acknowledges it or not, that it necessarily takes a side with regard to the social antagonism (class struggle) through the instance of the sciences,[27] and therefore, there is no science without the philosophical and political dimension. Thus, as can be seen, there is no contradiction between our two principles, the scientific claim to truth and partisanship; on the contrary, they are actually like the two sides of the same coin. Althusser's definition of the professional revolutionary captures this point perfectly:

> Communist militants must assimilate and use the principles of the theory: science and philosophy. The proletarian revolution needs *militants who are both scientists* (historical materialism) *and philosophers* (dialectical materialism) to assist in the defense and development of theory (Althusser, 1971c, p. 13, emphasis mine).[28]

As Marx argues, "just as the economists are the scientific representatives of the bourgeois class, so the socialists and communists are the theoreticians of the proletarian class," and through the latter consciously associating themselves with the historical movement (taking a side in the antagonism), science have "ceased to be doctrinaire and has become revolutionary" (Marx, 1955, p. 56).

[27] Specifically, dialectical materialist philosophy represents politics in theory and sciences, and scientificity in politics (Althusser, 1971a, p. 65).

[28] More than 50 years before Althusser, Armenian revolutionary Vanig (Kegham Vanigian), who was one of the 20 Hunchak militants who were executed in 1915 alongside Paramaz, wrote in his last essay that "my wish is to see my comrades as (…) socialist philosophers that attend to the situation of the proletariat and fight for the abolition of the existing inequalities and atrocities" (Akın, 2019, pp. 196-198).

2.3 Social science

Having defined the relationship between scientificity and partisanship, we can specifically relate this discussion to the social and political sciences and examine its implications therein. The main problem with what is called the human sciences and social sciences, according to Althusser, is the same with the problem of theology, rational cosmology, and rational psychology, all of which Kant demonstrates as invalid in the Critique of Pure Reason (Althusser, 1990b, p. 89; Kant, 1929, pp. 328-383, 653-665). The problem consists in that the objects of these sciences (respectively, God as the object of theology, the World (i.e., the Universe as a whole) as the object of cosmology, and the soul (what is called "individual" or "person" in modern parlance) as the object of psychology (to which we might add "the society" as the object of social sciences); are contradictory, and hence, non-existent; therefore in Althusser's words, they are simply sciences of "a misunderstanding," and their claim to scientificity is a myth designed to sustain a wish-fulfillment in the Freudian sense of the term: "with some distinct exceptions the human sciences are sciences without an object (...) in fact they do not 'know' what they are the sciences of: a misunderstanding"[29] (Althusser, 1990b, pp. 89, 96). As we have seen, the scientificity of a discourse requires the production of its object through rigorous formalization. However, these "sciences" appear not to have an object. The conclusion Althusser draws from this is that these are not, in fact, sciences, but they are idealist philosophies (since philosophy has no object) disguised as sciences; so that the task of dialectical materialism within the social and human sciences is also to

[29] The exceptions for Althusser being structural linguistics and psychoanalysis.

draw the line of demarcation to distinguish their de facto ideological foundations (no matter their de jure theoretical foundations) (Althusser, 1990b, p. 91).

Accordingly, if we are to approach social science through a dialectical materialist framework, the object of the science cannot be assumed to be "society" or any other substantial positive Whole. Like other sciences, this kind of approach remains at the level of the *semblant* (the constituted dimension) and results in the fetishization of truth as *adaequatio rei* which usually results in a variant of empiricism or dogmatism (Althusser, 1990c, p. 14). Concerning sociology, for instance, this preoccupation with *adaequatio rei* either prioritizes truth as material cause (verification of the adequacy of a Notion to reality), which results in a *qualitative*-descriptive sociology/anthropology that tends to eliminate theory in favour of pure content; or it prioritizes truth as formal cause (verification of the adequacy of reality to a Notion) which results in a *quantitative* sociology/statistics that tries to model society through a very shallow understanding of mathematization[30] (usually reduced to measurement and calculation). In both cases they are false, because they merely present the description or measurement of a non-contradictory static object ("society"), which simply amounts to a naturalization/justification of the existing state of things; or in Althusser's terms,

[30] They are like the sociology equivalents of pilot-wave theory or de Broglie–Bohm theory of physics in their search for hidden positive variables about this mystical object called the society, and in their "measurements" that cannot even have proper *unit*s (for instance, they assume they can measure and quantify variables like "happiness" without even having a *unit of measurement*). On this matter, Althusser correctly states that their simultaneous eagerness and inability for mathematics betrays an insecurity: "(…) this exteriority expresses and betrays the uncertainty which the majority of the human sciences feel concerning their theoretical status. This generalized impatience to embrace mathematics is a symptom: they have not attained theoretical maturity" (Althusser, 1990b, p. 89). One can see this easily by comparing the areas of mathematics that inform quantitative sociology (mainly statistics, and the pragmatic use of other areas of mathematics for statistical inference and calculation) with those that inform thinkers like Lacan, Badiou, or Deleuze (logic, set theory, topology, knot theory, graph theory, category theory, and so on).

they treat knowledge as knowledge of a given, and not at the knowledge of the process of production of knowledge, so whereas proper dialectical materialist science exists by dismantling the obvious, these "sciences" exist simply by reflecting the obvious (Althusser, 1990c, pp. 14-15).

To conclude this chapter and to connect it to the main theoretical thesis of this work that will be fully presented in the following chapter, through the dialectical materialist framework introduced in this chapter and against these sciences of the "society," we can put forward the thesis that socio-political science can only be thought as the science of the social antagonism (class struggle as the impossibility of society to totalize itself into a Whole) and the forms this antagonism manifests itself in (different class structures). So, it comes to a point of decision that either the Whole exists (idealism), or the symptom exists as its failure (materialism). As Žižek explains with regards to Lacan: "If the world and language and subject do not exist, what does exist; more precisely: what confers on existing phenomena their consistency? Lacan's answer is, as we have already indicated, symptom" (Žižek, 2008c, p. 78). Thus, to sum up our argument, we can state that society does not exist, but there is social antagonism; and what exists with regard to the domain of the social is the *symptom* (one of the fundamental inventions of Marx) as the various manifestations of this impossibility, which will play a central role in our theory in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

A GENERIC THEORY OF ANTAGONISM AND REVOLUTION

Having explored the definitions of scientificity as well as the fundamental principles of the methodology that is used in the work, we can now commence the presentation of the theoretical argument of this thesis, drawing heavily from German Idealism, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and Marxism, which are brought together in the dialectical materialist framework of what is known as the Ljubljana School (which includes Žižek, Zupančič, Dolar et al. as well as more "external" contributors like Badiou), succeeding and supplementing the framework of Althusser that we have presented.[31]

3.1 The One is not, or there is a non-relationship

As we have shown, the materialist introduction of the category of Real as impossible, or the *singular*, reveals the One as impossible or the Whole as contradictory or incomplete. This is the dimension that is designated by the concept of *lack* in Lacanian psychoanalysis, and results in two symmetric statements: On the one hand, *there is a non-relationship*,[32] the impossibility of a symbolic structure to be reduced into a non-contradictory articulation of its moments, in other words, the impossibility of a symbolic structure to totalize itself into a non-antagonistic Whole (e.g., the

[31] We have not presented Althusser's better known theory of Ideological State Apparatuses and interpellation here, therefore the criticism of that paradigm will not be included in the main discussion; but it should suffice to state that dimension *beyond interpellation* as Dolar calls it, precisely designates the level of *jouissance* where the inadequacy of the symbolic mandate emerges, which is the "upper level" of the famous graph ("of desire") in Lacan's seminar 5, *The Formations of the Unconscious* (Althusser, 1970; Dolar, 1993, Lacan, 2017, p. 485).

[32] Or "*il y a de l'Un*"/*Yad'lun*" (there is something of the One), which designates the same thing, namely the insistence of the singular as the fundamental ontological impossibility (Žižek, 2017a, p. 63).

impossibility of a universal genus to be perfectly enumerated into its particular species); and on the other hand, that *there is no metalanguage*,[33] that there is not an "external" or neutral point of view that can allow one to bypass this impossibility (examples of both we saw in the preceding chapter). Badiou formulates this concisely as "the One is not," which is a negative statement to be read affirmatively (that the One *is* not; it is not that the One simply does not exist but it *is* this non-existence itself) to be understood in terms of our framework (Badiou, 2001, p. 25; Badiou, 2007, p. 90).[34]

To demonstrate this, we can examine how the One appears in different registers: First, the imaginary One, which designates an ultimate fusion of everything into a unity; second, the Symbolic One, the *unary trait* (*le trait unaire*) to which all the richness of the imaginary content is reduced to, which designates the dimension of abstraction or the reduction to the letter; and lastly, the Real One, as the manifestation of the fundamental impossibility (antagonism, the dimension of the *singular*) within the field as inconsistency or incompleteness (Žižek, 2014, p. 382). This Real One that designates the fundamental ontological deadlock is what Zupančič calls the "ontological minus one," and Lacan emphasizes with the dictum "*il y a de l'Un*" or "*Yad'lun*" (there is something of the One),[35] and it precisely corresponds to the Hegelian insight that "substance shows that it is essentially subject" (Zupančič, 2017 p. 50; Žižek, 2017a, p. 63; Hegel, 2018, p. 23).

[33] Or "the big Other doesn't exist."
[34] I am skipping the discussion of Ljubljana School's insistence on negativity against Badiou's insistence on pure multiplicity as the mode of impossibility of One, and reading Badiou from the former's point of view.
[35] Or again, what Mao aims at when he states that "the One divides into Two."

We have already seen that the struggle between the tendencies of idealism and materialism is dependent on the rejection or acceptance of the impossible-real. Now, to start connecting it to the main theoretical thesis of this work, we can state that in the domain of politics, the same division with regard to the impossibility of the field (which is social antagonism or class struggle in this context) shows itself as the division between the right and the left; which can most elementarily be defined as following: Right politics is based on the rejection of the social antagonism through which a social Whole is produced (which can take forms as corporatism, fascism, functionalism, or spontaneisms like the myth of "invisible hand of the market" etc.); whereas left politics is based on the incorporation of the social antagonism into the theory as well as the practical dimension by actively taking a side in that antagonism (Žižek, 2017a, pp. 113-114).

This gives us the opportunity to introduce several fundamental concepts that are going to be deployed in our theoretical argument. First, the concept of *non-relationship* or *social antagonism* (class struggle) as Real, which designates the conflict arising from the impossibility of the social field to totalize itself, resulting in the manifestation of class structures. Second, the concept of *social fantasy* as the (idealist) way of erasing this fundamental impossibility through the construction of a meaningful ideological reality or a social whole. Third, the concept of the *symptomal element*, the uncounted element that positively embodies social antagonism in the social field, hence directly standing for the falsity of the social fantasy. And lastly, the concept of social *jouissance* (enjoyment) which designates the dimension of the Real as impossible again, but this time as the element of pure arbitrariness (foundational and systemic violence inherent to a social order in the most general

sense; or, the superegoical dimension of the Law) that props up the current social order, the element which is organized/repressed by the social fantasy that acts as the substance holding together a socio-symbolic structure. It is in this sense that Žižek claims that a society exists not on the basis of a purely symbolic bond (the Law), but what binds it together is the *jouissance* embodied in the "our way of life" that determines when and against whom the explicit "universal" Law could be transgressed (i.e., it is the obscene unwritten superego dimension of the Law) (Žižek, 2003, p. 201).

It is in this sense that the power relations in society (such as exploitation, domination, or discrimination) can be defined as "forms of exploitation of the non-relation" (Zupančič, 2017, p. 30). Power structures exploit the non-relation by "presenting a given form of social antagonism (non-relation) as the ultimate Relation" through the instance of *social fantasy*, transforming the non-relation into a narrative of a higher relation; which is a process Zupančič calls the "privatization of the negative," the abstract exploitation that makes the concrete forms of exploitation possible (Zupančič, 2017, p. 31). This fantasmatic transformation of the non-relation into a higher relation is best exemplified by Adam Smith's idea of the "free" market with its "invisible hand:" When we look at it in actuality, every economic crisis and the social and ecological consequences of capitalism shows us that the invisible hand does not actually do what it is supposed to do (provide the higher relation), but rather the market starts to masturbate when it is left alone, which Zupančič calls "the invisible handjob of the market" (Zupančič, 2017, p. 32).

This logic can be generalized to other ideological "higher relations" that are presumed to exist, such as the patriarchal ideology of the family (and the man as the

patriarch) and the binary understanding of gender, or the nationalist ideology of the harmonious unity of the nation-state. In each case, the non-relation is presented as a higher unity, which in turn gets embodied in a symptomal element that marks its impossibility: The impossibility of capitalism (class struggle) is embodied in the proletariat, the non-existence of man is embodied in the woman (which can be represented as M+, man and its impossibility), the impossibility of the binary classification of gender is embodied in the figure of the queer (i.e., when both the identities of man and woman are positivized, the impossibility takes the form of MF+), or the non-existence of the nation is embodied in the figure of the external enemy or the internal traitor (as the Jew in anti-Semitism, or the Armenian, Kurd, etc. in the context of the ruling nation ideology in Turkey). That is why the issue of class (understood not as a positively existing entity but in the sense of social antagonism which expresses itself in a class structure) connects revolutionary movements like communist, feminist, anticolonial, and queer movements (Zupančič, 2019, p. 445).

Now, the main theoretical thesis of this work can be summarized as follows in relation to its historical argument: First, the ruling nation ideology[36] in the context of Turkey (starting from the understanding of *millet-i hakime* in the Ottoman empire) can only be adequately understood through a framework that takes into account the

[36] "Ideology" has a triple designation here: i) Ideology as the explicit idea, (false) consciousness, doctrine, belief, dogma (at the level of the imaginary); ii) Ideology as matter, i.e., the material existence of ideology in the Ideological State Apparatuses or *dispositif*s (at the level of the Symbolic); iii) Ideology operative on the level of the organization of (national) *jouissance*, which designates the dimension of the unconscious (national) *fantasy* (at the level of the Real). Although all three designations are valid, the determining level (and the real point of focus of this analysis) is the third level of organization of national *jouissance* (national fantasy). The eruption of national *jouissance* (as the return of the Real against the repression undertaken by the national fantasy), which displays itself as racist chauvinism, violence, and massacres towards the symptomal element, also plays out in this third level.

dimension of the organization of social *jouissance* through the national fantasy as well as its founding and systemic violence. Second, the emergence of the revolutionary subject has a close relationship with the position that is uncounted or excluded from the ruling nation (the symptomal element); and this is the reason why the history of the revolutionary left in Turkey displays the emergence of radical revolutionary left from the colonialized nations twice (as well as many examples of obfuscation of the social antagonism by the "left" under the influence of the ruling nation ideology). Now, we will return to the terms individually and explicate them within a system.

The primacy of the lack as the impossible-Real as the has already been established through countless examples. The (fundamental) fantasy emerges through the repression of this lack, which results in the production of a mythical Whole as "the basic frame/matrix that provides the coordinates of the subject's entire universe of meaning" (Žižek, 2017a, p. 57). One can easily observe the continuation of Kantian *critique* in the Hegelian/Lacanian tradition here: Whereas the lack designates the non-relationship as the universal fact corresponding to the transcendental limit in the Kantian sense, the fantasy designates the schematism (of the categories of Understanding) that makes reality possible (Žižek, 2020, p. 194). When we translate these definitions to the socio-political field, and for instance, to the example of "nation" as a social totality, it becomes apparent that what is called a nation is an entity that "exists only as long as its specific enjoyment continues to be materialized in a set of social practices and transmitted through national myths that structure these practices" (Žižek, 2003, p. 202). This specific *jouissance* of nationalism erupts in the social field both as the founding violence and the systemic

violence that it deploys against its mythical Other (such as the "conceptual Jew" of anti-Semitism or the "*gavur*" of the *millet* system) who is presumed to be responsible for the constitutive impossibility of the society. This other is usually presumed to be a "thief of enjoyment" that stole "our" enjoyment (and nationalism is *paranoid* in this sense that it attributes the castration to an agent) by disturbing "our way of life;" which is, in fact, a myth that obfuscates that "we" never had it in the first place, that there is no "our way of life" free from antagonism and conflict (Žižek, 2003, pp. 202-203, 205, 281). This organization of enjoyment lays bare the logic of the superego as the "law that enjoys," as the unwritten rules that determine under which conditions written rules can be broken, which betrays the constitutively tautological and arbitrary (i.e., ultimately groundless, or grounded in pure violence) character of any Symbolic Law (Žižek, 2003, p. 50).[37] As we will see shortly after, this organization of social enjoyment takes the form of a *discourse* that can be analyzed through the theory of Four Discourses (Lacan, 2013a, p. 9; Zupančič, 2021, p. 14). Each specific organization of *jouissance* is a symptomal structure, in the sense that the fundamental impossibility of the structure gets embodied in one of the moments of the structure, which is called the *symptom*. This is due to the fact that the Real as *absolute difference* precedes the terms that it differentiates, in other words, it is the difference of something from itself. Therefore, every symbolization/categorization "fails" and produces an excessive element that stands for the impossibility/incompleteness of the categorization itself, in the form of the *oppositional determination* (*gegensätzliche Bestimmung*) of the Universal category,

[37] This groundless violence that posits the law corresponds to what is referred as the "so-called primitive accumulation" in Marx's theory (Marx, 1976, pp. 874-875).

which appears as the symptomal element among the ordinary elements (Žižek, 2012, p. 469).

Concerning the socio-political sphere, this excessive element, the oppositional determination, can either be conceptualized through the masculine logic as the "highest element" (as pure signifier) exemplified by the figure of Monarch in Hegel; or through the feminine logic as the "lowest element" (as the contingent element) that lacks a proper place in the social structure so that it embodies the *non-relationship*, exemplified by the concept of "rabble" (*Pöbel*) in Hegel, which is the dimension we properly designate by the symptomal element (and the theoretical precursor of Marx's *proletariat*), which is defined by Hegel in *The Philosophy of Right* as follows (Žižek, 2014, pp. 362, 368; Ruda, 2011):

> § 245 When the masses begin to decline into poverty, (a) the burden of maintaining them at their ordinary standard of living might be directly laid on the wealthier classes, or they might receive the means of livelihood directly from other public sources of wealth (e.g., from the endowments of rich hospitals, monasteries, and other foundations). In either case, however, the needy would receive subsistence directly, not by means of their work, and this would violate the principle of civil society and the feeling of individual independence and self-respect in its individual members. (b) As an alternative, they might be given subsistence indirectly through being given work, i.e., the opportunity to work. In this event the volume of production would be increased, but the evil consists precisely in an excess of production and in the lack of a proportionate number of consumers who are themselves also producers, and thus it is simply intensified by both of the methods (a) and (b) by which it is sought to alleviate it. It hence becomes apparent that despite an excess of wealth civil society is not rich enough, i.e., its own resources are insufficient to check excessive poverty and the creation of a penurious rabble. (Hegel, 2008, pp. 221-222, emphasis mine)

It is evident that although Hegel determines that the existence of the rabble as necessary and unresolvable within the existing system (through welfare measures or "development"), he nevertheless does not detect the proper Universal dimension of it, namely, that it embodies the constitutive impossibility and the key to

transformation of the current form of organization of society itself. That is why, instead of Hegel, it was Marx who became the inventor of the symptom through the introduction of the concept of *proletariat* as the excessive element and the universal class of the capitalist mode of production, as those that do not own the means of production and have nothing to sell but their labour-power which is a paradoxical "lowest" commodity the use-value of which is to generate surplus-value (Žižek, 2020, p. 250; Žižek, 2008c, pp. 3-9; Žižek, 2014, p. 362). If we generalize this logic, we can arrive at the formula that for a given Symbolic field, the constitutive impossibility of the field (which is repressed through the act that inaugurates the field) gets embodied in an element that lacks a proper place in the field, or, a Universal always encounters an element (*oppositional determination*) among the Particulars it subsumes such that this Particular both embodies the falsity of the (abstract) Universal and it also stands for the true dimension *concrete Universal*, so that it is potentially "more" universal than the (abstract) Universal itself. In any socio-symbolic field, this element appears as the phenomenon of those who are actually in the situation but are not counted, as the "supernumerary" element which embodies the contradiction of the situation as well as the *concrete universality* (such as proletariat under capitalism, woman under patriarchy, the colonized under colonialism, the LGBTI+ under heteronormativity, etc.); which is called the *part-of-no-part* by Rancière (Žižek, 2012, p. 797; Žižek, 2020, p. 129; Rancière, 2010, pp. 32-33; Badiou, 2007, p. 181).

Until now, we have presented this manifestation of the impossible-real as the excessive element, without strictly separating how this element appears differently within different levels of antagonism, which we will undertake now as to

introduce some psychoanalytical concepts that will occupy a central place. Following Žižek, we can deploy the logic of the antagonism in three levels that follow a logical succession (although this does not mean that they are temporally sequential): First, on the level of Zero, the impossibility shows itself in the form of the antagonism between the pre-symbolic pre-ontological Void (Real as pure negativity, as the constitutive minus One) and the Symbolic Zero ("pure" emptiness; which is the result of the addition of an element which is "less-than-nothing" to the pre-ontological Void), and the name that this impossibility takes is the *subject* ($) as the absence of a peaceful "zero level," as the antagonism of nothing. This impossibility is then "resolved" by the rise of the One (the Symbolic Whole), which in turn results in the manifestation of the second level of the antagonism as the impossibility or incompleteness of the One, which gets embodied in an element called the *objet petit a* as the embodiment of the fundamental lack (hence, simultaneously, surplus-*jouissance*) and the object-cause of desire in psychoanalysis. The third level arises in order to "resolve" this conflict between the One and its impossibility (objet a), and this is achieved through the substantialization of the conflict of One with itself into a conflict between Two elements (or any other *n*, since once Two arises, other *n*'s are trivial). This results in the creation of a *field* defined by the relation between its Two (or more) moments, but of course, it does not really resolve the impossibility, and in this level the excess arises as the third (or n^{th}) element, which is called the signifier of the lack-in-the-Other[38] (s(Ⱥ)) or the *sinthome*, which designates the symptomal

[38] Precisely; the big Other (A) stands for the Symbolic order taken as a totality which results in meaningful whole (s(A)); the lack-in-the-Other (Ⱥ) stands for its point of impossibility where the Real of *jouissance* makes it into a non-relationship; and the signifier of the lack-in-the-Other (s(Ⱥ)) stands for the inscription of the impossibility in the field itself.

element proper like the rabble or the proletariat, or "the conceptual Jew" of antisemitism (or "the conceptual Armenian" of the ruling nation ideology in Turkey) (Žižek, 2020, pp. 295, 299; Žižek, 2014, pp. 414-415).

After this clarification, we can differentiate the aforementioned couple abstract universality and the concrete universality in precise terms: Whereas the abstract hegemonic universality stands for the production of the One or a non-contradictory field ("all of us," "the people," "the nation" etc.), the concrete supernumerary universality of the excessive/excremental element points towards the dimension of the lack-in-the-Other as the point of impossibility of any field (Žižek, 2017a, p. 244). When translated into political terms, this difference manifests itself as the split between populist/hegemonic politics (right or left) and revolutionary politics respectively, which has important implications for the upcoming discussions regarding the revolutionary character of various leftist organizations. If we only consider the left variants, whereas the former populist/hegemonic mode of politics results in Laclau and Mouffe's understanding of "radical democracy"[39] that is based on an acceptance of the status quo and the rejection of the Jacobin understanding of revolution; the revolutionary mode of politics results in the framework which is broadly called "the communist hypothesis" represented by names like Žižek and Badiou, which predicates that "the existing world is not necessary," and therefore it can be transformed through the revolutionary act which is defined as moment "the

[39] It has to be noted that many fundamental insights and concepts of our framework such as the antagonism, the rejection of "society" etc. actually comes from Laclau through the critical mediation of the Ljubljana school. But due to the scarcity of space, we cannot present it fully here (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, Laclau, 2005).

'part of no-part,' the excremental element, occupies the hegemonic place." (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, pp. 152, 177; Badiou, 2001, p. 48; Žižek, 2017a, p. 245).

If we translate it to psychoanalytical terms, this split between the two modes of politics, the abstract-hegemonic and the concrete-revolutionary, reveals itself as the difference between a pure signifier[40] (S_1 – the Master-Signifier) and the excremental element (objet a), or again, the difference between the-Name-of-the-Father (an earlier designation by Lacan) and the primordial Father-*jouissance* of Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (or the fantasmatic figures like the Woman, the Jew, etc. that do not exist but embody the impossibility of fantasy, namely, surplus-*jouissance*); and whereas it is possible to formulate the symbolic function of the former, the same is impossible with regard to the latter (Freud, 1981a; Žižek, 2012, p. 681). Also, whereas the figures that are supported by S_1 as pure symbolic mandate/Law are always castrated (there is always an inadequacy with regard to any Symbolic ideal; e.g., no Father can embody the Father function perfectly etc.), the figures supported by objet a are *uncastratable*[41] since they embody nothing but the impossibility of a given fantasmatic field (Žižek, 2012, p. 683).

This is the fundamental ambiguity of fantasy (and ideology), resulting from the fact that it simultaneously organizes *jouissance* and it is disturbed by its presence because it cannot get rid of it (there is always a lack or an excess). This ambiguity results in the aforementioned dualism between the symbolic fiction (S_1) and fantasmatic spectral apparition (objet a), in which the former embodies the "ideal"

[40] Remember the Laclau's hegemonic operation of "suture" (quilting in Lacanese), defined as the "articulation of the opposed logics of equivalence and difference" through an "empty signifier," comes from psychoanalysis (Miller) and precisely describes the production of a new Master-Signifier (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, pp. 47, 88 note 1; Laclau, 2005, pp. 180-181, 200).

[41] Think of the omnipotence attributed to the other in nationalist, racist etc. paranoid discourses (e.g., conspiracies about "the Jews" or "the Armenians" that presumedly pull the strings behind the curtain).

peaceful state whereas the latter embodies the dimension of destabilization and disruption; and for any fantasmatic frame (and ideology) the two are codependent: The "ideal" (of a nation for instance) could only be kept alive only with a recourse to the fiction of a fantasmatic apparition that disturbs it (internal or external enemies and conspiracies, figures like the conceptual Jew, Armenian, etc.) (Žižek, 2012, pp. 684-686). Therefore, seen from one side (from the right), the fundamental impossibility appears as an external hindrance (that could be eliminated), whereas from the other side (from the left) it appears as the symptomal element that stands for the lack-in-the-Other; and there is no *tertium quid* in this split that corresponds to that of between idealism and materialism. The exact logical structure of which we will now present through the unified theory of the four discourses and the formulae of sexuation.

3.2 Discourse as social bond: Four discourses and formulae of sexuation

In order to introduce the unified theory, we can start out from the theory of Four Discourses. We have already stated that Lacan defines discourse not in purely symbolic terms but as a social bond, in which the dimension of *jouissance* that stands for the fundamental ontological impossibility gets managed as to create a consistent reality. We have also provided the definition of the signifier (a signifier is that which represents the subject for another signifier, or to give its general form, a signifier is that which represents the subject for all other signifiers), the structure of which directly corresponds to one of the four discourses, namely the Master's Discourse (Lacan, 1978, p. 207; Žižek, 2008a, p. 24).

If we unpack the definition through Lacan's mathemes, we can observe that the relation between the subject and the signifier that represents it is that of a metaphor, which is rendered in as $S_1/\$$. Whereas the signifier representing the subject is denoted as S_1 (the Master-Signifier), the other signifiers that are totalized through this operation are denoted as S_2, which designates the differential field of infinite series of signifiers, or knowledge. The S_1 that represents the subject is in no way necessary, but on the contrary, any signifier can act as the Master-Signifier owing to the purely differential structure of the Symbolic. The introduction of the Master-Signifier as a metaphor (that represents the subject) brings the metonymical sliding of the differential signifiers to a halt and results in the production of meaning (which is also called the operation of quilting through which the S_1 emerges as the *point-de-capiton*). However, as we have seen, this process of symbolization fails, and a leftover is produced either in the form of a *surplus* or in the form of a *lack*, which corresponds to the *objet petit a*. This fundamental matrix of the process of signification and its failure is captured by what Lacan calls the Master's Discourse[42] (figure 1), the "discourse as such" from which the other three discourses are derived, and which is denoted as follows (Žižek, 2017a, p. 221):

[42] The four elements that comprise a discourse are a, $, S_1, S_2. The four places that can be occupied by an element are named Agent, Other, Product, and Truth starting from the top left, going clockwise. The relations that arise between these places are: Necessity between the Truth and the Agent (exemplified by $S_1/\$$ in the Master's Discourse), impossibility between Agent and Other ($S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ in the Master's Discourse), contingency between the Other and the Product (S_2/a in the Master's Discourse), and mere possibility (which is equivalent to impotence) between the Product and the Truth ($//a or $◇a in Master's Discourse) (Urban, 2016, pp. 151-152).

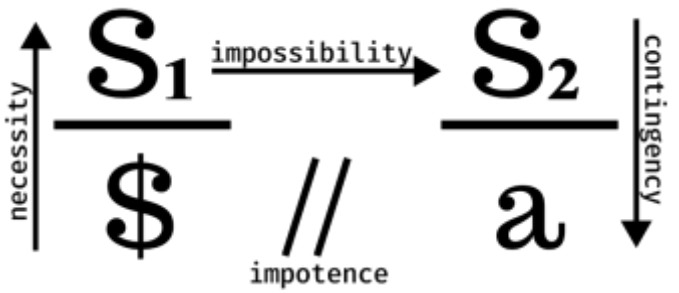


Figure 1 Master's discourse

We should emphasize again that there is nothing inherently special about the S_1; the S_1 and S_2 are purely differential, that they belong precisely to the same domain of signifiers, and it is only through an *arbitrary* nomination that S_1 emerges as a "special" signifier. In fact, the difference between S_2 and S_1 is nothing but the difference between a signifier and its empty place of inscription, in other words, between the Particular content and the Universal form[43] (Žižek, 2017a, p. 72; Žižek, 2008a, p. 43). Therefore, the *unary trait* that S_1 stands for turns out to be nothing but the difference between the presence of a signifier as opposed to its absence (its place of inscription); which is to say that S_1 represents for S_2 their absence as such, which is the $ (Žižek, 2017a, p. 24). In other words, the case is not that there are ordinary signifiers that get totalized by an exceptional signifier; but S_1 as an empty/zero signifier does not have a counterpart that would be a one-signifier (or the second, "binary" signifier), so that in the place of S_2 an infinite multiplicity of signifiers which are substantially no different than the S_1 emerge.

[43] In mathematical terms, the difference between an element of a set, and the empty set itself as the possible place of inscription of the element.

To exemplify this and conclude the discussion of the substantiality of numbers in the second chapter, we can give an elegant example from set theory: To derive natural numbers, we only need the empty set (the Zero) as the sole element and a successor function that takes an argument and produces a successor to it.[44] This gives us an infinite series that goes like the following:

0: {}
1: { {} }
2: { {}, {{}} }
3: { {}, {{}}, {{}, {{}}} }
4: { {}, {{}}, {{}, {{}}}, {{}, {{}}, {{}, {{}}}} }
...

As can be seen, this procedure produces a series in which the "size" of each successive set corresponds to a natural number, only using *nothing* (an empty set) and a *function*. Thus, numbers reveal themselves to be nothing that has been brought into a reflexive relationship with itself. This example illustrates beautifully how a signifier, which is by definition purely differential and in itself nothing, can prop up a field without itself having a substantial status. The passage from S_1 to S_2 directly reflects the passage from 0 to 1; it is not that there is zero and then we pass to something substantially different from the zero (a One), but instead, since there is no other element than the zero, the only way we reach to one is to count zero as One (to use Badiou's terms), by processing it through the successor function.[45] In the end, what is counted as One remains zero, and no matter how much we iterate this function, we never reach anything that is not written in terms of zero (the empty set). This lack of a ground corresponds to the notion of primordial repression (*Urverdängung*), which is another term designating the fundamental ontological

[44] There are many ways to define a successor function that we will skip over, and for the purposes of ease of presentation we will use Von Neumann's version: $S(X) = X \cup \{X\}$.
[45] Badiou's operation of "count-as-one" is exactly the same as the successor function.

impossibility in Lacanian psychoanalysis: The One is primordially repressed, there is no other/binary signifier that would complement the S_1, and this absence is filled up with the infinite series produced by the counting as one (S_2) (Žižek, 2012, pp. 587-8). The successor function ($S_1 \longrightarrow S_2$), the operation of "count-as-one" in Badiou's terms, in turn, corresponds to the Phallic function (Φ) in Lacan's framework, which stands both for the function that defines the symbolic order and the function of symbolic castration (since because of primordial repression, there is no reference point that would stabilize the function of signification) (Badiou, 2007, p. 24).

To sum it up, the top level of the discourse ($S_1 \longrightarrow S_2$) designates the impossible meaning-relation that consists in the attempt and failure of the representation of the $, producing the leftover objet a as surplus-*jouissance*. When we come to the bottom level of the discourse ($//a), we encounter the support of the meaning-relation, namely the dimension of fantasy that we have introduced before, designated in Lacanian psychoanalysis as $\diamond a (to be read as any kind of relation between the subject and the objet a or *jouissance*) (Žižek, 2017a, p. 57). The fantasmatic relationship is impossible, since, as we have already seen, the subject and objet a are simply the same impossibility seen from different facets, which means that their encounter is impossible due to the fact that they are the *same* thing. Deleuze explains this beautifully when he talks about the "object=x" that appears as an excessive element from the point of view of the series of elements (as objet a) but at the same time appears as an empty place lacking an element from the point of view of the series of places (as $) (Žižek, 2017a, pp. 18-19, 222; Žižek, 2012, p. 664): "if it is in excess in the one, it is so only as an empty square; and if it is lacking in the other, it is so only as a supernumerary pawn or an occupant without a

compartment. It is both word and object at once: esoteric word [$] and exoteric object [objet a]" (Deleuze, 1990, p. 51).

In fact, we have explained the general structure of a discourse through the example of Master's Discourse; and now we can add the other three discourses, which are variations (rotations) of it, which together comprise the theory of the four discourses of Lacan (figure 2):

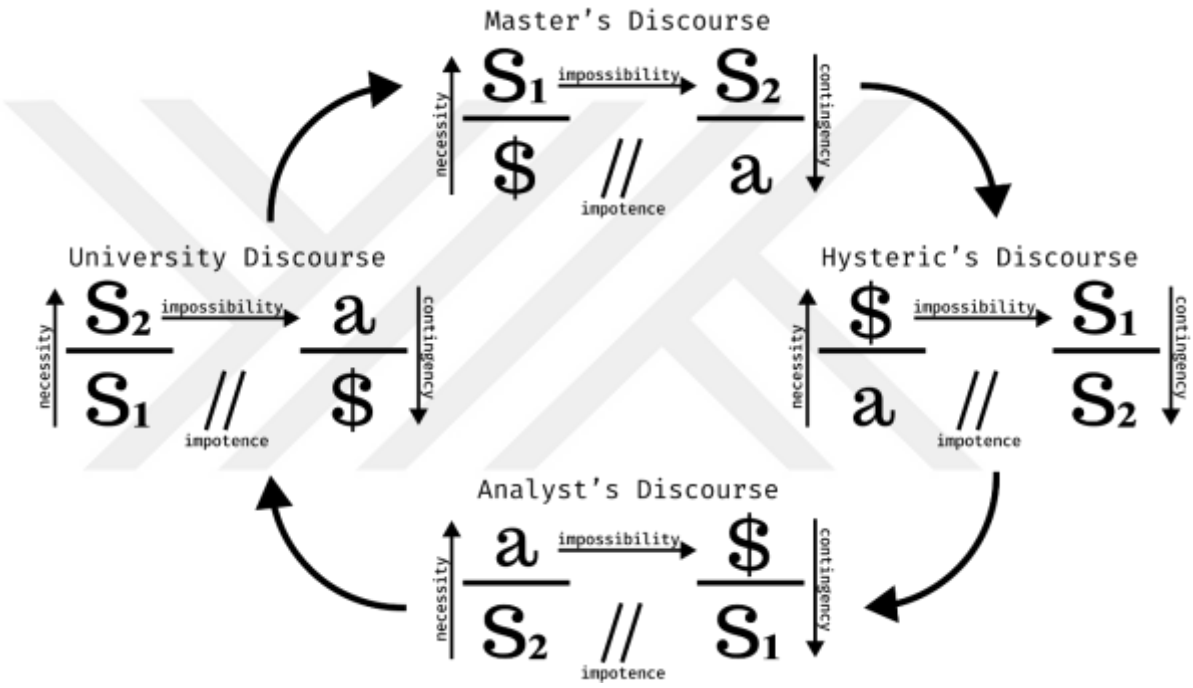


Figure 2 Four discourses

Now, for the sake of brevity, before explaining the discourses one by one, we will present the second half of the unified theory, the formulae of sexuation, after which we will explain all of them together.

Lacan develops the formulae of sexuation[46] shortly after four discourses, as an explicit opposition to Aristotle's logical and metaphysical system. Against Aristotle's metaphysical and logical system that erases the dimension of the *singular*, Lacan states in seminar 19 the following: "Read Aristotle's Metaphysics and I hope you'll feel, as I do, that it's incredibly stupid . . . Three or four centuries after Aristotle, people naturally began to express the most serious doubts about this text, because they still knew how to read" (quoted in Badiou & Cassin, 2017, p. 6). Lacan's primary criticism against Aristotle comes from the fact that Aristotle regards the relationship between the Universal and Particular as a harmonious one; resulting in a flat ontology based on a cosmological sexualized harmony (masculine *form* versus feminine *hyle* etc.), in stark contrast to the Lacanian understanding which renders visible the fundamental imbalance which prevents a harmonious relationship between the Particular and the Universal (Žižek, 2012, p. 758; Schuster, 2016, pp. 105-6). We will not go into the details of their comparison here, but we will only state that the conflict arises from the fact that the Particular statements can be interpreted in three ways which are not totally compatible with one another;[47] and Brunschwig, in his analysis of Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*, demonstrates that one must reject one of these three propositions in order to avoid contradiction. Rejecting the third proposition results in a *minimal* interpretation of the Particular (in which the Particular agrees with the Universal), which was the solution preferred by Aristotle;

[46] Sexual difference means the same thing as Real or absolute difference, or the class antagonism (Žižek, 2017a, p. 87). To be sexuated means to be marked with a fundamental constitutive impossibility, i.e., it designates the dimension of impossible-Real. It has nothing to do with sexuality understood in a daily sense.

[47] i) Universal affirmation is equivalent to negation of the Particular negation (All S is P ⇔ ¬Some S are not P); ii) Universal affirmation implies Particular affirmation (All S is P ⇒ Some S is P); and iii) Two Particulars are equivalent (Some S is P ⇔ Some S is not P).

whereas rejecting the second proposition results in a *maximal* interpretation (in which the Particular affirmation contradicts the Universal affirmation), which was the solution adopted by Lacan in the early 1970s (Grigg, 2009, pp. 90-93; Grigg, 2005; Urban, 2016, pp. 89-91). Therefore, we can present the difference between Aristotelian and Lacanian logical squares as follows (figure 3):[48]

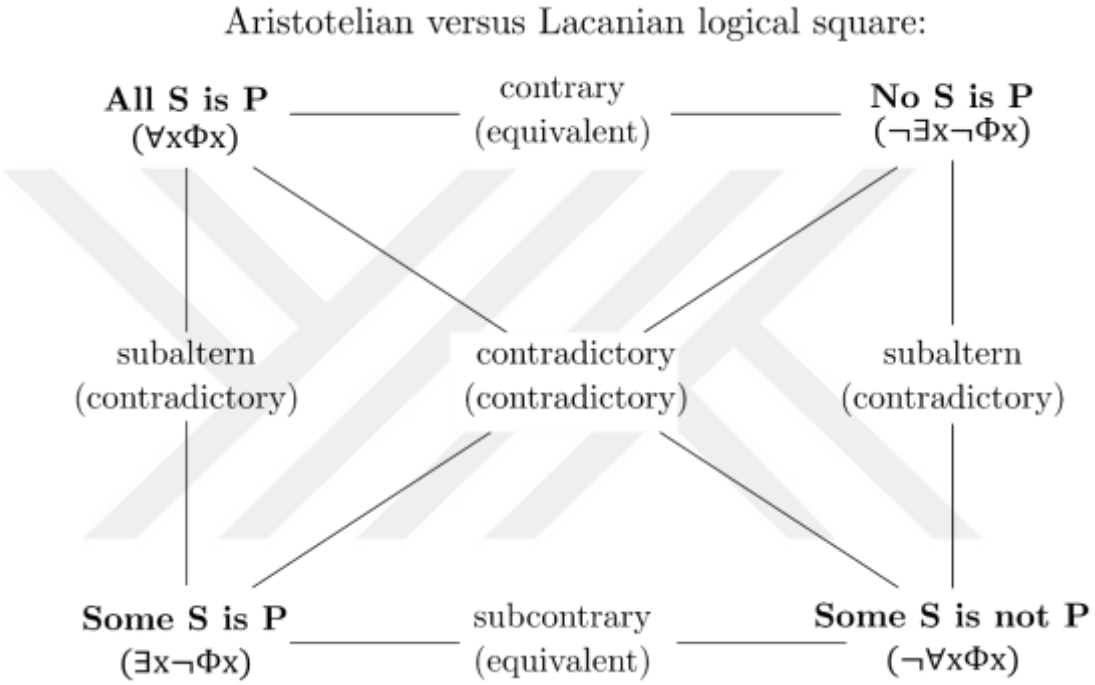


Figure 3 The comparison of Aristotelian and Lacanian logical squares (Lacan's modifications are indicated in parentheses on the Aristotelian logical square)

[48] We must introduce a couple of symbols from formal logic for those who are unfamiliar: the universal quantifier ∀, which can be read as "(for) all;" the existential quantifier ∃ which can be read as "there exists (at least one);" and the operator of negation ¬, which can be read as "not/non." The way Lacan writes logical propositions is non-standard but very close to usual notations: a subject in terms of a variable x which is followed by a predicate function that qualifies it; for instance, "∀xΦx" is read as "all x are submitted to the function Φ" and which can be written in a more common form as "∀x,P(x)" (all x are members of the class P) or in a more extended form, as Grigg provides: "(∀x)(A(x) ⟶P(x))" (for all x, if it is A then it is P) (Grigg, 2009, p. 82). These differences in notation are purely cosmetic.

Now let us observe how this difference manifests itself in the statements one by one: The Universal affirmation (∀xΦx) remains the same in Lacan as it was in Aristotle; but with a twist coming from C. S. Peirce's influence on Lacan, which states that the Universal quantifier does not imply existence, which means that ∀xΦx can be true even if no x exists (the famous example for it is the statement "all unicorns have one horn" which is true even though no unicorn exists; but the statement "some unicorns have one horn" is false without at least one unicorn existing) (Urban, 2016, p. 98). As for the status of the Particular affirmation, it undergoes a very radical change owing to the maximal interpretation: Since the maximal interpretation implies that the Particular affirmation contradicts the Universal affirmation (i.e., "some S are P" implies that "all S are P" is false), the statements ∃xΦx and ∃x¬Φx becomes equivalent to each other and equally represent the Particular affirmation in the maximal sense, and Lacan prefers the negative form ∃x¬Φx in order to emphasize his choice of the maximal reading. This means that the relation of subalternation between the Universal and the Particular of the same quality is replaced by contradiction. When we come to the Universal negation, which would be ∀x¬Φx or ¬∃xΦx in Aristotle's logic, which is the contrary of ∀xΦx; Lacan rewrites it as a double negation, ¬∃x¬Φx ("there is no x which is not submitted to the function") and it becomes apparently equivalent to the Universal affirmation. And lastly, the Particular negation which would be ∃x¬Φx is rewritten by Lacan as ¬∀xΦx by displacing the negation from the predicate to the quantifier (hence it becomes "not-All x is submitted to the function"), implying that both ∀xΦx and ∀x¬Φx are false, hence apparently equivalent to the Particular affirmation instead of being its subcontrary (Žižek, 2012, p. 759; Urban, 2016, p. 92; Grigg, 2009, p. 92).

In this way, we obtain a logical square whose two qualitative axes (affirmative and negative) of the same quantity are apparently equivalent instead of being contrary (or subcontrary) to each other; and whose quantitative axes (Universal and Particular) of the same quality are contradictory with each other instead of being related with subalternation. Hence, each qualitative axis appears to be contradictory within itself, and does not present a relation to the opposite axis. These qualitative axes constitute the *masculine logi*c (on the affirmative side) and the *feminine logic* (on the negative side) in Lacan's formulae of sexuation. The masculine side consists of the paradoxical relationship between the All and its exception (on which the All stands since the exception is the point from which the field is seen as All), whereas the feminine side stages the paradoxical relationship between the no-exception and the non-All (there is no exception, but precisely because of this the field cannot be totalized into a whole).[49]

Finally, as we have introduced both halves, we can present the table of the unified theory of four discourses and the formulae of sexuation as follows in figure 4 (Žižek, 2012, p. 794; Urban, 2016, pp. 144-148; Žižek, 2003, p. 274):

[49] We can also note that Lacan's division into the *feminine* and the *masculine* is analogous to the division between the *mathematical* and the *dynamical* in Kant, and the formulae of sexuation stage the corresponding antinomies (Kant, 1929, pp. 384-484; Kant, 2004, pp. 91-99; Copjec, 1994, p. 201-237). For a more detailed analysis of the Kant's antinomies of pure reason in relation to formulae of sexuation and four discourses, see my unpublished manuscript *The Obstinacy of the Singular* (Akar, 2022).

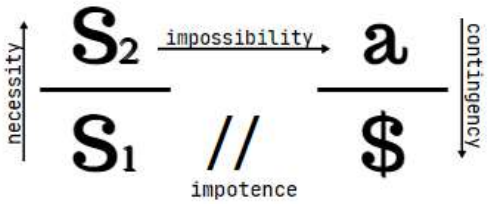
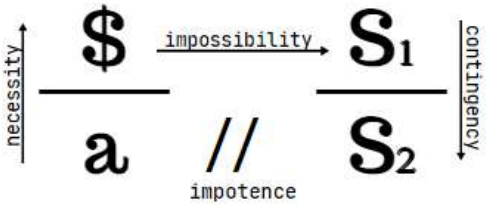
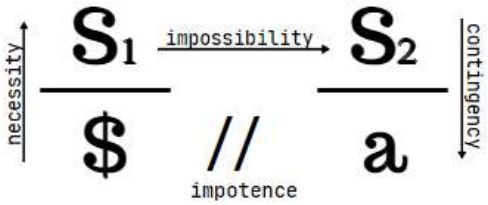
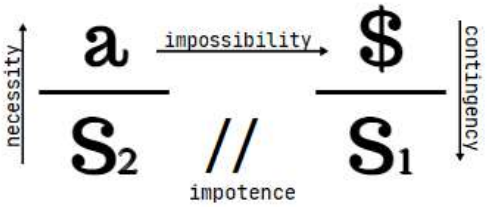
Masculine / Dynamical / Regulative	Feminine / Mathematical / Constitutive
$\forall x \Phi x$ (masculine All) University Discourse:  Obsessional Neurosis & Perversion Self-hindering & Self-instrumentalization Consistent - Inauthentic *ens rationis* (S_2/S_1) ii. External reflection	$\neg\exists x \neg \Phi x$ (feminine no-exception) Hysteric's Discourse:  Hysteria Acting out Inconsistent - Authentic *ens imaginarium* ($/a) iii. Determinate reflection
$\exists x \neg \Phi x$ (masculine exception) Master's Discourse:  Psychosis Passage à l'acte Inconsistent - Inauthentic *nihil privativum* ($S_1/$) i. Positing reflection	$\neg \forall x \Phi x$ (feminine non-All) Analyst's Discourse:  Subjective destitution Traversal of the fantasy (psychoanalytical act) Consistent - Authentic *nihil negativum* (a/S_2) iv. Reflexive determination

Figure 4 Formulae of sexuation and four discourses

To summarize the results: Masculine universality corresponds to the University discourse, in which knowledge (S_2), in the guise of the pursuit of objectivity (a) that always remains beyond reach, actually serves the empty/contingent Master (S_1), and this process results in the production of the subject as absent, erased from the field (S_1//\$). Since it renders the meaning-relation between S_1 and S_2 as necessary and totalizes the field ($\forall x \Phi x$), it implies that the University discourse is a discourse in which the subject (which can be thought of as the lack of the field) does not take place; which means that this discourse cannot produce anything new, and can only repeat itself in the framework given to it by the Master (S_1). This means that its truth (the Master) is external to it, which is why the University discourse is self-consistent but inauthentic. This is characterized by an attitude of false neutrality-objectivity, which states that since S_2 follows necessarily from S_1, the subject is not involved in the scenario. This discourse can be observed in various examples; obviously it is a primary tenet of its namesake, the university with its claim to impartial knowledge, but it can be also observed in different contexts such as discourses of technocracy or rational administration (which were analyzed by Foucault as the power-knowledge complex). One should also add that this is the discourse of the university, but it is not properly the discourse of science: There is indeed an overwhelming amount of "scientific" discourses that basically make a claim to objectivity and dogmatically operate in a pre-delineated zone; but this is not the properly scientific mode of operation as the point where science overcomes itself (examples of which were given in the second chapter). Instead, it is the result of the later neutralization or normalization of the properly scientific breakthrough. Regarding the clinical structures (which are the symptomal structures of various forms of non-action), the

masculine logic of the All of the University discourse is embodied in the structures of obsessional neurosis and perversion. In both cases, the impossible enjoyment (a) is approached through a *Gedankending* (S_2/S_1), which erases the subject from the field, though in different ways: Whereas in obsessional neurosis the main aim is to separate enjoyment from the Law, to prevent the Other's enjoyment in order to solve the conflict of the masculine All ($\forall x\Phi x$, as the Law) and its exception ($\exists x\neg\Phi x$, as *jouissance*) in an exclusive "neither-nor" mode; the same conflict is solved in perversion by the logic of "both(-this-and-that)," by reducing enjoyment to Law (hence the famous formula of fetishistic disavowal: "I know very well but…") (Žižek, 2017a, p. 204). In both cases, what we are left with is the Law (be it the obsessional neurotic's rituals or the pervert's scenarios) that is All, that obfuscates the Other's lack, therefore not leaving a place for the subject. This correspondence to the University discourse is further confirmed by Miller's observation that superego is on the side of S_2, which Žižek develops into the theory of Stalinism as displaying the structure of University discourse with its perverse self-instrumentalization (Žižek, 2022, pp. 116, 354 note 34; Tupinambá, 2021, p. xiv; Žižek, 2003, p. 193).

Second, the masculine exception corresponds to the Master's discourse which we already discussed in more detail earlier; the $\exists x\neg\Phi x$ stands for the arbitrary intervention of the Master (S_1), which inaugurates or terminates the field (hence opening up a new one), it is the gesture of founding violence upon which the masculine universality of the University discourse stands (therefore the S_2/S_1 of the University discourse can also be written as $\forall x\Phi x/\exists x\neg\Phi x$). Nevertheless, as we have seen, this discourse also fails to stabilize itself because the gesture of the Master is empty, it is fundamentally arbitrary and hence, stands on nothing ($S_1/\$$). This is to

say that every Master is necessarily an impostor; which makes the meaning-relation between S_1 and S_2 impossible, and produces the contingent *objet a* as the embodiment of its impasse. Therefore, the masculine exception or the Master's discourse is both inconsistent and inauthentic. What is known in computer science as the halting condition, which is the point where an algorithm "finds" its result and terminates, is an excellent example of the contingent status of the masculine exception ($\exists x \neg \Phi x$): As it was presented in the second chapter, Turing's halting problem states that although an algorithm has a halting condition logically (for instance, we can check that it is really programmed to stop when it finds the solution), we cannot know if this algorithm will halt in a finite amount of time or go into an infinite loop when executed, without actually waiting for it to halt. The status of the relationship between S_1 and S_2 (halting condition and the algorithm) is undecidable in this discourse, and the only way to "decide" is to wait for a contingent output (a). Regarding the clinical structures and the corresponding mode of non-action, the masculine exception of the Master's discourse, which is both the fundamental matrix of signification, and, at the same time, the fundamental matrix of primordial repression (what Hegel detects as the madness inherent to normality); corresponds to the primal state of generalized foreclosure (*Verwerfung*) including "extraordinary" psychoses as well as ordinary psychoses.[50] It is the logic of what

[50] Although it is out of the scope of this work, it should be noted that primordial repression ultimately points towards a "generalized psychosis" in the core of subjectivity which would take the central place in late Lacan's theory of the *sinthome*, because the existence of primordial repression makes it impossible to distinguish between a successful knotting of the Real, Symbolic, and imaginary via the Name-of-the-Father (*Bejahung*, resulting in neurosis) and the foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father (*Verwerfung*, resulting in psychosis). This is due to the fact that the fundamental impossibility of the symbolic (*Ausstosung*) is inseparable from foreclosure (*Verwerfung*) (Žižek, 2012, pp. 859-60). Rather Name-of-the-Father reveals itself to be one of the countless possible ways to knot the RSI, in other words, just another *sinthome* (Vanheule, 2011, pp. 3-4, 135). It is in this sense that Žižek concludes that "as the late Lacan knew very well (…) at a certain most basic level, we are all psychotics" (Žižek, 2012, p. 863). This radicalization of the primordial repression both eliminates the

Lacan calls generalized madness, which is characterized by the mechanism of suppletion (be it in the "delusional" form or the form of a symbolic suppletion like Joyce) or, in Hegelian terms, the imposition of the "law of the heart" (S_1/\$) to the world (Hegel, 2018, p. 213).[51] That is why, the psychotic act, called *passage à l'acte* (passage to the act), is a moment in which the act seems to perfectly coincide with the symbolic mandate or its notion (a "wholly successful act" in Žižek's words), which destructively suspends the Other, which finds its paradigm in suicide (Žižek, 2008a, p. 156; Žižek, 2012, pp. 209-10, 298, 701; Žižek, 2003, pp. 31-2, 267).

Passing to the feminine side, the third logic is that of the feminine no-exception which corresponds to the Hysteric's Discourse. This discourse is best understood in contrast to the Master's Discourse, because the Hysteric's discourse is a response to the Master's discourse and stages the truth of it, which consists in the fact that the Master is not really exceptional, but it is only an impostor. Hence, the no-exception ($\neg\exists x\neg\Phi x$) of this logic states that there is no one (Master) that is not submitted to the function (that is not castrated). The hysterical subject (\$) represents the necessary lack (a) to the Master (S_1), which reveals its impossibility, its status as an impostor, and, in turn, results in the negative knowledge which states that "that's not it" ($a//S_2$). In this sense, the feminine no-exception of the Hysteric's discourse is authentic but inconsistent; it reveals the Master's falsity in an authentic gesture, but

normative hierarchy between neurosis and psychosis (the former being the successful norm, and the latter being the deficient deviation), and it also demonstrates that clinical structures (like all Symbolic structures) are not absolute and subject to change, which is also predicted by the earlier theory of the Four Discourses (Vanheule, 2011, pp. 161, 162-3).

[51] This correspondence with the Master's discourse gives an explanation to the early Lacanian understanding of the psychotic as bearing witness to the externality of the Symbolic order, being spoken rather than speaking, which also reveals itself to be a fundamental feature of the subject as such, as well as the idea of actualization of the objet a (voice and gaze) in psychosis as hallucinations (the product of the Master's discourse is objet a) (Schuster, 2016, p. 31; Žižek, 2012, pp. 667-8).

the status of knowledge is contingent upon the Master, so it cannot be made into a closed system. In addition to the well-known hysterical provocation, this logic also exemplifies the proper mode of operation of science (in contrast to the University discourse, which is its normalization), in which the radically new emerges not from adherence to a framework but from the ceaseless questioning and the undermining of the prevalent doxa (which results in the "rotation" of the Hysteric's discourse into the Analyst's discourse as we will see). This is valid for science in the most general sense of the term, including proper philosophy and theory; which is exemplified by Lacan's statement that "hysterics produce knowledge" as they "force signifying matter to confess" regarding Socrates' employment of the Hysteric's discourse (as well as his hysterical symptoms such as catatonia), or his presentation of Hegel as "the most sublime of all hysterics" (Lacan, 2013b, p. 5; Žižek, 2017a, p. 4). However, although this discourse exposes the falsity of the Master through its provocations, it is unable to persist without a Master which functions as its Other. This means that although this discourse is necessary to break out from the prevailing doxa of the Master, it is not enough by itself since it cannot sustain itself without a Master; which, in turn, indicates that this is not all of the logic of science and philosophy, that there is a further discourse/logic that must be taken into account.[52] Regarding the clinical structures and the mode of non-action, the feminine no-exception of Hysteric's Discourse unsurprisingly corresponds to it is hysteria, with

[52] Lacan also notes this by stating that Socrates was not purely a hysteric but he was a "subtle master," a term that corresponds to the Analyst, as clarified by his following remarks that state that Socrates was not a "bad analyst" (Lacan, 2013b, p. 5). It is in this sense that we can understand the difference between the masculine false Master and the feminine true Master: Whereas the masculine Master keeps its followers in a state of permanent tutelage; the true Master, namely the Analyst ultimately tries to undermine the relationship of tutelage, it is a figure that makes the follower encounter the fact that there is no need for a Master, and "forces" them to be autonomous.

its insistence that "there is no X that is really it" (¬∃x¬Φx, e.g., there is no Master that has "it", there is no one who is not castrated). This manifests itself in the hysteric's preoccupation with the Other's desire (which is equal to Other's lack), ceaselessly trying to locate it or make it visible, in contrast, for instance, to the obsessional neurotic who feels guilty for the lack of the Other and tries to neutralize it by transforming it into a demand (Žižek, 2017a, p. 95). That is why the (non-)act in hysteria corresponds to the "acting out," which takes the form of a provocation that aims to bring forward the Other as desiring/lacking, thus revealing its split and its status as an impostor (Žižek, 2012, p. 701).

This last logic, the feminine non-All (¬∀xΦx), the logic that informs the entirety of this field, the ground in which these logics of sexuation and the four discourses are played out, corresponds to the Analyst's discourse.[53] The non-All is the truth of the previous logic of feminine no-exception in the sense that it takes the impossibility which was uncovered in a negative form by the Hysteric's discourse, and turns into a positive form, affirms the ontological negativity directly; this results in the inscription of the impossibility into the field directly. In this discourse, the embodied or objectified knowledge (a/S_2, e.g., the analyst as a *subject supposed to know*) reveals itself to be impossible to the subject (i.e., the analyst does not know the ultimate meaning of the analysand's symptoms), which results in the contingent production of the Master-Signifier as separated from the chain of ordinary signifiers ($S_2//S_1$), as a meaningless empty term; thus this discourse abolishes the meaning-

[53] This means that the representations of these fields are in no sense neutral/impartial/objective: on the contrary, the field of sexuation appears as such only from the perspective of the non-All, or similarly, the ground of the analysis of the four discourses is already the Analyst's discourse. This is simply another formulation of "partisanship in philosophy" or partisan science put forward in the second chapter.

relation between S_1 and S_2 by isolating the S_1 and showing its status as arbitrary (hence producing the signifier of the lack-in-the-Other: s(Ⱥ)). As such, it is both authentic and consistent (through its admittance of the field being non-All). This discourse is the point where the impossibility of the field is inscribed into the system itself, and as such, it is the proper moment of scientific, theoretical, as well as political (as we will see later) revolution; examples of which were given such as Cantor, Gödel, Einstein and Copenhagen School, as well as Hegel with his radicalization of Kant through the ontologization of the antinomies in philosophy, Marx with his discovery of the immanent impossibility of capitalism in the domain of political economy, and of course, Freud through Lacan and his successors such as Ljubljana school that make possible this very reading. Regarding the symptomal/clinical structures and the act, the feminine non-All of the Analyst's Discourse does not correspond to a structure but rather the dissolution of any structure through the production of the signifier of the lack-in-the-Other (s(Ⱥ)), which results in the subjective destitution through which the subject emerges as a being of pure drive as the feminine subject "beyond hysteria" (Žižek, 2017a, pp. 104-105). That is why the act that corresponds to the non-All of the Analyst's discourse is the psychoanalytical act (or the ethical act) understood as the traversal of the fantasy.

Now we can clearly see that the masculine side stages the tension between the All (University discourse) and its exception (Master's discourse), which can be thought in terms of the discord between the Universal and the Particular; the feminine side stages the tension between the no-exception (Hysteric's discourse) and non-All (Analyst's discourse), which can be understood as the relationship between the singular in a negative sense and the singular in an affirmative sense (denying a

predicate versus affirming a non-predicate). In Hegelian terminology, whereas the masculine side involves the conflict of logics of Being and Essence, the feminine side involves the conflict of logic of Notion. One is even tempted to construct a dialectical sequence following the four moments of Hegel's "triad" of logic of reflection: First, Master's discourse as the *positing reflection*; then its renormalization/externalization through the University discourse, which is the moment of *external reflection*; afterwards, the "solution" of the conflict between the first two moments in the no-exception of the Hysteric's discourse which is the moment of *determinate reflection* as the vanishing mediator ($); and lastly, the non-All of the Analyst's discourse which transforms the impossibility into a positive term, objet a, as the *reflexive determination*.

This quadripartite structure of the four discourses and the formulae of sexuation presents a very succinct matrix of formalization of dialectical materialism, and as such, it provides us with a theoretical framework to understand various social and political phenomena, the ways the social *jouissance* is organized through the social fantasy that manifests in the various symptomal structures that sustain a determinate form of the non-relationship; as well as the fundamental logic of the abolishment of a given non-relationship, namely, revolution. For this, we will now turn to the ethical/practical dimension.

3.3 Event, fidelity, and the ethical act: From symptomal element to the revolutionary subject

If we deploy the (materialist) feminine logic with regard to the fundamental approach to material reality, we obtain the two statements "there is nothing which is not

material reality" (¬∃x¬Φx) and "material reality is non-All" (¬∀xΦx); with the political implication that this non-All manifests itself as the now familiar supernumerary symptomal element or the *part-of-no-part* (Žižek, 2017a, p. 23). This means, on the one hand, that the social antagonism (class struggle) is never pure (never reducible into a duality) since that would amount to positing an All divisible into parts without remainder (which corresponds to masculine/idealist logic). On the other hand, it means that all subjective positions and all subjective interests are not equal, but some positions are more truthful (which corresponds to the concept of partisanship introduced before):

> The paradox to be accepted is that universal truth and partiality do not exclude each other: in our social life, universal truth is accessible only to those who are engaged in the struggle for emancipation, not to those who try to maintain 'objective' indifference. (Žižek, 2020, pp. 104-105)

That's why against both any kind of fundamentalism that rejects universality, or any kind of liberalism that advocates a false neutrality (abstract universality), it is to be argued following Žižek that "we are 'universal beings' only in our full partial engagements;" that "every authentic ethical position (…) combines Universalism with taking sides" (concrete universality) so that "a true ethical position combines the assertion of universalism with a militant, divisive position of one engaged in a struggle: true universalists are not those who preach global tolerance of differences and all-encompassing unity, but those who engage in a passionate fight for the assertion of the Truth that engages them" (Žižek, 2017a, p. 113; Žižek, 2020, pp. 404-405). That's why there can be no "pure" politics or "pure" revolution based on the abstract universality, or in Lenin's words: "Whoever expects a 'pure' social revolution will never live to see it. Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is" (Lenin, 1974a, p. 356; Žižek, 2017a, pp.

240-1). This also means that authentic revolutionary practice can produce novel theoretical principles that are unthinkable from a "pure" theoretical point of view (Althusser, 1990a, p. 64).

At this point, the Hegelian core of Lenin's thought can be revisited, as the dialectical method is what brings many different names (Althusser, Lacan, Žižek, Badiou) analyzed in this work together. As Althusser reveals brilliantly through his analysis of Lenin's notes on *Science of Logic*, Lenin regarded the last chapter on the Absolute idea (which is the most abstract chapter of the work) as a zenith of materialist thinking, and claimed that it is impossible to understand Marx's *Capital* without having studied Hegel's *Science of Logic* (Althusser reverses this formulation and argues that it is impossible to understand Hegel without knowing Capital, which interestingly foreshadows Žižek) (Althusser, 1971b, pp. 110, 112, 120).[54] Taking over the Absolute as the dialectical method from Hegel,[55] Lenin even determines the core of Hegelianism as the "*Trieb*" (drive) as an "arbitrary (independent), spontaneous, internally-necessary movement" which was laid bare afterwards by Marx and Engels (Althusser, 1971b, pp. 114-115, 123). The name of this absolute

[54] Lenin writes that "the whole chapter on the 'Absolute Idea' (…) contains almost nothing that is specifically idealism, but has for its main subject the dialectical method. The sum-total, the last word and essence of Hegel's logic is the dialectical method - this is extremely noteworthy. And one thing more: in this most idealistic of Hegel's works there is the least idealism and the most materialism. 'Contradictory,' but a fact" (Lenin, 1976, p. 233).

[55] Althusser formulates Lenin's position as "there is only one thing in the world which is absolute, and that is the method or the concept of the process, itself absolute" (Althusser, 1971b, p. 123). The same position is formulated by Marx as following: "Just as by means of abstraction we have transformed everything into a logical category, so one has only to make an abstraction of every characteristic distinctive of different movements to attain movement in its abstract condition – purely formal movement, the *purely logical formula of movement*. If one finds in logical categories the substance of all things, one imagines one has found in the logical formula of movement the *absolute method*, which not only explains all things, but also implies the movement of things" (Marx, 1955, pp. 49-50, emphases mine). It is also worthwhile to note that this is the point Çayan makes against the pseudo-orthodoxies of MDD when he claims that the only constant in Marxism is the dialectical method.

repetition that constitutes the core of the ethical/revolutionary act is, incidentally, *death drive* (*Todestrieb*) in psychoanalysis, which will come into play soon.

Now, if we revisit the distinction between the logic of hegemonic populism exemplified by "radical democracy" and the revolutionary politics of the communist hypothesis, we can easily point out that the political act in the former consists simply in the production of a new Master-Signifier (S_1) which is, as we now know, played out in the masculine domain, whereas the emancipatory/revolutionary act in the latter consists in the formalization of the antagonism itself into a new signifier (production of s(Ⱥ) by breaking down of the meaning relation $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ by inverting it into $S_2 // S_1$ of the Analyst's Discourse) from the point of view of the symptomal element. As Žižek argues, the proper Event does not simply consist in the production of a new Master-Signifier, instead it designates an operation of "subtraction" defined as the production of s(Ⱥ) from the S_1, which is the act of naming the antagonism as part of the default state (Žižek, 2014, pp. 398, 411-412).

The communist hypothesis is based on the insistence on this dimension of the truth Event as the irreducible impossible-real and the concept of ethical/revolutionary act against any kind of normative understanding of morality and rights, and as such, it is based on a theoretical antihumanism against the humanist political theories (Badiou, 2001, p. 5; Badiou, 2015, p. 182). Badiou succinctly demonstrates the impasse of the paradigms based on a framework of rights, such as the discourse of human rights that assumes a human subject with natural rights (which means the denial of revolutionary Marxism which sees the rights as results of the struggles), which is in turn reduced to a permanent victim whose rights are under the constant risk of being violated (Badiou, 2001, pp. 4-10).

Badiou demonstrates that this paradigm, in fact, reduces the subject to biological life, and presupposes the primacy of Evil over Good (since the Good is the non-violation of rights, and is defined negatively, whereas the Evil is the violation, hence defined positively; in other words, the Good is limited but the Evil is limitless), therefore it is unable to conceptualize the singularity of the situations in the sense that it is preoccupied with the abstract universality to the extent that it cannot be faithful to the *singularity* of a situation (i.e., cannot treat the situation to the limit of the possible) (Badiou, 2001, pp. 11-15). Against these three failures, Badiou puts forward the opposing theses that the subject is not defined by biology (or anything positive) but rather by the *truth* of which it is capable (designating the dimension of the *immortal* in Badiou's terms), that Good has primacy over Evil (Evil is a deviation from/betrayal against Good), and that "there is no ethics in general" but only the ethics of the singularity of a situation (corresponding to concrete universality) (Badiou, 2001, p. 16).

What Badiou proposes is an *ethics of truth* that consists in the Real process of fidelity to an Event (Badiou, 2001, p. 42). In this framework, whereas the existing field of ideological reality is defined as the *situation*; *truth*, in turn is defined as an immanent break in the situation that cannot be defined by the terms of the situation (i.e., it cannot be defined by what there is). The dimension of the Event arises as a supplement to the situation, and as such, signals its inconsistency, and the fidelity to the Event designates the decision on the part of the subject to relate to the situation from the standpoint of the evental supplement, which introduces a Real break in the order and compels the invention of a new reality (Badiou, 2001, p. 41-42). There is a retroactive twist here in the sense that Event is at most a vanishing moment without

the presence of fidelity, and truth itself is constructed through the fidelity to an Event, which means that fidelity to an Event retroactively posits its truth (Badiou, 2001, pp. 67-68). Although we are mainly concerned with the dimension of science and politics in this work, the process of truth or the truth Event has four paradigmatic forms constituting the conditions of philosophy: *science*, *politics*, *art*, and *love* (Badiou, 2001, p. 28).

In each case, Badiou argues that the Event occurs as the "naming of the void" of the situation (which echoes our previous definition of $s(\not A)$); for instance, "Marx is an event for political thought because he designates, under the name 'proletariat,' the central void of early bourgeois societies" (Badiou, 2001, p. 69). Whereas Good is defined through fidelity, Evil, in turn, is defined as a failure in three modes concerning the three main elements of a truth-process (Badiou, 2001, p. 71): With regard to the Event, the naming of not a void (negativity) but a plenitude (positivity) results in the form of Evil called the simulacrum (that mimics an Event), which is exemplified by many fundamentalisms that show "fidelity" to a positive essence.[56] With regard to fidelity, betrayal is defined as the Evil resulting from the simple failure of subject in fidelity. Lastly, with regard to the truth, the totalization of truth (mistaking truth for something positive, or more precisely, expecting that the truth Event would result in the abolishment of antagonism altogether) results in the form of Evil called disaster (Badiou, 2001, p. 87).

Badiou's ethics of truth shows many parallelisms with the ethics of psychoanalysis (or ethics of the Real in Zupančič's terms) that forms one of the main

[56] In Žižek's words, "authentic fidelity is *the fidelity to the void itself*–to the very act of loss, of abandoning/erasing the object. (…) The name for this fidelity is the death drive" (Žižek, 2008b, p. 470, emphasis mine).

pillars of the thesis of the relationship between the symptomal element and the revolutionary subject that is defended in this work, but it has to be noted that Badiou's theory is presented through the lens of the Ljubljana school without emphasizing the incompatibilities (such as radically different understandings of the subject). But one difference is to be stressed is that although, as we have seen, Badiou's framework can be read through the logic of non-All, it does not really admit the pure negativity as primordial (it posits pure multiplicity instead) and therefore cannot exactly capture the feminine logic (Žižek, 2017a, p. 45; Žižek, 2020, p. 329). Instead of the somewhat exceptional and external character of the Event thought in Badiou's terms, psychoanalysis proposes the concept of *death drive*[57] as the immanent torsion of the Symbolic order, which manifests itself as endless self-repetition of ontological negativity (the singular), which is not the repetition of something, but repetition in an absolute sense as the repetition of negativity/impossibility itself (Žižek, 2017a, p. 20; Zupančič, 2017, p. 117).

It is in this sense that the logic of the revolutionary act put forward by the Ljubljana School relies on an "intersection between reason and drive" (Žižek, 2012, p. 1010). Whereas the logic of fantasy serves to naturalize/eternalize and maintain the current form of non-relationship, the psychoanalytical/ethical act stands for the non-All of the Analyst's discourse that transforms the field by inscribing its impossibility into it, and by intervening to the Real with the Symbolic, it interrupts the functioning of fantasy, which corresponds to the moment called the *traversal of the fantasy* (Zupančič, 2000, p. 86; Žižek, 2012, p. 477). This is how Lacan's maxim of the ethics of psychoanalysis, "do not compromise your desire" (*ne pas céder sur*

[57] A concept against which Badiou is hostile, incidentally.

son désir), is to be understood: Desire stands in the place of the Real as the fundamental ontological negativity, and corresponds properly to the dimension of the *death drive*; and compromising it means escaping its impossible-Real core and translating it into a demand or desire of the Other through a fantasy (Žižek, 2012, p. 121). This means that the psychoanalytical/ethical act that arises through the *fidelity to death drive* is extremely disturbing and traumatic; it is neither compatible with the pleasure principle nor its extension in the reality principle, but rather, it is "beyond the pleasure principle" (Žižek, 2012, p. 123).

As Zupančič demonstrates in *The Ethics of the Real*, this logic is also to be found in Kant's understanding of moral philosophy. According to Kant, freedom is a "fact of reason," it is Real and abyssal, that it cannot be schematized, which is to say that it is equivalent to the death drive in its pure state (Žižek, 2012, pp. 265-6). This means that "*du kannst, denn du sollst*" (you can because you ought to) of the categorical imperative is not a superego injunction, but it is simply the statement of this fundamental fact of freedom: As per Kant's "incorporation thesis," the subject is affected by "external" causes insofar as it allows them to affect it; which Žižek puts as "every external impossibility (to which the excuse 'I know I must, but I cannot, it is impossible . . .' appeals) relies on a disavowed self-limitation," in other words it amounts to *fetishistic disavowal* (Žižek, 2012, p. 169). As we have seen, once the non-All is admitted, the Event is not reducible to the situation (or the field); it cannot be judged by the terms of the situation since it designates the impossibility of the field itself (Žižek, 2020, p. 325). This purely negative dimension of the death drive makes possible "the materialist miracle," namely the creation *ex nihilo* of a new reality through the revolutionary act, which transforms what appears as impossible

from within the existing field into actuality, even necessity (Žižek, 2020, p. 390; Badiou, 2015, pp. 182-183).[58]

To recapitulate, analogous to the organization of the subject's enjoyment through a fantasmatic frame, the organization of social jouissance also presents itself in the form of a discourse. This can be exemplified through Žižek's categorization of paradigmatic modalities of power: Absolute monarchy occupies the place of the Master's discourse (sovereign power to kill or let live in Foucault), total technocratic or bureaucratic administration occupies the place of the University discourse (disciplinary power in Foucault), and the atomized capitalist individualism undermining the traditional social forms displays the structure of the Hysteric's discourse (neoliberal governmentality in Foucault) (Foucault, 1978, pp. 135-159; Foucault, 2008, pp. 222-226, 246). Against these, the emergence of a revolutionary subject and the moment of revolution occupies the place of the Analyst's discourse, which stands for the undoing of the current organization of the systemic violence through the psychoanalytical/ethical act (Žižek, 2017a, pp. 217-8). Therefore, the traversal of fantasy or the psychoanalytical/ethical act reveals itself as the production of the s(Ⱥ) that "stops the compulsive repetition of the established form of enjoyment," to which Žižek gives the example of an "intervention which makes it impossible for [a] bad joke to go on" by somehow "spoiling" it (Žižek, 2017a, p. 75). This "spoiling" emphasizes the frustrative dimension of the *Versagung* (which is another name for the traversal), which stands for the subject's renunciation of its

[58] That's why "authentic philosophy" is deemed as "theoretical psychoanalysis" by Žižek, since authentic philosophy "is not a species of university discourse but an existential decision, the enactment of what Lacan defines as the final mutation of the analytic treatment (traversing the fantasy) by means of theory" (Žižek, 2020, p. 99). Schuster summarizes this connection brilliantly in one sentence as "philosophy has a perfectly good term for what Freud called the drive: namely, philosophy" (Schuster, 2016, p. 109).

"fantasmatic core of being," the disruption of the current organization of *jouissance* (Žižek, 2014, p. 388, note 7). Thus, the subject that emerges through this act (which corresponds to the revolutionary subject in the political domain) is a being of pure drive that displays the feminine logic of the non-All[59] (Žižek, 2017a, pp. 104-5).

Two results follow from this character of the ethical/revolutionary act: The absence of any guarantee, and the necessarily traumatic and violent character of the act. On the one hand, since the ethical/revolutionary act by definition appears as impossible from within a given field, there can be no way to define a revolution as a pre-determined "strategic activity;" and there can be no "guarantee of revolution" as Lenin argues, neither in the form of social necessity (assumption of which results in endless waiting for the conditions to mature), nor in the form of democratic legitimacy (which amounts to the "majority" to be on the revolution's side, which never happens) (Žižek, 2012, p. 120; Žižek, 2017a, p. 249; Žižek, 2017b, 56/196;[60] Comay, 2011, p. 7). On the other hand, since the ethical/revolutionary act entails the assertion of the truth (i.e., the constitutive impossibility) of the field (signifier of the lack-in-the-Other, s(Ⱥ)), it is by definition violent (even if it does not deploy physical violence, it always deploys Symbolic violence) and excludes a neutral position (Žižek, 2017b, 18/196). That is why "every event is a surprise," and "revolutions always, by definition, occur at the wrong time and place; they are always 'out of place'" (Badiou, 2015, p. 191; Žižek, 2012, p. 438). This is to say that the revolutionary act cannot directly make the right choice, instead, the "art of politics"

[59] Is construction of a social link based on the non-All of the Analyst's discourse possible? Žižek answers affirmatively: "The wager of the analyst's discourse is that one can do it. And the wager of revolutionary politics is that this is how a revolutionary collective functions" (Žižek, 2013, p. 176, note 44).

[60] The page numbers for this work are unavailable, given numbers are relative.

is to "make the right mistake," and only after this initial mistake the possibility for the right choice emerges (Žižek, 2017a, pp. 252-3; Žižek, 2017b, 55/196). This is the difference between formal and actual freedom: Whereas formal freedom entails a choice within a given set of possibilities (a given reality), actual freedom stands for the violent act that undermines the very set of possibles (dissolves the reality) (Žižek, 2017b, 30/196).

This is what Lacan designates with his example of the choice between "father or worse" (*le père ou pire*): The ethical choice never directly arises between the good and the bad, but initially appears as a choice between the presumed balance/peace of the *status quo* ("father")[61] or the uncertainty of "irrational" revolutionary rupture (which always appears as the "worse"); so that the only way for the possibility of the choice of the good to emerge is to initially choose the "worse," which is the violent uncertainty of the revolutionary rupture (Žižek, 2012, pp. 69-70). Just like the analyst who derives its authorization from nothing but itself, the revolution also deploys itself without any dependence on an external guarantee, so it does not need permission from the big Other (Žižek, 2012, pp. 118, 963; Žižek, 2017b, 18/196). It is this absolute absence of any guarantee that separates authentic revolutionary politics from religious, nationalist, or other kinds of fundamentalism: Whereas revolutionaries assume the non-existence of the Other, which means not only the acceptance that they might die, but the acceptance that their death may be in vain (recall Benjamin's "not even the dead will be safe from the enemy, if he is victorious") since the revolution might catastrophically fail; the idealist logic of fundamentalism always operates through a guarantee provided by a figure of big

[61] This also corresponds to Çayan's famous notion of "artificial balance."

Other (god, nation, etc.), which means that a fundamentalist is sure that their death will be meaningful (Benjamin, 2003, p. 391). In this sense, fundamentalism is always based on a given tradition, which is guaranteed by a figure of big Other, whereas revolutionary politics always deals with invented (and the invention of) tradition, which means that there can be no guarantee and it is fundamentally an experimental process.[62] It is in this sense that Žižek argues that only a true atheist (who fully assumes the non-existence of big Other) is capable of the authentic ethical/political act, because the act is defined precisely by the fact that it is not covered by the big Other (Žižek, 2020, p. 411; Žižek, 2017a, p. 280; Žižek, 2012, p. 116).

This explains why the idea of choosing the "lesser evil" (as a variant of the University discourse) is actually choosing the greatest evil: If one always chooses the lesser evil ("father"), one can never break out of the current situation and arrive at the point where the choice of good arises. So, in the ethical/revolutionary act, there are actually two choices: The first choice is between the old order and violent revolutionary rupture. And only after choosing the rupture ("worse") can one get to the second choice, which is between persisting in the *abstract negativity* of rupture (refusal to make the revolution into a positivity, which usually results in a catastrophe), or choosing the *concrete universality* (which positively establishes a new field) (Žižek, 2012, p. 290). The reason for this is that the presumed balance of the status quo ("father") is actually propped up on the founding violence that posits it and the systemic violence that sustains it (exemplified by the surplus-value and the

[62] In Badiou's ethics, this difference corresponds to the difference between the truth Event based on the Void as ontological impossibility, which corresponds to "the naming of the Void;" and the simulacrum of an Event as a form of Evil, which takes a plenitude as its reference point instead of a negativity (to which Badiou gives the example of Nazism) (Badiou, 2001, pp. 69, 72).

surplus-*jouissance*); thus, taking a neutral (masculine) position towards it –even one does not directly participate in any violence– amounts to supporting the systemic "objective violence" or the systemic *jouissance* (which is seen as "business as usual" or the "normal state of things") (Zupančič, 2021, pp. 10, 14; Žižek, 2008d, pp. 2, 64; Žižek, 2017a, p. 151).[63] This is the reason why the feminine revolutionary act is by definition and necessarily violent, as it emerges against the ideological backdrop that renders the masculine systemic violence/*jouissance* invisible, disrupting it and making it visible through its traumatic intervention.[64] In Žižek's words, the revolutionary act is not about establishing a harmonious state; rather, "the authentic revolutionary liberation is much more directly identified with violence— it is violence as such (…) which liberates. Freedom is not a blissfully neutral state of harmony and balance, but the violent act which disturbs this balance;" hence, "love that suspends the Law is necessarily accompanied by arbitrary cruelty" (Žižek, 2013, pp. 186, 189).

This concludes the presentation of the theoretical ground of this work and warrants a recapitulation of the theoretical argument: First, there is a privileged relationship between the symptomal element and the truth of a socio-symbolic system in such a way that the symptom embodies the fundamental impossibility of

[63] As Žižek notes, this passage from the first choice to the second choice is equivalent to the passage from revolutionary Terror to the Kantian autonomous free subject: Only after we identify with the revolutionary Terror completely can we recognize in the negativity of Terror the core of pure subject as ontological negativity (which is the reason for Heine's remark that Kant surpassed Robespierre in intellectual terrorism) (Žižek, 2012, p. 196; Comay, 2011, p. 20). That's why Hegel saw Jacobin revolutionary Terror not as an excessive moment that could have been avoided but as a necessary precondition for the revolution itself, since as we have seen, one cannot pass into the concrete directly without going through the abstract negativity of Terror (Žižek, 2012, pp. 205-206). Žižek summarizes this concisely: "violence does not work, renouncing it works even less," because renouncing violence is nothing but the acceptance of the current systemic violence (p. 299).

[64] Following a Hegelian triad, against the merely *subjective violence* ("crime," which is actually sanctioned by the system, e.g., femicides under patriarchy) and *objective violence* (founding and systemic violence of the structure), the revolutionary violence can be categorized as *absolute violence*.

the system, and this impossibility can only be formalized through the partisan standpoint of the symptomal element. Second, there is a privileged relationship between the symptomal element and the social revolution in the sense that the revolutionary subject arises only through the symptomal position, and the revolutionary act consists in the symptomal element directly occupying the position of universality. These two pillars inform our thesis that in the context of Turkey, the ruling nation (*millet-i hakime*) ideology rendered members of the ruling nation structurally blind to the *truth* of the system (both the pre-genocidal and the post-genocidal colonial situation in Turkey) and confined their activity to an *abstract universality*; whereas the *concrete universality* of the revolutionary left could only properly arise from those nations who occupied the symptomal position in the national-colonial hierarchy, first Armenians then Kurds.

What is presented until now amounts to a generic theory of antagonism on the one hand, and a generic theory of the revolutionary act on the other. The adjective *generic* designates that the theory is deployable regardless of the content of the field that it is deployed, which is attested by the fact that the presented theory can be used to understand the different manifestations of the social antagonism (contradictions of capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy); but this does not mean that it is a *general* theory that reduces different manifestations of the social antagonism into one. In order to illustrate this differentiation, four possible modes of revolutionary theory corresponding to four discourses can be considered: First, the *general* theory of the revolution that reduces the antagonism into One as the Master's Discourse, displaying the logic of determination-in-the-last instance, exemplified by the economism of "orthodox" Marxism. Second, the *hegemonic/populist* theory of

revolution as the University Discourse, which does not reduce the antagonism into One, but it attempts to unify/suture it into a Whole through hegemonic politics, exemplified by the theses of "radical democracy" and populist left politics of Laclau and Mouffe. Passing to the feminine side, the third possible mode is the *multiple* theories of revolution as the Hysteric's Discourse, which is characterized by the insistence on the irreducibility, incommensurability, or absolute separation of different class structures and revolutionary struggles, exemplified by the particular-local-grassroots struggles that reject any kind of universalization that amount to identity politics (as will be discussed in the next chapter apropos of the tradition of subaltern studies). And lastly, the *generic* theory of antagonism and revolution as the Analyst's Discourse, which accepts the irreducibility to One of different struggles, and instead of providing a method of bridging them or unifying them, it provides a method that is deployable in each of the fields, relating them not through something positive but through their *overdetermination* by the irreducibility of the social antagonism as Real.

Having established the theoretical framework, now the assessment and critique of the literature regarding both the theoretical and the historical arguments of this work can be undertaken, which will take place in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

ASSESSMENT OF LITERATURE

Thus far, the subject matter as well as the methodological and theoretical ground of the study in the preceding chapters was introduced, and now the relevant literature whose domain intersects with the current work will be assessed. Since the argument presented in this work is a double argument (i.e., a theoretical argument and a historical argument), I am going to analyze the literature under these two main axes. Of course, none of the analyzed works are purely theoretical or purely historical; therefore, some works will be considered twice, both with respect to their theoretical propositions and with respect to their historical arguments. It should also be added that, especially concerning theoretical matters, this analysis is focused on the approaches that *differ* from and claim to be an *alternative* to the theoretical traditions already incorporated into the present work. The criterion of difference means that since the present work's argument is constructed from within the tradition of the *communist hypothesis*, the positions about many discussions that are internal to Marxism are already taken in the process of construction and presentation of our fundamental theoretical framework in the preceding chapters, and they will continue to be addressed throughout the main body of this work. That is why this analysis is only concerned with the approaches that come from outside of Marxist tradition or those that attempt to step out of it. The second criterion of providing an alternative also follows the same logic: The focus here will be on the approaches that try to present either a non-antagonistic (i.e., not class-based, in the strict sense that we have presented) account for various manifestations of the social antagonism like the

structural inequalities and power relations, or those try to present a peaceful/communicative solution to the class conflict based on a kind of consensus.

The assessment of the alternative (non-Marxist) theoretical approaches consists in two main categories based on their acceptance or rejection of the tradition of Enlightenment: First, the literature of subaltern studies and postcolonial theories that "spun off" from Marxist (and the Enlightenment) tradition will be addressed. Although there is neither much of a direct correspondence or dialogue between the present work's object of study and that of the field of subaltern studies, nor a strong influence of the tradition of subaltern studies in the context of Turkey as an explanatory framework; it is nevertheless necessary to address it to differentiate our arguments and definitions from theirs regarding various apparently common categories such as the "subaltern" or difference.

In contrast to the first category, which is based on a rejection of Enlightenment tradition, the second category of theoretical approaches that will be analyzed is going to be those who accept and are rooted firmly in the tradition of Enlightenment. This category is comprised of theories of racial contract and whiteness studies that try to explain the genesis and the workings of structural and institutional racism as well as how it is internalized and embodied by the social agents through an explanatory framework that finds its roots in the classical justifications of sovereignty (monarchist or popular), in other words, in the social contract theories. This strand of theoretical explanation is of particular import because, in addition to satisfying the general criteria of difference and claiming an alternative, it provides the theoretical basis of the work that has become the dominant critical approach towards the issue of structural racism in Turkey, namely Barış

Ünlü's *Turkishness Contract*. We will examine its shortcomings later on, but it has to be stated that Ünlü's work occupies this exceptional position by its merit of being an attempt to provide a systematic explanation of the phenomena of structural and institutional racism in Turkey in contrast to more illustrative or descriptive historical accounts; therefore, since its publication, it emerged as an explanatory paradigm and is a frequent point of reference.

After examining the two dominant alternative theoretical paradigms, we will focus on the specific historical context and assess the diverse and more partial historical arguments relevant to our analysis of the genesis and establishment of the ruling nation ideology as well as the relation of the left with it. Since this is not a historiographic work and the main differentiating point of this work is the theoretical framework (viz. the form in which the given content is analyzed) that is proposed rather than the novelty of the content or the data that is analyzed (i.e., the ideological dispute is not over facts but how the facts are established and operationalized); the assessment of the various historical arguments will also function as a background to the historical discussions in the later chapters.

As was stated above, the two main alternative theoretical strands to our proposed dialectical materialist framework can be differentiated in the axis of pro-Enlightenment (albeit critical of it) versus anti-Enlightenment. We will start with the field of subaltern studies and the subset of postcolonial theories[65] that reject Marxism as exemplary of the anti-Enlightenment alternative; then we will go on to analyze the

[65] Postcolonial is an adjective that is used to designate many diverse fields and schools of thought. I am using "postcolonial studies" and "subaltern studies" here in a strict sense, referring to a specific school of anticolonial post-Marxism which is going to be introduced.

pro-Enlightenment alternative which is exemplified by the racial contract and critical whiteness theories.

4.1 Postcolonial theory and subaltern studies

By the terms of subaltern studies and postcolonial theory, I refer to the paradigm of a specific post-Marxist anticolonial school of thought, represented by influential names such as Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Anibal Quijano, and Homi Bhabha that emerged from the Indian Marxist academic circles after the 1970s, and afterward spread globally. Since the point of this analysis is not to give a detailed account of the movement, nor to examine all their theses and assess them, but rather to demonstrate their fundamental theoretical differences from our thesis, as well as the different consequences that arise from these positions; I am largely going to refer to the excellent presentation of Vivek Chibber in the work entitled *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* to provide a background, and demonstrate the main differences that arise between the dialectical materialist approach and the framework advocated by subaltern studies.

Before delving into a more detailed analysis, fundamental differences in the use of the same or similar concepts (e.g., subaltern/symptomal element, difference) by the subaltern studies and dialectical materialism should be pointed out in order to clear out any conceptual confusion: In contrast to our definition of absolute difference as Real (i.e., a difference that precedes the terms it differentiates), the subaltern studies' definition of difference collapses into a positive (imaginary) difference between two mutually excluding essences, which gives birth to essentialized conceptualizations of the differences between the West and the East,

the elite and the subaltern domains, etc. This operation results in the reduction of the Real antagonism into an opposition between two essential poles in contrast to our negative definition of antagonism. Symmetrically, it also results in the essentialization of the symptomal element (the subaltern) as completely excluded from the elite domain, in contrast to our definition of the symptomal element as the *part-of-no-part* that is not external to the hegemonic field but embodies its immanent impossibility. Therefore, although both the subaltern studies and dialectical materialism appear to agree on insisting on the irreducibility of absolute difference and the necessity of the subaltern/symptomal element, the resemblance remains purely superficial: Whereas their conceptions of both the absolute difference and the symptomal element rely on an assumed positivity, as we have demonstrated in the preceding chapter, the dialectical materialist definitions of the same terms emphasize their strictly negative character.

There is a similar difference between these two theoretical frameworks concerning the approach to universality: Although both sides appear to agree on the statement that there is no "pure" Universal (unblemished by a particular), the framework of subaltern studies reduces all universalities into pseudo-universalities (particulars disguised as a Universals) which results in the rejection of universal concepts such as Enlightenment, Reason and universality itself as Western particular ideas disguised as universals. In contrast to this view, the framework we propose accepts the premise that there is no pure universality, or in more proper words, *abstract universality* is by definition false; but emphasizes that this fundamental inconsistency of the Universal does not disqualify the dimension of universality *in toto,* but rather this crack of the Universal is the emergence of the antagonism and

the site of conflict within the Universal itself, as was shown in the preceding chapters.

After these preliminary conceptual clarifications, let us turn to the evaluation of the basic tenets of the subaltern and postcolonial studies. This school of thought emerged primarily from India as a university movement that first started out in the areas of literary and cultural studies as a movement against the dismissal of the non-Western canon, but later migrated to other domains (most importantly social and political sciences) with the "cultural turn," and primarily took on the function of providing an alternative to Marxist critical approaches (Chibber, 2013, pp. 1-3). As Chibber notes, its main motor force could be defined as the impetus to stress the radical and insurmountable *difference* between the colonial/postcolonial context ("the East") and the West, which takes on various forms like the difference of the bourgeoisies of the East and the West, the difference between the fundamental structuring of the power relations in the East and the West, or the difference between the political psychologies of the social agents in the East and West (Chibber, 2013, p. 22). In each case, this emphasized difference is operationalized to construct a contrast between the assumed proper course of development that capitalism underwent in the West (what is called the "Conventional Story" by the subalternists) and the pathological course of development that capitalism followed in the colonial East (Chibber, 2013, p. 12). For instance, Guha's classic argument of "dominance without hegemony" stands on this assumption of differences between the bourgeoisies of the East and the West, claiming that whereas in the West, there emerged a properly revolutionary bourgeoisie in the course of the revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which could speak for the whole People and in

this sense could produce a *hegemony* (which is based on consent according to Guha) and therefore created a proper public space/civil society; in the East, the character of the bourgeoisie was not revolutionary enough so that it could not hegemonize the People through consent but rather resorted to *coercion*, which resulted in the split of the public space into the *elite* and the *subaltern* domains which are mutually exclusive of one another (Chibber, 2013, p. 28).

This thesis of the existence of a non-revolutionary/non-hegemonic coercive bourgeoisie in the East in contrast to the Western democratic-hegemonic bourgeoisie constitutes the first of the six major theses of the subalternist and postcolonial tradition developed against the hegemonic and colonial understanding (what they call the "Conventional Story") as identified by Chibber. Resting on the rather weak conceptual differential couple consent/coercion, this first thesis puts forward that hegemony, which is obtained through persuasion or consent rather than coercion, as a phenomenon that is possible only in modern capitalist societies in contrast to the despotism of the precapitalist societies, is the distinguishing mark of the respective characters of the bourgeois class and the structures of the public spheres of the East and the West (Chibber, 2013, p. 35).

This thesis provides a basis for the rejections of the importation of Marxist class-based analysis from the West and gives birth to a second major thesis (identified as Thesis 4 by Chibber) briefly mentioned above, that of the division between the elite and the subaltern spheres in the colonial political domain: The argument goes to assert that the failure of the bourgeoisie to obtain hegemony through consent and create a unified public space in the East resulted in the division public sphere into the domains of the elite and the subaltern; whereas in the West, "a

revolutionary bourgeoisie successfully integrated the popular into the domain of elite and organized politics" (Chibber, 2013, p. 15). This is taken as an implication of the fundamental difference between the dominant axes of socio-political organization in the West and the East, namely, class being the dominant axis in the West, but community and ethnicity being the dominant axis in the East. This conclusion, by itself, could be regarded as a species of class-based analysis (and it is not infrequent to see these kinds of analyses in anticolonial Marxist literature, regarding the specificity of the primary contradiction within a context). However, the subalternists essentialize this difference and assert the invalidity of the Marxist class-based analysis *in toto* (i.e., they do not accept that analysis of classes structured by factors other than economy is also class-based analysis, and it is not mutually exclusive with economic class analysis) (Chibber, 2013, p. 16). Through this essentialization, it becomes possible for subalternists to reject the applicability of the category of class altogether to the Eastern context; for instance, it becomes possible for Chakrabarty to argue that "there was no class in South Asia comparable to the European bourgeoisie of Marxist metanarratives" (Chakrabarty quoted in Chibber, 2013, p. 13). Combined with another derivative thesis (Thesis 5) that rejects nationalisms in the colonial contexts due to the same difference, subalternist tradition comes to locate itself against colonialist, nationalist, and Marxist politics on similar grounds (Chibber, 2013, p. 16).

The other three major theses could be viewed as the expansion or deployment of the same logic of exceptional difference (of the East and the West) to the more abstract issues like the logic of Capital and applicability of epistemological frameworks. The most fundamental of these three theses (Thesis 2) states that

although Capital had a "universalizing drive" when considered through the European experience, which resulted in the establishment of a liberal-democratic political and cultural system, it came to abandon this "universalizing mission" when it expanded into the colonial world (Chibber, 2013, p. 13). Perfectly mirroring the theses concerning the different characters of the bourgeoisies and the difference of public spheres, this thesis comes with the assumption that imputes the historical political achievements of the revolutions in Europe to an intrinsic tendency of Capital itself, which in turn asserts a strong link between capitalism and liberalism that rests on Capital's self-descriptions rather than its actual history; as Chibber observes, this thesis "(...) rests, perversely, on their acceptance of certain aspects of the Conventional Story, in which the bourgeoisie is understood to have fought not only for economic freedoms but also for political liberties" (Chibber, 2013, p. 14).

As a derivative of this thesis that states Capital follows different logics in the West and the East, another thesis (Thesis 3) is put forward that argues whereas capitalism with its "universalizing drive" dismantled the premodern forms of interpersonal domination in the West, it did not abolish forms of precapitalist domination in the East *because it abandoned its universalizing mission* here (Chibber, 2013, p. 14). Although this statement, too, potentially could be understood from within a class-based Marxist perspective, the emphasized last part makes the difference. As a disjunction between Capital and power is assumed specifically for the East, which means that the structures of power are pluralized in the East in contrast to the West, it becomes a basis for the rejection of Western class-based Marxist analysis (Chibber, 2013, p. 15).

The last major thesis (Thesis 6) of the subaltern studies constitutes both the conclusion point of the development of other theses, as well as their logical starting point: This is the fundamental "epistemological" thesis that radicalizes the criticism of the Eurocentrism of Western thought and Enlightenment to the extent that Western frameworks are dismissed entirely on the ground of the fundamental difference that all other theses exemplify. As Chibber summarizes, "if the reality of colonial social formations is fundamentally different from that of Western social formation, then theoretical categories generated from the experience of the West cannot be appropriate for an understanding of the East" (Chibber, 2013, p. 17). Although the polemic is mainly about the applicability of Marxism in the colonial framework, their rejection reaches much deeper as to discount all "Western" universals (Chibber, 2013, p. 284). This results in such a fundamental dualism between the understandings of East and the West that whereas some within the subalternist tradition object to the application of "Western" categories such as "political agent" or "structure" to the non-Western context, some go to the extent that disqualifying the category of Universal as such (as in Chakrabarty) or rejecting Reason itself as a colonialist concept (as with Chatterjee) (Chibber, 2013, pp. 17-18, 212-213, 250).

Apart from mentioning some general problems like aversion to rigour and clearly formulated ideas, the conceptual inflation pervading the field, the absence of a formal unifying approach, and the filling up of this lack with a shared style, Chibber presents a very detailed and to-the-point criticism to the specific claims that characterize the subalternist tradition (Chibber, 2013, p. 3). Since our main purpose is not to oppose or criticize a whole tradition whose existence spans decades but to

demonstrate the fundamental differences between the dialectical materialist understanding from the subalternist understanding, we will not follow Chibber's argument point-by-point. Instead, after presenting a summary of Chibber's arguments that are relevant also to our subject matter, we will return to our direct criticisms.

The numerous criticisms Chibber directs against the subalternist tradition can be categorized under three headings with regard to the fields they refer to: First, as the subject of a historical argument, the romanticization of capitalism (and the Western bourgeoisie) and the identification of liberalism with capitalism; second, as the subject of a political-economic argument, the misunderstanding with regard to the universalization of Capital; and third, as the subject of an epistemological-ontological discussion, the rejection of universality, and the self-Orientalism that results from it.

4.1.1 The historical argument: Romanticization of capitalism

With regard to the historical dimension, Chibber argues that the subalternist understanding of capitalism and the Western bourgeois revolutions (and their bourgeoisies) as radically different from those of the East is simply based on a historical misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the development of capitalism in Europe as well as the experience of the European revolutions; in addition to being riddled with a confusion of twentieth-century liberal discourse with capitalism itself, which results in a very romanticized conceptualization of capitalism, such that "not only do they build liberal freedoms into the definition of capital, they attribute the advent of those freedoms to the European bourgeoisie" (Chibber, 2013, p. 24-25).

Against this understanding, paradigmatically represented by Ranajit Guha's work *Dominance without Hegemony*, Chibber goes on to demonstrate through the examples of the English Revolution of 1640-1648 and the French Revolution of 1789 that neither the claim that the Western bourgeoisies were more revolutionary and democratic so that they tried to incorporate popular forces through the exercise of hegemony, nor the claim that the bourgeois-capitalist characters of these revolutions caused the democratic achievements is valid (Chibber, 2013, p. 54). In addition to neither of the revolutions being a bourgeois revolution, in both cases, they started as an attempt to negotiate and form a new balance of power among the elites (an "elite pact"), but they gained a properly revolutionary character after the entrance of the popular masses (Chibber, 2013, pp. 55, 59).

The case of England is pretty straightforward. Chibber argues that since feudalism was already dead, this revolution lacked the anti-feudal character that subalternists expected from the Western revolutions in the first place. In addition to that, there was not also any attempt from the bourgeoisie to hegemonize the masses or speak for the people; they only appealed to them when they realized that this could not be purely an elite pact, and the popular forces had to be mobilized in order ensure their victory (Chibber, 2013, pp. 59-61). So, the "popular" aspect of the revolution was not due to the "heroism of the British capital" or the revolutionary-hegemonic character of the bourgeoisie, but due to the necessities forcing the bourgeoisie into a temporary alliance, in the absence of which they continued to try to exclude the subaltern in every way possible (Chibber, 2013, p. 62). This is evident from the fact that the monarchy and the bourgeoisie produced a new balance of power and new status quo among themselves through the disenfranchisement of the subaltern classes

shortly after the revolution so that constrictions on electoral participation remained as strict until 1832, trade unions remained illegal until 1871, and indentured labour remained legal until the late nineteenth century (Chibber, 2013, pp. 65-66).

The case of the French Revolution is more complex, but the argument is still evident. In contrast to the English Revolution, the French Revolution really had an anti-feudal character. However, the claims that the capitalists led the revolution, that their aim was to establish liberal ideals, and that they pursued the hegemonic strategy of eliciting consent and forming alliances with the popular classes are all rejected by Chibber (Chibber, 2013, pp. 66-71). About the first point, Chibber goes on to show that the Third Estate was neither revolutionary in itself nor capitalist: in addition to absence of industrial capitalists in the Third Estate, the revolutionary Jacobin fraction consisted of the poorest members among them; thus, it was not a revolution led by the bourgeoisie (as the exploiting class, as the owners of means of production) in the sense implied by Guha: "nobody came to Versailles in 1789 carrying a program for bourgeois revolution" (Chibber, 2013, p. 69). In addition to the non-existence of capitalists, there was no radical revolutionary agenda nor an attempt to obtain the consent of the masses in the beginning (Chibber, 2013, p. 73). When, for instance, the Third Estate assumed the leadership and through the abolition of absolute monarchy sovereignty passed to the National Assembly in June; Chibber observes that the revolution had not yet achieved an anti-feudal character, neither the inclusion of the popular classes had begun, which meant that at that moment this was also an "elite pact" just like the English example at the beginning (Chibber, 2013, pp. 70-71). It was transformed properly into a revolution after the intervention of the popular classes, which forced Louis XVI into retreat, resulting in iconic events like

the capture of Bastille and the women's march on Versailles, as well as the radical revolutionary agendas and ideas gaining ground (Chibber, 2013, pp. 71-72). In Chibber's words, "the revolution had finally become antifeudal and democratic, but not because of a 'bourgeois project.' The 'bourgeois' legislators of the Third Estate had to be dragged kicking and screaming to assume their role as revolutionaries" (Chibber, 2013, p. 75).

In sum, the two revolutions were not bourgeois projects, only in the case of the French Revolution it had an anti-feudal character which was caused by the later mass involvement and peasant pressure, and the radicalism of the revolutions was not of bourgeois origin but were forced by the subaltern in a struggle against the attempts to subjugate them. Therefore, through these examples, Chibber sufficiently demonstrates that the historical basis of the argument of radical difference is, in fact, flawed, that it is based on a mistake of taking capital by its own word, of accepting its ideological self-description which correspond not to the actual course of development and structure of capitalism in the West but liberal fictions or myths about it (Chibber, 2013, pp. 80, 92). In contrast to this mythical account of the democratic-popular Western bourgeoisie, Chibber shows that bourgeoisie has no strong preference for democracy but rather seeks oligarchical power whenever it can both in the East and in the West, and the division between the mainstream/elite and the subaltern domains is not an exceptional feature of the pathological capitalism of the East but it is a completely ordinary and normal property of bourgeois political orders everywhere (Chibber, 2013, pp. 90-93).

4.1.2 The political-economic argument: Misunderstanding of universalization of capital

The discussion regarding the political-economic dimension, namely the discussion of whether Capital abandoned its universalizing mission in the East, is closely connected to the previous issue: Whereas the subalternist definition of universalization or the "universalizing drive" of capital oscillates between the establishment of a unified public space through hegemonic politics and abolishment of premodern, pre-capitalist relations of interpersonal domination through homogenization and erasure of difference; Chibber correctly points out that neither the bourgeois liberal hegemony nor the abolishment of premodern forms of power and homogenization of the populations capture the proper Universal dimension of Capital, which simply consists in the subordination of social relations to the logic of the market (Chibber, 2013, p. 100). Therefore, the absence of these features cannot be taken as proof of capitalism abandoning its universalizing drive.

We have already seen that the historical argument regarding the presence/absence of hegemony is false. When it comes to the abolition of precapitalist relations and interpersonal forms of domination, Chibber correctly argues against Guha and Chakrabarty from a Marxist standpoint that although capitalism tends to dissolve or destroy all forms of social relationships that present an obstacle to the profit maximization motive, it also uses and even reproduces many forms of pre-capitalist or interpersonal modes of power when profitable (Chibber, 2013, pp. 123, 134). That is why, the existence of those relations cannot be taken as proof of Capital having failed or betrayed its universality in the colonial world, but rather the opposite is true: "The continued salience of archaic power relations, the

resort to traditional symbols, the resilience of caste and kin-based political coalitions, and so forth— all this can be shown to be consistent with the universalizing tendency" and "capital simply does not care about workers' local culture as long as it does not interfere with the accumulation process." (Chibber, 2013, pp. 125, 207, 236). In a similar way to this misunderstanding of the universalizing tendency of Capital, the category of abstract labour is also misread in two ways to prop up the difference between the East and the West. On one hand, it is taken as a term that designates the homogenization of the labour force through deskilling and dismantling of social hierarchies (Chibber, 2013, pp. 136-137, 140-141). On the other hand, it is criticized as a concept that is too abstract and unable to handle the infinite diversity of many forms of labour that causes the overlooking of particular differences (Chibber, 2013, pp. 130-131). The problem with both of these positions arises from their conceptualizations of the couple concrete/abstract: In both cases, they overlook the fact that "labor never becomes something other than concrete labor. It is impossible to separate concrete labor from abstract labor, except as an abstraction" (Chibber, 2013, p. 135). The error of the first position is that they expect that the emergence of universal abstract labour has to manifest itself as the dissolution of the concrete forms of differential/hierarchical organization of labour; in other words, they do not take it as an abstraction. The error of the second position is that they assume that the analyses incorporating the general/universal form of the abstract labour erase or disregard the heterogeneity of concrete forms of labour, whereas the abstraction precisely arises against the background of irreducibly heterogeneous diversity of labour by the unification through the emergence of the surplus-value; as Chibber argues, it does not erase the concrete, but it is nothing but an abstraction

from the concrete (Chibber, 2013, pp. 135, 137). Therefore, to sum up, the political-economic discussion, universalization of Capital does not have to mean homogenization or abolition of differences; it does not have to replicate its trajectory in the West everywhere, and "capital can reproduce social hierarchies just as readily as it can dissolve them" (Chibber, 2013, pp. 144, 148-150).

4.1.3 The metaphysical argument: Self-orientalism and the rejection of Enlightenment

The aforementioned rejection of abstraction in the context of the category of abstract labour can also manifest itself as a meta-thesis that states that abstraction and abstract Universal categories themselves are insufficient to capture the existing difference and diversity (as Chakrabarty does in the work entitled *Provincializing Europe* or Chatterjee in *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*), which brings us to the discussion about the metaphysical basis for the argument of difference (Chibber, 2013, p. 131). In the case of Chakrabarty, rather than bearing on a historical or structural difference between the East and the West, the argument is built upon the impossibilities inherent to abstraction and universality themselves, and rejects Western and Marxist traditions on the ground that they are too abstract and universal, that they erase historical difference by imposing "grand narratives" which are false by definition onto the local micro-histories (Chibber, 2013, pp. 210-211) Chatterjee goes even further as to state that reason itself which is embodied in the foundational Western ideas is colonial and it has to be rejected (Chibber, 2013, pp. 249-254).

This expansion of the argument of the insurmountable difference between the East and the West to the metaphysical domain also results in a kind of self-

Orientalism that manifests itself in two additional ways other than the exclusion of (or self-exclusion from) Reason: On one hand, since the Western modes of understanding subjectivity and agency are excluded, a fundamentally different essentialized "psychology" is ascribed to the Eastern agents (Chibber, 2013, p. 288). On the other hand, the rejection of universality results in the uncritical over-valorization and fetishization of anything local, indigenous, and particular (Chibber, 2013, p. 289).

Concerning the issue of subjectivity, subalternists assert that the Eastern subject is opaque to the Western frameworks, and has to be understood through the specificity of its own context, in which things like community, religion, honor etc. determine the subject (or the political agent) to such an extent that the concepts from the West like subjective interest or subjective desire become irrelevant; instead they propose forms of consciousness determined by the collective, such as Guha's "peasant consciousness" or Chatterjee's "community consciousness" (Chibber, 2013, p. 176).[66] Chibber correctly identifies that this kind of exclusion from universality is in fact a resurrection of Orientalism and nineteenth-century colonial thought (that excludes the savage from Reason or universality) from within the anticolonial tradition; and also shows through historical comparisons that Indian peasants also recognize and act according to an interest-motive, and in this sense, they are not different from peasants elsewhere (Chibber, 2013, pp. 161, 176). To this, it can be added from the previously introduced psychoanalytical perspective that since any identification or Symbolic determination is fundamentally impossible/incomplete,

[66] Note the unoriginality and self-Orientalism of this idea: individual for the West, herd mentality for the East.

and the subject is precisely the name for that point of failure through which the dimension of freedom and ethics emerges; the subalternists' definition of the Eastern subject determined by community (unable to access to the registers of subjective interest or desire) turns out to be an exclusion of the Eastern agents from the status of subjecthood (as well as from freedom and ethical responsibility) all together. In short, whereas the Western subject is the proper divided/barred subject ($), whose desire/interest can conflict with its symbolic mandate (or its essence); the Eastern subject emerges as the mythical non-barred "full" subject that corresponds perfectly to its essence, which is another name for the Substance (S).

The second issue of fetishization of the Particular stems from this essentialization of the subaltern subject. Since the Eastern subject is fundamentally different from the Western, it is assumed that it has another way of accessing the Truth that cannot be judged by the Western criteria, which gives way to what Chibber calls a "license for exoticism" with its "seemingly endless fascination with religion, ritual, spirits, indigeneity" etc. which he again correctly identifies as a species of self-Orientalism (Chibber, 2013, p. 238). Again, from a psychoanalytical perspective (and also a Marxist perspective), one might add that the fact that the symptomal element is privileged as a potential revolutionary agent in the sense that it embodies the point of impossibility of a given field (and not something external to the field[67]), but this does not mean that the symptomal element is necessarily revolutionary (e.g., working class *in-itself* is not the revolutionary proletariat which has become *for-itself*). This fundamental fact provides the basis for criticisms of all

[67] Against the Levinasian celebration and fetishization of Otherness, and the assumption of the radically Other as the site of emergence of ethics that pervades subalternist discourse.

kinds of spontaneism. As we have seen in the preceding chapters, first, the symptomal element is special not because of some positive property it possesses, but because it embodies the point of negativity of the field; and second, the emergence of the revolutionary subject from the symptomal element is an ethico-political process of construction (traversal of the social fantasy in psychoanalytical terms), or in Badiou's terminology, it is the result of the fidelity to a truth-process, therefore, it is never given or spontaneous (which is what makes Leninism relevant).

To conclude this discussion, while noting that the tradition of subaltern studies made outstanding contributions to the anticolonial theory, we can briefly sum up our argument against and the difference of our approach regarding similar concepts from the subaltern studies: With regard to universality, although through symptomal analysis subaltern studies correctly identifies the contradiction of the Universal (that it is colored by a particularity, for instance), it hastily arrives at the conclusion that since there is contradiction, the Universal itself must be false, in other words it must be a particular disguised as a Universal. This is an example of what Žižek calls *over-rapid historicization*, and it results in the essentialization of the East and the West as two different particulars, with no dimension of universality mediating between them (Žižek, 2008c, pp. 50-51). This results in an understanding of radical difference as a difference between two positive and mutually excluding essences, in contrast to our understanding of *absolute difference* as the difference of something from itself. As such, their framework overlooks the dimension of the *singular*, namely the fact that the difference between the Universal and the Particular is internal to the Universal itself; and in contrast to the false *abstract universality* of the hegemonic element, the symptomal element embodies the dimension of the true

concrete universality which stands for the lack of the Universal and opens up the way for the moment of transformation of the Universal through its own impossibility. That is why the symptomal element in this sense (as *part-of-no-part*) is radically different from the understanding of the "subaltern" in the subaltern studies tradition. A very important political implication of this is that their understanding of essentialized differences makes it impossible to think of political connections that can go deeper than tactical alliances between different oppressed or subaltern groups; whereas the dialectical materialist understanding allows us to see that although there is nothing common in the *positive* sense among different class antagonisms (and they are not reducible to another), there is nevertheless something *negative* (the Real as social antagonism) that connects all class antagonisms and class politics (be it against capitalism, patriarchy or colonialism) to one another.

4.2 Racial contract theories and whiteness studies

The second alternative theoretical framework that will be assessed is the theories of racial contract and whiteness, which locate themselves within the tradition of Enlightenment, albeit being critical of it. Whereas with subaltern studies, the issue requiring assessment was the apparent superficial similarities of our frameworks; with racial contract theories, the main reason is that this paradigm, which emerged in the USA and was imported into the context of Turkey, gained a dominant place as an explanatory framework through the work of Barış Ünlü entitled *The Turkishness Contract*. Although there are many more historiographically-oriented or fragmentary accounts regarding the ruling nation ideology, the founding crimes, and the regime of denialism, Ünlü's work is distinguished in the sense that it presents a widely

accepted systematic and structural account in addition to a historical presentation, which makes it similar in scope to this thesis, therefore warranting closer attention. In this part, we will only take the theoretical argument of Ünlü and the racial contract theories, and with the historical presentations, we will deal with in the following part among other historical arguments.

The main theoretical framework underpinning Ünlü's *Turkishness Contract* is the theory of the racial contract, which was put forward as a systematic explanation of white suprematism by C. W. Mills in the work entitled *The Racial Contract*; but it also draws from the area of study called the critical whiteness studies, which prefers a more phenomenologically-oriented approach as to uncover how the differences between the experience of the dominant identity (e.g., white) and the dominated identity (e.g., black) manifest themselves in social reality. Now, we will explore some examples from these fields as to prepare the ground for discussion of Ünlü's argument, and the general criticism of contract theories that will come afterward.

Let us start with the theory of the racial contract by Mills. Mills defines racism as an autonomous political system (comparing it to patriarchy in that sense), and he argues that this political system is based on a contract that excludes some part of the population, which makes it an exclusive contract among the members of the dominant identity; in other words, it is based on a racial contract (Mills, 2022, p. 3). The contract metaphor is directly borrowed from the justifications of sovereignty in the Enlightenment tradition (which can be found from Hobbes, to Rousseau, to Rawls), but it is not borrowed as a metaphor at all, as we will demonstrate shortly.

Mills openly states that he endorses both the Enlightenment (in the Habermasian sense, as an incomplete project to-be-completed) and the social contract theories (both the traditional versions and the Rawlsian version, although Mills prefers the former), not only as a metaphor to illustrate a structural fact but as an explanation of the *actual genesis* of society and social structures as well as subjectivities: "to explain the actual genesis of the society and the state, the way society is structured, the way the government functions, and people's moral psychology." (Mills, 2022, pp. 5-10, 129). The argument follows from the traditional social contract theories with a critical edge: Whereas the ideal social contract explains the passage from the state of nature to the civil state, the perverted racial contract explains the division of the civil state itself in terms of civil (white) and savage (non-white), and the distribution of the places and hierarchies per that division (Mills, 2022, pp. 12-13). We will problematize this division between the ideal social contract and the non-ideal racial contract later on, but first let us explore main claims and theses of Mills.

The three main claims of the racial contract theory according to Mills are, first, the existential claim that white supremacy exists, second, the conceptual claim that white supremacy constitutes by itself an autonomous political system, and third, the methodological claim that white supremacy can be theorized through contract theory (Mills, 2022, p. 7). Building upon this, Mills puts forward ten theses that explain the racial contract: Thesis 1 concerns the definition of domains of the racial contract and states that it is simultaneously a political contract that determines the state and the law, a moral contract that determines the unwritten moral norms, and an epistemological contract that determines the norms of cognition itself (Mills, 2022,

pp. 9-11). About the last dimension, Mills emphasizes that being white comes with an "epistemological ignorance" such that whites do not know what they are actually doing, that their mode of existence contains a necessary blind spot. This formulation comes uncannily close to one of the classic formulations of ideology by Marx ("they do not know it, but they do it"),[68] but as we will see later, Mills' avoidance of Marxism and the concept of ideology prevents such a connection (Marx 1976, pp. 166-167).

Thesis 2 concerns the factuality and historicity of the racial contract and states that it is an "historical actuality" that is both real and global, and that it explains the real genesis of society unlike the many variations of social contract theories (Mills, 2022, pp. 19-20). Mills argues that concepts such as *Herrenvolk* (dominant nation, *millet-i hakime*) and *Herrenrecht* (the right to dominate) are actually constructed through the historical reality of racial contract (Mills, 2022, pp. 28, 106). Thesis 3 concerns the political-economic dimension of the contract, which is said to be the "most salient" dimension, and states that it is an "exploitation contract that creates global European economic domination." Nevertheless, this emphasis on the "most salient" exploitative dimension is followed by a denouncement of Enlightenment in a way that includes Marxism on the grounds that these theories are blind to the realities of colonial conquest and, hence, inadequate for addressing the phenomenon (Mills, 2022, pp. 33-34).

Both thesis 4 and thesis 5 explain the division of the social field through the axis of civil-wild; resulting in epistemological normativities such as exclusion of the

[68] Originally: "Sie wissen das nicht, aber sie tun es." It is rendered as "they do this without being aware of it" in the cited translation.

non-white from the possibility of intellectual progress, the exclusion in terms of moral capability and responsibility, exclusion from the community, and lastly (the focus point of thesis 5), their logical extreme: exclusion of the non-white from personhood or humanity itself (Mills, 2022, pp. 41-54). Thesis 6 concerns the fundamental relation of the racial contract with the social contract, and contains very crucial observations as well as problems that we will address later: It states that the racial contract underwrites the social contract and as such it is the *truth* of it; and it creates not only racial exploitation but race itself in a continuous process of "being rewritten" (Mills, 2022, pp. 62-64). To illustrate this, Mills gives the examples of two periods of white supremacy: the *de jure* period in which the law directly and explicitly supported white supremacy, and the *de facto* period in which the rights were extended formally, but the racial contract implicitly determined this process and did not allow more than a *merely formal* extension of rights, hence maintaining the *de facto* white supremacy (Mills, 2022, pp. 73-75).

Thesis 7 concerns the deployment or the enforcement of the racial contract and states that it "has to be enforced through violence and ideological conditioning," in contrast to the social contract, which is assumed to be voluntaristic and neutral. Through this, an argument for a new conceptualization of state, the racial state instead of the liberal-democratic conceptualization, is put forward; in which state violence is defined as the means of enforcement of the racial contract and also the disciplinary mechanism that inculcates subjugation in non-whites (Mills, 2022, pp. 81-84, 89). Theses 8 and 9 concern the consciousness of the subjects under the racial contract; the whites, for whom racism is the norm rather than a deviation, and the non-whites, for whom the racial contract is explicit in determining the moral and

political practice of white agents (e.g., the "double-consciousness" of Du Bois) (Mills, 2022, pp. 91-93, 109). Lastly, thesis 10 simply states that the theory of the racial contract is superior as an explanatory framework compared to the raceless social contract theories (Mills, 2022, p. 120). We will deal with it in detail later, but when it comes to the issue of struggle against or a practical solution to the racial contract, Mills' approach remains on the level of discussing the possibility of white repudiation of the racial contract, namely the whites' ability to "opt-out" of the racial contract (Mills, 2022, p. 106-107).

What is called the critical theories of whiteness take their impetus from some of the dimensions presented by the racial contract theory, such as the epistemology of white ignorance, the criticism of merely formal equality under liberal democracy, and the persistence of structural racism, and tries to provide a framework that explains how white supremacy reproduces itself (Owen, 2007, p. 205). This theory is also developed through the example of the USA and explicitly states that it concerns the fields in which a standard of formal equality or liberal democracy exists (Owen, 2007, p. 203). Owen is also explicit about the liberal Habermasian framework of his theory (as is Mills), and he provides a clear theoretical presentation that we can engage with later on. His account is based on the definition of structure coming from Anthony Giddens and the theory of communicative action of Habermas. Concerning the first definition, he states that whiteness is a structuring property that "will condition the cognitive and evaluative presuppositions individuals possess, thus shaping their perceptions of and judgments concerning the social world" (Owen, 2007, pp. 207-208). He combines this structural definition of whiteness with Habermasian theory of communicative action in which

the dimension of consent forms the normative basis and the foundational form of social coordination in the "process of achieving intersubjective understanding," whereas the dimension of influence is derivative and secondary to consent; and argues against white supremacy on the basis of this normative distinction (Owen, 2007, p. 211). Owen explains the reproduction of structural whiteness through the again Habermasian concept of "life-world," which designates the "background" both in the sense of the ground in which the social agent's action is inscribed and in the sense of the socio-cultural facts that provide the basis of its action (Owen, 2007, p. 211). Through this definition, Owen argues that whiteness exists in the background life-world and it reproduces itself "behind the back" of social actors (Owen, 2007, pp. 212-213). After all these definitions, when it comes to the practical side of things, namely the issues of political action and responsibility, Owen states that "the responsibility (...) lies with each and every member of those social systems" with the qualification that whites have more responsibility, to which we will return in our criticism against contract theories (Owen, 2007, pp. 218-219).

One additional example from the area of whiteness studies that we will briefly consider is Lipsitz and the theory of "possessive investment in whiteness" which takes its starting point from similar principles as the previous two examples (such as whiteness being the unmarked category that can remain blind to itself) but gives much more focus to the economico-political dimension of racism and its embodiment in institutions (Lipsitz, 1995, p. 369). He argues that racism systematically creates and sustains itself through a "possessive investment in whiteness," which both relies on and generates real political and economic advantages (Lipsitz, 1995, p. 371). That is why, Lipsitz argues, through many

institutional examples or racism within social-democracy, that racism is not individual but it is embodied in the institutions and practices that govern the distribution of social and economic assets (Lipsitz, 1995, pp. 372-381). When it comes to the proposition for a solution, Lipsitz resorts to a rhetoric of knowledge and recognition, and how those who are white can "become part of the solution if we recognize the degree to which we are already part of the problem" (Lipsitz, 1995, p. 384).

The theoretical core of Ünlü's *Turkishness Contract* is a synthesis of the theories of racial contract and critical whiteness studies, which were explored very briefly above and in detail by (Ünlü in his work) and, as such, inherits their structural weaknesses (Ünlü, 2018, pp. 29-78). Paralleling the definitions of structural racism and racial contract, he puts forward a theory of structural Turkishness and Turkishness contract that does not consist in individual racism etc. but is a political system based on implicit participation, and *de facto* unwritten rules that generate and sustain a "privilege of Turkishness" (Ünlü, 2018, pp. 180, 231). It must be stated that what is really compelling about this work is not so much its theoretical rigour and solidity but the excellent illustration of the phenomenon it presents through many historical examples. And this is in fact a shared problem of theories that are on the last instance based on liberal-democratic understandings of the society, a property which racial contract theories and whiteness studies share: As long as we consider their "descriptive" side, namely their phenomenological, anthropological, and historical arguments, they are indeed very compelling and full of novel insights; but when we come to the ontological and epistemological theorization of the problem

and the ethico-political dimension of practical intervention against it, they reveal their shortcomings.

Let us state the conclusion first: Similar to the subalternists, the racial contract theories and the critical whiteness theories are pretty adept at *symptomal analysis*, in uncovering how a present "neutral" universality is, in actuality, colored or overdetermined by one of its particular subspecies, in other words, making the symptom visible. However, as we have argued in the preceding chapters, symptomal analysis on the level of Symbolic constitutes only the first stage of psychoanalytical (and dialectical materialist) intervention; and it has to be supplemented with an intervention to the Real dimension of *jouissance*; namely the traversal of the fantasy that abolishes the current organization of *jouissance*. All of these theories that are based on versions of social contract theories or normative social communicative theories such as that of Habermas which presume the primacy of *consensus* over *dissensus* miss the same thing: the Real of social *jouissance*, viz. social antagonism. In addition to causing an aversion to Marxism and confining these theories to pacifism, this blindness to class struggle also makes them inevitably regress to a *myth* (of social/racial contract or of the normative basis of communication) since they are unable to face the Real of social antagonism in its purely negative character.

About Ünlü's work, there is a specific point that has to be discussed that does not apply to other examples that we are examining, namely the fact that the theoretical framework of racial contract and whiteness studies emerged as an explanatory framework of a significantly different organization of society and racism than those of Turkey (namely, USA). Of course, this criticism could be dismissed on the basis that it could be made against all theories that originate in different contexts.

However, the fundamental problem is not that the theory is coming from a foreign context, but it is the fact that neither the state of formal equality nor the dominance of denialism is the same in the USA and Turkey. It is customary in Turkey to assume that everything is perfected elsewhere so that the theories that work for another context should be more than enough to the explain the situation here. But, in contrast to many other things, the regime of denialism is actually perfected in Turkey maybe more than any other place in the world, and in this sense, the theories of racial contract and critical whiteness are simply unequipped to be deployed in a context like Turkey in which denialism dominates. One of Mills' observations is very much to-the-point here: Against the counterfactuals like "what if Nazis somehow won and erased all the evidence" Mills calmly states that we are actually living exactly in that world with regard to many genocides; and we might add that one only has to observe that Turkey with its ruling nation ideology and the regime of denialism is one of the reasons we are in that world (Mills, 2022, p. 104). Therefore, whereas the pacifist propositions and appeals to understanding and consensus that are proposed by these theories are already problematic as we will see, they become much more absurd when applied to the context of Turkey.

If we return to the common problems of contract theories, one of the most prominent emerges as the unsurpassable dualism between the ideal social contract and the particular/perverted racial contract found both in Mills and Ünlü (Mills, 2022, p. 5; Ünlü, 2018, p. 80). Since the democratic social contract is kept as an ideal point of reference, it becomes possible to criticize any given concrete social formation as being a deviation from it by engaging in symptomal analysis (for instance, noting how the social contract is supposed to be among all people whereas

the racial contract is exclusively among the white people, or the social contract should be neutral and voluntaristic whereas the racial contract is partial and enforced). The problem with this is that, as long as the proper social contract is kept as an exceptional ideal point of reference, it is impossible to pass beyond the level of symptomal analysis, i.e., describing how the ideal social contract does not exist. This is what Žižek calls false eternalization/universalization, in which a trans-historical essence is extracted by dismissing all the contradictions as deviations and contingencies (Žižek, 2008c, pp. 50-51). However, instead, if we recognize that the impossibility of actually existing contracts to incarnate the ideal social contract is the inherent impossibility of the social contract itself; so that in the "beginning," there is not a rational decision (contract or consensus) that founds the Law, but rather an arbitrary and senseless violence (the founding crime) that posits the tautology "Law is Law." Therefore, their analysis does not reach the level of social *jouissance*, the foundational and systemic violence of society (both in the sense of the "so-called primitive accumulation" meaning the colonial regime and the founding crimes, and in the sense of class struggle or social antagonism) that gave way to or sustains the current form of organization of social enjoyment (Marx, 1976, pp. 874-875).

Another problem with the contract theories is that although they are situated against structural inequality, they imply a deliberate separation from and distancing from Marxism, in such a way that they might accept that there might exist many different varieties of structural inequalities and their respective contracts, they skip over the fact that there might also be a "bourgeois contract." In the case of Mills, this separation takes the form of an active polemic that takes as its opponent both white liberalism and Marxism. In addition to equating them countless times, he charges

Marxism with dealing with upholding the idea of “colorless classes” and reducing society to “just a structure of workers and capitalists;” which betrays either an ignorance or a deliberate misrepresentation of Marxist literature for a work written in the end of 1990s (Mills, 2022, pp. 94, 111, 113, 121, 131, 126).

The last major problem with the frameworks that depend on contract theories or social consensus-based theories is the previously alluded fact that when it comes to addressing the problems and developing solutions, since they reject the social antagonism and revolutionary theory in a fundamental way, virtually all of them resort to similar rhetorics of pacifist and democratic change through raising awareness, education of the masses, etc. as well as pleas to the powerful to relinquish their privileges. Owen's discourse, which relegates responsibility to everyone, is very symptomatic in this respect. Only the verbs that he uses in one paragraph when he discusses what is to be done against racism are sufficient to demonstrate my point: “unmasked,” “challenged,” “disrupted,” “dismantled,” “need to be transformed,” “called out,” “critiqued,” “resisted,” and “challenged” again (Owen, 2007, p. 214). This is, of course, topped-up with appeals to those in power like as “whites can be especially effective in promoting the necessary structural transformations because they are in a structural position of power,” and cautions against being too revolutionary, such as “focusing too much on the idealized telos of a world where racial distinctions no longer exist is misguided” or “a critical theory seeks to identify the concrete possibilities contained in the present in order to reshape the social order so that it possesses a greater degree of justice, if not perfect justice” (Owen, 2007, pp. 214, 219). In contrast to this “modest” approach, we can remind our definition in the preceding chapters that a revolutionary theory seeks the point of the Real

impossibility (truth) of the present order, and abolishes the present order through the actualization of that impossibility. As Žižek argues, the task of revolutionary politics consists "not in elaborating a proliferation of strategies for how to 'resist' the predominant dispositif from marginal subjective positions, but in thinking about the modalities of a possible radical rupture in the predominant dispositif itself" (Žižek, 2012, p. 994). The case is not different with Mills, who, when it comes to the issue of practical action, also basically proposes a cause for better mass education and better laws, as well as a "need to see differently, ridding ourselves of class and gender bias," by effect of which more and more "white renegades" will "opt-out" of the racial contract and the gap between the ideal of social contract and the reality of racial contract would become narrower (Mills, 2022, pp. 106-108, 123, 132).

To sum up, the contract and consensus-based theories that constitute the second alternative theoretical strand considered in this work reveal themselves to be not materialist (in the sense that they reject the antagonism as Real and obfuscate the impossibility of the social through various myths) nor revolutionary (which is directly attested by the solutions they propose). However, we have also noted that as long as they are considered descriptively and not for their theoretical power of explanation, there are many merits to them, and we are also going to draw from the historical analyses in Ünlü's work later on.

To conclude the discussion of the theoretical alternatives, we can compare the subalternist understanding to the understanding of racial contract and whiteness studies: Whereas in the subalternist tradition, any possibility of any relation between the Universal and the Particular is denied (through the reduction of the couple into two mutually opposed particular essences), which blocks the way for the

understanding of antagonism as Real; in the contract theories and theories based on consensus, the normative Universal (the ideal social contract) is already assumed to be the common ground that the conflict between the Universal and the Particular (the non-ideal racial contract) is going to be resolved, hence again resulting in the rejection of class struggle. In contrast, we state against the second group that the conflict is internal to the Universal itself, and against the first group that falsity of this *abstract universality* does not mean that universality itself is disqualified, but rather this impossibility of the Universal constitutes the very site of struggle for the emergence of *concrete universality*. These three approaches are based on three distinct responses to the thesis of the Dialectic of Enlightenment: The subalternist tradition directly rejects the Enlightenment, the racial contract and whiteness studies embrace the Habermasian normative framework that regards Enlightenment as an unfinished project and tries to discard its "bad" excess, whereas our dialectical materialist framework is based on the Lacanian response that underlines the immanence of the excess (the impossibility, social antagonism as Real) to the project of Enlightenment as its truth (Žižek, 2012, p. 159; Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002).

We can present this constellation through the unified theory of the four discourses and formulae of sexuation: First, at the impossible and exceptional place of the primordial Father as the *jouisseur*, namely the Master's Discourse, there is the mythical entity which is a point of reference of both the subaltern studies and the contract-consensus theories: capitalist democracy. With relation to this Master, the contract-consensus theories are characterized by the obsessional position of the University Discourse, which is betrayed by their attempts to make the big Other (the ideal social contract) exist by finding explanations and legitimations for the

contradiction of the existing social orders with the ideal presumed by the contract or consensus. On the other hand, in the position of the Hysteric's Discourse, there is the subalternist tradition that is preoccupied with exposing the falsity of the Master, how "he also doesn't have *it*," which leads to a search for a new Master figure which is found in the spontaneity of the local and the indigenous. The questions "which is better" or "which is worse" are to be answered in a classic Leninist way, "both are worse," from our dialectical materialist position that deploys the fourth logic, that of the Analyst's Discourse. Against the *false universalization* of the contract and consensus theories, it states that the contradiction is not an exception to the Universal but it is immanent to it; and against the *over-rapid historicization* and the dismissal of universality of subaltern studies, it emphasizes the ahistorical character of the social antagonism as Real, as the knot of the *concrete Universal*.

4.3 Historical arguments

Having examined the systematic theoretical approaches, we will now turn to the more particular arguments that historically address or relate to the subject matter of this work. In other words, we will address some historical explanations given to account for the genesis and dominance of the ruling nation ideology and the colonial question in the context of Turkey, especially with its relation to the left. It has to be noted that various other historical sources are incorporated into the main argument of the text in the following chapters, but they are not included here for the reason that they do not attempt to provide a general explanation, instead they are either relevant for more specific discussions or they are strictly historical works.

One preliminary observation that we can make is that the works considered are mostly concerned with the ruling nation ideology and the colonial question in the context of the Kurdish issue and the Turkish identity and its nationalism, and the references to the Ottoman imperial heritage (the *millet system* as well as the Muslim identity and ideology underpinning it) and the founding crimes are limited and they are mainly used to provide a background. The focus on the Kurdish issue is obviously natural in the sense that it embodies the primary contradiction of the current conjuncture in Turkey; but as we will demonstrate later on, focusing on it in isolation might cause us to miss the structural continuities spanning different historical periods as well as the relevance of (un-)*dead* issues like the founding crimes for today's conjuncture.

Güllistan Yarkın's text entitled *Irksallaştırılmış Toplumsal Rejim* is theoretically positioned in the traditions of critique of institutional racism that we have briefly explored before, which will not be discussed again. The main aim of the paper is to present a criticism of the common nationalist apology that "there is no racism in Turkey," in which racism is understood in a very narrow sense. After introducing a survey of the literature on racism, and showing how the definition of racism has changed from the nineteenth century until today; Yarkın argues through the framework of Bonilla-Silva that there is a "Turkish-supremacist relation of domination that the Sunni-Muslim Turks enforce on the autochthonous peoples of this geographical region" and that this is a "colonial relation of sovereignty" (Yarkın, 2021, pp. 175-177). To demonstrate this, Yarkın refers to Deringil and Eldem's work about the Ottoman colonialism of the nineteenth century, and underlines the fact that the colonial regime was present in the practice of Muslimification of the populations

as well as the subordination of the non-Muslim populations to the Muslim population (*millet-i hakime*) (Yarkın, 2021, pp. 178-179). In addition, Yarkın also emphasizes the fact that the Kurds were initially included in the dominant nation on the virtue of their being Muslim in opposition to *gavur*s that have a "book" (Christians) and *kafir*s without a "book" (Kızılbaş), and gained a structural advantage over them (Yarkın, 2021, p. 179). Yarkın also mentions the role of the founding crimes like the Armenian genocide in the consolidation of the dominant nation, which Muslim nations of different ethnicities, like Kurds, also participated in and profited from (Yarkın, 2021, pp. 177, 180). After providing this background, the remaining portion of the article deals with the Kurds being excluded from the dominant nation and being subjected to practices of colonization, and demonstrates through brief examples (such as *Şark Islahat Planı* and Dersim massacre) that the Kurds have become the other of the colonial regime. Although a very valuable historical analysis, and it shows the colonial mentality and the practices of the two periods before and after the Armenian Genocide; it does not establish the structural connection between the two and does not question the actuality of the questions of the former period for the latter (Yarkın, 2021, pp.180-185).

Another scholar that addresses the issue of the ideology of the ruling nation, as well as its relationship with the left, is Yeğen. In the article titled *Turkish Nationalism and the Kurdish Question*, Yeğen undertakes an analysis of Turkish nationalism as a "discourse" and attempts to provide an account of its genesis in addition to a description its fundamental orientations towards non-Turks (Yeğen, 2007, pp. 119, 143). The main argument is that many forms of Turkish nationalism can see Kurds (but not non-Muslims) as "future Turks" because being Muslim is the

implicit precondition of being a Turk (Yeğen, 2007, p. 119). To demonstrate this implicit precondition, Yeğen argues that throughout history, the definition of the dominant nation changed, but being Muslim always stayed as a precondition. According to this argument, first, İT (*İttihat ve Terakki*) transformed the original understanding of the *primary element* (*unsur-u asli*) into *millet-i hakime* in a turn towards nationalism (Yeğen, 2007, pp. 123-124, 144). It has to be noted that this assumption, although adequate to demonstrate the persistence of the condition of being Muslim, also makes invisible the colonial practices of the Ottoman state in and before the nineteenth century against the non-Muslim populations which Yarkın mentions, and we will also present later. The second transformation in the logic of dominant nationalism, according to Yeğen, happened in the transition from İT to the Kemalist nation-state (Yeğen, 2007, p. 126). But as Yeğen demonstrates with examples from the discourses in the Turkish War of Independence, throughout all these transformations, the reference to Islam and the Muslim element as the dominant element never changes (Yeğen, 2007, p. 126). Therefore, Yeğen correctly demonstrates that "Muslimhood has been the key to achieving Turkishness" and was baked in the definition from the start; and symmetrically, that "non-Muslimhood was seen as 'the natural' obstacle to achieving Turkishness." (Yeğen, 2007, p. 138).

Regarding the relationship of the left to the colonial question, Yeğen presents a historical survey of the discourse of the Turkish left towards the Kurdish problem in another article titled *The Turkish Left and the Kurdish Question*. After stating that this problem emerged because Kurds resisted the "national framework" enforced by the state, Yeğen presents a historical survey which we will briefly summarize (Yeğen, 2016, p. 1). Starting from the TKP of 1920 and its conformity

with the republican ideology in which the Kurdish problem is seen as a remnant of feudalism or a problem of backwardness; Yeğen quotes TKP's stances on the Kurdish rebellions like Sheikh Said rebellion of 1925, Ararat rebellion of 1930, and Dersim rebellion in 1938, all of which share the point of view of the ruling nation in dismissing them as reactionary (Yeğen, 2016, pp. 5-6). Afterward, Yeğen recounts the landmarks of the history of the left in Turkey in which the Kurdish question played an important role, such as the period starting with the establishment of TİP in 1961 and the *Doğulular* ("Easterners") group in it, the appearance of SD (*Sosyalist Devrim*, Socialist Revolution) and MDD (*Milli Demokratik Devrim*, National Democratic Revolution) split, the split of Aydınlık, 1971 coup and the killing of all the elite cadres, and the emergence of the "reformists" and "frontists" in the following period (Yeğen, 2016, pp. 7-15). After considering different organizations' views on the Kurdish problem, and the situation after 1980, Yeğen produces a periodization of the relationship of the left in Turkey with the Kurdish question: The encounter period of the mid-1920s, the embracement period of 1960-1970, the separation period of late-1970s and the divorce period of post-1980 (Yeğen, 2016, pp. 15-16). As much as this argument appears valid, it is lacking in two significant respects: First, it does not establish a connection with the period before 1920, nor does it establish a connection with the issue of Muslimhood, which is developed in his other article. Second, it does not account for the conditions of the emergence of the Kurdish Freedom Movement from within the left movement in Turkey.[69]

[69] On this topic, Jongerden and Akkaya has very valuable works, which will be utilized in our main argument.

Taner Akçam's *Yüzyıllık Apartheid* is another work that warrants an examination as it provides a systematic approach towards the colonial regime in Turkey. This work does not feature an explicit theoretical framework or explanation and constructs its thesis mainly through historical argumentation. This shared characteristic with the other analyzed works entails the same shortcoming: While it is very accurate descriptively, it cannot provide a structural explanation, nor can it provide a positive argument about the possibilities of transformation. The work puts forward four main theses, two descriptive and two prescriptive. The central thesis (thesis 1) states that the still-existing regime in Turkey is an Apartheid regime that was established through the War of Independence, and the second thesis, as a corollary to the first, states that the War of Independence reveals itself to be a civil war (and not an anti-imperialist war) (Akçam, 2023, pp. 15-16, 93). Theses three and four on the other hand, prescribe solutions to the problem put forward in the first two theses: Thesis three argues that the period between 1918 and 1938 should be rewritten as the formative era of the Apartheid regime, and as a conclusion, thesis four argues that a critical "distancing" must be undertaken regarding this period and the founding figures like Mustafa Kemal (Akçam, 2023, pp. 17-19). Akçam's description of the Apartheid regime as a three-layered "caste system" that is comprised of Muslim Turks, Muslim non-Turks, and non-Muslims from top to bottom is very accurate, and it is supported by a multitude of historical evidence as well as an analysis of the specific configurations of power relations between the castes, successfully demonstrating the actuality of the colonial system (Akçam, 2023, pp. 19-20, 22-35). The main problem with this argument is that, while criticizing the academia for erasing the history of the Apartheid prior to 1924, Akçam develops an

ambiguous position regarding the pre-1918 period in the sense that he positively identifies the establishment of the Apartheid with the post-1918 period and states that Ottoman *millet* system was less strict because it was based on religion, while also claiming that Apartheid was not a radical break from the previous regime[70] (Akçam, 2023, pp. 43, 21, 22). This approach, while correctly emphasizing the colonialist character of the Kemalist republic against the founding myths such as the War of Independence, risks overlooking the structural continuity with the previous periods. But more problematic than the descriptive theses are the prescriptive ones: While formulating the theses in a passive voice (the period 1918-1938 should be historiographically rewritten, and a "distance" should be taken regarding the period), Akçam remains symptomatically silent about the questions of how and who. This is the point where Akçam's implicit liberal consensus-based spontaneous political philosophy (similar to Habermasian contract theories) transpires. As shown in the previous chapters, neither the rewriting of the past, nor "taking a distance" are neutral and non-violent acts: On the contrary, the given form of organization of national *jouissance* is established through founding violence and sustained through the continuous systematic violence, and rewriting of the past entails nothing less than a revolutionary act (that disturbs the status quo) undertaken by a revolutionary subject who can "distance" (in Akçam's words) itself from the hegemonic ideology, which reveals itself to be the *part-of-no-part* (symptomal element). This is the point that is repressed by Akçam's argument, and it returns as the passive voice and the conspicuous absence of the subjectivity or political action (as was shown, the

[70] He claims that "the period after 1918 is nothing but the continuation of the previous period under new conditions" (Akçam, 2023, p. 132).

perverse erasure of subjectivity, namely self-instrumentalization, is a hallmark of false objectivism of the University Discourse). All in all, while correctly capturing and describing various mechanisms and manifestations of the colonial system, the implicit reliance on the liberal framework makes Akçam's theory blind to the dimension of *jouissance* (social antagonism as Real), rendering him unable to formulate the means and the actor of his proposed transformation.

Lastly, we are going to consider the historical and descriptive parts of Ünlü's argument in the *Turkishness Contract*, which will provide very valuable insights as well as a historical ground for the following argument. Ünlü enumerates the three main terms of the Turkishness Contract as follows: First, being Muslim and Turk; second, not telling the truth about what was done to the non-Muslims; and third, not telling the truth about the Kurds (Ünlü, 2018, pp. 14-15). Setting aside the problems of formulation as a contract or enumeration as rules, this proposition correctly captures the fundamental tenets of the ruling nation ideology.

When it comes to the historical part of his argument, Ünlü also states that the root of the Turkishness Contract is to be found in the Muslim Contract. But we already arrive at our first split here since Ünlü argues that the Muslim Contract was not fundamental, but it was already a derivative of the Ottoman Contract that preceded it. Ünlü argues that in the period after Tanzimat until Hamid, between the years 1839 and 1876, it was the Ottoman Contract that dominated, and it was Hamid's reign that corrupted it and made the transition into the Muslim Contract (Ünlü, 2018, pp. 84, 91). In addition to overlooking the colonial policies that were applied to the non-Muslim populations on the basis of a perfectly existing Muslim Contract prior to Hamid's reign, this argument incorrectly assumes that an Ottoman

Contract was able to be established in the post-Tanzimat period. Additionally, Ünlü argues that the Muslim Contract was a "bottom-up" contract so that the massacres like 1895-1896 as well as the Adana Massacre of 1909 were in a sense spontaneous and not directed by the state (Ünlü, 2018, pp. 97-98, 111-112). Against this, it must be stated that although there is a spontaneous component of the ruling nation ideology, this does not discount the determining role of the practices and the ideology of the state in the formation of the ruling nation ideology and, therefore, the aforementioned massacres. The analysis of this period also falls short on the issue of the Armenian revolutionary parties, which Ünlü regards simply as "left nationalist" parties and does not include them in his analysis further than Dashnak party's relations with İT (Ünlü, 2018, p. 95).

Ünlü regards the period after İT power, especially after the 1913 coup, as the period in which Ottomanism fully dissolves into Turk-Islamism, and the economic policy of creation of a national economy based on a Turk-Muslim bourgeoisie overcomes the liberal economic tendency (Ünlü, 2018, p. 123). The Armenian genocide is given as an example of wealth transfer through which this aim is carried out (Ünlü, 2018, p. 135). Despite this passage to Turk-Islamism, Ünlü argues that the Muslim Contract dominated until 1922, and from 1915 through 1922, played a crucial role in the ethnic cleansing of Anatolia from the non-Muslims, attested by Muslim-only Erzurum and Sivas congresses as well as the first national assembly (Ünlü, 2018, pp. 123-124, 153, 182, 155). Ünlü also notes that as long as the Muslim Contract dominated, the Kurds were included in it (Ünlü, 2018, p. 149).

According to Ünlü, the passage to the Turkishness Contract proper happened after the establishment of the Turkish Republic and the 1924 constitution;

in which the condition of being Turk is *added* to the condition of being Muslim (which still remains a *sine qua non* of the contract) (Ünlü, 2018, pp. 163, 166-7). Although Ünlü correctly pinpoints the structural transformation in the ruling nation ideology, there is not much of a structural reason given as to why this fundamental transformation had to take place. Ünlü views this transformation under a more general trend of secularization and modernization, and as we will see in our argument, misses the point that in the post-genocide situation, the social organization of *jouissance* was disturbed because the with the extermination of the non-Muslim population, the social fantasy lost the object that embodied the impediment (its "conceptual Jew") that allowed to obfuscate its own lack, hence needed a new one. After this transformation into the Turkishness Contract, Ünlü observes that the other that has to be subordinated to the ruling nation becomes the Kurds. Ünlü demonstrates this through the examples of Kurdish rebellions and resulting massacres like Koçgiri (1921) and Dersim (1938), which he considers the Turkish reconquest of Alevi Kurdistan; and Sheikh Said (1925) and Ararat (1930) as the reconquest of Sunni Kurdistan; which is followed by a period of non-activity in Kurdistan (Ünlü, 2018, pp. 286-287).

This period of silence is followed in the 1960s by the emergence what is called "the crisis of Turkishness" by Ünlü; which designates the crisis in the face of increasing difficulty or even impossibility to sustain the Turkishness Contract negatively, in a mode of non-knowing, non-seeing etc. (Ünlü, 2018, p. 284). Ünlü correctly identifies that this crisis emerges from within the left movements, and gives out a brief survey of the Kurdish issue in the left in Turkey. In addition to mentioning the *Doğulular* in TİP and the establishment of the DDKOs in 1969, Ünlü also

mentions the emergence of the "Kurdistan is a colony" thesis from names like Sait Kırmızıtoprak (Dr. Şivan), as well as theses like "a (semi-)colony cannot have a colony" defended by organizations like Dev-Yol and TKP; a discussion which will also be one of the crucial themes in our analysis (Ünlü, 2018, pp. 288-291). Here Ünlü reaches a hasty conclusion that "almost all" left organizations of the 1970s accepted the right of nations to self-determination (Ünlü, 2018, p. 292). This assertion might appear valid at face value, but becomes untenable when we examine how many organizations that accepted it on paper found ways to reject it in practice. Ünlü concludes the argument by stating that the period of the crisis of Turkishness reached its maturity with the emergence of the PKK in the late 1970s as well as the emergence of ASALA and the question of denial of the Armenian genocide in the 1980s and continues to determine the conjuncture until today (Ünlü, 2018, pp. 294-297).

One more discussion from this work that has to be mentioned is the two paradigmatic examples that Ünlü gives to demonstrate what happens when someone tries to go against the Turkishness Contract: First, İsmail Beşikçi, as the "first Turk who broke the contract," who dared to speak the truth about the Kurds and spent many years of his life in prison for that, in addition to being refused the recognition he deserved from the mainstream academia (Ünlü, 2018, pp. 314-324). The second example is Hrant Dink, an Armenian socialist journalist who dedicated his whole life to the issue of denialism and Armenian Genocide, and who was assassinated in 2007, in the end of a chain of events in which even the General Staff of the Turkish Military directly targeted him, which started out with his publication of the news that Sabiha Gökçen (the first "Turkish" woman war pilot, one of the many "spiritual

daughters" of Mustafa Kemal who had participated in the Dersim massacre) was, in fact, an Armenian orphan who was a survivor of the Armenian genocide (Ünlü, 2018, pp. 339-340). Again, setting aside the problems of the contract metaphor, these two examples perfectly illustrate the dominance of the ruling nation ideology in Turkey, in addition to the systemic violence that it deploys in order to sustain itself.

All in all, despite the overall accuracy of the historical examples and the adequate description of the unwritten rules of the ruling nation ideology, Ünlü's analysis falls short in several respects: First, due to its dependence on the consensus-based contract theories, it cannot properly account for the status of the social antagonism as Real, manifested in the dimensions of surplus-value and surplus-jouissance (which was introduced in the previous chapter), that form the basis of the colonial system in terms of economic exploitation/extraction and the systemic racist discrimination/violence. Second, due to the same formal problem, Ünlü's framework is unable to account neither for the necessity of revolutionary violence nor the emergence of revolutionary politics from the symptomal place as a response to the colonial system and the ruling nation ideology. As a common problem of all contract theories, this absence of the revolutionary option results in an appeal to formal equality amounting to a demand for a better contract, and it also entails the attribution of agency to the dominant classes, expecting them to relinquish their privileges. Third, since Ünlü's framework does not account for the unconscious component of ideology (national fantasy) or the superegoical dimension of the Law; the analysis falls short in identifying the continuity of the ruling nation ideology following its passage to the superegoical domain, evidenced by his claims that Ottoman contract was able to be established between the period between Tanzimat

and Hamid, or his characterization of Muslim contract as a bottom-up contract. As will be argued in the following chapters, Ottomanism was nothing but a façade to the ruling nation ideology after it passed to the superegoical domain, and the prerogative of the Islam *millet* had never been relinquished. Fourth, Ünlü's framework cannot account for the absolute structural equivalence of the Armenian issue and Kurdish issue, nor the emergence of the Kurdish Freedom Movement as a repetition of the Armenian revolutionaries; hence, also falling short in connecting the founding crimes and the regime of denialism with the prior colonial legacy of the *millet system*.

The following chapters will demonstrate the continuity of the ideology of the ruling nation (*millet-i hakime*), embodied in the national fantasy and national jouissance, throughout the Ottoman imperial-colonial regime and the republican national-colonial regime. They will also feature the analysis of the revolutionary left's emergence from the symptomal position against the ruling nation.

CHAPTER 5

PRE-1915: THE GENESIS OF RULING NATION IDEOLOGY AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE FIRST GENERATION OF REVOLUTIONARY LEFT

"Ottoman Bank is seized by the Federation (Dashnaksutyun) Committee,
The revolutionaries have placed explosives there…"

– from an Armenian revolutionary song

This chapter explores the genesis of the ruling nation (*millet-i hakime*) ideology and the beginning of the revolutionary left in Turkey that correspond to the two major elements of the historical argument of this thesis. In order to be able to understand the situation of the left movements in the twentieth century (post-genocide), namely the long denialist silence until '68 and the subsequent rupture that eventually resulted in the separation of the Kurdish left, it is necessary to consider the role of the Ottoman imperial and colonial heritage in the configuration of the logic of sovereignty and relations of power.

To this end, several arguments will be presented in this chapter: First, the emergence of the *millet* system created an imperial-colonial regime on the basis of the subordination of non-Muslim populations to both central and local Muslim powers. Second, throughout the centuries, this colonial regime of exploitation and expropriation gradually created a feudal-serf relation between the local Muslim and non-Muslim populations, integrating the Muslim populations into the ruling nation while excluding the non-Muslims to a symptomal position. Third, with the nineteenth-century Ottoman reforms, the logic of the *millet-i hakime* underwent a crucial transformation, as it was unsustainable side-by-side with the formal equalities

of Tanzimat reforms, it passed into the unwritten superegoical underside of the Law. This transformation provided the ground on which the later genocidal and denialist regimes would rise. Fourth, as the Armenians were pushed to the symptomal position more and more, they lost hopes of international intervention, an alliance with Kurds (which became a missed opportunity after Kurdish autonomy was crushed after the Bedirxan Beg revolt and the authority was passed to the local religious and tribal leaders), and the Ottoman modernization (as the formal equality did not alleviate the structural inequalities, but even worsened them), so that they turned towards their own resources. This resulted in the birth of the first generation of revolutionary left in Turkey, embodied in the Armenian Marxist parties who organized a mass armed struggle against both colonialism of the *millet-i hakime* ideology and capitalism. Lastly, the denialist national-colonial regime was established through an explosion of national *jouissance* culminating in but not limited to the Armenian Genocide, which functioned as the violent act of repression, erasure, and forgetting of the prehistory of the regime; both in the sense that it made invisible the so-called primitive accumulation that created the national-colonial regime, and in the sense that it destroyed the Armenian revolutionaries together with the Armenian nation, wiping off the history of the revolutionary struggle. The extermination of Armenians also caused a crisis in the organization of national *jouissance* since the national fantasy had lost its fantasmatic/mythical obstacle (its "conceptual Jew"), so the national *jouissance* was organized against the Kurdish nation, which now occupied the symptomal position in the new regime.

The first fact that should be acknowledged before the historical details is that the justification of sovereignty and the socio-economic power relations in the

Ottoman Empire is initially defined with reference to Islam, which comes with its own peculiar modes of relations: Externally, *fetih* (the right to conquer non-Muslim lands) and *ganimet* including enslaving and *cariye* (the right to expropriate non-Muslims including enslaving them); and internally, the *millet system* with *dhimma* (the status of non-Muslim population as "protected"[71]) and *jizya/haraç* (the taxes paid exclusively by non-Muslims in exchange for their lives) (Dadrian, 1995, pp. 3-5). These fundamental premises create such a situation that the logic of sovereignty and the constitution of the body politic in the Ottoman Empire and later Turkey becomes inexplicable through the theories based on the European experience, like social contract theories or Lefort's theory of democracy.

The general argument against the social contract theories has already been made, but we can add that, especially in the presence of the *millet* system (and the caliphate to some extent), there is not even a semblance of the notion of an all-encompassing subjecthood or citizenship, but on the contrary, a portion of the population (the *dhimmi*) is explicitly marked and excluded from the body politic, allowed to survive with limited rights as long as they pay the tribute for their lives. With regard to Lefort's understanding of democracy as a process that consists in the gradual emptying of the place of power, we can state that the place of power has always been occupied by the ruling (Islam) nation, and neither the reforms and attempts of modernization from Tanzimat until first constitutional era, nor the later more "radical" events like 1908 and 1923 –although resulting in changes in political regime– challenged the status of the ruling nation (Lefort, 1986, pp. 303-304). Eric Santner have already shown in his work that the Lefortian understanding of

[71] Because the life and possessions of a *kafir* (non-Muslim) is *halal*.

democracy as the emptying of the place of power (e.g., killing of the sovereign and the creation of national sovereignty) never succeeds without a remainder even in the paradigmatic European cases, and a surplus (of *jou*issance) that disturbs the purity of national sovereignty is necessarily produced (Santner, 2012). In the case of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, the emptying of the place of power never even happened and although the regime changed several times, the ruling nation as the occupant of the sovereign position never changed, resulting in an explosion of colonial, nationalist, and genocidal *jouissance* throughout history, materializing in the *millet* system, *millet-i hakime* logic, national fantasy, and systematic denialism after the genocide.

The two results of this colonial heritage of *millet* system correspond to the two main pillars of the historical argument of this thesis: The first result is the emergence of the revolutionary subject from the symptomal position within the colonial order, namely from outside the ruling nation; first from Armenian nation, then from Kurdish nation. The second result is the structural blindness of the left of the ruling nation towards the colonial situation and their Armenian precursors (as well as their Kurdish contemporaries/successors). As we will see, after the first generation of the revolutionary left ends with the genocide, the ruling nation ideology attains dominance to such an extent that the revolutionary left remains absent, and neither the Armenian Genocide nor the colonial question (with regard to Kurds) comes to the forefront in the period between 1915 and late 1960s. This connection of the Ottoman colonial heritage with the later conjunctures warrants an explanation of the *millet* system and an examination of its expression and evolution in the nineteenth century, especially in relation to Armenians and Kurds.

The *millet* system was a paradigm of government employed by the Ottoman Empire that partitions the population into distinct and mutually exclusive classes (*millet*[72]) on the basis of membership of religious community, governing each *millet* through its own religious leadership and, at the same time, organizing the *millet*s in a hierarchical order that determines the distribution of rights, duties, and privileges. This system is based on the absolute superiority of "the *millet*," *millet-i hakime* (the ruling nation), meaning the Muslim nation, over the non-Muslim *millet*s. It is, in this sense, an example of masculine logic of totalization-through-exception, a hallmark of racist social organizations. This division between the Muslims and the *dhimmi*[73] (the social Whole and the part-of-no-part) entailed a relationship of subjection in which not only cultural and socio-symbolic hierarchies were created, but equally importantly, it had a very strong economic base in terms of value extraction: On the one hand, the *millet* system facilitated the central government to organize an internal colonial economy, an economy of extraction, so that it allowed the government to exploit the non-Muslim *dhimmi* population through disproportionate taxation. On the other hand, through the hierarchies it creates, it facilitated the subjection of non-Muslims to local Muslim powers (such as feudal lords), creating a local dynamic of exploitation and domination that acts both as a second layer of extraction and a local oppressive/disciplinary apparatus against possible non-Muslim discontent.

[72] *Millet* (ملّة) literally means religion and religious community in Arabic (and Ottoman Turkish), and it is used in this sense in the Ottoman vocabulary. The use of the word in the sense of nation comes after the twentieth century, but even then, its primary meaning carried on. Thus, even in the modern context, the words "millet" and "milli" (national) have to be considered in this double sense. This ambivalence is also used as an advantage by the ruling nation ideology.

[73] "The dhimmis were "the protected and tolerated people" who accepted a subordinate status and who paid a poll tax as a price for their protection" (Barsoumian, 1997, p. 182).

The Armenian *millet*, one of the focal points of our analysis, was officially established in the fifteenth century by Mehmed II after the fall of Constantinople through the institution of the patriarchate,[74] and was represented by the patriarch who resided in Constantinople (Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 10 note 3, Nalbandian, 1975, p. 25, Sasuni,[75] 1992, p. 42). The Armenians, most of whom were peasants living in the rural areas, had *reaya*[76] and *dhimmi* status so they were subjected to the oppressive conditions described above, seen as nothing more than a tax revenue source by the government, and they were practically treated as serfs by local Muslim powers (Akın, 2021, p. 40, Nalbandian, 1975, p. 79; Barsoumian, 1997, p. 194; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 203; Kévorkian & Paboudjian, 2013, p. 65). As will be discussed through examples, the economic aspect of this domination revolved around the appropriation (or expropriation) of land and labour, for instance, in the form of Kurds and Circassians (who were Muslim hence included in the privilege of *millet-i hakime*) expropriating the lands of Armenians in the former case, and the forced labour (*corvée*) Armenians were subjected to in the latter case (Akın, 2021, p. 119). The only exceptions to this serf status were some places like Sassoun or Van where Armenians could have semi-autonomous *beylik*s side-by-side with Kurdish ones (Sasuni, 1992, p. 41). For centuries, Armenians had no institution other than the church (not even community schools) which served as their only means of

[74] Modern scholarship disputes this and dates the establishment of the Patriarchate between 1526 and 1543 (Barsoumian, 1997, p. 184).
[75] Sasuni's work is especially important for two reasons: Sasuni was a Dashnak militant active in the late Ottoman Empire, which gives his work a testimonial character. More importantly, as a work first published in 1931, it provides *ipso facto* proof against the denialist arguments that claim the information about the Armenian Genocide, the prior colonial regime, or the Armenian revolutionaries was unavailable at the time (Sasuni, 1992, p. 247).
[76] The most fundamental division in the Ottoman state structure was that between the rulers and the *reaya* (the ruled, lit. "herd") (Masters, 2021, p. 34).

organization (ibid.). This situation resulted in non-Muslims gradually losing their lands to Muslims through a cycle of heavy taxation-indebtment-expropriation and becoming landless peasants (*maraba*) which is in practice to equal to the status of serfdom (Barsoumian, 1997, p. 194).

Before delving into the historical details, the extent of the discrimination of the *millet* system or the sanctions against *gavur*s/*kafir*s that made the non-Muslim populations all the more vulnerable structurally should be noted: Most importantly, non-Muslims were both more heavily taxed than the non-Muslims and they were also subject to taxes that Muslims are exempt from such as *jizya* and *haraç* (Barsoumian, 1997, p. 182; Masters, 2021, p. 35).[77] As importantly, the non-Muslims were banned from bearing arms and their testimonies were not accepted in courts (Barsoumian, 1997, p. 183). They were also barred from holding offices in the government and taking duty in the military or navy (Nalbandian, 1975, pp. 25-26). In addition to these, there were countless examples of social and cultural markers that were forced upon the non-Muslims that ensure their visibility and inferiority: Their apparel and colors of their houses were determined (black), their houses could not be higher than that of Muslims, their religious rituals could not "disturb" Muslims (which meant that many churches could not have bells), they could not ride horses, and there were even restrictions pertaining to public baths such as the determination of the color of the towel and the prohibition of walking without pattens on (Barsoumian, 1997, pp. 182-183; Akın, 2021, pp. 57-58). In short, the *millet* system created a situation in

[77] Non-Muslims paid *öşür* for produce, *emlak* for property, *aghnam* for animals, all at a higher rate than Muslims; and they also paid exclusive taxes like the *jizya* (poll-tax, or head-tax) and *haraç*; and on top, they paid arbitrary taxes to local feudal lords like aghas (such as *hafir*) and performed *corvée* labour for them (Barsoumian, 1997, p. 193).

which a portion of the population was relegated to the status of a natural resource, or non-subjects (they occupied the symptomal position as the uncounted of the situation) who did not even have the right to have rights (if we pardon the anachronism of the formula), and who were permitted to live as long as the *jizya* could be extracted from them. In other words, the *millet* system functioned as long as the non-Muslims accepted inferiority and subservience to the *millet-i hakime* (Barsoumian, 1997, p. 183).

5.1 Pre-nineteenth century

Now, let us provide a rudimentary historical context to our argument. The period before the nineteenth century is out of our scope, but it is necessary to give a brief background in order to demonstrate how the emergence of the *millet* system gradually created the power asymmetry between the two subject nations (Armenians and Kurds), which were living under very similar conditions in the beginning. Before the Ottoman invasion, both Armenians and Kurds established various states and local feudal *beylik*s and underwent different series of invasions (Arabs in the seventh century, Seljuks in the eleventh century, etc.) (Nalbandian, 1975, pp. 12, 14). Whereas Kurds were most often organized as small local principalities, Armenians also established larger dynasties and kingdoms, such as the Bagratid dynasty in the ninth century and the New Armenia that lasted as late as the thirteenth century (Nalbandian, 1975, pp. 15, 17, 30). In this time span, although the religious and cultural differences between the two nations already existed, there was not a deep-seated relation of enmity or subjection between them; as they both fought against invasions of Arabs, Seljuks, Turks, and Mongols, they both revolted for

independence when there is an opportunity, occasionally fought among themselves and so on (Sasuni, 1992, p. 28). There was even an alliance formed in 1459 (decades before the proper arrival of the Ottoman sovereignty), an "alliance of Asia Minor" between the indigenous Muslim and Christian principalities (Diyarbakır principality, Sassoun principality, etc.) against the threat of invasions (Sasuni, 1992, p. 31).

This situation started to change after the fall of Constantinople and the rapid rise of Ottoman dominance on one side, and the rise of the Safavid Empire after Shah İsmail's victory over the Aq Qoyunlu and spreading of its reign over Armenia; resulting in an Ottoman-Safavid conflict that would last until 1639 (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 35, 17). In this period, both Armenians and Kurds preferred Safavids and sided with Shah İsmail, but Sunni Kurds soon grew discontent with İsmail's policies towards Sunnis (Sasuni, 1992, p. 36). It is at this point that for the first time, the Kurds started to come under the influence of the Ottomans and get integrated into the *millet-i hakime*, through the diplomatic work of İdris-i Bitlisi who organized the Sunni Kurds against Shah İsmail and negotiated the subordination of the Kurdish *beylik*s to the Ottomans (Sasuni, 1992, p. 37). Combined with Shah İsmail's defeat in Çaldıran in 1514, the period until 1530 became the period of integration of Kurdish feudal principalities to the Ottoman state in exchange for semi-autonomy (Sasuni, 1992, p. 15, Nalbandian, 1975, p. 17). This marked the beginning of the relationship of subjection between Kurds and Armenians determined by the *millet* system, in which most of the Armenian population (except in places like Sassoun, Zeitun, Khnus, Muş, Van, which will be important later) were kept under vassal status, subjected to the double yoke of Ottoman rule and local Kurdish powers (which were now sanctioned by the Ottomans) (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 66, 67). The Ottoman-Safavid

conflict heated up one more time during the reign of Shah Abbas, from whom Armenians and Kızılbaş Kurds sought help in 1603, and who took back Eastern Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1626, leading up to the Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin that determined the Ottoman-Safavid border (Sasuni, 1992, p. 40). Shah Abbas recognized the Armenian Karabakh *melik*s and left the rule of the borderlands to these principalities (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 18).

On the Ottoman side of the border, the Armenians were caught in the crossfire brought about by the *millet* system; the relationship of feudal domination between the Kurds and Armenians eventually developed into a situation in which Armenians either had to accept becoming "the subject of Kurds" or they had to migrate (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 57-58, 65). During the period between Selim I and Murad IV, the Kurdish principalities enjoyed relative independence in exchange for their services against Iran, but starting with Murat IV in 1638, Ottomans started to also crush the Kurdish lords and tribal leaders to some extent as to strengthen central authority (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 73-74). In the eighteenth century, Ottomans continued this policy by undertaking expeditions to Ararat and Azerbaijan during which they were defeated by Karabakh *melik*s in 1726 (Sasuni, 1992, p. 2). In this century, the only exception to the new dynamic of the *millet* system was the relative friendship between Armenians and Kurds in places like Sassoun and Shatah, but Armenians were already seen as a "subject nation" even by the friendly Kurds (Sasuni, 1992, p. 84). An Armenian proto-nationalism started to form in this century, and Armenians started to seek alliances among their neighbors (including Kurds) against the Ottoman rule. But the *millet* system had taken hold to such an extent that only the non-Muslim populations like Yezidi and Kızılbaş Kurds, and Assyrians agreed to the

alliance, whereas Sunni Kurds sided with the Ottomans (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 85-87). These alliance attempts did not bear any fruits and the *millet* system seeped deeper into the social edifice.

5.2 Nineteenth century

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the *millet* system and the *millet-i hakime* logic were in place for several centuries, and Armenians were subjected to systematic political and economic exploitation by the Ottoman government and the local Muslim powers (Sasuni, 1992, p. 68). However, up until this point, although it was in effect, the *millet* system was functioning in a very loose and heterogenous way which was very different that the form it took in the nineteenth century after the advent of centralization and bureaucratization, and it had not yet become absolutely determinant in the allocation and distribution of power. The nineteenth century constituted a turning point in two major respects: First, whereas the colonial regime of the *millet* system was perfectly explicit and sanctioned by the law until now, the reforms and modernization attempts undertaken by the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century made it so that the *millet* system and the privilege of *millet-i hakime* could no longer be explicit and legal, necessitating their transformation and preservation outside of the law. This change did not loosen the hold of the *millet* system, but on the contrary, especially when combined with the effects of centralization, strengthened it. In psychoanalytical terms, this transformation from written to unwritten law marks the point of passage of the ruling nation ideology from the logic of Law (Ego-Ideal) to that of superego (unwritten rules that determine when or against whom the explicit law can be broken), a process which gave the

ruling nation ideology its characteristic form, which eventually culminated in the Armenian Genocide and its offspring, the post-genocidal denialist regime surviving until today. Second, the nineteenth century was a turning point because of the emergence of the national question for all subject nations (including Muslims) and the numerous movements and rebellions it created against the colonial regime. At this point, non-Muslim nations such as the Armenian nation had already developed a national understanding to an extent and were going to be the site of the emergence of the first generation of revolutionary left, and Kurds were catching up quickly in terms of national consciousness (Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 9). A very important consequence of this was that, although the *millet* system was deeply entrenched, the rise of national movements caused it to be unsettled, and alliances against Ottomans among the subject nations, such as Armenians and Kurds, again became possible (and actual, to a small extent) in this century. But unfortunately, the historical opportunity of a large-scale alliance between two subject nations was missed as the ruling nation successfully subsumed the Kurds.

5.2.1 Passage to superego: Tanzimat reforms, bureaucratization, and centralization

One can start out by giving a brief overview of the attempts at modernization and centralization by the Ottoman regime. Pre-Tanzimat events included the *Sened-i İttifak* (Charter of Alliance) of 1808, which tried to strengthen the central authority by regulating the power of *ayan*s (local rulers) and the abolishment of the Janissaries (and the Bektashi order) in 1826 (Akın, 2021, pp. 46, 49). But the real wave of reforms came afterward, in the aftermath of a chain of events including the Serbian rebellion, the Greek revolution, The Russo-Turkish war of 1828-29 (in which the six

vilayets became an issue for the first time), and the 1838 trade agreement (Treaty of Balta Liman) between Ottoman Empire and Great Britain (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 25; Akın, 2021, p. 54; Barsoumian, 1997, pp. 177-179).

Tanzimat reforms of 1839 abolished the *de jure* unequal status of the *dhimmi,* and Islahat Ferman (Reform Edict) of 1856, for the first time, created a definition of equal citizenship regardless of religion and abolished *haraç*[78] (Akın, 2021, pp. 57, 64). The fact that the implications of these reforms went against the organization of the colonial regime as well as the fundamental justification of sovereignty that depended on the Islamic law, in other words, they were clearly "breaking with Islamic law and tradition,"[79] gave a "forced" character to these reforms; and made it so that even those who instituted these reforms did not fully believe in them, and therefore, they mostly remained on paper (Islahat itself was a response to Tanzimat remaining ineffective) (Barsoumian, 1997, p. 181; Dadrian, 1995, p. 19; Akın, 2021, pp. 58, 79). The new definition of citizenship entailed the equality of all regardless of religion before the law, whereas as we have seen, the *millet* system was based on religion and the supremacy of Islam, so that the equality of different religions could easily be seen as a repudiation of the supremacy of Islam itself (Barsoumian, 1997, p. 182; Akın, 2021, pp. 59, 66). It was evident that Tanzimat reforms could not be successful without a radical change in the Islamic understanding of the state, which was definitely not on the agenda (Barsoumian, 1997, p. 199).

[78] The reforms are considered only in the context of their implications for the *millet system* and *millet-i hakime* ideology.
[79] Equality before law of all citizens regardless of religion went against the fundamental tenets of the Islamic law that justified the millet system until now (Barsoumian, 1997, p. 181).

This conflict caused the aforementioned superegoical transformation in the logic of the ruling nation, exemplified by the infamous anecdote of "gavura gavur denmeyecek:"[80] Everyone knows that the non-Muslims are still *gavur* and the Muslims are the *millet-i hakime*, but the explicit law prohibits stating this fact, so it is necessary to "maintain the appearance," to keep the big Other ignorant. This perverse logic of fetishistic disavowal ("I know very well, but…") characterizes both the pre- and post-genocidal configurations of the ruling nation ideology, which amounts to the fact that the regime had become genocidal and denialist prior to the systematic massacres and the genocide taking place, and long before the official post-genocidal regime of denialism was established. Whereas the "public secret" of the post-genocidal configuration was obviously the genocide and the ongoing colonial oppression against non-Turks, the public secret of the Tanzimat period onwards was the fact that no matter what the explicit law declared, *gavur*s were still inferior, and the İslam *millet* had the unconditional prerogative to rule. This allows one to posit that although the *content* of the ruling nation ideology underwent many changes starting from this period, the denialist *form* (which is a species of the masculine University discourse) remained intact until today. This has very important consequences regarding the discussion about the necessity and contingency of the genocide: On one hand, the massacres and the genocide, as historical events, are undoubtedly contingent, which amounts to the fact that it could have been otherwise. But on the other hand, the structure of the ideology of the ruling nation, and the eruption of national *jouissance* that comes with its passage to the superegoical mode, necessarily engenders the genocidal and denialist logic. This aporia can be explained

[80] "[From now on] a *gavur* is not to be called a *gavur*."

by employing the distinction between linear-causal determination (such as determination-in-the-last-instance) and overdetermination (Žižek, 2014, pp. 27-28). Against the argument of pure contingency/historicity (over-rapid historicization), it should be argued that neither the systematic oppression, nor the systematic massacres and the genocide were pure chance events. On the contrary, they were structurally determined by the ruling nation ideology as it necessarily engenders a fantasmatic obstacle (the conceptual Jew, Armenians in our case). Against the argument of pure necessity (false eternalization/universalization), following Lenin's concept of conjuncture, it should be stated that the mechanism of this determination is not a linear-causal determination but overdetermination. Necessity is always retroactively established; there are always gaps, contingent encounters, and missed opportunities[81] in the causal chain which get erased after the establishment of necessity, and a revolutionary rupture is capable of transforming the very definition of the necessary (as we have shown in the third chapter).[82] Thus, "it could have been otherwise," but with a strict qualification: It could have been otherwise only if an Event (the revolutionary act) had transformed the field by destroying the existing organization of national *jouissance* embodied in the ruling nation ideology.

Accordingly, both Tanzimat and Islahat reforms remained on paper, especially in the rural areas, and the existing organization of social relationships on the basis of subordination and servitude of non-Muslims continued and even worsened (Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 16; Barsoumian, 1997, p. 199). One change in

[81] For instance, one can hypothesize about counterfactuals such as what would have happened if an Armenian-Kurdish alliance was formed instead of Kurds getting integrated to the ruling nation; or what would have happened Armenian revolutionaries did not decide to lay down arms after 1908.
[82] This is why "history is denialist in its very essence," since a historiography based on causal determination necessarily represses the dimension of the negative and the contingent, namely the missed opportunities and encounters, and presents the status quo as necessary (Artuç, 2021, p. 24).

this respect was the increasing dominance of capitalist relationships and the expansion of the market, especially with land becoming private property with the Land Code of 1858 that allowed new ways of "legal" expropriation and a new regime of accumulation on the basis of cash crop production which started a process of double transformation of feudal landlords into capitalists and the proletarianization of peasants (Akın, 2021, p. 67).

5.2.2 Colonial and national question until 1860

The second major dynamic, the colonial and national question in this period, unfolded in parallel to the rise of centralized bureaucracy and reforms. In addition to the nations that have successfully gained their independence, the national consciousness among subject nations such as Armenians and Kurds reached such an extent that both Kurdish *beylik*s and Armenian principalities such as Sassoun and Zeitun desired and sought out independence, which was exacerbated by Ottoman policies of centralization (Sasuni, 1992, p. 91). The main difference between the Kurdish and Armenian movements in this period consisted in the difference in their respective strategies: Whereas Kurds were mainly opposed to the Ottoman Empire's attempts at centralization that diminished their local power, the Armenians supported the Sublime Porte's reforms as a measure against the local feudal oppression they were subjected to (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 92, 126). Another major difference in their strategies consisted in their respective attitudes towards foreign states: Since Ottoman rule categorically preferred the Muslim population, Armenians were much more hopeful and reliant on the intervention of foreign states (especially Russia), but Kurds had no reason for categorically opposing Ottoman rule. This was apparent as

early as the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-1829, during which Armenians were hopeful that they could be freed from Ottoman and Kurdish oppression at once; whereas the Kurds also supported the Russians but only tactically and not for the same end, since the vassal status of Armenians was unquestionable and favorable for them (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 124-125).

This difference between the strategic approaches adopted by the two nations originated from their respective positions within the *millet* system. Although Ottoman oppression against Kurds was worsening, and Kurds also had started to desire independence, they were still relatively autonomous and occupied a privileged position in comparison to the non-Muslim populations they lived together under Ottoman rule. In contrast, for non-Muslim nations like Armenians, almost anything but the *millet* system was better, so they could easily prefer Christian Russian rule over Muslim Ottoman rule. This polarization between the Kurds and Armenians materialized in events like the Ottoman Empire's invasion attempt on Zeitun in 1805, in which Kurdish Muslim tribes of Elbistan joined the Ottoman forces against Zeitun (Sasuni, 1992, p. 92). This attempt resulted in the defeat of the Ottomans, and five years later, in 1810, the Zeitunians undertook an expedition to Maraş in retaliation and seized the city for a couple of weeks (Sasuni, 1992, p. 93). This polarization grew to such an extent that in 1847-1848, it grew into an enmity such that the Ottoman government could use both parties for its own interests (Sasuni, 1992, p. 126). The major event before the definitive split was the Bedirxan Beg rebellion of 1841-1847, in which Kurds and Armenians could produce a large-scale alliance for the last time.

The Kurdish revolt and resistance against the Ottoman Empire's campaign of crushing Kurdish autonomy was already ongoing before the Bedirxan Beg movement emerged. As early as 1833, Bedirxan Beg was appointed by the local Kurdish beys to the head of the emirate of Botan (Cizre), which was followed by almost a decade of Ottoman attacks against the Kurds (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 94, 99). The rebellion of Bedirxan Beg properly erupted in 1841, after the failure of the Ottoman expeditions to subdue the Kurds. The movement of Bedirxan Beg is very special in the sense that it was not a spontaneous national uprising movement, but it was a political movement in the full sense of the term. This is evident from the fact that the movement was not an exclusively Kurdish national organization, but rather, it was a political project that included and attempted to form alliances with other subject nations such as Armenians.[83] Its army was composed of Kurds and Armenians, and after independence, Armenians were to be recognized as equal citizens and have the control over the economy of the state (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 104, 107, 112). The emergence of the movement divided Armenians into two camps; whereas the Patriarchate and the urban Armenian population supported the Ottomans[84] (since they were still hopeful for the Tanzimat reforms), the rural Armenian population sided with Bedirxan Beg (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 113, 115). After the Ottomans defeated Bedirxan Beg by bribing one of the commanders, the Kurdish-Armenian relations worsened to such an extent that it developed into an enmity that determined the

[83] It should be noted that although Bedirxan made alliances with non-Muslims, he also did not hold back from massacring Assyrians that he regarded as political enemies in 1843-1846 (Gaunt, 2021, p. 62).

[84] Patriarch Mattheos sent a letter to Eastern Armenians, requesting their support for Ottomans (Sasuni, 1992, p. 114). And in 1847 a *kondak* (pastoral letter) was read against Bedirxan (Astourian, 2022, p. 23; Sasuni, 1992, pp. 127, 130).

following conjuncture[85] (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 119-120, 121). By 1865, the Ottomans subdued all of Armenia and Kurdistan (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 135-136). The most important transformation of the Kurdish social organization after the defeat of Bedirxan Beg and abolishment of the emirate of Botan was the transition of power and authority from powerful *bey*s or *mir*s to smaller traditional figures of authority like tribal chiefs and more importantly religious and leaders like sheikhs (especially under the hegemony of the Sunni Naqshbandi order, which still holds sway in the region), who were regarded by the Ottoman government as "officers of Islam" and used as local apparatuses of power (Deringil, 2009, pp. 349-350; Sasuni, 1992, pp. 122, 136, 137; Astourian, 2022, p. 21; Gaunt, 2021, p. 63). It should be noted that the passage to local religious authority as the extension of the central authority exactly coincided with the reforms and the transition of the *millet-i hakime* logic from the domain of Law to that of the superego.

5.2.3 The Armenian Constitution and national awakening after 1860

In the 1860s, the Armenian national movement took a definitive turn, which would later result in the formation of the first revolutionary parties and the birth of the first generation of revolutionary left. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the Armenian *millet* witnessed a national awakening as a struggle developed against the *amira* class, which was an oligarchy of Armenian large capital owners that had official or financial ties with the state and which *de facto* replaced the official head of the Armenian *millet*, the patriarch (Akın, 2021, pp. 70-71, Nalbandian, 1975, p. 42-

[85] For instance, in 1849 Ottomans used Armenians of Zeitun for suppressing Kurds, promising autonomy in exchange (Sasuni, 1992, p. 93).

47; Barsoumian, 1997, p. 189). After the Armenian community schools were allowed for the first time in 1790, the national awakening gained momentum, and it intensified in the period 1840-1860, which resulted in the Armenian Constitution (*Nizamname-i Millet-i Ermeniyan*), written in 1860[86] and ratified in 1863, planting the seeds of the Armenian national emancipation movement (Nalbandian, 1975, pp. 42, 50; Akın, 2021, p. 70; Akın, 2019, p. 35; Sasuni, 1992, p. 137; Barsoumian, 1997, p. 198). The Armenian constitution prescribed a national assembly elected by popular vote, which, in turn, elects the patriarch, the political assembly, and the religious assembly (Akın, 2021, p. 73; Nalbandian, 1975, p. 26). The Armenian constitution also made it possible for the Armenians to communicate their complaints and grievances through letters sent to the churches, which were forwarded to the Patriarchate and then presented to the Sultan as reports; but these reports were usually ineffective and caused nothing but the envy of Muslim nations such as Kurds who did not have such opportunities[87] (Astourian, 2022, p. 23; Sasuni, 1992, p. 141).

The major problem of the East in the period following 1860 was the land problem, and many of the aforementioned letters of complaint (patriarchate presented 529 reports between 1860 and 1870) attest to that fact (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 143, 145). Two significant developments mentioned before, the passage of the authority to religious leaders (sheikhs) and the privatization of land with the Land Code of 1858, exacerbated the already existing problems caused by the *millet* system, as sheiks (like Sheikh Sabadullah, who was openly anti-Christian) attempted to take advantage of

[86] In fact, the first version is written in 1857 but it was rejected by the Sublime Porte. The second version in 1860 was promulgated without awaiting approval from the Sublime Porte; and it was only ratified by the Sublime Porte in 1863, after the 1862 patriarchate raid happened (Akın, 2021, p. 72).
[87] Also, the interventions of Europe and Russia on behalf of the Armenians provoked similar reactions (Akın, 2019, p. 36).

the new law and "legally" appropriate the land of non-Muslims, resulting in non-Muslim populations of rural areas gradually becoming landless peasants (*maraba*) subordinated to Muslim landowners (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 143-144). In this period, religious discrimination and fanaticism became a central dynamic overseen by the Ottoman officers (*mültezim*) and local sheikhs. It facilitated the expropriation of land and dispossession of Armenians, forced labour, abductions, arbitrary and extortionate taxation (both by the government and the local powers since both the modern taxation and archaic taxation coexisted), and caused forced conversions (either through direct pressure, or economic pressure) as well as mass migrations (Ter Minassian, 2012, pp. 16-17; Sasuni, 1992, pp. 144-145, 146, 148). One noteworthy fact that attested to the religious basis of this dynamic of systematic exploitation of the *millet* system was the arrival of Muslim Circassians in the second half of the nineteenth century. Many Circassians were settled in various parts of Armenia, and since they were Muslim, they gained all the privileges of the *millet-i hakime,* such as the right to bear arms, and they used it to gain advantages over Armenians and participated in the regime of expropriation and extraction (Ter Minassian, 2012, pp. 16-17, Sasuni, 1992, p. 149; Astourian, 2022, pp. 20-21). 144 of the 529 reports (compiled from the letters of complaint that were sent to the patriarchate) that patriarch Mkrtich Khrimian (known as Khrimian Hairig) presented to the Sublime Porte in 1872 were related to "special persecutions," which designated the violations undertaken by Kurds and Circassians (Sasuni, 1992, p. 149; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 204). The report had no effect, as it was nothing but an appeal to the Sublime Porte, and subsequently, patriarch Khrimian resigned (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 145, 150). To sum it up, in this period, the Muslim *millet* was gradually assembled from diverse

ethnicities, and it was pitted against the non-Muslims by the Ottoman government so that the colonial conflict caused by the *millet* system (Muslim against non-Muslim) became the primary conflict, superseding all other differences and antagonisms (Hovannisian, 1997, p. 206; Astourian, 2022, p. 20).

These conditions, combined with the national awakening of Armenians, became the catalyst for a series of Armenian uprisings against the Ottoman Empire, which could be considered as the precursors of the revolutionary movement. The earliest examples of these uprisings happened in 1862 in Van and Zeitun (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 78; Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 18). Van uprising was a precursor to the Zeitun rebellion of 1862, which could be considered the first full-blown Armenian uprising (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 79; Barsoumian, 1997, p. 200). Zeitun was a semi-independent and legally tax-exempt Armenian settlement since 1626-27 (Astourian, 2022, p. 17-18). In addition to conditions of systematic discrimination against non-Muslims described above, the Ottoman government had settled Circassians and Tatars around Zeitun after the Crimean War of 1853-1856, and when Zeitun opposed, the government responded by imposing higher taxes (despite the Islahat of 1856) (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 69; Barsoumian, 1997, p. 200). The resistance began in 1860 when Armenian *fedai*s resisted the Ottoman forces, and it developed into a 2-year war, which was resolved by the intervention of Napoleon III that stopped the advance of the Ottoman army in 1862 (Nalbandian, 1975, pp. 69-71; Astourian, 2022, p. 19; Dadrian, 1995, p. 53). The victory in Zeitun encouraged other cities like Muş, where an uprising occurred a year later (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 79). These and other spontaneous uprisings in this period signaled the organized armed struggle for emancipation that was to come a couple of decades later.

Following the 1876's brief constitutional period and the start of the reign of Abdul Hamid II, the outbreak of the 1877-1878 Russian-Ottoman war and the resulting Ottoman defeat changed the situation for Armenians and Kurds definitively (Akın, 2021, p. 88). In this war, Kurds openly sided with Ottomans (sheiks like Ubeydullah, Celaleddin, and Abdülkadir joined the war), whereas Armenians hoped for a Russian victory (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 150-151). Combined with events like Kurds and Circassians attacking and pillaging Armenian territories whenever Russian soldiers withdrew, this war riveted the *millet* system (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 27; Dadrian, 1995, p. 69). The resulting Treaty of San Stefano and the following Congress of Berlin marked the introduction of the Armenian question into the arena of international politics (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 25; Akın, 2019, p. 36; Sasuni, 1992, p. 152). The sixteenth article of the Treaty of San Stefano[88] was specifically about the security of Armenians against Kurds and Circassians under Russian guarantee (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 27; Akın, 2021, p. 82; Sasuni, 1992, p. 151). In the following Congress of Berlin that took place because of the intervention of Great Britain, the same issue of protection of Armenians against Kurds and Circassians was included in Article LXI (Akın, 2019, pp. 36-37; Sasuni, 1992, p. 153; Nalbandian, 1975, p. 28; Akın, 2021, p. 92). These articles had no effect, as already while these congresses were happening, the Kurds and Circassians had started to pillage Armenian towns by taking advantage of the withdrawal of Russian soldiers (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 28; Dadrian, 1995, p. 32). The ineffectiveness resulted in a memorandum against the Ottoman Empire in 1880, which was also ineffective (Akın, 2021, p. 94). The only

[88] "Ottomans agree 'to carry out, without further delay, the ameliorations and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Kurds and Circassians.'" (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 27).

material result was the end of the *millet-i sadıka* (loyal *millet*) rhetoric and the incrimination of the Armenian population as potential traitors by the Ottoman government and the neighboring Muslim populations (Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 18).

This moment also marked a definitive point of rupture in the Armenian national movement. Whereas until now, Armenians had high expectations from the European powers and especially Russia, supporting them against Ottomans in every war (1829, 1853-56, 1877-78); the failure of the Treaty of San Stefano and the Congress of Berlin made them turn towards their own resources. This transformation is best exemplified by a short story called "iron spoon," told in a sermon after the Congress of Berlin by Mkrtich Khrimian (former patriarch), who was a delegate in the congress representing the Armenian population (Hovannisian, 1997, pp. 209, 211). The story describes a situation where a "dish of liberty" is on the table, and each person (nation) takes turns eating from the dish. But the problem is, whereas all the other nations have iron spoons that allow them to eat, Armenians have a paper spoon ("paper petitions") which is useless; therefore, while the others can eat, Armenians cannot (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 28; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 211). This story perfectly demonstrates the double predicament that Armenians were subjected to: On the one hand, the formal equality of Tanzimat and Islahat reforms (the equal access to the dish of liberty) did not amount to anything in the presence of the substantial inequalities created and sustained by the *millet* system. On the other hand, the more "literal" interpretation of the metaphor, that paper was useless in the struggle for freedom (note that Khrimian Hairig was the patriarch who submitted the many letters of complaint written from the provinces) and armed struggle was necessary if anything was to be achieved (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 29; Sasuni, 1992, p. 175).

Therefore, echoing the logic of "courage of hopelessness," which means that "it is only when we despair and don't know any more what to do that change can be enacted – we have to go through this zero point of hopelessness;" the Armenians' complete loss of hopes regarding the Ottoman reforms and foreign state intervention opened the way for the armed struggle and the formation of the Armenian revolutionary parties (Sasuni, 1992, p. 176; Nalbandian, 1975, p. 54, Žižek, 2018).

Under the reign of Hamid, the domination of *millet-i hakime* worsened as the central government started to use religion as a governing principle more and more, which found its zenith in the creation of Hamidiye Regiments from the Muslim Kurdish population beginning in 1879 as an attempt to gain their allegiance, as these regiments "provided a method of separating the Moslem Kurds from possible cooperation with the discontented Armenians" (Akın, 2021, p. 144; Nalbandian, 1975, p. 161). These cavalry regiments were modelled after Russian Cossacks and were comprised of Sunni Kurds carrying Islamic banners decorated with *ayah*s from the Quran and the seal of the Sultan; and in the following years, they committed endless atrocities against the non-Muslim populations such as Armenians, Yazidis, Assyrians, Kızılbaş/Alevis under the sanction and protection of the Sultan (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 161; Akın, 2021, p. 146). This period also witnessed the first great Kurdish uprising since Bedirxan Beg, namely, the revolt of Naqshbandi Sheikh Ubeydullah (Nehri) in 1880, but the dynamics were radically different this time (Gaunt, 2021, p. 63). The character of the uprising was clearly Sunni-Islamic (Zaza and Kızılbaş Kurds did not join), and the non-Muslim populations were seen as enemies rather than potential allies, and the movement also had the approval of the Sultan (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 163, 165, 166). An article published

in the *Murch* journal in 1880 under the pseudonym "the witness" warned the people that Ubeydullah was planning to invade Van and massacre the Armenians under the approval of the sultan (Sasuni, 1992, p. 156). The uprising came to an end when Ubeydullah changed his course and attacked Iran early, provoking Hamid to banish him to Mecca (Sasuni, 1992, p. 163). After 1880, the conditions became worse than ever for the Armenians, as Kurds were now definitively integrated into the colonial *millet* system in return for economic and political *millet-i hakime* privileges, and simultaneously, the government's policy towards Armenians turned towards elimination, as Armenians embodied the mythical obstacle of the national fantasy (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 172-174).

5.2.4 Armenian revolutionaries: Birth of the first generation of revolutionary left

It was under these conditions that the Armenian political movement was born: An early organization called Defense of the Fatherland Society was established in Erzurum in 1881 but dissolved within a year following the arrest of all of its members, followed by the Armenakan party in 1885, Hunchakian Revolutionary Party in 1887, and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksutyun) in 1890 (Akın, 2021, p. 110, Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 19). Whereas the Armenakan Party of Van was a pacifist nationalist party, both the Hunchak Party and the Dashnak Party were revolutionary Marxist parties (both became members of the Second International) that constituted the first generation of revolutionary left in Turkey (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 98; Akın, 2021, pp. 109-111; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 213).

The Hunchakian Revolutionary Party (Social Democrat Hunchakian party after 1909) was established in Geneva in August 1887 by Marxist revolutionary

Armenians who were influenced by and in contact with Russian revolutionaries including Plekhanov[89] (Ter Minassian, 2012, pp. 19, 23; Nalbandian, 1975, p. 104). As such, it was the first Marxist party of the Ottoman Empire, and it was also the first armed national emancipatory movement of the Armenian nation (Akın, 2021, p. 118). Hunchaks saw national emancipation and socialism as compatible, and they were the first ones to point out the class structure displayed by the relationship of exploitation between the *millet-i hakime* and the non-Muslims, hence introducing Marxism and socialism into the Armenian question (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 114; Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 24; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 214). Their minimal program aimed for the democratic rights, political freedoms, and national independence of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, whereas their maximal program aimed to end exploitation through a socialist revolution (Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 24). They are responsible for the first translation of the Communist Manifesto into Armenian (Akın, 2021, p. 118; Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 24; Nalbandian, 1975, p. 117). The central committee of the Hunchak party included a woman, which was also noteworthy for the period. (Akın, 2021, p. 119). Hunchak party program emphasized dialectical materialism, Marxist class struggle, and revolution through armed struggle; it included demands like extensive provincial and communal autonomy, the right to hold office without distinction, the right to elect public administrators, the complete freedom of "press, speech, conscience, assembly, organizations, and electoral agitation," the right to education in one's native language, elimination of

[89] In fact, they shared a similar line with *Narodnaya Volna* (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 113; Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 23). Many would remember *Narodnaya Volna* from Lenin's polemic against it in *What is to be Done*, but keep in mind that at this point in history, Leninism had not yet emerged, and Lenin himself had also been a sympathizer of *Narodnaya Volna*.

public religious spending, maternity leave, nursing breaks for women with newborn children in the workplace; and advocated for revolutionary activity in the form of organization, propaganda, agitation and terror (Nalbandian, 1975, pp. 108-113; Akın, 2021, pp. 121-122; Akın, 2019, p. 153-154). It specifically emphasized that the alliance of Kurds and Assyrians must be won in the struggle against the Ottoman Empire (Akın, 2021, p. 122).

The second Armenian Marxist party, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation or Dashnaksutyun, was established shortly after in 1890 in Tbilisi (Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 19; Akın, 2021, p. 109). Dashnak Party was also established as a Marxist socialist revolutionary party which was in line with Russian Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), but due to its strategy of uniting the Armenian nation, nationalist and liberal elements were more prominent within the party, and the party was more open to liberal democratic politics in comparison to Hunchaks (Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 26; Akın, 2021, pp. 127-129; Akın, 2019, p. 88; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 216). The first program of the party was drafted in 1892. Similar to the Hunchak Party program, it was openly Marxist and indicated that armed revolution was the only option, as well as calling for alliances with other groups such as Assyrians, Yazidis, and oppressed working classes of Kurds and Turks (Sasuni, 1992, p. 177). After presenting a brief introduction to class struggle and socialism, the program depicted the class structure of the colonial *millet* system and its connection to economic exploitation by presenting the situation via analogous oppositions like conquerors/subjects, Turks/Christians, and exploiters/exploited (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 166; Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 27). The demands in the program included universal suffrage, equality between nationalities and religions, freedom of

speech, press and assembly, land for the landless peasants, taxation according to the ability to pay, elimination of forced and unpaid labour ("such as the *gor* and *begar*, *angaria*, *olam*, etc."); and the program endorsed terror as a method in the revolutionary struggle (Nalbandian, 1975, pp. 166-171).

The following years, especially the period between 1890-1897, witnessed a surge in the organization and activity of Armenian revolutionaries, as the revolutionary parties organized both armed guerilla (*fedai*) action in the rural areas and public demonstrations and protests in the urban areas (i.e., Constantinople) (Akın, 2021, p. 136). It started with the small Hunchak-organized protest in Erzurum in 1890 (Hovannisian, 1997, p. 218). Afterward, on 15 July 1890, Hunchaks organized a demonstration in Constantinople known as the Kumkapı protest, which began in the Surp Khach cathedral with the Hunchak militants (who were Hampartsoum Boyadjian later to be known as Medzn Murad, Mihran Damadian, and Harutiun Jangülian) interrupting the mass, destroying the Ottoman coat of arms, calling for a march on the Yıldız Palace, and forcing the patriarch to walk with them (Akın, 2021, pp. 137, 140; Nalbandian, 1975, p. 118; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 218). The demonstration attracted 4000 people (many of them were women), but it ended with a massacre when police (*zaptiye*) blocked the road and attacked the crowd, killing 60 people and triggering a three-day pogrom against Armenians (Akın, 2021, pp. 166-167, 140-141, 168). It should be noted that this event also marked the first public appearance of İttihat ve Terakki (Committee of Union and Progress, which was officially founded a year before in 1889 under the name *İttihad-ı Osmani*) in Constantinople, as their members handed out leaflets in the street addressed to "Muslim and patriotic Turks" condemning the demonstration and the "arrogance" of

Armenians (Akın, 2021, pp. 108, 168-169). Of the militants that organized the action, Jangülian got caught, but Boyadjian escaped and shortly after reemerged in Sassoun alongside Damadian, which would be the next focal point of revolutionary action (Akın, 2021, p. 141).

As we have briefly touched before, Sassoun had always been one of the strongholds of Armenians that could keep a relative autonomy, and starting from the 1890s, with the organization of Armenian revolutionaries, it became a de facto liberated area (Sasuni, 1992, p. 183; Akın, 2021, p. 148). In addition to not paying the illegal *hafir* taxes and not accepting the domination of Sunni tribes, they had been solving their problems and conflicts among themselves without involving the government (Hovannisian, 1997, p. 219; Akın, 2021, pp. 148-149). Starting with the spring of 1891, they began to organize self-defense and guerilla (*fedai*) units under the leadership of Hunchak militant Damadian, and as early as 1891, armed conflicts started to break out in Sassoun's borders (Astourian, 2022, p. 29; Akın, 2021, pp. 150-151; Sasuni, 1992, p. 183). When it came to 1892, Ottomans and Kurds (who were now definitively on the Ottoman side) sieged Sassoun, but Sassoun resisted until 1893, and Ottomans were forced to retreat (Sasuni, 1992, p. 184). Ottomans responded by arresting 1800 people in 1893, including Damadian, followed by a full-blown declaration of "jihad" against Sassoun in 1894 when they refused to pay taxes under the leadership of Medzn Murad, which marked the eruption of the Sassoun resistance of 1894 (Astourian, 2022, p. 30; Akın, 2021, pp. 149, 157; Sasuni, 1992, p. 185; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 219).

The uprising was directed both against the central government and the local feudal powers (Kurds). The reasons for the uprising included the oppression of the

millet system, Hamidiye regiments, arbitrary extortion and double taxation (to the government and to Kurds), and the myriad of violations that the non-Muslims suffered (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 121; Akın, 2019, p. 40; Deringil, 2009, pp. 348-349; Dadrian, 1995, p. 114). After Kurds pillaged an Armenian village and seized their animals in 1894, the conflict erupted, and Armenians started an armed guerilla resistance in the Andok mountain with the call of Hunchaks (but Dashnaks also participated) (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 121; Akın, 2021, p. 159; Akın, 2019, p. 40). Ottomans sent the army at the request of the governor, and after ten days of fighting, Ottomans proposed general amnesty, tax exemption, and reparations in exchange for a ceasefire (Akın, 2021, pp. 158, 160). Approximately two hundred Armenian militants laid down their arms and came down the mountain for negotiations but they got massacred by the Ottoman army, whereas the remaining militants decided to fight (Boyadjian, who got the *nom de guerre* Medzn Murad because of his role in this resistance, was among them, and got arrested) and 24 days of massacre ensued (Hovannisian, 1997, p. 219; Dadrian, 1995, p. 117; Akın, 2021, pp. 145, 160-162; Akın, 2019, p. 41). 3000 Armenians died in the following massacres (Hovannisian, 1997, p. 220). The subsequent intervention of the international commission consisting of Great Britain, France, and Russia resulted in the Memorandum of 1895 and the Project of Reforms for the Eastern Provinces of Asia Minor, which were again ineffective; as in the following period (especially starting with summer and fall of 1895), a series of mass massacres of Armenians known as the Hamidian Massacres took place in which up to 300000 Armenians were killed and many were

forcefully converted into Islam en masse[90] (Nalbandian, 1975, pp. 122, 135; Sasuni, 1992, p. 186; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 221; Dadrian, 1995, p. 119). These massacres were modelled after the massacre in Sassoun, and they were the first large-scale deployment of the Hamidiye regiments for the direct purpose of mass massacre (Astourian, 2022, p. 32; Akın, 2019, p. 42).

As a response to the massacre, Hunchaks organized the Bab-ı Ali demonstrations in Constantinople between September 18-30 1895 to which between two and four thousand demonstrators joined, and they declared a petition protesting against "the systematic massacre of the Armenians by the Turkish government," "the unjust arrest and the cruel punishments of prisoners," "the Kurdish injustices," "the corruption of tax collectors," and "the massacre at Sassun" (Nalbandian, 1975, pp. 122, 124; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 221; Dadrian, 1995, p. 119-120). The demonstrations resulted in pogroms as well as hundreds of demonstrators getting imprisoned; subsequently, the great powers demanded the introduction of the Armenian Reform Program, which Hamid was forced to sign (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 125-126; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 222).

During the same period, Hunchaks were also organizing in Zeitun, which was another stronghold of Armenians (almost all of the 1500 houses were Armenian), and it was the birthplace of Armenian uprisings with the Zeitun resistance of 1862 (Akın, 2,021, p. 171, Nalbandian, 1975, p. 127). When the Ottoman army marched on Zeitun in 1895, Armenians decided for armed resistance under the leadership of guerilla (*fedai*) leader Aghasi (Karapet Ter-Sargsian); they

[90] Hamid even declared in 1897 in the aftermath of the massacres that "the Armenian question was closed;" which was going to be repeated by Talat after the Armenian Genocide (Dadrian, 1995, p. 186).

sieged the local barracks and the district governorate, both of which were captured in two days (Akın, 2021, pp. 172-173; Dadrian, 1995, p. 127-128).[91] The uprising lasted for four months, after which great powers intervened and mediated negotiations between Zeitun and the Ottoman government, preventing a massacre from happening directly in Zeitun (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 127; Akın, 2021, p. 174; Akın, 2019, p. 47). As a result of the negotiations, the Ottoman government was forced to let the leaders of the resistance leave the country and accept Zeitun's demands for tax exemption, the right to elect state officials (except judges) from the local population, and a Christian district governor; all but the first turned out to be empty promises just like Armenian Reform Program (Akın, 2019, p. 46; Akın, 2021, p. 174; Nalbandian, 1975, p. 127; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 223; Dadrian, 1995, pp. 52-53).

Hunchak revolutionary activity got interrupted in 1896 as a split between socialist (Nazarbekian) and anti-socialist (anti-Nazarbekian) camps emerged within the ranks of the party, which resulted in the separation of reformist Veragazmiyal (reformed) Hunchak Party in 1898 (which would eventually join the Armenakan Party in 1921) (Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 25; Hovannisian, 1997, pp. 226-227). This contributed to the rise of the Dashnak Party, which organized the Ottoman Bank raid[92] in 1896 in Constantinople (Akın, 2021, p. 175; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 224; Dadrian, 1995, p. 161). Around two dozen militants[93] raided the Ottoman Bank under the leadership of Karekin Pastermadjian (*nom de guerre* Armen Garo)[94],

[91] Armenian revolutionary Karekin Pastermadjian who would later lead the Ottoman Bank raid also took part in the Zeitun resistance of 1895 and took the *nom de guerre* Armen Garo here.
[92] This could be the last political action against a bank in Turkey until the emergence of THKO and THKP-C.
[93] It was planned for 75 people but eventually around twenty militants joined (Akın, 2021, p. 177-178).
[94] Armen Garo spontaneously became the leader after the commander Papken Siuni (Bedros Parian) died early in the raid (Hovannisian, 1997, p. 225; Dadrian, 1995, p. 138; Akın, 2021, p. 27).

taking hostages and threatening to blow the building up and destroy all the money and legal tender in the vaults with it (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 177; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 224). The demands of the militants included a high commissioner for Armenia appointed by great powers, the appointment of local rulers by the high commissioner, militias and gendarmerie to be drawn from the local population, "the immediate restoration of usurped real property," cancellation of "tax" debts, return of the Armenians who were forced to migrate from their lands, freedom of worship, education and press, and judicial reforms (Nalbandian, 1975, pp. 176-7; Akın, 2021, p. 179). Eventually, the militants agreed to evacuate the bank (they handed over all the money after counting and reporting it), but already while the negotiations were ongoing, the pogroms and massacres against the Armenian population that was going to last for three days and cost the lives of 6000 Armenians had started (Akın, 2021, p. 180; Nalbandian, 1975, p. 178; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 226; Dadrian, 1995, pp. 144-145). The pogroms were planned and premeditated, the crowds were armed with identical weapons that were mass-produced, and they were also openly supported by government soldiers, which indicates that the government possibly had intelligence about the bank raid and used it as an opportunity to massacre the Armenians (Akın, 2019, pp. 66-69; Nalbandian, 1975, pp. 177-178; Deringil, 2009, p. 350). This is also evident from the fact that simultaneously with Constantinople, pogroms and massacres against Armenians broke out in Akn (Eğin) (Akın, 2021, p. 182; Akın, 2019, p. 69).

1896 also staged another armed resistance, the Defense of Van, which was a joint organization of Armenakan, Hunchak, and Dashnak parties (Nalbandian, 1975, pp. 102-103). In addition to being an Armenian stronghold, Van was one of the

exceptional places that showed Armenian and Kurdish cooperation was still possible (Dadrian, 1995, pp. 131-132; Akın, 2019, p. 47). At the height of the Hamidian massacres, after Ottomans sent Sadettin Pasha for "inspection" to Van as a provocation that resulted in the death of two soldiers, the conflict broke out (Akın, 2021, p. 188). The ceasefire was reached under the mediation of Great Britain, and the militants agreed to retreat to Iran; but as they were retreating, the Kurdish tribes allied with the Ottomans attacked the retreating Hunchak, Dashnak, and Armenakan militants, killing 1000 of them (Akın, 2021, p. 189; Akın, 2019, pp. 48-49; Sasuni, 1992, p. 190). In retaliation, 300 Dashnak *fedai*s organized the Khanasor raid against those Kurdish tribes in 1897 (Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 40; Sasuni, 1992, p. 189). In the aftermath of the massacres of 1894-1896, in which up to 300000 people were killed, armed action of the Armenian revolutionaries diminished, with exceptions like the second Sassoun resistance of 1904 and the Dashnak assassination attempt on Hamid in 1905 (Akın, 2021, p. 192; Ter Minassian, 2012, pp. 39-40; Akın, 2019, pp. 42, 66; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 227).

Although the possibility of an alliance between Armenians and Kurds was a thing of the past, Armenian revolutionaries were aware of the fact that without forging an alliance with the other subject nations, a revolutionary war could not be supported, so they persisted in their attempts to enlist the support of Kurds (Sasuni, 1992, p. 204). But the majority of Kurds were already completely integrated into the *millet* system through Islam; hence, they did not possess the required national consciousness, and the minority that was against the Ottoman regime were the nationalists who merely desired Kurdish independence, disregarding the Armenians (Sasuni, 1992, p. 207). Neither of these camps was aligned with Armenian

revolutionaries' politics that aimed to eventually organize a Marxist revolution in the whole Ottoman empire, which would emancipate all *reaya* (both non-Muslim and Muslim) (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 207-208). In this period, only a handful of Kurdish intellectuals, in response to the massacres of 1984-1896, could defend the common struggle of Armenians and Kurds publicly (Sasuni, 1992, p. 189). A pseudonymous article written by a Kurdish intellectual published in the official publication of Dashnak Party, *Droshak*, in 1898 openly condemned the massacres by stating that "Sultan Hamid is neither caliph nor sultan. He is nothing but a malefactor, and this butcher is telling you to kill the Armenians, why can't you respond by saying 'we do not kill our neighbors'"[95] and called for a united Armenian-Kurdish uprising against Ottomans: "If you join forces with the Armenians and revolt, the government can do nothing and therefore all peoples would be emancipated from slavery (…) today is not the day of religion/judgement and power/influence, today is the day of humanity"[96] (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 193-194). Another article written by someone from the Kurdistan journal circle (signed "a Kurd") stated that "government's idea of massacring the Armenians started after the Russo-Ottoman war"[97] and foresaw the fact that "if we massacre them today, the Turks are going to massacre us tomorrow"[98] (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 195-197). And last but not least, Abdurrahman Bey, the editor-in-chief of the journal *Kurdistan* and son of Bedirxan Beg, published an

[95] "Sultan Hamid ne halifedir ve ne de padişahtır. O bir caniden başka bir şey değildir ve bu cani size Ermenileri öldürün diyor, fakat siz niçin 'biz komşularımızı öldürmeyiz' diyemiyorsunuz."
[96] "Şayet sizler de Ermenilerle birleşip ayaklanırsanız, hükümet sizlere hiçbir şey yapmayacak ve böylece bütün halklar da kölelikten kurtulacaklardır. (…) bugün din ve nüfuz günü değildir. Bugün insanlık günüdür."
[97] "Hükümetin Ermenileri katliam ettirme fikri, Rus-Osmanlı savaşından sonra başlar."
[98] "Şayet biz bugün onları kırarsak, yarın da Türkler bizi kıracaklardır."

article under his name, in which he exposed how Kurds allied with Hamid against Armenians in return for privileges and condemned the massacres:

> (…) [Hamid] deceived you with a couple of worthless insignia even dogs would reject, and made you do countless horrendous things. You do not understand that these medallions and insignias are the reward for you trampling down your national pride and future. (…) Are you not afraid that, while killing many defenseless Armenians, that your homelands and households could also be destroyed completely? (…) Massacring the Armenians puts you under a great burden both in this world and in the afterlife. You will not get away with impunity.[99] (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 197-199).

Neither the calls of these handful of Kurdish intellectuals, nor the attempts of the Armenian revolutionaries were of any avail; as the conditions were overwhelmingly persecutive for those who attempted to ally with Armenians (for instance, the criminal penalty for supplying arms to a non-Muslim was either death or 100 years of prison), and simultaneously, they were too lucrative for those who sided with the Ottoman government (the right of Muslims to exploit, extort, and expropriate non-Muslims with impunity) (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 183; Akın, 2021, pp. 200, 203). This situation is attested by a Dashnak article published in *Droshak* in 1901 that announced the failure of the attempts of Armenian revolutionaries to ally with Kurds in the last decade, which was undertaken despite feudal-vassal relationship existing between Kurds (who are described as "the rope that hangs Armenians") and Armenians; and the article determined that Islam is one of the main factors that facilitates this division, calling for a struggle against the hegemony of religion over Kurds (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 200-202).

[99] "(...) köpeklerin bile kabul etmediği bir iki nişanla sizi kandırıp, size birçok kötülükler yaptırdı. Siz şunu anlamıyorsunuz ki bu nişanlar ve madalyonlar ulusal şerefinizi ve geleceğinizi ayaklarınızın altına almanızın mükafatıdır. (…) Birçok müdafaasız Ermeni öldürmekle kendi vatanınızın, ev ve barkınızın da bir gün temelinden yok olabileceğinden korkmuyor musunuz? (…) Ermenileri katliama uğratmanız dünya ve ahirette sizi çok büyük sorumluluklar altına sokar. Sizler de cezasız kalmayacaksınız."

The attitude of Armenian revolutionaries towards other subject nations such as Kurds demonstrates that their politics was not determined by nationalism but internationalism. In addition to the party programs discussed before, this is also attested by the famous Van court defense of Hunchak militant leader Paramaz (Matteos Sarkissian) in 1897. In his defense, Paramaz identified and recounted the recent systematic oppression and exploitation of Armenians by the alliance of *millet-i hakime* including the plunder of 570 churches and 80 monasteries (300 of which are converted into mosques), forced conversion of local populations, *jizya*, bribery and corruption of state officers, physical violence and torture, the massacres of Hamidian regiments; but strongly emphasized the fact that they are not nationalists and they are struggling for the liberation of all peoples under Ottoman rule through the establishment of an Anatolian Federation (Akın, 2019, pp. 57, 59-62):

> We are not nationalists, and not guided by 'national strivings.' (…) We know that a nationalist sovereignty would sustain the same system. Out demand is that all the residents of Armenia, Armenian, Kurd, Turk, Arab, Laz, Circassian, Assyrian, Yazidi, Romani, should elect their own administrators by their own will and vote.[100] (Akın, 2019, p. 64)

He again underlined the same point by stating:

> What we want is equality, we are not stern nationalists, our demand is to live under equal conditions together with Armenian, Turk, Kurd, Alevi, Laz, Assyrian, Arab, and Romani. As a revolutionary, I believe that we will reach this objective. (…) We demand this future for all residents of Armenia, for all Ottoman peoples.[101] (Akın, 2021, pp. 191-192)

[100] "Bizler, milliyetçi değiliz, 'millet gayreti' tarafından yönlendirilmemekteyiz. (...) Bizler milliyetçi bir hükümranlığın aynı düzeni devam ettireceğini biliriz. Bizim talebimiz Ermenistan'ın bütün sakinlerinin, Ermeni'nin, Kürt'ün, Türk'ün, Arap'ın, Laz'ın, Çerkez'in, Süryani'nin, Yezidi'nin ve Mıtrib'in kendi iradesi ve oyuyla kendi yöneticilerini seçmeleridir."

[101] "Bizim istediğimiz eşitlik, biz katı milliyetçi değiliz, bizim talebimiz Ermeni, Türk, Kürt, Alevi, Laz, Yezidi, Süryani, Arap ve Kıptilerle birlikte eşit koşullarda yaşamaktır. Bir devrimci olarak bu hedefe ulaşacağımıza inanıyorum. (...) Biz bu geleceği Ermenistan'ın bütün sakinleri için, bütün Osmanlı halkları için talep ediyoruz."

Then he compared this understanding to the colonial-racist mindset of the ruling nation ideology taking the form of "Turkism," determining that "the practice of the Ottoman state is guiding it towards Turkism. You are returning to the point whence you came centuries ago, to Turkism"[102] and declared that armed struggle and a violent revolution is the only way out from the oppression of the Ottoman Empire (Akın, 2021, p. 192; Akın, 2019, p. 58).

To sum the situation up until the turn of the twentieth century, one can state that although the *millet* system and its colonial regime were existent prior to the nineteenth century, several crucial developments transformed it and gave it its final form prior to the genocide: Concerning the *millet-i hakime* ideology, we have seen that starting with the reforms, it ceased to be explicit law and passed into the domain of the superego. As for Kurds, we have seen that in the beginning, their integration into the *millet-i hakime* was not absolute (for instance, they could ally with Armenians in the Bedirxan Beg rebellion, or they could support the Russians against the Ottomans); but at the end of the century, they are completely integrated to the ruling nation in exchange for *millet-i hakime* privileges over their non-Muslim neighbors. When it comes to Armenians, the opposite mechanic played out. Throughout the century, they were more and more disenfranchised and pushed to a symptomal position, which eventually gave birth to the first generation of the revolutionary left in Turkey: Their expectations from the central reforms were quickly frustrated as the passage of the *millet-i hakime* logic to the superegoical domain with the introduction of formal equality exacerbated the existing exploitation

[102] "Ama Osmanlı devletinin tutumu onu Türkçülüğe götürüyor. Yüzlerce yıl önce bu topraklara geldiğiniz noktaya, Türkçülüğe geri dönüyorsunuz."

and inequalities. Similarly, their hopes for the interventions of European states and Russia were disappointed as the limited interventions caused nothing but empty promises and the worsening of conditions for Armenians. This hopeless situation, combined with a tradition of hundreds of years of resistances and the national awakening after 1860, prompted the Armenians to turn towards their own resources and power, as well as towards revolutionary theory and Marxism, which brought about the conditions for the emergence of the Armenian revolutionary movement and the first generation of revolutionary left.

5.3 Post-nineteenth century

The first decade of the twentieth century witnessed the rise into power of the *İttihat ve Terakki* (İT) and the struggle for constitutional monarchy that resulted in a split between Hunchaks and Dashnaks and the overall weakening of the Armenian revolutionary movement. Whereas the Hunchaks advocated as early as 1902 that there could be no cooperation of Armenian revolutionaries with İT, since İT ultimately aimed to "repress, destroy and erase the Armenian issue from the political arena without traces;" the Dashnaks entered into an alliance with İT against the Hamidian regime (which was made official in 1907) (Nalbandian, 1975, p. 172; Akın, 2021, pp. 212-213). This split was advantageous to İT, as it tried to play into the divisions within the Armenians by accepting the Dashnak party as the sole representative of the Armenian nation (tolerating them as long as they did not demand independence) (Akın, 2019, p. 141; Akın, 2021, p. 199). The relationships of Dashnaks with İT would last until 1912 (despite the Adana massacre of 1909), preventing the unification of Armenian revolutionary movements and resulting in the

excluded Hunchak party being forced into getting in an alliance with *Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası* (Freedom and Unity Party) in 1912 (Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 77; Nalbandian, 1975, p. 172; Kévorkian, 2011, p. 173). After the declaration of constitutional monarchy in 1908, both Hunchaks and Dashnaks laid down arms and switched to legal struggle, and prominent leaders and militants like Medzn Murad, Stepan Sapah-Gulian, and Paramaz came to Constantinople under the atmosphere of relative freedom (Sasuni, 1992, p. 214; Akın, 2021, pp. 232, 238; Ter Minassian, 2012, p. 75; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 230). In the following period, some of these major names from Armenian revolutionary parties such as Medzn Murad from Hunchak Party, and Armen Garo, Vahakn Papazian, and Vartkes Serengülian from Dashnak Party even became members of the parliament (Akın, 2021, pp. 292-293).

With the constitutional regime, the conflict between the Armenian revolutionaries and the central government faltered, but the conflict between Kurds and Armenians deepened as they were positioned on opposite sides concerning constitutional monarchy. In contrast to the Armenians supporting the constitutional monarchy, Kurds regarded it as a grant of privileges to the Christians and opposed it, since any kind of change in the *millet* system (reform or Armenians' idea of federation) was potentially disadvantageous to them (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 214, 216-217). More specifically, Armenians viewed the constitution as an opportunity to free themselves from the status of servitude to the Kurds, and they tried to address the fundamental problems like the expropriation of land, forced labour, and extortion by appealing to the new constitution. In contrast, especially the feudal leaders of Kurds were directly opposed to it since it threatened their feudal privileges (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 220-224). As was revealed shortly after, the constitution was ineffective (similar

to the Tanzimat and Islahat) in addressing the inequalities as the limited improvements like formal judicial equality were useless against the expropriations and injustices of the Hamidian and prior periods which were already legalized (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 218-220). The reason for this ineffectiveness was not accidental, as the passage to İT power did not actually change anything concerning the *millet-i hakime* ideology; it was just a change of strategy internal to the ruling nation (Akın, 2019, p. 121). This is evident from İT's insistence on protecting the prerogative of the dominant nation[103] to rule, as evidenced by Hüseyin Cahit's statement in *Tanin* that "Turkish nation is the ruling nation and this will continue to be so,"[104] or Resneli Niyazi's statement that "We will not allow anyone but Turks to be masters,"[105] or Prince Sabahattin exposing the result of a "Turk to Turk" conversation with İT members in which it was revealed to him that İT ultimately planned to eradicate the Armenians (Akın, 2019, p. 121; Akın, 2021, pp. 235, 239). This last "Turk to Turk" qualification is critical because it shows the difference between the explicit Law and its superegoical obverse: Whereas "in public," İT defended the "written" constitution and was allied with Armenians; when it came to a "Turk to Turk" conversation, the obscene underside emerged as the unwritten rules that determine the extent to which written rules could be broken. In a word, İT took over the *millet-i hakime* logic from Hamid and perfected it to such an extent that it can be regarded as one of the global pioneers of fascism (Adanır, 2001, p. 318).

[103] Referred as Turks, meaning Muslims. Although racism was on the rise, requirement of ethnic Turkishness for millet-i hakime was not in place yet.
[104] "Türk ulusu hakim ulustur ve böyle olmaya devam edecektir."
[105] "Türkler dışında kimsenin efendilik etmesine izin vermeyeceğiz."

This period also witnessed a conflict within the *millet-i hakime* with the 31 March incident of 1909, which was an uprising against the constitutional monarchy (or merely against İT government, according to some views) that resulted in the birth of the official false dichotomy between the secularists and Islamists that has lasted until the present day (Kévorkian, 2011, pp. 71-72, Akın, 2021, p. 261). During the uprising, Armenian revolutionaries (as well as Bulgarian and Greek revolutionaries) supported the government and the Action Army (*Hareket Ordusu*), with some İT members saving their lives by hiding in the Dashnak headquarters (Kévorkian, 2011, p. 73; Kévorkian, 2008, p. 340; Akın, 2021, pp. 263-264). The incident resulted in the dethronement of Hamid, and Mehmed Reşad taking his place as the puppet sultan of İT (Akın, 2021, p. 266). The incident reflected a division within the ruling nation about the definition of *millet-i hakime*, but it should be noted that this division is strictly internal to the ruling nation in the sense that neither side questioned the prerogative of the ruling nation to rule or its definition through Islam so that the conflict became merely a dispute over how the ruling nation should rule (traditional authority or modern authority).[106] This reflects the fundamental falsity of secularism, which always relies on a disavowed sacred foundation (tries to merely separate the sacred from the worldly, resulting in a secularized religion, exemplified by the state Islam created by Kemalists with its ministry of religious affairs and Islamic clergy as state officers) which makes it an idealist orientation. In contrast, the proper materialist stance concerning religion is not secularism but profanation, which

[106] The falsity of this dichotomy between the seculars and Islamists is attested by the fact that they both agree on the colonial regime against non-Muslims and later non-Turks. This is also proven by the successful unification of Kemalist nationalism and Islamism by the late AKP. Note that the political field in Turkey displays the logic of 2 + a or 1 + 1 + a; meaning the "official" antagonism between the Islamists and Kemalists, and the real antagonism between the ruling nation (Islamists and Kemalists together) and the symptomal element (non-Muslims, non-Turks) (Žižek, 2012, pp. 800-1).

amounts to dismantling the sacred by excluding it from its proper context and dispelling its illusion (Žižek, 2012, p. 987).

The conflict within the *millet-i hakime* revealed itself to be a false dichotomy shortly after, with the Islamists and İT (the very Action Army that suppressed the 31 March incident) cooperating in the massacre of 25000 Armenians (who had laid their arms after 1908) in the Adana massacre of 1909[107] (Kévorkian, 2011, p. 74; Kévorkian, 2008, p. 339; Astourian, 2022, p. 33; Akın, 2021, pp. 268, 275). The organized and planned massacres unfolded in two stages, it was started by mobs led by sheiks and hodjas, and completed by İT-aligned army reserves (*redif*) and the Action Army (Kévorkian, 2011, p. 83; Kévorkian, 2008, p. 341; Astourian, 2022, p. 34-35; Akın, 2021, p. 274; Akın, 2019, pp. 70, 72). The parliament set up a commission to investigate the massacre, İT members Hagop Babikian and Yusuf Kemal were tasked with writing the report on which they could not come to an agreement, which resulted in Babikian getting killed shortly after, before the date that the report was to be presented (Kévorkian, 2008, pp. 358-359, 363; Kévorkian, 2011, p. 100; Akın, 2019, p. 149; Akın, 2021, p. 279). The report remained hidden until 1912, when it surfaced, as can be predicted, it was revealed that Babikian's verdict was that İT was responsible for the Adana massacre (Akın, 2019, pp. 149-150). Adana massacre did not result in a split between Dashnaks and İT, who published a joint statement afterward, condemning both the 31 March incident and the Adana massacre in the exact text, which Hunchak leader Sapah-Gulian considered as the greatest mistake of the Dashnaks (Akın, 2021, p. 283). In contrast to Dashnaks, Hunchaks got alarmed after the Adana massacre. In their sixth congress

[107] The massacres were not limited to Adana but spanned whole Cilicia (Kévorkian, 2008, p. 343).

in 1909, issues like policies of homogenization of population and İT's role in the Adana massacre were put forward (Paramaz warned that İT was more dangerous than Hamid) in addition to a consideration of return to armed struggle (defended by Sapah-Gulian, Paramaz, and Nazarbekian; to which Boyadjian objected) (Akın, 2021, pp. 283, 185-286; Akın, 2019, pp. 147-148).

In the absence of any resistance, İT consolidated power in the following years, and with the secret Thessaloniki Congress of 1910, they officially adopted the policy of Turkification of Anatolia which was more and more reflected in the racist policies of the government (Kévorkian, 2011, p. 122; Dadrian, 1995, p. 180; Akın, 2021, pp. 374-375; Akın, 2019, pp. 113-114). The general elections of 1912, known as the "election of clubs" (*sopalı seçimler*), reflected this as İT won by a massive margin through electoral fraud and coercion, which Hunchak Party assessed as a definitive passage to the "Turkification" strategy (Akın, 2021, pp. 366-368; Hovannisian, 1997, p. 232). In addition to this, İT broke their election agreement with Dashnaks and gave them only nine seats in the parliament, resulting in Dashnaks breaking their alliance with İT shortly after (Kévorkian, 2011, p. 134; Akın, 2021, p. 367; Sasuni, 1992, p. 229). This was followed by the outbreak of the first Balkan War in 1912 and the *coup d'état* of 1913 (*Bab-ı Ali baskını*, Raid on the Sublime Porte) that resulted in the establishment of the triumvirate of Talat, Enver, and Cemal; which completely eradicated all hopes from the constitutional monarchy and the discourse of Ottomanism (Sasuni, 1992, p. 228; Akın, 2021, pp. 371-372; Adanır, 2001, p. 320). In their subsequent congresses in 1913, the Dashnak Party

decided to seek cooperation with the Hunchaks;[108] and the Hunchak Party, realizing that Sapah-Gulian and Paramaz were right, took the decision of organization of self-defense and the return to illegal struggle until the destruction of İT (Kévorkian, 2011, p. 173; Akın, 2019, p. 163, 166-167, 169). Unfortunately, it was too late as İT had already consolidated its power as the representative of the *millet-i hakime*, started rehearsing the genocide with the massacres of Greeks in 1913-1914, and the secret agreement with Germany for WWI was in the process of being established (Kévorkian, 2011, pp. 177-179; Dadrian, 1995, p. 204; Akın, 2019, pp. 124, 173).

The last article written by Paramaz, entitled "Armenians' Demand," published in the Hunchak journal, summarized this situation and the mistakes of the Armenian revolutionary movement, as well as presenting a brilliant analysis of the ruling nation ideology, providing a proof for the fact that the truth of a given field only visible from the perspective of the *part-of-no-part*. He stated that "Armenian *fedai*, bidding farewell to Mardig, Zakaryan… to rebellious souls, laid down arms and came down from the mountains under the 'constitution's silhouette of liberty, equality, fraternity;"[109] but it was a mistake to trust the chauvinist and Islamic worldview of Ottomans: "Armenian *fedai* was mistaken in convincing themselves that Ottoman sovereignty, with its narrow, despicable, and wretched chauvinism and intolerant Islamic worldview, could protect the economic, spiritual, and intellectual

[108] Despite this, it is interesting to note that Dashnaks were loyal to the Ottoman state as late as 1914, when, in their eighth congress, they shared in the mistake of Second International and took the decision that that if war breaks out, Armenians are going to enlist in the Ottoman army (Akın, 2019, p. 182).

[109] "Ermeni fedaisi, Mardig'e, Zakaryan'a... asi ruhlara veda ederek silahı bırakıp 'Anayasa'nın hürriyet, adalet, müsavat, uhuvvet silueti altında kıra indi..."

interests of the nations under its dominion"[110] (Akın, 2019, p. 185). Then, quoting Ali Kemal's statement that "Muslim Turk is the instrument of ideological unity; it grinds down wills and by eliminating the nationalities, it kneads them and positions them in a level of equality [sic]"[111] and reminding of Babikian's report, he warned that this is a matter of existence for the Armenian nation (Akın, 2019, pp. 185-187). Shortly afterwards, 20 Armenian revolutionaries including Paramaz would be captured on 16 July 1914 and executed a year later on 15 June 1915, in the heat of the Armenian Genocide (Kévorkian, 2011, p. 172; Akın, 2019, pp. 194, 212). During their detention, Paramaz would continue to try to warn Armenians by sending letters to the patriarch, stating that this violence against the revolutionaries would soon turn against all Armenians and that they should hurry up to organize self-defense (Akın, 2019, pp. 203-204). In his court defense, against the accusations of nationalism, he asserted their commitment to communism and internationalism by stating that "Homeland does not exist for us. (…) We are not endeavoring only for the emancipation of Armenians, we are endeavoring for the emancipation of all humanity, our homeland is whole world,"[112] and he condemned the genocidal policies of Ottomans by stating that "six hundred years ago, you attempted to snatch off our country, you invaded it. You continuously tried to exterminate our people through massacres, and now, you are in the effort of transforming all of the Ottoman

[110] "Ermeni fedai, kapıldığı heyecanın etkisiyle; Osmanlı hükümranlığının dar, aşağılık, zavallı şovenizmiyle ve müsamahasız İslami dünya görüşüyle bünyesindeki milletlerin iktisadi, ruhi ve fikri çıkarlarını koruyabileceğine kendi kendisini inandırmakla yanlış yaptı."
[111] "Müslüman Türk, ideolojik birliğin aracıdır; iradeleri öğütür ve milliyetlere son vererek onları yoğrurup eşitlik seviyesine koyar."
[112] "Bizim için bir vatan yoktur. (…) Biz sadece Ermenilerin kurtuluşu için çalışmıyoruz, bütün insanlığın kurtuluşu için çalışıyoruz, bizim vatanımız bütün dünyadır."

homeland into a Türkiye [Turkey],"[113] adding that the extermination of Armenians would mean the extermination of Turkey altogether (Akın, 2019, pp. 210-211). His last words before his execution were: "You can only destroy our bodies, but never the ideas we believe in. Tomorrow, Armenianness will hail free and socialist Armenia. Long live socialism!" (Akın, 2021, p. 217).[114]

Ottomans had learned from the massacres of 1894-1896 that the genocide could not be completed using traditional methods, that Armenians could not be massacred entirely in their own lands where they could put up a resistance, which resulted in the decision of uprooting, deportation, and systematic killing of the Armenians on the road, in which Kurds played a significant role (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 238-239). It should be noted that German soldiers were also present on Ottoman soil, and their intervention to the genocide was prohibited by the German command-in-chief (Dadrian, 1995, p. 228; Akın, 2019, p. 123). The perverse superegoical organization of the ruling nation ideology in the preceding century enabled its adaptation to operate in the grey zones and outside the law while maintaining the appearance. Therefore, it facilitated the implementation of the genocide while "officially" keeping the pretext of deportation.[115] This obscene strategy of ambivalence (official narrative as the Ego-Ideal and its superegoical obscene underside delivered between the lines) can be observed in the telegrams sent by Talat

[113] "Siz ülkemizi bundan altı yüz yıl önce bizden koparmaya çalışıp, işgal ettiniz. Halkımızı sürekli olarak katliamlar yoluyla imha etmeye çalıştınız ve şimdi de tüm Osmanlı vatanını bir Türkiye'ye dönüştürme çabası içindesiniz."
[114] "Siz sadece bizim vücudumuzu yok edebilirsiniz, fakat inandığımız fikirleri asla. Yarın Ermenilik özgür ve sosyalist Ermenistan'ı selamlayacaktır. Yaşasın sosyalizm."
[115] This superegoical tactic was employed by the ruling nation throughout history and can be traced towards recent times to the counter-guerilla in Turkey.

with their use of enigmatic language, the constant cancelling and revision of previous orders, and the explicit emphasis on the maintaining the appearance of deportation:

> For this reason, during the deportation of people in cities, towns, or in areas close to [population] centers, you must practice caution and avoid drawing attention, in order to produce the belief among the foreigners wandering around in those parts that the purpose of the deportations is nothing other than the relocation. To achieve this, the temporary implementation of compassionate treatment is necessary for political reasons, and the usual measures (massacres) known to you should be implemented in the appropriate regions (Cipher telegram from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Aleppo governor-generalship, Akçam, 2018, p. 211).

This superegoical ambivalence is one of the main pillars of denialism as it allows the denial of responsibility of the perpetrator by erasing the subjective dimension and making the Other responsible for it ("they died on the road," "there was no intention for genocide"). Furthermore, it displaces the burden of responsibility to the victim in the form of a superegoical "injunction to prove" ("prove if you can") that "pushes the survivor to guilt for not being able to prove" since denialism entails the repudiation of the very factuality of facts (Artuç, 2021, pp. 41-42, 44, 23-24). This perverse logic of *fetishistic disavowal* is captured beautifully by System of a Down in the song Holy Mountains, in which the subjective responsibility for the genocide (the mythical "intention") is disembodied and appears as partial objects (organs-without-body), the paradigmatic examples of which are gaze and voice: "someone's blank stare deemed it warfare," and "someone's mouth said, 'paint them all red.'"

Overall, the Armenian Genocide resulted in the eradication of the Armenian nation from its homeland, and at the end of 1915, Armenians were almost non-existent in the Ottoman Empire; thus, the Armenian problem "had been solved."[116]

[116] "Ermeni sorunu hallolunmuştur."

according to Talat[117] (Akın, 2019, p. 268; Sasuni, 1992, p. 241). Roughly simultaneously with the Armenian Genocide, the Greek Genocide and the Assyrian Genocide (*Sayfo*) had also been carried out, which resulted in the systematic destruction of all non-Muslim elements and the creation of a homogeneous Muslim population, as well as the accumulation of capital in the hands of the Muslims (who would later be the national capitalists of the republican era) through mass expropriation, resulting in the creation of a "national" economy (Gaunt, 2021, pp. 56, 68-69; Kévorkian, 2011, p. 200).

The extermination of the non-Muslim population, which functioned as the symptomal element that embodied the imaginary impediment for the national fantasy of *millet-i hakime*, resulted in a crisis in the organization of national *jouissance*, since in the absence of an impediment, obfuscating the lack or falsity of national fantasy had become impossible. In addition to this, although a mass expropriation and transfer of wealth had happened momentarily, the continuous economic exploitation that was made possible by the colonial *millet* system was abolished with the destruction of the non-Muslim populations. Consequently, the *millet-i hakime* ideology had to be reconstituted, and the regimes of surplus-value extraction and national *jouissance* had to be reorganized against a new enemy that would serve as the new Armenians, which unsurprisingly turned out to be Kurds. Ironically, the highest moment of integration of Kurds into the ruling nation through a shared founding crime (to which we can add the fact that after the genocide, Kurds fought alongside Turks also in the Turkish War of Independence) turned out to be the

[117] Talat was assassinated by the Dashnak militant Soghomon Tehlirian 5 years later in the Operation Nemesis that targeted the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide such as Cemal Pasha, Behaeddin Shakir, Said Halim Pasha, and Cemal Azmi; and the organizers of which included Armen Garo.

moment of the beginning of their exclusion from the ruling nation; as Turks turned against Kurds as early as 1916 with the forced migrations and massacres planned in a similar way to Armenian Genocide, which could not be executed to the same extent because Kurdish populations were very concentrated and armed (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 242-245). During the years of the Turkish War of Independence, Mustafa Kemal needed the support of Kurds, so he maintained the anti-*gavur* (anti-Christian) rhetoric of the Islam nation.[118] The Islamic term *millet* was deliberately used by the Kemalists (who adopted the credo "hakimiyet bilakayduşart milletindir," meaning that sovereignty lies with the *millet* without any conditions), and the large majority of Kurds again preferred the alliance with Turks over a possible non-Muslim intervention, only with the exception of small and short-lived but important Kurdish national organizations like *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti* (Society for the Rise of Kurdistan, *Cemiyeta Tealiya Kurd*) which was founded by the descendants of Bedirxan and Ubeydullah (Akın, 2019, p. 269; Sasuni, 1992, p. 256; Yeğen 2021, p. 304). And although in the Treaty of Sèvres, Armenian and Kurdish delegations could agree on a joint declaration, the Ankara government had already consolidated its power, and when both the Ankara and Moscow governments refused to recognize it, the treaty was annulled and the road to the establishment of the Republic of Turkey was opened (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 258-259, 164).[119]

[118] Islam was the official state religion of Turkish Republic until 1928 (Adanır, 2001, pp. 331, 338). The references to Islam nation are numerous, such as: "(…) in early 1920, Mustafa Kemal reminded the deputies that they were not just Turks or Circassians or Kurds, but rather representatives of Muslim populations which formed a community of solidarity, and the unity which the national movement was determined to accomplish was going to be an Islamic one encompassing all ethnic elements" (Adanır, 2001, p. 328).

[119] Although the parts of Kurdistan remaining outside of Turkey is outside of the scope of this work, it should be noted that the Kurdistan's division into four happened in this period through Sykes-Picot and Lausanne treaties.

The Ankara government (and later the republic) inherited the logic of *millet-i hakime* from the Ottomans and İT (as the National Forces (*Kuvâ-yi Milliye*), which developed into the Ankara government was an organic continuation of İT cadres and ideology). Taking advantage of the situation in which no opposition against the domination of the ruling nation was left, it established a regime of denialism concerning the founding crimes, simultaneously reconfiguring the definition of *millet-i hakime* so that Turkishness in addition to Islam became a *sine qua non* of inclusion in the ruling nation, thereby excluding the Kurds (that form the largest non-Turk element now) from it. Throughout the reign of İT and Kemalists, the imperial-colonial regime was transformed into a national (or nation-state) colonial regime, relying on a fascist-corporatist[120] ideology, which was materialized in the Durkheimian discourse of ideologues like Ziya Gökalp (Adanır, 2001, p. 320). To bypass the problems of the definition of fascism, one can observe that when analyzed through the formulae of sexuation, the logic of the national Whole (and the resulting foreign element that disturbs the national harmony, e.g., Armenians or Kurds) corresponds to the masculine logic that stages the contradiction between the All and the exception, which reveals that it is a species of idealist (right) politics that displays precisely the same structure with racism and anti-Semitism of Nazi Germany. In fact, Armenians had been directly compared to Jews in Europe by the proponents of these views, such as Yusuf Akçura (Adanır, 2001, p. 324).

The genocide also marked the end of the organized revolutionary left in Turkey, and combined with the regime of denialism constructed around the real

[120] Exemplified by Mustafa Kemal's Balıkesir speech in 1923: "The party will represent the nation as a whole, not just one social class." (quoted in Adanır, 2001, p. 336)

kernel of *jouissance* of the founding crimes and the absolute domination of the ideology of the ruling nation, it opened up a period of silence and complacency that would last until the end of 1960s in which no revolutionary left party or organization that is against (or at least free from) the ruling nation ideology was active. As the Kurds were excluded from the ruling nation and replaced the non-Muslims as the "internal enemy" that is presumed to prevent the realization of the national fantasy, the eruption of national *jouissance* turned against them in the form of discrimination, oppression, and massacres. Kurds started to realize their predicament shortly after and began to put up resistance, but none of them resulted in a sustained national or left organization. This period of silence prior to the emergence of the '68 movement, in which the ruling nation ideology and the regime of denialism dominated and the colonial regime was uncontested, will constitute the focus of analysis in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

POST-1915: DOMINATION OF RULING NATION IDEOLOGY AND THE REGIME OF DENIALISM

The reconfiguration of the *millet-i hakime* ideology under the Kemalist regime undertook two main trajectories: On the one hand, the anti-non-Muslim foundation of the *millet system* was kept intact and reinforced through the regime of denialism and the continuation of the systematic discrimination and violence against the remaining non-Muslim populations. On the other hand, it gained a Turkish nationalist/racist character so that it turned against the non-Turkish populations, the largest of which was the Kurds. This meant the re-emergence of the colonial problem in the post-genocidal period, this time not as the Armenian question but as the Kurdish question. This period also witnessed the emergence of the "Turkish left," the left integrated into the ruling nation, which was materialized in the "illegal" TKP which was under the hegemony of Kemalism and supported the nation-state with regard to the colonial situation and the privilege of the *millet-i hakime* to rule, in an age where Lenin's theses on the right to self-determination of nations had already been formulated. This was made possible by employing the false dichotomy of secular-Islamist (and progressive-reactionary) that first emerged in the 31 March incident of 1909 and categorizing all the discontent against the Kemalist regime as a reactionary opposition against the secular regime or the republic itself (which continues to be a position defended by some of the Turkish left today).

6.1 The republic against Kurds

Starting from the 1920s, the republic denied the existence of non-Turkish elements (as evidenced by the 1924 constitution in which only Turkishness was recognized and Islam was the official state religion) and ruled most of Kurdistan under martial law and state of emergency, applying a colonial policy that involved the appointment of inspector generals to the region that resulted in the rampant assimilatory and oppressive practices against the Kurdish population (Yeğen, 2021, p. 303; Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, 139, note 4). This policy resulted in 19 Kurdish uprisings of various sizes during the first twenty years of the republic, some of which had great impacts with regard to the awakening of Kurdish national consciousness (O'Connor, 2017, p. 5). The first rebellion of Kurds against the Kemalist regime was the 1921 Koçgiri rebellion which aimed to bring about the independence of Kurdistan on the basis of Wilson's principles and the article of Treaty of Sèvres that recognized the right of Kurds to separate; but it was suppressed by the early Kemalist regime in three months. The following great uprising was the Sheikh Said rebellion of 1925, which was the result of a national resistance organization (Azadî) that spanned all of Kurdistan, preparations of which started in 1920 (Yeğen, 2021, p. 306; Maraşlı 2010, 3/20;[121] Sasuni, 1992, p. 268). Although the uprising was forced to start earlier than planned, Kurds could take over 12 cities, and the Kemalist regime was able to suppress the resistance only after they made an agreement with the French for the use of the Syrian railroads for transportation of Turkish soldiers to Mardin (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 271-274). The suppression of the uprising was an important step in the

[121] The page numbers for this work are unavailable, given numbers are relative.

annexation of Kurdistan[122] by the Turkish republic between 1920s and 1930s, and resulted in the martial law for entire Kurdistan, the law for Establishment of Peace (*Takrir-i Sükûn*), Eastern Independence Tribunals (*Şark İstiklal Mahkemeleri*), and 1925 Report for Reform in the East (*Şark Islahat Planı*) that projected a systematic deployment of assimilatory practices against the Kurdish population (Yeğen, 2021, pp. 306-308; Adanır, 2001, pp. 331-332).

Beginning with 1926, the focus of the Kurdish national resistance had shifted to the region of Ararat, which had almost become a liberated zone by that time (Yeğen, 2021, p. 308; Sasuni, 1992, p. 284). This prompted the Kemalist government to launch a military attack on Ararat with 10000 soldiers in late 1927, against which Kurds resisted and the first Ararat rebellion broke out, resulting in the defeat of the Turkish government and the declaration of the government of Ararat (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 296-297). In parallel to the rebellion, an organization of national emancipation under the name Xoybûn emerged (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 291, 297; Maraşlı, 2010, 3/20). One very important aspect of the Ararat rebellion and Xoybûn organization is that after a very long time, they marked the first prominent cooperation between the Kurds and the (remaining) Armenians as they were now both excluded from the *millet-i hakime* (Sasuni, 1992, p. 288; Maraşlı, 2010, 3/20). In their 1928 declaration, Xoybûn exposed and condemned the policies of ethnic cleansing and oppression of the Ottoman and Turkish governments and warned the Kurdish nation that this genocidal threat was now clearly turned against them (Sasuni, 1992, p. 304). The following two years until late 1930 passed with a period

[122] Although the rebellion was suppressed in two months, the Turkish army continued its operations in Kurdistan for two years (Yeğen, 2021, p. 307).

of secret preparations on the side of Xoybûn, whereas the Kemalist government introduced an amnesty as well as forced migrations, massacring those who accepted the terms and migrated (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 297-298, 302). The second (and the larger) Ararat rebellion broke out in 1930 when Turkish forces started attacking after the secret Turkish-Soviet agreement (Sasuni, 1992, p. 312). The resistance was led by three leaders, one of whom was Armenian,[123] and the resistance demanded the independence of Kurdistan and Armenia (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 309-310; 322, note 1). Although the rebellion emerged victorious from the first two battles, with the Soviet Red Army crossing the Aras and coming to the aid of the Turkish army, and later Iran giving military access to Turkey under Soviet pressure, enabled the Turks to blockade off Ararat completely, therefore the rebellion was suppressed after resisting until September 25 (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 313-319). During the Ararat rebellion, the Turkish government also massacred thousands of Kurdish civilians (15000 were reported dead by the official newspaper Cumhuriyet) using the army and the air force near Van as a show of force against the rebellion, known as the Zilan massacre (Yeğen, 2021, p. 308).

Following the suppression of the rebellion of Ararat, the Kemalist regime turned against the last remaining semi-autonomous Kurdish region within its territory, which was Dersim.[124] Although the 1925 Report for Reform in the East (*Şark Islahat Planı*) was already in effect, it was not enough to break the autonomy of Dersim, so in 1935 a special law for Dersim called the Tunceli Law was

[123] Ardashes Muradyan of Khnus, *nom de guerre* Zilan bey (Sasuni, 1992, pp. 310; 322, note 1).
[124] Dersim was distinguished from other Kurdish areas by virtue of the predominance of the non-Sunni (and for all intents and purposes, non-Muslim) Kızılbaş/Alevi and the Zaza population. This difference of especially Kızılbaş/Alevi Kurds prevented their inclusion to the *millet-i hakime*, and although they were not directly targeted as the other non-Muslim populations such as Armenians, Greeks, and Assyrians, they were still seen as *kafir* by the Sunni Muslim orthodoxy.

promulgated and an inspector general was appointed for Dersim by the Kemalist regime, which was followed by military operations and massacres in 1937-1938 (Maraşlı, 2010, 4/20). Although Dersim resisted for more than a year under the leadership of tribal leaders like Seyit Rıza, but due to the lack of political organization and organized self-defense, it was suppressed through what is known as the Dersim massacre in which tens of thousands of civilians were massacred and much more forcefully displaced by the Kemalist regime, again by military operations and aerial bombardments, which included the use of chemical weapons (Yeğen, 2021, pp. 309-311; Maraşlı, 2010, 4/20).

Following the Dersim massacre, the Kemalist regime had completed annexing Kurdistan, consolidated its domination, and cemented the new configuration of the colonial system that would stay in place until today. This was met with no opposition from the ruling nation (which has now become Muslim Turks), who benefited from both the extraction of wealth from the non-Muslims through the genocide and from the colonial extraction and exploitation made possible by the exclusion of the Kurds from the ruling nation. As Kurds also provided the new imaginary obstacle to the realization of the national fantasy, the post-genocidal reorganization of the national *jouissance* turned against them, as evidenced by the explosion of systematic racism, oppression, and violence against them. Yeğen captures this point succinctly by stating that "the Kurds' status became closer to that of the Armenians in 1937–38" (Sasuni, 1992, p. 312). The constitutional republican regime and the formal equality of citizens did not provide an obstacle to this as the logic of the *millet-i hakime* had already passed into the superegoical domain of unwritten rules a century earlier, and it was perfected to such an extent that its

deployment against Kurds was trivial. This meant that Kurds, who were already divided into four nation-states following WWI, were left to the assimilatory policies of the republic with no possible allies and no political organization. This resulted in a period of silence with regard to the Kurdish question and the Kurdish national movements in Turkey, which was only going to start to break after the 1960s.[125]

6.2 The republic against non-Muslims

The superegoical logic of the *millet-i hakime* found its highest expression in the Armenian Genocide and the extermination of the non-Muslim populations, and the resulting regime of denialism was a necessary extension of this logic: Just like the *millet system* surviving after the introduction of formal equalities through the "maintaining the appearance" of formal equality and keeping the big Other ignorant about the actual inequality which everybody is aware of (and which is endorsed by the superegoical supplement of the Symbolic law embodied in the ideology of *millet-i hakime*); the regime of denialism is also based on the keeping the big Other ignorant about the founding crime that made possible the current order (both in the economic and ideological sense) which was again known by everyone, and in fact, directly was prescribed by the *millet-i hakime* ideology.

This regime of denialism materialized on the one hand in the official ideology and official history of the Turkish Republic (as there is no fundamental discontinuity between İT and Kemalist regime), and on the other hand in the continuation of the genocide through racist policies of systematic discrimination,

[125] Although it was not in Turkey, the declaration of Republic of Mahabad in 1946 should be noted as an exception of this period and an important event regarding the Kurdish national movement (Mustafa Barzani also rose into prominence starting with this event).

assimilation, and ethnic cleansing (Suciyan, 2015, p. 83; Adanır, 2001, p. 336). Regarding the former we can give examples like the foundation of the Turkish Historical Society (Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti, later Türk Tarih Kurumu) and the production of the Turkish History Thesis (Türk Tarih Tezi), and the parallel establishment of the Turkish Language Association (Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti, later Türk Dil Kurumu) and the production of the Sun Language Theory (Güneş Dil Teorisi)[126] in the 1930s which are both racist and supremacist pseudo-scientific theses that try to justify the superiority and prerogative of the ruling nation (*Herrenvolk*), typical of the fascist ideologies of the era (and even pioneering them, since Hitler regarded Mussolini the first and himself the second student of Mustafa Kemal in his 1939 birthday speech)[127] (Suciyan, 2015, p. 87; Adanır, 2001, pp. 344-346, 352).

With regard to the continuation of genocidal policies against non-Muslims, many examples can be given: As early as the 1920s, the Kemalist regime started displaying its clearly denialist character by declaring some of the perpetrators of the genocide as martyrs (*şehid*), granting pensions to the families of those who were executed in the 1918 court-martial (*Divan-ı Harbi-i Örfi*) trials, and making laws for the confiscation of so-called "abandoned properties" (*emval-i metruke*) as well as the remaining properties in the hands of non-Muslim foundations (Akın, 2019, p. 257). This was followed by systematic discriminatory practices and pogroms against the remaining non-Muslim populations of Turkey: In addition to the Armenian

[126] This was accompanied by the language reform that aimed to artificially eliminate non-Turkish words from the vocabulary of Turkish language, and a mass change of non-Turkish location names as well as location names that are in Turkish but include references to non-Muslim or non-Turkish elements (e.g., location names that include "kilise" meaning church).

[127] "(…) a German sympathizer to observe already in 1933 that in Turkey 'the idea of race' was much more strongly developed than in any other country" (Adanır, 2001, p. 351).

Constitution of 1860 and all its achievements being annulled and the institutions like the assemblies being left without legal basis and ceasing their activities (Suciyan, 2015, pp. 94, 97), in 1922, the return of the "leftovers" of Armenian Genocide was prohibited (Yeğen, 2021, p. 304), in 1923 the reopening of Armenian schools –which was guaranteed by the Treaty of Lausanne– was prohibited (Suciyan, 2015, p. 43), in 1925 the state forced the community representatives to abdicate their rights which were again granted by the Treaty of Lausanne (p. 91), same year a travel ban for non-Muslims was put into place (p. 42), in 1926 official aid was granted to the families of İT leaders (p. 83), in 1938 the law regulating the religious foundations (Law of Pious Foundations) was changed and Single Trustee System was introduced so that the administrators of foundations of non-Muslims were started to be appointed by the government despite heavy objection from the communities (pp. 97-98), in 1941, non-Muslims aged 25 to 45 were conscripted as reserve soldiers and sent to labor camps like Aşkale, where they were subjected to forced labor under extremely harsh conditions, known as the incident of the Twenty Classes (*Yirmi Kur'a Nafia Askerleri*) (pp. 71, 73), in 1942, with the Wealth tax (*Varlık vergisi*) non-Muslims were forced to pay exorbitant amounts of arbitrary taxes, resulting in a further mass wealth transfer after the genocide, in 1943, with a cabinet decision Talat's body was brought to Turkey and an official funeral was held[128] (p. 83), in 1950, with the new Law of Associations, use of race was prohibited in association names as a measure against the organization of non-Muslims (p. 97), and in addition to these, many Armenian publications were censored and banned throughout these years,[129] and

[128] He was buried in the *Abide-i Hürriyet* in İstanbul, which was built to commemorate the 31 March incident, and later became the shrine of İT.
[129] Around 144 Armenian publications were prohibited between 1923–45 (Suciyan, 2015, p. 128).

many Armenian churches and properties remained occupied or seized (pp. 126-130, 75-76). The anti-non-Muslim policies of ethnic cleansing reached another peak in the state-sponsored İstanbul Pogrom of 6-7 September 1955 which was perpetrated against the remaining non-Muslim populations (predominantly Greeks, but also Armenians and Jews) and resulted in the dramatic decline in the non-Muslim population, which was already almost non-existent in the aftermath of the genocide and population exchanges.

As was shown, throughout the first decades of the republic, colonial and national oppression of the ruling nation both against non-Turks and non-Muslims was systematic, and both of those groups had become disenfranchised to such an extent that they could put up virtually no resistance, whereas the members of the ruling nation were under the hegemony of the ruling nation ideology so that they were categorically blind to these issues. This caused the absence of radical revolutionary struggle in Turkey until the end of the 1960s. The "Turkish left" emerged and developed in this period as an extension of the Kemalist regime, embodied in the TKP, which both provided the origin myth as well as the theses that made possible the articulation of the left to the ruling nation ideology, making it complacent in the founding crimes as well as the ongoing colonial oppression.

6.3 Early Turkish left and the national-colonial question

The reason for the symptomal absence of the revolutionary left movements in Turkey in this period can be put as follows: The first generation of revolutionary left emerged from the Armenian nation which occupied the symptomal position within the colonial *millet system*, and as Armenians as a nation were destroyed *in toto* by the

Genocide, the revolutionary left was also eradicated. In the following conjuncture, the nation that occupied the symptomal position in the colonial regime had become the Kurds, but the Kurdish national resistance could not form a lasting impact, nor could it produce a leftist revolutionary movement, because, in their long alliance with the Turks and inclusion in the *millet-i hakime* which culminated in the sharing of the founding crimes, they had given up the means of autonomous national organization in return of the ruling nation privileges and came under the traditional authority of sheiks and small tribal leaders who were either directly loyal to the state and pacified the national movements, or could not provide the necessary level of political and military organization against a nation-state even if they were dissident. As for the Turks, since they shared in the privilege of the ruling nation, the most that could emerge from them was a "left" politics of *abstract universality* that is both pacifist and blind to the colonial exploitation that generates their structural privilege.

The TKP emerged in this post-genocidal conjuncture of denialism in 1920 in Baku, and although its founders and leader cadres (the Fifteens, including Mustafa Suphi) were assassinated by the Kemalist regime under the nose of Soviets and afterward the party was pushed into illegality by Kemalists; the policy of TKP always remained pro-Kemalist and Soviet-aligned since its first congress, in which the decision to support Kemalists against imperialism was taken[130] (Ulus, 2011, pp. 132, 134). Under the leadership of Şefik Hüsnü, who was a proponent of the Kemalist regime to the extent of congratulating the foundation of the national assembly, the TKP supported Kemalists against what they deemed as imperialists and their reactionary internal allies (such as Kurds in the 1925 Sheikh Said rebellion)

[130] Which was criticized by Comintern in the fifth congress in 1924 (Ulus, 2011, p. 135).

(Ulus, 2011, p. 136). In the programme of 1926 (which was in effect until 1951), Kemalism was criticized superficially, but nevertheless, it was safeguarded and supported as progressive and national against reactionaries and imperialism (Ulus, 2011, pp. 136-137). Starting from the 1930s, Şefik Hüsnü reduced the opposition to the Kemalist regime to a minimum, and this resulted in a period of irrelevancy and non-activity for the TKP until it ceased to exist in Turkey after the arrests of 1951 (Ulus, 2011, pp. 137-139).

The theses and politics of TKP constituted a central point of criticism of the revolutionary organizations after the ’68 break, and they will be touched upon more, but for now, the masculine logic of abstract universality displayed by the TKP can be summarized under three headings: First, they accepted the racist bourgeois rule of Kemalists and justified it through an evolutionist understanding (reminiscent of the Second International more than Lenin) that claimed the conditions of socialist revolution has not matured and Kemalist rule was, in fact, a progressive force for the development of capitalism against feudalism. This led to pacifism (obsessional self-hindering) as well as support of the colonial practices of the Kemalist regime in the name of progress (perverse self-instrumentalization). Second, the TKP functioned as the agent of denialism for the left memory for it erased the first generation of revolutionary left that came before it (therefore establishing itself as the “beginning” for the Turkish left), and it also shared in the official Kemalist historiography’s denial of the Armenian Genocide, resulting in the production of pseudo-leftist theses that would plague the Turkish left for decades such as non-Muslims constituting a “comprador bourgeoisie” and acting in collaboration with imperialism (which is directly equated with physical invasion, contrary to Lenin’s insistence on finance

capital), or the Armenian revolutionaries being mere nationalists with "particular" interests in conflict with internationalism (Akın, 2021, p. 116; Lenin, 1974a). This articulation to the regime of denialism was not unexpected as the TKP included former İT cadres were perpetrators of the genocide[131] (Akın, 2021, p. 117). And third, TKP was blind to the class dimension of the existing colonial order against Kurds, as it reduced the Kurdish question to a problem of backwardness and reaction against the modern secular bourgeois Kemalist regime (which was seen as relatively progressive), and again joined with the ruling nation in oppressing the Kurds, siding with the Kemalist regime in the numerous Kurdish uprisings and massacres.

Because TKP accepted the field defined by the ruling nation ideology and official Kemalist historiography as given, starting from a presumed blank slate without questioning the prehistory of the current regime, nor concerning itself with the so-called "primitive accumulation" (meaning the violent regime of exploitation and expropriation made possible by the *millet system* that culminated in the genocide) that generated the current order, it could not detect the real contradiction of the Kemalist nation-state and could only exist and act within the confines that are determined by the Kemalist regime. This false neutrality/universality in the service of a hidden Master corresponds to the logic of the masculine All of the University discourse, which is characterized by the two poles of obsessional self-hindering and endless postponing as evidenced by TKP's pacifism and evolutionism/economism, and perverse self-instrumentalization as can be seen in TKP's "service" to and justification of the Kemalist colonial regime in the name of objective historical

[131] For instance, the county governor (*mutasarrıf*) of Deir ez-Zor, one of the "destinations" and focal points of the Armenian genocide, Salih Zeki Kuşarkov, who was responsible for the massacre of thousands of Armenians, was a former İT member who later joined TKP (Akın, 2021, p. 117).

progress, which results in the erasure of the role of the revolutionary subject (vanguard) which is another feature of the University Discourse. Because of this dependence on the Kemalist Master and the absence of dimension of subjective intervention, when faced with the question "Father, or worse" meaning the status quo or the revolutionary rupture, the TKP was structurally conservative as it could not choose the "worse" and attempt to step outside of the given paradigm.

This predominance of the masculine All of the University Discourse prevented the TKP from accepting fundamental Leninist theses, and even resulted in anti-Leninist positions, although the party was Soviet-aligned. Three short examples could be given to exemplify this, only by referring to famous works of Lenin: Unlike Lenin, TKP was not critical of patriotism and the involvement in WWI,[132] nor of the state apparatus (nation-state) with its founding and systemic violence, disregarding the Leninist paradigm put forward in the *State and Revolution* (Lenin, 2015). Unlike Lenin, TKP did not accept the theory of the vanguard, and it tended to idealist deviations such as evolutionism and economism, disregarding the theses put forward in *What is to be Done* (Lenin, 1978). And lastly, unlike Lenin, TKP did not accept the unconditional right of nations to self-determination, not in the (past) Armenian case nor in the (present) Kurdish case, which was repeated endlessly in many places by Lenin, but most famously in *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination* (Lenin, 1977b).

Revisiting Akçura's famous "three policies" (*üç tarz-ı siyaset*), which are ultimately nothing but different flavours or configurations of the ruling nation

[132] Another unique feature of Lenin was his stance in the WWI in contrast to almost all other leftists of the day. Whereas the Second International and many Marxists were sided with their respective nation-states, Lenin did not hold back from being a traitor and directly advocated for the defeat of Russia.

ideology aimed to sustain the privilege of the ruling nation, we can determine the point of articulation of the politics of TKP to them: Ottomanism is the mythical liberal-democratic variant that is impossible to sustain alongside the privilege of the ruling nation (it was "merely a decorative flourish" in Kévorkian's words), Islamism is the imperial-colonial variant that provides the basis and the fundamental justification of the system, Turkism is the national-colonial adaptation of it to the modern world, to which one can add TKP line as the socialist variant as another modern adaptation (the reason for its absence in the Akçura's thesis can be explained by the fact it was written before the Bolshevik revolution, therefore socialism had not yet emerged as a paradigm of power that could be judged as valid by the ruling nation ideology) (Kévorkian, 2011, p. 192).[133]

The four main sources of the Turkish left of the following periods, characterized by its adherence to Kemalism and nation-state, as well as its juntaism, can all be traced back to the tradition of TKP which acted as the catalyst to the adaptation of the ideology of the ruling nation to the left discourse[134] (Ulus, 2011, p. 133). First, Şefik Hüsnü's own line known as the *Aydınlık* group, whose theses were summarized above, contributed greatly to the generation of a Kemalist left. Second, the line of Şevket Süreyya Aydemir that split from the TKP as a right fraction championing full integration to Kemalism, which was materialized in 1932 in the journal *Kadro* that advocated a form of Kemalist national-socialism as a "third way" against capitalism and socialism (Ulus, 2011, pp. 135-136; Adanır, 2001, pp. 354-

[133] That is to say, without a real revolution (1917) as the authentic Event, the national-socialist simulacrum could not exist.
[134] This intersection of "origins" in TKP also betrays the origin of the consensus on the erasure of the first generation of revolutionary left, namely the Armenian revolutionaries.

355). The *Kadro* journal is the ideological precursor to the journal *Yön*, which also advocated for a Kemalist statism as a way of development and hegemonized the left in the 1960s. The third line is that of Mihri Belli, who originated from the Şefik Hüsnü's *Aydınlık* wing and regarded himself as the true successor to TKP, who was again very influential in the left in 1960s, and especially important for our study because of his involvement in the *Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi* (the name of which comes from Şefik Hüsnü's *Aydınlık*) and later split of Mahir Çayan from them (Ulus, 2011, p. 92, 135). Belli was one of the pioneers of the idea that the military in Turkey had a special status that it was above the class antagonism, and furthermore, it was essentially revolutionary since it always played a progressive role (and never a reactionary role) throughout history (Ulus, 2011, pp. 96-98). And fourth, Hikmet Kıvılcımlı, who was cast out of the TKP in the 1930s and attempted to form his own legal party, Vatan Party (Fatherland Party) calling for a second *Kuvâ-yi Milliye* in 1954, was also one of the main ideologues of the Kemalist Turkish left during the following period[135] (Ulus, 2011, p. 158). His main work, *Tarih Tezi* (History Thesis), is an attempt to fuse socialism with the Turk-Islam mythology (going as far as trying to incorporate the pan-Turkist fascist ideal of *Kızıl Elma* (Red Apple) or the *ghazis* who fought in *jihad* for Islamic conquests into the left discourse), putting forward theses like the Ottoman land ownership being "communal," or again, the special status of the military as the agent of all of the revolutions in the Turkish history,

[135] It is interesting to note that although Kıvılcımlı constitutes one of the main pillars of later Turkish left integrated to the ruling nation ideology, in fact, early Kıvılcımlı was much more critical about the Kemalist regime and the colonial situation compared to the positions he took later in his life. For instance, he spoke about Kurdish issue in the 1930s against the TKP, but later disregarded the issue completely; in the 1960s he was critical of Dev-Genç's usage of "peoples of Turkey," and advocated against the bringing of the Kurdish issue to the agenda (Ulus, 2011, pp. 177-178).

which was exemplified for Kıvılcımlı by İT and Kemalists (Ulus, 2011, pp. 164-166).

These four main sources, even after TKP was already superseded and pushed into irrelevance after its relocation abroad, provided the ideological ground for the Turkish left of the 1960s, and as such, in addition to being a period of pacifism and revisionism, the TKP era also stands for the period of the erasure of the revolutionary history and the integration of the left to the ruling nation ideology embodied in the regime of denialism and Kemalism. This configuration was only going to develop cracks after 1968 with the emergence of the second generation of revolutionary left, which will be considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

’68 BREAK: THE EMERGENCE OF THE SECOND GENERATION OF REVOLUTIONARY LEFT

In the 1960s, two major dynamics were determinant in the emergence of the second generation of revolutionary left in Turkey at the end of the decade, namely, the rise of the Turkish left and the parallel rise of the Kurdish national-colonial problem. These two factors determined the beginning of fateful break of revolutionary left from the ruling nation ideology embodied in Kemalism and nationalism, which was initially materialized in Mahir Çayan’s split from *Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi* that led to the formation of THKP-C and İbrahim Kaypakkaya’s split from *Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık* that led to the formation of TKP/ML. In this chapter, the domination of Kemalism, statism, and military interventionism in the Turkish left before the break, the rise of the Kurdish national question, and the eventual emergence of the second generation of revolutionary left from the National Democratic Revolution (Milli Demokratik Devrim, MDD) movement will be discussed respectively.

7.1 Turkish left under ruling nation hegemony

Following the 1960 coup d’état and the establishment of TİP in 1961, the left movements in Turkey started to develop under the division between the proponents of Socialist Revolution (Sosyalist Devrim, SD) represented by legalist TİP against the proponents of National Democratic Revolution represented by figures like Mihri Belli and Doğan Avcıoğlu. Both SD and MDD proponents were Kemalists integrated into the ruling nation ideology that accepted the TKP as the beginning of left in

Turkey, and they were also both on the side of the foundational and systemic violence in the sense of their integration to the regime of denialism regarding the founding crimes, and their acceptance of the discrimination, oppression, and violence of the republican regime against both the non-Muslims and Kurds.[136] As the second generation of the revolutionary left was born out of (the criticism of) MDD whereas the SD mostly remained legalist and pacifist, the analysis of the hegemony of the ruling nation ideology within the Turkish left will focus on the examples from the MDD camp.

The MDD thesis was developed in publications such as *Yön* and *Devrim* (of Doğan Avcıoğlu, who can be regarded as "right" MDD) and *Türk Solu* (of Mihri Belli, who can be regarded as "left" MDD) (Ulus, 2011, p. 20). In addition to completely integrating Kemalism and the ruling nation ideology into its framework just like the TKP before (such as deeming the Turkish War of Independence anti-imperialist), the MDD thesis complemented this with a revolutionary (or more correctly military interventionist) twist that advocates for a state-controlled national economy under military dictatorship which is branded as socialism. In fact, their relation to socialism was purely pragmatic in the sense that it did not proceed from Marxist principles (such as class struggle) but it proceeded from a developmentalist understanding influenced by dependency theories and viewed socialism as an instrument of non-capitalist way of development (understood in the sense of economic growth); which displays its debt to the *Kadro* movement[137] and its affinity

[136] SD sided with systemic violence implicitly or passively, by attempting to hold a neutral position in an antagonistic field in which there is no other position than siding with the systemic violence trying to sustain the *status-quo* or siding with the revolutionary violence against the system; whereas MDD sided with the systemic violence more actively and explicitly as can be seen in its juntaism.
[137] Şevket Süreyya Aydemir was also directly a contributor of *Yön*.

to the movements like Free Officers and Baath (e.g., Nasser, Qasim, Gaddafi) rather that revolutionary Marxists and Leninists[138] (Ulus, 2011, pp. 21-23, 27, 44, 55). In this sense, the understanding of socialism upheld by the Turkish left reveals itself to be not Marxist socialism but a mix of Kemalism, statism, nationalism, labourism/workerism, and juntaism (Ulus, 2011, p. 22).

In addition to the whitewashing of the Kemalist regime and the crimes of the nation-state (past and present, against non-Muslims and non-Turks, respectively) and casting the War of Independence as an anti-imperialist war (and Mustafa Kemal as a revolutionary), the MDD of Avcıoğlu and Belli upheld the thesis that the Turkish military was exceptional in the sense that it was above class antagonisms and it was essentially progressive despite being a state organ (in direct contradiction to Lenin's theses in *The State and Revolution*), and therefore determined military intervention as the main strategy (Ulus, 2011, pp. 29, 25-26). Through the equation of anti-imperialism with nationalism, the MDD advocated for a National Front (the unity of the ruling nation regardless of class) and a "second War of Independence" which would be waged against the imperialists (which were equated almost solely with external invaders and not with financial capital) and the comprador bourgeoisie (whose prototype was the non-Muslim populations of the Ottoman empire, which also served as a widespread "left" legitimation of the Armenian Genocide) (Ulus, 2011, pp. 24, 35). Because of this integration into the ideology of the ruling nation, the ideologues of the Turkish left often appealed to Turkist and Islamist discourses,

[138] Mihri Belli was inspired by Lenin's *Two Tactics* in his formulation of MDD, but as the later split of Çayan will demonstrate, he was profoundly anti-Leninist in many issues (Ulus, 2011, p. 92).

exemplified by the joint translation of Roger Garaudy's Islam and Socialism (*İslamiyet ve Sosyalizm*) by Doğan Avcıoğlu and Mihri Belli (Ulus, 2011, p. 40).

The direction of the MDD movement changed drastically following two events: First, the entrance of the student movement (FKF, and after 1969 Dev-Genç) into their ranks (materializing in *Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi* in 1968) planted the seeds of criticism from which the second generation of the revolutionary left would sprout; and second, the failure of the "left" junta of 9 March 1971 (which was supported by Avcıoğlu, Belli, and other MDD proponents) and the consequent coup of 12 March 1971 that provided the breaking point for the revolutionary left from the state and Kemalism. But there was another factor that contributed to the split "from the outside," which was the development of Kurdish national theses and the reemergence of the Kurdish national-colonial question, that would provide the real basis for the revolutionary left's rupture with Kemalist left.

7.2 The resurfacing of the national-colonial question

Following the Dersim Massacre, there was a 20-year period of silence with regard to the colonial problem and the Kurdish national movement, which would only be interrupted in the 1950s with journals like *İleri Yurt* and figures like Musa Anter emerging, and the famous trial of the 49's (*49'lar davası*) of 1959 against 49 Kurdish intellectuals (which included figures like Musa Anter, Sait Kırmızıtoprak, and Sait Elçi) taking place (Şur, 2018, p. 248; Küçük, Küçük, & Yılmaz, 2023, p. 81). After the coup of 1960, the relative atmosphere of freedom that was felt by the members of the ruling nation was not at all felt by the Kurds, as many dissidents were released from prisons but not Kurds (Maraşlı, 2010, 5/20). While most of the Turkish left was

applauding the "progressive" coup and the relative political freedoms, Cemal Gürsel was openly declaring in Diyarbakır that "there is no such nation called Kurds in this country and all of the Orient"[139] (Akkaya, 2013, p. 4).[140]

Under these conditions, the Kurdish national movement did not exist as an organization, and it was confined mostly to the activity of Kurdish intellectuals who wrote in various journals and tried to analyze the issue under the heading of "Eastern question" since even stating the existence of Kurds was unacceptable in many cases (Akkaya, 2013, p. 4). The transformation of this intellectual movement into an organization was made possible by the Kurdish revolts in the other parts of Kurdistan (most importantly, KDP and Barzani), the formation of the *Doğulular* (Easterners) group in TİP, and the emergence of the Dev-Genç from within the student movement (Akkaya, 2013, p. 3).

One of the pioneering figures with regard to the criticism of the colonial situation was Sait Kırmızıtoprak (*nom de guerre* Dr. Şivan), who was one of the Kurdish intellectuals who tried to bring the issue to the spotlight in the first half of the 1960s by publishing in journals like *Yön* (Şur, 2018, p. 250). During this period, Dr. Şivan's articles were written in a very mild tone that tried to convey the basic issues like the existence of Kurds[141] and the existing structural inequalities without

[139] "Bu memlekette ve bütün Şark'ta Kürt diye bir millet yoktur."
[140] It is interesting to note that the Kurds and the Kurdish language are deemed both impossible/non-existent by the ruling nation ideology and prohibited at the same time. This coincidence of impossibility and prohibition (which Freud determined to be a fundamental characteristic of a taboo, exemplified paradigmatically by the incest taboo) betrays the arbitrary character (i.e., the involvement of *jouissance*) of the Law (Freud, 1981a). In an anecdote from 1968 M. Emin Bozarslan exposes this contradiction brilliantly: When he was detained and interrogated because of his works about the Kurdish language which was deemed inexistent by the authorities, he simply stated that if Kurdish language did not exist, then there was no reason for his detention as it was pointless and absurd to fight other over non-existing things (Kırmızıtoprak, 2014, p. 118).
[141] Although he also uses the term "Easterner" (*Doğulu*), he insists that the proper term is "Kurd," and not "of Kurdish origin" nor "Easterner."

overstepping any of the boundaries of the nation-state ideology (such as national unity), and he generally discussed the problem under the category of underdevelopment and persistence of feudal relations rather than colonialism, pointing towards socialism as a solution (Şur, 2018, p. 251). These early publications include articles like *Doğunun Baş Düşmanı Faşizm* (Dicle Fırat, 1962, January, 1) which is a polemic against assimilationist and racist policies, *Doğu Davamız* (Yön Dergisi, 26) signed by "15 Easterner Youths" that exposes the exploitative and extractive character of the "investments" that are made in the East, *Toprak Reformu Diye Kimi Aldatıyorlar* (Yön Dergisi, 28) that criticizes the promised land reform after the coup of 1960, *Doğu* (Yön Dergisi, 32) (again signed by 15 Easterners) that argues for the acknowledgement of the existence of Kurds, with a follow up that argues for right to education in native language *Bir Tartışma Üzerine* (Yön Dergisi, 36), *Kabahat Doğulunun mu?* (Yön Dergisi, 36) that argues against the deployment of violent security measures against the Kurdish population, *Doğuyu Sosyalizm Kurtarır* (Yön Dergisi, 48) that argues against the existing fascist regime in which Kurds are treated like "blacks and Jews," correctly determining the symptomal status of Kurds as that of the "conceptual Jew" as well as documenting their proletarianization through migration to cities, *Doğu Meselesinde Yanılmalar* (Yön Dergisi, 63) which is a polemic against assimilationism and the prohibition of education in native language, as well as two articles arguing for the legalization of abortion (Yön Dergisi, 36; Milliyet, 1964, April 30).

After this first phase, Dr. Şivan turned towards a much more radical criticism of the existing regime, and assessing that the national-colonial problem is rooted in the Turkish nation-state itself, he gradually passed towards illegality. First,

he established relations with TKDP (*Türkiye Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi*) of Faik Bucak, which was founded in 1965 as the Turkey chapter of Barzani's KDP in Iraq (Akkaya, 2013, p. 6; Maraşlı, 2010, 5/20). Utilizing these connections, he went to KDP's Dışeş camp in 1969 and underwent guerilla training there, after which he founded T-KDP (*Türkiye'de Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi*) in 1970 as a separate organization which declared in its first congress that Kurdistan is a colony and armed struggle is necessary (Küçük, Yılmaz, & Küçük, 2023, pp. 522-523; Maraşlı, 2010, 6/20; Akkaya, 2013, p. 8; Şur, 2018, p. 259). During this second phase, he developed his theories and wrote about the colonial situation in Kurdistan, most importantly his work titled *Kürt Millet Hareketleri ve Irak'ta Kürdistan İhtilali*, Dr. Şivan provided three novel criticisms that can be enumerated as follows: First, his criticism of Kemalism as a "racist-turanist" "military dictatorship," making him the first to openly reject Kemalism (preceding even İbrahim Kaypakkaya); second, his criticism of the Turkish left's inability to criticize Kemalism and his call to the left for the rejection of "Turkish national privileges" granted by the inclusion in the ruling nation; and third, his observation of the internal national contradiction and the identification of the status of Kurdistan as a colony (and the theses that a colony can have a colony, which will be a central discussion in 1970s Turkish left)[142] (Şur, 2018, pp. 255-256; Küçük, Yılmaz, & Küçük, 2023, p. 523; Küçük, Küçük, & Yılmaz, 2023, p. 84; Kırmızıtoprak, 2014, pp. 66, 121). Building upon a detailed history of Kurds and the emergence of the current colonial system, Dr. Şivan demonstrates the continuity of the ideology of the ruling nation throughout Tanzimat, İT, and Kemalist

[142] The discussion of who developed the "Kurdistan is a colony" thesis first is outside of this work's scope, but it is safe to state that Dr. Şivan was one of the first if not the first.

regimes, which all aimed to sustain the privileged status of "master-colonizer nation" ("efendi-sömürgeci millet"); emphasizing the anti-non-Muslim ("anti-*gavur*") foundations of it through the examples of Armenian Genocide (he calls it a massacre and "Ermeni Taramaları", also "kökünü kazımak" in a quotation) and the War of Independence, both of which utilized the anti-*gavur* and jihadist rhetoric of the Islam nation to win over the Muslim populations (Kurds, Circassians) and to justify the atrocities against non-Muslims (Kırmızıtoprak, 2014, pp. 66, 71, 84). Unfortunately, shortly after the formation of T-KDP, Dr. Şivan was accused of the killing of Sait Elçi (the leader of TKDP), and he was executed by the KDP of Iraq without any due process (Şur, 2018, p. 260; Küçük, Yılmaz, & Küçük, 2023, p. 523). This caused the abrupt end of the T-KDP movement (except for the DDKD fraction that would be later KİP) and the erasure of Dr. Şivan from the political memory of the left (both Turkish and Kurdish) almost completely (Küçük, Yılmaz, & Küçük, 2023, pp. 524-527).

Another venue for the development of the Kurdish national movement in this period was the Easterners (*Doğulular*) group that was formed inside the SD-proponent TİP (Akkaya, 2013, p. 6). Since the MDD proponents were openly Kemalist and nationalist, Kurdish politics, with its objections against Kemalism and the nation-state, could express itself more easily among the pacifist and more liberal-oriented SD proponents (Akkaya, 2013, p. 8). In this sense the relationship between the Kurds and TİP was conjunctural, not ideological (Maraşlı, 2010, 6/20). Between the years 1967 and 1969, the Easterners organized the Eastern Meetings (*Doğu Mitingleri*) in Kurdistan, and starting with 1969, they began to organize under DDKOs (*Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları*, Revolutionary Cultural Eastern Hearths)

despite objections from MDD-oriented Dev-Genç (Akkaya, 2013, p. 6; Maraşlı, 2010, 6/20; Küçük, Yılmaz, & Küçük, 2023, p. 17). The DDKOs were banned after the coup of 1971, and "separationism" was cited as the reason for the ban of TİP, but the Kurdish national question had already come to the forefront and entered the agendas of the new generations of revolutionaries to emerge (Maraşlı, 2010, 6/20).

7.3 MDD movement and the '68 break

The break in the Turkish left emerged within the MDD movement, specifically with the entrance of the representatives of the student movement (FKF and later Dev-Genç) to the ranks of MDD. The collaboration of theoreticians of MDD like Mihri Belli with the student movement (the inclusion of FKF in Belli's Dev-Güç) resulted in the birth of the *Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi* in 1968, which would provide the stage for the self-criticism within the Turkish left and the subsequent separation of the second generation of revolutionaries (which would materialize in THKP-C, TKP/ML, and THKO[143]) from the Kemalist and pacifist/juntaist MDD tradition represented by figures like Mihri Belli and Hikmet Kıvılcımlı[144] (Ulus, 2011, p. 112; Jongerden & Akkaya, 2012, pp. 5, 18, note 11). Although the well-known split within the ASD circle is the separation of the journal into "red Aydınlık" (ASD, Belli fraction and Çayan fraction) and "white Aydınlık" (PDA, Perinçek fraction) in the 15th issue, the real split was between the Kemalist-nationalist-juntaists that

[143] The THKO tradition also emerged from within the student movement, but it was not affiliated with the *Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi*. The theoretical material produced by THKO (mainly *Türkiye Devriminin Yolu* by Hüseyin İnan) is very rudimentary compared to Mahir Çayan's and İbrahim Kaypakkaya's elaborate theses, therefore, although THKO is the chronologically first, the analysis of emergence of second generation of revolutionary left will mainly focus on Çayan and Kaypakkaya.

[144] It should be noted that Hikmet Kıvılcımlı was not directly integrated to the MDD movement and occupied the position of an external contributor, but with regard to his theses and engagements during this period, he will be considered as MDD.

represented the old Turkish left and those that were critical of them who emerged within the student movement, and it occurred within the each of the journals separately (Çayan in ASD, Kaypakkaya in PDA). The real conflict was not between the Kemalists of ASD and PDA (Belli and Perinçek), as they were more or less in line with each other, but rather it was between the Kemalists and the leaders of the student movement which were critical of the ruling nation ideology. Even the split of PDA from ASD was sparked by a disagreement over Mustafa Kemal between Perinçek and Çayan (whereas Perinçek claimed that Atatürk was the leader, Çayan rejected it[145]), and although Belli's views were much more compatible with Perinçek's, he pragmatically supported Çayan's faction, resulting in Perinçek faction's separation with the accusation against Belli for establishing a "front of unprincipled unity" (Ulus, 2011, p. 114, Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık, 15). The coexistence of Belli and Çayan fractions in ASD also did not last long, as the fundamental differences among them regarding the ruling nation ideology with its nationalism, Kemalism, and pacifism/juntaism were unsurmountable from the outset as Çayan fraction's *Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi'ye Açık Mektup* (Open Letter to ASD) revealed after the separation (Çayan, M., Küpeli, Y., Aktolga M. R., & Kürkçü, E., 1971). Similarly, İbrahim Kaypakkaya's almost simultaneous separation from the PDA/Şafak was also caused by the fundamental disagreements regarding the ruling nation ideology that hegemonized the Turkish left up until then. This fundamental split between the left of the ruling nation and the revolutionary left materialized with the 12 March 1971 coup: The coup was accepted and even celebrated by both Belli's

[145] Çayan's *Yeni Oportünizmin Niteliği Üzerine*, which was written as a response to Perinçek and openly states that their guide is not petty-bourgeois Mustafa Kemal or Kemalism but Marxism (Çayan, 2003, p. 125).

ASD and Perinçek's PDA (as well as Kıvılcımlı's *Sosyalist*) who were actually expecting a "left" coup on 9 March. In stark contrast, the critical camps of Çayan (THKP-C) and Kaypakkaya (TKP/ML) decisively turned against the Turkish state and transitioned to armed struggle while formulating fundamental criticisms against the established regime.

The analysis of this process of emergence of the second generation of revolutionary left in Turkey is going to be undertaken in two steps: First, a general overview of the prominent doxas of the dominant Kemalist fractions of the ASD and PDA (which constitute the majority of the content of these journals) will be given through selected examples from the publications. The presence and the publications of the critical camps (Çayan fraction and Kaypakkaya) in these journals will be noted but their analyses will be postponed to the next phase. After having presented the dominant theses of MDD, Mahir Çayan's and İbrahim Kaypakkaya's theses and criticisms against them —which provided the theoretical ground of the revolutionary left in Turkey in the years to come— will be analyzed through a reading of the totality of their work.

The discourse of the Kemalist MDD hinges on two contradictory principles: On the one hand, the overwhelming influence of the *particularity* of the ruling nation embodied in the Turk-Islam identity (which is correctly detected by many symptomal readings); and on the other hand, not less importantly, a claim to false abstract *universality*, in the name of which all other particularities (Armenians, Kurds) can be dismissed as reactionary or particularist. One can observe that this mirrors the paradox of the masculine logic that stages the contradiction of the All (false abstract Universal) and the exception (the Particular that cannot be eliminated), and it is a

hallmark of the ruling nation ideology and the Turkish left under its hegemony. Only from the point of view of (the feminine logic of) the symptomal element does this contradiction appear as the Real antagonism, i.e., the impossibility of the nation itself that manifests itself as (economic and colonial) class difference.

In this sense, the "left" wing of MDD represented by the dominant fractions of ASD and PDA does not formally differ from Doğan Avcıoğlu's "right" wing flavour of MDD, and with regard to their contents, they are also very similar. In all of them, the denialist ruling nation ideology embodied in Kemalism and its official history is accepted as the undisputable ground, the War of Independence is cast as an anti-imperialist war and utilized as a central metaphor, anti-imperialism is equated with nationalism, the class antagonism is replaced by a corporatist understanding of society that transposes the internal impossibility into an external enemy (such as imperialists or non-Muslims/non-Turks), reference to Marxism and especially Leninism is minimalized thus reducing socialism to an instrument of (non-)capitalist development, and the military is seen as the revolutionary actor.

All of these traits can be observed when we look at some of the theses published in ASD: Articles like *Dünya Türkiye ve Devrimci Mücadele* by ASD, *Saldırıyı Arttırınız* signed by founders of Aydınlık, *Halkımızın Milli-Demokratik Mücadelesi Bugünkü Durumu Düşmanları ve Meseleleri* by ASD, *"Devrimciler El Ele Milli Cephede"* by ASD, *Cumhuriyet Bayramımızı Kutlamaya Layık Olmak İçin* by Türk Solu and ASD, *23 Nisan 1920 Ruhunun Gerçek Temsilcileri* by ASD, *Büyük İşçi Direnişi* by ASD, and *Proleter Devrimci Hareketin Program Taslağı* all hinge around these themes and the call for the "second War of Independence" waged by a "National Front" under the leadership of the Turkish military that would complete

the "anti-imperialist" Kemalist revolution which remained on the level of superstructure (Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi, 1, 4, 6, 8, 13, 19, 21, 29-30). Of course, this discourse in its totality stands on the denial of the Armenian genocide on the basis that they were "minority compradors" as well as the existence of the revolutionary parties before TKP. In order to achieve this, these theoretical articles are complemented by "historical" content that attempts to articulate the left to the Kemalist legacy such as *Türklüğün İstikametleri* by Mustafa Suphi,[146] *Doktor Şefik Hüsnü Değimer* by Rasih Nasuh İleri, *Tarihimizden: Kazım Karabekir Paşadan Umum Kıtaata* by Kazım Karabekir,[147] and *Tarihimizden: Egemenlik Kuvvetle ve Zorla Alınır* by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi, 2, 7, 10, 13).

The integration of the left into the ruling nation ideology is also pursued through articles by Belli and Kıvılcımlı that appeal to the national fantasy and the Turk-Islam mythology in a populist attempt to render Islam and nationalism compatible with socialism. In *Genel Olarak Sosyal Partiler*, Hikmet Kıvılcımlı tries to construct a narrative of Mohammad as a pragmatic and realist anti-capitalist revolutionary who was struggling against the proto-capitalist infidels of Mecca who worshipped money (Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi, 3). In another article titled *Dinin Türk Toplumuna Etkileri*, Kıvılcımlı tries to reconcile racist Turkist imaginary and narratives with his understanding of socialism, discussing lengthily the origin of Turks in Central Asia, the meaning of the word Turk and being Turkish, mythical Turkish tribes etc. in an effort very reminiscent of the Turkish History Thesis, albeit

[146] In this text, Mustafa Suphi openly claims that Turks are the most oppressed nation after Jews (Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi, 2).
[147] A propaganda text against non-Muslims from the post-WWI years, in which Dashnak revolutionaries are referred to as a "gang."

with a "left" twist (Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi, 17). Mihri Belli also contributed to this category with his articles defending nationalism such as *Devrimci Milliyetçilik ile Proleter Enternasyonalizmi Birbirini Tamamlar* in which he claims that nationalization is the major task in this "age of nations," that there is no conflict between nationalism and socialism, and even goes as far as to claim that since all of the bourgeoisie is not national ("milli"), nationalism cannot be considered a bourgeois ideology (Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi, 23). In another article that was published earlier titled *Millet Gerçeği*, in addition to stating the same thesis with regard to nationalism that the most important contemporary reality is that of the nation, and becoming a nation through realizing the unity in language, land, economy, and national culture is the first and most revolutionary task of Turkey of the day; Belli puts forward a defense of the Turkish mythology (which is itself a product of racist theses of Kemalist regime of the 1930s), going so far as defending Turanism and claiming that Turkish mythology is progressive and socialist, which he exemplifies by the *Ergenekon* epic that is characterized as a "revolutionary epic" in which the protagonist is a worker and the "collective labour of humanity smelts mountains" (Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi, 7). While he dismisses the non-Muslim minorities as the instruments of the imperialists and argues that the minority schools of the non-Muslims should be closed on the basis that they contradict secularism and it would facilitate the "amalgamation of those minorities with the Turkish majority;" he states that Kurds and the "Eastern issue" exist, and citing İsmet İnönü's claim of representation of both Turks and Kurds in Lausanne, and argues for the recognition of the existence of Kurds (on the condition of preservation territorial integrity of Turkey) to prevent them from becoming instruments of the imperialists as allegedly

was the case in the Sheikh Said rebellion. Symptomatically, this is followed by an amendment that claims that this is not a refutation of the right of nations to self-determination, and this right should not be taken as an absolute principle.

The attitude of ASD towards the coup (Çayan fraction had split before the coup) can be examined through two articles, one published one month before and one right after the coup: The first article titled *Karşı-devrimin Tecrit Oyununu Bozacağız* by ASD underlines the special status (i.e., above class antagonisms) of the Turkish military and celebrates the "revolutionary tradition" that is upheld by the "Kemalist forces" in the military (Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi, 28). The second article that was published after the coup titled *Bir Daha Hazırlıksız Yakalanmıyalım* and signed by ASD celebrates 12 March coup and the military, characterizing the Turkish army as being "born out of our War of Independence, and able to maintain Mustafa Kemal's nationalist ['millici'] and progressive tradition against all odds," and the coup as its answer to the "parliament dominated by comprador capitalists and feudals," blaming the revolutionaries for being weak and not being able to capitalize on it (Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi, 29-30).

Çayan's line developed in parallel to this dominant Kemalist line in ASD and was not very prominent in terms of publications before the PDA split. One noteworthy contribution that appears to be distinctly from Çayan before the split is the publication of Althusser's contemporary text *Philosophy as a Revolutionary Weapon* translated from French (presumably by Çayan) in the sixth issue.[148] After the split with PDA, Çayan's line gained prominence as texts written by them such as

[148] Çayan went to France in 1967 and he was clearly influenced by the student movement there. Looking at his texts and his mastery of dialectics, perhaps it would not be erroneous to consider him as an unknown student of Althusser.

Sağ Sapma Devrimci Teori ve Pratik by Çayan, *Doğu Anadolu Raporu* by Hüseyin Cevahir[149], *Yeni Oportünizmin Niteliği Üzerine* by Çayan, and *Kitleler, Küba Devrimi ve Yeni Oportünizm* by Cevahir appeared in the journal (Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi, 15, 19, 20, 23). In addition, the newspaper *Kurtuluş*[150] began to be published, which devoted a great deal of attention to the structural problems and oppression in Kurdistan ("the East") while remaining within the confines of the Kemalist MDD paradigm.

When it comes to the predominant doxa in PDA, it was actually not very different from that of ASD except for some nuances. They upheld similar theses with ASD regarding Kemalism, nationalism, and military interventionism; as evidenced by articles like *Gerçek Kahraman Kitlelerdir* by PDA, *Belgeler: 69 Deniz Subayının Son Olaylara İlişkin Bildirisinden Pasajlar*, *Deccal Nasıl Kapımızı Çalıyor I-II-III* by Hikmet Kıvılcımlı, and the "historical" complements like *1 Mayıs Nedir* by Şefik Hüsnü, or *Mustafa Suphi ve Yoldaşlarının Anısı Mücadele Azmimizi Çelikleştiriyor* that try to present an amalgamation of left Kemalism (Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık, 1, 6, 7, 8, 14). The main difference with ASD emerges in the polemics against ASD and *Kurtuluş* such as *Proleter Devrimci Birlik İçin İlkesiz Birlik Cephesini Açığa Çıkartalım* by PDA, *Proleter Enternasyonalizmi ve Burjuva Milliyetçiliği* by PDA, *Kurtuluş Gazetesinin Eleştirisi* by PDA, and *TDGF'yi Yıkıcılardan Kurtaralım* by PDA in which PDA simultaneously criticizes Belli for being nationalist while criticizing *Kurtuluş* for overemphasizing the Kurdish issue by fabricating a Turkish-

[149] This report was published not as a stand-alone article but as a section within the editorial part "Aydınlık'ta Dünya ve Türkiye" (The World and Turkey in Aydınlık).
[150] After the split with ASD and transition to armed struggle this journal was resurrected under the name *Kurtuluş: Devrim İçin Savaşmayana Sosyalist Denmez* which functioned as the official organ of THKP-C.

Kurdish conflict, overlooking the totality of the Turkish people and the interests of the proletariat (Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık, 2, 8, 10). During this period, PDA also proclaimed its adherence to Maoism, which is said to be repressed by the ASD and Dev-Genç. As to PDA's attitude towards the coup, it was also not much different from that of ASD. One month before the coup, PDA published an article about the military titled *Ordunun Rolü ve Anlamı* which stated that the military is an apparatus of the dominant classes but still made an appeal to the military to join with the people against imperialism (Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık, 17). Right after the coup, they published the article titled *Komutanların Muhtırasından Sonra Durum Nedir* which argued that the coup was, in fact, progressive and reformist and should be regarded as a warning against the parliament to implement the reforms (Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık, 20).

In contrast, these developments caused the representatives of the student movement to break with the Kemalist/juntaist MDD tradition and undertake a serious criticism of it, resulting in the formation of the three Marxist revolutionary parties (THKO, THKP-C, and TKP/ML) 80 years after the Armenian revolutionaries, marking the birth of the second generation of revolutionary left in Turkey. Already with the great worker demonstrations of 15-16 June 1970 being crushed violently by the military which was followed by a declaration of martial law, the student movement had started to realize the falsity of both pacifist/legalist (SD, TİP) and juntaist (MDD) versions of the ruling nation left; and with the 1971 coup, the decisive break started to materialize. While the prestigious and influential names of MDD, such as Belli, Kıvılcımlı, Perinçek, Berktay, Boratav, and Erdost, were either applauding the coup or remaining passive, the student movement produced great

theoreticians and revolutionary leaders who would shake the paradigm of the ruling nation ideology both ideologically and practically.[151]

The factors that make these movements revolutionary (in contrast to the previous Turkish left) in the dialectical materialist sense are not limited to their explicit commitment to dialectical materialism (Marxism and especially Leninism, in contrast to the Turkish left), and their transition to illegality and armed struggle. There is also a much more fundamental passage from the primacy of the Whole (nation) to the primacy of the antagonism, in other words, a passage from the masculine logic of the ruling nation left to the feminine logic of the revolutionary left. This *hystericization* manifests itself in two aspects: First, the fact that they were able to expose the falsity of the Master by criticizing the dogmas of the ruling nation ideology such as Kemalism, nation-state, nationalism, and official history shows that their point of view is that of the symptomal element (*part-of-no-part*), and not that of the hegemonic All. Second, the fact that they were able to make the Jacobin gesture of choosing the *worse* (the revolutionary rupture) in a decision between "Father or worse" shows that it is the feminine *abstract negativity* of the Hysteric's Discourse that they embody. And the usual, widespread criticisms against them such as ambivalence, prematurity, haphazardness, and adventurousness, far from disqualifying them as revolutionary movements, act as indices of the authenticity of this hysterical rupture.

[151] The rupture created by the second generation of revolutionary left does not mean that they were completely free from the ruling nation ideology. Both the fact that they had been closely collaborating with Kemalist-nationalist MDD and some of their own theses display that they had also similar inclinations to an extent (only Kaypakkaya could completely reject Kemalism). But the material developments (their positionings vis-à-vis the 12 March junta and the state) made the break with the ruling nation ideology clear, and this break influenced the revolutionary left movements to come, which in turn, retroactively determined the '68 break as a proper rupture.

This passage to the feminine logic embodied in the gesture of stepping outside of the ruling nation ideology was made possible not merely by a stricter adherence to Marxism-Leninism but mainly by the rise of the Kurdish national question and Kurdish movements (such as DDKO) as well as the Kurdish and Alevi[152] revolutionaries (such as Hüseyin Cevahir and Hüseyin İnan) who directly participated in these organizations and brought their unique perspectives and memories (Küçük, 2023, p. 407; Küçük, Yılmaz, & Küçük, 2023, pp. 518, 529). The support for the revolutionary left also overwhelmingly came from Kurdish and Alevi populations, exemplified most famously by Dersim (Maraşlı, 2010, 8/20; Küçük, 2023, p. 405). This change brought about by the perspective of the *part-of-no-part* also foreshadowed the role that Kurds were going to play in the revolutionary struggle in the following decades.

7.3.1 THKO

Of the three organizations, the separation presented by THKO was more of a practical nature in the sense that in its short lifespan, the organization did not produce much theoretical material nor many theoretical innovations, but only through its practice did it demonstrate a break with the old left. The only major theoretical work of THKO is Hüseyin İnan's *Türkiye Devriminin Yolu*, which can be considered more

[152] It exceeds our scope, but the reason for Alevi/Kızılbaş support can shortly be explained twofold: On one hand, Alevi/Kızılbaş are by definition heterodox and were seen as *kafir* and not included in the *millet-i hakime*. On the other hand, it is due to the fundamental logics that organizes the religions: Just as the religions of Judaism and Christianity which can be analyzed as a couple that stands for the (masculine) establishment of the Law and (feminine) cancellation of it through love, the couple Islam-Alevism can also be analyzed through the same logic (Žižek, 2012, p. 118; Žižek, 2020, pp. 126, 401): Islam is a religion of Law (*sharia*) just like Judaism, whereas Alevism is a heterodoxy that cancels the religious Law just like Christianity (notwithstanding the further direct connections between Pauline Christianity and Alevism, which exceed our scope even more).

or less in the same line with the previous MDD legacy in its celebration of usual themes like Kemalism, War of Independence, and Free Officers Movement with some minor exceptions (İnan, 1991, pp. 25, 57). One of them is the argument that after the War of Independence, other nations started to be subjected to assimilation, and the Turkish nation was put into a privileged position (İnan, 1991, p. 27). Another significant difference is the text's emphasis on the Kurdish national question, with statements like Kurds exist as an "oppressed nation," and "they are deprived of all of their democratic rights, and their languages and cultures are subjected to assimilation"[153] (İnan, 1991, pp. 17-18). Despite proclaiming adherence to the right of nations to self-determination, the text rejects "separationism" and proposes "local autonomy" instead (İnan, 1991, pp. 26, 29).

7.3.2 THKP-C

In contrast to THKO, the THKP-C line produced a great number of texts (mainly by Mahir Çayan) in which they present a relentless dialectical materialist criticism of and a decisive break with the existing Turkish left. The first portion of these texts was actually published in ASD while the Çayan fraction was still inside, but they have to be assessed separately because even then, they presented a radically different tone and line than the rest of the journal. These consist of four texts, two by Mahir Çayan and two by Hüseyin Cevahir, in which they mostly engage in polemics against the "right deviation" of PDA, but their criticisms actually apply to the totality of the Turkish left (including Belli). Among these texts, only Hüseyin Cevahir's *Doğu Anadolu Raporu* (Report on Eastern Anatolia), published in the 19th issue of ASD,

[153] "Tüm demokratik haklarından yoksun olup, dilleri ve kültürleri asimilasyona tabi tutulmaktadır."

was not a direct polemic against the Turkish left, but being a report on the oppression and assimilation ongoing in Kurdistan, it was also very much against the grain. The second text by Cevahir was *Kitleler, Küba Devrimi ve Yeni Oportünizm* (Masses, Cuban Revolution, and the New Opportunism) which was a direct attack on the dominant views in MDD, accusing their theoreticians that reject the Cuban Revolution like Halil Berktay of being "campus Maoists"[154] that hide their opportunism and pacifism behind the Marxist terminology such as the non-existence "objective conditions of revolution" and relegating the initiative to Kemalists (Cevahir, 1976, pp. 31, 33, 59).

In a similar vein, both of the texts by Mahir Çayan were polemics against PDA (and specifically Şahin Alpay) that focused on the phenomenon of "right deviation" in the left movements, which contained the earlier formulations of some of his later ideas. The first of these texts, *Sağ Sapma, Devrimci Pratik ve Teori* (Right Deviation, Revolutionary Practice, and Theory), is primarily concerned with introducing a division between proper Marxism-Leninism and Kemalist left, which he explicitly determines as a necessary task (Çayan, 2003, pp. 56, 57). Referring to Althusser's *Philosophy as a Revolutionary Weapon*,[155] he claims that there is a war fought with words over nuances in the left, and this war is in no way trivial (Çayan, 2003, pp. 89-90). Then he goes on to criticize the "rightist deviation" of abandoning

[154] Also used deliberately in English in the original text. This term is used by Cevahir and Çayan to refer to the pacifist and academicist theoreticians of MDD, and mocks the fact that they are privileged bourgeois children that study in schools in the Unites States that try to pass as revolutionary theoreticians here. It is out of the scope of this work but it is really interesting that in the '68 split the pacifists and juntaists were of bourgeois elite origin and were academically acclaimed whereas the revolutionaries were students coming from proletarian and subaltern origins; which is also a fact detected by Kaypakkaya.

[155] Note that this text summarizes Althusser's framework presented in the second chapter of this thesis.

dialectics with their objectivism and economism that result in pseudo-Marxist analyses of "immaturity of conditions" and justifications of "rear-guardism" ("kuyrukçuluk") and juntaism, making their "non-capitalist way" similar to Free Officers and Baath rather than the Marxist understanding of revolution (Çayan, 2003, pp. 58, 62, 64, 69, 73, 87). Çayan rejects this pacifism and the perverse hiding behind the "objective conditions" as a denial of dialectics, and states in a Leninist vein that the objective and subjective conditions of revolution are not separable, which makes the proletarian organization (and not the national front, as "right deviation" supposes) the main task (Çayan, 2003, pp. 83-85).

The second text by Çayan, titled *Yeni Oportünizmin Niteliği Üzerine* (On the Qualities of New Opportunism), is a continuation of the same polemic in which he develops his analysis of rightist deviation and opportunism. He brilliantly demonstrates the falsity of the University Discourse employed by the ideologues of MDD (Alpay, Boratav, Berktay, Perinçek), which consists in a pseudo-orthodox dogmatic attachment to the *letter* of Marxism while disregarding its revolutionary *spirit* which justifies their pacifism, which means that the apparent orthodoxy reveals itself to be revisionism (Çayan, 2003, pp. 101, 108). Against the pacifism of the "campus Maoists," he puts forward the criticism of workerism and spontaneism, arguing that spontaneous consciousness of the proletariat cannot surpass syndicalist/unionist consciousness and reach political/socialist consciousness, and that waiting for the "maturation of the objective conditions"[156] results in an endless postponement (characteristic of the obsessional logic of the University Discourse) as

[156] Çayan regards this thesis on the maturation of the objective conditions especially reactionary and "idiotic" so that he states that "Even Kautsky were to climb out of his grave today, he would not say things like this for a semi-colony like Turkey in this period in time" (Çayan, 2003, pp. 136-137).

without the intervention of the subjective factor (the revolutionary subject) the objective conditions "would never mature" (Çayan, 2003, pp. 111, 117, 121, 131, 135, 139). He repeats his criticism of nationalist juntaism (explicitly naming Doğan Avcıoğlu) and likens it to Gaddafi, stating that military coup or junta is not people's war (Çayan, 2003, p. 125).

The next text produced by the THKP-C line is published with the split with the ASD and it is an open letter to ASD signed by Çayan, Kürkçü, Küpeli, and Aktolga; detailing the reasons for the split while extending the criticisms in the previous texts to the Mihri belli fraction as well as openly declaring the Leninist split from the Kemalist left. The text states that the reason for the split is Mihri Belli's "right-wing" and "nationalist" views that could not be eliminated (Çayan et al., 1971, pp. 148-150). Stating that "feudal and patriarchal relations have no place in the class struggle,"[157] the text announced a rupture with the past left legacy, rejecting as "a groundless, absurd, and non-revolutionary attitude"[158] the arguments that appeal to seniority like Mihri Belli being a representative of the past tradition, put forward that the argument "'we are the predecessors, therefore we know' is nothing but a fallacy"[159] and "the mentality that assumes that their seniority increases each year, and expects obedience from others, is not a socialist mentality, but it is, at most, a narrow soldier mentality"[160] (Çayan et al., 1971, pp. 150, 155-156). The text enumerates the differences with Mihri Belli under three main categories: First, the conceptualization of revolution, which Kemalist MDD expects from the military;

[157] "Sınıflar mücadelesinde proletarya yoldaşlığının dışında, feodal ve ataerkil ilişkilere yer yoktur."
[158] "Temelsiz, saçma sapan ve devrimci olmayan bir tutum"
[159] "'Biz eskileriz, biz biliriz' safsatadan başka birşey değildir."
[160] "Her geçen yıl kıdemin arttığını zanneden ve başkalarından itaat bekleyen kişinin kafası sosyalist değil, olsa olsa dar asker kafasıdır."

second, the mode of operation of Kemalist MDD that attempts to create a front without the proletariat; and third, the understanding of organization which Kemalist MDD prevents the creation of a Leninist vanguard party and rejects professional revolutionary organization (Çayan et al., 1971, pp. 158-163). And in addition to these, very importantly, the text puts forward an open defense of the Leninist principle of the right of nations to self-determination and openly rejects Belli's insistence to approach the Kurdish issue unconditionally within the "borders of Misak-ı Milli" (the National Oath).

3 days after the 12 March coup, the first issue of *Kurtuluş: Devrim İçin Savaşmayana Sosyalist Denmez* was published by THKP-C, which included *Devrimde Sınıfların Mevzilenmesi* by Mahir Çayan (published anonymously). In this text, building on the previous criticisms, Çayan argued that under the hegemony of pacifism and capitulationism, the measure of being a revolutionary is revolutionary practice, calling out all the representatives of MDD (including Hikmet Kıvılcımlı) as variants of Menshevism, and instead proposing the *Politikleşmiş Askeri Savaş Stratejisi* (Politicized Military War Strategy) for the first time (which is one of Çayan's innovations) (Çayan, 2003, pp. 172, 179, 183, note 106). The text is a strong statement of the Marxist principle of *unity of theory and practice*, arguing that what makes the difference is not the intent to make a revolution but the actual revolutionary action, hence "the one who does not fight for the revolution is not a socialist,"[161] which is very fitting as this text marks the passage to the armed struggle (Çayan, 2003, p. 185).

[161] "Devrim için savaşmayana sosyalist denemez."

The last theoretical text produced by the THKP-C line was Mahir Çayan's opus magnum *Kesintisiz Devrim I-II-III* (1972) in which he presents a systematic overview of his Marxist-Leninist revolutionary paradigm against the Kemalist left.[162] Çayan repeats his criticisms against the left by stating that "the essence of the doctrine have been lost in the theoretical commotion existing in the left"[163] and the revolutionaries have become the rearguard of nationalists, doing nothing but engaging in meaningless fractional conflicts among themselves (Çayan, 2003, pp. 190, 249-250). The reason Çayan gives for this, as was developed in the previous texts, is the hegemony of the revisionism disguised as "orthodoxy" that takes Marxism as "a dogma and religious precept" ("bir dogma ve nas"), in other words, taking the "*letter"* of Marxism and disregarding its "*spirit*" or "essence" (Çayan, 2003, p. 254). Against this, Çayan states that Marxism is not a complete and unchanging system, and the only constant in Marxism is the dialectical method, which is its "*spirit*" (Çayan, 2003, pp. 190, 253).[164] This results in the rejection of both types of left revisionism and opportunism, the anti-Leninist pacifist version and the ultra-orthodox version that reduces theory to dogma[165] (Çayan, 2003, p. 275). Against the pacifist arguments like "maturation of objective conditions" and "requirement of democratic majority," Çayan emphasizes the role of subjectivity in the revolutionary process by stating that in the current conjuncture under imperialism the objective conditions of revolution ("national crisis") are always present, and the

[162] Note that *Kesintisiz Devrim I* was written separately from *Kesintisiz Devrim II-III.*
[163] "Solda var olan teorik keşmekeşin içinde doktrinin özü gözden kaybolmuştur."
[164] Note that here Çayan is following the line of Lenin and Althusser, and furthermore, exactly echoing the dialectical materialist logic of "in Lenin more than Lenin" put forward by Žižek many years later (Žižek, 2017b, 13/196).
[165] Both of these are species of the University Discourse but the former embodies the perverse logic of disavowal in the sense that it erases its own subjectivity whereas the latter embodies the obsessional logic of self-hindering because it absolutizes the Law to an extent that acting becomes impossible.

Leninist gesture precisely consists in the bringing about the "subjective conditions" which necessitates revolutionary violence (Çayan, 2003, pp. 220-222, 192, 240, 211). That's why, the Politicized Military War Strategy (*Politikleşmiş Askeri Savaş Stratejisi*, PASS)[166] is proposed as the revolutionary strategy that aims to disrupt the "artificial balance" maintained by the oligarchy through "armed propaganda," which is conceptualized not as a military but as a political form of struggle whose main aim is to expose the falsity and weakness of the state apparatus (in psychoanalytical terms, exposing the lack in the Other) (Çayan, 2003, pp. 251, 273-274, 281). The analysis is also complemented with a historical argument, but it is very rudimentary in comparison to the theoretical arguments. Symptomatically, it is very brief with regard to the pre-republican era (and of course it does not include the Armenian Genocide), and with regard to 1923, it states that it was a bourgeois revolution that did not result in full independence but a petit-bourgeois single-party dictatorship in the service of feudals and compradors (Çayan, 2003, p. 291). This analysis also includes the famous assessment of Kemalism of the 1920s as "a development of an anti-imperialist stance of the leftmost and most radical section of the petit-bourgeoisie through nationalism,"[167] which unfortunately became the last word of Çayan on Kemalism and later served as the justification for various left organizations from the THKP-C tradition to continue defending Kemalism.

[166] "The deployment of guerilla warfare for political objectives, as an instrument of the campaign to expose the political truths, meaning its utilization as a political mass struggle, is called the Politicized Military War Strategy" (Çayan, 2003, p. 252).
[167] "Küçük-burjuvazinin en sol, en radikal kesiminin milliyetçilik tabanında anti-emperyalist bir tavır alışıdır."

7.3.3 TKP/ML

While THKP-C represented a decisive rupture with the Kemalist MDD, it did not reject Kemalism completely, and the most radical criticism of Kemalism emerged in parallel, from the texts of İbrahim Kaypakkaya who is the theoretician of the TKP/ML, in the process of his split from the PDA/Şafak circle. Only one of Kaypakkaya's texts (written together with Altun, Mercan, Ovalıoğlu) titled *Çorum İlinde Sınıfların Tahlili* was published in PDA, and it did not include any of his criticisms against PDA/Şafak or Kemalism (Kaypakkaya, 2018, pp. 157-189). The remainder of the texts are written as internal documents, most of which are formulations of Kaypakkaya's criticisms against the organization and leadership as well as the Turkish left in general. Earlier texts like *Özeleştiride Samimi ve Cesur Olalım* and *Saflarımızdaki Sol Oportünizm Sağ Hatalarımızın Cezasıdır* start out by pointing out problems like lack of self-criticism, lack of action, "right-wing mistakes" (such as accepting the right revisionist theories of Belli and Kıvılcımlı, or insistence on legalism), acceptance of Kemalism and the principle of "full independence" ("istiklal-i tam") as well as giving the history of the split of ASD and PDA (Kaypakkaya, 2018, pp. 141-142, 192, 196). These texts are followed by *Kürecik Bölge Raporu* which is another report that does not contain many theoretical points except the thesis that the oppression is not purely economic but rather national and religious, foreshadowing his further work. It is also noteworthy that while analyzing the level of political consciousness, Kaypakkaya underlines in the social memory of the rebellions against the state and the presence of the Alevi population which displays a striking affinity to revolutionary Marxism in contrast to the Sunni population (Kaypakkaya, 2018, pp. 208-210, 212).

Starting with the December of 1971 Kaypakkaya produced a series of texts in which he undertook a very elaborate criticism of Kemalism, ruling nation ideology, and the colonial regime, especially in *Türkiye'de Milli Mesele* and *Şafak Revizyonizminin Kemalist Hareket, Kemalist İktidar Dönemi, İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yılları, Savaş Sonrası ve 27 Mayıs Hakkındaki Tezleri* that present a systematic refutation. The other texts, while including similar themes, are more fragmentary and related to the specific conditions of the disagreements and split with the PDA. *Şafak Revizyonizmi İle Aramızdaki Ayrılıkların Kökeni ve Gelişmesi* includes a chronology of the split, and puts forward the thesis that both SD and MDD of the Turkish left are "ruling nation nationalists" which are in fact proponents of the "non-capitalist way" (Kaypakkaya, 2018, pp. 416-417). This point is further developed in *Şafak Revizyonizmi ile Ayrıldığımız Başlıca Noktalar* that criticizes the "ruling nation nationalism," the acceptance of the legacies of Mustafa Kemal and TKP, and the positioning of state and military above class antagonism; which results in the rejection of Kemalist MDD as a variant of third-worldism like the Free Officers Movements in Libya, Sudan, and Egypt or Baath in Syria (Kaypakkaya, 2018, pp. 464-465, 536, 540, 542-543). In *TİİKP Program Taslağı Eleştirisi* Kaypakkaya again rejects "non-capitalist development," juntaism, as well as the legacies of Kemalism and TKP (citing their pacifism and support in the Kurdish massacres, as well as Belli and Kıvılcımlı's roots in the TKP); and underlines that the ultimate aim of the revolutionary struggle is the abolition of the state (communism), not economic development (Kaypakkaya, 2018, pp. 305, 309, 317, 298). It is interesting to also note that in *Başkan Mao'nun Kızıl Siyasi İktidar Öğretisini Doğru Kavrayalım*, regarding the Dersim rebellion, Kaypakkaya claims that if a communist organization

were to be present, the rebellion could have never been suppressed (Kaypakkaya, 2018, p. 287).

The main text with regard to the national-colonial question is *Türkiye'de Milli Mesele*, in which Kaypakkaya presents a lucid analysis of the ruling nation ideology and the colonial situation. In it, Kaypakkaya puts forward the thesis that Kurds constitute a nation and "national oppression" (which is distinct from class oppression in economic sense) is exercised against the Kurdish nation and all minority nations by the dominant nation that aims at market dominance through linguistic and territorial unity, and this national oppression "goes as far as the usurpation of democratic rights and mass massacres (meaning genocide). There are many examples of genocide in Turkey"[168] (Kaypakkaya, 2018, pp. 222-225, 229, 230). Touching upon the founding crimes for the first time, Kaypakkaya also refers directly to the Armenian Genocide as "Armenians who were massacred and exiled en masse in 1915 and 1919-20"[169] (Kaypakkaya, 2018, p. 241). Kaypakkaya also ascertains the fact that the right to self-determination is and has historically been a privilege of the ruling nation, and it is denied when it comes to other nations (Kaypakkaya, 2018, pp. 234, 260). Against this, he puts forward that Turkey is a multi-national country, and the core of the national problem is the Kurdish problem, emphasizing the unconditionality of the right of nations to self-determination (as a right to form a separate state) as well as stating that Kurdish national movement has a revolutionary potential as it is "nationalism of the oppressed nation" while citing the

[168] "Demokratik hakların gaspına ve kitle katliamlarına (yani jenoside = soykırıma) kadar uzanır. Türkiye'de jenosidin de birçok örnekleri vardır."
[169] "1915'de ve 1919-20'de kitle halinde katledilen ve topraklarından sürülen Ermeniler"

Kurdish revolts and massacres since Sheikh Said[170] (Kaypakkaya, 2018, pp. 238, 240, 247). Kaypakkaya also notes the "nationalism of the ruling nation" of TKP in its support of policies of national oppression against Kurds (Kaypakkaya, 2018, pp. 243-244). As a conclusion, Kaypakkaya puts the "task of demolishing Turkish nationalism"[171] as the major objective, because the "nationalism of the ruling nation" embodied in Kemalism had blinded Turks completely to the national problem (Kaypakkaya, 2018, p. 259). Arguing against accusations of "separatism" as a tenet of "nationalism of the ruling nation," Kaypakkaya states that the decision to form a separate state lies solely with the Kurdish nation, and almost foreshadowing the Kurdish Freedom Movement, specifically argues that separation would be advocated in the condition of a strong revolutionary organization emerging in Kurdistan (Kaypakkaya, 2018, pp. 270, 267).

The second major text related to this issue titled *Şafak Revizyonizminin Kemalist Hareket, Kemalist İktidar Dönemi, İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yılları, Savaş Sonrası ve 27 Mayıs Hakkındaki Tezleri* specifically deals with Kemalism and PDA/Şafak's theses on Kemalism (which were shared by most of the Turkish left). Destroying the standard narrative completely from the outset, Kaypakkaya states that the Kemalist regime is a Turkish bourgeois regime that is a direct continuation of the İT regime, and both of these regimes maintained the semi-colonial status of Turkey (Kaypakkaya, 2018, pp. 355-357, 362). Emphasizing the genocidal origin of the nation-state, he argues that the creation of a "national" (Muslim and Turk)

[170] He also responds to the pseudo-left criticism that Sheikh Said cooperated with British imperialism, stating that it would not change anything since nations have right to self-determination, and rejection of this right under the pretext of anti-imperialism simply amounts to Turkish chauvinism (Kaypakkaya, 2018, pp. 244, 246).
[171] "Türk milliyetçiliğini yıkmak görevi"

bourgeoisie was made possible through the expropriation of "Armenians and Greeks who were massacred and abandoned the country" (Kaypakkaya, 2018, pp. 362, 365). That's why, against virtually all of the Turkish left (TİP, Avcıoğlu, Kıvılcımlı, Belli, PDA/Şafak, TKP), Kaypakkaya states that the Kemalist regime was neither revolutionary nor progressive, and on the contrary, it is the counter-revolution itself (Kaypakkaya, 2018, p. 365). He also determines the falsity of the separation between the secularists and Islamists, stating that it is a superficial division among the different factions of the ruling nation, and there is no risk of reactionary/Islamist counterrevolution and return to monarchy (since the prevailing regime is already the counter-revolution) (Kaypakkaya, 2018, p. 366). After listing the injustices and crimes of Kemalists against the minority nations, such as forced Turkification, language bans, mass massacres, martial laws, violation of the right to self-determination, erasure of the histories and cultures of the indigenous peoples, and creation of false histories through pseudo-scientific theories like Turkish History Thesis and Sun Language Theory; Kaypakkaya goes on to define Kemalism as an alliance of comprador Turkish large and middle bourgeoisie whose politics is characterized by anticommunism, hostility against workers and peasants, oppression, censorship, martial law, military dictatorship, Turkish chauvinism, animosity and national oppression against minorities, Turkification, acceptance of semi-colonial status under the principle of "full independence" (*istiklal-i tam*), and states that Mustafa Kemal can be considered as a part of history of the people only as much as Mehmed II (Kaypakkaya, 2018, pp. 371, 405-408).

To sum it up, against the logic of masculine All of the University Discourse displayed by the Turkish left, which manifested itself in various forms such as the

claim to abstract universality that erases the antagonism ("pure" class struggle), the obsessional self-hindering that prevents any form of revolutionary action (waiting for objective conditions to mature), or the perverse self-instrumentalization and erasure of the subjective responsibility (economism, spontaneism, syndicalism/workerism, juntaism), the second generation of revolutionary left deployed the feminine logic of the Hysteric's Discourse that consists in the gesture of exposing the lack-in-the-Other, therefore dismantling the existing paradigm and opening up a way for a radical reconfiguration of the revolutionary struggle. This is attested by their ability to choose the "worse" against the "father;" both in the aforementioned theoretical sense that they presented a rupture with the ruling nation ideology, and also in the practical sense (as necessitated by the principle of the unity of theory and practice) that they formed armed revolutionary organizations and fought against the state. Unfortunately, in a short time span after the passage to armed action, all of the leaders and main theoreticians of the three organizations were killed by the state, which marked the end of the second generation of revolutionary left. But this time, the following period would witness not the silence but the proliferation of the left organizations. This rebirth in the 1970s developed in two channels in parallel as both the Turkish left and Kurdish left organized themselves on the basis of the '68 rupture, which will be considered in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER 8

TURKISH LEFT BETWEEN 1974-1980

With the loss of all leader cadres and mass imprisonments, the second generation of revolutionary left consisting of THKO, THKP-C, and TKP/ML had formally ended, but shortly after (especially with the amnesty of 1974), many revolutionary left organizations claiming to continue the legacy of the ’68 generation emerged, this time not only as the Turkish left but also as the Kurdish left as Kurdish revolutionaries who did not have autonomous organizations previously (except DDKOs) had started to organize in parallel (Akkaya, 2013, p. 10). The rupture of the second generation with the ruling nation left transformed the field in such a way that a “minimum” line was established with regard to revolutionary violence (between legalists and frontists) and the national question (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2012, p. 6; Maraşlı, 2010, 8/20). Despite the proliferation of organizations and the minimum line provided by the previous theoreticians, the Turkish left would be defeated completely at the end of the decade with the 1980 coup, and the Kurdish Freedom Movement would emerge as the revolutionary subject. This chapter examines the structural reasons behind this dynamic.

One can start out by observing that the reason for the defeat of the Turkish left in 1980 is not purely external (i.e., due to sheer violence and complete destruction, as was the case for Armenian revolutionaries) but it has an ideological dimension that made the Turkish left structurally weak: the hegemony of the ruling nation ideology. Although ’68 was a hysterical rupture with the classic Kemalist-racist paradigm, it did not completely break with the ruling nation ideology, as

evidenced by the theses on Kemalism, the War of Independence, the nation-state as well as the absence of the Armenian Genocide and the homogenization of population which was the founding event of the current colonial order as an extension of the Ottoman colonial order.[172] This traumatic break, combined with the "incomplete" characters of the theses, gave way to two different receptions in the Turkish left: On one hand, it resulted in the conservative reception that attempted to renormalize the traumatic excess of '68 and reintegrate it into the doxa of the ruling nation, by taking the theses of the leaders by the *letter* and treating them as a limit not to be transgressed, trying to continue the '68 as it exactly was. This perfectly demonstrates the logic of renormalization of (scientific) discovery, which is originally produced by the Hysteric's Discourse but subsequently gets reintegrated into a new doxa by the University Discourse.[173] Most of the Turkish left could be categorized under this heading as this was also the populist way to appeal to the Turkish population which was also under the hegemony of the ruling nation ideology. In contrast, the second type of reception was the radical one that emphasized the *spirit* of the theses of '68 leaders, seeing them not as a limit but a benchmark to be improved; but this radical break came with the price of inability to find support among the Turkish population. In the end, whereas the *content* of the ruling nation ideology was accepted by the former tendency and rejected by the second; *formally*, they were subjected to the same shortcomings as their base was the hegemonic element (ruling nation). This structural weakness resulted in the popular base of the Turkish left being easily co-

[172] The Armenian genocide is present in Kaypakkaya's work as we have seen, but the proper significance of it as a founding crime is absent.
[173] And this is what Çayan means when he claims that orthodoxy (taking the *letter* of Marxism) results in revisionism.

opted by the Kemalists and the isolation of radical militants from the rest of the people so that the militants who were left without the support of the masses could be easily crushed in the 1980 coup. This double dead-end was "resolved" by the emergence of the Kurdish left, which could reject both the content of the ruling nation ideology as well as formally being based on the symptomal element (Kurdish nation).

Before going into the detailed analysis of the publications of the Turkish left, what is designated by the minimum line should be clarified. Most importantly, regarding the national-colonial question or the Kurdish problem, there was an apparent consensus on the formal acceptance of the existence of Kurds as a nation, as well as the Leninist thesis of the right of nations to self-determination[174] (Akkaya, 2013, p. 15). This is due to the Leninist turn introduced by the theoreticians of the '68 generation, after which Lenin became a common point of reference; and Lenin is very explicit and clear about the issues of national oppression and the right of nations to self-determination. This can shortly be exemplified by surveying Lenin's numerous texts on the national question, in which he openly rejects all national privileges of ruling nations and calls for the unqualified recognition of the right of nations to self-determination (which directly means "their separation as states" and nothing else, which is to be decided by the seceding region only without the involvement of the central government) of the oppressed nations, arguing that any kind of compromise (in theory, or in practice) of this principle is "annexationism" and it amounts to supporting the privileges of the dominant nation, furthermore, any

[174] In the 1970s the Kurdish left was already developing its theses in parallel, and the Turkish left was aware of them, which is a very important factor contributing to this.

presumed "agreement" or voluntary union between the oppressor and oppressed nations are by definition compulsory in the absence of the right to secession (Lenin, 1977b, pp. 22, 110, 397, 412, 425, 443, 450; Lenin, 1974b, pp. 105-106; Lenin, 1977a, p. 356; Lenin, 1974d, p. 91; Lenin, 1974c, pp. 73, 302, 336-337). Lenin also openly rejects official language and single-language education, arguing for the right to education in native languages; he even advocates for limiting the use of the Russian language in non-Russian republics (Lenin, 1977b, pp. 21, 73, 290-291; Lenin, 1977a, p. 355; Lenin, 1977c, p. 610). Lenin's argument here is grounded in the dialectical materialist understanding of the concrete Universal that insists on the absolute separation of the hegemonic-masculine position of the All (formal/abstract Universal), which is exemplified by the oppressor nation, and the symptomal-feminine position of the non-All, which is embodied by the oppressed nation. Determining the formal understanding of equality as a bourgeois-idealist assumption, Lenin argues that the revolutionaries of the oppressor nations should never adopt a formal approach to equality (which he deems "a defect common to the socialists of the dominant nations" which erases the class difference based on nationalities), and they should not themselves become imperialists towards oppressed nationalities while claiming to fight imperialism;[175] and posits that the conflict between oppressed/dependent/subject nations and the oppressing/exploiting/sovereign nations is fundamentally determinant for the revolutionary strategy (as it is impossible for an oppressor nation to be free just like an oppressed nation), so that fighting against the

[175] Lenin also warns against the false anti-imperialisms that are in fact traditional authority in disguise, such as pan-Islamism and nationalism that attempt to channel the anti-imperialist indignation to strengthen or sustain traditional power relations, which is widely seen in Turkish left's attempts to co-opt Islamism and nationalism such as its usage of the anti-*gavur* rhetoric or its characterization of Kemalist regime as anti-imperialist (Lenin, 1974e, p. 149).

dominant culture of the oppressor nation and for the abolition of both formal and substantial/practical inequalities (including the compensation of the past crimes) becomes a revolutionary task (Lenin, 1977b, pp. 25, 436, 143; Lenin, 1974e, p. 145; Lenin, 1977c, pp. 608-609, 611; Lenin, 1974b, p. 104).

This is the reason why outright denial or the omission of the issue of national question and the right of nations to self-determination had become impossible for the Turkish left after the ’68 break. This formal acceptance inevitably caused a contradiction with the ruling nation ideology (similar to the post-Tanzimat conflict between the logics of formal/legal equality and the *millet-i hakime*), resulting in the passage of the logic of the ruling nation to the superegoical domain, which manifested itself in the diverse tactics employed by the Turkish left to “maintain the appearance,” namely to deny the consequences while paying lip-service to the principles. These tactics follow the masculine logic and either take the form of a pure (abstract) universalism that rejects everything contradicting the hegemony of the ruling nation as being too particular (e.g., dismissing the national-colonial problem as secondary to imperialism/capitalism), or they take the form of an appeal to truth as *adaequatio rei*, in which the reality is dismissed on the account of a very strict adherence to the *letter* of the theory (e.g., rejecting the colonial status of Kurdistan on the ground that it does not satisfy a specific set of criteria of being a colony).

The development of the Kurdish left in parallel posed another problem for the Turkish left as now the Kurds had started to organize separately and were developing much more radical theses, which was a situation unacceptable for the ruling nation ideology (Akkaya, 2013, p. 16). Up until now, Kurds were mostly organized within the Turkish left and had no autonomous organizations except for

the DDKOs which were not centralized. But the closure of DDKOs during the 12 March coup followed by the political defenses of the DDKO in the trials which were held under martial law in military courts in Diyarbakır (*Diyarbakır Sıkıyönetim Askeri Mahkemesi*) created an impetus for a definitive reorganization of the Kurdish left on the basis of the theses of the necessity of separate organization and the colonial status of Kurdistan (Maraşlı, 2010, 9/20; Akkaya, 2013, p. 9; Akkaya, 2014, p. 76). This created the definitive division between the Turkish left and the Kurdish left: Even the thesis of Kurdistan being a colony was accepted by a portion of the Turkish left (mainly THKP-C/Kurtuluş), but none of the Turkish left could accept the thesis of separate organization of Kurds. The Kurdish left formed many autonomous organizations during this time (most importantly, Öcalan's group, which would later be PKK, started to form in 1973) that took a completely different direction than the Turkish left, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

After these remarks, the analysis of the publications of the Turkish revolutionary left in the 1970s can be presented. The presentation is divided into three sections according to the tradition that the organization is originating from. The analysis concerns specifically the issues relating to the ruling nation ideology and national-colonial problem, and not the other differences, disputes, and divisions among the organizations. As such, only representative selections from the historical theses regarding the colonial legacy, founding crimes, Kemalism, and Kemalist left, and the discussions relating to the national-colonial problem (such as national oppression, right of nations to self-determination, colonial status of Kurdistan, and separate organization) are going to be assessed. The publications that are going to be analyzed are *Halkın Kurtuluşu* (TDKP line) and *Emeğin Birliği* (TKEP line) from the

THKO tradition, *Halkın Birliği* (TKP/ML-Hareketi line) and *Partizan* (TKP/ML-Partizan line) from TKP/ML tradition, and *Devrimci Gençlik* (Dev-Genç/DGDF), *Devrimci Yol* (Dev-Yol), *Devrimci Sol* pamphlets (Dev-Sol), and *Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi* (THKP-C/Kurtuluş)[176] from THKP-C line. KSD will be analyzed last because of its exceptional place within the Turkish left.

8.1 THKO tradition

8.1.1 Halkın Kurtuluşu (1976-1978)

Halkın Kurtuluşu (1976-1978) is a publication formatted as a newspaper that mostly covers various news regarding the worker and peasant movements without much space devoted to theoretical elaborations. The movement was of THKO origin; it was initially Maoist (accepted the thesis that the USSR was "social imperialist") and later embraced the line of Enver Hoxha (rejected the three-worlds-theory) in the split following Mao's death in 1976. Between 1978 and 1980, the movement evolved into TDKP (*Türkiye Devrimci Komünist Partisi*) (Halkın Kurtuluşu, 133).

The historical framework of HK does not differ much from the THKO's line in *Türkiye Devriminin Yolu* as it views the War of Independence as an anti-imperialist war after which Kemalists turned against Kurds. But regarding the Sheikh Said rebellion, HK views it as a national revolt and opposes the Kemalists and Kemalist left of the time (Şefik Hüsnü's TKP) (Halkın Kurtuluşu, 71). Regarding the national-colonial question, there is not much elaboration, but in various places HK

[176] Although the movement is generally known simply as Kurtuluş, in order to prevent confusion with the Kurtuluş newspaper (of the original THKP-C), it will be referred to as either THKP-C/Kurtuluş or KSD.

briefly recognizes that there is an oppressor nation and an oppressed nation (Kurds) which is subjected to assimilatory conditions, also accepting the right of nations to self-determination on paper; but these statements are rendered ineffective as it rejects separate organization claiming that the "purity of the internationalist ideology of the working class" should be preserved "on the basis of the unity of workers and peoples of all nationalities in the struggle against imperialism, social-imperialism, and internal reaction" (Halkın Kurtuluşu, 6, 17, 18, 46, 50). Symptomatically, the absence of theoretical discussion and real attention to the colonial-national question is filled up by an enormous amount of news and reports about the national oppression of Kurds such as the "forced assimilation," violations by the army and the gendarmerie, tortures, poor living and health conditions in Kurdistan, and military drills such as "Kanatlı 78" that are used as cover for massacring civilians, and the censorship against Kurdish outlets (Halkın Kurtuluşu, 46, 48, 52, 63, 70, 98, 107, 111, 127, 131, 134). This is a theme that emerges again and again, as one of the tactics of the Turkish left was to present the "acceptance" of the existence or the oppression of Kurds as a substitute for actually recognizing the right of nations to self-determination in its full terms as well as the right of Kurds to organize separately.

8.1.2 Emeğin Birliği (1976-1979)

Emeğin Birliği also shares the newspaper format and mostly covers news regarding the worker-peasant movements. The movement, also known as THKO/MB, is of THKO origin and Soviet-aligned, and it was later transformed into TKEP.

Similar to HK, EB also continues the THKO line on Kemalism without advancing it, considering the War of Independence and the republic as anti-imperialist, and claims that the Kemalist regime "did not turn towards colonizing Kurdistan after it annexed it" and that's why "the Kurdish nation did not engage in emancipatory struggle after 1923" (Emeğin Birliği, 15, 21). The most significant fact about EB is that despite being uninterested in theoretical discussions and especially the national question in its first ten issues; as the discussion regarding the colonial status of Kurdistan gains prominence in the Turkish left, EB suddenly starts to engage in deep polemics (especially against KSD) in which they put forward theses against Kurdistan being a colony. In these polemics, EB argues that "there is only one revolutionary struggle in Turkey, that is, the struggle for democratic revolution," and therefore the solution to the national question is purported to be the "democratic revolution" (Emeğin Birliği, 11). In order to refute the "Kurdistan is a colony thesis," EB puts forward many arguments in its polemics against KSD and *Özgürlük Yolu*, including the claims that Kurds are an "annexed oppressed nation" but Kurdistan is not a colony, that "a colony cannot have a colony,"[177] that the non-existence of national emancipation movements in Kurdistan is a proof that it is not a colony, and going as far as claiming that the MHP's election results in Kurdistan is a proof that it is not a colony (Emeğin Birliği, 20, 11, 21). EB bases its claim that Kurdistan is not a colony on an appeal to formal equality (abstract universality), arguing that "no portion of colonized nations can take part in the administration and government of the state," and that the colonized nations "cannot have equal rights with the colonizer

[177] This discussion results in many examples of colonialist colonies being found such as Portugal, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique which are meticulously refuted by EB (Emeğin Birliği, 11, 23, 24).

nation" such as "right to vote and hold office," the right to "work under same conditions for equal pay," the opportunity to become "police officers, military officers, generals, ministers, [and] prime minister" (Emeğin Birliği, 22). Building on these, EB staunchly argues against the colonial status of Kurdistan as well as rejecting the separate organization of the Kurdish left altogether.

8.2 TKP/ML tradition

The examples from the TKP/ML tradition that are going to be considered have an interesting property that whereas the other organizations have either stayed at the same level with their founding theoreticians or improved it; although they are relatively late (post-1977) both *Halkın Birliği* and *Partizan* take a step back from İbrahim Kaypakkaya's relentless criticisms against the ruling nation ideology.

8.2.1 Halkın Birliği (1977-1979)

Halkın Birliği is also fashioned in the format of a newspaper, but it has a slightly less emphasis on news. The movement, also known as TKP/ML Hareketi, was Maoist at first, and switched to Hoxhaism after Mao's death, similar to HK.

Regarding the historical legacy of the colonial regime, HB rejects Kemalism and Mustafa Kemal as a comprador-feudal regime but embraces the "official origin" of the Turkish left as TKP of Mustafa Suphi, qualifying him as the "first organizer of the proletariat of Turkey" (Halkın Birliği, 1). HB accepts the existence of the national problem and the policies of national oppression and assimilation against Kurds, but subordinates the issue to the universal problem of imperialism/capitalism, and claims that the solution to both is the "National

Democratic People's Revolution" arguing that "in our country, the solution of the national question is connected to the revolution with unbreakable ties" (Halkın Birliği, 50, 28). Although HB accepts the right of nations to self-determination on paper, it denies it in effect by qualifying it such that only the national movements that "attacks, weakens, and makes imperialism easier to take down" would be supported (Halkın Birliği, 50). HB also rejects the colonial status of Kurdistan and the separate organization of the Kurdish left, claiming that these are "bourgeois-nationalist" theses that "sabotage the unity of proletarians of different nations in Turkey" by fabricating an opposition between "we (Kurds) and them (Turks)" and serving "the interests of the oppressed nation bourgeoisie;" whereas the real opposition is between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (Halkın Birliği, 50). Consequently, HB also rejects the thesis of separate organizations, arguing that only "under the leadership of a single proletarian party" could national oppression be abolished (Halkın Birliği, 47). All of these rejections are again symptomatically supplemented by an abundance of news and reports about the national oppression such as abuses and violations of the military or censorship against Kurdish journals and publishers (Halkın Birliği, 2, 6, 28, 29, 37, 38, 47).

8.2.2 Partizan (1978-1979)

Partizan (known also as TKP/ML-Partizan and Halkın Gücü), is another organization that emerged from the TKP/ML tradition, which is still in existence today. The political line of Partizan regarding national oppression, the right of nations to self-determination, colonial status of Kurdistan and separate organization are not much different from HB, as Partizan also accepts that Turkey is multinational and Kurds

are an oppressed nation but advocates that national question is secondary to the democratic revolution, and while again accepting the right of nations to self-determination "unconditionally" on paper, qualifies it as being valid for only the progressive aspect of the Kurdish national movement (Partizan, "Çıkarken," pp. 37-40, 50). What is unique in Partizan is their very detailed historical analyses that cover the period starting from the late Ottoman Empire and the theses they developed regarding the status of non-Muslims that display their commitment and appeal to the ruling nation ideology. The historical analyses of Partizan are based on the assumption that the non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire were a privileged minority comprising a "comprador bourgeoisie" that collaborated with the imperialists (that is repeated *ad nauseam* in many places), and it serves to legitimize the Armenian genocide and the Kemalist War of Independence as a rightful response against imperialism[178] (Partizan, "Çıkarken," 3, 5, 6, 7). Despite continuing the regime of denialism against the Armenian Genocide without saying a word about it, Partizan regards the post-republic massacres against Kurds as genocides and condemns the Kemalist regime as well as the support of TKP (Partizan, "Çıkarken," 6).

8.3 THKP-C tradition

The organizations that sprouted from the THKP-C tradition surpassed the THKO and TKP/ML lines both in quantity and influence. Some organizations like TKHP-C/Acilciler, TKHP-C/MLSPB, and THKP-C/HDÖ preferred to give weight to direct action and armed struggle rather than producing publications or theoretical output,

[178] This thesis is one of the hallmarks of Turkish left and still defended by many organizations even today as it provides a very easy way out from the responsibility facing the founding crimes.

while others like Dev-Genç (DGDF), Dev-Yol, and TKHP-C/Kurtuluş produced periodical journals.

8.3.1 Devrimci Gençlik (1975-1977)

Devrimci Gençlik is one of the most mainstream among the publications that are being analyzed; it has a format closer to a newspaper that covers recent news but also includes long-form articles like polemics and theory texts. The movement, also known as DGDF, was based on loosely connected student associations scattered across the country and can be considered the spiritual successor of the previous Dev-Genç. It is also the precursor of organizations like Dev-Yol and Dev-Sol. DG does not devote much space to historical analysis in its journal, but it can be seen from the pamphlet titled *Emperyalizm ve Yeni Sömürgecilik* that their analysis does not differ from Çayan's as they do not acknowledge the founding crimes nor the colonial situation in Kurdistan (Devrimci Gençlik, 1976). Regarding the national-colonial situation, DG accepts the existence of Kurds and national oppression, and even qualifies the situation as "oppressor-nation chauvinism of the colonialist state" in one of its early statements addressing DDKO, promising to "do [their] part in the national problem" (Devrimci Gençlik, 1). On the issue of the right of nations to self-determination, DG states that it upholds the right of self-determination of Kurds unconditionally, exemplifying it through the defense of their preference for the slogan "End to fascism, freedom for peoples" instead of "end to fascism, freedom to the people" defended by Halkın Kurtuluşu and Halkın Sesi (Devrimci Gençlik, 8, 14). In addition to amounting to a reduction of the right of nations to self-determination to an issue of recognition of "peoples," this "unconditional" support is

also qualified by the assertion of the necessity of unitary struggle (as the oligarchy is not a purely "Turkish oligarchy" since it includes both Turks and Kurds) and the rejection of separate organization of the Kurdish left and the colonial status of Kurdistan (again on the basis that Turkey is already a semi-colony) (Devrimci Gençlik, 9-10). Again, these are supplemented by a multitude of news and reports about the national oppression in the East such as the violations of the military,[179] the "national" aspect of the Van earthquake and its aftermath, and the bans against various DKDs (Devrimci Gençlik, 3, 6, 7, 9, 15, 16). The arguments of DG would provide the ground for the theses of *Devrimci Yol*, which is the direct continuation of DG.

8.3.2 Devrimci Yol (1977-1980)

Devrimci Yol continues the same format as DG, publishing news as well as polemics and theoretical texts. As a spin-off of the DG movement, DY is important both because it is the mainstream left organization of the Turkish left of the day, and because it developed some of the most elaborate theses in an attempt to simultaneously accept the national problem and the right of nations to self-determination formally while at the same time rendering them ineffective in an appeal to the ruling nation ideology. Especially with its arguments developed in the polemic against *Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi*, DY functioned as the bulwark of the Turkish left against the theses coming from the Kurdish left. The historical arguments of DY follow Çayan's line almost exactly but with a more pronounced

[179] It is interesting that counter-guerilla Cem Ersever (who was an unknown figure at the time) is directly named as one of the major perpetrators of the violations and tortures against Kurds (Devrimci Gençlik, 6).

rejection of Kemalism and other types of nationalist bourgeois regimes, such as the Free Officers Movement of Nasser, all of which are considered in the same category as movements that "facilitate the top-down organization of capitalism" (Devrimci Yol, 8). Although DY argues that "rearguardism of Kemalism, this 'heritage' should be definitively rejected,"[180] it still qualifies the War of Independence as a "rightful war" and the early Kemalist regime as progressive against imperialism and reactionary against Kurds (Devrimci Yol, 9). Regarding the Ottoman Empire, DY claims that it had never been a colonial regime in the capitalist sense, and while describing the Hamidian Massacres as Kurds and Armenians being "pitted against each other," it keeps silent about the Armenian Genocide (Devrimci Yol, 17). Interestingly, while analyzing the birth of the Turkish left, DY refers to the Armenian and other non-Muslim revolutionaries but dismisses them as nationalists, again fixing the "origin" of the left in Turkey to the TKP of Mustafa Suphi (Devrimci Yol, 14).

When it comes to the national problem, DY accepts that Turkey is multinational and the Kurdish nation is oppressed but subordinates the issue to the "primary contradiction" which is purported to be between the oligarchy and the people, not between the oppressor nation and the oppressed nation, hence the solution to the Kurdish question is again relegated to the revolution (Devrimci Yol, 9). By arguing that "the struggle against feudal oppression and the land struggle are organic parts of the struggle against capitalist exploitation, and all of these struggles are united and concretized in the anti-oligarchic and anti-imperialist struggle," DY utilizes the masculine logic of abstract universality to reduce all antagonisms into one (Devrimci Yol, 9). Accordingly, DY claims that all other forms of exploitation

[180] "Kemalizm kuyrukçuluğu, bu 'miras' kesinkes reddedilmelidir."

are subordinate to capitalism so that the problems of Kurds are "not separate from the problems of other working people in Turkey" and the economic exploitation and national oppression are exercised by the same class, which amounts to the claim that "the division in Turkey is not according to nation but class" and "all struggles unite and materialize in anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchic struggles" (Devrimci Yol, 9, 10). Regarding the right of nations to self-determination, DY recognizes that it is the right to a separate state and this "right to have a nation-state is a privilege of the Turkish nation;" but again practically blocks the way as it claims that "the national movement of the oppressed nation is to be supported as long as it advances the revolution" and "the national question is to be considered as dependent on the proletariat's seizing of power" (Devrimci Yol, 9, 10). This position is supported on the one hand by the rejection of the colonial status of Kurdistan, and on the other hand by the rejection of the thesis of separate organization.

DY holds the main line of opposition against the theses regarding the colonial status of Kurdistan put forward by KSD, Rizgarî, and Özgürlük Yolu (the latter two being representatives of the Kurdish left). Warning against the attempts to "sow the seeds of discontent between the Turkish and Kurdish workers," DY argues that the theses that claim Kurdistan is an "international colony" are "anti-Marxist," and furthermore, they are nothing but an attempt to "mask their nationalisms with Marxism-Leninism," and as such they "pose an obstacle in front of the revolutionary struggle of peoples of Turkey" (Devrimci Yol, 10, 16). Basing its claim on the "a colony cannot have a colony" thesis, DY claims that since Turkey is already a semi-colony, it is "impossible (for Turkey) to establish a colonial regime in the imperialist era" and "no one in their right mind would claim that Turkey invaded Kurdistan to

solve the problems of its own capitalism," thus Kurdistan is not a colony (Devrimci Yol, 16, 21, 10). DY accuses the "theoreticians of colonialism" of being "deceived by the appearance" and states that the fact that Kurdistan "looks like" a colony cannot be proof that it is a colony (Devrimci Yol, 17). The argument against separate organizations is based upon this refutation of the colonial status of Kurdistan, and the "unconditional" acceptance of the right of nations to self-determination is again negated by the necessity of a "united struggle" (Devrimci Yol, 9). DY rejects the "Kurdish left" and claims that separate organization can only be accepted if there were separate states, but as long as Turks and Kurds are citizens of the same state in which a proletarian party exists, separate organization of the Kurdish left is deemed unacceptable and dangerous (Devrimci Yol, 10, 17).

8.3.3 Devrimci Sol (1978-1980)

Devrimci Sol (DS) was another influential revolutionary organization that emerged from the THKP-C line, and it was formed as the result of a split within DY between Ankara and İstanbul cadres. Although the movement did not publish a periodic journal, the pamphlets it produced give an overview of their positions regarding the themes of our analysis. Its line is very similar to DY in many respects, but DS follows Çayan's line more strictly. Their historical theses regarding the Ottoman Empire recount the Hamidian Massacres as the Ottoman Empire using the Kurds against Armenians while staying silent about the Armenian Genocide and the homogenization of the population (Devrimci Sol, 1979, p. 69). DS regards the autonomy promised to the Kurds in the Treaty of Sèvres as beneficial for the imperialists and qualifies the Kemalist War of Independence as "anti-imperialist"

and “left-nationalist” (Devrimci Sol, 1979, pp. 70-71). Similar to the other organizations of the Turkish left, DS dates post-Lausanne as the turning point of the Kemalist regime, which was considered “progressive before it became reactionary and chauvinist” (Devrimci Sol, 1979, p. 76). This is explicitly justified with reference to Çayan, and organizations like KSD are accused of revising Çayan’s line (Devrimci Sol, 1979, pp. 105-106). This assumed cutoff point in 1923 results in the Koçgiri rebellion being classified as reactionary whereas the rebellions after the republic including Sheikh Said, Ararat (“Ağrı”), and Dersim are considered as national movements that were crushed by Kemalist’s policy of “liquidation and genocide against Kurds” (Devrimci Sol, 1979, pp. 71-72, 76).

Regarding the national problem and right of nations to self-determination, DS claims that “unquestionably, the national issue is secondary with regard to the class struggle” and the primary conflict is between “imperialism and oligarchy” on one side and “peoples of Turkey” on the other; and while claiming to “unconditionally” accept the right of nations to self-determination, it proposes that only the “Democratic People’s Revolution” is the solution of the national problem (Devrimci Sol, 1979, pp. 5, 26, 83, 97). DS also rejects the colonial status of Kurdistan, claiming that neither the Ottoman Empire was colonialist (even claims that “minorities were superior to Ottomans with regard to trade and advancing the relations of production [sic]”) nor the Turkish republic can be considered as colonialist; citing the argument that “a colony cannot have a colony” as well as arguing that “in the age of imperialism there is only one kind of colonialism” which is “the colonialism [exploitation] of financial capital” (Devrimci Sol, 1979, pp. 114, 119, 121, 122). Building on this, DS rejects separate organization (as well as the idea

of a united struggle of Kurds in the four parts of Kurdistan), claiming that "organization according to nationalities achieves nothing but the division of the power of the proletariat" (Devrimci Sol, 1979, pp. 75, 94, 132). DS claims that "separate organization is generally defended by Kurdish petit-bourgeois nationalist organizations," and against Rizgarî's proposition of an alliance between the national emancipation movement of Kurds and Turkish proletariat, it claims that since the emancipation struggle of Kurds is by definition against Turks, this understanding "severs the ties of Turkish and Kurdish nations" and argues that separate organization of Kurds is absurd since "the Kurdish nation does not have its own state so that Kurdish proletariat could organize separately and make a revolution" (Devrimci Sol, 1979, pp. 106-107, 132, 134).

8.3.4 Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi (1976-1980)

In contrast to all of the publications analyzed, *Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi* holds an exceptional place as it produced both the most radical and the most elaborate criticisms of the ruling nation ideology. Before the detailed analysis, the obvious differences can be listed as the complete rejection of Kemalism and the republic, the acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide and the continuity between İT and Kemalists, the acceptance of the colonial status of Kurdistan, and the admission of the right to separate organization (albeit rejecting it in practice by advocating for united organization). The format of KSD is also exceptional as it does not have a newspaper format but rather it is more similar to an academic journal as it contains almost no news and images but only very lengthy articles.

The historical theses of KSD display a complete rejection of the legacy of the ruling nation; starting from the Ottoman empire, KSD rejects İT, Kemalist regime, TKP of M. Suphi and Şefik Hüsnü, post-TKP Kemalist theoreticians like Mihri Belli and Hikmet Kıvılcımlı, the MDD tradition of '68, and Mahir Çayan's "positive" views on Kemalism. Regarding the Ottoman Empire, KSD qualifies the Armenian massacres from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards as a strategy of the Ottoman Empire to draw Kurds to its side while weakening the Armenians, İT as deploying "an assimilationist and genocide-oriented policy against non-Turks,"[181] and while the explicit reference to Armenian Genocide is absent in earlier publications, in the 27th issue it is proclaimed openly: "In the midst of war, a merciless repression and terror was deployed against the Armenian movement. 500 thousand Armenians were killed"[182] (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 2, 3, 6, 25, 27). KSD also correctly determines the direct continuity between İT and the Kemalist regime as the Kemalist cadres were nothing but the former İT cadres (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 9). Regarding the War of Independence, KSD still claims that it had an "anti-imperialist content" that vanished as soon as the war ended and the Kemalists turned to "policies of 'reformation' and forced assimilation against the Kurdish national movement", and it is this anti-imperialist content that was "exaggerated and fetishized" by the Turkish left resulting in the hegemony of bourgeois chauvinist nationalism (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 19, 3, 1). KSD determines TKP and its products like Mihri Belli who claimed that "there are no insurmountable barriers

[181] "İttihat ve Terakki Partisi, Türk olmayan topluluklar üzerinde asimilasyoncu ve jenoside yönelik bir politika izledi."
[182] "Savaşın içinde, Ermeni hareketine karşı insafsızca bir bastırma ve terör uygulandı. 500 bin Ermeni öldürüldü."

between Kemalism and socialism" and Hikmet Kıvılcımlı as the source of this right-wing deviation in the Turkish left that resulted in theses like non-maturity of objective conditions for revolutionary activity and strategies like "expecting revolution from the forces on one's right" which is a hallmark of the juntaism of MDD (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 1, 2, 6). That's why, KSD rejects Çayan's claim about Kemalism being the leftmost wing of petit-bourgeoisie (which is accepted by all the other organizations coming from THKP-C tradition) and instead claims that Kemalism is "bourgeois chauvinist nationalism," arguing that this made Çayan appear as "objectively on the side of the ruling Turkish nationalism despite his subjective intentions" (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 1, 3, 14).

On the matters of national-colonial question and national oppression, KSD accepts that Kurds are an oppressed nation and that Kurdistan is a colony, and claims that the nationalism to be combated is not the nationalism of the oppressed nation (Kurds) but the oppressor Turkish nationalism and Kemalism (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 2). KSD determines the absence of a proper understanding of the national problem as a root cause of the wrong assessment of Kemalism and argues that the national problem "objectively" unites the Turkish left in Turkish nationalism (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 2, 3). KSD also identifies the "revolutionary potential of the oppressed Kurdish nation and the national minorities" as a crucial element, but nevertheless claims that the national problem is still secondary to the problem of independence and democracy (with the reservation that this priority can change) (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 3). Regarding the right of nations to self-determination, KSD argues that the essence of the national problem in Turkey is the Kurdish national problem, and the heart of this problem is "the right of the Kurdish nation to

self-determination (to form a state)" (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 16). Criticizing the Turkish left's positions as "going as far as the rejection of the Leninist principle of the right of nations to self-determination," KSD argues against the "right to form a state being a privilege of the ruling Turkish nation in Turkey" and calls the socialists of the ruling nation to support the right of nations to self-determination (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 2, 3). With regard to the colonial status of Kurdistan, KSD defends the thesis that Kurdistan is a colony divided between four nation-states according to the interest of British and French imperialists, and the colonial regime in Kurdistan is a regime of extraction of surplus-value (viz. exploitation) (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 2, 3, 6, 24). KSD engages polemics against virtually all of the Turkish and Kurdish left. Whereas against the former, it defends the right of nations to self-determination and the thesis that Kurdistan is a colony (and a semi-colony can have a colony), against the latter, it defends the united organization of Turkish and Kurdish left (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 6).

KSD accepts the right to separate organization and does not mandate united organization like the rest of the Turkish left especially in its earlier issues, but it still advocates very strongly against the Kurdish left for the necessity of the "single party of the working class" as despite all its radicalism it considers the national problem as a secondary conflict ("tabi," "mihrak değil") that is a part of the "Democratic People's Revolution" (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 2, 6). The analysis KSD puts forward regarding the revolutionary strategy in Turkey envisages two possibilities: First is the leadership of the "revolutionary movement of Turkey" meaning a united struggle for the revolution in Turkey under the leadership of the Turkish left, and the second is the separation of the Kurdish left and continuing its struggle for revolution

in Kurdistan (which is not preferred but seen possible as KSD, which gives various examples like Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau) (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 2, 6, 30). More interesting than KSD's strong preference for the former option is the fact that KSD is symptomatically blind to the third option, which is the separate organization and struggle for revolution in Turkey under the leadership of the Kurdish left (which ended up happening) (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 6). In the later issues, with the Kurdish separate organizations gaining force, KSD adopts a stricter tone in its advocacy against a separate organization, refusing the terms such as "Kurdish left" and "Turkish left" which were used by the Kurdish left as "national parochialism" that cuts off the Kurdish problem from "the general issue of revolution" (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 14, 31).[183] Especially with the rise of Kurdistan Revolutionaries (*Kürdistan Devrimcileri*, *Şoreşgerên Kurdistan*, KD, later PKK) in late 1978 (and their show of force in the *Newroz* of 1979), KSD's polemics turn against KD which is deemed as the "most bigoted defender of separate organization" (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi, 31). Perhaps in a desperate attempt to keep its ground against the KD, in the course of the polemic KSD engages in an attempted justification of united organization that amounts to a whitewashing of the colonial regime; exemplified by claims like "colonizers, in no point in time could declare a 'jihad against Kurds,' instead of explicit conditioning and incitements of racism against Kurds, they pursued a policy on the basis of the denial of this people, trying to uphold the appearance, and only the appearance of, an equal policy,"[184] that the

[183] Note that whereas the masculine hegemonic side (Turkish left) denies the split, the feminine symptomal side (Kurdish left) stands for the split itself.
[184] "Sömürgeciler, hiç bir dönemde «Kürtlere karşı cihad» açamamış, Kürtlere karşı açıktan açığa şartlandırma, ırkçılığı körükleme yerine, bu halkın varlığının inkarı temelinde, görünüşte ama sadece görünüşte eşit bir politika uyguladığı havasını egemen kılmaya çabalamıştır."

colonial regime is not excessively harsh and explicit in Turkey due to "the administrative structures in Turkey and Kurdistan being the same,"[185] as "the administrative structure in Turkey is implemented in the exact same way in Kurdistan, and all the rights given to the Turkish people in the laws are also given to the Kurdish people (on the condition that one does not say that one is Kurdish),"[186] the colonizers "confine themselves only to the claim that everyone is Turkish,"[187] and "the Kurds who took office in the mechanism of the colonial state in the various institutions (military, police, gendarmerie, various state offices etc.) are numerous"[188] (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi 31, 35).

To sum it up, one can observe that the Turkish left in the late 1970s was affected both by a structural blindness and a structural weakness, both of which were due to the hegemony of the ideology of the ruling nation. The structural blindness (due to the hegemonic position of the ruling nation) made it unable to detect the national-colonial antagonism with its full consequences and produce a real criticism of the nation-state, founding crimes, and ruling nation ideology. The structural weakness (caused by the dominance of the ruling nation ideology in the Turkish nation) made it unable to find a base that would support a large-scale armed organization and long-term revolutionary struggle. The fact that the Turkish left was simultaneously committed to Marxist-Leninist principles and partake in the ideology of the ruling nation manifested itself as the idealist (masculine) strategies of rejection of the antagonism as Real, such as the appeal to *abstract universality* of the pure

[185] "İdari yönden, bugün Türkiye'deki yapıyla Kürdistan'daki yapının aynı olması"
[186] "Türkiye'deki idari yapı olduğu gibi Kürdistan'da da uygulanmakta ve yasalarda Türk halkına ne türlü haklar tanınmışsa, onlar Kürt halkına da (Kürt olduğunu söylememesi koşuluyla) tanınmaktadır."
[187] "Sadece herkesin Türk olduğu iddiasıyla yetinmektedir."
[188] "Sömürgeci devlet mekanizması içinde, değişik kurumlarda (ordu, polis, jandarma, çeşitli devlet daireleri, vb.) görev almış Kürdistan'lıların sayısı bir hayli kabarıktır."

class struggle (since the reduction of the antagonism into an opposition or the reduction of the revolutionary struggle into One struggle is the same as their rejection) and the dismissal of the national-colonial problem as secondary, subordinate, or particular. It can be argued that KSD went to the limit of the Turkish left and the paradigm it took over from the ’68 rupture, and it was not possible for it to go further, without actually ceasing to be Turkish left and becoming Kurdish left; as the only way to reach the true *concrete Universal* is to abandon the insistence in the purity of the false *abstract Universal* and to adopt the Particular position of the symptomal element (*part-of-no-part*).[189] And despite all their radicalism and innovation for the Turkish left, the theses defended by KSD were in no way original, as they had already become the standard minimum theses defended by the Kurdish left. In the end, due to the combination of these structural causes and the excessive amount of violence deployed by the state, the 1980 coup marked the defeat of the Turkish left, which afterward only survived as a remnant of its former glory.

As was shortly mentioned, the Kurdish left had already separated itself from the Turkish left before the 1980 coup. And by following the rupture of ’68 to its logical extreme and really breaking with the ideology of the ruling nation, it created the third generation of revolutionary left in Turkey, in which the symptomal element of the national-colonial regime, the Kurds, emerged as the revolutionary subject and took the central place in the following conjuncture. This parallel development of the Kurdish revolutionary left in the 1970s and the emergence of PKK will be the subject matter of the next chapter.

[189] This “class-suicide” (or “nation-suicide”) was a real possibility as there were many Turks in the Kurdish left, including among the founding members of PKK.

CHAPTER 9

SEPARATION OF THE KURDISH LEFT: THE EMERGENCE OF THE THIRD GENERATION OF REVOLUTIONARY LEFT

While the Turkish left was dealing with the contradiction between the traumatic excess of the ’68 break and the ideology of the ruling nation, the Kurdish left was developing in parallel, unimpeded by that conflict because it was grounded on a total rejection of the ruling nation ideology. As argued, this difference was due to the fact that whereas the Turkish left was confined to the masculine logic of abstract universality due to the hegemonic position of the Turkish nation; the Kurdish left, by virtue of the Kurdish nation occupying the position of the *part-of-no-part* within the national-colonial regime, could carry the rupture of ’68 to its ultimate conclusion; both in the theoretical sense that it completely rejected the ruling nation ideology and national fantasy, and in the practical sense that it could subtract itself from the official antagonism (secular versus Islamist, progressive versus reactionary) and produce a mass armed revolutionary organization in contrast to the Turkish left.[190] That’s why, although as we have seen that the proletariat is the paradigmatic example of the symptomal element, the “pure proletarian” position of the Turkish left was false in the sense that it reduced the irreducible Real antagonism into an abstract duality, dismissing the antagonism in the national context. This is in explicit contradiction to the aforementioned Leninist thesis that there is no pure revolution

[190] There were also strategic differences such as Kurdistan’s suitability for supporting rural guerilla organization, and the Kurds’ ability to operate in four parts of Kurdistan which made possible PKK’s passage to Syria, enabling it to survive the 1980 coup.

(which is also quoted by Kaypakkaya) (Lenin, 1974a; Kaypakkaya, 2018, p. 491). In contrast, the Kurdish left could produce a properly dialectical materialist stance and a revolutionary movement against the ideology of the ruling nation and the nation-state, specifically because of its Particular character that was rejected by purists of the Turkish left, as the *concrete Universal* always appears as an excluded Particular element that stands for the falsity of the *abstract Universal*. At this point, the main historical thesis of the work can be recapitulated: Because of the continuity of the dominance of the colonial *millet* system and the ideology of the ruling nation throughout the history of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, the revolutionary subject (Marxist revolutionary left) could only emerge from the colonized nations, which happened twice, first time as the Armenian revolutionaries as the first generation of the revolutionary left, and second time as the Kurdish Freedom Movement as the third generation.[191]

9.1 The parallel development of Kurdish left

The details of the emergence of the Kurdish left are out of the scope of this work, but in order to complete the argument, a general overview of the Kurdish organizations of the 1970s will be given, which will be followed by a short analysis of the emergence of KD (PKK) and its specificity which made it the main actor of the revolutionary left in Turkey in the following decades. The organizations of the Kurdish left (excluding PKK) can be categorized through several different sets of criteria such as their origin, their alignment with Kurdish nationalists like KDP, and

[191] The second generation did not create a large scale and lasting organization but functioned as a "vanishing mediator" in the process of separation from the ruling nation ideology and the creation of the Kurdish left.

their accepted methods of struggle; which could be summarized as follows: First, the TKDP which had been established in 1965 was still active despite the crisis of leadership after the death of Sait Elçi, and the organization was captured by leftists in 1977 and transformed into TKDP-KUK, who later entered into conflicts with PKK. PSK was founded in 1974 and was led by Kemal Burkay, who was from the Easterners (Doğulular) group of TİP, so its origin was the Turkish left; the party was aligned with USSR but opposed armed struggle. Nevertheless, it made a great impact through its publications like *Özgürlük Yolu* and *Roja Welat*. Another organization that was established in 1974 was DDKD, which originated in the DDKOs, hence in the tradition of Turkish left, but it was also close to KDP's line (it later sided with Talabani against Barzani) as well as having roots in T-KDP of Dr. Şivan; the organization was aligned with USSR, and in 1977 it took the name KİP. Rizgarî was also established in 1974 and originated in DDKOs, and it was also close to the line of KDP. The group included theoreticians like Orhan Kotan who put forward very elaborate theses regarding the colonial situation and Kemalism, and these theses were published in the journal *Rizgarî* and the publications of Komal publishing, drawing much reaction from the Turkish left.[192] Kawa was another organization that originated from DDKOs; its specificity was that it was the only Maoist organization of the Kurdish left that published through Kawa publications and its journal, but due to its internal conflicts rising from the internal problems of Maoism, the organization did not grow much. There also existed smaller groups like Tekoşîn (which was a Kurdish splinter group from THKP-C/Kurtuluş), Stêrka Sor, and Pêkanîn that did not receive much spotlight except for their conflicts with PKK (Akkaya, 2013, pp. 11-14;

[192] We can note also Ala Rizgarî here, which was a group that split from Rizgarî.

Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, p. 125). Although some of these groups have produced very strong criticisms of the ruling nation ideology, they could not translate it into practical terms; in other words, they could not reorganize the Kurdish nation as a revolutionary subject, which was eventually accomplished by PKK.

9.2 The emergence of PKK

The process of emergence of PKK started simultaneously with the rest of the Kurdish left right after the 1971 coup (and in this sense the Kurdish left of the 1970s was really contemporaneous with the Turkish left, which should always be kept in mind), and it was born directly out of the ’68 break, both ideologically and as per the origin of its core cadres, which was summarized by one of its founding leaders Kemal Pir as following in his famous court defense: “The movement known as the PKK movement, which emerged after 1972, is not an organization; it is an ideological and political movement. That movement has the intention to unite [the divided revolutionary left in Turkey]” (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, p. 123; Jongerden & Akkaya, 2012, p. 1). In this sense, contrary to the general acceptance, PKK is not a “party without history,” but –as was also pointed out by others– it has its origins in the second generation of revolutionary left of which it is the real successor, as also evidenced by Öcalan’s explicit statement on the matter (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, pp. 124, 126; Jongerden & Akkaya, 2013, p. 169; Maraşlı, 2010, 2/20).:

> The role of the Turkish socialist movement in the emergence of PKK cannot be denied. If the Turkish socialist movement did not have the courage for war, it would be a mere conjecture to claim that PKK could dare to wage a revolutionary war by itself.[193] (Öcalan quoted in Akkaya, 2014, p. 80)

[193] “PKK’nin çıkışında, Türkiye sosyalist hareketinin rolü yadsınamaz. Türkiye sosyalist hareketinin savaşa cesareti olmasaydı, PKK’nin tek başına devrimci savaşa cesaret edebileceğini iddia etmek ancak varsayım değeri taşır.”

The political origins of the leader cadre of PKK also display this continuity, as Abdullah Öcalan and Kemal Pir were THKP-C sympathizers; and Haki Karer, Ali Haydar Kaytan, and Mustafa Karasu were THKO sympathizers (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, p. 127; Jongerden & Akkaya, 2012, p. 5).[194] Regarding this origin, Öcalan stated that PKK emerged from the mistakes of the revolutionary left of ’68; which are determined as the urgency to act which resulted in premature direct confrontation with the state on the one hand, and the ideological hindrance caused by the ruling nation ideology (Kemalist nationalism and chauvinism) which integrated them to the colonial system (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, p. 127; Jongerden & Akkaya, 2012, pp. 7-8). Similar to the ’68 generation, PKK also had its roots in the disenfranchised working-class members of the student movement, and the founding members included Turks like Kemal Pir, Haki Karer, and Duran Kalkan in addition to Kurds (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, pp. 124, 127; Jongerden & Akkaya, 2012, p. 3).

Taking lessons from the premature defeat of the ’68 revolutionaries, PKK took a very cautious and slow route of organization that spanned almost all of the 1970s; which can be considered under three stages of “ideological group formation” of 1973-1977 in which the group was organizing underground, “party building” stage of 1977-1979, and “organization of revolutionary violence” after 1980 (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, p. 123; Akkaya, 2013, p. 21). This included a meticulous preparation for the organization of the “vanguard party” that would “realize the interwoven

[194] Öcalan still considers himself a Çayanist: “I started out as a sympathizer of Mahir Çayan. Mahir defended the right of nations to self-determination. I got involved in the struggle with the momentum he gave me. I have been following his line for the last forty years, and I have come to this day” (Öcalan, 2015, p. 163).

realization of organization and action" which would put an end to the Kurdish problem being a "subject matter of journals, newspapers, and NGOs" (Öcalan quoted in Akkaya, 2014, p. 80).

The core group of the movement formed around ADYÖD, which was a legal organization established by the legalist TSİP and later taken over by the frontists coming from THKO and THKP-C traditions that included the founding members of PKK such as Abdullah Öcalan, Haki Karer, Baki Karer, Kemal Pir, Ali Haydar Kaytan, Duran Kalkan, and Cemil Bayık (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, p. 127). After the closure of ADYÖD in 1974, the group gave up on legal organization completely and started to organize "discussion groups" that would take place in homes until 1977, and it is in these meetings that the group's fundamental theses were explained and developed as well as new militants were recruited (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2012, p. 7; Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, p. 128).[195] After the detachment from ADYÖD, the group came to be known under the name of *Kürdistan Devrimcileri/Şoreşgerên Kurdistan* ("Kurdistan Revolutionaries"),[196] in the 1976 Dikmen meeting, they took the decision to move their focus to Kurdistan from Ankara; in the 1976 Dikimevi meeting, they decided to start presenting the movement to the Turkish left and the people of Kurdistan (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, pp. 128-129). The presentation to the Turkish left in a meeting in TMMOB, which was arranged through the mediation of THKP-C/Kurtuluş, and as can be predicted, it did not result in a positive outcome, and the Turkish left missed the

[195] Kemal Pir emphasizes the meticulousness of these discussions by stating that "if three hours were needed to convince people, we would be busy for three hours, if 300 hours were needed to convince them, we would be busy for 300 hours" (quoted in Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, p. 128).
[196] They were also known as "Apocular" and "Ulusal Kurtuluş Ordusu" (or shortly "Ulusalcılar") which were usually used by the Turkish left (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, p. 128).

chance to fix the mistake of TKP's dismissal of Kurds; after which KD turned towards Kurdistan and organized meetings in places like Ağrı, Kars, Dersim, Karakoçan, Diyarbakır, and Antep during 1977 (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, p. 129).

1977 proved to be the turning point for KD when one of the founding members (and the *de facto* second-in-command after Öcalan) Haki Karer was assassinated by Alattin Kaplan, who was the leader of Stêrka Sor (which was declared as a satellite organization of the state by the KD); and the KD gave more weight in organizing the armed struggle against the tribes (*aşiret*s) and its opponents within the left, and this process eventually led to the transformation of KD into a communist party, PKK (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2012, pp. 4, 10, 13; Akkaya, 2013, p. 15; Jongerden & Akkaya, 2013, p. 165).[197] In rapid succession, the first congress of the party was organized, and the party program was written in 1978, and PKK was declared openly in 1979 (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2012, p. 10). Already with the pamphlet that was written after the assassination of Karer in 1978, KD proclaimed its war against the "social-chauvinism and bourgeois-nationalism" and obsession with territorial integrity ("*misak-ı milli*") of Turkish left that blinds it to the colonial status of Kurdistan and results in the rejection of the right of nations to self-determination (in practice, if not on paper), claiming that "the Kurdistan National Liberation Struggle will free the Left in Turkey from its social-chauvinist illness." (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2012, pp. 11-12). The declaration of the foundational congress of 1978 also made this position clear and proclaimed its acceptance of revolutionary violence as a

[197] Öcalan states that PKK was established "as an oath to Haki Karer" (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2012, p. 10).

method and proposed armed struggle (similar to Çayan's PASS) projected in three phases of defense, balance, and strategic offense (Akkaya, 2014, p. 81; Akkaya, 2013, p. 12).

9.3 Theses and specificity of PKK

The most comprehensive and systematic expositions of the views of early PKK can be found in *Kürdistan Devrimi'nin Yolu* written in 1978, which could be considered as the manifesto of the third generation of revolutionary left in response to the second generation (and the title itself was an allusion to İnan's *Türkiye Devrimi'nin Yolu*). The most important theoretical innovation in *Kürdistan Devrimi'nin Yolu* is its statement of the irreducible character of the social antagonism exemplified by the thesis that both capitalism and colonialism are class systems, and both the struggle against economic exploitation and national oppression/exploitation are class struggles that cannot be reduced into one another (Öcalan, 1993, p. 17). Another very important unique characteristic of *Kürdistan Devrimi'nin Yolu* is that, whereas the Turkish left was either silent about Islam or was trying to co-opt it, Öcalan explicitly names Islam as a root cause in the formation of the national-colonial system and advocates for a "struggle against religion" (Öcalan, 1993, p. 107). Characterizing Islam as "more mind-numbing than the narcotic effect of the bourgeois ideologies,"[198] Öcalan observes that Islam (and to a lesser extent feudalism) functioned as a "trojan horse" that "killed the spirit of national resistance" and integrated the Kurds into the ruling nation; and states that "religion and religious

[198] "Burjuva ideolojilerinin uyuşturucu etkisinden bin kat daha uyuşturucu"

sectarianism present obstacles in front of the struggle for national emancipation" (Öcalan, 1993, pp. 24-25, 107).[199]

Kürdistan Devrimi'nin Yolu includes a very comprehensive historical argument that spans all of the history of Kurds starting from antiquity, which is presented through a Marxist analysis of the succession of different modes of production (primitive commune, slavery, feudalism, capitalism). What is distinctive about the historical argument except for its elaborateness is the fact that it accepts the Armenian Genocide (referring to it as a mass massacre) and it also points to the resulting wealth transfer that gave birth to the "national" Turkish bourgeoisie (Öcalan, 1993, pp. 78, 80).[200] Öcalan also assesses that all of the "three policies" ("üç tarz-ı siyaset;" viz. Ottomanism, Islamism, and Turkism) are in fact ideologies that "aimed to sustain the status of Turks as the ruling nation," which resulted in the "racist-chauvinist Turkish nationalism" of İT which was taken over by the Kemalists (Öcalan, 1993, p. 77). The War of Independence is regarded as a process of division of Kurdistan by the agreement of Kemalists and imperialists, which was followed by the intensification of the process of "creation of a Turkish nation" in which "the various nationalities and minorities that conflicted with this aim would be destroyed through assimilation" (Öcalan, 1993, pp. 28, 81-82).

When it comes to the national-colonial situation, Öcalan openly states that Kurdistan is a colony in the "classical" sense of the term and this classical colonialism does not contradict the interests of neocolonialism (imperialism)

[199] It is also important that Öcalan also determines the heterodoxies such as Kızılbaş/Alevi religion as a "resistance ideology created through an amalgamation of the peoples' national religions and Islam" (Öcalan, 1993, p. 67).
[200] But the thesis that non-Muslims constituted a "comprador bourgeoisie" is also present in the text (Öcalan, 1993, pp. 73, 74, 77).

(Öcalan, 1993, pp. 64, 56, 83). Giving the example of the invasion of Cyprus as evidence of the colonial capacity of Turkey, it determines the national contradiction as the primary contradiction in Kurdistan; arguing that the apparent formal equality is the mask of "colonialism of the Turkish bourgeoisie" and democratic struggle is impossible under this colonial situation (Öcalan, 1993, pp. 120, 112, 113). Öcalan assesses the structural weakness of the Turkish left as Kemalism, which makes them blind to this colonial status of Kurdistan, and against their juntaism, argues that even if leftists took over the army, it would not change anything regarding the violations and massacres against Kurds (Öcalan, 1993, pp. 111-112). Öcalan proposes revolutionary violence as the only way out of this deadlock: "(…) let us create the rightful and revolutionary violence that builds a new society! Another way of reaching to a new world has not yet been discovered by science."[201] (Öcalan, 1993, p. 123). In the text, PKK positions itself as a "communist organization" and the Kurdistan Revolution as located within the series of world revolutions that had started with the October Revolution (Öcalan, 1993, p. 133).

As was argued, the specificity of the Kurdish left, in contrast to the Turkish left, consisted in its symptomal position that allowed it to designate the ruling nation and the nation-state as the enemy. The specificity of PKK in contrast to the rest of the Kurdish left consisted in several aspects that can be listed as follows: PKK was not aligned with any external power (KDP, China, Soviets), it prioritized the armed struggle without compromising the theoretical depth, in its correct determination of the necessity of the revolutionary violence and rejection of legal struggle, it was able

[201] "(…) yeni bir toplum yaratıcı, haklı ve devrimci zoru yaratalım! Yeni bir dünyaya ulaşmanın başka tür bir yolunu bilim henüz keşfetmemiştir"

to choose the “worse” against the “Father” (*le père ou pire*) hence did not hold back in attacking the state, fascist paramilitaries, or the feudals (Akkaya, 2013, pp. 12, 15-16; Maraşlı, 2010, 13/20). This radical rejection of the colonial legacy of the nation-state even materialized in a cooperation with ASALA as early as 1980 with the bombing of the Turkish Consulate in Strasbourg (figure 5), which was an emblematic event that displayed the extent of the break of the third generation of the revolutionary left with the ruling nation ideology.



Figure 5 The joint declaration of cooperation by ASALA and PKK, on the frontpage of ASALA's official journal. The headline reads: "The Armenian-Kurdish Revolutionary Alliance is the Main Pledge Leading to Victory"

Additionally, unlike the other organizations, the leadership had an important role in PKK, which allowed the organization to undertake radical self-criticisms and paradigm shifts without getting lost in the deadlocks of bureaucracy (Maraşlı, 2010, 13/20). The existence of the leadership apart from the rest of the party bureaucracy allowed it to function as an "analyst" of the movement, balancing the University Discourse of the party bureaucracy with the Analyst's Discourse (and Master's Discourse), which in turn made possible the radical reconfigurations of the party. This position of the leadership (especially as it was gradually detached from executive functions) is similar to late Lenin's proposition of a "Central Control Commission" (CCC) that would be located outside of the party bureaucracy, and act as a balance against the Central Committee through its utilization of "some semi-humorous trick, cunning device, piece of trickery or something of that sort (…) to expose something ridiculous, something harmful, something semi-ridiculous, semi-harmful" (Lenin's own words) (Žižek, 2017b, 47-49/196, 149/196). In connection to the leadership, one additional peculiar characteristic of PKK could be given as its innovative utilization of media other than text; most importantly, the cassette tapes of Öcalan's speeches that were circulated across Kurdistan, which made possible the ideas and aims of the organization to be disseminated across the population, as well as cementing Öcalan as a leader. PKK also did not hold back from using Turkish ("the colonizer's language") as its primary education language, which testifies to a proper dialectical materialist perspective that rejects the fetishization of the particular and the indigenous (or the mythologization of the pre-colonial state), and instead accepts the *alienation* in colonizer's language in order to achieve the *separation* from

the colonizer (Öcalan, 1993, p. 104).[202] These properties distinguished PKK from the rest of the Kurdish left and caused it to gradually become the dominant organization in the Kurdish left.

This concludes the presentation of the historical argument, which can be summarized in one sentence as the necessary emergence of the revolutionary subject from the symptomal element twice (first as Armenian revolutionaries, second as Kurdish Freedom Movement), which is a consequence of the theoretical argument which states the irreducibility of the antagonism and defines the revolutionary act as the symptomal element occupying the hegemonic position. The conjuncture following the 1980s was characterized by the dominance of PKK as the only remaining active mass revolutionary organization in Turkey on one hand, and the erosion of the Turkish left with its insistence on refusing the revolutionary leadership of the Kurdish left on the other hand; which will be shortly touched upon in the next and the final chapter.

[202] "Turkish language should not be scorned because it is the language of the colonizer; but rather, it should be used as a tool to carry the cultural accumulation of the peoples of the world to our people. The limitation of the possibilities to think in Kurdish should be compensated by using Turkish for now." (Öcalan, 1993, p. 104).

CHAPTER 10

POSTSCRIPTUM ON THE SITUATION AFTER 1980

Despite the presentation of the historical argument of this work is completed in the last chapter and a proper analysis of the conjuncture after 1980 would require another complete study, it is still necessary and illuminating to give as a supplement a general outline, and emphasize some facts regarding post-1980 which still relate to and support the arguments put forward in this thesis, especially about the (non-)relationship between the Kurdish left and the Turkish left, and how the fundamental differences in their respective logics of organization (feminine non-All and masculine All) result in radically different ways of doing politics. One thing to be noted in general about the following arguments is that what is referred to as Turkish left in this chapter has a stricter meaning than from the rest of the work, because here it refers to the portion of the Turkish left did not amalgamate with the Kurdish left and persisted in a separate existence and a separate thesis as the "Turkish left," in other words, those who did not recognize the radical rupture created by the political Event which is the Kurdish Freedom Movement.

Following the 1980 coup, PKK had become the only remaining large-scale revolutionary actor in Turkey.[203] Despite this situation, a significant portion of the Turkish left, who were usually comprised of core militant cadres left without support from the masses, insisted on not recognizing the revolutionary leadership of PKK, and the relationship between the two remained on the level of individual or small group participation from the Turkish left and occasional attempts at united fronts,

[203] Although it was active before, the real insurgency of PKK started with the attacks of 1984.

which remained mostly on paper (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, p. 133). This is due to the double predicament of structural blindness and weakness the Turkish left, which is to say that the Turkish left was either unable to overcome the blindness and cooperate with the Kurdish left, or it was so that when it did overcome and cooperated, then it found itself alienated from its base in the ruling nation, hence in a state of weakness. Furthermore, it is very interesting and symptomatic of the Turkish left that whereas virtually all of it was defending a united organization and rejecting the thesis for separate organizations before the rise of the Kurdish Freedom Movement when they knew that the hegemony would be theirs in a united organization; they mostly switched to persisting in their separate organizations after the hegemony of Kurdish left, since they were aware that they could not dominate a united organization now.

Adapting Artuç's analysis of historical loss, structural lack, and melancholy regarding the Armenian Genocide (and the theory of Marc Nichanian) to this context, we can easily observe that the main characteristic of the Turkish left of the post-1980 period is also a melancholic attachment to the historical *loss* embodied in the 1971 and 1980 defeats which condemn it to an endless process of (false) mourning, and makes it unable to pass beyond the historical *loss* and assess the structural *lack* (the structural impossibility of a revolutionary movement integrated to the ideology of the ruling nation) that afflicted them with unescapable weaknesses (Freud, 1981b; Artuç, 2021). This over-attachment to the historical loss resulted in the ossification of the Turkish left both in the sense of cessation of theoretical innovations and in the sense of withering away of practical revolutionary activity, as the irreparability of the historical loss provided an excuse to avoid assessing the past mistakes as well as

dismissing the current responsibilities and the possibility of revolution. This melancholic stance of the Turkish left is exemplified perfectly by the famous opening sentence of a contemporary novel popular in Turkish left circles: "Revolution used to be a possibility, and it was very beautiful."[204] As can be seen, the obfuscation of the structural lack through the over-attachment to the historical loss makes it possible for the Turkish left to simultaneously proclaim allegiance to revolution while evading responsibility and doing nothing about it since the historical loss had rendered the revolution a foregone possibility.

Nevertheless, the united front attempts between the Kurdish and Turkish left happened, and they started as early as 1982 with FKBDC ("Faşizme Karşı Birleşik Devrim Cephesi"), the members of which included PKK, Dev-Yol, TKEP (Türkiye Komünist Emek Partisi), TEP (Türkiye Emekçi Partisi), Devrimci Savaş, THKP-C/Acilciler, SVP (Sosyalist Vatan Partisi), and TKP/İşçinin Sesi, but it was dissolved in 1986 after none of the organizations except PKK could organize a significant resistance. It was followed by DDGB (*Devrimci Demokratik Güç Birliği*) in 1993 which included PKK, TDP (*Türkiye Devrim Partisi*, which had split from TSİP), TKP/ML Hareketi, TKP/Kıvılcım, MLSPB, TİKKO, TKEP, and Ekim, it, too, was dissolved after remaining on paper. In 1996, a protocol of cooperation between PKK and DHKP-C was reached that resulted in some armed cooperation between the organizations, but it also failed in a short time due to political disagreements between the two organizations and was officially dissolved in 1998. 1996 also witnessed the formation of DGB (*Devrimci Güç Birliği*) between PKK and various representatives

[204] Incidentally, escape into literature is also seen as the only remaining option by Marc Nichanian (Artuç, 2021, pp. 65-66).

of the Turkish left such as DHP (*Devrimci Halk Partisi*) and TDP; but it also remained mostly as a symbolic alliance and did not result in a real cooperation (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, pp. 132-3). The latest example of a united front is HBDH ("Halkların Birleşik Devrim Hareketi"), which was established in 2016 and includes members like PKK, MLKP, THKP-C/MLSPB, TKEP/L, TİKB, and DKP.[205] As of 2024, HBDH is still in existence, but despite it formally being an alliance between the Kurdish and Turkish left, the movement does not have a large base or much effect on the Turkish population.

Another phenomenon of post-1980 is the activity in the legal political domain which was undertaken by both the Turkish left and Kurdish left, resulting in occasional cooperation between the two. The legal political parties of the Kurdish Freedom Movement are numerous as they were often banned. The cooperation with SHP in 1987 resulted in the emergence of the first Kurdish party HEP in 1990 (which entered the parliament with 22 seats from SHP in 1991); and because of the concurrent bans, HEP was resurrected as DEP in 1993, HADEP in 1994, DEHAP in 1997, DTP in 2005, BDP in 2011, HDP in 2012 (which was not result of a ban but a new alliance strategy as result of the paradigm of democratic confederalism), and DEM in 2023 (Güneş, 2017, pp. 11, 14-18; O'Connor, 2017, pp. 8-9). These parties occasionally entered into alliances and formed blocs with the legal parties of the Turkish left, such as the "Emek, Barış ve Özgürlük Bloğu" of 1995, the alliance of DEHAP, EMEP and SDP in 2002, and the "Bin Umut Adayları" of 2007 which included DTP, DTH, EMEP, SDP, and ÖDP (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010a, p. 133).

[205] TKP/ML-TİKKO was also initially included but later withdrew from the front and only externally participates in it.

Besides DTK and HDK, the latest legal cooperation of Kurdish left and Turkish left was the "Emek ve Özgürlük İttifakı" established between HDP, (new) TİP, EMEP, EHP, TÖP, and SMF in 2022; in which a crisis ensued with TİP's refusal to enter the general elections of 2023 from HDP's lists, resulting in lower cumulative performance in comparison to HDP's prior performance. As a representative of the Kemalist left,[206] TİP's inability to accept the leadership of the Kurdish left (both in the sense that it does not join HDK/HDP and it insists on separately participating in the elections) is symptomatic, which displays the continuing presence of the hegemony of the ideology of the ruling nation in the Turkish left, which manifests itself in the paradoxical results of the populist attempts of TİP like its commemoration of İbrahim Kaypakkaya on May 18 and celebration of Mustafa Kemal following day on May 19.[207]

In contrast to the stagnation and the ossification of the Turkish left after 1980, the Kurdish Freedom Movement maintained its dynamic and revolutionary character as it both advanced the armed struggle (without succumbing to pure legalism like most of the Turkish left) and developed its theoretical positions and theses further, resulting in major shifts in its paradigm that would make it unique not only in the context of Turkey, but globally. Two main directions that this

[206] New TİP's legacy comes from the legalist and Kemalist SD tradition, which can be traced back from TİP as HTKP, TKP, SİP, TSİP, (original) TİP.
[207] The consecutive commemorations lasted until 2023, when TİP gave up on commemorating Kaypakkaya but continued commemorating Mustafa Kemal. (The tweets can be accessed at: https://twitter.com/tipgenelmerkez/status/1129692831159902208, https://twitter.com/tipgenelmerkez/status/1130075158914445312, https://twitter.com/tipgenelmerkez/status/1262284285685297152, https://twitter.com/tipgenelmerkez/status/1262692425035927552, https://twitter.com/tipgenelmerkez/status/1394548308018749440, https://twitter.com/tipgenelmerkez/status/1394908351197241345, https://twitter.com/tipgenelmerkez/status/1526836777272479744, https://twitter.com/tipgenelmerkez/status/1527212548885471236, https://twitter.com/tipgenelmerkez/status/1659530437041979393)

development took was the transcending of the paradigm of the nation-state altogether (the formation of which was an initial objective as per national emancipation) and the recognition of other forms of class antagonism, such as patriarchy and incorporation of feminism into their framework.[208] This incorporation of feminism resulted in theoretical movements like *Jineolojî* as well as the formation of separate and autonomous organizations of women on all levels of the Kurdish Freedom Movement (both civilian and armed).[209] The abandonment of the nation-state paradigm (culminating in the fifth congress), on the other hand, allowed PKK to criticize real socialism as well as to protect itself from its collapse in the 1990s; and this critique further developed into the paradigm of *democratic confederalism*,[210] a trans-state organizational paradigm that aims to render the nation-state redundant, which was matured following the capture of Öcalan in 1999 (Akkaya, 2014, p. 88; Jongerden & Akkaya, 2010b, pp. 143-145; Akkaya & Jongerden, 2012, p. 1, Öcalan, 2011).[211] Also being referred as "radical democracy" (which is a term coming from Laclau and Mouffe, but it is not used in the same sense by the theoreticians of PKK), this paradigm is based on the thesis that nation-state itself is a bourgeois concept and hence incompatible with communism, and argues for a social organization beyond the paradigm of the nation-state and the market that would not attempt to take over state power but develop alternative forms of power in parallel that would constitute a

[208] Öcalan: "The PKK, under the influence of real socialism, was for a long time unable to transcend the nation-statist paradigm" (Jongerden & Akkaya, 2013, p. 179).
[209] Note that the masculine logic of Turkish left could not accept separate organization of the Kurds, whereas the Kurdish left, following the logic of the non-All, could accept the separate organization of women. And again, Turkish left was blind to other forms of class antagonism (colonialism, patriarchy) whereas the Kurdish left was receptive towards acknowledging them (patriarchy).
[210] It is strategically deployed in three stages of democratic republic, democratic autonomy, and democratic confederalism (Akkaya & Jongerden, 2012, p. 6).
[211] Following his capture, Öcalan studied the works of theoreticians such as Bookchin, Negri, Badiou, and Foucault which contributed to the development of the new paradigm.

"democracy without the state" (Akkaya & Jongerden, 2012, p. 12; Jongerden & Akkaya, 2013, pp. 165, 171, 10, 180).

This change of paradigm to democratic confederalism caused the ultimate reorganization of the Kurdish Freedom Movement as a confederation under the name KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union, *Koma Civakên Kurdistanê*) in 2005, which is a trans-state social organization posited as independent from and coexistent with the nation-states, spanning four parts of Kurdistan as well as having its own constitution or "social contract." This organization later provided the backbone of the Rojava Revolution in 2012 resulting in the formation of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), which is globally one of the very few authentic examples of an initiative to invent novel forms of social organization, new universalities which are not of and beyond capital (Žižek, 2003, p. 220).

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSION

Throughout this work, I have tried to present a structural account of the colonial regime and the ruling nation ideology in Turkey in relation to revolutionary left politics, informed by and as an illustration of the formalized understanding of social antagonism as Real. I attempted to demonstrate that this framework has numerous advantages and more explanatory power in comparison to alternative frameworks that try to provide an account of the colonial/postcolonial situation and structural inequalities. First, the framework proposed here does not have to rely on myths (such as the myth of social contract) because it is a class-based perspective founded on the primacy of antagonism, which states that the organization of society is not purely Symbolic but involves a violent Real dimension of social *jouissance*. Second, due to its formal nature, it can account for different manifestations of class structures as overdetermined by the social antagonism as Real; or to state it more plainly, it allows one to simultaneously conceptualize the contradictions of antagonistic class structures such as capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy without dismissing any of them or reducing them to one another. In the historical context of our argument, this allowed us to trace the intermingled organization of surplus-*jouissance* and surplus-value manifested in the colonial regime of the ruling nation without reducing the issue to pure colonial racism or pure economic exploitation and extraction. This formal approach also enabled us to track the continuity of the ruling nation ideology despite the changes in its content throughout the pre- and post-genocidal periods, revealing the structural equality of Armenian and Kurdish problems. Third, the

framework defended here is not confined to the level of detection and description of the problem as a phenomenon (symptomal analysis) like the consensus-based alternatives, but it can also provide an explanation for the logic of transformation of a given class structure. This means that instead of pointing out the structural problems and expecting the hegemonic element to relinquish its privileges or advocating for a liberal-democratic solution under capitalism like the contract theories, the framework defended here provides a formal understanding of the revolutionary subject and the revolutionary act as the dismantling of the existing state of things and the emergence of the radically New by virtue of the symptomal element (*part-of-no-part*) occupying the hegemonic place.

To that end, starting from the presentation of the dialectical materialist understanding of social science as the science of social antagonism (partisan science), I have introduced key concepts like national fantasy, national *jouissance*, and the symptomal element, and put forward a generic theory of the antagonism and the revolutionary act through the frameworks of Lacan, Althusser, Žižek (Ljubljana school), and Badiou. Utilizing this framework, I have presented a critical examination of the alternative schools of thought that aim to provide an explanatory framework to the post-colonial situation and structural inequalities, such as subaltern studies, racial contract theories, and critical whiteness studies, and discussed their shortcomings. Then, connecting it to the historical argument regarding the colonial regime and the ruling nation ideology in Turkey, I have critically engaged with various historical works that address the colonial situation in Turkey. As argued, although these works were very valuable and compelling regarding their descriptions and examples, they fell short in providing an overarching structural explanation of

the ruling nation ideology and the colonial system and conceptualizing a transformative option (revolutionary politics).

The following historical argument was presented in four moments that correspond to a Hegelian "triad," or the four moments of the unified theory of the four discourses and the formulae of sexuation. First, as the moment of *positing reflection* embodying the logic of masculine exception ($\exists x \neg \Phi x$) of the Master's Discourse that stands for the inauguration of a new order through the violent act of repression of the preceding history, we have discussed the genesis of the *millet* system and the ruling nation ideology. As was shown, as the imperial-colonial *millet* system was gradually established, the Armenians were pushed into the symptomal position while non-Turk Muslims such as Kurds were co-opted into the ruling nation (*millet-i hakime*). While both Armenians and Kurds were subject nations living under similar conditions in the beginning, the entrenchment of the *millet* system resulted in a relation of domination and subjection between them. This domination, combined with the passage of the logic of the *millet-i hakime* into the superegoical domain following the Tanzimat reforms, resulted in the rise of Armenian Marxist parties as the first generation of revolutionary left in Turkey in the nineteenth century, exemplifying the first emergence of the revolutionary subject from the symptomal position. The following violent act of erasure and forgetting, the eruption of national *jouissance* that characterizes this moment of positing reflection, is the Armenian Genocide as the founding crime that properly initiated the new national-colonial order, which was based on the regime of denialism and the absolute dominance of the ruling nation ideology. This violent repression corresponds to the big Other erasing the traces of its own genesis in order to appear eternal and natural, and this

specifically implies that both the true origin of the revolutionary left and the true origin of the Kemalist republican regime becomes inaccessible from within the new field.

As the second moment, that of *external reflection* embodying the logic of masculine All (∀xΦx) of the University Discourse, namely the false neutrality or the *abstract universality* that is confined to acting within (and the justification of) the status quo, serving the Master in the guise of objectivity, we have discussed the emergence of the Turkish left with the TKP in the post-genocidal denialist context. We have seen that TKP acted as a catalyst to integrate the left with the ruling nation ideology, producing various "left" justifications of the regime, participating in the denialism as well as supporting the colonial practices against Kurds who were pushed to the symptomal position following the crisis and subsequent reorganization of the national *jouissance* in the aftermath of the Genocide. In addition to creating the ideological edifice of the future Turkish left, TKP also provided a mythical origin to it which was universally adopted and uncontested. As characteristic of the University Discourse, the symptomal mode of non-action of TKP and the later Turkish left took two main forms. It either appeared as the obsessional self-hindering that consists in an indefinite deference of the act through the creation of obstacles or extra conditions in between, or it appeared as the perverse self-instrumentalization (cynicism) that consists in the erasure of the subjective responsibility through an appeal to an external/objective condition, process, or *telos*. The examples of the former include the waiting for the maturation of the conditions, the spontaneous organization of workers, or the approval of the democratic majority; whereas the examples of the latter include the whitewashing of the founding crimes and systemic

colonial violence through an appeal to historical progress (e.g. “Mustafa Kemal is not responsible for his crimes, History is responsible for Mustafa Kemal’s crimes”), the justification of bourgeois rear-guardism by posing the completion of the bourgeois revolution as a precondition for proletarian revolution, or the justification of juntaism through elevating the military and the state to a classless position. As we have seen, this masculine-hegemonic logic of the University Discourse rendered the Turkish left structurally blind to the colonial situation, resulting in an ambivalent mode of denial in which the Universal position is coloured by the hegemonic particularity (Turk-Islam nation) at the same time all the other particularities (Armenians, Kurds) are being rejected as being too Particular. In addition to characterizing the framework of the TKP and the Turkish left until the 1968 break, this logic also informs the conservative reception or renormalization of the ’68 break by the following generation of the Turkish left.

Third, we have discussed the hysterical break of ’68 materializing in the birth of the second generation of revolutionary left in Turkey (THKO, THKP-C, TKP/ML) as the moment of *determinate reflection* (the vanishing mediator) displaying the logic of feminine no-exception ($\neg\exists x \neg \Phi x$) of the Hysteric’s Discourse, which stages the radical questioning of the Symbolic Law (mandate) and attempts to expose the lack-in-the-Other through a provocative gesture. Although the hysterical acting out does not provide a decisive break with the Other and it is necessarily registered as out-of-time, out-of-place, premature, and incomplete; we have seen through the example of “Father or worse” that this step of the eruption of abstract negativity is absolutely necessary and it cannot be bypassed, and the proper revolutionary choice can only emerge afterward. Regarding the ruling nation

ideology and the Kemalist left tradition, the ’68 break introduced a crack in the edifice while still remaining in relationship with them, underlining the inconsistent but authentic character of Hysteric’s Discourse.

Before the last moment, we have examined the reception and renormalization of the ’68 break by the revolutionary Turkish left in the 1970s, mostly resulting in regressions to the University Discourse characteristic of the Turkish left. As we have seen, on issues like the right of nations to self-determination, the colonial status of Kurdistan, and the separate organization of the Kurdish left; almost all of the Turkish left employed arguments appealing to an abstract universality (such as the primary conflict, unity of proletarian internationalism) while rejecting the Kurdish left as being particularist. Even the organizations that accepted the colonial status of Kurdistan, like KSD, rejected the separate organization of the Kurdish left.

In contrast to the abstract universality of the Turkish left, as the fourth moment of the *reflexive determination* displaying the logic of feminine non-All ($\neg\forall x\Phi x$) of the Analyst’s Discourse, we have discussed the emergence of concrete Universal from the symptomal element, as the third generation of the revolutionary left, namely the Kurdish left and specifically PKK. Consistent with the logic of the dialectical process of the emergence of the New, the point where the *truth* of the ’68 break was materialized, turned out to be the end of the Turkish left and the emergence of the revolutionary subject as the Kurdish Freedom Movement. What was repressed (the Armenian revolutionaries and the colonial situation) by the inaugurating act (founding crimes and denialism) returned as the Kurdish movement, embodying the truth of the colonial system and the ruling nation ideology.

Furthermore, because the third generation of revolutionary left was informed by the feminine logic of the non-All, it could incorporate other conflicts and struggles and transform its framework accordingly to account for them, which is epitomized by its early recognition of founding crimes (emblematically exemplified by PKK's cooperation with ASALA as early as 1980), its incorporation of feminism, its rejection of nation-state paradigm with the paradigm of democratic confederalism, and its inclusion of the ecological struggle.

All in all, the argument aims to illustrate the continuity of the ruling nation ideology that underpins the colonial system, as well as the emergence of the truth of the system (the revolutionary subject) necessarily from the symptomal position. In this sense, one of the main conclusions of this work is that the eruption of the truth of the colonial regime as the Kurdish Freedom Movement is to be considered as a return of the repressed, as the return of the Armenian revolutionaries. This means that, by virtue of their positions within the colonial regime, there exists a structural equivalence between the Armenian problem and the Kurdish problem, making it impossible to consider them separately. To state it plainly, the issue of the founding crimes epitomized by the Armenian Genocide is not a problem of merely facing, recognizing, or proving the past,[212] nor is it a problem of reconciliation through the rehabilitation or democratization of the existing regime based on the masculine-hegemonic All. This implies that recognition and reparations, although they might provide the elements of a minimal political line to be defended, fall short in properly

[212] There is an abundance evidence and factual explanations relating to the Armenian Genocide, but since denialism works through attacking not facts themselves but the very factuality of the facts, it is not affected by the presentation of sheer facts (Artuç, 2021). This aporia can be solved in a Hegelian manner through the realization of the fact that the most direct and the absolute proof of the genocide is the regime of denialism itself.

addressing the structural root of the national-colonial problem and the regime of denialism; which is to say that a serious political action that would go beyond recognition and reparations as to directly intervene the organization of social *jouissance* must necessarily be conceptualized in addition to these options. As per the thesis of partisan science, this also means that the problem cannot be confined into the pure academic domain of the impartiality of the University discourse, and reduced into an issue of production and verification of impartial facts and knowledges isolated from practice, which results in an obsessional mode of non-action that ultimately reproduces the status quo, described by Žižek splendidly:

> Many Leftist intellectuals pursue their academic career here, fortified by their assurance that a true revolution is going on somewhere out there; religious people live (and participate) in brutal chaos here, fortified by their belief that there is a higher order of Justice out there in Heaven. (Žižek, 2020, p. 395)

Thus, the national-colonial problem can be addressed only through a revolutionary intervention based on the feminine non-All that would dismantle the ruling nation ideology altogether. In this sense, a major risk would be to separate the two issues (attempting to "solve" the Kurdish problem by giving up on problems like founding crimes and the nation-state), which would amount to an initiative of (re-)integration to the ruling nation ideology instead of dismantling it.[213] This stance is best exemplified by the apparently multiculturalist motto "Turkish, Kurdish, Laz, Circassian," from which non-Muslim elements like Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, and Jews are always symptomatically absent because it implicitly refers to the Islam nation as the ruling nation.

[213] It can be hypothesized that the integration of Kurds into the ruling nation could take place if another large group, like the immigrants, takes the symptomal place in the new organization of national *jouissance*.

In a similar vein, another risk or pitfall is the possibility of a complete regression into populist politics or radical democracy (in the sense of Laclau and Mouffe), namely, the reduction of the struggle into a struggle for recognition and rights within the system, instead of persisting in the communist hypothesis and building democratic confederalism. In this opposition, the former stance amounts to the logic of democratic materialism which admits nothing except bodies and language (the imaginary and the Symbolic) resulting in a populist politics that preserves the economy of repression, whereas the latter exemplifies the logic of dialectical materialism which also admits the dimension of *truth* (the Real) on top of them, resulting in the conceptualization of politics as class struggle (Zupančič, 2021, p. 18; Žižek, 2012, p. 41). As a species of the University Discourse, populist politics is inherently neutral, which means that a regression to radical democracy could again indicate the (re-)integration of Kurds into the ruling nation (Žižek, 2017a, p. 238). Another problem of populist politics is the trap of traditionalism and identity politics, namely that instead of recognizing different manifestations of social antagonism as different class structures and further integrating different struggles like feminism and queer, the movement could gradually regress into appealing to the established beliefs and prejudices, losing its revolutionary character and regressing into identity politics. It should be noted that, symmetrically, feminist and queer movements can also regress into identity politics. This manifests itself, for instance, as variants of ruling nation feminism in Turkey that disregard the Kurdish and Armenian issues, and attempt to build alliances within the ruling nation (e.g., secular feminists' alliance preferences with Muslim feminists over Kurdish feminists). Or again, as the liberal

variants of feminism and queer that accept capitalism and nation-state, and reduce the problem to a particular struggle for legal rights within a nation-state.

Therefore, it is not through compromises, middle grounds, merely tactical alliances, choosing lesser evils, or settling for partial victories but only through the absolute insistence in demanding the impossible, in the *communist hypothesis*, informed by the partisan science of dialectical materialist principle of the *unity of theory and practice* and supported by revolutionary action, that a true criticism and struggle against the existing forms of class structures can be undertaken, and something radically New may possibly emerge. Furthermore, besides the issues of abolishment of capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy; the existence of the global ecological crisis, which necessitates radical action and cooperation on a global scale that cannot ever be achieved through the market, nation-states, or traditional forms of social organization, makes the *communist hypothesis* all the more relevant and indispensable today.

Specifically in the conjuncture in which this thesis is written, which is founded upon and dominated by the colonial logic of the ruling nation ideology and its regime of denialism, and which is also very proximate (geographically, historically, and politically) to colonial atrocities like the recent war, blockades, and mass deportations in Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) and the ongoing brutal genocidal destruction of Gaza, providing an adequate analysis of, taking a definitive stance against, and initiating revolutionary action for the abolition of the class structures that beget and sustain these phenomena such as colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy stands in front of us as both as the primary task and the only way.

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