

following them and keeping a record of their identity and whereabouts continued in Republican Turkey. Ruben Melkonian draws a parallel between the treatment and upbringing of these boys and the *yeniçeri* (janissary) practice in the Ottoman Empire, calling the former “Twentieth-Century Janissaries.”³⁸ The practice of collecting Armenian orphans and bringing them up as devout Muslims is indeed a reminder of the *yeniçeri*, especially if further investigation into this issue should bring to light the subsequent use of these orphans by the government. Melkonian points to two examples to drive home his point in this comparison. One is “the brigade of the sturdy” (*gürbüzler ordusu*) comprised of well-built and devoted Turkish youths who were actually Armenian orphans collected and educated at Kiazim Kara Bekir’s initiative.³⁹ The

³⁸ Melkonian, “20-rd dari yenicherinere,” *Hanrapetakan* 9 (2007). The *yeniçeri* (“new soldier”) or janissary corps originated in 1365 during the reign of Murad I. They were the Sultan’s special army comprised of slaves and prisoners of war in the beginning, and later, of non-Muslim (*dhimmi*) youth. As non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire, *dhimmi* were granted protection by law in exchange for their subservience—meaning that their rights were not equal to those of Muslim citizens—and their loyalty to the state. *Dhimmi* children from Greek, Armenian, Albanian, Bulgarian, and other Christian subordinate peoples of the Ottoman Empire were collected by the government as a blood tax (*devşirme*) levied on non-Muslims of the Empire. These young boys were brought up as devout Muslims and the chosen ones were entrusted with important positions in the military and government. Gradually, the *yeniçeri* grew into a strong, corrupt, and formidable organization capable of overthrowing every Sultan who tried to put an end to their existence. They were eventually abolished by Sultan Mahmud II in 1826.

³⁹ Musa Kâzım Karabekir was a strong supporter of Mustafa Kemal who became a deputy to the Grand National Assembly and