

HISTORY AND EDUCATION IN THE İNÖNÜ ERA:
CHANGES AND CONTINUITIES ON PERCEPTIONS OF HISTORY AND ITS
REFLECTIONS ON EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

HISTORY AND EDUCATION IN THE İNÖNÜ ERA: CHANGES AND CONTINUITIES ON PERCEPTIONS OF HISTORY AND ITS REFLECTIONS ON EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

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This research aimed to put forth changes and continuities in the formation of the official history and its dissemination through education, with particular emphasis to history courses in high schools during the Early Republican Era with reference to the ministerial decisions, parliamentary discussions, history textbooks and also history and educational congresses held during Atatürk and İnönü eras.

1930s for the Turkish Republic was a time span when the core principles of the regime were formulized to ensure that they were publicly comprehended and posed. Correspondingly, formal and informal educational institutions were established for the dissemination of these principles, i. e. official ideology. Among them, Turkish History Association played an important role in formulation of official history which was one of the major means to install Turkish identity and a collective memory to the nation. In this respect, history courses and especially textbooks served instilling Republican understanding of history.

The presidency of İsmet İnönü were the years when the regime was consolidated and intoleration to the opposing views was decreased. This also affected the official perception of history, by dissolving the clear break from

the recent past and reconciling it with the modernization process of Ottoman-Turkish history while paying attention to the ccontinuities.

Keywords: Early Turkish Republic, Official History, History Textbooks, Education, Nationalism

ÖZ

İNÖNÜ DÖNEMİ'NDE TARİH VE EĞİTİM: TARİH ANLAYIŞINDAKİ SÜREKLİLİK, DEĞİŞİM VE EĞİTİM UYGULAMALARINA YANSIMALARI

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Bu çalışmanın genel amacı, Erken Cumhuriyet döneminde resmi tarihinin oluşum ve bunun eğitim aracılığıyla yeni nesle aktarım sürecindeki süreklilik ve kopuşları ortaya koymaktır. Bu bağlamda, Atatürk ve İnönü dönemleri; Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi kurul kararları, meclis görüşmeleri, eğitim ve tarih kongreleri ile tarih ders kitaplarına referansla karşılaştırılarak incelenmiştir.

1930'lar, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti rejiminin temel prensiplerinin formüle edildiği ve bunların topluma anlatılıp benimsetilmeye girişildiği yıllar olmuştur. Buna bağlı olarak bu prensiplerin, başka bir ifadeyle resmi ideolojinin aktarımı için örgün ve yaygın eğitim kurumları açılmıştır. Bunlar arasında Türk Tarih Kurumu, ulusa Türk kimliği ve ortak bellek kazandırmanın en temel araçlarından biri olan resmi tarihin formülasyonunda önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Cumhuriyetin resmi tarih anlayışını benimsetmek için tarih dersleri ve özellikle ders kitapları da önemli araçlar olmuşlardır.

İsmet İnönü'nün cumhurbaşkanlığı dönemi, rejimin konsolide olduğu ve muhalif görüşlere karşı keskin ve tavizsiz tutumun yumuşamaya başladığı yıllar olmuştur. Bu aynı zamanda resmi tarih anlayışını da etkilemiş; yakın geçmişe karşı kesin kopuş eksenli anlayıştan uzaklaşarak Osmanlı-Türk

modernleşme sürecinin sürekliliklerin de dikkate alınarak değerlendirilmesine yol açmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Erken Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, Resmi Tarih, Tarih Ders Kitapları, Eğitim, Milliyetçilik

To my family

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to put forth the basics of official historiography in Turkey and its reflections on educational practices during the İnönü Era (1938-1950). As the period was witnessing a nation-state building; nationalism and construction of a national identity among the peoples was the core problem of the ruling cadre. Hence, official history was used as one of the major devices to install Turkish identity and consciousness to the nation which was being reshaped to adopt the dominant ideology of the power. From this viewpoint, education and especially history courses were instrumental in spreading the official ideology. In this respect the two dimensions this study covers are education and history writing. Within this framework, this study will display the changes and continuities in the formation of the official history in Turkey and its dissemination through education i. e. history textbooks as ideological tools for the building of a nation-state. In this regard it focuses on official directives, speeches and also parliamentary discussions as well as history congresses and textbooks. Hence, firstly, conceptional framework which illuminates the standing points of the study and the axis of analysis will be given to facilitate readers' acquaintance to the procedures the government followed towards this socio-political aim.

1.1 Contemporary Paradigms/Debates on Education and its Functions

Basic function of education can be regarded as socialization of the individual. In this context, duality is observed within its characteristics. Primarily, it socializes individuals to conform the norms and values of society and its establishment. Thus, it aims to safeguard basic social consistency and stability and also traditional life style within a society. Considering that

schools, as agencies of the state emphasize the production of the dominant culture, education is conservative. Secondly, education has the capacity to generate a spirit of enquiry and questioning of the accepted “truths”. It has the potential to make people question the ruling values and norms in society. In other words, education possesses the capacity to liberate human mind from the barriers of the past and restrictions of the present. In this respect, education promotes changes and developments¹.

Relying upon above mentioned aspect, *functionalist* and *critical* (conflict) paradigms/theories emerge as two main approaches of education and social change. According to functionalists the main aim of education is to socialize the youngsters, teach them required skills in order to make them productive individuals and in the meanwhile indoctrinate them with the existing values². What these explanations predicted from education is explicit or implicit social consistency and order. It is assumed that when individuals learn and absorb the social elements previous generations produced, social consistency will be maintained and social rules and norms will be continued by compatible persons. These ideas, which are the basics of functionalist paradigm, are derived from Emile Durkheim’s sociological approach³.

Durkheim asserts that, every society requires similar thoughts, values and norms among its members. In other words, common values are essentials providing orderly continuity of societies. Conflicts and chaos becomes unavoidable when the members of a society do not have mutual values or principles. Therefore transferring basic values to new generations ought to be the major function of the education systems. This understanding attributes two basic roles to education, which are stability and continuity of the social order

¹ Andrew K. C. Ottaway, *Education and Society*, London: Routledge, 1953, p. 9

² L. Tschirhart Sanford; Mary E. Donovan, *Women and Self-esteem*, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 1985, p.177

³ For a detailed information on Durkheim’s sociological approach and its reflection to education, see Emile Durkheim, *Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Application of the Sociology of Education*, New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961

and socialization of the individual. Educational institutions which perform these functions are expected to bring up the type of citizens societies require⁴.

Analyses of aims and roles of education bring forth that functionalist paradigm determines critical points about education such as transferring of knowledge, abilities and attitudes to the individuals; providing social order and consistency and preparing individuals for certain fields and positions. Within this perspective, when defining education historical, social and political context is disregarded. Hence, in practice, the system generally does not function as affirmative, coherent and stable as functionalist paradigm asserted.

The above mentioned inconsistencies within theory and practices gave way to critical paradigm, and education was considered by certain scholars as a device transferring official ideology to new generations. Based on Marxist theory, critical paradigm introduces a fundamental conflict among different groups of contradictory benefits within a society and therefore is separated from the functionalist paradigm. Critical theorists and educators claim that social order and integration is achieved through state's ideological and pressure apparatuses. Furthermore, they draw attention to a force and acquiescence based upon pressure instead of a common compromise of values in the achievement of order and integration.

Although critical paradigm considers the strong relationship between education and society, it rather stresses the connections among schools and elitist demands. Moreover, it emphasizes the relation between education and teaching obedience rather than developing cognitive skills. In this respect, Hurn⁵ states that schools are institutions which serve the interests of ruling cadre, multiply existing inequalities and produce attitudes of adopting the system. In that case, while explicit function of the schools is to teach cognitive skills, implicit function is the protection and prosecution of existing social order through bringing in specific attitudes and values.

⁴ David Blackledge, Barry Hunt, *Sociological Interpretation of Education*, London: Routledge, 1985, pp.15-21

⁵ Christopher J. Hurn, *The Limits and Possibilities of Schooling-An Introduction to the Sociology of Education*, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, 1985, p. 61

Main arguments about education within critical paradigm are based mostly on the concept of reproduction which is handled together with ideology. The educators pay attention to this concept to criticize understanding of liberal education. They also use the concept of reproduction to improve the understanding of critical education⁶. The views developed by Antonio Gramsci⁷, Louis Althusser⁸ and Nicos Poulantzas to analyze the concept of ideology within Marxist structural-functionalist paradigm affected many theorists. Educational theorists such as Henry Giroux, Samuel Bowles, Herbert Gintis and Michael Apple have used and enriched critical theorists' ideological reproduction approach in educational field. According to them, education is viewed as the most important "ideological state apparatus" devised by the ruling classes to ensure that society largely conforms to their ideas. It is regarded as an instrument forged by the ruling classes to serve and preserve their own interests, and thus to maintain the status quo in the existing economical and political power structure. Since schools, as other social institutions in capitalist societies are controlled by the dominant power, they

⁶ Stanley Aronowitz, Henry A. Giroux, *Education Under Siege: The Conservative, Liberal and Radical Debate Over Schooling*, London: Routledge, 1986, p. 69

⁷ Gramsci is one of the prominent Marxist theoreticians who affected the field of critical pedagogy. He centered his theory on the concept of hegemony and put forth that hegemonic control of the dominant power was not maintained only with force and coercion, but also with non-coercive institutions such as churches, schools, trade unions, political parties and cultural associations. In this sense, education as the institution of production and reproduction of the dominant ideology, has a special place for the domination of the ruling class through the consent of the masses so that it is internalised by the community and becomes part of a 'common sense'. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2005

⁸ Louis Althusser takes Gramsci's theory a step further and systematizing it, bisects state instruments. The government, army, police, courts and prisons make up Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA), while Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) are composed of religion, family, law, politics, syndicate, mass media, culture (literature, fine arts, sport, etc.). While the RSA's use force to a large extent, the ISA's on the other hand use ideology and refer to convince/consent method. At this point, Althusser asserts that the prevailing ideological instrument in today's capitalist societies is the *educatory ideological apparatus*. In other words, the school today takes the children "at ages when they are open for impression the most" and inculcates throughout their educational life, the knowledge and skills full of dominant ideology, namely the production relations of the capitalist social formation. Louis Althusser, *İdeoloji ve Devletin İdeolojik Aygıtları*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991.

can not produce change. They rather necessarily reflect and reproduce the dominant status and the existing institutional arrangements.

1.2 Education and the Modern State

As mentioned above, education is one of the basic institutions of the social structure and it has various relations with the other institutions of the society. Every educational system and process is affected and determined by social, political and economical conditions. Thus, it should be described in relation with social and political structures. The kind of manpower to be educated, the kind of knowledge values to be taught and ideals to be transferred are decided and applied in this context⁹.

Policy of the modern state, in almost all societies is extremely influential in education of masses. The ideology of the state directly affects and reflects its philosophy of education. Accordingly, the curricula; aims and content of the courses and sources to be used are determined in line with that philosophy. Ruling classes aim to perpetuate their authorities over educational institutions¹⁰. In this respect, education becomes the institution –ideological tool- through which political powers transfer their values, aims and worldviews to the new generations. During the school years, young are trained to adapt and obey authority they are socialized and their positions in the society are more or less established¹¹. Meanwhile, they also learn to absorb the dominant culture.

In this respect, dominant culture is largely determined by the official ideology, and educational curricula are the fundamental tools of its transmission. As Apple argues in his several writings, school curricula do not

⁹ Kemal İnal, *Eğitim ve İktidar: Türkiye'de Ders Kitaplarında Demokratik ve Milliyetçi Değerler*, Ankara: Ütopya Yayınevi, 2004, p.12, 39

¹⁰ Ephraim V. Sayers, Ward E. Madden, *Education and the Democratic Faith: An Introduction to Philosophy of Education*, New York: Appleton-Century-Croft, 1959, p.243

¹¹ Wilbur B. Brookover, David Gottlieb, *A Sociology of Education*, New York: American Book Co, 1964, pp.99-100

serve neutral knowledge¹². Content of the school curricula are the outcomes of the complex power relations which covers cultural, political, and economical conflicts among certain classes, and this makes the modern state and education as inseparable. As Apple asserts:

What *counts* as knowledge, the ways in which it is organized, who is empowered to teach it, what counts as an appropriate display of having learned it, and -just as critically- who is allowed to ask and answer all these questions, are part and parcel of how dominance and subordination are reproduced and altered in this society. There is, then, always a *politics* of official knowledge, a politics that embodies conflict over what some regard as simply neutral descriptions of the world and what others regard as elite conceptions that empower some groups while disempowering others¹³.

All of the conceptual data given above have more or less contributed to historical understanding and applications of different states at one time or other since they were the major instruments of spreading the official ideology, but more than ever during nation building processes.

1.3 Official History and Nation-Building

Prior to analyzing nationalist historiography and its reflections on history education, it is essential to clarify the relationship between nationalism and history as a discipline. Nationalism as an ideology and emergence of nation-states are products of the Enlightenment in the 18th century and the multi-dimensional characteristics of this phenomenon led the emergence of a variety of theories aiming to explain it. In this respect, Ernest Renan in his famous essay first delivered as a lecture at the Sorbonne in 1882 and accepted as one of the pioneer works regarding this issue, described the nation as;

¹² Michael W. Apple, *Education and Power*, New York: Routledge, 1985; Michael W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, New York: Routledge, 1990

¹³ Michael W. Apple, *Cultural Politics and Education*, New York: Teachers College Press, 1996, pp.22-23

The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past of endeavours, sacrifice, and devotion. Of all cults, that of the ancestors is the most legitimate, for the ancestors have made us what we are. A heroic past, great men, glory (by which I understand genuine glory), this is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea. To have common glories in the past and to have a common will in the present; to have performed great deeds together, to wish to perform still more-these are the essential conditions for being a people¹⁴.

In the same study, Renan also underlined the need for consent, the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life with assimilating a nation's existence to a daily plebiscite. These indicate the historicity of nations; the role of the past, history and memory for future generations of the nation as well as a requirement for their consent for continuation of common life. The production of continuing consent of the people requires a collective memory for the construction of national identity/consciousness. Hence nation-states gave prominence to the structuring and control of collective memory, i.e. history for the construction and continuation of their nations as well as the transmission of the dominant/official ideology. To put it in another way, "the relationship between history, memory and the nation were characterized as more than natural currency: they were shown to involve a reciprocal circularity, a symbiosis at every level – scientific and pedagogical, theoretical and practical"¹⁵.

Basing upon the abovementioned perspective, many sources on nationalism have defined nations as *imagined* or even *invented* communities¹⁶ and the scholars dealing with this subject stressed the importance of the analysis of constructing national identity within the nation-states. The reason

¹⁴ Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?", *Becoming National: A Reader*, Geoff Eley, Ronald Grigor Suny (eds.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 41-55.

¹⁵ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*", *Representations*, 26, 1989, p.10

¹⁶ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1983; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1991; Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, London: Verso, 1991

behind this definition was that the members of these communities/nations did not know each other, but had an imagination of the entire community in their minds which made them feel the bounds and unity with it. From this point, nation-states attempt to legitimize themselves by basing their discourse on the depth of their past and historical continuity throughout the time. Albeit their emergence within a specific period of history, they also tend to make connections with the ancient communities they shared the same territory with. In other words, they present an image of a homogeneous community moving from a glorious ancient past to the cusp of a bright, modern future - a future (and a past) envisaged by the leadership of the time. Sweeping reforms are designed to bring about this future and to reshape “the people” in whose name the new nation is created, and in whose sovereignty it obliges. Yet both modern nation-state and society require collective memory and a national identity to construct its specific history over. In this context, a collective language and history played a significant role in constructing it. Thus, historians of the young nations, although their historical roots were based on a recent past, established their narratives on the ancientness/eternity and uniqueness of their own nations. With Hobsbawm’s definition, this is a process of ‘invention of tradition’, which is a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past¹⁷. In this respect, revolutions and progressive movements which break with the past, have a distinctive past. However, as there is such reference to a specific history, the peculiarity of ‘invented’ traditions is that its continuity is largely fictitious¹⁸.

¹⁷ Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions”, *The Invention of Tradition*, (eds.) Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 4. Commemoration ceremonies of important historic dates, flag ceremonies or children songs taught in schools serve good examples of this process in terms of constructing collective identity/citizenship consciousness since they contain strong nationalist symbols.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 2

1.4 Philosophical Background of Nationalist Historiography

The most important source on which this new approach was based was the German Historical School. The philosophical foundation of this School is based on the historical perspective of Herder, who is considered as the originator of thinking about history in Germany¹⁹. According to Herder, what is essential in thinking is not to reach the general, but to the particular; the peculiar structure of the subject. As the field of history consists of “idiosyncratic and irreproducible events”, the goal of the historians and their point of departure would be to discover the uniqueness of historical events. Asserting that history is man’s own structure, Herder pointed out the fruitlessness of seeking necessities and generalities behind voluntary and purposeful human activity in the stiff scientific sense. He defined all epochs, all people and all nations as *unique within their own structures*. Therefore, suggested all national histories should be considered within their “singularity, peculiarity and distinctiveness”²⁰. Herder and his adherents stressed that since people have separate “spirit” (*Volkgeist-tin*), they could pass through the process of political nationalism, i.e. the construction of the nation-state, only by conserving individual “spirit”. This laid the foundations of the 19th century German romanticism focusing on people of individualistic “spirit” were entitled to have a political structure based on its unity²¹.

This approach, which asserts that a country with its idiosyncratic sociological and historical qualities is different from others, and assumes that current political pursuits, thus be analyzed upon these “idiosyncrasies”. It can

¹⁹ As a matter of fact, when focused on the relationship between philosophy and history, it is clearly observed that until mid-18th century, the philosophers were not much interested in history. This was mainly because the dominant philosophical approach of the period was universalism. Defining the universal as reaching the knowledge of eternal truth, this mode of thinking deemed history as the field of singularities, change and happening. Hence, history was seen as a secondary activity, even of tertiary importance, and it was assumed to have nothing to do with philosophy. However, as social sciences started to grow away from metaphysics in the 18th century, social sciences and especially history started to become a field of interest in philosophy. Doğan Özlem, *Siyaset, Bilim ve Tarih Bilinci*, 1999, İstanbul: İnkılap, pp.53-59.

²⁰ Doğan Özlem, *Tarih Felsefesi*, İstanbul: Anahtar Kitaplar, 1994, pp.52-54

²¹ Suavi Aydın, “Aydınlanma ve Tarihselcilik Problemleri Arasında Türk Tarihyazıcılığı: Feodalite Örneği”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 91, 2002, pp. 50-51

be called as *particularism* in historiography which was born as a quest for a new methodology against the positivist paradigm of the 19th century. The scientific understanding of the 19th century positivism, which still echoes today, was based on assumptions such as: objective reality can be examined and predicted independently from the researcher by means of experimental processes, and knowledge can be discovered and revealed. Positivism, in this way, aimed at reaching certain universal laws of nature. As a result of this conception, there was a dominant view which asserts that human actions could be examined through the research methods designed for natural events. In this era when history was started to be considered a science, historians shared the view that objective knowledge could be achieved by positivist methods. Another common point among historians, even though they adopt different points of view, was that they all worked with a linear time concept. In other words, instead of a multitude of histories, they admitted that there is ‘a single history with continuity and a direction’. In addition, the positivist view of history was based on the view of narrating the past events as they happened, without resorting to value judgments and in an impartial way²².

In contrary, especially German idealists claimed that human actions, which are the pillars of history, cannot be examined with the positivist approach of natural sciences. According to them, while the purpose of natural sciences is reaching universal laws, the purpose of humanities is to understand the singular, to describe each and every event in its own uniqueness²³. Thus, they argued that those which belong to the nature of the human being cannot be explained by the strict rules of natural sciences²⁴. Since historical events occur only once, i.e. they are irreproducible, so each historical event ought to

²² Georg. G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2000, p.3

²³ It is quite possible to see the inherently paradoxical and mutually exclusive aspects of positivism and German idealism in writing national histories. However, it has also been possible to use positivism, especially its social engineering dimension in juxtaposition with German idealism, in which the latter provided the ideological content for the former.

²⁴ Kubilay Aysevener, Müge Barutça, *Tarih Felsefesi*, İstanbul: Cem Yayinevi, 2003

be considered in its own context. Therefore, it is impossible to make generalizations and create laws pertaining to the course of historical events. Dilthey, who gathered sciences dealing with historical/social reality under the title “human sciences” (*tin bilimlari*) rather than using the positivist terminology of “social sciences/natural sciences”, made important contributions in drawing the boundaries of these sciences as a whole vis-à-vis natural sciences.

A scientific methodology can study the peculiarities of single events and the distinctions between them by sticking to the individuals themselves, moving from individual to individual and specify the degrees of differences; it can set forth familiarities and similarities typologically rather than doing it through generalizations. Such scientific methodology can plainly put forward the relationships between the singular and the set, the individual and the group, as well as putting forward the similarities and differences; it can point out the main trajectories that render the changes in these meaningful²⁵.

1.5 History’s Mission in the Formation of Collective Identity

The beginning of the 20th century was the period when political history dominated the field of historiography so that the focus was rather on power-politics, diplomacy, decision-making and great men. There was an emphasis on nationalistic history before and during the First World War. Within the mentioned period of time, history had an important role for the creation of collective memory and especially academic historiography (history writing in universities) was an effective way in the nation-building process. In other words, historians had great role in the making of nation within the state²⁶. Actually, writing of academic texts was only one of the ways that historical

²⁵ Wilhelm Dilthey, *Hermeneutik ve Tin Bilimleri*, (trans.) Doğan Özlem, İstanbul: Paradigma, 1999, p.71

²⁶ As known, the historians were largely motivated by the socio-political agendas of their periods. Accordingly, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, their works were inevitably affected by the political framework and national context within which they worked. For further information about politicisation of historiography and how Italian, French, German and British historians contributed to and influenced the nation-building processes in the 19th and 20th centuries, see *Writing National Histories*, (eds.) Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan, Kevin Passmore, London: Routledge, 1999

consciousness was constructed and expressed. Celebrating of national days of remembrance and festivals, or institutionalization of national holidays, monuments and symbols were also influential in constructing historical understanding in nationalist perspective with the help of increasing influence of the mass media. Hence, academic texts had a great influence on socio-cultural changes and constructing historical consciousness on the new generation.

The origins of this understanding were formulated in German universities and were evolved in other Western European countries in the late 19th century. This era also witnessed the rise of ‘professional historiography’ which differentiated from amateur and literary discourses. Such history writing highly influenced by positivism and well-known as Rankean paradigm²⁷, can be briefly described as value free (not subjected to any evaluation), namely ‘scientific’ as relying upon archival materials which aimed to produce objective knowledge. The historians following Ranke’s approach perceived the past and believed to reconstruct it ‘as it had actually occurred’ and narrowed themselves only on political life of the nations.

Another characteristic of the mainstream historians in European countries was their clear stance and participation in political arena. Most German historians assumed the quality sought in a historian to being a partisan, and asserted that political views would have no effect on their scholarliness and objectivity²⁸. Therefore, it was nearly impossible to write history isolated from contemporary politics. Iggers²⁹ explains this contradiction in terms of the theological presuppositions which guided mainstream historians’ historical and

²⁷ Because it was Ranke who aimed to turn history into a science practiced by professionally educated historians and rejected history writing on the basis of other than primary sources. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth*, p. 24-25

²⁸ Historians such as Dahlmann, Gervinus, Droysen, Sybel, Baumgarten, Treitschke, Mommsen, Ranke in Germany and also Guizot, de Tocqueville and Thiers in France not only espoused political positions in their writings, but occupied powerful political posts. For instance, Sybel, a famous German historian and educated under the influence of Ranke, claimed that the historian must not be impartial, but must have a definite political viewpoint. Georg G. Iggers, “Nationalism and Historiography 1789-1996: The German Example of Historical Perspective” (eds.) Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan, Kevin Passmore, *Writing National Histories*, London: Routledge, p.19

²⁹ *ibid.*, p.19

historiographic thought. Divine will, in Ranke's words 'the finger of God', gave history direction and meaning. As Ranke explained, a historical approach to politics and history makes it possible to understand the objective forces which operate in the world. Thus the new scientific school was, from the start, politically oriented and propagandistic.

As in the case of Britain, Whig historians declared the unique tradition of liberal parliamentarism was the reason for British superiority to other nations. For instance, a famous British historian, George Macaulay claimed that British were "the greatest and most highly civilized people world ever saw"³⁰. There were also negative perceptions about other nations within Britain; therefore the Scottish, Irish and Welsh were marginalized and the term 'English' was used as the synonymous of 'British' for a long time³¹.

Starting from 1914, similarly, German intellectuals, including Ernst Troeltsch and Friedrich Meinecke attempted to define a specific German ideology, distinct from and superior to that of other Western countries. In literature, a whole set of stereotypes were used to distinguish a superior German world from an inferior undifferentiated Western one. German *Kultur* was conflicted with Western *Zivilisation*, the depth of German *Bildung* (personal and cultural maturation) with the superficiality of Western culture³².

Two different national identities were apparent in France and the United States, from the late-nineteenth until well into the twentieth century. Firstly, the nation was built upon common political institutions and attitudes essentially republican if not always democratic in nature with origins in a successful revolution against arbitrary authority. The other was that nation was defined in ethnic or even racial terms, as Gallic in France or Nordic and

³⁰ For nationalist discourse of European and US academic historians see Paul M. Kennedy, "The Decline of Nationalistic History in the West, 1900-1970", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 8 (1), 1973, pp.77-100

³¹ For further information about Englishness/Britishness question, see Rebecca Langlands, "Britishness or Englishness? The historical problem of national identity in Britain", *Nations and Nationalism*, 5 (1), 1999, pp. 59-60

³² Iggers, "Nationalism and Historiography", p.21

Protestant in the United States. But the republican and democratic traditions, particularly in France, also placed a high value on the military and glorified expansion. Side by side with the republican tradition there existed throughout the nineteenth century, and until 1945, a xenophobic, anti-Semitic orientation.

After 1919, national tradition in historiography declined by degrees, giving room to internationalist perspective. Political historiography central to the formation of national and social identity in the 19th century started to lose its effect in public life³³ and there emerged a consensus that history must not only narrate, but also analyze. During the inter-war period there was a rise in social and economic history, which was more vigorous after 1945. Annales School, developed by French historians as Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre and Fernand Braudel, was an important approach against traditional historiography and focused on writing problem-oriented analytical history through an interdisciplinary understanding. However this shift in historiography gradually reflected in the educational field slowly over a long period and history education served rather imperialist, nationalist and patriotic aims until the end of Second World War.

1.6 History Education and Textbooks as Ideological Tools

The success of nationalist ideology may well be related with the education system. Nationalist culture was shaped and constructed in schools and new generations were inculcated there in line with nationalistic perspective. Thus, nationalism, from its emergence until today, has been an instrument of providing the development of state-controlled educational systems and schools functioned as formation centers of national system in many countries³⁴.

In this context, history education had a special place in constructing national identity among the people of the same state. Hence, governments at

³³ Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth*, p.34

³⁴ Gerald L. Gutek, *Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education: A Biographical Introduction*, Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Merrill, 2005

various times became interested in and attempted to control history education in schools. Berghahn and Schissler³⁵ showed that school history has been used at multiple times in Europe as a device of socialization, geared to the teaching of the national past in order to generate identification with the nation and the state. Therefore, history topics to be taught have been one of the most controversial but essential issues of the school curricula. The opportunity to discuss and understand the formation of identity and possibly control it made history an essential and controversial part of school curricula³⁶. Debate on history education both among politicians and educators was rather upon the methods of teaching history - *how to teach it* - and more importantly, about the selection of and justification for history - *what history to teach and why*³⁷.

In this respect, the analysis of reproduction of ideological discourse and its transmission to the public, demonstrates the pioneer role of education and specifically the textbooks as they contain the knowledge filtered by the official ideology of the state. In other words, textbooks become the fields in which the effect of state power is explicitly observed in educational dimension. The ruling cadre utilizes them as educational tools to transfer and reproduce the knowledge and values derived from official ideology³⁸.

Starting from 1970s, there has been an increasing interest towards the content of history textbooks, especially due to their political use³⁹. Researches on the role of history textbooks show that the books, despite different educational settings, share certain broad functions. They are the tools with

³⁵ Volker R. Berghahn, Hanna Schissler, *Perceptions of History: International Textbook Research on Britain, Germany and the United States*, Oxford: Berg, 1987

³⁶ Gavin Baldwin, "In the Heart or on the Margins: A Personal View of National Curriculum History and Issues of Identity", R. Andrews (ed.) *Interpreting the New National Curriculum*. London: Middlesex University Press, 1996

³⁷ Robert Phillips, *History Teaching, Nationhood and the State*, London: Cassell, 1998

³⁸ İnal, *Eğitim ve İktidar*, p.11

³⁹ For a comprehensive analysis of utilizing history education and textbooks as ideological state apparatus, in the case of Balkans, see *Clio in the Balkans The Politics of History Education*, (ed.) Christina Koulouri, Thessaloniki: CDRSEE, 2002

which the ideology of the state is projected⁴⁰. Similarly, Altbach⁴¹ asserts that the textbooks are written and adopted as a product of a specific ideology to be utilized within the educational system. Therefore, they become the fields/tools of transferring, fortifying and reproducing the nationalist ideologies. In fact, the textbooks are expected to protect the system in a nationalist view. As a result, textbooks frequently contain national values such as patriotism, glorification of the fatherland and loyalty to national ideals. Wain asserts that “the philosophical point underlying schoolbooks is that there is no ideologically neutral stance that can be taken towards the past, or for that matter our social and political institutions of the present. This means history and social studies textbooks must be evaluated as ideological tools.”⁴²

Textbooks used in USSR serve good examples of the relation between textbooks and official ideology. Then history, geography and social studies textbooks used between fourth and tenth grade generally transmitted Marxist-Leninist ideology⁴³. Hence, textbooks of Soviet period functioned as reproduction of hegemonic ideology and culture. Another example pertains to Iran: the cadre of Iran Islamic Revolution had a different value system than Shah Regime, thus the textbooks of the revolution became the tool to adopt Islamic ideology. Values such as uniqueness of God, the prophet and apocalypse, resurrection of human being through the way towards God, justice of God became the basic values transferred through textbooks⁴⁴. Similarly, the

⁴⁰ Michael W. Apple,; Linda K. Christian-Smith, (eds.), *The Politics of the Textbook*, New York: Routledge, 1991; Martin Carnoy, Joel Samoff, *Education and Social Transition in the Third World*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990

⁴¹ Philip G. Altbach, “Textbooks: The International Dimension”, Michael W. Apple,; Linda K. Christian-Smith, (eds.), *The Politics of the Textbook*, New York: Routledge, 1991, p.242

⁴² Kenneth Wain, "Different Perspectives on Evaluating Textbooks", *History and Social Studies - Methodologies of Textbook Analysis*, H. Bourdillon (ed.), Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger, 1992, p.39

⁴³ Charles D. Cary, “Patterns of Emphasis upon Marxist-Leninist Ideology: A Computer Content Analysis of Soviet School History, Geography, and Social Science Textbooks”, *Comparative Education Review*, 20, (1), 1976, pp.11-29

⁴⁴ Bahram Mohsenpour, “Philosophy of Education in Postrevolutionary Iran”, *Comparative Education Review*, 32, (1) 1988, pp.77-85

research of Hooper and Smith⁴⁵ on five history textbooks written for American children between 1787 and 1865 proved that they served to fortify nationalism. In the mentioned textbooks, the Anglo-Saxon population (WASP) was taken up defensively against other religious and ethnic groups within the society. For that reason, as Bierstedt⁴⁶ put forth, knowledge in textbooks, written in nationalistic manner and mostly comprised of dominant ideological values, could not be regarded as scientific. Typically, those elements cover narratives which praise their own nation and vilify the others.

1.7 General Framework of This Study

This study attempted to reveal the characteristics of official history and its reflections on educational practices, especially history textbooks during İnönü Era as previously mentioned. Since the official history was shaped by the ruling cadre and intellectuals of the young republic in 1930s, firstly, its basic dynamics which constituted background of İnönü Era were presented. Accordingly, features of the official history in İnönü Era was analyzed with reference to Atatürk Era and changes and continuities were attempted to reveal by making certain comparisons in relation with the educational policies and historical understanding of the two eras.

Formation of official history in Turkey is closely related with the modernization and nation-building process of the Republic. Thus, a clear conceptualization of the tradition and cultural values inherited from the past is required. Therefore, initially a reference to sources feeding the Republican ideology; in other words historical and ideological background of formation of the dominant ideology which shed light on construction of national identity was made. However, regarding history and education as inseparable parts of installing nationalist historiography and culture; education became the institution utilized as a tool of transmitting the official ideology to the new

⁴⁵ Jimmie H. Hooper, Ben A. Smith, "Children's U.S. History Textbooks: 1787-1865", *Social Education*, 57 (1) 1993, p.15

⁴⁶ Robert Bierstedt, "The Writers of Textbooks," *Text Materials in Modern Education*, (ed.) Lee J. Cronbach, Illionis: University of Illinois Press, 1955, pp.106-107

generation which also guided the function of history education within the perspective of nation-state. This made primary reference to education unavoidable before exploring into national historiography and its reflections to history textbooks in the new Turkish Republic. In this perspective, the study primarily covered educational policies of the Atatürk and İnönü Eras before elaborating the official historical understanding of the mentioned periods which would be transmitted to the children of the new nation for the construction of a collective identity and memory.

At this point Childress⁴⁷ who presented a PhD thesis exclusively on Turkish education system deserves special attention. She stated that, the history of educational reforms during the late Ottoman period and the early years of the Republic were well documented. Though primarily focused on institutional and organizational changes, previous works noted that the school curricula of the early Republican years were designed to engender students pride in and loyalty to the new Turkish state, but provided no in-depth examination of the formulation of these curricula. In other words, there is a scholarly gap on educational policies of the Republican governments and their implementations. In this respect, decisions made by Instruction and Pedagogy Committee (*IPC-Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi*) were analyzed as a part of the study in order to reflect the policies of the Ministry of Education. IPC, established in 1926 as an organ of the Ministry of Education, played a significant role in planning educational policies and curricula. The activities of the IPC were crucial in formulating and disseminating the Kemalist ideology via education. The Committee was composed of prominent members of the Republican educational elite and undertook several critical duties such as determining educational goals and pedagogical obligations, examining existing textbooks and commissioning new ones. Another instrument of revealing the educational approach of the ruling cadre and to answer the question of what kind of a citizen was aimed to be raised; official speeches, directives and the discussions

⁴⁷ Faith J. Childress, *Republican Lessons: Education and the Making of Modern Turkey*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Utah, 2001

in the parliament as well as the education congresses held concerning the educational policies and applications were analyzed in Chapter 2.

As underlined several times, history was another important device in the formulation of official ideology and its nationwide adoption. In the building process of a new system, which is in our case a nation-state from an empire, a division was made as the ‘old’ and the ‘new’, and the latter was described as a clear cut break from the former. During this transition process, the old was explained as bad and insufficient for the legitimization of the new order which in this case, the new ‘invented tradition’, i.e. official history of the nation was formulated as Turkish History Thesis and introduced to the intellectuals, historians and teachers – who would also play a crucial role in disseminating it to the society - through the First and Second History Congresses.

In this respect, historiography constituted the second axis of the study and basic dynamics within formulation of it and its role in formation of the nation-state were put forth. In line with this purpose, understanding of history among the ruling elite and how history was utilized as a tool in constructing national identity and a collective memory was displayed in Chapter 3. Furthermore, the traces of the changes or continuities regarding official history and the textbooks written in İnönü Era were sought in the 6th Chapter with reference to Atatürk Era. In this context, history congresses as the primary sources of formation of official history and the textbooks, the main tools of inculcating children of the nation in line with the official thesis were analyzed. The speeches and discussions of the members of the parliament were also referred to this study since they were valuable first hand sources in indicating the official perspective and its varieties as well as the changes in the course of time.

An overall look at the studies discussing the characteristics of official history and the textbooks during Early Republican Era displays their two main features: Basically, they tended to evaluate the official historiography of the Republic and the basic assumptions of Turkish History Thesis as a continuous phenomenon with slight changes almost until 1980s, with the construction of Turkish Islamic Thesis. In this respect, within these studies, İnönü Era was not

given the place it deserved since it witnessed crucial changes in socio-political arena which also paved way to the shift in official perception both in understanding of education and historiography. Nevertheless, this period can also be described as a ‘consolidation era’ since the sharp edges of the regime were shaved; cultural and educational policies were designed and applied under the light of humanist understanding. Undoubtedly it affected the official understanding of history, which makes this study an important explanatory source in displaying the changes.

Another important characteristic of the studies examining the official ideology and history and its reflections to the textbooks of the Republican Era was that, they evaluated the period only through the discourse analysis of the primary documents under the light of famous works of political theorists without regarding its historicity, namely peculiarities of the period, its variations and even contradictions. In other words, the traces of the theoretic framework were sought in the sources and the theories were confirmed once again. They also concentrated on highlights from certain official speeches, directives or the textbook quotations, as if they were presenting the perspective of entire ruling cadre to be comprehended by the nations. Such an approach without assessing the historical and conceptional context of the issues lead to some underestimations such as evaluating the ‘pure Turk’ concept of certain politicians as exclusionist policy of Kemalist nationalism ‘otherizing’ impure Turks. Similarly, the term ‘race’ used in congress presentations and the textbooks may well be regarded as the racist perception of the official history.

Targeting to overcome such underestimations, this study through various primary sources aimed to guide the reader to understand and approach the question of official history within its historical context; considering its theoretical framework but also noticing the diversities within the ruling cadre as well as intellectuals and historians. That is to say, a critical point in installing nationalist history among the society is that although historians played the most significant role in shaping official history; they were not simply a “transmission belt for a dominant ideology” since they also defended

their own special interests⁴⁸. This determination, which is crucial in this study, compelled tracing and presenting where available, the different paths the historians followed within or close to the official circle since it is not possible to talk about a homogenous historian group who played a role in the formulation of official history in Turkey.

The risk of making such generalizations ignoring the historical context of the subject was also mentioned by Stefan Berger et al. in relation with the issue of historiography as “assimilating all historical writing to the same nationalist and racist discursive system”⁴⁹. Conversely, the mentioned scholars underlined one of the main aims of the book as to present the diversities of historiographic nationalism which is constructed in a particular historical context and changes over time. They also declared that the nature of historical writing cannot be fully understood in isolation from the nation-state, but also that it represents only one among the other influences which affect historians. That is to say, history writing could be better understood in multiple social and political contexts each of which affects the others. This, in the case of this study, entails focusing on social, cultural, educational as well as political aspects of the period while analyzing its main topic. Particularly, the intellectual mindset apart from the official view and the perceptions of history from different ideological standpoints would give a wider perspective upon the general map and ideological landscape of the period. In this respect, after giving a brief outlook of academic/professional historical studies; prominent journals of İnönü Era representing conservative thought were analyzed in Chapter 5 to put forth the discrepancies and overlapping points between the official viewpoint and historical understanding of the conservative intellectuals having different ideological backgrounds by also presenting how they fed each other. Since the analysis of general intellectual atmosphere including socialists and liberals would exceed the scope of this dissertation and also the

⁴⁸ Kevin Passmore, Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan, “Historians and the Nation-State Some Conclusions”, *Writing National Histories*, p. 283

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 282

conservatives were the sources which official perspective was mostly fed from; prominent journals of Turanists, Anatolianists and Islamists were taken up among conservative intellectuals.

CHAPTER 2

EDUCATIONAL POLICY OF THE EARLY REPUBLIC

Education, not only for Turkey, stands out as a pillar that rests over the infrastructure of communities. It is education that gives and guards the identity of states, nations or communities. Thus, the emphasis history education had over this trio, trophied education in all other fields.

Official history of a nation-state and its educational policies as stated in the previous chapter, are closely related with its understanding of modernization. Hence, in order to evaluate how education was made instrumental in the construction of national identity in Turkey, it is essential to carefully overview Republican ideology and its basic principles.

The ideological values of the Turkish Republic can be described as Kemalist modernization process and the worldview, determined and held by the ruling cadre under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The targeted modernization of the Republic was based on transforming the empire to a nation-state by way of constructing modern social and political institutions. Therefore, modernization and nation-building in Turkey differed from its Western counterparts with such complementary processes.

Within this framework the first obligation of the nationalists was to build a nation-state and establish the infrastructure of such a model required understanding the essence of Turkish nationalism, its historical and conceptual basis and its variations which became apparent during the late Ottoman and early Republican period.

2.1 Historical and Ideological Background of the Republican Ideology

It is well known by the researchers of this topic that nationalism gradually gained importance amongst Young Turks starting from the last

decades of the 19th century. The main channel acquainting this group with the idea was the Young Ottomans who were in Paris during the years following the Revolution and witnessed its immediate and subsequent aftereffects. Apart from this, one of the most important sources of nationalistic ideas was the developing interest on Turcology studies in the 18th century within Europe as the importance of the history and language of Turkic peoples in pre-Islamic period were emphasized. These studies shed light on the understudied pre-Islamic history of Turks and the role of Turkic tribes within Asian and European history. The students who were sent to different European universities inevitably got affected by the Turcology studies. Although having less scientific value, especially the writings of some important Turcologs; Arthur Lumley Davids, Leon Cahun and Arminius Vambery became popular among certain number of Ottoman intellectuals. They defended that Turanid race was composed of Turks, Finns, Mongols, Hungarians and other peoples living in Central and South Eastern Asia. These people were assumed to have the same racial and linguistic origin and the lands these peoples lived on were called as Turan. They were translated into Turkish; became an inspiration to the works of some Young Ottomans such as Ali Suavi, Şinasi, Ziya Paşa, Namık Kemal and led them to develop Turkish consciousness⁵⁰.

Young Turks were also influenced by biologic-materialist and Social Darwinist theories which were quite popular during this period⁵¹. Napoleonic Wars after the French Revolution and developments following Industrial Revolution, especially quashing 1848 Revolution which was made in the name of individual rights and freedom caused a real frustration towards Enlightenment philosophy which started emerging in the 18th century and gained prominence in the 19th century. One of the responses to this phenomenon was the rise of German romanticism in the 19th century. Charles

⁵⁰ Bernard Lewis, *Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu*, (trans.) Metin Kıratlı, Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1993, p.342-344

⁵¹ For further information about influences of Social Darwinism over Ottoman intellectuals, see Atila Doğan, *Osmanlı Aydınları ve Sosyal Darwinizm*, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2006

Darwin's evolution theory which was introduced by his book called *The Origin of Species*⁵² (*Türlerin Kökeni*) first published in 1859 based on biological evolution and natural selection also gained influence in this period. Inevitably, especially during second half of the 19th century, the transfer of Darwin's theory into social context entailed added dimensions such as siding with the strong to survive that could only operate within a social context and human consciousness⁵³. Darwin's biological approach caused important discussions in social sciences and was adapted as "struggle for living" as a tool for progress and "survive of the strongest" within the communities.

Late Ottoman modernization, especially among Young Turks was based on positivism, but the background was strongly covering social Darwinist theme which was fed from German romanticism. For instance Abdullah Cevdet and Prince Sabahattin were affected by bio-organistic views of Ernst Haeckel and Gustave Le Bon; especially Haeckel's 'superior German race' ideas gained importance among the Young Turks⁵⁴.

Another source stimulating Turkish nationalism was immigrants from Russia, particularly Tatar and Azeri Turks during late 19th century. There were two main reasons for these immigrations. One was the rising of pan-Turkist thoughts among Turks living in Russia as a consequence of economic developments and emergence of Turkish bourgeoisie with national consciousness⁵⁵. This current first effective in places such as Crimea and Caucasia where Turks were in majority was led by Turkish intellectuals such as Akçuraoğlu Yusuf, Gaspıralı İsmail, Ağaoğlu Ahmet and Hüseyinzade Ali who chose to immigrate to Turkey. Another reason was that, Russian pan-Slavist

⁵² Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, New York: The Modern Library, 1876

⁵³ The most popular Social Darwinists were Herbert Spencer, Francis Galton, Ernst Haeckel and William Graham Sumner.

⁵⁴ Şükrü Hanioglu, *Young Turks in Opposition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p.209

⁵⁵ As known, especially Tatars started to make trade relations between Central Asia markets and West which Russia could not enter due to religious barriers. This led to the emergence of a rich bourgeoisie among Tatars, spreading all along trading routes and reaching to China. François Georgeon, *Türk milliyetçiliğinin kökenleri: Yusuf Akçura, 1876-1935*, (trans.) Alev Er, Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1986

ideology and Russification policies which strengthened nationalist views among Turkic communities particularly in Crimea and Caucasia as a reaction⁵⁶. Actually pan-Turkist views of the Turkish intellectuals at first were not so effective among Young Turks, who were more dependent upon Ottomanism. However Balkan defeats and Albanian Revolt indicated to the Young Turks that Ottomanism could not hold the Empire together and as a result, Turkism started to become the emerging ideology for the sake of preserving integrity of the Empire.

Actually patriotism was very strong in military schools and the officers willing to defend and save the empire, and prepared to assume control were educated in these schools. On the other hand, Ottoman patriotism was formulated as *İttihad-ı Anasır* which meant the unity of all communities in the Empire. However due to the new interpretation of Ottomanism⁵⁷ by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) formulated as Turks' domination of the Empire, Ottomanism, which had never popularly taken root, started to lose its remaining popularity among different nationalities, especially non-Muslims.

CUP Turkism as an ideology gained more ground particularly after 1913, and became a significant factor in the formation of social and economic policies. Actually Turkification was one of the policies that CUP employed and it coexisted with other policies ranging from centralization to decentralization, assimilation to dissimilation and integration to homogenization. Erol Ülker⁵⁸, in his article about Turkification which was significant as a project of nation-building in the multiethnic Ottoman Empire, asserts that this policy had two dimensions: The first was nationalization of specific geographical areas where nation-building project would be implemented and this policy was put into practice in Anatolia. The second questioned which of the peoples of the empire

⁵⁶ Mehmet A. Ağaoğulları, "Aşırı Milliyetçi Sağ", *Geçiş Sürecinde Türkiye*, Irvin C. Schick, Ertuğrul A. Tonak (eds.) İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1998, pp.189-212

⁵⁷ The traces of this new perception were observant especially in *Türk Yurdu*, CUP's semi-official media organ, with the writings of Ziya Gökalp, Yusuf Akçura and Tekinalp.

⁵⁸ Erol Ülker, "Contextualising 'Turkification': Nation-Building in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1908–18", *Nations and Nationalism*, 11 (4), 2005, p.615

could be regarded as the core nation. This resulted in the assimilation⁵⁹ of some communities and dissimilation of others.

Between 1913 and 1918, Turkification was installed into different state policies: Economic nationalization was the one which aimed the development and strengthening of Muslim Turkish bourgeoisie against Armenians and Greeks⁶⁰. Regulations for settlements⁶¹ and deportations were also determined within the scope of this nationalist policy⁶². Deportation of non-Muslims – especially of the Greeks and Armenians with the claim that they could not be loyal Ottoman citizens any longer – and resettlement of emigrating Muslims⁶³ aimed to provide demographic superiority of Muslim Turks in Anatolia⁶⁴. Population exchange with Bulgaria after the Second Balkan War with 48.570 Muslims immigrating while 46.746 Bulgarians were deported from Ottoman

⁵⁹ Linguistic policy of the CUP was one of the means to impose cultural assimilation. 1908 Program of the Party declared that the official language of the empire was Turkish and from then on, non-Muslim communities were warned not to use their native language in their official correspondence. For details, see Erol Ülker, “Contextualising ‘Turkification’”, p. 620

⁶⁰ The works of Zafer Toprak, Çağlar Keyder and Fatma Müge Göçek are illustrative of this subject. Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye’de ‘Milli İktisat’ (1908-1918)*, Ankara: Yurt Yayınları 1982; Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class: A Study in Capitalist Development*, London: Verso, 1987; Fatma M. Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996

⁶¹ For further information about settlement policies of the Union and Progress Party, see Fuat Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki’nin Müslümanları İskân Politikası (1913-1918)*. İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2001

⁶² As it is well known, the most comprehensive population replacement was *Tehcir* Law enacted in May, 1915. In fact, the law was not only for all Armenians; but also for some Greeks and other minorities and even Muslims who acted against the state. Thus, for security, the Greek population of some villages in the coast lines were transferred to the inner regions of Anatolia and some were sent Greece.

⁶³ After the Balkan Wars and during the First World War, nearly 435.000 Muslims immigrated to the Empire. After the deportation of non-Muslims, Muslim refugees were settled in the abandoned areas according to that of the total number of the immigrants should be 10 % of the total Turkish inhabitants. Ülker, “Contextualising ‘Turkification’”, p.625-626; Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki’nin Müslümanları*, p.63-65

⁶⁴ At this point, Dündar points out one of the main characters of settlement and deportation policies which is confidentiality. CUP carried out these actions through cipher telegrams; thus Ottomanism and Islamism were conducted in official level, and on the other hand Turkist policies could easily be handled in a more implicit way. Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye’nin Şifresi İttihat ve Terakki’nin Etnisite Mühendisliği (1913-1918)*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008, p.440

territories was carried out with this consideration. A similar agreement was attempted with Greece in May 1914, but as the First World War began, the negotiations were suspended⁶⁵.

Among Ottoman nationalists, there was another group restricting Turkish nationalism to Anatolia. They territorially held apart from pan-Turkists and looked upon as the region where the Independence War would be pursued and gained. During the foundation process of the Republic, intellectual and administrative cadre which paved the way towards the new regime put forth a strict distinction with their understanding of nationalism from that of Panturkism/Turanism. However, both pan-Turkist and official Kemalist nationalism were derived from the same sources of the 19th century, namely the European Turcologists and Turkish immigrants from Russia as well as from the romantic nationalist movements of central and Eastern Europe. Racist/Social Darwinist Western ideologies also found room in Kemalist nationalism both ideally and practically. Therefore there was not a strict distinction between the two versions of nationalism; moreover, affecting each other and intertwining at certain times; they did survive side by side⁶⁶.

2.2 Constructing National Identity During Early Republican Period

One of the basic questions of the Republican ruling cadre was identity problem. The question of “who is a Turk?” could not be completely answered during foundation process of the Republic and debates continued even in the 1930s. Therefore, Turkish identity is formulated as an eclectic combination of French territorial model and German ethno-culturalist nationalism. In this respect, while the official discourse was based on citizenship and territorial belonging, which was stated in the 88th article of the 1924 Constitution, as “People of Turkey is called as Turk in terms of citizenship regardless of their

⁶⁵ Ülker, “Contextualising ‘Turkification’”, p.625

⁶⁶ Günay G. Özdoğan, “*Turan”dan “Bozkurt”a: Tek Parti Döneminde Türkçülük, 1931-1946*, (trans.) İsmail Kaplan, İstanbul: İletişim, 2001

religious and racial differences."⁶⁷; the orators of ruling cadre clearly expressed their ethnic, even sometimes racist understanding of nationalism which was fed from historicist-culturist-ethnicist understanding of central and eastern European romantic nationalist movement. Kemalist perception of nation can be best observed in the book titled *Vatandaş için Medeni Bilgiler* (Civil Knowledge) which was written in 1930 by Afet (İnan)⁶⁸ with the instructions of Atatürk who personally dictated most parts, with the awareness that the society was completely alien to the Republican values. The book was also designed as *Yurt Bilgisi*, a textbook for civics courses offered in secondary schools. In the book, "nation" is described as "the people of Turkey founding Turkish Republic is called Turkish nation"⁶⁹ and the factors which compose Turkish nation include 'unity in race and origin' as well as unity in political existence, language, homeland and also historical and ethical affinity⁷⁰. It should be noted that the definition of Turkish nation and the factors characterizing it might look contradictory at first because of the term *race*. However, this term was not used with the understanding of a specific and narrow definition of a biological race, but rather referred to a broad-set umbrella identity. In other words, this concept was not based on an exclusionist approach, but adhered to inclusivity in the sense of operating as an assimilationist melting pot which is also apparent in the following elaborations of the issue in the text⁷¹.

⁶⁷ Suna Kili, A. Şeref Gözübüyük, *Sened-i İttifak'tan Günümüze Türk Anayasa Metinleri*, (3rd ed.) İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1985, p.147

⁶⁸ Afet İnan, Atatürk's adopted daughter who assumed the last name İnan after her marriage following the last name act in Turkey.

⁶⁹ Afet İnan, *Vatandaş İçin Medeni Bilgiler*, İstanbul: Milliyet Matbaası, 1930, p. 16

⁷⁰ *ibid*, p.23-24

⁷¹The following statements in the mentioned book well illustrate this approach: "Today, in the political and social community of the Turkish nation, there are fellow citizens and compatriots who have been subject to the attempts of propaganda of the idea of Kurdishness, the idea of Circassianness, and even the idea of Lazuri or Bosnian ethnic identity. Yet, these incorrect appellations that are the legacy of the despotic periods of the past have not had any impact on any member of the nation, except for creating anxiety among a few reactionary fools who are used as a pawns by the enemy. This is because, members of these nations as well share the

Actually, it would be wrong to evaluate Kemalist nationalism as fixed and unchanged from the beginning. The understanding of nationalism among ruling cadre changed by time in accordance with the gradual changes of political conditions. For example, throughout the National Struggle, Islam⁷² was used to define the people within Anatolia; an ethnic ideal of nationalism was not pursued and the public was seen as a combination of different elements rather than a monolithic structure⁷³. Nevertheless, this pluralist discourse would not continue after the war and it would change throughout the consolidation of the new regime. Atatürk's speeches within different periods can serve as good examples reflecting the consecutive changes of this understanding. In his speech in 1920, May 1, Atatürk explained the components of the nation as "The people constituting the parliament are not only Turk, Circassian, Kurd or Laz. Yet composed of all Islamic elements (*anasır-ı islamiye*), a sincere composition". But only two years later, in opening speech of the third term of the parliament, he expressed his understanding of nationalism as "racially or religiously or ethnically unified people of Turkey"⁷⁴

Atatürk targeted to raise the Turkish Republic to the "level of contemporary civilizations". The plan was to modernize not only the state, but

same common past, history, morality, and enjoy same laws Turkish community does in general." Ibid, p.23

⁷² In practice, Turkishness was often understood same as being Muslim. Greek Orthodox population living in Central Anatolia whose mother tongue was Turkish was sent to Greece in 1924-25 population exchange and linguistically non-Turkish Muslims were settled in Anatolia. Joining them although very restricted numerically were Christian Gagauzians who were of Turkic origin. Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyete Türk Kimliği", Nuri Bilgin (ed.), *Cumhuriyet Demokrasi ve Kimlik*, İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 1997, pp. 71-83

⁷³ Ergun Özbudun, "Milli Mücadele ve Cumhuriyetin Resmi Belgelerinde Yurttaşlık ve Kimlik Sorunu", *Cumhuriyet Demokrasi ve Kimlik*, Nuri Bilgin (ed.), İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 1997, p.64

⁷⁴ Most of the scholars state that in fact, the main aim of Republican cadre was to establish the state in accordance with an ethnisist understanding. However, the conditions of the war did not let the ruling cadre declare and implement their real agenda. In order to decrease the elements to struggle, the politicians chose to make favourable relations with İslamic conservatives and non-Turkic Muslim groups. For further information see Özbudun, "Milli Mücadele ve Cumhuriyetin", pp. 63-70

the entire society in order to ‘progress’. Modernization through westernization was the core of Kemalism and in this context positivism was the basic characteristic of this modernization project⁷⁵. Accepting superiority of reason and positive science instead of religious-metaphysic thought and emphasis on temporality was a very important part of this movement. Therefore the reforms aimed to limit the sphere of religion into the domains of the individuals.

As well known, positivist approach and the emphasis on reason was a product of Enlightenment. In this respect, Enlightenment inspired a homogenous world in which each society would unite under the universal ideas of freedom and equality while cherishing different ideas, traditions and forms of life. Enlightened Republican cadre in accord with this perspective aimed to reconstruct the society in a scientific and objectivist manner and transform diverse values to constitute united citizenship. In that spirit, the target of the ruling elite was to create a new nation-state and to reconstruct the society with changes based on secularism and clear breakaways from old religious-traditional culture. This mindset provided the legitimacy and foundation blocks of several endeavors such as the abolition of traditional temporal and religious authorities of Ottoman context - the Sultanate and Caliphate - and performing reforms such as the alphabet, language, head gear and the adoption of new civil code.

2.3 1930s: Crystallization of the Regime

Early Republican period was not a time span in which a clear, coherent revolutionary ideology was formulated from the beginning and imposed onto the new generation through various means. It was a gradual process of flexible and pragmatic resolutions which changed through different circumstances in the 1920s and 1930s⁷⁶.

⁷⁵ Taner Timur, *Türk Devrimi ve Sonrası*, Ankara: İmge, 1993

⁷⁶ For a comprehensive analysis of the characteristics of the Single Party Rule and its transformation in 1930s, see Mete Tunçay, *TC’nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması*, İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1992

1930s were critical years for the integration of the state and Republican People's Party (RPP-*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*). Relatively liberal character of the regime started to disappear also during those years while the state became more authoritarian, disallowing any kind of opposing views. Internal and foreign developments were influential in the changings of the RPP policies. The consequences of First World War introduced the rising of authoritarian regimes in the international arena during this inter-war period. With the exception of some states such as the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland and United Kingdom, democracy suffered setbacks throughout Europe albeit their existing assemblies and parliaments. The great depression of 1929 also stimulated some governments to carry on militant propaganda against liberalism and a liberal economy. The lack of confidence in liberalism, individualism and democracy resulted in increasing of anti-liberal, etatist and even fascist implementations.

During this period, in order to maintain coherence and unity within the society, RPP during this period ardently supported democracy however, ironically rejected alternative thoughts or systems stressing differences to its own. The ruling cadre frequently emphasized that the party was efficiently representing the benefits of the whole society, hence there was no need for displays of other views excluding RPP. Atatürk's opinion was well reflected in *Vatandaş için Medeni Bilgiler* as;

The objective of criticizing and opposing should not be to establish a new party. In our case, the idea of establishing an opposition party has been misinterpreted and misapplied as to mean resorting to the fixed idea of adopting antagonistic methods against the policies of current party or parties. Those who behave this way are the nonconformists who struggle to prevent and constrain progress. They are like the people who resort to reviling as the only means to gain appreciation for themselves.⁷⁷

The social and political characteristics of the period were also apparent in discourses and practices of ruling cadre. For instance, Recep Peker, the

⁷⁷ İnan, *Vatandaş İçin*, p.236

General Secretary of the RPP strongly attacked socialism and communism, as well as to capitalist economic system and liberal democratic regimes in the History of the Turkish Revolution lectures (*İnkılap Tarihi Ders Notları*), he gave at the İstanbul University⁷⁸. In these lectures composed with a coauthor and published as a university textbook he asserted that multi party system would weaken the state structure, cause general instability and carry the country to depression⁷⁹. In this context, such dominant discourse of the ruling elite can be regarded as the defence of monist and authoritarian nationalism against communism and liberalism.

Attributions were made to fascistic regimes in Italia and Germany as well by the ruling cadre and some intellectuals. For instance, during Prime Minister İsmet İnönü's visit to Rome in spring of 1932, Yunus Nadi – the owner and leading-writer of *Cumhuriyet*- wrote the following lines in the May 22nd issue: “We were braced up as we were attained by the appreciation and fondness of fascism that has rendered Italy and on May 22nd 1932, made the Italian society the most developed nation of the century.” Similarly, at the opening speech of the Central Office of the Turkish Hearths (*Türk Ocakları*) in 1930, President of the association Hamdullah Suphi pointed out the similarities of the Turkish regime and fascism as, “That movement is nationalistic and we are nationalistic. We confidently assert that class struggles would bring ultimate disaster to our country, and they have the same opinion there too.”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ In fact, these lectures were made compulsory at İstanbul University in 1934 following the 1933 transmission from Darülfünun with the event recongized as the University Reform. Moreso, an institute was established to deal with different aspects of the history of the Turkish Revolution stretching from composition of textbooks and teaching practices to appointment of instructors. However, this institute did not become active, but on the contrary melted into the institute established within the frame of Ankara University in 1942. Meeting the same obligation, Turkish Revolutionary History Institute (TİTE-*Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü*) which still exists today also assumed the responsibility of collecting archival documents and artifacts concerning the Turkish Revolution. Seçil Akgün, Nesim Şeker, “Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü ve Cumhuriyet Tarihi Öğretimi İçindeki Yeri”, *Bilanço 1923-1998 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin 75. Yılına Toplu Bakış Uluslararası Kongresi*, vol. 1, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1999, pp. 225-234

⁷⁹ Recep Peker, “Mahmut Esat Bozkurt Ders Notları”, *İlk İnkılap Tarihi Ders Notları* (ed.) Oktay Aslanapa, İstanbul: Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı, 1997

⁸⁰ Actually it would be wrong to evaluate these intellectuals who were also among the administrators as direct defenders of fascism. Their pro-fascistic inclination was rather the

Another intellectual and politician, Mahmut Esat Bozkurt in his book titled *Atatürk İhtilali*, compared Kemalism with national socialism and expressed that “A German historian of our times states that both national socialism and fascism have no more than slight differences from the Mustafa Kemal regime. This is absolutely true. This is an absolutely true opinion.”⁸¹

In this historical context, especially with the effects of unpredicted increasing power of Free Party (FP-*Serbest Fırka*) and then Menemen Incident, the RPP cadre admitted that the new regime was not yet fully established. Consequently, some attempts were made to define and systematize Kemalism as the Republican ideology. Especially FP’s getting broad public support was identified with the fact that principles of the Revolution had not yet been clearly understood by the society. Even some of the intellectuals such as Ahmet Ağaoğlu and Şevket Süreyya Aydemir thought that most of the literates could not comprehend Kemalist consciousness which was the mentality of the new Republic. In its 1927 congress, RPP had already assumed the control over all of the associations in the country. Thus, after 1931, it closed most of them including Turkish Hearths, masonic lodges and Teachers’ Unions (*Muallim Birlikleri*) and established new institutions instead to spread the Republican ideology and principles of Kemalist regime through the society. It was greatly due to this stance that People’s Houses (*Halkevleri*) were established in 1932 as an organization to work under the control of RPP in branch offices erected all over the country to explain through various cultural activities the pertinence of Kemalist ideology and reforms and by this means, provide their adoption⁸². Recep Peker summarized in a speech in 1932, the objective for establishing of

outcome of the Kemalist regime’s populist understanding which similar to fascistic regimes emphasized a ‘classless homogenized society’ and division of labour among occupational groups.

⁸¹ Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, *Atatürk İhtilali*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1995, p.88

⁸² The People’s Houses were designed as the melting pot of the intellectuals and common people; the city-dwellers and the peasants, where all disconnections between the social strata would gradually be eliminated. In this regard, particular importance was given to their rural branches. For further knowledge, see Asım Karaömerlioğlu, “Tek Parti Döneminde Halkevleri ve Halkçılık”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 88, 2001, pp. 163-187

the People's Houses as "organizing the nation to become a conscious crowd affectionate to but independent from each other"⁸³. In the speech İsmet İnönü delivered at the first anniversary of the establishment of the People's Houses, he quoted, "The People's Houses are important centers for conveying and ingratiating to the broad strata of the people the whole essence of our political party, which is in charge with its ideas and establishments."⁸⁴

As other instruments of instilling Republican ideology, Turkish Historical Association (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*) and Turkish Linguistic Association (*Türk Dil Kurumu*) were founded under state control and evolved into two important institutions which used history and linguistics as significant means in creating a national identity and an official history during the 1930s. These developments led to the formulations of two new projects intended for nation-building. These projects which will be discussed in Chapter 3 were the Turkish History Thesis (*Türk Tarih Tezi*) as the official history of the Republic and Sun Language Theory (*Güneş Dil Teorisi*) promoting Turkish language.

2.4 Education for the Modernization of the New Republic

Scholars investigating the characteristics of education in the nation-states, claimed that it was not only an important instrument of social control, but especially after First World War it became one of the most significant means for applying social construction or reconstruction relative to modernization and national movements⁸⁵. In this respect, inspired by such, early Republican elite approached education as the device to install and sustain the secular nation-state understanding of the new regime. Characteristics of political transformation were soon reflected to the educational system and the Republican cadre aimed to transfer basics of the Revolution through education.

⁸³ *Cumhuriyetin 10'uncu Yıl Dönümü Ankara Halkevi*, Ankara Halkevi, 1933, p. 10

⁸⁴ Çetin Yetkin, *Türkiye'de Tek Parti Yönetimi 1930-1945*, İstanbul: Altın Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1983, p. 88

⁸⁵ Isaac L. Kandel's study was one of the pioneers in this field. For further, see Isaac L. Kandel, *Comparative Education*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1933

The changes in the curricula and especially the content of the textbooks can be regarded as the most explicit incidents of this alteration⁸⁶. Educational project of the new regime was not limited to formal schools; but was utilized as a widespread socialization instrument⁸⁷. However, since mass education is not in the scope of this study, in this chapter, the focus will be on formal education system.

Education was one of the influential channels for the establishment of Kemalist ideology in Turkey. The new mentality, viewpoint and spirit were transferred to new generations by schools providing education on positivist philosophy⁸⁸. As the primary aim of the Kemalist regime was to transform Turkey into a modern nation state and education was the fundamental means of inculcation; from the beginning of the Republican Era, ruling cadre applied a conscious policy of reorganizing the entire education system, expanding it in a systematic way and harnessing it to national goals⁸⁹.

Most of the Turkish and foreign scholars dealing with Turkish educational system were in consensus on education being the key to modernization. They advocated that the ideal and modernization perception of Kemalists focused on abandoning religious dogmas and facing Western mentality instead. Modern Turkish schools of the time helped to socialize the youth with such understanding and served as important nation-building agents spreading Republican ideology. Andreas Kazamias, in his work on the role of

⁸⁶ Yet it was not just Republican elite who utilized education as ideological tools. In terms of indoctrination, Mehmet Ö. Alkan clearly determines the structural continuity since Ottoman Era. For a comprehensive analysis of the educational policies in transition from the Empire to the nation-state, especially as tools of construction of an identity to the 'Ottoman citizen', see Mehmet Ö. Alkan, "İmparatorluk'tan Cumhuriyet'e Modernleşme ve Ulaşçuluk Sürecinde Eğitim", *Osmanlı Geçmişi ve Bugünün Türkiye'si*, (ed.) Kemal H. Karpat, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2005, pp. 73-242

⁸⁷ Kemal İnal, *Eğitim ve İktidar: Türkiye'de Ders Kitaplarında Demokratik ve Milliyetçi Değerler*, Ankara: Ütopya Yayınevi, 2004

⁸⁸ Donald E. Webster, *The Turkey of Atatürk: Social Process in the Turkish Reformation*, New York: AMS Press, 1973

⁸⁹ Joseph S. Szyliowicz, *Education and Modernization in the Middle East*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973

education in modernizing Turkish society, used the word “modernization” synonymously with Westernization and defined it as the process of transforming Ottoman Islamic institutions, concepts and way of life into a secular constitutional republic. He recognized that:

In the emerging ideology of Atatürkism, education was inextricably bound up with political, economic, and cultural independence and with breaking the shackles of traditional beliefs and outlooks; it was the means of nourishing national aspirations, creating the consensus necessary to sustain a free national state, training new Turkish leaders, and paving the way towards a dynamic and modern society.⁹⁰

Modernization perception of the ruling cadre was based upon three trivets; National Treaty (*Misak-ı Milli*) -accepted in January 1920 in the last Ottoman Parliament-, Economical Treaty (*Misak-ı İktisadi*) -accepted in March 1923 in İzmir Economical Congress- and Educational Treaty (*Misak-ı Maarif*). As known, Unification of Education Law (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Yasası*) enacted in May 3, 1924 played a significant role in transition into a modern state and specifically nationalization of education. Yet, before application of this law, Educational Treaty (*Misak-ı Maarif*) was accepted in March 1923 during the ministry of İsmail Safa Özler underlining the necessity of the national, secular and scientific character of education. In this respect, Atatürk made numerous visits to various parts of the country to explain the public the importance of national education which was “deprived of old period’s superstitions and thoughts and also the effects of foreign ideas coming from east and west; a culture coherent with our national character and history”⁹¹.

The official directives given by the Ministry of Education to the administrators and teachers are important documents to give us an idea about the nature of the Turkish educational system and its practices. For instance, a 1923 document indicated: “Schools ought to inculcate students to become

⁹⁰ Andreas Kazamias, *Education and the Quest for Modernity in Turkey*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966, p.115

⁹¹ *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, vol. II*, Ankara: TTK, 1959, pp.16-17

subjects faithful to the principles of the Republic.” A 1924 document stated: “In their hearts and souls, our children ought to have the ideal of sacrificing themselves for the Republic, if necessary.” and another in 1931 was, “Turkish schools ought to teach psychology and ideology of the Republican regime to every Turkish youngster and prepare them to be most efficient citizens for the Turkish nation and the Republic.”⁹²

The question of national education was systematically discussed for the first time in the Teachers Congress held in Ankara in 1926. At this Congress, Professor Ali Haydar defined national education as follows:

Turkish youth trained under national education should not become individuals who think only of their own interests, but learn to consider personal interests within the scope of social interests. They should nourish emotion and devotion to the society they are a member of. They should be sincere citizens who wherever they are, always think, feel and works for the progress of Turkey and the Turkish nation.

As the abovementioned statements point out, modernization and raising nationalist consciousness were the two main pillars of the mission designated for education. By means of the nationwide education campaign, the cadres of the Republic had, on the one hand, endeavored to modernize the country in the Western sense and, on the other hand, to implant a nationalistic consciousness, i.e. “the consciousness of Turkishness” among the new generation. In this regard, the major objective of the new state could be summarized as “implementing new courses and the curricula, teaching methods and techniques in line with contemporary reformist education movements that arose in the West so as to make Turkey ‘nationalized’ as well as ‘civilized’”⁹³.

⁹² Yahya Akyüz, *Türkiye’de Öğretmenlerin Toplumsal Değişmedeki Etkileri (1848-1940)*, Ankara: Doğan Basımevi, 1978, p. 275

⁹³ Osman Kafadar, *Türk Eğitim Düşüncesinde Batılılaşma*, Ankara: Vadi Yayınları, 1997, p. 155

Republic's intent of modernization, which can be described as becoming westernized, has inherently driven the ruling cadres to focus on the West's approach towards and practices on education. Therefore, the attempts to adopt western reformist views on education in the West by means of translations and copyrighted works became common practice during this period. Many educators and students benefited from the opinions and suggestions of foreign experts⁹⁴ invited to Turkey concerning the education system of the country, while many others were sent to different countries⁹⁵ in order to experience the educational practices there and convey their observations upon their return⁹⁶.

However, the most important vein that fed the Republican educational cadres and even shaped their backgrounds was the views of the intellectuals and educators of the Second Constitutional Era. Especially after the Balkan Wars, the emphasis on creating a 'nationalist generation' was pronounced more. The attempts to create the national consciousness, in fact Turkishness among children through festivities and feasts in schools, as well as through children's journals and books had also become prominent in this period. The opinions and suggestions of noticeable writers of the era on education, such as

⁹⁴ In this respect, Republican educators adopted from Euro-American pedagogic spheres; 'learning by doing' and looking upon schools as 'miniature society', rather than 'a stage of preparation for life'. Barak Salmoni, "Turkish Knowledge for a Modern Life: Innovative Pedagogy and Nationalist Substance in Primary Schooling, 1927-50", *Turkish Studies*, 4 (3), 2003, p. 103-104.

These ideas were popularized by John Dewey, American philosopher and educational reformer. He was one of the educationists who were invited to Turkey. For information about the reports of foreign experts indicating their views upon Turkish educational system and their effects on the educational practices, see İlhan Başgöz, *Türkiye'nin Eğitim Çıkmazı ve Atatürk*, İstanbul: Pan Yayıncılık, 2005

⁹⁵ In this context, during 1930s many students from different branches were sent abroad to be trained as secondary and high school teachers. Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi Kurulu Kararı, issue 95, 1929; issue 104, 1930; issue 171, 1931. For further information, see Kansu Şarman, *Türk Promethe'ler*, İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2006

⁹⁶ Multiple articles which appeared almost in every issue of periodicals Ministry of Education published between March 1925 and October 1940 such as *Maarif Vekaleti Mecmuası* and *Terbiye* as well as the issues of *İlköğretim*, published during the Ministry of Hasan Ali Yücel, concerning education movements in foreign countries are clear displays of these inspirations.

Selim Sırrı, Mehmed Emin, Edhem Nejad and Yusuf Akçura, influenced the cadres of the Republic considerably.

Ziya Gökalp amongst this group was the ideologist who was extremely influential in the formation of nationalism and populism perceptions of the new state, as well as education. Accordingly, Gökalp set the agenda of education as primarily, raising nationalist individuals and laid out his understanding of nationalistic morality in its various aspects in a series of articles he published in the *Muallim* Journal. It can confidently be asserted that his views, which can briefly be summarized as the need to bring up the Turkish child according to the Turkish culture, attributing the weaknesses of the current education system to interference of international civilizations rather than adherence to national culture, hence stressing the need to predicate the revolution in morality not on civilization but on culture⁹⁷; was widely influential in the construction of Kemalist educational policies. It was therefore that Prime Minister İnönü's below statements at the Teacher's Union in 1925 on how they perceive national education were almost identical with Gökalp's opinions:

We want national education. What does this mean? We can better understand it when we define the opposite better: When we are asked about the opposite of national education we say that this is either religious education or international education. The education extended will not be religious or international but it will be national... Our education will be ours and it will be for us... There are Turkish people who give to this land its character. But this nation does not yet display the uniterianism we want... In this unified nation, all foreign cultures should be completely melted... If we are going to live we will live as a unified nation. This is the goal of the system which we call national education⁹⁸

⁹⁷ For a detailed information about Gökalp's views on education, see Ziya Gökalp, *Milli Terbiye ve Maarif Meselesi*, Diyarbakır: Diyarbakır Tanıtma ve Turizm Derneği, 1964

⁹⁸ Hasan Ali Yücel, *Türkiye'de Ortaöğretim*, Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1994, p. 25

2.5 1930s – Unification of the Party Principles With the School Curricula

The developments of the Republican era demonstrate the fact that education can not be disconnected from socio-economic and political settings. 1930's were critical years in unification of the state and RPP. In 1930's, the schools became devices for spreading of the RPP ideology; the objectives of the schools outlined in the curriculum guides existed as identical with the principles which appeared in the party program.

The Fourth General Congress of the RPP which convened in Ankara in 1935 constitutes a good example for this. This congress adopted a decision which would give a direction to the training of the new generations, stating; “The most important issue at every level of schooling is to educate Turkish citizens to become firm republican, nationalist, populist, etatist, secularist and revolutionary individuals.”⁹⁹ Although some changes such as introducing ‘modern pedagogical principles into schools’ were outlined in the curriculum guides by the Ministry of Education, these changes were in reality the inclusion of political ideologies of the RPP to school curricula¹⁰⁰.

In this manner, the Primary Schools Curriculum of 1936 is a striking indicative example demonstrating the values new generations are to be brought up with. The chapter on objectives of the 1936 curriculum in accordance with the RPP ideology and its view on education were altered to verify that children will be brought up according to the principles of the RPP¹⁰¹. As a matter of fact, it was included in the new program that these principles had become the fundamentals of the republican regime and in the chapter on “The Objectives

⁹⁹ *CHP Programı, Partinin Dördüncü Büyük Kurultayı Onaylamıştır, Mayıs 1935*, Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1935, p 16

¹⁰⁰ The Kemalist government wanted to develop a curriculum which was consistent with secular and nationalistic policies of the Republic. The new curriculum would instruct the individuals in the requisite attitudes, beliefs, values and knowledge that would support the new regime and also involve them in the process of rapid transformation. Ahmet Eskicumalı, in his research, investigated the role of education in the establishment of Kemalist ideology. He focused on the curricula between 1923 and 1946 and analyzed how they were reconstructed in line with Kemalist ideology. For further information see Ahmet Eskicumalı, *Ideology and Education: Reconstructing the Turkish Curriculum for Social and Cultural Change, 1923-1946*, Unpublished PhD. Thesis, The University of Wisconsin – Madison, 1994

¹⁰¹ İlhan Başgöz, *Türkiye'nin Eğitim Çıkması*, p.124

of the Primary School” of the 1936 Primary School Curriculum, it was underlined with the following statement that the new generations were also to be trained accordingly:

Primary school should inculcate a national education to the children. The new values that will be made the common property of the Turkish nation through primary school education are the fundamental principles of the regime on culture, which are set out in the chapter of Republican People’s Party’s program on national education... Attention will be given at all levels of education to raising strong Republican, nationalistic, populist, etatist, secularist and revolutionary citizens.¹⁰²

Even the articles of school digests were exclusively stipulated to reflect these principles by wordings as “the student’s love, respect and commitment to Atatürk, Turkishness, the Turkish nation, the Republican regime and the Turkish Revolution”, “the student’s cordial commitment to the principles of the RPP and as specified in the chapter on national education absorbing its characteristic qualifications”. More articles contained remarks such as “attenuate the national ideal”, “generate appreciation and respect of other regimes” and comments assumed as “products of a backward and reactionary mentality or enable the preaching of such mentality” were banned from school magazines¹⁰³.

Textbooks were instrumental in conveying Kemalism to new generations during the mentioned years when Kemalist ideology trophied all others in education and training. Among them, the four-volume history (*Tarih*) textbook prepared by the TTTC and the aforementioned Civics textbook (*Medeni Bilgiler*) were of particular importance in fulfilling this obligation. Especially the 4th volume *Tarih* in which mythicized Mustafa Kemal is presented as the indisputably one and only leader, Kemalism the best ideology in the world, bears clear contradictions to those prior to 1930s. In this respect,

¹⁰² 1936 *İlkokul Programı*, İstanbul: Devlet Basımevi, 1936

¹⁰³ Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi Kurulu Kararı, issue 43, 1938

it is important to note that just like events unexplainable by reasoning are referred to as miracles; the Turkish War of Liberation is referred to as Turkish miracle. Furthermore, in various parts of the book, Atatürk is presented as “the wonder of mankind”, “the greatest man Turkish nation ever raised”, a person who “established a new state without a single token of cash, alone and relying only on his own genius”¹⁰⁴ whereas his opponents are presented as “uninformed, weak and half-witted”¹⁰⁵. Similarly “the state system called Kemalism, based on the fundamental principles of the Turkish revolutionary movement,” is reflected as “not only the most appropriate complying with the history social edifice, and ideal requirements of the Turkish nation, but also the most sound and perfect system among all others in the world”¹⁰⁶.

Vowels of unconditional commitment to Atatürk, and mythicizing him to the point of a prophet, were not abstracts encountered only in textbooks, but also frequently pronounced by statesmen in their discourses moreover, even by those in the world of arts and literature¹⁰⁷. It is particularly interesting to note that Nurullah Ataç, a prominent critique and a noted author who was İsmet İnönü’s Cultural Advisor, referred to Atatürk as “Tanrıtürk” (God-turk) Hasan Ünder attributed this to most of the ruling and intellectual cadres subjection to intense religious education during their youth so that their mentalities were shaped with religious motives. He further pointed out that some common and prominent people such as Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Hasan Ali Yücel and Hamdullah Suphi were affiliated with religious cults and as generations grew away from this affiliation, commitment to Atatürk and his principles which replaced the feeling.

¹⁰⁴ *Tarih IV*, İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931, p.131-133

¹⁰⁵ *ibid*, p.50

¹⁰⁶ *ibid*, p.188

¹⁰⁷ Hasan Ünder, “Eğitimde Atatürk/çölük”, *Birikim*, 89, 1996, p. 66-67. On the other hand, although the characterization of Atatürk of these people as such reflects their religious identity and as an attribution of divinity to him, this is actually a product of the esteemed praise they have vis-à-vis Atatürk

2.6 Republican Perception of *Nation*

In order to understand on what values and ideals the Republican cadres aimed to raise the new generation, first, their understanding of community and of youngsters, as a significant component of the society will be put forth. A point that should be mentioned at this juncture is that they perceived the children, i.e. the “soldiers of the Republic”, not only as belongings of parents, but also, maybe even more so, of the nation¹⁰⁸. An emphasis frequently repeated in the speeches of the politicians as well as in the textbooks was that, individuals should love and cherish their country and nation, work for and support them with unconditional priority¹⁰⁹. Even attending personal hygiene and observing sanitation was evaluated as patrimonial care and devotion¹¹⁰. Comprehension of RPP’s such understandings makes it possible to claim what lied beneath this perception was solidity of assuming citizenship as individualistic restrictions or sacrifices of personal interests on behalf of country’s welfare.

As is known, populism which was one of the main components of Turkish modernization was largely formulated on national solidarity. Such a regard of populism was based on Ziya Gökalp’s definition, “there are no social classes, but professions acting in solidarity!”, and an egalitarian perception of

¹⁰⁸ "23 Nisan Çocuk Bayramında Ankaradaki Merasimde Maarif Vekili Doktor Reşit Galip Beyin Nutku," cited in Özge Ertem, *The Republic's Children and Their Burdens in 1930s and 1940s Turkey: The Idealized Middle-Class Children as the Future of the Nation and the Image of "Poor" Children in Children's Periodicals*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2005, p. 44

¹⁰⁹ Expression of the National Anthem everyday by primary grade school children since 1933 with the decision of Committee of Instruction and Pedagogy serves a good example regarding this issue. Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi Kurulu Kararı, issue 101, 1933. As a matter of fact, together with flag ceremonies and commemorations of important historic dates or heroes, this was one of the crucial means of nation-building process in establishing the new regime and adopting it among the new generation. For an extensive information about nationalization of the citizenship through using national symbols in the school curricula, see Jessica S. Tiregol, *The Role of Primary Education in Nation-State Building: The Case of the Early Turkish Republic (1923-1938)*, Unpublished PhD. Thesis, Princeton University, 1998

¹¹⁰ Hasan Ali Yücel, in one of his parliamentary speeches as the Minister of Education, drew attention to this point while he talked about the ethical maxims that should be followed by Turkish students. Devre 6 cilt 18 içtima 2, 27.5.1941, Maarif Vekaleti Bütçesi, p. 219-220

society¹¹¹. This view was brought forth especially in *Ülkü*, the longest lasting publication of the Public's Houses and the strongest representative of Kemalism, which through its articles, played a significant part in shaping RPP's perception of society and conveying it to young generations through education. The most prominent figures of *Ülkü*, Recep Peker, Nusret Kemal, Behçet Kemal and Kazım Nami Duru, defined populism as a homogeneous, classless entity. The authors strongly opposed individualism in their articles; aimed to create a homogeneous society they referred to as *kitle* - meaning massive, based on common faith and spirit of solidarity. In regard to furnishing the people with principles of revolution and elevating social-confidence, they attributed utmost importance to public education¹¹².

Solidarism was one of the main veins feeding the Republican cadres' understanding of nationalism. Indeed, it is possible to say that nationalism and populism were complementary principles based on solidarism: While nationalism referred to a single Turkish identity in the process of transition from a multi-national empire into nation-state, populism defined this identity as a homogeneous, classless society. The most important factor underlying such a perception particularly with the change in source of legitimacy of sovereignty from divinity to public, was the ultimate need of the Republic for homogeneous, coherent mass and indivisible nation, in which social classes and other differences were reduced to the minimum¹¹³.

Kemalist approach to society as a massive, homogeneous entity affected RPP view towards minorities as well. Deputies affirming all citizens regardless of their religion were inseparable constituents of Turkishness frequently voiced their disturbance, even anger concerning the term "minority" at the assembly.

¹¹¹ Ziya Gökalp was substantially influenced from Emile Durkheim's sociological approach and in this issue, he directly took the concept of solidarism from Durkheim. Taha Parla, *Ziya Gökalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye'de Korporatizm*, İstanbul: İletişim, 1993

¹¹² For further, see Ertan Aydın, *The Peculiarities of Turkish Revolutionary Ideology in the 1930s: The Ülkü Version of Kemalism, 1933-1936*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Bilkent University, 2003

¹¹³ Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "Tek Parti Döneminde Halkçılık", p. 175-176

There was general concern that such terms might disturb “national impartiality, nationalistic thoughts and feelings” infect unity and integrity within the body of the state. With the awareness of the significant role of common language in building national identity they targeted Turkification of the minorities, i.e. dissolving them in Turkishness, through education in Turkish language¹¹⁴. The attitude towards minority schools was not only limited with the discourse of the political power, but certain decisions about these schools were taken as well. For instance, with a decision taken in 1941, the senior year students at Greek high schools, who previously could graduate with cumulative grade average, were required to have an average grade of at least five from Turkish language and culture classes –history, geography and civics- so as to prevent the students “who could get their diploma as they receive the average grade, although they have very low grades in courses taught in Turkish”¹¹⁵.

This was a display of a common opinion of the majority of deputies at the assembly that, all Turkish citizens regardless of their religion, had to mingle within Turkish culture. In fact, they were in a consensus that Turkish consciousness could only be raised at Turkish schools, by Turkish teachers and especially through history, geography and civics courses¹¹⁶. Some even went further and proposed the closing of all foreign schools. General opinion of the political power vis-à-vis these schools was that, although Turkish language, history, geography and civics deemed as leading courses for installing national consciousness were taught by Turkish teachers, foreign schools still hindered its adoption, hence Turkish children ought not attend

¹¹⁴ 26.5.1937 Devre 5 Cilt 18 İçtima 2, Maarif Vekaleti Bütçesi, p. 249. As a matter of fact, although the dominant discourse was that all citizens are Turks regardless of their religious and ethnic differences, it is difficult to say that most of the deputies could internalize this idea. For example, describing marriage with foreigners as very dangerous, Antalya Deputy Rasih Kaplan could propose the “in order to strengthen national morality, the Ministry of Education should include articles in secondary and high school textbooks that emphasize Turkish youth should marry with Turks only” at the assembly, and did not receive any opposition or reaction on this matter. Devre 6 cilt 2 içtima F, 25.5.1939, Maarif Vekaleti Bütçesi, p. 258

¹¹⁵ Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi Kurulu Kararı, issue 18, 1941

¹¹⁶ Devre 5 cilt 25 içtima 3, 26.5.1938, Maarif Vekaleti Bütçesi p. 219; Devre 6 cilt 2 içtima F, 25.5.1939, Maarif Vekaleti Bütçesi, p. 252

these schools. The decision taken by IPC in 1931 presents a concrete example of this stance. The referred decision prohibited “Turkish children currently continuing their primary education at foreign schools” from attending these schools due to the conviction that “primary education at institutions other than national primary schools, which strongly inspire national feelings and national culture, were deemed harmful for the country”¹¹⁷. Deputy of Manisa and one of the prominent educators of the Republic, Kazım Nami Duru, even took a step further and argued at the assembly that “Turkish children of minorities should not go to foreign schools at the secondary level as well, for these schools are harmful to the national morality as they impose foreign culture”¹¹⁸. Obsession for elevating Turkish consciousness and reinforce the impetus of protecting nation-state among the minorities are quite visible in these examples, although foreign schools were included in the body of the Ministry of Education and placed under its control.

2.7 “New Citizen” of the New Regime – *National and Moral Education Understanding of the Republic*

The understanding that children of the Republic, as the adults of tomorrow, were expected to inherit fundamental values of the state and convey them in the future is worth special attention. This perception regarded raising mentally and physically well-fit youngsters equipped with high, sturdy moral values utterly important. In this context it is possible to explain the educational understanding of RPP as “national education” and “moral education”. In this regard, the emphasis on “raising morally justified, spiritually and physically sound citizens loyal to their country, nation and the principles of the Republic” is frequently repeated in both education curricula and regulations, and orations of the politicians¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁷ Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi Kurulu Kararı, issue 11, 1931

¹¹⁸ 26.5.1937 Devre 5 Cilt 18 İçtima 2, Maarif Vekaleti Bütçesi, p. 252

¹¹⁹ Even in 1930’s, that among the requirements for the students to be sent abroad for training as secondary and high school teachers were more particularly “strong national character and moral”, “perfectly healthy, physically and psychologically strong”, again reflects the

Personal qualifications students were expected to possess were designated during the Second Education Council meeting in 1943. They included qualifications such as veraciousness, obedience to state and school regulations, respecting teachers; preserving personal dignity, health and rights; obeying the etiquette and rules of courtesy; safeguarding state and school property, etc¹²⁰. Deputy of Kastamonu Tezer Taşkıran was ordered to write Civics I and II textbooks for inculcating these values to the students, which were made textbooks to fourth and fifth grades at primary schools and second and third grades at secondary schools¹²¹. Furthermore, Taşkıran wrote another booklet titled *The Principles of Turkish Ethics* (Türk Ahlâkının İlkeleri) in which she listed several ethical features such as commanding one's tongue, eyes, ears and deeds; salvage from emotions such as jealousy, arrogance, anger and ostentation; being courageous, honest, helpful, knowledgeable, prudent, complacent, respectful, industrious and obedient before the order among the constituents of national ethics¹²².

2.7.1 Through a Healthy and Powerful Generation

Atatürk in the speeches he delivered at the Teacher's Union Congress, in 1924, had already requested from the teachers to bring up “mentally, scientifically and physically strong guards”, underlining that physical integrity was essential for being a good soldier and a productive citizen¹²³. Accordingly,

importance the ruling cadre attributes to physical and moral manners. Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi Kurulu Kararı, issue 112, 1932. For more information about the discourse of ruling cadre, party programmes, regulations on education and curricula, see İsmail Kaplan, *Türkiye'de Milli Eğitim İdeolojisi*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999

¹²⁰ *İkinci Maarif Şurası 15-21 Şubat 1943*, İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1991, p. 107-112

¹²¹ Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi Kurulu Kararı, issue 347 and 348, 1943

¹²² For a comprehensive information about the desired citizen profile in Turkey and the civics courses given in line with it, see Füsün Üstel, *"Makbul Vatandaş"ın Peşinde*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2004

¹²³ A striking example of how the republican staff paid special attention to the “strong body” image is that; in 1933, during the contest made for the medal in commemoration of Republic's 10th Anniversary, a medal was refused with the reason that “not strength but weakness was

physical fitness was promoted by giving prominence to physical education courses in the curricula as well as through the other activities carried out at schools. Each province was designated as a physical training region and with the Law on Physical Training adopted in 1938, governors were assigned as the ‘chiefs in charge of physical training in the region’. The same law required the youngsters to participate in physical training and sports activities at sports clubs and groups to be established¹²⁴. Moreover, sports centers or halls were established at schools for various physical activities during spare times. These installations provided students the chance to train themselves according to their choice in athletics, handball, soccer, wrestling, boxing tracking, tennis scouting and at appropriate places and weather, learn swimming, mountain climbing, cycling, motorcycling, sailing etc.¹²⁵

Literature concerning physical activities gives important acknowledgements explaining the importance given to sports and physical training by the Republican cadre was a product of careful considerations in the process of creating the stereotype “new man” for the modern nation-state. Hence, in the Turkey of 1930s and 40s, sports activities were regarded as indispensable components of forming “new type of citizens” and were made use of improving the health, moral regulations, military alertness of individuals and establishing social control to homogenize and mobilize the population through manipulation of their bodies¹²⁶.

Indeed raising “physically and mentally healthy generations” was not a policy started with the Republic. During the 2nd Constitutional Period, Selim Sırrı (Tarcan), an educator and athlete of the time in his book titled *School*

observed on the arm holding the flag, and this side of the printed medal did not truly express Republic’s 10th Anniversary”. Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi Kurulu Kararı, issue 203, 1933

¹²⁴ T. C. Maarif Vekilliği, *Maarifle İlgili Kanunlar*, İstanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1940

¹²⁵ Cumhuriyet Arşivi, T.C. Maarif Vekilliği Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi, 1944, 030.01.90.559.5

¹²⁶ Yet, this was not just peculiar to Turkey, but gained popularity around various European countries as a matter of a 'modern nation-state'. For further information, see Yiğit Akın, *'Not Just a Game': Sports and Physical Education in Early Republican Turkey (1923-51)*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2003, p. 30

Games for Training Gymnastics (Terbiyevi Jimnastikler Mekteb Oyunları), emphasized the need to physically and mentally prepare youngsters to work and fight for the country at a very young age by means of *Terbiye-i Bedeniyye* (Physical Training) courses, aiming to render them physically strong, sturdy and disciplined as well. During the same era, youth organizations such as *Türk Gücü Cemiyeti* (The Turkish Force Club), *Osmanlı Güç Dernekleri* (The Ottoman Force Associations) and *Osmanlı Genç Dernekleri* (The Ottoman Youth Associations) were established for “physical training and public hygiene”¹²⁷. The main goal of these organizations was envisaged as “bringing up physically fit and stout generations to defend our sacred homeland with their able bodies and assure the existence of our esteemed, noble nation”¹²⁸.

2.7.2 Military Training as a Part of Citizenship Education

From the Balkan Wars to 1926, physical education courses were actually planned to give military knowledge and were turned into compulsory military science courses after this date. Moreover, they were not limited to giving military science alone but included drillings at military camps which students could participate on a written request made by the Ministry of Education from the Presidency of General Staff¹²⁹.

Scouting activities, which were carried out along with military science and physical education classes were also given great importance during this period. The activities of the scouts were modeled on military practices. Scout attires were similar to army uniforms; their marches were the same as in the army; and they were envisaged to make a salute like the Turkish soldiers¹³⁰.

In history and civics textbooks of the same years, military service was identified as the most sacred of citizens’ duties. Likewise, military barracks

¹²⁷ For information about this topic, see Orhan Aybers, *Eugenics in Turkey During the 1930's*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Ankara, METU, 2003

¹²⁸ Cüneyd Okay, *Meşrutiyet Çocukları*, İstanbul: Bordo Yayınları, 2000, p. 77-79

¹²⁹ Talim ve Terbiye Kurlulu Başkanlığı, issue 73, 1932

¹³⁰ Talim ve Terbiye Kurlulu Başkanlığı, issue 204, 1933

were also seen as places of civic education. In the “Military Duty” chapter of the book *Civic Knowledge for the Citizen*, the army is identified as a school and military barracks are specified as educational institutions where the youth is trained and educated on culture¹³¹. In this respect, one can say that a great deal of significance was attached to military service and it was intertwined with civics education. In the chapter titled “The Turkish Army and National Defense” of the book *History 4*, military service is labeled intrinsically as a national superiority, and it was assumed that each patriotic citizen would possess a soldier spirit identified with love for the country based on moral values such as intelligence, determination and heroism. Furthermore, it is expressed that the Turks through centuries of experiences have developed nationalist qualifications as “the Turkish nation has the most mature spirit of military service among all nations”¹³². In this respect, it would not be wrong to say that the military-nation myth has a significant place in the Turkish citizen’s cultural codes as the maxim “Every Turkish citizen is born as a soldier and dies as a soldier” was repeated frequently in these books¹³³.

One of the underlying factors, which feeds back into this, is the conviction of the political power that the ‘warrior spirit’, which is the most important characteristic of soldiering, is a significant component of and a source of pride for the Turkish culture. Hence, the new generation should be brought up with this spirit and “the [school] curricula shall be reinforced so as to bring the children’s capability of contestation and struggling to the utmost.”¹³⁴ Indeed, military service and physical education classes were intermingled and acted together as an important tool for the political power to convey its understanding of morality and ethics to the new generation. The following words of the Minister of Education Hasan Ali Yücel during İnönü period reflect this approach very clearly:

¹³¹ İnan *Vatandaş İçin Medeni Bilgiler*, p.122-123.

¹³² *Tarih 4*, p. 344.

¹³³ Üstel, “*Makbul Vatandaş'ın Peşinde*.”

¹³⁴ Devre 6, cilt 18 içtima 2, 27.5.1941, Maarif Vekaleti Bütçesi, p. 211

Courses of military service are at the same time physical training classes and we believe that there is a strong interaction between ethical training and national morality... I frankly state that the immoralities of our generation and the previous ones heard stories of are extremely reduced in our day, and this can be explained with the prevalence of physical training among the youth in the country.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Devre 6, cilt 18 içtima 2, 27.5.1941, Maarif Vekaleti Bütçesi, p. 219

CHAPTER 3

OFFICIAL HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC

In order to understand on which dynamics the official historiography was built, which was formulated by the young Republic in 1930s, the tradition and heritage it was inherited by should be revealed. Therefore, in the first place, historical and ideal sources that fed into the 1930s conception of history will be explained.

The core of the official history thesis, which was put forward in order to create an identity for the newly established state and the nation, had a state-centred and a particularist view of history¹³⁶. It is possible to say that this view of history, which could be formulated as “we resemble only ourselves”, was indeed a reflection of the populist understanding of the early Republic. Behind this idea, there was the assumption that, in contrary to Western societies, the Turkish society was a classless, unexploited and coherent which had a particular structure, incomparable with the West.

French and Hungarian Turcology¹³⁷ of late 19th and early 20th centuries, in which scholars such as De Guignes, Davids, Vambery and Cahun studied the history and language of Turks based on Chinese and Islamic sources, was one of the main veins feeding the historiography of the early Republican period¹³⁸.

¹³⁶ Suavi Aydın, “Aydınlanma ve Tarihselcilik Problemleri Arasında Türk Tarihyazıcılığı: Feodalite Örneği”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 91, 2002, p.56

¹³⁷ Since the issue of Turkology is discussed in more detail in the previous chapter, it is touched upon very briefly here.

¹³⁸ During this period, Ottoman Empire was affected by these ideas especially through Turcology researches and this helped the development of national consciousness among Turks. Ziya Gökalp was one of the Ottoman intellectuals who were influenced by the works of Turcologs such as Leon Cahun or A. Vambery. For further information see Taner Timur, “Batı İdeolojisi, Irkçılık ve Ulusal Kimlik Sorunumuz”, *Yapıt*, 5 (June-July), 1984

Yet, at that time, little was known on the history of Turks and of Anatolia before the Ottoman Empire. The pioneering works on the history of Anatolian Seljuks and pre-Ottoman Anatolian history by Gordlevsky, Paul Wittek and Çağatay Uluçay came in late 1930s¹³⁹. As a result, the dominant conception of the Western historiography had been that the Turks were extremely backwards, completely nomadic and lacked all sorts of elements to initiate a civilization before they entered Islamic circle in the 11th century. Since the cultural heritage of the Great Seljuk and the Anatolian Seljuk Empires on the history of the Ottomans was unknown, the Ottoman Empire was looked upon as an imitation of the Byzantium rather than being a continuation of the formers¹⁴⁰.

On the other hand, even at the beginning of the 20th century, it was not possible to speak of a strong scientific/academic history tradition for the Ottomans. In this regard, it is worth mentioning Yusuf Akçura¹⁴¹, who was among the most prominent ideologists of Turkish nationalism and important contributors to the construction of the Republic's ideology and historiography.

Akçura's approach to history was reflected clearly in his dissertation *An Essay on the Institutions of the Ottoman Sultanate* (Osmanlı Sultanlığının Kurumları Üzerine Bir Deneme) which he submitted in 1903 in Paris where he did his graduate study. In this work, Akçura tried to point out that Ottoman institutions were the products of inspirations of ancient Turkic and Islamic traditions. Although Turks had been affected by various civilizations they came into contact with, they preserved their ethnic characteristics; they even exhibited a firm commitment to their own conventions, customs and traditions after they adopted Islam. Thereby, Akçura "dealt with Islamic laws and Turkish conventions at the same plane, and left aside the absolute quality attributed to Sharia; hence, he ascribed a relative historical value to the latter.

¹³⁹ Halil Berktaş, *Cumhuriyet İdeolojisi ve Fuat Köprülü*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1983, p.16-17

¹⁴⁰ *ibid*, p. 20

¹⁴¹ Previously known as Akçuraoğlu Yusuf Bey, he adopted the last name Akçura, following the last name act in Turkey.

Islam, in the history of the Turks, was just a tradition that was not different than the others”¹⁴². Apparently, this approach was quite in contrast with both the Ottoman historiography which idealized the religion and the Western view of history which completely ignored the pre-Ottoman Turkish and Islamic traditions. In this respect, such a view of history raised quite appropriate arguments that could serve as a source for the Republic’s official understanding of history, which will be further elaborated below.

Akçura’s above summarized credentials joining with his participation among the founders of and the vice presidency at the TTTC, demonstrates that it was not a coincidence that he was also among the authors of the new textbooks, in which the official thesis of history of the Republic was formulated. His understanding of history and the arguments he raised in his works were made a major building block of the official ideology of the Republic.

It is worth mentioning that the prominent ideologues and intellectuals of the Republican period such as Yusuf Akçura, Fuat Köprülü¹⁴³ and Ziya Gökalp, wrote articles in journals such as *Türk Yurdu* and *Halka Doğru*, presenting the core of their theses to the readers. As a matter of fact, the objective of articles of such intellectuals published in *Türk Yurdu* explained as “revealing and spreading the antiquities, history, popular and elite literature, ethnography and ethnology, social conditions and established civilization of Turkish civilizations by studying its old and new geography”¹⁴⁴ was functional in assisting the readers to understanding the intellectual background of the official historiography of the Republic.

¹⁴² François Georgeon, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri: Yusuf Akçura, 1876-1935*, (trans.) Alev Er, Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1986, pp.29-30

¹⁴³ Previously known as Köprülüzade Fuat Bey, he adopted the last name Köprülü, following the last name act in Turkey.

¹⁴⁴ Nejat Kaymaz, “Türkçü Tarih Görüşü”, *Felsefe Kurumu Seminerleri: Türkiye’de Tarih Eğitimi*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1977, p.440

In fact some Turkish and foreign scholars and researchers of the area made similar comments supporting this verdict. For example Uriel Heyd¹⁴⁵ asserting that the Turkishness of the Sumerians and Hittites, even the ethnic relationship between them and the Turks was unproven, stressed that the precursors of the Turkish history thesis also found in some of Ziya Gökalp's works, who, in many places, considered Sumerians and Hittites as Turks. Actually, major assumptions which were to constitute Kemalist view of history were initially proposed earlier by Enver Celaleddin Paşa in 1917, but did not arouse much interest in the public opinion. Enver Celaleddin Paşa was the son of Mustafa Celaleddin Paşa, who wrote *Les Turcs anciens et modernes*. His argument was; (a) The Turks were the ancestors of the white Arian race, (b) There were common words between Turkish, classical Greek and Latin (c) Turkish was an older language than the Sanskrit, which was deemed as the ancestor of Indo-European languages. Raising a migration theory, he also tried to prove that the Central Asian Turks established the foundations of Chinese, Greek, Egyptian, Indian etc. civilizations¹⁴⁶.

Another legacy from Yusuf Akçura to the Republican historiography was the tradition of social history, at least to some extent. In his first researches, Akçura aimed to discover the effect of economic factors and intrinsic data behind the views and ideals. He expressed in his 1905 year course notes that he was investigating the scientific laws of history determining the common actions of humankind. He also strictly criticized the “history of great men” perception of the historical studies of *Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni*¹⁴⁷ and

¹⁴⁵ Uriel Heyd, *Türk Ulusçuluğunun Temelleri*, (trans.) Kadir Günay, Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1979

¹⁴⁶ “Türkçülüğün Tarihinden: Enver Celaleddin Paşa'nın Edebiyat-ı Umumiye Mecmuası Yazıları”, *Tarih ve Toplum*, 1, January 1984, pp. 16-17

¹⁴⁷ *Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni*, founded in November 1909, has a significance in the history of Turkish historiography. Mükrimin Halil Yinanç paid attention to the institution since scientifically important historical studies were initiated along with translations from Western sources under the umbrella of this institution. Mükrimin Halil Yinanç, “Tanzimattan Meşrutiyete Kadar Bizde Tarihçilik”, *Tanzimat I Tanzimat'ın Yüzüncü Yıldönümü Münasebetiyle*, İstanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1940, pp. 573-595. Another significance of the institution was that, it aimed to research and publicize national history to save the unity of the elements (*ittihad-ı anasır*). In this respect, the historical studies were not only limited to

the ignoring of social and economic aspects of the history degrading it into a bundle of useless factual knowledge¹⁴⁸. The effect of this perception became more appreciated after 1940s, with the studies of Fuat Köprülü and Ömer Lütfi Barkan under the influence of Annales School.

3.1 Formulation of Official Historiography During Early Republican Era

Official historiography was one of the critical outcomes of Republican modernization process. Its discourses were based upon radical distinction between past and present and presented as a break from the Ottoman past – *Dark Age*¹⁴⁹. In this context, Kemalist modernization was explained as a process focusing on demolishing the old system and to construct a new order with a radical rupture; hence it was implemented in a revolutionary understanding. Accordingly, ‘new Turkey had no relation with Ottoman past’ and ‘the Ottoman government passed away into history and a new Turkey was born’ were the characteristics of Kemalist discourse. The album which Ministry of Education prepared on the occasion of the Republic’s Tenth Anniversary entitled *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’ndan Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’ne. Nasıldı? Nasıl Oldu?*¹⁵⁰ (From the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey. How Was It? How Has It Become?) is a good illustrator of the new regime’s perception of the past. In the album, the contrary elements of the past and present are illustrated side by side on each of pages; with the heading on all the left pages "How it was" symbolized by spider webs, and on the right pages "How it has become" symbolized by the torch of knowledge. On the first two pages of the album, sultanate and Republican regimes were compared. On the

Ottoman period, but included Anatolian Seljuk and Beyliks Period as well. Zeki Arıkan, “Cumhuriyet’in İlk Yıllarında Selçuklu, Beylikler Ve Osmanlı Mirasının “Keşfi””, *ODTÜ Geliştirme Dergisi*, 39, 2012, pp.27-59

¹⁴⁸ Georgeon, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri*, pp.47-48

¹⁴⁹ Nesim Şeker, “Vision of Modernity in the Early Turkish Republic”, *Historia Actual Online*, 14, 2007, pp.49-56

¹⁵⁰ Vedat Nedim; Burhan Asaf, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’ndan Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’ne... Nasıldı? Nasıl Oldu? 10. yıl*, Ankara: Maarif Vekaleti, 1933

first page, there were some general statements about Ottoman sultans such as ‘sultans who were corrupted inside the palaces were the prodigals of cruelty and debauchery’ There was also the photos of two of the last few sultans of the Ottoman Empire with the following descriptions; “The Yıldız Owl [Yıldız Palace] who choked the awakened youth and confined them to prisons: Abdülhamit” and “The Sevres broker who sold his country to save his throne: Vahidettin”¹⁵¹. Conversely, on the next page was Atatürk, glorified as the leading hero of the nation and described under his photos as; “Ghazi and his friends always knew how to hold their heads high and look to the future during the Independence War”¹⁵².

As stated previously, the 1930s were the consolidation years of the regime through determining and defining Republican ideology with the effect of internal and international socio-economic and political developments. One dimension of spreading republican ideology among masses was to formulate a new history for the new Republic. Atatürk was aware of the fact that one of the basic components of nation-states was common history. Thus, he put high emphasis on researches on Turkish history. Consequently, Turkish Historical Committee (*Türk Tarih Encümeni*) was founded under the roof of *Darülfünun* in 1927 with the directives of Minister of Education, Mustafa Necati. The primary aim of the committee was to collect and classify the documents related with national history, translate the foreign sources regarding Turkish history and also elevate the attention of secondary and high school teachers to national history. In this respect, a considerable amount of collections were gathered and published regarding Seljuks, Beyliks and Ottoman periods as *Düsturname-i Enveri* by Mükrimin Halil Yinanç, *Düvel-i İslamiye* by Halil Edhem and *Kitabeler* by İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı¹⁵³.

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*, p.2

¹⁵² *ibid.*, p.3

¹⁵³ Arıkan, “Cumhuriyet’in İlk Yıllarında”, p. 47

Afterwards, Turkish Historical Society¹⁵⁴ (*Türk Tarihini Tetkik Cemiyeti*) was established in 1931 to do scientific researches on Turkish history. Its basic aims concerning this issue were to provide history textbooks in line with Turkish History Thesis and then to organize a congress to fortify and legitimize the thesis for scholars and teachers. Accordingly, history textbooks were written for secondary and high schools in 1932 and afterwards two national congresses were held in 1932 and 1937 which were very significant in demonstrating how Turkish History Thesis was grounded and defended by some scholars and also displaying the debates among participants.

3.2 Turkish History Thesis

Historical understanding of the revolutionist cadre was a response to Islamic-Ottoman history in a sense, so it was understandable to break the ties with the Ottoman past both socio-politically and historiographically. The new nation needed a new outlook upon history and it was indispensable to reject the “unsuccessful Ottoman past”. Disconnecting the Turks from the Ottoman past historiographically, Turkish History Thesis aimed to bring forth connections with pre-Islamic era and especially ancient Anatolian and Near Eastern civilizations. Whilst Atatürk directed Afet İnan to research historical origins of Turks, he underlined that Turks could not have risen from a tribe into an empire in Anatolia, as it was claimed by Europeans. He reminded that the mission of Turkish researchers should be to investigate cultural wealth of Turks. He also wanted them to bring out the autochthonous peoples of Turkey.

¹⁵⁴ Taking the internal and external conditions of the day into consideration, Atatürk’s preference to have such an institution established as a Society, rather than an official institution of the state, seems important for enabling historical research to be carried out independently from the political power as much as possible. Indeed, it is possible to say that different sorts of historiographies apart from the official historiography could get a foothold, and theses that can be deemed “antithetical” could be written and discussed during the mentioned period. İlber Ortaylı, “Resmi Tarihçilik Sorunu Üzerine”, *Tarih ve Demokrasi*, 1992, p.37; Enver Ziya Karal, “Tanzimat’tan Bugüne Kadar Tarihçiliğimiz”, *Felsefe Kurumu Seminerleri, III. Türkiye’de Tarih Eğitimi*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1977, p.462.

As the Hittites were known as the primary civilization in Anatolia, he directed scholars to research their relations with Turks¹⁵⁵.

Territorially, the focus of historical research was on Anatolia. Nonetheless, it was already known that there had been many immigrations to Anatolia within different time periods, thus it was essential to complete the immigration chain and connect it with the Turks. This guided historiography based upon Central Asia where history of Turks as the founders of all civilizations had begun. In other words, official historiography combined Central Asia as historical roots and Anatolia as geographical/territorial roots of Turkey as well as of the world. Atatürk stated that;

Turks cannot be the true owners of Turkey if they immigrated here recently. Brachycephalic Turkish race is the first nation that established a state in Anatolia. The cultural fatherland of this race was Central Asia at ancient times where the climate was suitable. Through the years, the climate changed... The peoples were forced to immigrate. From Central Asia, they spread to the east and south, north and south of the Caspian Sea. They settled in distant places and founded their cultures there. In some areas, they became autochthonous and at some other, they were mixed with other autochthonous races.¹⁵⁶

Another reason of attempting to prove that Turks were the autochthonous peoples of Anatolia was the reaction to the territorial claims of imperial powers of the area. After the First World War; some European states such as Greece, France and Italy demanded certain areas of Anatolia claiming to possess historical rights for occupation. Turkish Independence War was a reaction to invasions of the lands legitimized as Turks' in the Armistice of Mudros, determined according to Wilsons' 14 points. Historical studies started

¹⁵⁵ In an earlier conversation with Yunus Nadi (April 7, 1924), Atatürk emphasized the historical importance of Ankara (Republic of Ankara) as being one of the ruling centers of Anatolia during the Anatolian Seljuk Period which he learned from history textbooks. This is a significant demonstration of the shifting of Republican focus towards pre-Ottoman period. *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri III*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1989, p. 98

¹⁵⁶ "Türk Tarih Kurumu Asbaşkanı Bayan Prof. Afet ile Mülakat", *Belleten*, 2 (5-6), 1938, p.245-246

by Atatürk were to eliminate the negative propaganda on Turkish history¹⁵⁷. Hence, the Thesis was used as a tool to legitimize Turkish rule through ethnical relations with the ancient people in Anatolia and a historical continuity throughout the time with the understanding of “Turkish history is a continuous fact the source of which is buried into the darkness of the past and which constantly flows for a long long time”¹⁵⁸.

As can be seen from the explanations above, the official historiography developed in accordance with Atatürk’s maxim of “reaching the level of contemporary civilizations”, with the intention of opening a space for itself within the mainstream of human history, moreso, even going as far as being the initiator of that history. Therefore, the main argument on particularism of constructing itself by creating an “other” to sort out “internal and external enemies” was out of the question for the official historiography of the Republic at least until 1940s¹⁵⁹. On the contrary, the historians in this period, while not xenophobic, pursued a 'humanistic'¹⁶⁰ and 'universalistic' perspective¹⁶¹, at least towards international arena. Hence, in this regard, it is possible to say that the official thesis of history was not discriminating and otherizing, but rather integrating, unifying and especially assimilating the differences within this whole with its discourse of “generating and spreading civilization”.

One of the pioneers of official historiography can be regarded as Pontus Question (*Pontus Mes'elesi*) which was published by *Matbuat Müdüriye-i*

¹⁵⁷ Akurgal, Ekrem (1956), “Tarih İلمي ve Atatürk”, *Bellekten*, 20 (80), pp. 571-584; Karal, “Tanzimat’tan Bugüne Kadar Tarihçiliğimiz”, pp. 265-268

¹⁵⁸ “Türk Tarih Kurumu Başkanı Prof. Şemseddin Günaltay'ın Açış Nutku”, *Bellekten*, 8 (29), 1944, p.6

¹⁵⁹ Suavi Aydın, “Aydınlanma ve Tarihselcilik Problemleri”, p. 56

¹⁶⁰ Hence, it is possible to say that, contrary to Copeaux’s argument that “humanism was secretly an opposition to the Kemalist historiography”, the official worldview of the İnönü period, humanism, had indeed been a conception that laid the ground of the mentioned era. *Tarih Ders Kitaplarında Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk-İslam Sentezine (1931-1993)*, (trans. A. Berktaş), İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998, p.54

¹⁶¹ Halil Berktaş, “Dört Tarihçinin Sosyal Portresi”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 54-55, 1991, p.28

Umumiye in 1922. Tunçay¹⁶² exemplifies this book as the precursor of Turkish History Thesis which was formulated 10 years later. Actually the book, confuting the thesis that Greeks and Armenians were the autochthonous people of Anatolia, was written to “legitimize the Turk thesis during Lozan negotiations”¹⁶³. However, many claims of Turkish History Thesis can be seen in the book. In the introduction was the claim “First of all, the world public opinion should know that Anatolia is Turkish in its entirety. It has been the own country, own homeland of the Turk for thousands of years... Turkish race inhabited Anatolia since the ancient and dark ages. Historically first inhabitants of Anatolia were the Turanians.”¹⁶⁴ Then the book attempted to prove with historical sources that the peoples living in Middle East such as the Frigs, Lydians, Sumerians and Hittites were in fact Mongol, Turk or Turani.

To sum up, the Turkish History Thesis was in fact a reaction against the mentioned European perceptions of the Turks as an inferior race and Eurocentrism over all other civilizations. It first attacked the idea that Turks were incapable of creating a civilization by asserting that, on the contrary, the very first civilization was the achievement of Turkic people in Central Asia who were of the "white race", not the “yellow race”. It primarily argued that all civilizations of the world derived from this proto-civilization on outward migrations from this area. Secondly, the thesis aimed to demonstrate that Turkish history was not limited to an Ottoman-Islamic past; it stressed pre-Ottoman/Islamic identity and emphasized the existence of the Turks since the ancient times. Thirdly, the Thesis argued for Turkish continuity in Anatolia since the Bronze Age and perceived this geography as the homeland of the Turks¹⁶⁵.

¹⁶² Mete Tunçay, *TC'nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması*, İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1992, p.300

¹⁶³ *Pontus Meselesi*, (ed.) Yılmaz Kurt, Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1995, p. ix

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p.3

¹⁶⁵ The main assumptions of the Thesis are driven from the book *Outline of Turkish History* (1930), as stated above. Similar summary was done by Şefika Akile Zorlu Durukan, *The Ideological Pillars of Turkish Education: Emergent Kemalism and the Zenith of Single-Party*

3.3 New History Textbooks

History textbooks gained importance since the modernization period of the late Ottoman Empire. The focus was rather on the content of the textbooks, i. e. ‘what to teach’ than ‘how to teach’ it. In this respect, the content of these courses was shaped in line with the conditions and the values/ideals of each era. Accordingly, the subjects to be highlighted or omitted/banned were decided in the related commissions¹⁶⁶. The new state was also aware of the importance of history as a discipline for the massive application of principles of the revolution thus, from the early Republican period until today, primary and secondary grade textbooks, including history books have always been under the assessment and direction of the state. Swartz¹⁶⁷ asserts that the content of the secondary grade Turkish history textbooks not only represents how the state portrayed national values at the time, but they are also powerful cultural and political artifacts illustrating changing interpretations of what it is to be a Turk.

Beginning from 1924, the issue of adjusting history education to comply the state with the aims of the Republic and making it more efficient, has been discussed within the framework of national education studies¹⁶⁸. During the first years of the Republic, history textbooks used during the late

Rule, Unpublished PhD. Thesis, The University of Wisconsin – Madison, 2006 and Büşra Ersanlı, “‘Turkish History Thesis’ and its Aftermath. A Story of Modus and Operandi”, *Asien Afrika Lateinamerika*, 29, 2001, pp.7-29

¹⁶⁶ For instance, *Tarih-i Umumi* by Mizancı Mehmed Murad used as history textbooks in high schools was banned during the reign of Abdülhamid II for including French Revolution. Mehmet Ö. Alkan, “İmparatorluk’tan Cumhuriyet’e Modernleşme ve Ulaşçuluk Sürecinde Eğitim”, *Osmanlı Geçmişi ve Bugünün Türkiye’si*, (ed.) Kemal H. Karpat, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2005, pp.143-144

¹⁶⁷ Avonna D. Swartz, *Textbooks and National Ideology: A Content Analysis of the Secondary Turkish History Textbooks Used in the Republic of Turkey Since 1929*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, 1997

¹⁶⁸ Muhittin Birgen was one of the first researchers indicating the necessity of a change in understanding of history and its education. Coming from Azerbaijan where he was strongly affected by Marxism, he emphasized the significance of saving Turkish historiography from ‘the jaws of Ottoman history’ and teaching national history in schools. For a detailed information on Muhittin Birgen, see Zeki Arıkan, *Tarihimiz ve Cumhuriyet Muhittin Birgen (1885-1951)*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1997

Ottoman period were taught with some minor changes. Although these books, which were mainly based on French textbooks were moderated to a certain extent by the Turkish historians, they conflicted with the History Thesis of the 1930s. In other words, when examined, these books highlighted Turkic nomadic life patterns, irrespective of glorifying the Turks.¹⁶⁹ Frequent researches were observed reflecting such situations as in the book *History of Turkey (Türkiye Tarihi)* written by Ahmed Hamid and Mustafa Muhsin, and in *General History (Umumi Tarih)* written by Ali Reşad which were taught in secondary schools¹⁷⁰.

From 1928 on, Atatürk was more attentive to Turkish history and history teaching especially at secondary schools. After Afet İnan¹⁷¹ complained to him about French geography textbooks which contained that Turks belonged to yellow race, defined as a secondary type of human beings, he directed her to do some research on the topics and rewrite Turkish history¹⁷². As quoted below, he has expressed the necessity that history should be researched and rewritten with an objective point of view, rather than views of foreign authors, who for various reasons, were no friends of Turks:

The view which introduced Turks as an underdeveloped nation to the world was also adopted by us. During the Ottoman period, Turks also accepted the perspective that the Empire and the nation had emerged from a nomadic tribe of four hundred tents. First of all, we should teach our people

¹⁶⁹ For detailed knowledge about the mentioned textbooks, see Nevzat Köken, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Tarih Anlayışları ve Tarih Eğitimi (1923-1960)*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Isparta 2002

¹⁷⁰ These textbooks were mainly influenced by French positivist historian Charles Seignobos who was in line with the general Republican approach separating ‘temporal’ from ‘ethearal’. Zafer Toprak, “Darwinizmden Ateizme Türkiye’de Tarih Eğitiminin Evrimi”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, December 2011, 216, p. 5

¹⁷¹ Afet İnan completed her dissertation entitled “Anthropological Characteristics of the Turkish People and the History of Turkey” (*Türkiye Halkının Antropolojik Karakterleri ve Türkiye Tarihi*) under the advisory of anthropologist Eugene Pittard in Switzerland. She even carried out research on “the specification of the cranium of the Turkish race” in 1930s with Atatürk’s directive. As a result of these studies, many corpses were exhumed in different parts of Turkey for cranial measurements.

¹⁷² Afet İnan *Vatandaş İçin Medeni Bilgiler*, İstanbul: Milliyet Matbaası, 1930, p.244

their own history; that they are a noble nation and are the children of a nation which is the mother of all civilizations...¹⁷³

Fuat Köprülü¹⁷⁴, during the First Turkish History Congress, stressed the necessity of writing a national history by gathering every item of the past and expressed that ‘re-creation of Turkish national history’ demonstrated the spiritual liberty of the nation¹⁷⁵. Similarly, Akçura stated the main problem which Turkish Historical Society confronted was to elevate Turkish nation to the level it deserved among the world nations by displaying the pertinent role Turks have played in history of humanity the enemies tried to conceal until then¹⁷⁶. Accordingly, a quest to discover the place of Turks in world history and their contributions to civilizations became the main issue.

As a result of the studies made by the Turkish History Committee (*Türk Tarih Heyeti*) performed under the directives of Atatürk during the 6th Assembly of the Turkish Hearths in 1930, a four volume history book titled *Outline of Turkish History (Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları)* was written for schools. Afet İnan, Yusuf Akçura, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, Reşit Galip, Hasan Cemil Çambel, Sadri Maksudi, Reşit Tankut, Şevket Aziz Kansu and Fuat Köprülü were some of the contributors of this book and Kemalist historiography. Focusing basically on the extension of the Turkish race through prehistoric and

¹⁷³ Ahmet H. Başar, *Atatürk’le Üç Ay ve 1930’dan Sonra Türkiye*, İstanbul: Tan Kitabevi, 1945, p.122

¹⁷⁴ Köprülü’s position at the forefront of the system (he was the chairman of the commission which prepared the *Belleten* of the Turkish History Council, the *Ülkü* magazine of the Halkevleri; and he was within the group which drew out the four volumes of the History textbook for high schools) despite his distant stance from the official thesis of history, even his contradictory historical analyses was another example on its own. Halil Berktaş, *Cumhuriyet İdeolojisi ve Fuat Köprülü*, p. 63.

¹⁷⁵ Köprülü’zade Fuat Bey, Untitled Presentation in the First History Congress, *Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi, Konferanslar Müzakere Zabıtları* İstanbul: Maarif Vekaleti, 1932, p.47

¹⁷⁶ Akçuraoğlu Yusuf Bey “Tarih Yazmak ve Tarih Okutmak Usullerine Dair”, *Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi, Konferanslar Müzakere Zabıtları*, İstanbul: Maarif Vekaleti, 1932, p. 597

historic periods, this book was the first attempt to convey official history, that is to say the *Turkish History Thesis* to schools¹⁷⁷ .

Atatürk was closely interested in the writings of history textbooks for the new generation as stated above. He also targeted translations of important history sources into Turkish as he paid close attention to studying Turkish history in relation with the world history. In line with this objective, he assigned Ministry of Education to translate the book *The Outline of History* written by H. G. Wells in 1920¹⁷⁸. This book was significant since it reflected a Darwinist perspective which also affected the history textbooks of 1930s, namely *Outline of Turkish History (Türk Tarihinin Anahatları)* and *History (Tarih)*. This was also coherent with the secularist understanding of the Republic explaining human history in an evolutionist approach with the keyword “sequence of life” (*hayat zinciri*)¹⁷⁹. In 1928, the book was translated and published as *Cihan Tarihinin Ana Hatları* which underlied the book *Outline of Turkish History*, the first attempt to writing a history textbook carrying the fundamental features of the Thesis. The aim of the book was to discontinue the underestimation of Turks, observed in multiple western sources used as history textbooks in late Ottoman and early Republican schools¹⁸⁰. The introduction indicated that the principal aim of the book was to correct the degrading attributions made to Turks and similar harmful wrongs which confined the Turkish people to live with this consciousness. Additionally, it

¹⁷⁷ Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih Türkiye’de Resmi Tarih Tezinin Oluşumu (1929-1937)*, İstanbul: Afa Yayınları, 1996

¹⁷⁸ Herbert G. Wells, *The Outline Of History*, New York: Garden City Publishing Co. Inc., 1920

¹⁷⁹ Toprak, “Darwinizmden Ateizme”, pp. 7-9

¹⁸⁰ Utkan Kocatürk, in his interview with Afet İnan, asked her how she approached the issue of Turks being called as second (yellow) race. Dr. İnan told him that she had read in foreign secondary level history and geography textbooks that Turks were barbarians and of subordinate race when she was a student in Switzerland. Then she immediately showed one of them to Atatürk and after reading, he proclaimed that “No, it’s not like that! We really need to make serious researches about Turkish, this assertion cannot be as such! Not convenient with the reality!”. Utkan Kocatürk, “Prof. Dr. Afet İnan’la Bir Konuşma”, *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, 3 (1), 1985, pp.711-739

was indicated that rewriting the history of the Turkish nation whose personality and unity was awakened with all recent experiences would provide the upbringing of confident Turks, proud to be a big and powerful nation of deep racial roots¹⁸¹.

Outline of Turkish History is a significant illustrator to show the secular understanding in creation of the book. In the first volume of the book, genesis of the universe and formation of life patterns in the world is explained completely in Darwinist view¹⁸² as a reflection of Atatürk's positivist-scientific approach. The composition process of the book is also an important indicative of the state-education, and especially history education relations and interpenetrations. The copies of the book were handed out to the authorities and experts in order to obtain their decisions and views. However, the book was not approved by Atatürk and some of the historians. Amending these copies, Atatürk personally tried to minimize the words which did not comply with his opinions. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı¹⁸³ also expressed that the book was insufficient as a textbook for, albeit rejections to the argument, the book was written in haste without ample research. Moreover, some authors of the book had written on issues which were not in compliance with their field of expertise. Furthermore, some important and reliable sources about the topics were not consulted during the preparation. There were many mistakes and insufficiencies too. Considering these, the following year, the book was reduced to 90 pages and made a supplementary course book. Nevertheless it served as the basis of the famous four volume history textbooks which were to be published in 1932.

The four volume book simply titled History (*Tarih*) published in 1931 for high schools was written by the members of Turkish Historical Society with inspirations from *Outline of Turkish History*. The simplified editions of these

¹⁸¹ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* (1930), İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, pp.1-3

¹⁸² Karal, "Tanzimat'tan Bugüne Kadar Tarihçiliğimiz", p. 258

¹⁸³ İ. Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Türk Tarihi Yazılırken Atatürk'ün Alaka ve Görüşlerine Dair Hatıralar", *Belleten*, 3 (10), 1939, pp. 349-353

books were published in 1933 in three volumes as *History for Secondary Schools (Ortamektep İçin Tarih)*¹⁸⁴. This set of books, based on the Turkish History Thesis became important in terms of reflecting the understanding of history of the state; i.e. official history.

The aim of the book appeared as “foreword” in each of the volumes and read as below:

Until recent years Turkish History has been one of the least studied subjects in our country.

Under the influence of the animosity generated through more than 1000 years of confrontation between Islam and Christianity, conservative historians strove hard to present the history of the Turks, who were the upholders of Islam for centuries, as merely consisting of adventures full of blood and blaze. On the other hand, Turkish and Muslim historians have fused Turkishness and Turkish civilization with Islam and Islamic civilization; they regarded it a necessity of *ummah* politics and duty of faith to make people forget the pre-Islamic epochs of thousands of years. For longer than just recent times, it was illusioned to create a single nation by composing numerous elements in the Ottoman Empire under the policy of Ottomanism. In addition to the above-mentioned two, it contributed as a third factor to cloak the name Turk and, not only to neglect, but also to erase National History from the pages it was already written on.

All these negative currents naturally found their way into school programs and books. Associating Turkishness with concepts such as tent, tribe, horse, weapon and war crept into our schoolbooks. Turkish History Research Committee, which has been working to reveal the rebuffed and forgotten Turkish history in its sheer veracity, has assigned some of its members the duty of preparing a book to fill this gap in history teaching.
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In the introduction part of the first volume of *History*¹⁸⁶, with the subtitle “Introduction to History of Humanity”, racial and linguistic characteristics in the survey of human history were defined as distinguishing features of communities. Concept of “race” defined as the people coming from

¹⁸⁴ *Ortamektep İçin Tarih vol: 1-3*, İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1933

¹⁸⁵ *Tarih I-IV*, İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931, pp.5-6

¹⁸⁶ *Tarih 1*, p.1-8

the same blood with similar physical characteristics, was supported by different classifications of Arthur Gobineau and Eugene Pittard. However, it was also stated in the book that racial differentiations was not very important in terms of history and that “although the shape of the skull has a scientific value in anthropologic classification of races, it is totally meaningless in social distinctions”¹⁸⁷. In the explanation about Turkish race and language; it was mentioned in the first place that the prominent nations of Europe were not belonged to a specific race. Yet, among these communities, there is not a dominant race which preserved its characteristics. On the other hand, although Turkish race mingled with the neighboring races, it preserved its identity. In spite of this mingling, it was able to preserve its own characteristics by its superior nature and common language¹⁸⁸. Additionally, the appearance of Turkish race was traced far back to the Paleolithic ages, in 12000 BC.

Another emphasis of the book was that Turks ‘climbed up the steps of civilization before other societies’. One of the most striking statements of such assumption was, “While peoples in other parts of the world were still living the darkest wild life in caves and tree holes, Turks had reached the ages of civilizations of lumber and mine”¹⁸⁹. The statement continued as, ‘Turks carried this civilization to the other parts of the world and civilized the populations in the regions they settled’, reflecting an argument deriving from the basic assumptions of the Turkish History Thesis and the famous Immigration Theory referred to in many resources. As a reflection of the theory that Turks carried the civilization from the Central Asia to the entire world, it was mentioned in multiple places in the book that the Middle Eastern, Anatolian and Mediterranean peoples such as Hittites and Phoenicians were of Turkish origin.

The early Republican perspective upon Islamic religion and history was apparent in History II where the Turkish and Islamic history was recounted

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p.17

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p.20

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p.26

until the Ottoman period. The entire book held a distant stance, moreso a total adriftness to religious references to Islam¹⁹⁰. For example, the word “Holy” customarily attached to Mohammad’s name in references to him was omitted; the Koran was not categorically mentioned as the word of God but that the Islamic hearsay that recognized it as so¹⁹¹. Similarly, the book contained that Muhammad proclaimed himself the prophet when he was 40, without mentioning at all a theological reference or revelation¹⁹². To sum up, Islam was reduced to a historical narration purged of any pattern relating to religious faith.

The general theme in presenting Islamic history culminated around identifying Arabs uncivilized and indicating they remained the same even after the acceptance of Islam. Also emphasized was that Non-Arab converts and especially Turks turned Islam into a major religion and created an advanced civilization around it¹⁹³. Actually in many parts of the book, were remarks full of contempt concerning the Arabs such as “Although Arabs made contact with Turkish, Persian and Byzantine civilization during the period of *Hulefairaşidin* (Dört Halife), they benefited a little from them. Thus, they saw no harm in burning and destroying the Turkish, Persian and Greek works when they invaded those lands.”¹⁹⁴.

It was argued in the sections on conversion of Turks into Muslims and the latter periods that Islam was of secondary importance in the history of Turks. For example, relations of Turks with Arabs, especially the Umayyad period, were narrated quite negatively. The book reduced “the Arab policy against Turks” to “oppression and mass slaughters”¹⁹⁵ and argued that Turks

¹⁹⁰ Zorlu Durukan, *The Ideological Pillars*, p.150

¹⁹¹ *Tarih II*, p.90

¹⁹² *ibid.*, p.89

¹⁹³ Zorlu Durukan, *The Ideological Pillars*, p.147

¹⁹⁴ *Tarih II*, p.124

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p.145

were able to resist this for a long time “since it was impossible for them to step away from mastery to slavery through adopting Islamic religion”¹⁹⁶. In the same vein, Turks’ mass conversion to Islam was possible “only after they decided to be the master of Arabs, who wanted to enslave themselves to Turks”¹⁹⁷. In many parts, of the book it was stated that Islam became a major religion and civilization only after it was adopted by non-Arab peoples, especially Turks. Another recurrent emphasis of the book was that it was “Turks, who already had an ancient and elevated civilization at the time when Islam emerged.”¹⁹⁸ who contributed to the Islamic history and civilization, not the vice versa. Even it is emphasized that Turks made great contributions to all branches of science, especially philosophy and positive sciences, and prominent Islamic scientists such as Biruni, Avicenna, Farabi, and Ibn Abd al-Malik were actually of Turkish origin.

In Volume 3 on the Ottoman history and the sections on the Turkish revolution and reforms in Volume 4, perception of the early Republic on the Ottoman period is apparent. Similar to narrations of Turkish Islamic history, this section was based on the stress on Turkishness also. For example, in many parts of the book, the phrase *Ottoman Turks* was used instead of *the Ottoman* whereas *Turkey* was used instead of *the Ottoman Empire*. The Ottoman history was not narrated on total negation and rejection; on the contrary, the 16th century, age of Suleiman the Magnificent, is considered as not only the most glorious period of the Ottomans but also an epoch “where the Ottomans expanded most, acquired wealth and power, and achieved the most perfect level of political, administrative and social organization of the ancient times”¹⁹⁹. The following epoch, in turn, was categorized into the periods of stagnancy, regression and decline, as considered in the textbooks until today.

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p.146

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p.146

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.* p.162

¹⁹⁹ *Tarih III*, p.52

The Ottoman modernization movements were considered as products of pressure and intervention of the European states and the failure of the reforms were attributed to factors such as “failure to implement laws frankly”²⁰⁰, “imitating”²⁰¹, and “lack of knowledge on the situation in Europe and the trends of development in the world”²⁰². It is argued that, “because of these and similar reasons, the Second Constitutional Period vanished into the history without leaving any significant legacy behind”²⁰³.

The last argument above actually hinted that the Second Constitutional Era, which in reality constituted the intellectual background of the Republican revolution and where the first steps of most of the reforms were formulized, was not worth of any praise. In fact, it was ignored and the main arguments of the official discourse were based on the idea of a rupture from the past. In such an account based on the idea of a rupture, the Ottoman past was taken as an object of comparison to describe the Republican mentality and the differences were based on dichotomies such as reactionary/progressive, old/new, primitive/modern, just like it was the case in the book, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndan Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'ne. Nasıldı? Nasıl Oldu*, prepared by the Ministry of National Education for the 10th anniversary of the Republic. The desire to put the emphasis on the secular character of the young Republic inevitably resulted in the prominence of negation of the Islamic character of the Ottoman and the use of incisive adjectives. For instance, the mingling of religious and administrative affairs was considered as “perversion and imprudence”, and the Ottoman Empire was represented as the latest victim of such a mistake in the Turkish history²⁰⁴. Similarly, relating to the Turkish Civil Law, it was emphasized that “it is the same with the Swiss Civil Law, which is

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p.248

²⁰¹ *ibid.*, p.252

²⁰² *ibid.*, p.304

²⁰³ *ibid.*, p.305

²⁰⁴ *Tarih IV*, p.206

superior to all civil laws in the world”, and it was noted that its adoption “eliminated the *narrow* and *primitive* legal principles forcefully imposed on the social life of the Turkish nation in the name of religion in order to make survive and strengthen the theocratic sultanate regime”²⁰⁵. As to accounts of the place of women in the Ottoman period, it was noted that “the increased oppression of the Ottoman sultanate and monarchy went too far in suppressing especially the *Turkish womanhood*”²⁰⁶ and the said period was described as “a genuine period of dungeon, tragedy and misery for the Turkish woman”²⁰⁷. Actually, with an emphasis on that “oppression and slavery into which women were drawn has nothing to do with Turkishness and the Turkish social principles”²⁰⁸, the Ottoman period is marginalized and accused of a deviation from the political and social traditions of Turks since the earliest times.

3.4 First and Second Turkish History Congresses

Once writing history textbooks for the new nation was completed, a congress was held mainly to open the textbooks to discussions among scholars and teachers, and to introduce the thesis officially to larger masses. Hence the First Turkish History Congress was organized with Atatürk’s initiative in 1932. During the Congress, the participants were split into two main groups. The first group was the well-known politicians, historians, intellectuals and ideologists of the time such as Yusuf Akçura, Fuat Köprülü, Afet İnan, Samih Rifat, Reşit Galip, Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, Hasan Cemil Çambel and Şemseddin Günaltay most of whom were also the members of Turkish Historical Society, assigned to write *Outline of Turkish History*. The outline and the content of the official

²⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p.215

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p.225

²⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p.226

²⁰⁸ *ibid.* p.226

history were determined by them who were “appointed as the historians of the party” as Aydın²⁰⁹ has put forth²¹⁰.

Fuat Köprülü and Zeki Velidi Togan were members of the second group who did not approve the way the thesis was established and defended. They criticized mainstream politician-historians methodologically, claiming they did not resort to primary sources. However, their reactions could not be strong and clear; otherwise they would be judged as non-scientific and anti-nationalist²¹¹.

The Second Turkish History Congress was held in 1937 and archeology, linguistics and anthropology were the main topics taken up. One of the core subjects discussed in the congress was Sun Language Theory (*Güneş Dil Teorisi*). This theory was based on the assertion that Turkish language was the primary source of all languages. The impetus in putting this theory forth was, as in Turkish History Thesis, to prove the ancientness and continuity of Turkish language. Additionally, in the words of Şemseddin Günaltay²¹², “with

²⁰⁹ Suavi Aydın, “Türk Tarih Tezi ve Halkevleri”, *Kebikeç*, 3, 1996, p.107

²¹⁰ Actually, interlacing of the science and politics was not only the problem of Turkey, but the other Western states as well, especially in historical area, as stated earlier. However, there were several opposing views upon that situation. Niyazi Berkes, one of the opponent intellectuals of the time, criticized this situation giving reference to race theory which was still popular in Turkey and its Western counterparts. He expressed that, in this aspect, “the scientists became opportunist politicians” and in order to construct science properly, its independence from politics should strictly be provided. Niyazi Berkes, “İlim Dünyasındaki Durumumuz”, *Yurt ve Dünya*, 29 İkteşrin 1942, cilt 3 (20), p. 271-275

²¹¹ At the second day of the congress, Zeki Velidi Togan criticized one of the presentations about Turkish race and culture. First, Yusuf Akçura and Reşit Galip reacted by cutting his speech. Then Şemseddin Günaltay commented that “(...) But Zeki Velidi Bey strongly opposed to the formation of Turkish union at Ufa Congress and separated Başkırt from Turkish community (*shame on you voices*). By opposing and preventing the progress towards unified culture and dialect (language) among all Turks with the feeling of national solidarity. Zeki Velidi Bey has caused the separation of Russian Turks into many pieces such as Tatars, Başkırt, Özbek, Azeris who have different cultures and languages. It is a Wonder whether Zeki Velidi Bey wanted to play the same role also in this congress? Yet, he has to be sure that those gathering around this congress are burning with the flame of nationhood. Any intent, any attempt against this flame is condemned to melt.” (Continuous and furious applauses).”, in *Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi, Konferanslar Müzakere Zabıtları*, İstanbul: Maarif Vekaleti, p.400

²¹² It is observed that, Şemseddin Günaltay was one of the strong defenders of Turkish History Thesis. Yet, a controversially interesting point about Günaltay was his Islamist identity during the Second Constitutional Era. He was promoted as Professor of History of Religions in

Sun Language Theory, Turkish language is liberated from Islamic dominance”²¹³. That is to say, the chains with Islamic past were broken linguistically as language was one of the core elements of culture and thus a big step was taken in secularization.

The focus was rather on Anatolia in the congress and archeology was the most preferable discipline by the researches to demonstrate that Turks were the autochthonous peoples of this land. Common approach of the researchers was an attempt to prove with archeological findings that all civilizations in Anatolia were of Turkic origin and that Turks had been the natives of Anatolia since the emergence of first civilizations. Thus, the ancient civilizations in Anatolia and Near East such as Hittites and Sumerians had emerged from Turkish race. Those archeologists supported their claims by asserting that all the findings from archeological diggings displayed signs of belonging to Turkish culture²¹⁴. Actually, archeology became a tool of legitimizing Turks being “indigenous peoples and real owners of Anatolia” as a part of Turkish History Thesis²¹⁵.

Süleymaniye Madrasah in 1917 and Professor of History of Islam and History of Islamic Law in Faculty of Theology of the Istanbul Darülfünun in 1924. In his articles written in Islamist journals as *Sırat-ı Müstakim*, *Sebilürreşad* and *İslam Mecmuası*, Günaltay defended that Islam was not against progress. He also regarded religion as a social requirement and emphasized its mission of unification, and coherence within the societies. He even continued to defend these arguments consistently during the Republican Era. Furthermore, in the presentations made in the first and second history congresses, Günaltay introduced the constructive role of Turks in the history of Islam. Zafer Toprak, ““Mukaddes”ten “Temeddün”e Kültür Devrimi Şemsettin Günaltay ve Türk Tarih Tezi Eleştirilerine Yanıt”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, Nisan 2011, 208, p. 3; Fahrettin Altun, “M. Şemseddin Günaltay”, *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasî Düşünce vol: 6 İslamcılık*, (ed.) Yasin Aktay, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003, pp. 160-167

²¹³ Şemsettin Günaltay, H. Reşit Tankut *Dil ve Tarih Tezlerimiz Üzerine Gerekli Bazı İzahlar*, İstanbul: Devlet Basımevi, 1938, p.27

²¹⁴ İnan, in one of her interviews, strongly claimed that the archeologic objects dug out in this land are without doubt Turkish handworks and all belonged to Turkish civilization. She showed a gammadion and explained that “... this swastika (*kruva game*) is the same with the sign the national socialist party in Germany today uses; whereas these golden swastikas coming out from the land of Anatolia show that these consist of symbols used by the Turks and the Turkish ancestors from all eternity” in “Türk Tarih Kurumu Asbaşkanı Bayan Prof. Afet ile Mülakat”, *Belleten*, 2 (5-6), 1938 p.253-256

²¹⁵ Another important aspect of the congresses, which could not find voice in today’s academic studies was that, they provided environment for the explanation of history in an evolutionist basis, maybe once for all. The presentation of Afet İnan in the first congress has a significance in this respect as its considerable part covered explanations on the phylogenesis of human

The main aim of both congresses was to impose and procure acceptance of Turkish History Thesis; thus, the defenders of that approach were considerably closed to different viewpoints. Saffet Arıkan, Minister of Education declared at the opening speech of the Congress that Turkish History Thesis was based on sciences especially archeology and anthropology, thus could not be confuted²¹⁶. Similarly, Günaltay stated that the Thesis was analyzed and clarified through scientific methods and the complainants were given the right to declare their arguments and objections at the congress. Accordingly, he declared that “Yet it was so easy to confute all those objections and critics for they lacked scientific value.” Criticisms ended with the reassertion of the thesis’ scientific value. At the Second History Congress, Turkish History Thesis gained absolute victory”²¹⁷.

Two types of historiography, which appeared to be paradoxical but the first of which legitimized the second, underlied the assumption that the data relating to the Turkish History Thesis were analyzed with scientific methods and thus they have an unquestionable truth value. On the one side, under the positivist approach originating from the Enlightenment, the Rankeist documentarist historiography was glorified and primary resources were deemed to reveal the objective information that would make interpretation unnecessary. On the other side, under the light of the particularist approach and especially with the development of archeological methods, there was the cultural historical account that aimed at questing and revealing the unique set

being. Zafer Toprak evaluates this as a confrontation to creationism myths which was dominant in Ottoman-Turkish historiography and underlines the role of “L’évolution de l’humanité” series brought from France in it. Zafer Toprak, “Âdem-Havva’dan Homo-Alpinus’a Eugène Pittard, Antropoloji Ve Türk Tarih Tezi”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, Şubat 2011, 206, pp.20-21

²¹⁶ “Kongre Başkanı Maarif Vekili Saffet Arıkan’ın Nutku”, *İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi Kongrenin Çalışmaları, Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler İstanbul 20-25 Eylül 1937*, İstanbul: Kenan Matbaası, 1943, p.2

²¹⁷ Şemsettin Günaltay, “Türk Tarih Tezi Hakkında İntikatların Mahiyeti ve Tezin Kat’i Zaferi”, *Bellekten*, 2 (7-8), 1938, p. 338

of spiritual factors that differentiated the Turkish history from that of other nations²¹⁸.

Actually, Turkish History Thesis was not exclusive for Turkish history. Verifying this was that most of the papers presented in Turkish history congresses were based upon German and Hungarian historical and archeological researches. Such studies were based upon the understanding of cultural evolutionism which gained fame across Europe as a consequence of growing nationalism. The late 19th century witnessed the rise of *culture-historical archeology* which promoted a sense of ethnic identity and basically assumed that the peoples composing a nation were inherently homogeneous and had a historical continuity. Thus, to construct the past, this type of research aimed to trace the origins (ethnogenesis)²¹⁹. Many nations traced their own genealogies in erecting their national consciousness of identity and in providing their political legitimacy. For instance in France, the impact of nationalism on archeology was reflected as emphasizing solidarity of national groups. Napoleon III ordered large-scale excavations to prove Celtic origins of France to enhance the power of his regime. Similarly, Polish historians searched for their Slavic roots in their territory since prehistoric times²²⁰.

Definition of archeological culture and systematic application to the interpretation of archeological data was in fact, Gustav Kossinna's attempt with his publication *Die Herkunft Der Germanen* (The Origin of the Germans) in 1911 which was a glorification of German prehistory as a biologically pure master race. Kossinna evaluated archeology as a tool of determining the ancestry roots and historical developments of a people. Wherever the elements of "German" material culture were found, these places were declared as ancient German lands and it is declared that modern Germany had rights there or could demand to repossess them. Kossinna's declaration of archeology as the most national of sciences and the ancient Germans as the noblest subjects for

²¹⁸ Aydın, "Aydınlanma ve Tarihselcilik Problemleri", pp.52-53

²¹⁹ Aydın, "Türk Tarih Tezi", pp.107-13

²²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 114

archeological research supported German nationalism and became much popular during the Nazi regime. Throughout this period, prehistory of Germans, as the largest “pure race” was glorified²²¹. For Kossinna, Schleswig-Holstein was the cultural centre of Europe and Near East and cultural innovations were spread from this area to periphery through migrations.



Friedrich Wilhelm Putzgers, *Historischer Schul-Atlas*, Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1935, p. 1

Actually Kossinna was not acting differently from other archeologists. Archeology in each region reflected racist attitudes in different ways and became widespread in the Western world during the 20th century. Aydın²²² assesses this period in Germany as the initiation of cultural and racial legitimization with the hegemonic nations sharing wealth of the world during their nation-state building process. Hence, this understanding of nationalistic archeology and cultural history bestowed a legitimization tool to countries which targeted becoming nation-states.

²²¹ Bruce G. Trigger, *A History of Archeological Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp.163-164

²²² Aydın, “Türk Tarih Tezi”, p.117

In fact, debates on racism and nationalism had a wide sphere of influence through anthropology and philology. The studies mainly German and Austrian anthropologists have focused on were about physical features of the human body from the beginning of the 19th century and different racial classifications were formulated in terms of skull types or skin color. Among such studies, Swiss anthropologist Eugene Pittard's ideas about skull types gained importance among Turkish researchers. With findings from diggings, Pittard introduced that Turks were of the brachycephalic type originating from Central Asia; that they came to Anatolia through migrations and laid the foundations of Anatolian civilizations. The topics discussed in the First and Second History Congresses were closely related with Pittard's arguments. However, in the speech he delivered as guest of honor and complimentary chairman in the Second History Congress²²³, Pittard claimed something different from the Turkish History Thesis and emphasized that Turks, as one of the oldest peoples of Anatolia were bred from different of peoples with different political and social norms, names and languages²²⁴.

To sum up, with the studies of 1930s, the material products of history were displayed with archeology and its social characteristics with anthropology; thus both disciplines were developed and they collaterally shed light on the past. In line with this perspective, *Anthropological Research Centre of Turkey* (Türkiye Antropoloji Tetkikat Merkezi) was founded as early as 1925. Furthermore, Şevket Aziz Kansu was sent to Paris Anthropology School for physical anthropology education in 1927 and after his return, was assigned as professor to Anthropology Department of İstanbul University²²⁵. He also became the first rector of Ankara University which opened in 1946. Joined with Afet İnan's studies under the guidance of Eugene Pittard, the

²²³ Eugene Pittard, "Neolitik Devirde Küçük Asya ile Avrupa Arasında Antropolojik Münasebetler", *İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi Kongrenin Çalışmaları, Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler İstanbul 20-25 Eylül 1937*, İstanbul: Kenan Matbaası, 1943, p.77

²²⁴ This focus on Anatolia would later give way to Anatolianism as a view.

²²⁵ Zafer Toprak, "Erken Cumhuriyet'in Bilimi: Antropoloji Türkiye'de Fizik Antropolojinin Doğuşu", *Toplumsal Tarih*, December 2010, 204, pp. 29-31

researches of Kansu demonstrated the interest in Turkish race of pre-historic and ancient times and the aim to put forth its importance within the history of civilization.

Fuat Köprülü, in the foreword he wrote to Barthold's famous book *History of Islam Civilization (İslam Medeniyeti Tarihi)*, explained the understanding of this new historiography as all national histories possessed similar romantic perspectives at the beginning and this emotion contributed to the development of historical studies²²⁶. He stated that this romantic period of national history was apparent in historiography of Turkish nationalism as well due to the baseless and unfair interpretations in European historiography. However, the reaction of this romantic historiography became extreme and exaggerated. Classifying all races and languages as of Turkic origin gave way to racist views from time to time. For instance, while Köprülü was criticizing racist views of Gobineau²²⁷ as "However, today there is no possibility for such an understanding of race any more. Anthropology, on the one hand, and the progress of social sciences, on the other, have established the genuine and scientific meaning of the concept of race."²²⁸; on the other hand, he complied with Afet İnan's views on Turks' racial features as;

Indeed, many historical and literary documents that I was able to review so far clearly demonstrate that the Turkish race are not an exemplary of hideousness as written in some anthropology books but, on the contrary, a symbol of beauty. Anthropology books, even some recent publications demonstrated that the Anatolian Rumelian Turks, for example, the Turkishness of whom cannot be denied, are not members of the Mongolic or Mongoloid race.²²⁹

²²⁶ Vasilij Vladimiroviç Barthold, *İslam Medeniyeti Tarihi, İslam Medeniyeti Tarihi*, (trans.) M. Fuad Köprülü, İstanbul: Kanaat Kitabevi, 1940, p.22-23

²²⁷ Actually it is quite understandable for Köprülü to criticize Gobineau due to his views on Turks. Gobineau regarded Turks within yellow race and asserted that within 400 years, they gained white race characteristics since they were mingled through slave trade and devshirmeh. Timur, "Batı İdeolojisi, Irkçılık", pp.14-15

²²⁸ Köprülüzade Fuat Bey, *Untitled Presentation*, p.45

²²⁹ *ibid.*, p.45

Similarly, Dr. Reşit Galip²³⁰, in his speech at the First Turkish History Congress, accused westerners of being racist for classifying human beings with their color of hair or skin and for regarding Turks of the ‘yellow race’ same as Mongols. However, in the same speech, he easily determined Turks as “the most beautiful examples of white race”²³¹. He carried his claims even further by asserting Turks’ ability to construct civilization came from their racial superiority and citing from Frets, quoted: “According to clear evidence, the brachycephalic people, especially those from the Alps, have biological superiority over dolichocephalic people. Thus, it is natural that the outcome would be towards the hegemony of these people.”²³²

Akçura also objected to race theories voiced during the First Turkish History Congress, by claiming they were invented by imperialists and expressed that “Our fellows who have been making speeches in front of you for the last week have proved that the race theory raised by Europeans for the purpose of hegemony has no scientific value.”²³³

The traces of the Thesis were also apparent at the RPP program which was accepted in 1935. The articles under the title of ‘National Education’ clearly demonstrated how the official historiography was integrated with the ruling cadre and reflected upon the educational system:

Article 41. Our principles for national education are as follows:
... (b) Training the youth to become staunch republican, nationalist, populist, etatist, secular and revolutionist citizens must be fostered in every degree of education. To respect and make others respect the Turkish nation, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, and the Turkish state must be taught as a foremost duty. (c) The main goal is to give importance to physical as well as mental development and make sure to elevate them to higher levels inspired by evidence from the

²³⁰ Reşit Galip, “Türk Irk ve Medeniyet Tarihine Umumi Bir Bakış” *Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi, Konferanslar Müzakere Zabıtları* İstanbul: Maarif Vekaleti, 1932, p.158

²³¹ *ibid.*, p.159

²³² *ibid.*, p.113

²³³ Akçuraoğlu Yusuf Bey, “Tarih Yazmak ve Tarih Okutmak Usullerine Dair”, *Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi, Konferanslar Müzakere Zabıtları*, İstanbul: Maarif Vekaleti, 1932, p.606

depth of our national history. (d) [Quality of] Education must be high, national, patriotic, and far from all sorts of superstitions and foreign ideas... (f) Our party lays an extraordinary importance upon citizens with profound knowledge of our deep history. This is the sacred essence that nourishes the indestructible resistance of the Turk against all currents that may prejudice the national existence, his capacity and power, and his sentiments of self-confidence. (g) We shall continue our serious work in rendering the Turkish language a national, perfect language.²³⁴

Turkish History Thesis was also reflected on the primary school curriculum of 1936. Sections related to history courses, statements to guide the youngsters towards national individuality sentiments were placed meticulously in it. These were expressed as such:

...Having [students] feel their national selves by emphasizing the role of the Turkish nation in world history through making them comprehend how the Turks established their culture and language in Central Asia and how this spread around the world... The teacher should especially show how the Turks established a civilization in Central Asia... how the Turkish race, adopting various names all over the world, spread their culture... how the nations called *Sumerians* and *Hittites* are of the Turkish race... through concrete examples so that the student could grasp, and perpetuate the national consciousness and national existence inside them...; and to clarify the great role of the Turkish race particularly in history.²³⁵

²³⁴ *CHP 4. Büyük Kurultayı. Tüzük ve Program Komisyonunca Onanan Program Taslağı*, Ankara, 1935, p.28

²³⁵ *Kültür Bakanlığı, İlkokul Programı*, İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1936, p. 78

CHAPTER 4

İNÖNÜ ERA: CONTINUITY OR CHANGE?

As stated earlier, 1930s were the years when liberalism and democracy no longer had its old credibility among the Turkish intellectuals, but for those of most European countries as well. Disciplinary procedures of single party regimes, particularly Italian fascism attracted and overwhelmed Kemalist elite. Although similarities in many aspects with the south-east European authoritarian regimes (such as the regimes of Salazar in Portugal, Franco in Spain and Metaxas in Greece), especially traces of fascism and Sovietic totalitarianism were apparent in Turkey's administration during the 1930s and 1940s²³⁶, more differences were observed rather than similarities when they were compared²³⁷. Basically Turkey with its enlightenment principles was not conservative, but was rather progressive. Moreso, although Atatürk's leadership was engraved like a cult over the society, except for the six principles of Kemalism which constituted the fundamentals of even the Turkish constitutions²³⁸, neither he nor İnönü put forth 'doctrines of the leader' to maintain legitimacy. Furthermore, unlike most of its European counterparts, the parliament remained open and elections were held to secure the image of democratic system. Lastly, but not as the least important, a peaceful and neutral foreign policy was followed instead of irredentist propagandas fascist states displayed.

²³⁶ See Falih Rıfki Atay, *Moskova Roma*, İstanbul: Muallim Ahmet Halit Kitaphanesi, 1932.

²³⁷ Eric J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, London: I. B Tauris, 2004, pp. 185-186

²³⁸ Although in 1930s there were some initiatives among journal groups like *Kadro* and *Ülkü* to systematize Kemalist principles, Atatürk resisted such attempts which could eventually turn these principles into dogma and were none different than values introduced to the world since ancient Greece and particularly with the great revolutions.

This period, especially last years of Atatürk was also the unveiling of the gradually growing tension and conflicts between Atatürk and İsmet İnönü. Although Atatürk and İnönü had long and close relations since their War Academy (*Harp Akademisi*) years, collaboration between the two began to fall into loggerheads due to Atatürk's interferences in the Cabinet²³⁹. Cemil Koçak, in his exclusive study about İsmet İnönü period, categorized the main issues causing tension between Atatürk and İnönü into three. He gave the first place to Atatürk's interference into İnönü Cabinet and his decisive implications without informing or expressing his opposition. The obvious tension between İnönü and Atatürk's close friends Nuri Conker, Salih Bozok, and Kılıç Ali, who had serious impact on his decisions, was underlined as a supplementary factor of Atatürk's such behavior. Another point underlined was the arguments which took place from time to time between the two at Atatürk's famous dinners referred to as *Sofra* (Table) at Çankaya when İnönü expostulated Atatürk regarding his orders given at the dinner table and complained of not being able to have direct contact elsewhere²⁴⁰. Prime Minister İnönü's strong reactions to Atatürk's remarks or explanations in the presence of others deepened the ill feelings.

Second source of conflict was related to differences concerning foreign policy particularly during the second half of the 1930s. Hatay question was at issue then and Atatürk- İnönü disagreement for the solution of the question was delaying the essential ad hoc measures. Atatürk was prepared to risk Turco-French harmony for the sake of including Hatay into Turkish frontiers at once

²³⁹ There were numerous instances of the disagreement. For further information regarding the tension between Atatürk and İnönü, see İsmet Bozdağ, *Atatürk'ün Sofrası*, İstanbul: Kervan Yayınları, 1975; İsmet İnönü, *Hatıralar*, (prep.) Sabahattin Selek, İstanbul: Bilgi, 1969; Yakup K. Karaosmanoğlu, *Politikada 45 Yıl*, Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1968

²⁴⁰ Metin Heper, *İsmet İnönü, Yeni Bir Yorum Denemesi*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999, p. 152

but İnönü was for solving the problem through possibly time consuming moderate negotiations²⁴¹.

Third disagreement was the economic policy of the İnönü government. Atatürk's preference was more towards liberal economy supportive of free enterprise whereas İnönü was defending etatist economic policy. At last, on September 1937, Atatürk asked İnönü to resign from prime ministry and charged Celal Bayar, General Director of İş Bank instead²⁴². This decision and assignment of Celal Bayar who had liberal views on economy demonstrates the discrepancy upon economy politics among Atatürk and İnönü. Nevertheless, after the death of Atatürk, İsmet İnönü was elected as the president of the Republic without any serious oppositions.

Despite the analysis of official historiography regarding the İnönü period as continuity, there are strong indications questioning this assumption. Some scholars advocated that İsmet İnönü's aim was to maintain the heritage of Atatürk era which was to fulfill nation building process and provide transition to democracy through multi-party system. Those scholars evaluated İnönü as a strong defender of democracy; however claimed that Turkey was unprepared for such a transition and that the public should not have been recognized social rights until the system was established and İslamist reactionists were fully under control²⁴³. As for İnönü, he simply expressed his views on democracy as;

...Introducing chief requirements of social life such as 'peace' and 'security' in Turkey can be resembled to the first move in game of chess. To secure the confidence of citizens that they

²⁴¹ İnönü explained in his memoirs that he had several problems with Atatürk between the years 1936 and 1937. Yet, among them, the biggest one was due to Hatay Problem. İsmet İnönü, *Hatıralar II*, p.282

²⁴² Cemil Koçak, *Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi (1938-1945)*, vol.1, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996, pp.24-47

²⁴³ The approach of passing onto democracy gradually and when the society is ready is a typical reflection of tutorship understanding. This can be regarded as the reflection of modernization perception of Kemalist ruling elite. In this context democracy is an aim, not a tool. For further, see Levent Köker, *Modernleşme, Kemalizm, Demokrasi*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1990, p. 228

live in a free country where everyone is treated equally should be the first requirement. The first obligation should be solving the questions pertaining to the regime. This does not depend solely on adoption of certain laws. Yes, initially, it is necessary to make these laws! Another equally important obligation is to apply them in a spirit that would let the conditions of ‘peace’ and ‘security’ take root. Fulfillment of these led to training and cultivation of the people (including you, us, and even the law-makers)...again, resembling the second move in the chess game this time. It is essential to make democracy habitual.²⁴⁴

Dankwart Rustow, a well known scholar with expertise on Turkish politics, stated that the primary characteristic of İnönü is that he had “the incomparable honor of being the single statesman in the world who, for the sake of democracy, renounced the power that could only be found in the hands of a dictator”²⁴⁵. Metin Heper is another scholar who defended that İnönü aimed to continue the ‘mission’ of which Atatürk has commended to him. He claimed that in fact, İnönü was not well understood; hence his was received with less esteem for his deeds than he deserved²⁴⁶.

On the other hand, there were many researchers and intellectuals of the period claiming that İnönü applied a clear political transformation which meant the betrayal of this heritage²⁴⁷. This group regarded İnönü a tyrant²⁴⁸, despot who utilized the political power of the government under his dominance. In fact, İnönü was authoritarian rather than despotic. He was the defender of a strong and effective government based upon unification of powers. He also

²⁴⁴ İsmet İnönü, *Muhalefette İsmet İnönü, 1956-1959: Konuşmaları, Demeçleri, Mesajları, Sohbetleri ve Yazılarıyla*, İstanbul: Ekicigil Matbaası, 1959, p. 344-345

²⁴⁵ Dankwart A. Rustow, “Modernization of Turkey in Historical and Comparative Perspective”, *Social change and politics in Turkey. A structural-historical analysis*, Kemal H. Karpat (ed.), Leiden: Brill, 1973, p. 113

²⁴⁶ Heper, *İsmet İnönü*, p. 9

²⁴⁷ Niyazi Berkes was taking the lead of this group. For detailed information regarding his views upon this subject, see Niyazi Berkes, *İkiyüz Yıldır Neden Bocalıyoruz?* İstanbul: Yön Yayınları, 1965

²⁴⁸ Karaosmanoğlu states that, İnönü’s suppression of Şeyh Sait uprising and the following Takrir-i Sükun Law, confirmed the general viewpoint that he was a tyrant. Karaosmanoğlu, *Politikada 45 Yıl*, p.79-80

believed in authoritarian approach for reinforcement of Republican reforms, imbuing the society with Kemalist principles and transition into a multi-party system. At this point it is possible to question whether there were other ways of establishing a nation state and implementing the reforms required for providing targeted radical changes. Kemal Karpat, supporting İnönü's method answered this question by indicating that none other could have been applicable in a state so backwards socially and economically, and that where there were not any farsighted intellectuals; that the enlightened mind of Atatürk had been a big chance for Turkey²⁴⁹.

Actually, the system was a 'chieftainship regime' which meant that the system was formally determined by the 1924 Constitution; but in practice, it was operated by RPP regulations²⁵⁰. In 1944, Memduh Şevket Esenal, General Secretary of RPP, described the chieftainship regime as; "Constitutions of some countries are in written, and some are not. We have two constitutions: one written and another unwritten. The written one is the Constitution. The unwritten one is our actual condition in other words, our system of Chieftainship. This system derives its power from the RPP."²⁵¹

In the RPP regime, decisions were taken by a twosome cadre consisting of the president and the prime minister; the assembly was turned into a source of approval²⁵². This strong leader perception was verified in the 1938 RPP

²⁴⁹ Kemal Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi Sosyal, Ekonomik, Kültürel Temeller*, İstanbul: Afa Yayıncılık, 1996, p. 126

²⁵⁰ In fact, 1924 Constitution provided this contradiction. It allowed a multi party system that enabled establishment of various parties since 1925. Yet uncontrolled Assembly led to authoritarianism of the ruling party, which was apparent during the governance of RPP and DP. Thanks to Alper Bakacak for this contribution.

²⁵¹ Cemil Koçak, "Tek Parti Yönetimi, Kemalizm ve Şeflik Sistemi: Ebedi Şef/Milli Şef" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Kemalizm*, (ed.) Ahmet İnsel, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p. 120-122.

²⁵² Aydemir sharply criticized this chief-led regime and asserted that this perception prevented the emergence of a progressive and pioneer cadre within the RPP. He asserted that every measure had to be presented by the chief and approved by the assembly under his leadership; however, members of the parliament were just the confirmators and obedient of the leader, in Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *İkinci Adam (1938-1950)*, Vol.2, İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1991, p. 353. Karaosmanoğlu was also against the chieftainship regime due to its understanding of 'chief knows everything', 'chief solves all the problems'. One of the consequences of this

Extraordinary Congress, with the new addendums to party regulations, it was decided that Atatürk was to be called the *Eternal President* and İsmet İnönü, the *National Chief*. The reason behind the title given to İnönü was the considerations for him as the educator, cultivator of Turkish nation²⁵³.

4.1 Political Developments During İnönü's Presidency

In the first few years of presidency, İnönü contacted some leading figures of the Independence War Atatürk later discharged due to political controversies such as Kazım Karabekir, Fethi Okyar, Ali Fuat Cebesoy, Refet Bele. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın and Adnan Adıvar who strongly criticized some policies of Atatürk Era were also in İsmet İnönü's contact list. The President got in touch with those opponents; living abroad in a semi-exile since 1926 but were called back upon the 10th anniversary of the Republic and even became members of the parliament. In his memoirs, İnönü evaluated this attempt as an invaluable personal step in calming public opinion and restoring favorable relations with the old opponents²⁵⁴. However, the movement can also be evaluated as an effort of articulation/reconciliation of potential oppositions to the new government. It was a wise strategy to collaborate with the potential opponents rather than struggle with them. In this way, İnönü was able to secure state authority and maintain a peaceful climate during the World War II years.

Another sign of the shift in political arena was that prominent statesmen of the Atatürk Era such as Şükrü Kaya and Tefik Rüştü Aras, who carried out ministerial duties between 1923 and 1938, were not given any positions in the new Cabinet. The reason of this discharge was, both of the politicians were near abroad of Atatürk and opposed to İnönü during last years of Atatürk²⁵⁵.

perception was, it cut the relation of the leader with the society and produces alienation from social realities, in Karaosmanoğlu, *Politikada 45 Yıl*, pp. 170-174

²⁵³ Heper, *İsmet İnönü*, p. 163-164

²⁵⁴ İnönü, *Hatıralar II*, p. 327

²⁵⁵ İsmet Bozdağ, *Bir Çağın Perde Arkası: Atatürk-İnönü, İnönü-Bayar Çekişmeleri*, İstanbul: Kervan Yayınları, 1972

İnönü's explanation for omitting these men who remained close to Atatürk but opposed to him during the last years of his life was that they nourished strong dislike towards the newly, refined politicians so actually their elimination was 'a true relief in the country'²⁵⁶.

This was the method İnönü resorted to suspend his known opponents from political arena and started to establish his 'own team'²⁵⁷. In this new team, Dr. Refik Saydam was assigned as Minister of Interior and Şükrü Saraçoğlu as Foreign Minister. Mahmut Goloğlu in his work pertaining İnönü, called attention to Refik Saydam's rejection to participate in Celal Bayar Cabinet but accepting the position in 1937 and calling it a significant example, noted that Saydam over a short period of time after assuming the position 'cleaned ' the ministry from those who were on Bayar's side'²⁵⁸.

Another point regarding this period was that it was wartime, and efforts to keep out of the war and to take position in line with balance of powers directly affected domestic developments²⁵⁹. The first pillar of the balance of powers was the Soviet Union. Since the middle of the Independence War, Ankara aimed to maintain the good relations established with this country and successfully preserved stability until the U.S.S.R. allied with Nazi Germany, brought forth territorial demands from Turkey. Meanwhile, Turkey aiming to preserve its status-quo, improved the relations with England and France especially after Italy's expansionist moves, as a buffer against totalitarian powers with Turkey. After Italy's invasion of Albania in April 1939, against any potential attacks, Turkey made a mutual aid agreement with England and

²⁵⁶ İnönü, *Hatıralar II*, p. 283

²⁵⁷ Metin Toker also drew up a categorization of 'men of İnönü' and 'men of Atatürk' and specified that after İnönü, became the president most of the latter were left out of the Cabinet. See Metin Toker, *Demokrasimizin İsmet Paşalı Yılları (1944–1973) Tek Partiden Çok Partiye*, Bilgi Yayınevi İstanbul 1990, p. 47.

²⁵⁸ Mahmut Goloğlu, *Milli Şef Dönemi (1939–1945)*, Ankara: Kalite Matbaası, 1974, p. 4.

²⁵⁹ For detailed information on Turkish foreign policies during World War II, see Mehmet Gönübol, *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996; Selim Deringil, *Denge Oyunu: İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası* İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2007

France. However, Germany's occupation of France entailed strong criticisms among the intellectuals and politicians of this alliance. They regularly announced German triumphs and war proclamations (*Alman Harp Bildirileri*) and in the meantime continued asserting that convergence with England and France was a big mistake²⁶⁰. Even some Turkish Generals prematurely celebrated German ultimate victory they assumed was approaching²⁶¹. Actually this was a tough controversial period when the governmental policies did not always match the popular views. Large majority of public opinion influenced by publications in the press was in favor of Germany. İnönü, following closely the assumptions of German victory and keeping track of the current events through the media also, was concerned about possible attacks to Turkey. To safeguard the country, he confided in the Anglo-Turkish alliance concluded in May 1940 right after German advances started. In the meanwhile he calculated that although French Government in Vichy by then was not in alliance with England, Turkey was at least spared of French pressure to involve the country in the war. Nevertheless, although Turkey's policy was to remain neutral, a treaty of friendship was signed with her in June 1941 while England was trying to orient Turkey into the war. Adana Meeting and Cairo Conference both held in 1943 and attended by Churchill, Stalin and İnönü were two significant demonstrations of this pressure.

Turkish internal politics during the war years was inevitably molded according to the domestic and foreign balances summarized above. Especially the years between 1941 and 1943 were the period when German propaganda was held by the Foreign Ministry of Germany and the rising Pan-Turkism was made a diplomatic matter between the two countries. Germany focused on

²⁶⁰ Even some members of the parliament questioned "What does İsmet Paşa still waiting for? What does he still expect from the English alliance? Why doesn't he seek an alliance with Germany? This hesitant foreign policy will bring us into a trouble." in Karaosmanoğlu, *Politikada 45 Yıl*, p. 168. However, it is well known that İnönü, Saraçoğlu and Menemencioğlu, well aware that Turkey did not have ample economic and military means, never considered participating in the war.

²⁶¹ For further information about the effect of Second World War on national press, see Alper Bakacak, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Döneminde Ulus Gazetesi'nin İç ve Dış Politika Değerlendirmeleri*, Unpublished Masters Thesis, Ankara University, Ankara, 2002

persuading Turkey to add the Axis Powers due to its geo-strategical position, supported Pan-Turkist movements in Turkey as a critical device to achieving this aim. In fact, Germany wanted Turkey to join the war against Soviet Russia and considered taking advantage of the attachment of Muslims living in Soviet Russia to Pan-Turkism. Hence, Turkey became a significant target of Germany's propaganda. Turkey used Pan Turkism as a diplomatic tactic to prevent German attack as well as to gain time not to join the war. Correspondingly, Turkish government condoned and allowed demonstrations of Pan-Turkist movements in the country until 1944 when Germany defeat became definite²⁶².

In the meanwhile, German propaganda was mainly conducted through the media; publishing of books, journals, newspapers and with the promotion of exchange programs for university students. Von Papen, the German ambassador to Ankara at that time, was a critically important diplomat to whom German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop had with a letter clearly related the aims and expectations of his country. These included using Pan Turanism for 'inciting and arising Turkish imperialistic aims in slumber until then'²⁶³ Moreso, Propaganda Office of the German Foreign Ministry had reserved a handsome fund of five million German Reich Mark particularly to influence the Turkish media to support this cause. Consequently, two important newspapers, *Cumhuriyet* and *Tasvir-i Efkar* were made "friends of Germany" and published articles in favor of German policies²⁶⁴. For instance, retired general, Hüseyin Hüsni Emir Erkilet's articles handling the Second World War from a military aspect rhapsodizing Hitler army appeared in *Cumhuriyet*.

²⁶² For further information about propaganda policies of Germany, see Herbert Melzig, *Yakın Şarkta Alman Propagandası Hakkında Bir Muhtıra*, Ankara: Alaeddin Kırıl Basımevi, 1940; Johannes Glasneck, *Türkiye'de Faşist Alman Propagandası*, Onur Yayınları, 1976

²⁶³ Günay Göksu Özdoğan, "*Turan*"dan "*Bozkurt*"a: *Tek Parti Döneminde Türkçülük, 1931-1946*, (trans.) İsmail Kaplan. İstanbul: İletişim, 2001, p. 143

²⁶⁴ Cemil Koçak, "Milli Şef Döneminde Yönetim ve Basın Hayatı", *Kebikeç*, 1 (2), 1995, pp. 149-159

The same person also wrote several articles in a strong racist and xenophobic tone in *Çınaraltı*.

On the other hand, 1943 was the year when German defeat in Stalingrad turned diplomatic balance in favour of Soviet Russia and accordingly, tolerating racist and Pan-Turanist views lost its validity. Therefore İnönü, was able to announce in his speech on May 19, 1944 that Turanist views were no more than harmful and ill indications of recent times. In the meantime, it was only natural that the intensive political changes were reflected upon multiple institutions, but mainly upon education as system and practice.

4.2 Changes and Continuities in the İnönü Era - Reflections of Humanism on Cultural and Educational Policies

When İnönü Era was evaluated in general, humanism is observed as the distinct characteristic of its educational policy. Especially during the first part of this era (until 1945), there were various attempts to install and fortify humanism such as equipping the Ministry of Education with staunch supporters of this ideology as well as gathering intellectuals in educational congresses to organize, administer and publicize them. Individualistic approaches of the Minister of Education Hasan Ali Yücel in turning these attempts into practically a general mobilization are worth of extensive discussions. In fact, the mentioned conventions which will be referred below more extensively were a product of his supportive efforts.

Hasan Ali Yücel was appointed to the Ministry of Education in December 28, 1938 in the first cabinet under İnönü's presidency and carried this duty until 1946. Soon after taking up this position, Yücel drew his approach to education in a perspective of a total modernization. He declared that educational duties were handled in certain and limited aspects since Tanzimat Era. Thus, he considered "approaching Turkish education from primary grade up to universities and academies as indispensable without

neglecting any of its parts”²⁶⁵. Actually, with these statements, he gave the clues of the radical changes to be performed which made him get corroded and exposed to unjust and rude attacks due to the humanitarian policy pursued and particularly the Village Institutes, which was its product.

Although this period was known as “Era of Humanism”, this understanding did not emerge in the İnönü Era with Hasan Ali Yücel. Humanism was traceable in ancient Greek and Latin civilizations through their literary and philosophical sources; it became a movement shaking the West in later centuries and in Turkey appeared among the Republican elite as interest towards the classical world. This interest can be initiated by Yahya Kemal Beyatlı and Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu when they came across humanistic ideas while examining the roots of French literature. Consequently, 1930s witnessed a series of translation and publication activities in the light of humanist understanding such as Eclogues of Vergilius by Ruşen Eşref Ünaydın, poems of Horatius by Karaosmanoğlu, an Italian literature anthology, surveys on Dante and Petrarca, a book on Greek-Roman mythology by Nüşet Haşim Sinanoğlu with another book on mythology translated by Nurullah Ataç²⁶⁶.

The above mentioned publications constituted the background of the activities of Translation Office founded in February 1940. Among the members of this office, there were Saffet Pala, Sabahattin Eyuboğlu, Sabahattin Ali, Bedrettin Tuncel, Enver Ziya Karal and Nusret Hızır under the direction of Nurullah Ataç. The first appointed group by the Ministry of Education for the translation of the selected books consisted of prominent intellectuals of the period as Bedrettin Tuncel, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, Nurullah Ataç, Azra Erhat, Sabahattin Ali, Nusret Hızır, Halide Edip, Orhan Burian and Yaşar

²⁶⁵ Hasan Ali Yücel, “İstanbul Üniversitesinde Kendilerine Verilen Çay Ziyafetinde Rektörün Söylevine Cevap Olarak”, February 11, 1940, *Milli Eğitimle İlgili Söylev ve Demeçler*, Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993, p. 41

²⁶⁶ Suat Sinanoğlu, *Türk Hümanizmi*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1980, p. 92

Nabi²⁶⁷. Prior to the foundation of the office, in 1939, First Turkish Publication Congress was held to organize all publication activities, and specifically do the planning for publication of books to be translated. In the opening speech of the congress, Hasan Ali Yücel expressed the necessity of this ‘wide mobilization of translation’ as; “Republican Turkey is desirous to become an exclusive part of Western culture and thought therefore there is a pertinency for translating the ancient and new intellectual sources of the civilized world in order to enable the people access to this culture so that they can be equipped with its perceptions and mentality”²⁶⁸. As is seen, the main point in these attempts was the adoption of ‘humanist spirit’ and the Western mindset through its literary and philosophical sources.

Although most of the translations were from Western literature; the classics from the East including Islamic culture were also taken up. Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar well describes the mentality of Hasan Ali Yücel as “a person translating Mevlana’s quatrains (*rubai*) on the one side and writing Goethe’s life on the other side surely was aware of what he was doing. Selection of Weimar divine and the poet of *Mesnevi* and *Divan-ı Kebir* for this duty indicate the edges of the two worlds he aimed to connect with”²⁶⁹. It should also be kept in mind that, although only five sources were translated from Eastern and İslamic classics²⁷⁰, their selection was the indicator of retrieval of their value neglected until then²⁷¹. This also demonstrated that Hasan Ali Yücel did not focus only on the West as observed in the previous era, but aimed for a synthesis of the East and West as a modernization approach as he stated; “I do not make any distinctions as East and

²⁶⁷ Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi Kurulu Kararı, issue:67, 1940

²⁶⁸ Hasan Ali Yücel, “Birinci Türk Neşriyat Kongresini Açarken”, May, 2, 1939, *Milli Eğitimle İlgili Söylev ve Demeçler*, Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993, p. 4

²⁶⁹ Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, “Hasan Ali Yücel’e Dair Hatıralar ve Düşünceler”, *Yeni Ufuklar*, 109, 1961, p. 3

²⁷⁰ Among 109 books; 39 of Classical Greek, 38 of French, 10 of German, 8 of English, 6 of Latin, 5 of East and Islamic Classics, 2 of Russian and 1 of Scandinavian literature were translated in first three years. Mustafa Çıkar, *Hasan Ali Yücel ve Türk Kültür Reformu*, İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 1997.

²⁷¹ Translation of the books from the East was continued throughout this era and the classical such as *Kutadgu Bilig*, *Divanü Lügati’-t-Türk*, *Quatrains* of Ömer Hayyam, *Hafız Divanı* by Hafız-ı Şirazi, *Gülşen-i Raz* by Mahmud-ı Şebüsteri, *Siyasetname* by Nizamülmülk, *Mantık Al-Tayr* by Feridüddin Attar were also published.

West. Although human productions, desires, anxieties, fears change within time and space; if there is a separation in the essence, it's because of the way and method selected. If we did not comprehend with the method of Western mind, we could not find its essence in the Easterner's"²⁷².

Translation issues were discussed in the parliament also. Rize deputy Saim Ali Dilemre explained their aim of intellectual enrichment of Turkish young with the cultural heritage of East and West as “We attempted to establish in the minds of Turkish youth mental contacts with the pioneers of the world. Yet we did not start it by excluding the Turkish. Thus, there is Goethe on the one side and Mevlana on the other. On the one side Fuzuli, on the other Racine. Hence we do not look through the past, but to the future and educate them for the future.”²⁷³ Yücel highlighted these endeavors as embedding of the World Classics into national literature as “the expression of Faust in my beautiful Turkish is to nationalize Faust”²⁷⁴. Nevertheless, these explanations could not prevent the critics that the translations were only from Western literature and there were none from classical Turkish sources. Severe criticisms increased especially after 1946 and turned into an overall attack towards Hasan Ali Yücel and his colleagues both from political and intellectual sphere.

Another effort for adapting humanism to educational system was 1st Educational Council held in 1939. In this meeting starting from the point that Humanism movement in Europe retraced the ancient Greek and Latin sources; similar to starting the translations of the same sources, teaching ancient Greek and Latin in the schools were discussed. Cevat Dursunoğlu;

I believe that the Turkish nation will have a great civilization mission in the future. The way to that is specific: To retrace this culture on one hand, and enrich this future progress with our main

272 Mustafa Baydar, “Hasan Ali Yücel Anlatıyor”, *Varlık*, 419, 1955, p. 6. Translation of *Encyclopedia of Islam* into Turkish and its publication -finished in 1988- to learn the science, art, mentality of the East is another indicative of this approach.

²⁷³ Devre 6 cilt 25 içtima 3, 26.5.1942, *Maarif Vekaleti Bütçesi*, p. 317

²⁷⁴ Devre 7 cilt 2 içtima F, 26.5.1943, *Maarif Vekaleti Bütçesi*, p. 253

resource on the other. We all know that the main source of this culture is ancient humanism. Understanding and spreading of the idea of humanism will be through the path which the nations of this culture will take. The means for this is Latin and Greek education.²⁷⁵

In line with this perspective, the Ministry decided to open classical branches (*klasik şube*) in 1940 starting from the first grade in high schools²⁷⁶. In the 3rd grade curriculum of this branch; content of the literature, philosophy, sociology, history and geography courses given in the other branches (literature and science) were designed in a more condensed way and Latin was added to the courses. History curriculum was reorganized also, in a manner that Aegean, Greek and Roman periods were covered with more details and extended class hours “with specific emphasis to their mythology, movements of thought and art along their social events”²⁷⁷.

Another point to mention was that, the prominent enlightened men of the time influencing the mindset of the era were not monolithic. Intellectuals such as Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, Adnan Adıvar, Mehmet Kaplan, Nurullah Ataç or Sabahattin Eyüboğlu presented variety of ideas and reflected their own views pertaining to ongoing cultural developments. In this spectrum, Ataç, Cultural Consultant of İnönü, had a separate place within Yücel’s circle. He was neither a cultural nationalist nor a populist²⁷⁸. As a radical modernist, he defended a clear break from the past. The below lines well indicate his perspective on cultural policies:

²⁷⁵ *Maarif Vekilliği Birinci Maarif Şurası, 17-29 Temmuz 1939 Çalışma Programı Konuşmalar, Lahikalar*, Ankara: Maarif Vekilliği, 1939, pp.393-394

²⁷⁶ The branch was planned to open firstly in Ankara Erkek High School, Galatasaray and Vefa Erkek High Schools. Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi Kurulu Kararı, issue 186, 1940

²⁷⁷ Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi Kurulu Kararı, issue 336, 1942

²⁷⁸ What differed Nurullah Ataç from the other Westernists of the time was his rigid anti-populism which made him think the majority of the people as a non-comprehending reactionists as can be seen in his words “Majority is always reactionist. Not only here, but everywhere. They content themselves with ancient ideas and beliefs, can not understand that they should change, just wish the continuity of the past.” in Nurullah Ataç, *Prospero ile Caliban*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999, p. 202. Orhan Koçak evaluates Ataç’s elitism as “a genuine display of oriental ‘historical complex’”. Orhan Koçak, “Nurullah Ataç ve Etkilenme Endişesi”, *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasî Düşünce vol: 3 Modernleşme ve Batıcılık*, ed. Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002, p. 485

Are we revolutionists? Are we really revolutionists? We will close the past. We will not read old *divans*, or play and listen to old music until we gain a new identity. One day, when our new identity is constructed, developed and stabilized; then we will be able to look back on, read and like Fuzuli, Baki as an English or German reads, namely with our minds, not feelings.²⁷⁹

On the other hand, Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, a member of IPC, was the representative of a folklorist/populist cultural understanding, known as Anatolian humanism²⁸⁰ or Blue Anatolianism (*Mavi Anadoluculuk*). Eyüboğlu, with a humanitarian synthesis of the East and the West, looked upon popular displays such as Karagöz, Nasrettin Hoca, Pir Sultan and Yemen Türküsü as parts of cultural wealth of Anatolia and advocated that “they should not be approached with populism but public opinion in mind”²⁸¹. He carried this understanding to the agenda by his following quotation: “We have kneaded this land and it kneaded us. Thus, whatever exists from the earliest to the latest in our homeland, are intrinsic to us. The history of our people is the history of Anatolia.”²⁸²

Meanwhile, with the instruction of Hasan Ali Yücel, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, one of the prominent conservative intellectuals of the period, was appointed as professor of Contemporary Turkish Literature at the Faculty of Literature of Istanbul University in 1939, although he did not have any PhD degree. Furthermore he was also appointed to write the history of Turkish Literature since Tanzimat on the occasion of the centennial of Tanzimat. He

²⁷⁹ Nurullah Ataç, *Günce*, November 16, 1953 İstanbul: Varlık, 1971, p. 127

²⁸⁰ Anatolian Humanism, developed among Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, Azra Erhat and Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı (Halikarnas Balıkcısı) had an impact on forming the cultural policies and also historical understanding of Hasan Ali Yücel Era. However, they will not be analyzed deeply in this chapter which does not focus evaluating them but will refer to such views and representatives only when related to the official policies taken up. Impact of this approach would be more explicit in the reformulation of the official history, which is analyzed in Chapter 6.

²⁸¹ Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, “Bizim Anadolu”, *Mavi ve Kara*, İstanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları, 1994, p. 14

²⁸² *ibid.*, p.9

wrote various articles in the Encyclopedia of Islam with Mükrimin Halil, İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal and Mehmet Kaplan²⁸³. Favorable relationship between Tanpınar and the ruling cadre is a good illustration demonstrating that assumptions classifying Republicans' evaluation of progressive and conservative intellectuals as conflicting forces is not more than a misevaluation.

Another critical point which is worthy of attention is, the special place given to Dr. Adnan Adıvar in the publication matters. Being one of the intellectuals whose prestige was restored during the İnönü Era, Adıvar was appointed to important positions by the Ministry of Education such as being the director of the editorial commission of *Encyclopedia of Islam*. He also translated from French and published his book titled *Osmanlı Türklerinde İlim* (1937) with the suggestion of Hasan Ali Yücel²⁸⁴.

Nevertheless, the above mentioned intellectuals with different ideological stances willingly worked under the same roof and paved the way to many cultural achievements. Orhan Koçak very suitably defined their reciprocal maneuvers during this “restoration era” as the attempts for the solution of the old “East-West” question which became a remedy for Turkey’s “injured consciences”, at least temporarily²⁸⁵. However, they were unable to prevent reactions during the 1940’s to cultural-educational policies which in the course of time proved to be the foundation bricks of Turkish-Islamic Synthesis.

²⁸³ Kayahan Özgül, “Edib Tanpınar’dan Edebiyat Tarihçisi Tanpınar’a”, *Hece*, 61, 2002, p.102

²⁸⁴ Kurtuluş Kayalı, “Bir Türk Aydınının Trajik Portresi”, *Tarih ve Toplum*, 166, 1997, pp. 205-210

²⁸⁵ Orhan Koçak defines the years between 1923 and 1938 as a period of “discharge” breaking the cultural policies of the Republic from the past. From this point, he evaluates the years between 1938 and 1950 as a “relative restoration” as humanist policies were attempts of a meeting and synthesis of the past and present and of the East and the West. Orhan Koçak, “1920’lerden 1970’lere Kültür Politikaları”, *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasî Düşünce vol: 2 Kemalizm*, ed. Ahmet İnsel, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p.397

4.3 1946: Rising Conservatism in RPP

The above mentioned developments turned the second half of İnönü's presidency into a flexible time when next to claims of democracy as well as climbing marginal ideologies, rising conservatism was observed in the RPP. In fact, these sharp cleavages were reflected even upon changing educational policy of the ruling cadre. Moreso, İnönü's assistance to the removal of some of his most confided associates in the line of education, Hasan Ali Yücel coming first to be replaced by conservatives such as Reşat Şemsettin Sirer echoed within the enlightened circles with astonishment as the consequences put a heavy restrictive pressure upon total educational system extending to changes in moral values and ethical understanding. The reactionary events following the illumination the intellectuals strived to install even ended up at the court house with challenges of the recent past. A very striking example to such court cases was the long debated Yücel-Öner Case.

4.3.1 Yücel-Öner Case

Starting from the Cold War Era after 1945, the Turkish government has changed its attitude towards Pan-Turkist groups. They were judged, but were acquitted from the Racist-Turanist Case in 1944. Making use of the opportunities generated by new conditions to their own benefit, the Turkists built connections with the nationalist circles close to the political power by giving weight on the concept of nationalism.

Starting as a simple defamation case between DP Istanbul Provincial Head and lawyer Kenan Öner and Hasan Ali Yücel in 1947, the lawsuit became a political struggle aiming to prove that Yücel was protecting and promoting all leftists, including the communists²⁸⁶. The phase leading to the mentioned trial was developed as such: In 1947, Minister of Interior Şükrü Sökmensüer made a statement at the Grand National Assembly that was built on the documents collected as a result of the research done by the Istanbul

²⁸⁶ As a matter of fact, blaming one as a communist was very popular during the Cold War Era. RPP and DP were frequently accusing each other of having relations with and protecting communists.

Martial Command and showed the phases of communism in Turkey, which in turn he used to give the names of two members of the Democrat Party in order to discredit the latter. Then, one of the mentioned persons, Field Marshall Fevzi Çakmak, in order to defend himself, claimed that the Minister of Education of the period supported communist activities while he was in charge. Yücel responded to this claim with an open letter he sent to the press and asked the Field Marshall who was the Minister of Education he mentioned, activities of which communists he was referring to and who was he warning. The letters of Yücel were left without an answer. Kenan Öner blamed Yücel as well, and Yücel pressed a charge in 1947²⁸⁷.

During the trial, Nihal Atsız and others judged in the 1944 Case also played an important role as witnesses. Öner brought forth the issues of communism, racism, Sabahattin Ali-Nihal Atsız Case, the professors of DTCF and Village Institutes to the court. His basic assertions were that; Hasan Ali Yücel allowed communist actions in the Institutes and also protected communist professors in the university. Thus, the case became a revenge on the events of 1944 which would also lead to the discharge of four professors²⁸⁸ in DTCF in 1948 and the closing of Village Institutes in 1954²⁸⁹.

On November 1947, the court decided to drop the case. Although Yücel appealed and the lawsuit process restarted in 1948, this meant his political setback. On December 1949, Kenan Öner and Cemalettin Saraçoğlu were fined for a charge corresponding to 4 months and 20 days of

²⁸⁷ Mustafa Çıkar, *Hasan Ali Yücel ve Türk Kültür Reformu*, İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 1997

²⁸⁸ These professors were Pertev Naili Boratav, Behice Boran, Niyazi Berkes and Mediha Berkes; owners and authors of *Yurt ve Dünya*, *Adımlar* and *Görüşler*. Dean of DTCF, Enver Ziya Karal wrote a secret writing to the Ministry of Education General Directorate of Higher Education in December 1945 asking the dismissal of these professors with the claim of expressing communist thoughts through these journals and “aiming to channel the ideas of faculty students into harmful directions” and Minister Hasan Ali Yücel affirmed the decision. Although the professors were absolved with the reversed decisions of the State Council and Supreme Court, they were shelved with the act of parliament. Uğur Mumcu, *40'ların Cadı Kazanı*, İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1990

²⁸⁹ Cemil Koçak, “İrkçilik-Turancılık Davasının Siyasi Rövanş: Öner-Yücel Davası”, *Tarih ve Toplum*, 166, 1997, pp. 22-30

imprisonment. Yücel pressed charges against Öner for a second time, and he also sued Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti, Cemal Oğuz Öçal, Haluk Karamağaralı, Selahattin Ertürk and İbrahim Süruri Ermete due to their defaming accusations. All of these cases resulted in favor of Yücel and the lawsuits ended with the conviction of the accused. Despite all, Hasan Ali Yücel acquitted only before the court. Defaming and accusation campaigns against him reached the desired goal as it spread to massive sections of the population.

4.3.2 Changes in the Moral Perception of the Ruling Cadre

Starting from the earliest days of İnönü's presidency, there were some deputies who opposed the "new ethics" that the Republican cadre aimed to create within the new generation. Following Sirer's appointment, some deputies sharing this view started to carry their opposition to the assembly. For example Çanakkale Deputy Nurettin Ünen claimed that the Party ought to abandon what he described as "the academic ethics" so that new generations can be raised according to Turkish traditions. He even proposed to impose the ethical principles "inherited from grandparents" that "flared up the Turk in 16th century and led him to fame everywhere" instead of adopting the scientific and pedagogical; he was heartily applauded as he voiced this proposal at the assembly²⁹⁰.

Similarly, shifts in the political power's conception of nationalism and national identity affected and determined the ideas on the function of some courses in schools. Cemil Sait Barlas, a prominent politician of the time, complained that civics and history courses were inadequate in reflecting nationalism and especially history textbooks failed to clearly specify Turks' enemies. His conviction was that it was essential to convey to the students ancestral conquests reaching back to 300-400 years and territories which unfortunately were lost 80 years ago and to "teach the late Ottoman history at

²⁹⁰ Dönem 8 cilt 3 toplanti 1, 1946, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Bütçesi, p. 399

primary and secondary schools with all its distinctiveness as if teaching a religious book”²⁹¹.

Along with the rising conservatism since 1940s, perception of regarding religion as a part of the national identity also increased not only within the intellectual, but in political arena as well and Islam was made a frequent emphasis of political discourses at the assembly²⁹². One of the most characteristic examples of increasing conservatism making the year 1946 a landmark was Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver’s approach. After drifting apart from the secularist wing of RPP that year, Tanrıöver resigned from the party in 1947. During his last year as a deputy he declared that two kinds of faith could be given to the Turkish youth: One was nationality, which was Turks’ new faith. The other was religion which “we should consider our duty to instill into the minds of Turkish children”²⁹³. His following emphasis on the indispensable place of religion in social life which was eminently neglected in the re-opening speech of the Turkish Hearths in 1949 serves as another good example to his approaches: “Religion is the oldest and the most continuous institution of the nations. It is a defense shelter for enslaved nations.”²⁹⁴

Rising of the conservative voices in the parliament accompanied influential reaction and even harsh attacks towards the educational and cultural

²⁹¹ Dönem 8 cilt 3 toplantı 1, 1946, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Bütçesi, p. 400

²⁹² As a matter of fact, one reason for giving prominence to religion as an important aspect of Turkish cultural and moral values was regarding it as bastion against communism. Both in political and intellectual arena, Islam was emphasized as an antidote of this ‘disease’. Anti-communism was very popular among conservatives and religion was used as an anti-propaganda for communism. For example Necip Fazıl, a well known Islamist, over attacks towards RPP claimed to be advocating communism frequently displayed religious propaganda in his journal *Büyük Doğu*. For further, see Nazan Üstün, *Büyük Doğu Mecmuası’nın Siyasal Analizi*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Istanbul, 2011

As for the parliament front, conservative wing in RPP was concerned about communist movements developing within the country. Remarks such as “moral structure of the Turkish nation should be reinforced” and “they [the youth] should be given the opportunity to benefit from religion and nationality as great moral values” were often pronounced at parliamentary meetings as remedies to prevent this ‘trouble’ from spreading. Dönem 8 cilt 3 toplantı 1, 1946, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Bütçesi, p. 440

²⁹³ Dönem 8 cilt 3 toplantı 1, 1946, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Bütçesi, p. 439

²⁹⁴ İlhan Darendelioğlu, *Türkiye’de Milliyetçilik Hareketleri*, İstanbul: Toker Yayınları, 1977, p.221.

policies of Hasan Ali Yücel Era. Another instrument utilized to attack Yücel was the Village Institutes. It was claimed the Institutes were the “communist organizations” planned to stir up a Stalin-led revolution in Turkey and that the teachers of these institutes conveyed communistic propagandas to students. The assertions of Emin Soysal, an independent parliament member, were typical for reflecting the general views of the conservatives on Village Institutes. Soysal expressed that the reason for communistic attributions to the institutes was a particular story a teacher of Hasanoğlan Village Institute told in the office of *Millet* Journal. The story that the teacher told was published in the journal as follows: “For instance they instill the students as such: What does nationalism mean? There is no such thing as a nation. This is a narrow and immature view. Neither nation nor God exist. Those two are nonsense driving humanity into ill thoughts.”²⁹⁵

Translation of the world classics into Turkish was another topic opponents tried to degrade Yücel. For instance Emin Soysal brought up the wrong translations in the books. But more importantly, he complained that most of the translated books -nearly 98%- were novels and love stories, and he asked the parliament whether parents wanted youngsters of the Turkish nation to be brought up as novelists²⁹⁶.

Journals were another channel the opponents disseminated their reactions for Yücel. *Bilgi*, published by İstanbul Teachers’ Association²⁹⁷ (*Muallimler Birliği*) was a noteworthy educational journal containing articles of authors with oppositional stance. The following statements of the editorial summarize the general perspective of the journal towards Hasan Ali Yücel and his cadre during his ministry:

²⁹⁵ Dönem 8 cilt 3 toplantı 1, 1946, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Bütçesi, p. 456

²⁹⁶ Dönem 8 cilt 3 toplantı 1, 1946, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Bütçesi, p. 454

²⁹⁷ The honorary chairman of the association was Şemsettin Günaltay. Mustafa Şekip Tunç was assigned as the chairman and Ziyaeddin Fahri Fındıkoğlu as the executive clerk of the association in 1949. These names were illustrative of reflecting association’s general perspective.

If the people put in charge of a work had real expertise; Mr. Yücel who instructed the Turkish education for eight nine years only in line with his own ideas thinking that they were true, would have good reputation and be recalled as a man with high contribution to the Turkish education. On the contrary, the reformation made on education today shows how much of what he did have been inappropriate.

It is possible to come across with affirmative works in his recent actions on education, while there have also been wrong implementations. Yet, considering that to fix a broken machine is far too harder than to make a new machine, the mistakes made by Mr. Yücel are impossible to be amended.²⁹⁸

All kinds of educational developments including the new school curricula and the textbooks of various courses were made matters to criticize with claims that “these foreign and unsuited adjustments were not performed with national considerations; instead, they were the products of some personal, arbitrary, egoistic ambitions inviting harmful, inglorious and even dangerous consequences for the nation and professions.”²⁹⁹ The authors even disregarding common courtesy asserted that Yücel “was affronted by the teachers and students in every city he visited and every meeting he held was intervened and dispelled by the police” and that he “was too informal everywhere, laid on the desks in classrooms”, “set a bad example for and had negative impacts on teachers, students and the environment”³⁰⁰.

Certainly, there were various reasons behind the overall attack to this era of humanistic policies. Discontent for the Single Party rule accompanied by increasing conservatism made educational and cultural applications targets of the opponents. Especially the legal conflict between Öner and Yücel Case as explained above, became a leverage for them to assault Hasan Ali Yücel. Although Yücel won the case with the appeal, Öner became the actual political victor. This was also the victory of conservatism, especially chauvinist nationalism; and it not only affected the general public opinion, but also the

²⁹⁸ “En Büyük Maarif Davamız”, *Bilgi*, November 1947, 6, p. 26

²⁹⁹ “Okullarda Tarih Dersleri”, *Bilgi*, August 1948, 15, p. 14

³⁰⁰ Nesip Kaşifoğlu, “Atay Yücel ve Muhtar Çakır”, *Bilgi*, May 1950, 37, p.25-27

RPP itself. Even İnönü could not resist the pressure from his party; he did not hesitate to sacrifice Yücel and did not get in touch with him until his death. Yet the political balances were shifting and RPP took its position within the new order.

CHAPTER 5

POST-ATATÜRK UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORY

The nature of national history writing cannot be understood well when isolated from the dynamics of nation-state, and multiplicity in social and intellectual contexts of the era is overlooked. Therefore a brief overview on the characteristics of academic/professional historiography will be presented first in this chapter aiming to demonstrate different perceptions on history through the ideas of intellectuals with different ideological backgrounds. A general frame of Turkish intellectuals not sharing the official historical understanding will be displayed through analysis of the prominent journals of the İnönü Era. The reason behind this analysis is the intention to exhibit the discrepancies and overlapping points between the official viewpoint and historical understanding of the various ideologies and how they contributed each other. This endeavor will equip the reader with a complete intellectual context and ideological landscape of the era, the edges of the official ideology becoming fully apparent only if evaluated within the entirety of the available perceptions.

It is worth noting at this point that the mentioned perceptions formed to some extent the basics of the official ideology and history - Turkish-Islamic Synthesis - of 1970s and 1980s. The graduates of the history departments of institutions such as Faculty of Liberal Arts (İstanbul University)³⁰¹ or Faculty of Letters (DTCF of Ankara University) as well as academicians³⁰² of these institutions and of the Türkiyat Institute in 1940s become prominent representatives of Turkish-Islamic Synthesis. Articles of leading academicians'

³⁰¹ For instance İbrahim Kafesoğlu, Muharrem Ergin, Osman Turan, Mehmet Altay Köymen, Faruk Timurtaş.

³⁰²For instance Zeki Velidi Togan, Sadri Maksudi Arsal, Reşit Rahmeti Arat, Ziyaeddin Fahri Fındıkoğlu, Mükrimin Halil Yinanç.

writings on Turkish-Islamic history in some journals also are good examples indicating the support given to the new thesis. For instance the contributors of *Çınaraltı*; İsmail Hami Danişmend and Tayyip Gökbilgin were illustrative names of this background. Thus it would be critical to present the ideological and historical background of the future official approach and how it was fed from various ideologies.

5.1 Historical Studies of 1940s

Undoubtedly, historiography in Turkey cannot be evaluated independent from the phases pursued in other countries. Thus, emergence and evolvement of modern historiography in Turkey followed a similar pattern with Western counterparts. Resembling the nationalist character implanted into the historiography of 1930s Turkey through Social Darwinist impacts of European historiography particularly after 1910, a certain part of studies of some prominent historians in 1930s Turkey and onwards were conducted with the impact of Annales School³⁰³ which their effects were felt much more during 1940s. In this respect, Fuat Köprülü and Ömer Lütfi Barkan gained significance for the institutionalization of history in Turkey and its variations in methodology and the subject matter³⁰⁴. Fuat Köprülü made a comparative analysis regarding the institutions of Byzantine and Ottoman empires tracing the effects of Byzantine institutions onto the development of Ottoman ones in *Bizans Müesseselerinin Osmanlı Müesseselerine Tesiri Hakkında Bazı Mülahazalar*. Furthermore, he analyzed the social structure of Anatolia through an economic perspective in *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluşu*. Köprülü

³⁰³ Annales School brought forth new approaches in the topics and methodology of history such as problem based analytical researches with an interdisciplinary approach initiated by the studies of Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre and Fernand Braudel. The topics of the history were also changed from political history of the states to the structures/institutions and long term processes. Georg Iggers, *Yirminci Yüzyılda Tarihyazımı*, (trans.) Gül Çağalı Güven, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, pp. 51-56

³⁰⁴ Erdem Sönmez in his comprehensive study on historiography in Turkey, reveals the effect of Annales School on Turkish historiography by analyzing four prominent historians; Fuat Köprülü, Ömer Lütfi Barkan, Mustafa Akdağ and Halil İnalcık. Erdem Sönmez, *Annales Okulu ve Türkiye'de Tarihyazımı*, Ankara: Tan Kitabevi Yayınları, 2010

played an important role in the historiography of the following years. His assistants or students such as Abdülkadir İnan, Faruk Sümer, Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Pertev Naili Boratav, Osman Turan and Mustafa Akdağ became leading historians in their research areas³⁰⁵.

Ömer Lütfi Barkan, one of the founders of the economic history in Turkey, got his university education in Strasbourg between 1927-1931 and was affected by the academic and intellectual atmosphere there especially through the courses he took from leading historians of the Annales School³⁰⁶. He analyzed the social and economical structure of the Ottoman Empire in the paper he presented at the 2nd Turkish History Congress³⁰⁷. İlber Ortaylı pointed out the Annales effect on Köprülü as “the historians of 1920s to 1940s belonging to Köprülü School had read H. Pirenne and the historians of French Annales School when they were university students.”³⁰⁸ Likewise, Halil İnalçık initiated effects of this school with Köprülü and evaluated Barkan as “the researcher doing studies opening an era in this field”³⁰⁹. Thus, the effect of Annales School on Turkish historiography can be initiated with Fuat Köprülü in 1930s; but its ideal background could be traced back in the late Ottoman period with the rising of social and economic history understanding by Yusuf Akçura.

However, more importantly, the academic studies of 1940s supported the perception of structural uniqueness of Turkish-Islamic states and resulted in the crystallization of a particularist understanding in the historiography of

³⁰⁵ Halil Bertay, *Cumhuriyet İdeolojisi ve Fuat Köprülü*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1983, p. 90

³⁰⁶ Erdem Sönmez, *Annales Okulu*, p. 165-166

³⁰⁷ Ömer Lütfi Barkan, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Kuruluş Devrinin Toprak Meseleleri”, *II. Türk Tarih Kongresi İstanbul 20-25 Eylül 1937*, İstanbul: Kenan Matbaası, 1943, pp.1002-1013. The translation of this research was also published as an article in *Annales* in 1939.

³⁰⁸ İlber Ortaylı, “Kurumların Tarihçisi Henri Pirenne Hakkında”, *Ortaçağ Kentleri: Kökenleri ve Ticaretin Canlanması*, Henri Pirenne, (trans.) Şadan Karadeniz, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002, p. 8

³⁰⁹ Halil İnalçık, “Osmanlı Devleti’nin Kuruluşu Problemi”, *Doğu-Batı Makaleler I*, Ankara: Doğu Batı Yayınları, 2006, p.218

Turkey. Emerged within the tradition of *historicism*, particularist perception paved way towards the break from the universalist and progressive line which Enlightenment has figured³¹⁰. As of then, all values related to the concept of the state were reduced to culture as its defining ideal³¹¹. Hence, 1930s understanding of a strict distinction between ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ followed by a rupture from the Ottoman past was gradually abandoned. Its reflections on the textbooks would be visible later, 1950s and onwards.

It is obvious that particularism and the idea that “we resemble only ourselves”, one of the concrete expressions of particularism, persisted after 1938 with slight changes in its form and with a conservative content³¹². With this conservative restoration, the Ottoman history was studied with an inclination to discover “the golden age” and the idea of “the esteemed state”. Thus, the reason of the decline was attributed to moving away from this “golden age”. This period based on reconciling with the Ottoman past began to be regarded as “the continuation of the glorious Turkish history, one of the last appearances of wide settlement and colonization movements generated by Turkish raids”³¹³. In this respect, historical studies regarding Ottoman period increased during this period³¹⁴.

³¹⁰ History textbooks written by Şemsettin Günaltay in 1939 excluding Evolution Theory serves a good example for this. Another part omitted in the textbook was “Emergence of Thought” which presented the history of thought in a scientific perspective having a distant stance to religious explanations.

³¹¹ Suavi Aydın, “Aydınlanma ve Tarihselcilik Problemleri Arasında Türk Tarihyazıcılığı: Feodalite Örneği”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 91, 2002, p. 54

³¹² The conservative comprehension of historiography compromised with Ottoman and İslam became more apparent during İnönü Era especially in academic field. Journals of this period became a channel to express their perspectives. In fact, this conception provided the intellectual background of Turkish Islamic Synthesis, the official ideology and historiography of 1980s.

³¹³ Ömer Lütü Barkan, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Kuruluş”, p. 1011

³¹⁴ Some of the other books which were influential in the studies of the following years can be listed as İsmail H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilatına Medhal*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1941; M. Kemal İnal, *Son Sadrazamlar*, vol: 1-6, İstanbul: Maarif Basımevi, 1940; Ahmet Bedevi Kuran, *İnkılap Tarihimiz ve Jön Türkler*, İstanbul: Tan Matbaası, 1945; İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, vol: 1-6, İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi

In the post-1938 Turkish historiography, particularism was expanded with an attribution of uniqueness this time to the Ottoman administrative system and social structure resembling the notion of “uniqueness” apparent in the foundation process of the Republic. This state-centered historiography was initiated by Ömer Lütfi Barkan towards the end of 1930s and in time, became the orthodox doctrine of academic historiography³¹⁵. The paper presented in the 2nd Turkish History Congress constituted the mainline of Barkan’s basic views which were displayed in his further researches³¹⁶. In this study examining land management of Ottoman State during the foundation period and its effects on social and economical structure, Barkan put forth the uniqueness of the Ottoman order and justice which was totally different from its Western counterparts adding that *timar system* was illustrative of the inexistence of feudalism. The principal claim lying under this stance was that, in this system, *timar holders* did not have the opportunity to become a feudal lord as they just functioned as civil servants of the centralist state. Thus;

The matters pertaining to land relations, which is one of the basic essentials concerning the issues under examination were attempted to be liberated from being regarded as part of the application of conditions isolated from those providing continuity for their reason of being and, instead placed under historical, legal and economic contexts which enabled their emergence. In this respect, in addition to the non-existence of any responsibility for anyone to create a social order, it was understood that none of the social organizations defining the era were brought up by pure imitation and application of the like³¹⁷.

As observed, the denial of feudalism in Seljuk and Ottoman States serves a good example for the concept of uniqueness. Behind this rejection lies the understanding of state dominance throughout the land, the classless society and the just order disallowing accumulation of any surplus value within certain groups. This perception which is repeated in history textbooks up to this date

³¹⁵ Halil Bertay, “Dört Tarihinin Sosyal Portresi”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 54-55, 1991, p.42

³¹⁶ Ömer Lütfi Barkan, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Kuruluş”, p.1002-1013.

³¹⁷ *ibid*, p. 1013.

was adopted and explicitly defended by leading historians, also by the followers of Barkan; such as Halil İnalçık and Osman Turan.

The reflections of the conservative historiography exalting Ottoman and Islamic past as a historical reference appeared in official discourses as early as 1946, beginning only four months after Hasan Ali Yücel Era. During the budget negotiations of Ministry of Education, Hamdullah Suphi expressed his discontent for the disparaging, trivializing approach of the ruling cadre towards Turkish past due to the fear from reactionism. He also demonstrated his own acknowledgement of the past and asserted that;

We should give our children the great faith that our fathers relied upon; the faith that constituted the basis of the Ottoman State and also of the state established by the Seljuk sultans who have Turkified Anatolia before us.
Now it is time to abandon this [attitude]... Friends, we should once again inspire our children to respect our past and ancestors again.³¹⁸

The same sentiment was valid in the Fourth Educational Congress held in 1949, where the ending of the Turkish History Thesis was announced with the commission report including the following remarks: “The anxiousness for joining the world civilization with our national values and revolutionary steps from time to time invited exaggerations as well as negligence in our history and language researches. We started to overlook the exceptional place of Seljuk and Ottoman civilizations upon contemporary history.” Thus, it was regarded unworthy to conduct “researches on Ottoman history, embracing its entire social, judicial, political, economical institutions and cultural elements”. It was also emphasized in the report that, “conveying consciousness of continuity of the national history to Turkish youth was not harmful, in fact, rather beneficial, moreso it was a requirement of democracy.”³¹⁹ During negotiation discussions of the commission report, Nihat Sami Banarlı took the floor and declared that it became a requirement to give an end to Turkish

³¹⁸ Dönem 8 cilt 3 toplantı 1, 1946, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Bütçesi, p. 438-439

³¹⁹ *Dördüncü Milli Eğitim Şurası 22-31 Ağustos 1949*, Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1949, p.68

History Thesis for the imaginary views it asserted such as all nations having Turkic origin or all languages were derived from Turkish damaged the genuine history and accordingly national education. He commented that such perspectives “infiltrated to Turkish history and language education should not exist at all in school curricula”³²⁰

5.2 General Vision of Turkish Conservative Intellectuals

İnönü Era witnessed the rise of a strong criticism towards Republican modernization understanding and its practices. In this respect, intellectuals opponent to these had a chance to reflect their ideas through different channels, specifically journals. However, the origin of their thoughts can be traced back to early 1930s, which were the years of systematization endeavors of Kemalism and maturation of alternative modernization perceptions in a traditional and conservative perspective³²¹. The initial oppositions were voiced in 1932 by Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, Vedat Nedim Tör, Burhan Asaf Belge and İsmail Hüsrev Tökin under *Kadro* Journal. Similar step was taken by Mustafa Şekip Tunç, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, Hilmi Ziya Ülken, Peyami Safa, İsmayıl Hakkı Baltacıoğlu and Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver in a conservative conception. Nevertheless, an explicit opposition to the core values of Revolution ideology was not possible during that time. Hence, conservative intellectuals could express themselves and put forth their perspectives upon state and society within the scope which Kemalism defined and permitted. Under such circumstances, legitimacy and duration of their movement could only be provided by positioning their ideology in the edges of Kemalism³²². Nazım İrem defined this understanding, which stood out as a

³²⁰ *ibid.*, p.82.

³²¹ For a comprehensive analysis on Turkish conservatism, see Nazım İrem, “Kemalist Modernizm ve Türk Gelenekçi-Muhafazakârlığının Kökenleri”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 74, 1997, p. 52-99

³²² Accordingly, Peyami Safa expressed in the preface of the 1981 edition of his book *Türk İnkılabına Bakışlar* and the following editions, “This book was written in 1938 and published serially in *Cumhuriyet* newspaper. They were the last days of Atatürk. Writing discipline

separate ideology from Ottomanism, Islamism, Turanism and constituted the first serious critique paving the way towards Turkish modernism as “Republican conservatism”³²³.

Republican conservatives objected to the radical, top to down modernization understanding of the ruling cadre visioning the recent positive, rationalist progress as a complete break from the past. They looked upon such ignoring as eliminating the uniqueness/genuineness of the historical and cultural values bringing the Turkish nation to the present. Affected by spiritualist, romantic and Bergsonian³²⁴ philosophical movements, conservative intellectuals were suggested an evolutional social change. It should be underlined that, they were not against change and progress, but suggested renovation without disregarding traditions, or to “approach to future without drifting away from the past”³²⁵. Their modernization approach was based on the continuity and preservation of cultural values and in this respect, *tradition* was very important. They also aimed to establish a national identity upholding religious and cultural-traditional values as an alternative to the Republican understanding of secular identity rejecting religious symbols³²⁶. Amongst them, Peyami Safa described himself as “both revolutionary and conservative”, and Baltacıođlu highlighted the word ‘traditionalism’ (*ananecilik*) to differentiate his ideas from religious reactionism. In this respect, Tanıl Bora’s definition of conservatism as “a request of purification the modernization from

common to that period was obliging the writer to endure some limitations on freedom of thought, with the requirement of complying to the formal contention.” Peyami Safa, *Türk İnkılabına Bakışlar*, Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1981

³²³ Nazım İrem, “Cumhuriyetçi Muhafazakarlık, Seferber Edici Modernlik ve Diğer Batı Düşüncesi”, *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, 57 (2), 2002, pp. 41-60

³²⁴ Also known as *intuitionism*, this movement prioritizes intuition than mind for the intellectual thinking.

³²⁵ İsmayıl Hakkı Baltacıođlu, *Türke Doğru*, İstanbul: Yeni Adam Yayınları, 1943, p. 139

³²⁶ Nuray Mert, “Muhafazakârlık ve Laiklik”, *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasî Düşünce vol: 5 Muhafazakârlık*, ed. Ahmet Çiğdem, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003, pp. 314-345

extremenesses and conciliation it with the tradition”³²⁷, well reveals the characteristics of the movement.

Conservative intellectuals of this period paid attention to history as to recognize the distinctive cultural components of the nation and historical process generating these cultural structures since “understanding today’s world and national values are relied upon historical and social consciousness”³²⁸. They regarded “nation” as the outcome of a social evolution, protective of own values – such as language, customs, traditions, folk, memory – all constituting the roots of social identity. Within this context, the awakening of historical consciousness in conformity with tradition and culture gained significance among these intellectuals. This consciousness was “a sense describing the roots of present existence and the cadre of our social character”³²⁹. As a reflection of their romantic approach, conservatives defended a particularist perspective on history. In other words, they believed in that people were the products of their unique history and tradition and accordingly emphasized the exclusiveness of Turkish history and culture. It should again be stated that, their political and social perspective was not to preserve the past as unchangeable, thus their historical understanding and ‘perceiving a person in a historical context’ did not include recreating and living in a ‘glorious past’; but to walk to the future with the potential of historical-cultural heritage. It was also very essential for them to avoid “admiration of the past”, “slaving to the previous models” and “any scholasticism whether religious or not”³³⁰.

Conservatives’ understanding of history developed in accordance with their modernization perception, the main question being what of the past ought to be adopted as reference for traditions. At this point, the past that the

³²⁷ Tanıl Bora, “Muhafazakarlığın Değişimi ve Türk Muhafazakarlığında Bazı Yol İzleri”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 74, 1997, p. 20

³²⁸ Hilmi Ziya Ülken, “Tarih Şuuru ve Vatan”, *Millet ve Tarih Şuuru*, İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008, p. 197

³²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 208

³³⁰ Hilmi Ziya Ülken, “Tanzimat ve Hümanizma”, *Millet ve Tarih Şuuru*, İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008, p. 42

Republican elite and the conservatives followed was differentiated; the elitist approach defined as official history. Basically, the conservatives in conformity with the revolution and the continuity of the renovations embraced the Seljuk and Ottoman heritage as an important page of Turkish history, made references to this period omitted by the ruling cadre. They paid a specific attention to Ottoman period in constructing a national identity as it was regarded the peak of Turkish history. The reason behind elaborating the glorious Ottoman past can be evaluated as the result of the complexes they developed due to defeats against the West. Thus, the conservatives concentrated on “adopting Ottoman heritage as an imaginary elitism in compensation to Republican Westernist elitism which excluded the Ottoman heritage from the new political and cultural scale”³³¹. One of the leading Anatolianists, Remzi Oğuz Arık’s³³² views on history are illustrative of the typical standpoint of conservatives on nationalism, modernization and perception of history. Regarding his understanding of history, Arık strongly criticized the official approach disregarding religion within the history and culture of Turks and pointed the inferiority complex behind this ignorance as;

The way we follow is the historical view intending to get ahead of the self mortification that is the offshoot of the pessimism which is quite possible to be dragged into under our needy situation today.

The historical view is the way which does not permit any deny on all that is done by the nations like us rare-born to humanity...

... Apart from this; such an interest in the past will enlighten a history which has barely been examined and enable a big nation to make its real presence, which has been despised and misunderstood. This concern will teach what our public, our nation found on the way and on this land in the past, how a stand

³³¹ Nuray Mert, “Türkiye İslamcılığına Tarihsel Bir Bakış”, *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasî Düşünce vol: 6 İslamcılık*, (ed.) Yasin Aktay, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003, p. 416

³³² Arık was one of the first archeologists and conducted excavation works in various places of Anatolia under Turkish History Committee until 1940s, but since then he was forced to resign from Archeology Department of DTCF due to the discrepancies with the official viewpoint since he attributed social functions to religion and put emphasis on it within Turkish national identity. Hayati Tüfekçioğlu, “Remzi Oğuz Arık”, *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasî Düşünce vol: 5 Muhafazakârlık*, ed. Ahmet Çiğdem, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003, pp. 448-457

they took towards what was found, how they enriched this heritage and how they stroke out.

Such view of ours is not an admiration of the past. As known, admiration blocks any possibility of criticism. We consider our past as a whole just as if our present. Breaking this wholeness arbitrarily is just overweighing on us as if denying it, that is all!³³³

As for the different perceptions of conservative intellectuals, albeit their different ideological backgrounds, for example, Yahya Kemal's approach to 'nation' with respect to history and geographical environment concerned³³⁴, centering Anatolia became their common feature; in other words, "Turkish rightist wing developed its Ottomanist inspirations from Yahya Kemal line"³³⁵. In fact, the famous poet's verse "I am the future with roots in the past" would become the common slogan of nationalist-conservatives³³⁶.

Last to mention about the Republican conservatives was that they structured the historical and ideological basis for nationalist-conservatives of the subsequent years with the Anatolianists, Islamists and to some extent, racist-Turanists ideas, which became chief representatives of the Turkish right. In other words, conservative intellectuals of 1940s and onwards constructed their historical and social perspectives upon the intellectual heritage of 1930s conservatives. In this respect, 1940s were the years opponent intellectuals regained the opportunity to reflect their opinions through various journals.

³³³ Remzi Oğuz Arık, "Tarih Görüşü", *Çınaraltı*, June 1948, 11, p. 4

³³⁴ In this sense, Yahya Kemal's statement "From now on, the period before 1071 is prehistory, after 1071 is history for me." has become the guideway for the conservatives' historical perception. Nihat Sami Banarlı, *Yahya Kemal'in Hatıraları*, İstanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti Yayınları, 1994, p. 47

³³⁵ Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Cumhuriyet Türkiyesi'nde Osmanlıcılık", *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasî Düşünce vol: 5 Muhafazakârlık*, ed. Ahmet Çiğdem, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003, pp. 361-380

³³⁶ An unbroken time desire in which the past was combined with today was the common motive of the conservatives. Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, another important intellectual of the period, claimed in his famous novel *Huzur* that a healthy national identity could only be constructed through conciliation with the tradition, namely the past. Just like Yahya Kemal, he was on the side with building the 'new' onto the 'old' within the continuity of the culture. Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Huzur*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2001. Even the Turanist intellectual Nihal Atsız ended one of his articles quoting this verse. See Nihal Atsız, "Osmanlı Padişahları", *Türk Tarihinde Meseleler*, Ankara: Afişin Yayınları, 1966, p. 45

1938 as the end of Atatürk Era and the beginning of İnönü's was the first turning point with the gradual detente the new president İsmet İnönü started.

During the İnönü Era encompassing 1938-1950, opposing intellectuals until 1945 had a limited opportunity to declare their views. Nevertheless, with the transition to multi-party system that year, it became easier to explicitly discuss Republican ideology and suggest alternative solutions. Below are the analyses of the mindsets of intellectuals with different ideological backgrounds and how they perceived history in line with their worldviews. In the first place is the racist Turanist perception due to being the dominant opposing ideology with the social and political conditions of the period.

5.3 Racist-Turanist Version of History

An important aspect of the İnönü Era was rising of racist and Pan-Turkist movement involving in various political activities and thus having a broad repercussion in public opinion through press. The significant characteristic of this movement was racist approach, attributing superiority to 'pure Turkish blood'. Ideologists of this movement strictly defended biological racism basing their concept of nationalism on blood and kind unity, and diverting their effort to preserving racial purity.

As a matter of fact, historical and ideological background of this movement was the same with Kemalist nationalism since Turkism emerged during the late Ottoman period³³⁷. The Ottoman Turkists had aimed to construct a national identity based on history, culture and ethnicity. Ziya Gökalp, a prominent ideologist of the period, stressed cultural features of the Turkish nation; language, morality and religion. He also idealized *Turan* as the imaginary and mythical motherland of the Turks. On the other hand, Yusuf Akçura defended pan-Turkism, the racial unity of all Turkish peoples. Hence, both Akçura and Gökalp applied the term 'race' or 'ethnicity' to identify the common cultural heritage of Turks; omitting physical features or pure blood.

³³⁷ The detailed information on the historical and ideological basis of Turkish nationalism was given in Chapter 2.

However, Turkism in 1930s adopted the idea of Turan and race, and attributed new meanings to them in line with its peculiar approach, which will be explained below.

The most effective study on the emerging popularity of racist theories was Arthur de Gobineau's "An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races" written in 1853³³⁸. Gobineau based his theory on the existence of three primary racial divisions; white, yellow and black with the superiority of white/Arian race. His core claim was that decline of civilizations was due to mingling and thus deterioration, hybridization of the races. Therefore, a society's supremacy called for the preserving racial purity by preventing mixing of bloods of different races.

Kemalist nationalism defining national identity in terms of mutual history, culture and ethnicity – emphasizing Central Asian origin and anthropological researches on racial characteristics of Turks – also increased the attention of the Pan-Turkists to racist themes. Ethnicist tones of the official understanding and orations of the top administrators had an impact on widening appreciations towards racist and Pan-Turkist circle. For instance, Minister of Justice, Mahmut Esat Bozkurt in an interview to *Son Posta* in September 21, 1930, stated that "My belief, my conviction is that this very country is Turkish. Those who are not originally Turkish has a right in the Turkish homeland; that is the right to be a servant, a slave." Similarly, Prime Minister Şükrü Saracoğlu in a 1942 parliamentary speech quoted "We are Turkish, we are Turkist and we will always be Turkists. For us, Turkism is not only a matter of blood but also a matter of conscience and culture."³³⁹ This ideology was also accepted by some representatives of the ruling cadre. Reşat Şemsettin Sırer and Tahsin Banguoğlu, two consecutive Ministers of Education succeeding Hasan Ali Yücel, were recognized as Turkist members of the Parliament. In an interview during his ministerial term, Banguoğlu declared

³³⁸ Arthur de Gobineau, *The Inequality of Human Races*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1915

³³⁹ TBMM, *Zabıt Cerideleri*, Devre 6, Cilt 27, p.24-25

that he was against İsmet İnönü because of the fact that “he was not a pureblood Turk” and he did not support the nationalists³⁴⁰.

The political atmosphere in Turkey during the Second World War undoubtedly had great significance on the nationwide climb of Pan-Turkist ideology. In other words, the effect of German propaganda and the overlooking, even implicitly encouraging attitude of the Turkish government this ideology enabled the development and multiplication of adherents³⁴¹. The “Racism-Turanism Case” well describes the changing approach of the government to the Pan-Turkists in line with the changing conditions of Germany and Soviet Russia within the war. This case was a clear evidence of a goodwill step to Soviet Russia after it was understood that Germany would not have any opportunity to win the war. Turkish government supported racists and Turanists while Germany was powerful, yet did not hesitate in disbanding them after the gradual German decline starting at the end of 1943 clarified that they were not needed. However, this outlook changed in 1945 as Soviet Russia became a threat to Turkish foreign policy. Accordingly, it was decided that radical version of nationalism was no longer treated as a crime³⁴².

Turkey lived through a ‘case period’ initiated by a letter sent by Nihal Atsız to the Prime Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu revealing the names of some leftists. Their first trial was held in September 7, 1944 with 65 others following until March 29, 1945. Among the 23 people interrogated, 10 received various punishments. However, the court decisions were rejected by the Military Supreme Court and retrial of the accused started on August 26, 1946. However, all were acquitted. The critical point in this judgment was that expression of

³⁴⁰ Günay Göksu Özdoğan, “*Turan*”dan “*Bozkurt*”a: *Tek Parti Döneminde Türkçülük, 1931-1946*, (trans.) İsmail Kaplan, İstanbul: İletişim, 2001, p. 219

³⁴¹ For further information about the effect of Second World War on Turkish interior and foreign politics, specifically regarding reflections of German propaganda, see Chapter 4.

³⁴² The case of Tan Press was another incident in the government’s using of radical nationalists by its own benefits. Burning of the press by the young nationalists was overlooked and even not prevented for hours. As a consequence, nothing has happened to the ones who have burnt the publishing house, but its owners were judged. For a comprehensive information on this issue, see Cemil Koçak, *Türkiye’de Milli Şef Dönemi (1938-1945)*, vol.2, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996

racist thought was not against the Constitution, since “a thought which is not a crime cannot be a crime when organized”³⁴³.

Turanists of 1930s and 1940s had a racist worldview strongly defending Social Darwinism and thus idealized a history and society in this perspective³⁴⁴. They used journals as an effective channel to spread their ideologies. Some of the Pan-Turkist publications which multiplied between 1939 and 1944 ceased to appear after a few issues. The most populars of were *Atsız Mecmua*, *Orhun*, *Çınaraltı*, *Ergenekon*, *Bozkurt*, *Gök-Börü*, *Tanrıdağ*, *Türk Yurdu*, *Kopuz* but in these periodicals often the same writers, defending the superiority of Turkish race and sharing a nationalist view based on blood rather than cultural values repeatedly wrote the same themes.

Reha Oğuz Türkan explicitly displayed Turanist ideology as “the belief in the supremacy of Turkish race and nation amongst the others”, originating of this supremacy from Turkish blood and attributing unchanged, particularistic qualities to Turkish race as “Turks are inherently superior and gifted. Turks derive their intellect, bravery, military brilliance and its great capability and genius in all respects from their blood”. He reasoned the decline of this superiority to the occasion of “If the blood of the Turk gets dirty with any foreign blood, then the generations which will be born with hybrid and mixed blood will not carry the material and spiritual characteristics of the Turk and they cannot belong to the superior race like that of a genuine Turk.”³⁴⁵ Under such a perception, tarnishing of the pure Turkish blood would entail a decline in the state and society.

The Turanist writers also defined themselves as Pan-Turkists, meaning unification of Turks. Hence, the ideal of Turan has changed when compared

³⁴³ For further information about the speeches of ruling cadre and prominent intellectuals on Racism-Turanism Case, see *Irçılık-Turancılık*, Ankara: Maarif Matbaası, 1944

³⁴⁴ For the comprehensive analysis of the Turkist fascist ideology emerged in 1930s and its theoretical and political perspective relying on the journals that prominent racist Pan-Turkists have published see, Fatih Yaşlı, “*Kinimiz Dinimizdir*” *Türkçü Faşizm Üzerine Bir İnceleme*, Ankara: Tan Kitabevi Yayınları, 2009

³⁴⁵ Reha Oğuz Türkan, “Bozkurtçunun Amentüsü”, *Bozkurt Dergisi*, 1, March 1942, p. 6

with Turanist perspective in Ottoman period and turned into a real target of Pan-Turkist union through an irredentist policy³⁴⁶. In this respect, Pan-Turkists believing Turks possessed natural military and warfare abilities took for granted commanding the world be it by – raid, occupation or conquest. The racist authors of *Çınaraltı*, evaluated Turkishness in historical, social and political aspects in line with this framework, which will be seen below.

5.3.1 *Çınaraltı*

Çınaraltı, one of the leading journals reflecting racist and Pan-Turkist ideals, was known as a ‘Journal of Turkist Ideas and Arts’. It was a weekly journal regularly published between August 1941 and July 1944. After this date its regularity disappeared and only four issues were published between August and October 1944 and then it was issued for one year until 1948³⁴⁷. When compared with other racist journals with harsh tones such as *Gökbörü* and *Bozkurt*, *Çınaraltı* with a variety of authors reflecting moderate interpretations of nationalism reached a wider scope of readers. Apart from Orhan Seyfi Orhon, owner and editor; prominent nationalist writers such as Nihal Atsız, Yusuf Ziya Ortaç, H. Emin Erkilet, Nejdet Sançar, Hüseyin Namık Orkun, Peyami Safa wrote in *Çınaraltı*.

Nihal Atsız was the foremost ideologist of Pan-Turkist movement in 1930s. He set forth his initial views on Turkish history in his book “Türk Tarihi Üzerine Toplamalar”³⁴⁸. We can also find the instances of his racist and irredentist approach on history in “Türk Tarihinde Meseleler”³⁴⁹, a collection of articles published previously in various journals.

³⁴⁶ Orhangazi Ertekin, “Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkçülüğün Çatallanan Yolları,” *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasal Düşünce Vol 4: Milliyetçilik*, ed.: Tanıl Bora, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002 pp.345-387

³⁴⁷ Cumhur Arslan, “Çınaraltı”, *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasal Düşünce Vol 4: Milliyetçilik*, ed.: Tanıl Bora, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002, pp.579-583

³⁴⁸ Nihal Atsız, *Türk Tarihi Üzerinde Toplamalar*, İstanbul 1935

³⁴⁹ Nihal Atsız, *Türk Tarihinde Meseleler*, Ankara: Afşın Yayınları, 1966

Nihal Atsız, asserting that historians did not come to the same conclusion about the same issues they dealt with, did not evaluate history as a science³⁵⁰. Instead, he saw history as a tool of instilling national conscience (Turkishness in this case) and love for nation and that the primary benefit of history was observed in national education and politics. In line with his ideology, Atsız based history upon political and military issues. He also defended the use of history under the ideological purposes and emphasized that “Our concept of history should be in line with our wishes; it should not only show our history in its brightest form but also should offer a path for the future”³⁵¹. Correspondingly, he put forth that historical approach of Turks should first introduce the magnificent victorious wars and lives of Turkish heroes.

This basic assumption was not only defended by Atsız; it was the common view of other racists and Pan-Turkist writers of *Çınaraltı* as well. To promote historical pride, numerous articles were written in the journal bringing forth the ‘glorious victories in Turkish history’ and ‘the best illustrations of destruction wars’. For instance, Hüseyin Namık Orkun³⁵² wrote a serial of articles titled “Serving the Ideal of Turkism” (*Türkçülük İdealine Hizmet Edenler*) in which he introduced prominent Turks such as Attila, Kaşgarlı Mahmud and Ali Şir Nevayi. Similarly, Nejdet Sançar wrote a serial entitled “Heroes of Our Race” (*Irkıımızın Kahramanları*), introducing Turkish sultans such as Selim II (Yavuz), commanders and senior officials such as Topal Osman, Barbaros Hayrettin, Turgut Paşa and Gazi Osman Paşa.

With these articles, the authors approached people by attributing their superior qualifications such as sophistication, intelligence, courage etc. to their

³⁵⁰ Atsız, *Türk Tarihi Üzerinde Toplamalar*, p.2

³⁵¹ *ibid.*, p.3

³⁵² Hüseyin Namık Orkun is rather known with his ‘scientific’ aspect rather than promoting political and ideological knowledge among racist Turkists. Orkun is rather interested in the researches of European and Hungarian Turcologs and also deals with mythological elements within Turkish epics. Nizam Önen, “Hüseyin Namık Orkun”, *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce Vol 4: Milliyetçilik*, ed.: Tanıl Bora, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002, pp.396-397

Turkishness. Thus, most of the articles turned into narrations full of ‘wars with infidels’ ending up with triumphs of ‘valiant Turkish heroes’; even the losers were remembered as ‘victorious and famous commanders’.

Perception of a great victorious history, underlying its ancientness as a tool in instilling a national conscience was the general approach of racists and Pan-Turkists. According to racist conceptions of history and society, Atsız thought the aim of history education was for love of nation. This perception naturally would produce its opponent which was nursing grievance and hostility to the others:

Children of a nation should be raised with both national love and national grudge in order to make them good sons and daughters of that nation. All nations have historical enemies. If the children of a nation is raised with the idea of forgiving those who gave harm to their ancestors, if they do not bear any feeling of vengeance for them or if they deny and do not recognize those who served them, then that nation would lose its right to live.³⁵³

Mustafa Hakkı Akansel emphasized the significance of history education as a means for instilling the idea of being such a great nation in youngsters’ mind and added that “The basic aim in teaching Turkish national history should be to awaken Turkish national conscience, rapidly establish the confidence inspired by reflections from the peerless Turkish history!”³⁵⁴

In this respect, *Çınaraltı* undertook preparation of a list of forty Great Turks under the name of “An Honor Gallery of Turkish History” (*Türk Tarihinin Şeref Galerisi*). The striking point of this list was the criteria in the selecting the ‘Great Turks’ as follows: “1. Coming from the genuine Turkish blood 2. Having the high characteristics of Turkish morality 3. Having rendered unforgettable services to Turkish nation”.³⁵⁵

³⁵³ Atsız, “Osmanlı Padişahları”, p. 35

³⁵⁴ Mustafa Hakkı Akansel, “Millî Tarihimizin Kıymetini Bilelim”, *Çınaraltı*, April 1943, 82, p. 4

³⁵⁵ Adnan Giz, “Türk Tarihinin Şeref Galerisi”, *Çınaraltı*, April 1943, 83, pp. 8-10

Younger brother of Nihal Atsız, Nejdet Sançar writing in *Çınaraltı* also shared the racist ideas above. He regarded blood superiority, military capability and spirit of heroism as the historical power sources of a nation. Yet, he placed history above all quoting “the past makes us assert we belong to the supreme race which we are proud of”³⁵⁶. In addition to this and with reference to the ‘betrayals’ Turks faced in history, Sançar regarded history as a tool to distinguish friends with enemies; namely as the ones who carry pure Turkish blood or not with the basic assumption of “harm will come from a foreigner to a Turk, not a benefit”. History was also fictionalized to encourage the idea of race unity and irredentism³⁵⁷ as follows:

That great son of the Turk had created that magnificent and devastating force called “the armies of Cenghis” in order to establish the unity of its race. These armies were to go to any place where Turks lived. When one of its greatest commanders asked for permission for the conquest of Kipchak, Cenghis gave the following order: ‘If there is a Turk in Kipchak, conquer it then!’ Yes, it was necessary to go to any place where Turks lived and any land where Turks lived would be annexed to the state. Cenghis achieved this ideal of him; he ensured the unity of his race and rendered Turkism the power that subdued the world³⁵⁸.

As for the ideas of Turanists upon official historiography, namely Turkish History Thesis, Atsız wrote an article concerning his views on it. In the article, Atsız first criticized the official standpoint and then he introduced an alternative perspective³⁵⁹. He started his article accusing Turkish History

³⁵⁶ Nejdet Sançar, “Dün ve Dünü İnkâr Edenler”, *Çınaraltı*, August 1941, 3, p. 14

³⁵⁷ Expansionist nationalism was the common approach of racist-Turanists and most of the contributors of the journal adhered to the same position. In this context, Orhan Seyfi Orhon criticized Anatolianists with the thought that they underestimated Turkish nation and restricted them inside Anatolia. However, “We are a great nation, so old and so great”. Additionally, Orhon declared that they were Anatolianists as well, but their “Anatolianism is not opposite Turkism, but complementary to it”. Orhan Seyfi Orhon, “Anadoluculuk”, *Çınaraltı*, September 1942, 51, p.1. Likewise, Orkun implicitly accused the Anatolianists as they were narrow-minded since their effort was to restrict Turkish world inside our national borders. Hüseyin Namık Orkun, “Dünya Tarihinde Türkler”, *Çınaraltı*, January 1943, 69, p.10

³⁵⁸ Nejdet Sançar, “Cengiz Han”, *Çınaraltı*, November 1941, 16, p. 12

³⁵⁹ Nihal Atsız, “Türk Tarihine Bakışımız Nasıl Olmalıdır?”, *Çınaraltı*, August 1941, 1, p. 6-8

Association³⁶⁰ for presenting totally wrong information on Turkish history with the claims that the ancient civilizations were Turkic such as Sumerians, Hittites and Akkadians. Thus, he claimed, the Turkish history taught in schools at once turned into a timeless placeless heap of facts and since every nation was regarded as Turk, ‘being a Turk’ lost its privilege. Atsız stated the fallacy of manipulating history for bringing a feature of ancientness to Turkish civilization³⁶¹. He declared it unnecessary for justifying that Anatolia was the motherland by pronouncing “such an idea of the necessity of being the autochthonous of a land to own the deed of it is meaningless”³⁶². He reminded that claiming other ancient nations as Turkic albeit absence of clues would only humiliate Turks in the scientific community.

It must be included that Atsız was not alone in his claim. For example Hüseyin Namık Orkun was also against regarding ancient civilizations as of Turkic origin. He thought that it was needless “to invent a fictitious past” since Turks already had a glorious and honorable history as he quoted “We do not gain any benefit in making other nations of Turk since I will not be proud of it; but they should”³⁶³.

Literally, there was a consensus among the nationalist-conservative intellectuals regarding the beginning of Turkish history in Anatolia. The common view upon this matter was to initiate it with 1071 Malazgirt War – especially Anatolianists were emphasizing this date – the battle that Great

³⁶⁰ On the other hand, Atsız appreciated İsmet İnönü’s recent order to Turkish History Association for the search of Seljuk and Ottoman history as the “need for the correction of our history by the state” *ibid.*, p.6

³⁶¹ Atsız was strictly against the idea of valuating the ancient civilizations as Turkic origin conforming to Turkish History Thesis. Instead, for the defense of ancientness of Turks, he initiated Turkish history from 1200 B.C. with the Şu/Çu tribe living in Turkistan which referred to the time before Asia Huns. Nihal Atsız, “Türk Tarihinin Meseleleri”, *Türk Tarihinde Meseleler*, Ankara: Afşın Yayınları, 1966, p. 6

³⁶² Nihal Atsız, “Türkiye Tarihinin Meseleleri”, *Türk Tarihinde Meseleler*, Ankara: Afşın Yayınları, 1966, p. 8

³⁶³ Hüseyin Namık Orkun, “Dünya Tarihinde Türkler II”, *Çınaraltı*, January 1943, 69, p.10

Seljuk Sultan Alparslan won against the Byzantium Emperor³⁶⁴. This victory was assumed among Turkish historians as the “confirmation of Turks’ presence in Anatolia”. However, Atsız indicated that in 1071, Seljuk Empire was not newly established, but already was an existing state and succeeded in a war for the hegemony of Anatolia. Hence it would be more accurate to originate “history of Turkey” from 1040, Dandanakan War that Seljuk Sultan Tuğrul Bey won against Ghaznevids; the state was constituted as a result and expanded into Anatolia in time³⁶⁵.

Another critical approach of Atsız to official historiography involved his rejection to anthropology as a scientific method to provide evidence that Turks were brachycephalic and all the brachycephalics were of Turkic origin. Concern for counter-claims as “Won’t the Armenians, Albanians, Bosnians be equally right if they rise and claim that every brachycephalic is Armenian, Albanian and Bosnian since they are brachycephalics as well?”³⁶⁶ undoubtedly was the cause of his rejection. In fact, rejection of anthropology was a common feature of racist-Turanists as they had an exclusionist perception of nationalism³⁶⁷. In other words, they defended the existence of a separate Turkish race and did not accept the terms as Ural Altaic, Mongoloid or Turanid

³⁶⁴ The core reason behind covering Seljuk period as a part of Turkish history was the reaction of official perception of history underestimating the Seljuk and Ottoman past and protection of it with all its historical and cultural values.

³⁶⁵ Atsız, “Türkiye Tarihinin Meseleleri”, p. 8

³⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p.6

³⁶⁷ There is one exceptional article in the journal criticizing the racist approach to Turks both historically and sociologically. Praises to the researches of Şevket Aziz Kansu and Afetinan demonstrate that Nurettin Ardiçoğlu, author of the article, had a closed stance to Turkish History Thesis. He put forth that a zoological concept of race is mixed up with cultural issues, especially history and language. Furthermore, he rigorously criticized the racists’ admiration towards the Nazis and declared that “As for the popular concept of race and racism that have shown up recently in several publications, it is not baseless to say that it is because of imitation of the principles of foreign regimes and lack of understanding of the Turkish history and nationalism.” Nurettin Ardiçoğlu, “Tarihi Türk Irkı ve Muahhar Tahavvülleri”, *Çınaraltı*, September 1942, 62, pp.6-7

since “Turkish race is the dominant within Turanid kin and the only one supplying its characteristics to it”³⁶⁸.

Above all, Atsız regarded the fragmentation of Turkish history as the biggest delusion. His basic claim upon this issue was that; history of Turks was a sustained entity and there was only one Turkish state in the history. Hence, Huns, Kök Turks, Uyghurs, Seljuks, Ottomans and even Turkish Republic were not separate states, but various dynasties within the same state. The problem was, we always considered each dynasty as an independent state and asserted that we have founded that much states. In fact, this was “as simple as today’s cabinet changes”³⁶⁹. Though, Atsız’s justification of all these assumptions was the reflection of his defense of a strong, consistent state tradition; “If we represent each demolished dynasty as a separate state, the consequence would be that we were not able to be stable in political sphere and could not keep our states alive for long.”³⁷⁰

Not complying with the idea of the defense of a strong, dominant power; Atsız also rejected considering Cengiz and Timur Hans as Mongolian since both were Turks³⁷¹. His conviction was that accepting Cengiz and his sieblings as Mongolian would inevitably involve another foreign state and dynasty and pave the way to accepting that Turks have lived under a foreign domination for a long time; this would annihilate Turkish pride in being a nation never having lost our independence.³⁷² Atsız also did not accept

³⁶⁸ Orkun, “Dünya Tarihinde Türkler”, p. 11

³⁶⁹ Atsız, “Türk Tarihinin Meseleleri”, p.8

³⁷⁰ This approach was not completely shared and approved by the other writers for sure. For instance, albeit existence of one Turkish state in history with several dynasty changes claim by Atsız; Atabinen counts nearly fifty Turkish states in his article in the way that “Whenever in history a Turkish state tends to collapse under the anesthetic, oppressive, deadly effects; we witness the emergence of a new Turkish state nearby the dead one, having fresh vitality elements as inspiration of a fire by a spark under the ashes”. Atabinen, “Yeni Türk Devletinin Kuruluşundaki”, p. 8

³⁷¹ Actually he did not accept Mongols as a separate nation; he asserted that Mongols and Turks were two brother nations coming from the same origin. In Atsız, “Çengiz Han ve Aksak Temir”, pp .25-28

³⁷² Atsız, “Devletimizin Kuruluşu”, p.12

considering Timur as foreign and belligerent and declared that Turks should evaluate Ankara War – the battle between Timur and Bayezid in 1402 – as a quarrel between two members of the same dynasty.

As a matter of fact, every period and matter of Turkish history was made a device to inculcate nationalist views by authors of racist views. Great Seljuk Empire and specifically Sultan Alparslan were the issues which the authors were more interested in owing to the raids to Anatolia for the Turkification of the land. For instance, the transfer of Byzantine soldiers of Turkic origin into Seljuk army during Malazgirt War was evaluated as “When the Uz and Petchenek Turks realized that the army across them was composed of people from their own race, they altogether sided with Alp Arslan. This outstanding national consciousness among Turks ensured the defeat of the Byzantine.”³⁷³. Likewise, the alliance between Anatolian Seljuk and Kharzem Shah State was cherished for the unity of the two in race and religion, and their diplomatic relations was regarded as “a sincere expression of an ideal of national unity and a nationalist feeling which has gained consciousness seven centuries ago.”³⁷⁴

As for the Ottoman Empire, the authors evaluated this period as a part of ‘glorious Turkish history’ as well. To begin with - as stated previously - it was accepted that the Ottomans shared some special characteristics attributed to Turks such as obedience to order, authoritative, powerful, intelligent, capability of constituting government. They were convinced that the repeated declines and falls of the Turks due to power struggles only stimulated their desire for existence. More importantly, it was advocated that the preservation of pure Turkish blood and qualities namely never corrupted and changed or without being Persianized or Arabized that enabled the existence of the powerful Ottoman state³⁷⁵.

³⁷³ Nejdet Sançar, “Alp Arslan”, *Çınaraltı*, January 1942, 26, p.9

³⁷⁴ Nuri Gençosman, “Türkçülük Tarihinde Eski Vesikalar”, *Çınaraltı*, January 1942, 26, pp.11-12

³⁷⁵ H. E. Erkilet, “Taze Türk Kanının Telkih Kudreti”, *Çınaraltı*, July 1942, 41, p. 4.

The authors of the journal, albeit aspects to be criticized, wholeheartedly possessed and stood behind the performances all of the Ottoman sultans including those of the decline. Accordingly, approaches of the sultans and grand viziers towards the modernization of the Empire were also credited by the authors dealing with this subject. For example Selim III was presented as a farsighted reformist deeply concerned about the welfare of the country; the layihâs he dictated describing course of action to prevent the problems³⁷⁶ and even his consultive correspondence with the king of France³⁷⁷ under surveillance was paid a tribute. Mustafa Reşit Paşa was appreciated as a progressive vizier having European mind and Abdülmecid was concerned as “a commendable sultan since he willingly declared Tanzimat Edict, the reform which meant a renewal movement”³⁷⁸. Western style schools were appreciated as advanced institutions which educated scientific minds such as Hoca İshak Efendi, Gelenbevî İsmail Efendi, İngiliz Raif Efendi, Doctor Şanizade, Doctor Behçet Efendi, Abdülhak Molla who were the preparators of Turkish renaissance³⁷⁹. Even Mehmed VI was accepted as a patriot, not a ‘traitor’. His decision in staying in İstanbul and not attending the National Struggle was legitimized as having no other choices for in case he left İstanbul the enemy would not have returned the city to Turks and he would not have been able to send princes to lead the national movement. Thus, he “stayed in order to save İstanbul and the dynasty, and send his reliable commanders to start the military campaign in Anatolia.”³⁸⁰

³⁷⁶ Adnan Giz, “Osmanlı Tarihinde Islahat Raporları”, *Çınaraltı*, November 1943, 112, pp. 8-11

³⁷⁷ Adnan Giz, “Avrupanın İlk Cumhuriyet İnkılabı İstanbulda Nasıl Karşılandı?”, *Çınaraltı*, October 1943, 110, p. 6

³⁷⁸ Nebil Buharalı, “Osmanlı Padişahları: II.nci Abdülhamit”, *Çınaraltı*, December 1942, 63, p.8

³⁷⁹ Adnan Giz, “Türk Rönesansı Ne Zaman Başladı?”, *Çınaraltı*, July 1943, 97, p. 6-7

³⁸⁰ Atsız, “Osmanlı Padişahları”, p. 42

Only Abdülhamid II was criticized for his despotic regime and the innocent students his spies persecuted due to their opposition to the sultan³⁸¹. He was also accused of being uneducated, unscientific and cowardly “leaving the state without a navy”³⁸². Nihal Atsız controversially rejected all negative evaluations for Abdülhamit’s Reign declaring that he was the most aggrieved sultan who carried the heavy weight of the previous eras and still managed the survival of the state for 33 years³⁸³. Atsız explained that Abdülhamit’s hostility towards the minorities originated from the consent of the Christian deputies gave to Ottoman Russian War of 1877 with the anticipation of Russian victory and disintegration of the Empire. Hence, beside establishing many schools, educating qualified military officers and forming a huge intelligence organization; the biggest success of Abdülhamid was to suspend the parliament and prevent the emergence nationalist movements in the country. In this respect Atsız defined Abdülhamit as the “*Gök Sultan*” meaning Celestial Sultan³⁸⁴.

The reason behind strenuously defending each was that, although they had certain misdoings, they all belonged to Ottoman dynasty which was regarded as the greatest in Turkish history. That is to say;

Looking down on all Ottoman sultans and trying for their belittlement would ultimately be ingratitude to our own history and past. Above all, inclusion of such approach in school textbooks would be a great danger for national discipline. Respect to the values of the past... Here you have the main requirement of nationalism and ethics... We are bound to the past

³⁸¹ Buharalı, “Osmanlı Padişahları”, p.8

³⁸² Adnan Giz, “Tarih Muhakemesinde Sultan Hamit”, *Çınaraltı*, February 1944, 127, pp. 10-13

³⁸³ Nihal Atsız, “Abdülhamid Han (= Gök Sultan)”, *Türk Tarihinde Meseleler*, Ankara: Afşın Yayınları, 1966, pp.31-35

³⁸⁴ This title was probably to gift him as *Gök Tanrı*, the god of pre-Islamic Turks for the sacralization of Abdülhamid II.

no matter how revolutionary we are. This is because we are the future whose roots are in the past!³⁸⁵

Racist and blood based nationalist thoughts of *Çınaraltı* authors also reflected their rationalization of the Ottoman decline. Most claimed that imperial wedlocks with women of non-Turkic origins degenerated pure Turkish blood and this paved the way to the collapse of the Empire. For example Hakkı Akansel put forth that the last 250 years of the Empire witnessed rules of unqualified sultans, reptiles, undignified and servile people³⁸⁶. He claimed that during this period, honorable, morally justified and magnanimous administrators were dismissed by provocations of officers who did not belong to Turkish race who were merely “with such actions, implicitly taking revenge of their defeat and submission of their own race by Turks”³⁸⁷. Correspondingly, Nebi Buharalı quoting “poor Ottoman has run out of blood since he consorted with other nations”³⁸⁸ also argued that marriage with foreign women – Slavic, Hungarian, Georgian and Circassian – deteriorated Turkish blood. A similar remark came from Adnan Giz who based the decay of the ruling system upon the “compassion for magnificence”. He claimed that this passion was the heritage of Sasanians, Byzantines, especially Byzantine women. Like Akansel, he evaluated this point as seeking of revenge – in the years to follow, this argument was made the core stance of the textbooks – and declared that;

³⁸⁵ It is very meaningful to quote a statement that belongs to Yahya Kemal. This demonstrates the commonality between the modernization perception of conservatives and racist nationalists. Atsız, “Osmanlı Padişahları”, p. 45

³⁸⁶ The general approach to the Ottoman decline was to reason it with internal factors, particularly with the low skilled sultans. Mustafa Hakkı Akansel wrote an article series discussing this issue and explained it with the personal characters of the sultans as deception, slavishness, favoritism and arrogance. Mustafa Hakkı Akansel, “Osmanlı Devletinin Batmasının Başlıca Sebepleri Osman Oğulları Sülalesinin Bozulması 2”, *Çınaraltı*, May 1943, 86, pp. 4-5

³⁸⁷ Mustafa Hakkı Akansel, “Bir Devletin Temeli Nedir”, *Çığır*, February 1942, 29, p.6

³⁸⁸ Buharalı, “Osmanlı Padişahları”, p. 7

As you know, after their settlement in Anatolia, the Seljuks and the Ottomans had close relations with the Byzantium and many of them became grooms in the Byzantine palace marrying to Byzantine girls. Those Byzantine girls, who were very competent on the most conspicuous methods of moral corruption in the collapsed and decayed Roman civilization, took revenge of all defeats suffered by their men since Malazgirt and instilled terrible customs to the intellectual class of Turks that were not used to such customs until then.³⁸⁹

5.4 Anatolianist History

Ideological background of Anatolianism which represented another fraction among the conservatives can be taken back to early 20th century. Its approach to nationalism can be described as a cultural unity constructed upon common perceptions of the past within specific territory³⁹⁰. Anatolianist understanding of nationalism was the opposite of racism and Turanism which focused on fictional Turkic home as Turan, ignoring Anatolia as the motherland. Basic assumptions of Anatolianism included centring Anatolia as the motherland embracing a nation composed of Turkish and Islamic cultural elements on this landscape³⁹¹. According to Yahya Kemal's explanations of Anatolianists' historical understanding, they initiated Turkish history with 1071 Malazgirt War, which provided Muslim Turks to settle in Anatolia they regarded as a motherland and established a Turkish and Muslim cultural circle which would last for a thousand years. Hence, this perception brought more historical references to Turkish Islamic history in Anatolia beginning with Seljuks and continuing with Ottomans. Another characteristic point of Anatolianists' historical understanding was criticizing Ottoman-Turkish

³⁸⁹ Adnan Giz, "Tarihte Türk Ahlakına Yapılan Yabancı Tesirler İhtişam Merakı ve Saltanat Kavgası", *Çınaraltı*, May 1943, 86, p. 12

³⁹⁰ There is another Anatolianist group called as Blue Anatolianists consisting of Azra Erhat, Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı and Sabahattin Eyüboğlu embracing the historical and cultural heritage of ancient Anatolian civilizations. Though here, they are not discussed as their understanding of history was not outside of official view, but complementary to it.

³⁹¹ Metin Çınar, *Anadoluculuk Hareketinin Gelişimi ve Anadolucular ile Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Arasındaki İlişkiler (1943-1950)*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Ankara University, Ankara, 2007

modernization regarded as imitating the West, resulting in the loss and degeneration of our cultural and moral values since Tanzimat Era.

Islamic tradition was an inevitable element of Anatolianists' historical and cultural perception, thus strong religious tones were in the foreground of their arguments. In this respect, Islam was indispensable in their understanding of nationalism. Collaboration of Islam with nationalism in one respect was due the loss Islamist intellectuals³⁹² suffered after the closing of Mehmet Akif's journal *Sebilürreşad* in 1925³⁹³. Having lost the channel to express their ideas until 1945, Islamist intellectuals collated with the nationalists to express their ideologies and this integration would be the first precursor of Turkish Islamic Synthesis publicized in 1970's. The prominent Islamist Necip Fazıl's following statements well describe this unity;

However, we were pursuing a nationalism that would love Turks and appreciate them to the extent of their faith in Islam and we named this approach as 'Anatolianism'. As we would reiterate in one of our conferences 15 years later, we defended the thesis that 'if the goal is Turkism, then it should be recognized that Turks became Turks only after they converted to Islam.'³⁹⁴

5.4.1 Çığır

Çığır, published by Hıfzı Oğuz Bekata was another important journal expressing the Anatolianist viewpoint³⁹⁵. On its first page "a nationalist journal" written immediately under the title was expressive enough to convey

³⁹² It should be again reminded that these Islamists did not have any ideological connections with the Islamists of the Constitutional Period; their ideas were emerged as a reaction to the Republican modernization perception and its practices. Embracement of Ottoman past was only in a historical and cultural perspective and did not contain any desire to reconstruct Sultanate and Caliphate. Yet Kısakürek has explained the Islamic modernization as close to democracy and distant from the Sultanate. "İslam İnkılabı – Devlet", *Büyük Doğu*, December 1949, 11, p .2.

³⁹³ In 1948, Eşref Edip started to publish the journal again and it continued into the 1960s.

³⁹⁴ Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *Bâbîâli*, İstanbul: *Büyük Doğu* Yayınları, 1994, p. 393-394

³⁹⁵ Bekata was graduated from Ankara University Faculty of Law in 1935. He joined politics in the ranks of RPP and worked as a member of parliament from 1943 until 1950. Then he worked in several ministries under RPP governments.

the journal's core value. Its general publishing policy can be described as RPP line specifically bringing forth republicanism and nationalism.

The leading writers of the *Çığır* were Remzi Oğuz Arık, Samet Ağaoğlu, Ziyaeddin Fahri Fındıkoğlu, Mehmet Kaplan, Behçet Kemal Çağlar, Hüseyin Namık Orkun, Ahmet Kutsi Tecer, Cahit Okurer, Mümtaz Turhan, Tezer Taşkıran, Mehmet Halit Bayrı, Nihat Erim and Cemil Sena Ongun. Articles by Şevket Raşit Hatipoğlu, Reşat Şemsettin Sirer and Tahsin Banguoğlu were also frequently published in the journal. Among the articles published within the time the journal was analyzed, three important ones drew outmost attention. Each of the three was related with nationalism as an idea and through the lines, the nationalist perspective and historical understanding of the journal was apparent. Nevertheless each is worth of a seperate evaluation.

The first is the text of a conference – divided into four issues for publication – delivered by Sadri Maksudi Arsal in Turkish Hearths, later published in *Türk Yurdu* in 1924³⁹⁶. In the introductory note by Remzi Oğuz Arık, the orator is celebrated for giving pertinence to and successfully highlighting glorious history of Turks. Arık also stated that Arsal's statements on “the consequence of the Turkish race which gained the Asia Minor after two thousand years of struggle”³⁹⁷ demonstrated the significance of this conference in narrating history of Turkish nationalism. This emphasis was also indicative for displaying the significance given to Anatolia by Anatolianists as the motherland of Turks. By bringing forth Arsal's particularist arguments on Turkish history, *Çığır* demonstrated accordance to them in a broad sense. Statements such as “the most lively and vigorous race among the others”, “being eternal in political life”, “the power of giving birth to guides, leaders, heroes and geniuses” can be regarded as noteworthy while it was also claimed that all of the mentioned qualifications in the text were significant only for the Turks and no other nation possessed them totally.

³⁹⁶ Sadri Maksudi Arsal, “Türk Tarihinin Telkinatı”, *Çığır*, August 1940, 93, p. 40-50

³⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p.41

The second article is a narration of a chapter from the book by Halil Fikret Kanat entitled “Milliyet İdeali ve Topyekün Milli Terbiye”³⁹⁸. History of nationalism among Turks is displayed in the text with the basic argument that Turks hold superiority to other nations as the earliest to develop strong national emotions and reach national consciousness. Kanat justified this argument with a specific reference to Orhon Inscriptions. Exemplifying from *Divan-ı Lügat-it Türk*, he also claimed that “Turks have long had the conviction that they were the most precious and genuine sons of God. They rightfully consider themselves bodily stronger and spiritually superior than other nations”³⁹⁹.

An extremely pertinent point brought up in the text is the perception of Islam and its effect on Turkish history where Kanat underlined that national consciousness and social life of Turks were cooperated when they embraced Islamic religion. This enabled the collaboration of Turkish norms with Islamic rules which obviously did not hinder the improvement of Turkish moral values and national consciousness. Consequently Turks took over the mission of territorial expansion of Islamic religion and as observed during The Crusades, became the defender of Islam against Christianity. This perspective clearly displays Anatolianist conception of Islam and their evaluation of the Islamic era as the promotion period of Turkish cultural and political history.

The third article introduces the readers Remzi Oğuz Arık’s book, “İdeal ve İdeoloji”⁴⁰⁰. This book is also important in revealing Anatolianists’ modernization perspective, nationalist ideas and approach to Turkish history which is quite different from the Kemalist discourse. The below quotation is a good explanatory start which also sets an example to modernization standpoint of the Anatolianists and their distance in positivist paradigm and scienticism.

With the most respectful consciousness let’s reiterate the great and irreplaceable place of science in the national life. Let’s internalize that today science has a unique role in transformation

³⁹⁸ Halil Fikret Kanat “Türklerde Milliyetçilik”, *Çığır*, April 1943, 125, p. 104-113

³⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p.105

⁴⁰⁰ Hıfzı Oğuz Bekata, “İdeal-İdeoloji ve Milliyetçiliğimiz”, *Çığır*, July 1947, 176, p. 105-108

of persons into individuals and communities into nations. Yet, let's avoid taking science as a discipline that binds masses, sustains masses, and leads masses to success in this world where the goals are obvious. Today, it is negligence maybe more than ever to ask science – per se – to be an ideology which leads communities, to treat it like a religion, that is to say, to do scienticism⁴⁰¹.

An objective of Arık's book was to answer the questions concerning the ideology Turkish intellectual ought to embrace to elevate Turks. He concluded it by recommending nationalism after explaining the characteristic feature of this ideology as placing Anatolia in the centre under the subtitle "Our Nationalism". In this respect, he criticized Ottomanism, Islamism and Turanism as ideologies and declared that "it is astonishingly obvious that the meaning of basing our ideology upon those views requires concentrating on areas apart from the motherland⁴⁰²". He also underlined that defending those ideologies called for focusing energy elsewhere and invited sacrificing the motherland and its children on behalf of other territories.

The nationalist views of Anatolianists affected their historical understanding as well. Hıfzı Oğuz Bekata, basing his work upon Arık's proclamations, defended that the Ottoman Empire did not emerge from a group of people dwelling in 400 tents; nor was the Turkish State founded in 15 years or was created out of ashes. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of 1071 Malazgirt Victory as a turning point in the destiny of Anatolia as he gave specific emphasis to Islam as the religion settlers of this land belonged to.

5.4.2 *Hareket*

Hareket published by Nurettin Topçu is another prominent Anatolianist journal with a strong Islamic and mystical line. Its first issue appearing in February 1939, *Hareket* had a long publication life and was regularly published until the death of Topçu in 1975. The significance of *Hareket* among other

⁴⁰¹ *ibid.*, p.106

⁴⁰² *ibid.*, p.106

Anatolianist journals was that, apart from *Sebilürreşad* which ceased to exist in 1925, it was the first and only oppositional journal integrating Anatolianist-nationalist views with Islamic thought until the publication of *Büyük Doğu* in 1943.

Modernization understanding of the *Hareket* writers was based upon nationalist concept, territorially focusing on Anatolia. This was expressed as “This land created the people of this nation”⁴⁰³ and the ‘nation gained power from two dimensions: One is the material dimension, including the ancestors of Anatolia and their economical accumulations. The other is the Islamic ethics coming up from Anatolia and coalescing with peoples’ identity, the spiritual aspect⁴⁰⁴. Topçu explained that the Hittites were the antecedents of the Anatolian peasants who earned their living from cultivation and this paved the way to establishing strong agricultural economy in Anatolia. He continued his explanations by stating that the people living on this land had higher spiritual and moral values when compared with Arabs and Central Asian Turks because they were not nomadic and came from a settled culture. He also indicated that same people were inspirational in the development of mature character and their material elements to Islam which spread in this country ten centuries ago. This provided the emergence of a new civilization from the combination of Turkish and Islamic culture in Anatolia, the motherland. To sum up, he underlined that the Turks came from Central Asia five thousand years ago to the Near East, and then gradually settled in Anatolia a thousand years ago. However, *Hareket* circle put forth that it would be accurate to evaluate Muslim Turkoman living and having a history in Anatolia as Turks’ ancestors. Therefore they marked 1071 Malazgirt Victory opening Anatolia to Muslim Turks’ inhabitation as the beginning of Turkish national history.⁴⁰⁵ Mingling of

⁴⁰³ Nurettin Topçu, “Bizde Milliyet *Hareketleri*”, *Hareket*, April 1939, 3, p. 74

⁴⁰⁴ *ibid*, p. 78. In his another article, Topçu describes the spirit emerging the nation as Islam religion and its ideal of spreading the world. It was the *gaza* essence which our sultans had and helped them to make war in the name of Allah and deliver his orders to the world. Nurettin Topçu, “Millet Ruhu ve Milli Mukaddesat”, *Hareket*, June 1948, 16, p. 4.

⁴⁰⁵ Nurettin Topçu, “Benliğimiz”, *Hareket*, May 1939, 4; Mehmed Kaplan, “Yeni Türk Milliyetçiliği”, *Hareket*, October 1947, 8

Oguz Turks with the Anatolians making this land “a uniform body”⁴⁰⁶ reflects their viewpoint of territorial nationalism. The continuing phases of Turkish history with the same understanding are classified as Anatolian Seljuk State, Period of Beyliks, Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic. In this respect, Kaplan well summarized their conception of nationalism and history; “Geography, history... The unity of lineage, and material and spiritual culture generated by such lineage; here you have the foundations of the new Turkish nationalism!”⁴⁰⁷. Accordingly the authors of *Hareket* in their articles reflected their conviction that *spiritual* and *material* fortification could only materialize when the people are bounded to territory and that the *true* Turkish nationalist ideology and national history emerged from Anatolia, the Turkish motherland.

This period of time for the Anatolianists is also significant for Islamization of Anatolia by the Muslim Turcomen as to allow the birth of a new civilization on this land. Topçu described this phase as “rebirth of Anatolian peasant through Islam”⁴⁰⁸. In this context, all Turkic cultural elements such as the language, literature, fine arts, architecture, music, manners and customs were attributed to Islamic circle. Yet the Islam perception of *Hareket* authors did not reflect the strict, orthodox Sunni understanding but was rather closer to the Sufistic and mystic thoughts, giving room to geographical, historical and social conditions in the shaping of the religions. With this viewpoint Anatolian Islam was the product of historical and cultural elements of the land and it referred to the Anatolian Turcoman mystics; the spirit of Mevlana, Yunus Emre, Eşrefoğlu and Hacı Bayram Veli⁴⁰⁹.

Conceptual background of the *Hareket* authors’ nationalism and history understanding can be found in the thoughts of Yahya Kemal as he explained a

⁴⁰⁶ Kaplan, “Yeni Türk Milliyetçiliği”, p. 1

⁴⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p. 3

⁴⁰⁸ Topçu, “Benliğimiz”, p. 116

⁴⁰⁹ Mehmed Kaplan, “Oğuzlar”, *Hareket*, February 1939, 1, p. 20; Kaplan, “Yeni Türk Milliyetçiliği”, p. 3

nation with geography and a history developed on that territory. Thus, he grounded Turkish history on the year 1071 and identified the period before that time as *tribal history* and the period after as *national history*⁴¹⁰ which we can see the same identification in the journal.

Similar to views observed among *Çığır* authors, the writers of *Hareket* took a stand against the ideologies emerged during the late Ottoman period, which underestimated Anatolia and the people living on it. They regarded Ottomanism, Islamism, Turanism ideals of the time as unrealistic and foreign. They criticized the views of Ottoman nationalists such as Namık Kemal and Ziya Gökalp claiming “they aimed to grow a tree not having roots in our country and leaning of its fruits outside our land”⁴¹¹. They also disagreed with Turanism which held racial thoughts and an imaginary ‘new motherland’ and looked upon the ideal of uniting all Turanid races as imperialistic⁴¹².

As a matter of fact, journal authors were in full harmony in criticizing modernization movements during the late Ottoman period. The general modernization perception of the *Hareket* writers can be described as adopting the core values of the West based upon science and scientific thought; and accordingly, finding the path leading own self and values, in Topçu’s words, through “renaissance movements”⁴¹³. With this respect, all the reforms Turks so far performed were considered as superficial, imitation and formalistic for the core values of Western civilization were not realized⁴¹⁴. Hence, Turks were unable to get to the roots of European mentality and just copied the visible values in the surface; thus were unable to create an intrinsic civilization.

⁴¹⁰ Mehmed Kaplan, “Yahya Kemalde Tarih ve Coğrafya Fikri”, *Hareket*, June 1948, 16, p.2

⁴¹¹ Cahid Okurer, “İdeal ve İdeoloji”, *Hareket*, July 1947, 5, p.11; Cahid Okurer, “Garplılaşma *Hareketleri* III”, *Hareket*, June 1949, 28, p. 4

⁴¹² Hilmi Ziya Ülken, “Türk Milletinin Teşekkülü”, *Hareket*, August 1948, 18

⁴¹³ Cahid Okurer, “Garplılaşma *Hareketleri* II”, *Hareket*, May 1949, 27, p. 5-6; Nureddin Topçu, “Rönesans *Hareketleri*”, *Hareket*, February 1939, 1, p. 2

⁴¹⁴ Nureddin Topçu, “İki Mezar”, *Hareket*, November 1939, 7, p. 193-197

There is also an explicit objection among the *Hareket* writers towards the modernization approach of the Republican ruling cadre and the positivist paradigm underlying it. Especially evaluation of the past as a clear cut break and disregarding its moral values is not approved by the journal authors, who regarded displays of backwardness only during the period classified as the decline and perceived the entire Ottoman history as a failure. This perception of the past made the Republican administrators destroy everything which belonged to the past and establish a totally new structure as if Turkey and the Turkish nation was regarded as “tabula rasa”⁴¹⁵. Their approach brought forth radical implications such as “creating a new imagination of the past from Sumerians”, “finding centuries-old Turkish antipathetic and producing a new language” which made this period more backward than the Constitutional Era. This situation provided reaction, even confrontation towards the ruling cadre as can be observed in the below lines;

It is time to think freely on the last twenty five years, a crucial phase in our national life. Nobody can deny that for the last few years we have been resigning step by step from the values of the pre-1938 period. If we want to make drastic steps in our new direction, we need to evaluate impartially and carefully what has been done so far. With each day passing, the principle of reaction between generations will inevitably force us to adopt an attitude towards the previous generations. Whether one admits it or not, such tendency has already started to reign.⁴¹⁶

5.4.3 Büyük Doğu - An Islamist and Counter - Republican Journal

Büyük Doğu, published between 1943 and 1978 irregularly with numerous breaks due to several reasons, can be described as a conservative anti-Republican journal, intensively conveying Islamic and nationalistic views. The first period of the journal, ‘the primitive phase’ as Necip Fazıl Kısakürek defined, lasted between September 1943 and May 1944, publishing 30 issues. This stage contained a wide range of authors of rightist and leftist tendencies

⁴¹⁵ Mehmed Kaplan, “Nesillerin Ruhü”, *Hareket*, January 1949, 23, p. 3-4

⁴¹⁶ Kaplan, “Nesillerin Ruhü”, p.5

scuh as Peyami Safa, Bedri Rahmi Eyübođlu, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, Reşat Ekrem Koçu, Hilmi Ziya Ülken, Sait Faik Abasıyanık, Rasih Nuri İleri, Ahmet Adnan Saygun, M. Faruk Gürtunca, Cemal Reşit Rey, M. Sami Karayel, Eşref Edip, Kazım Nami Duru, Oktay Akbal and Mustafa Şekip Tunç⁴¹⁷. The journal's second stage Kısakürek has described as 'the actual beginning period' started in November 1945 and gradually radicalized, publishing religious articles and lost most of its authors⁴¹⁸.

The editorial of the first issue of *Büyük Dođu* referring to Turkish spirit and the existence within the territories of Turkey, which is the motherland, openly demonstrated differentiation of the journal's Anatolianist understanding from Turanism. Thus, the "east" articles pointed at did not cover any place outside the motherland⁴¹⁹. The significance of East, where the name of the journal originated from, was described with the following sentence; "Everything came from the East, everything, namely our soul"⁴²⁰ and asserted that East was important not because it was the source of Turkish culture, but was also the sources of history of humanity. In this context, West was characterized opposedly, as the source of material knowledge and a shallow mind⁴²¹.

The articles related with history were more on the decline registered in Turkish history. In the articles written as editorials or under his name, Necip Fazıl constantly put forth the phases of Turkish depression and the reasons behind it. There is only one article pertaining to the periodization of Turkish

⁴¹⁷ Another interesting aspect was that, the journals *Malum Paşa* and *Marko Paşa* by leftist intellectuals Sabahattin Ali and Aziz Nesin were also published in the printhouse of *Büyük Dođu*. Cemil Koçak, "Türk Milliyetçiliđinin İslam'la Buluşması *Büyük Dođu*", *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Vol 4: Milliyetçilik*, ed.: Tanıl Bora, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002, pp. 601-613

⁴¹⁸ Nazan Üstün, *Büyük Dođu Mecmuası'nın Siyasal Analizi*, Unpublished MA Thesis, İstanbul, 2011

⁴¹⁹ "Büyük Dođu", *Büyük Dođu*, September 1943, 1, p. 1

⁴²⁰ "Herşey Dođudan Geldi", *Büyük Dođu*, September 1943, 2, p.1

⁴²¹ "Batı Nedir?", *Büyük Dođu*, October 1943, 3, p.1

history and in that article, in line with the Anatolianist thought, the journal authors initiated it from 1071 Malazgirt Victory, the time Muslim Turks came and settled in Anatolia⁴²². As a matter of fact, in the editorials concerning the condition of the Turks entitled “Our Situation”; although acceptance of Islam is emphasized as Turks’ encounterance with the world of genuine idea and soul, and the reason of Turks’ institutionalizing as a nation and a state⁴²³; Turkish history was started from the foundation of the Ottoman State period which was regarded as the most mature period of Turkish political existence:

Without cherishing the naïve and vain inculcations of the golden haired dreams of the fairytale epochs of the history, we should note that, before the Ottoman Empire, we were nothing but a fusion of a transcendent movement, a helical flow, maybe without a beginning and an end, like the sky before the creation of Earth, yet shapeless and unexpressive, thus which had not yet shaped its spirit; and we have only started live our time, fixed in a certain space, with the Ottoman Empire.⁴²⁴

Returning to the core problem of the journal, the decline of the Turks appears as one of the core issues, and most of the writers start it from the years following Kanuni Sultan Süleyman’s Reign and take it up in two stages as before and after Tanzimat⁴²⁵. The first stage is reflected as the period Turks started to lose their souls and moral values⁴²⁶. Misinterpretation of Islam by fanatics and reactionists and the damage this gave to genuine Islamic thought is regarded as the main problem of this period. Kısakürek explained this as deterioration of the pureness of Islam, causing its values to turn into dead

⁴²² Reşat Ekrem Koçu, “Tarihimiz Uçurumun Eşiğinde”, *Büyük Doğu*, December 1945, 7, p. 14

⁴²³ “Kendi Mizanımız: 2”, *Büyük Doğu*, November 1943, 8, p.1

⁴²⁴ “Kendi Mizanımız: 1”, *Büyük Doğu*, October 1943, 7, p.1

⁴²⁵ “Bizim Buhranımız”, *Büyük Doğu*, November 1943, 11, p.1

⁴²⁶ Religion is regarded as the basic source of morals both in East and West. Hence, the reason of our moral depression is considered as drifting apart from pure Islamic faith and love. “Ahlakımız: 2”, *Büyük Doğu*, December 1943, 14, p.1

molds arbitrarily interpreted by the fanatics and used in guise of the religion with the words “losing of our love and ecstasy”⁴²⁷.

The core characteristic of the Tanzimat Era which was the second stage is reflected in an article as “enslavement to the visual aspects of the West without realizing its secrets of existence”⁴²⁸. It is written in the same article that since then, in line with this blind imitation and adoration, Turks gradually lost their spiritual roots and fell into a deep mental and moral depression which also effected the administration and entailed bribery, robbery, favoritism and deception.

On the other hand, similar with the *Hareket* circle, modernization perception of the journal authors was more of a quest for the Turkish personality and evolvment, anticipating it within the own culture, not in the West and westernization. Therefore, they categorically objected to all of the modernization movements since Tanzimat. In other words, 1839 was viewed as the beginning of decadence of Ottoman-Turkish society. Turkish artists and intellectuals wee regarded as “The pure fruit of a non-contradictory community which framed its causes, consequences and aims around a specific outlook; which represented the time in its three harmony of the past, now and future; which mastered the affairs in its life and with its insight” until Tanzimat⁴²⁹. In fact, Tanzimat Edict was evaluated as the primary reason of the collapse in social, economic and political areas⁴³⁰ and that imitation of Europe in intellectual life produced corrosion in literary. Kısakürek joining this severe criticism defined the Tanzimat intellectuals as “unconditional and absolute ADMIRATION dominating their psychology, unconditional and absolute

⁴²⁷ Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Ve Tarihçe”, *Büyük Doğu*, May 1946, 30, p.11

⁴²⁸ “Bizim Buhranımız”, p.1

⁴²⁹ Necip Fazıl Kısakürek has written six consequent articles known as letters. In those articles, he attempted an analysis of Turkish arts and intellectual life. Just as the other writings, he used an agitative language full of aggressive statements. Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “İkinci Mektup”, *Büyük Doğu*, June 1946, 35, p. 11

⁴³⁰ Sami Karayel, “İnkıraz Sebepleri”, *Büyük Doğu*, November 1943, 8, p. 14

IMITATION dominating their consciousness, and unconditional and absolute INFERIORITY dominating their ego”⁴³¹. He also claimed that not a single genuine intellectual rose since Tanzimat and all the existing were shallow-minded, suffering from lack of comprehension. However, although their perceptions of nationalism differed, Kısakürek admitted that amongst them Ziya Gökalp, through his contacts with West, managed to construct a system of thought and integrate it with the social conditions of the considered him as “the first and only Turkish intellectual since Tanzimat”⁴³².

Rights given to minorities was another critical issue within the articles, for example one contained that renovations in this period brought forth freedom to the minorities which led them penetrate the state even as major officials and this caused the dissolution of state authority which led to rebellions for independence. Consequently, minorities and foreigners through holding public revenues by Galata agiotage excessively indebted the state and generated a state within the state with Duyun-u Umumiye⁴³³. It was claimed that these changes, applied under the name of freedom and caused the demolishing of Turkish national conscience⁴³⁴.

1876 Constitution resulted in worse conditions than Tanzimat Edict. There was ethnical diversity in the Parliament. Non-Muslims also worked there against common interests and in favor of their nations. In this respect, Abdülhamid II Reign was an exception. Abdülhamid II took measures to prevent the collapse of the empire. First, he abolished the Parliament which allowed benefits of non-Muslims. Then, he discharged large amounts of the Ottoman debts without resorting to new loans. He also managed to discard

⁴³¹ Capitalization belongs to the author. Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Üçüncü Mektup”, *Büyük Doğu*, July 1946, 36, p. 11

⁴³² Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Beşinci Mektup”, *Büyük Doğu*, July 1946, 38, p. 11

⁴³³ Sami Karayel, “Tanzimatın Hediyesi”, *Büyük Doğu*, December 1943, 15, p. 14

⁴³⁴ Sami Karayel, “Tanzimatın İçyüzü”, *Büyük Doğu*, October 1943, 7, p. 14

nationalist movements even if through despotism. Above all, this 34 year regime was completely war-free⁴³⁵.

Second Constitutional Era is another stage which was the subject of *Büyük Doğu* authors. They defined this era as the climb and dispersion of moral corruption within the entire society. For example Sami Karayel wrote that along with nationalist movements of non-Muslims, ‘non-Turk Muslim cause’ – Arab, Kurd, Albanian and Circassian separatist actions – which he named as “Tanzimat trap”⁴³⁶, was added in this period. Constitutionalism could not rescue the empire and it collapsed within ten years. Hence, Young Turks were accused of “finally entombing the Turkish Empire with wars and wars, internal disorder and anarchy, and melodies of freedom, justice, equality and fraternity.”⁴³⁷

In *Büyük Doğu* articles, Republican Era is observed as the last phase and the culmination of the moral depression. For example Independence War, is considered as a “national ramp” by Kısakürek and that; albeit the diseases and great depressions covered its soul and body, the national will has taken an action to survive⁴³⁸. In this war, Turks regained their homeland, but could not feed it with a new ideology and morality since they could not change their custom by shallowly imitating the West. As a consequence, Republican period has become “the unfortunate turmoil where anarchy, incongruity, cacophony, disproportion, dissolution, disintegration, silence have wreathed in the Turkish

⁴³⁵ Sami Karayel, “Sultan Hamit Müstebit Midir?”, *Büyük Doğu*, December 1943, 16, p. 14-15. Afterwards, Karayel published an article series entitled “Tarih ve Sultan Hamit” that would appear in four consecutive volumes. In these articles, he repeated the basic claims of his previous writings and attacked to the transformation in social, economical and political areas initiated in Tanzimat period. He then appreciated Abdülhamid II due to his attempts reversing the modernization period.

⁴³⁶ Sami Karayel, “Tanzimatın Hediyesi”, p. 14

⁴³⁷ Sami Karayel, “Tanzimatın İçyüzü”, p. 14

⁴³⁸ Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Ve Tarihçe”, p.11

intellectual and artistic life more than ever and more than anywhere else and thus the entire artistic and intellectual life went into crises of bankruptcy”⁴³⁹.

⁴³⁹ Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, “Altıncı Mektup”, *Büyük Doğu*, July 1946, 39, p. 11

CHAPTER 6

CHANGES IN OFFICIAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

The changes reflected upon the educational policy of the Turkish Republic as the İnönü Era advanced, paved the way not only to determining the cultural policy of the period, but also to applying the new perceptions brought to understanding of history and to teaching it in schools as well. That is to say, socio-political changes during İnönü Era were the precursors of a smooth shift in the mindset of the time. The appointment of Hasan Ali Yücel as the Minister of Education in the first Cabinet formed under the presidency of İnönü was not a coincidence. During his ministry, also known as the humanist era, took place critical advances in educational and cultural field. These changes as well as the new humanistic understanding reflected on the official approach to history both from disciplinary and educational aspect.

During the ministry of Hasan Ali Yücel, the extensive movement launched under the light of humanism as a cultural and educational policy undoubtedly had major effects on the concept of history as well as on textbooks written in line with it. First of all, while steps were taken to reconcile history studies with the Ottoman past, publications were reinforced with topics reflecting this period. The book *Tanzimat*, published by the initiation of Hasan Ali Yücel, in 1940 to commemorate the centennial of the Era was considered as the symbol of the change in the official perception regarding Ottoman History. With this study, the Republic by identifying the process between Tanzimat and Republic as an inefficient reform era, was in a way making a settlement with the Ottoman modernization.⁴⁴⁰ Yücel specified the reason

⁴⁴⁰ Mehmet Ö. Alkan, “Kaynakça’ya Dair”, *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce volume I: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet’in Birikimi*, (ed.) Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 2001, p. 408

behind publishing this book “examining an important turning point in Turkey’s Westernization movements” as “Tanzimat reached its hundredth year on November 3, 1939. We assumed it a duty to commemorate this important occasion in our national history by displaying recordings demonstrating the progresses and pauses which still needs an analysis”⁴⁴¹.

6.1 Third Turkish History Congress

Internationally attended Turkish history congresses regularly held every five years after the foundation of the Turkish History Association met for the third time on November 15th, 1943 under the presidency of Minister of Education, Hasan Ali Yücel. Similar to the previous, the opening speeches of the congress demonstrated that 'history cause' was perceived not only as an academic and scientific, but also as a 'national cause' underlining strong loyalty to Turkish History Thesis as the important duty given by Atatürk. Accordingly, Hasan Ali Yücel stated that the current understanding of civilization and nation in Turkey was Atatürk’s legacy and language and history causes were its outcomes. Therefore, “We believe that we are fulfilling completely our obligations front of the Eternal Leader by assimilating, in our brains and our hearts, the revolutions in language and history.”⁴⁴² Likewise, Şemsettin Günaltay, Head of the Turkish History Association declared that Turks were the ancient race whose glorious history deepened and dispersed with a retrospect. He continued expressing his sentiments with the following quotation; “Turkish history is a phenomenon, sometimes over-flown with exuberance and sometimes quiet and still, yet, constantly flowing from an unprecedented past to an eternal future.”⁴⁴³

⁴⁴¹ Hasan Ali Yücel, “Önsöz”, *Tanzimat I Tanzimat’ın Yüzüncü Yıldönümü Münasebetiyle*, İstanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1940, p. 5

⁴⁴² “Kongre Başkanı Maarif Vekili Hasan Ali Yücel’in Nutku”, *III. Türk Tarih Kongresi Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1948, p.6-7

⁴⁴³ “Türk Tarih Kurumu Başkanı Ord. Prof. Şemseddin Günaltay’ın Açış Nutku”, *III. Türk Tarih Kongresi Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1948, p.2-3

Press reflections of the congress displayed the immense public interest. *Ulus*, the semi official newspaper of RPP daily conveyed the proceedings to its readers. The article entitled “Third Congress and our History Cause” well illustrates the excitement and the continued effect expected from the history thesis, especially on the perception concerning the Ottomans⁴⁴⁴. The author of the article, underlining how the thesis was regarded as a 'national cause', indicated that the History Association and the congresses held were products of not only scientific researches, but also of the general enthusiasm for the national cause. Claiming that Ottoman historical understanding was effete and contradictory to Turkish history, he asserted that the association and the congress demonstrated “The magisterial cause of history brought out by the spirit of Kemalism, which destroyed and eliminated the unnecessary, and repaired and reformed the essentials as well as discarding the ill residues from the past; pushing aside the barren clauses of the Ottoman history”.

Osman Şevki Uludağ also wrote a similar article expressing gratitude for the works of the Turkish History Association⁴⁴⁵. He stated that until recent times, Turkish intellectuals were deprived of national history consciousness due to the lack of history researches on the contributions of Turks to history of civilization, thus confining them to remain silent against the European claims accusing Turks of being uncivilized. He commemorated Atatürk with gratitude for founding an association to enlighten Turkish civilization and culture. Falih Rıfki Atay also mentioned the problem of Turks' inferiority complex stemming from European perception and pointed out that it was overcome through education by awareness of ancient, magnificent and rich Turkish history⁴⁴⁶.

Although the opening speeches and newspaper articles appeared to indicate that historical understanding of 1930s and the core ideas of the History Thesis remained the same in the third congress, the presentations demonstrated

⁴⁴⁴ T. İ., “Üçüncü Kongre ve Tarih Davamız”, *Ulus*, 16.11.1943, p. 1-2

⁴⁴⁵ Osman Şevki Uludağ, “Türk Tarihi-Bir Hatıra”, *Ulus*, 15.11.1943, p. 2

⁴⁴⁶ Falih Rıfki Atay, “Üçüncü Tarih Kongremiz”, *Ulus*, 15.11.1943, p. 1, 3

an explicit change. Organization of sessions including Ottoman history omitted in the previous two was, all by itself, the indicative of this change.

Ancient history presentations at the congress also revealed the distancing from the History Thesis. As well known, one of the core claims of the first two congresses was that Turks were the autochthonous of Anatolia from whom other civilizations emerged. Hence, all the Anatolian, Mesopotamian and Near Eastern civilizations were regarded as of Turkic origin. Attempts were made to legitimize this with the excavations where all the findings were related with Turks. However, a significant break was apparent in the studies presented in the A Session (prehistory, archeology, anthropology and ancient history) in the Third Congress. For instance, a research by Hamit Koşay concerning the excavation in Alacahöyük argued that before the Hittites, there was another developed civilization in Anatolia⁴⁴⁷. The remarkable point in the research was that, unlike the ones in the first two congresses, this presentation did not connect Turks with this civilization or with the period after the Hittites. Another striking presentation delivered by Muzaffer Süleyman Şenyürek was about the excavations searching the autochthons of Anatolia⁴⁴⁸. Şenyürek mentioned in the presentation that skull examinations revealed that the majority of the populations of Chalcolithic and Copper Eras were dolichocephalic and mesocephalic while brachycephalics belonged to minorities. Another outcome of the study was that the autochthons of Mesopotamia and Near East were not brachycephalic, but dolichocephalic. Şenyürek also came to the conclusion that “race types and national or linguistic names signify different concepts and it is not correct to define them with given ethnical or linguistic names”⁴⁴⁹. These results refuted the claims that Turks were brachycephalic, and were only one amongst the earliest peoples of Anatolia.

⁴⁴⁷ Hamit Koşay, “Alaca-Höyük Hafriyatının Son Safhası”, *III. Türk Tarih Kongresi Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1948, p.169-177

⁴⁴⁸ Muzaffer Süleyman Şenyürek, “En Eski Anadolu Halkının Kraniyolojik Tetkiki”, *III. Türk Tarih Kongresi Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1948, p.204-212

⁴⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p.211

A research by Şevket Aziz Kansu displayed similar results as well⁴⁵⁰. He asserted that the brachycephalic proto-Turks were the ancestors of today's Anatolian Turks who lived in Chalcolithic, Copper and Hittite times. He also underlined three basic races in Anatolia as dolichocephalic, mesocephalic and brachycephalic and the majority of the earliest people were the dolichocephalics. The common point of the last two important studies reflecting the change in the History Thesis was that they did not bear assertions that Turks were the initiators of the advanced civilization there.

Nermin Aygen's analytic research is another noteworthy display of the change in attempts of categorizing Turks racially through blood or skull types⁴⁵¹. In her research, the professor indicated that Turkish and foreign scholars generally aimed to determine where Turks' race stood nationwide or ethnically in order to specify their place among the Europeans by analyzing blood groups and types. However, she underlined the incapability of those studies in revealing racial and anthropological history of Anatolian Turks. She then put forth that such researches ought not to aim to make racial classifications, but rather to specify the traces of geographical movements and dissemination of the peoples.

The above mentioned studies can all be regarded as divergences from the Turkish History Thesis. However linguistic researches appear to preserve the principles of Sun Language Thesis. A presentation concerning the morphology of Turkish language attempted to prove that the earliest Turks in Central Asia spread their advanced civilization and language to the places they moved and their language was adopted by other nations although under hundreds of different names in areas which constituted the grounds of Indo-German, Indo-Europe or Ural-Altai languages⁴⁵². The same researcher, who

⁴⁵⁰ Şevket Aziz Kansu, "İnsan ve Medeniyet Tekamül Tarihinde Anadolu'nun Yeri", *III. Türk Tarih Kongresi Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1948, p.306-314

⁴⁵¹ Nermin Aygen, "Türklerin Antropolojik Tarihleri Bakımından Kan Grupları Hakkında", *III. Türk Tarih Kongresi Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1948, p.281-287

⁴⁵² Ahmet Cevat Emre, "Dil Davamızın Morfolojik İspatı Üzerine", *III. Türk Tarih Kongresi Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1948, p.178-193

was also the member of Turkish Language Association, explained that he targeted to “establish the Turkish cause by conducting researches under scientific methods”⁴⁵³. This was an indication of the continuation of effort to legitimize the thesis through so-called scientific studies. The critical point is that, the strong opposition on the establishment of a linguistic connection within different language groups with the referred methodology, which was silenced in the first two congresses, was voiced by Professor Landsberger at the mentioned congress.

Another attempt of proving the language thesis came from Reşit Rahmeti Arat, director of Turcology Institute⁴⁵⁴. The beginning phrases of this presentation clearly demonstrated Arat's sentimental rather than scientific approach to the subject: “None of the other languages have played the role of Turkish language did as a national bond. In the past as well as in our day, our language covers a wide area incomparable with other languages”⁴⁵⁵. Arat conveyed basic arguments of the thesis as he repeated the superiorities and intactness of Turkish language throughout the presentation. The salient aspect of his study was the Islamic and Ottoman perception which was not common in the congress. In this respect, the development of Turkish language through ages was taken up while the visible negative approach to the 13th century was attributed to Iranian and Arabic cultural interferences. As a consequence, transformation of the language to Ottoman Turkish was disconfirmed for causing a linguistic deterioration, leading to the loss of its genuinity⁴⁵⁶.

The presentations on Ottoman history, on the other hand, displayed the change in perception of the Ottoman past. The study of Ziyaeddin Fındıkoğlu on Mehmet Şerif, an economy professor of Tanzimat period was an explicit

⁴⁵³ *ibid.*, p.180

⁴⁵⁴ Reşit Rahmeti Arat, “Türk Dilinin İnkışafı”, *III. Türk Tarih Kongresi Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1948, p.598-611

⁴⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 598

⁴⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p.607

example of this alteration⁴⁵⁷. In his critical analysis on Turkish cultural and economic history, the period was taken up in two stages as before and after Tanzimat. He also defined certain post Tanzimat breaks he listed as 1876, 1908, 1923 and 1945 reminding “These stages are not the same with respect to their impacts and characteristics. Yet, one cannot deny that although they are distinguished among themselves with different paces, there is a historical unity, a unity of concern, between all these stages.”⁴⁵⁸. Declaration of this understanding in the congress without any opposition can be regarded as revolutionary due to the emphasis of the continuity in Ottoman-Turkish history of thought. Another important aspect of the study was that the internal dynamics of Ottoman reform age were revealed through Mehmet Şerif, In this aspect, Fındıkoğlu asserted that the officials trained in the Translation Office (*Tercüme Odası*) gained a perspective on European economists such as Rossi, A. Smith, J. B. Say through the translations and proposals they presented to the Sultan and Grand Vizier. Among them, some intellectuals aware of and seeking for the solutions for the problems emerged and that Mehmet Şerif was one of them. To sum up, unlike the evaluations in the 1930s, presentation was explanatory in bringing forth that with the inspirations of European scientific and intellectual accumulation, quest for the solutions of social and economic problems were deepened in the 19th century.

Other papers presented in the session pertaining to Ottomans demonstrated similar approaches. For example, Osman Şevki Uludağ's study about women in medical area put forth the change in womens' position after 1908 which he defined as a 'political transformation'⁴⁵⁹. He stated that women's emancipation was witnessed during that time; they got a chance to improve their educational level and participate social life. In another study which was

⁴⁵⁷ Ziyaeddin Fındıkoğlu, “Türk İktisadi Tefekkür Tarihi ve Mehmet Şerif”, *III. Türk Tarih Kongresi Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1948, p.260-268

⁴⁵⁸ *ibid.*, pp. p.261-262

⁴⁵⁹ Osman Şevki Uludağ, “Türk Kadınlarının Hekimliği”, *III. Türk Tarih Kongresi Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1948, p.441-460

on Mithat Paşa; 1876 Constitution was welcomed as the “ending of absolutism which lasted hundreds of years and establishment of democracy which is not a coincidence, but a product of serious organization”⁴⁶⁰.

The above mentioned examples all display the significant change in the approach to Ottoman history both in the content and methodology. Then, Ottoman period ceased to be regarded as an era of embarrassment to be disregarded and overlooked. On the contrary, the emergence of Turkish modernization was traced back to later years of Ottoman history. Moreover, a wider view of the wordings of presentations demonstrated that emotional and subjective statements were omitted. Regarding the methodology, besides primary sources, references were made to recent national and foreign studies. In this respect, Barkan stated the necessity to perform “systematic studies of internal and external criticism of the texts involved in analyses identifying their genuine characteristics and qualities as well as comparative studies on classification, categorization and investigation”⁴⁶¹.

Researches on Turkic-Islamic states are other indicators of the perceptual change⁴⁶². While previous congresses focused on ‘Turkishness’, in this congress, the emphasis was on Turkish and Islamic identity. Positive statements about Islamic civilization were also prominent features of the narration regarding Islamic period. In this respect, Bayur in his study, confirmed Islamic influence on military success as he brought forth the spiritual support of the sultans having the title *gazi*⁴⁶³. Likewise, Uzunçarşılı also promoted Islamic characteristics observed in the Turkish states through

⁴⁶⁰ Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, “Midhat Paşa'nın Gizli Bir Siyasi Teşebbüsü”, *III. Türk Tarih Kongresi Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1948, p.470-477

⁴⁶¹ Ömer Lütfi Barkan, “Osmanlı Kanunameleri”, *III. Türk Tarih Kongresi Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1948, p.505

⁴⁶² Presentations of some prominent scholars on Turkish history during pre-Islamic and Islamic era such as; Zeki Velidi Togan, Mükrimin Halil Yinanç, Abdülkadir İnan and Osman Turan could not be analyzed since they did not submit their texts to be published in the congress book. This lack of information prevents us making wider analysis around this issue.

⁴⁶³ Hikmet Bayur, “Ortaçağda Türkler ve Hindistan”, *III. Türk Tarih Kongresi Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1948, p.136

their architectural works such as mosques, madrasas, hospitals, bridges, baths and caravansaries⁴⁶⁴. This change can be regarded as the beginning of conciliation with Islam which was more evident in the history textbooks that will be discussed below.

6.2 New History Textbooks

The publication of the four volume history textbooks –first three in 1942 and fourth in 1945- was the outcome of the necessity of writing new textbooks for the new era. As a matter of fact, the books published in 1932 were criticized by the teachers, parents and students right from the beginning. This in a way compelled the Turkish History Association to accept that the textbooks were far from meeting educational requirements and to invite their revisions in 1936. Accordingly, the following year Ministry of Education sent a notice to history teachers asking them to prepare a new course plan considering pedagogical requirements. Although a new comprehensive plan was prepared by the teachers, the books basically remained the same⁴⁶⁵. In 1940, the official inquiry sent by the Ministry of Education to secondary and high school teachers asking to report their opinions on the history textbooks indicate that there were strong criticisms around the existing books.⁴⁶⁶ Considerable portion of the critics culminated around the excessive lengths and details of the books; with the claim that they surpassed students' levels. Moreover, the linguistics and terminology of the books were also difficult for the students to understand. There were some mistakes in the content as well. In a report sent from The Commission of Secondary and High School History Curricula (*Lise ve Ortaokullar Tarih Dersleri Müfredat Programı Komisyonu*) to The Chair of

⁴⁶⁴ Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, “XII. ve XIII. Asırlarda Anadolu’daki Fikir Hareketleri ile İçtimai Müesseselere Bir Bakış”, *III. Türk Tarih Kongresi Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1948, p.287-306

⁴⁶⁵ As a result of the critics, the books of Şemsettin Günaltay and Ali Haydar were used from 1939 on. However, Karal indicated that those books still could not solve the core problems by underlining their features and defects. Enver Ziya Karal, “Tarih Tedrisatı Hakkında Tebliğ”, undated from his special collection.

⁴⁶⁶ TC. Maarif Vekilliği, Kültür Kurulu, 20.04.1940, Ankara

Secondary Education Commission (*Orta Öğretim Komisyonu Reisliği*) one of the basic problems of the textbooks was also defined as “many topics held controversies; they include too many theses, antitheses and assumptions; thus some topics were too brief and some others, too elaborated.” “The comments expressed [in the Commission] in these minutes have the form and odour of rescission. Even a clear rescission... We cannot recede from any of the great revolutions we have done so far.” Their feature was also academic rather than an instructional tool and thus, above the students’ level of understanding⁴⁶⁷. Consequently, Enver Ziya Karal sent a comprehensive report to Ministry of Education regarding writing new history textbooks⁴⁶⁸. The report is significant for indicating the emphasis and evaluations of IPC pertaining to this issue in considering foreign developments in a wider perspective. In the report, he underlined the necessity of a new curriculum, considering that the previous curriculum was based on the books of Turkish History Association which were not prepared as textbooks thus were pedagogically unsuitable. He suggested organizing of a new commission to examine following documents before the preparation of the new curriculum: Present history curriculum, inspection reports on history teaching, reports of history teachers about the present history textbooks, and French, English and German history textbooks and manuscripts on history education. In this context, Arif Müfit Mansel, Cavit Baysun and Enver Ziya Karal studied history in European universities, were not coincidental authors of the new books which followed this report but they were selected as academically and pedagogically well qualified scholars for this assignment by a committee consisting of the members of Ministry of Education and Turkish History Association. The new books also encompassed different epochs of history as the ancient, medieval, modern history as well as the history of the Turkish Revolution. However, starting from their aims, each volume included the differences reflecting the changing mentality of the

⁴⁶⁷ TC. Maarif Vekilliği, Maarif Şurası, 1942, Ankara

⁴⁶⁸ TC. Maarif Vekilliği, Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi, 04.04.1941, Ankara

administrators they deemed essential to construct the official history understanding the students would be brought up with.

6.2.1 Ancient History

The ancient history textbook which was published in 1942 had certain differences when compared with the one published in 1931. The basic aim of the 1931 edition was to convey the assumption to the new generation that Turks created the earliest civilization in the world and the other civilizations were derived from them. Apart from this, although Turkish race was mingled with other races during the migration, they never lost their genuine characteristics due to their superior quality⁴⁶⁹.

On the other hand, similar to the previous, the focus of the new book was the basic elements composing ancient civilizations with the difference that Turks were classified as one of those elements rather than being the core. The most advanced civilizations of ancient times were declared as the Sumerian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Hittite, Persian, Greek and Roman. Turks were regarded as a part of those civilizations; not the earliest and this was stated as “those ancient civilizations passing from race to race and generation to generation, composing our contemporary civilization”⁴⁷⁰.

In the 1931 edition, it was assumed that Turks lived the pre-historic eras at least 5000 years earlier than the other civilizations. However, there is no such assumption in 1942 edition and furthermore, it was stated that human communities were developed and civilized in different times in line with their own capacities and within their then existing circumstances⁴⁷¹. In relation to these, unlike the 1931 edition, explanations about human races were limited to

⁴⁶⁹ The comprehensive analysis of the four volume history textbooks published in 1931 and used between years 1931-1941 is in the third chapter.

⁴⁷⁰ Arif Müfid Mansel, *İlkçağ Tarihi*, Ankara: Maarif Vekâleti, 1942, p.3

⁴⁷¹ *ibid.*, p.2

half a page in the 1942 edition which stated that due to the amalgamation of different races a pure one was nonexistent⁴⁷².

Another indicator of the discrepancies between the 1931 and 1942 editions of the Ancient History book was the contextualization of the history of Turks. This can initially be noticed in the titles and subtitles in the books. While 1931 edition used *A General Overview of the Great Turkish History*; the other book titled the same issue as *Motherland of Turks – Migrations*. The length of the content also differed in both books For example there were 28 pages under this title in the former book while this was dropped to 10 pages in the latter⁴⁷³.

It is observed in the 1942 edition that the tone of the narrations were less assertive. The ancientness of the Turks was expressed as; “the researches in Anav in Central Asia, the motherland of Alpine Turks brought forth traces of Turkish civilization during the times when the rest of the world was primitive, indicating Turks had advanced in civilization”⁴⁷⁴. Meanwhile, the outline of the *Migration Theory* that increase in population, climate change and lack of irrigation, mainly, the drought compelled the people in Central Asia to migrate so they carried their advanced civilization to the lands that they emigrated was preserved as in the 1931 edition. However, the theory was summarized in half a-page in smooth expressions such as “they assumed an important role in providing the transition of the communities in the lands they expanded to from Stone Age to Metal Age.”⁴⁷⁵ On the other side, the expressions in 1931 edition

⁴⁷² *ibid.*, p.5

⁴⁷³ As a matter of fact, shortening the content of history textbooks used in primary and secondary grade was discussed in the Second National Education Congress (*İkinci Maarif Şurası*) held in 1943. The common opinion about all history textbooks was that they were not able to achieve the aims of history curriculum and not suitable for the students' level of understanding. It was also declared that the new high school history textbooks published in 1942 were undoubtedly advanced in quality when compared with the previous ones. *Maarif Vekilliği İkinci Maarif Şurası, 15-21 Şubat 1943 Çalışma Programı Raporlar Konuşmalar*, İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1991, p. 199-202

⁴⁷⁴ Mansel, *İlkçağ Tarihi*, p.8

⁴⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p.10.

about the same issue are worth noting: “When early China is concerned... if we leave fictitious origin legends aside, we ought to regard the entrance of Turks into China to be as early as 7000 BC” or “In pre-historic times; the inhabitants of India were dark skinned, resembling monkey flocks... The ones who exiled them to the south and advanced the Indian civilization were Turks.”⁴⁷⁶

Apart from the above, while the 1931 edition traced the establishment of the Turkish states back to 13000 BC, 1942 edition carried this date to 7000 BC with rather scientific and reasonable assertions such as “Although Scythians living in western Asian steppes could not establish a big state, they occupied an important place within civilization starting from 7000 BC.”⁴⁷⁷

Another prominent difference between the two textbooks was in the manner of approaching other ancient civilizations. In 1931 edition, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Anatolia, even Greece and Rome were narrated as associated with Turks and the roots of the peoples of all were claimed to be Turks from Central Asia. For instance, it was asserted in the book that the initial peoples of Egypt were Tuareks who were actually Turks having moved from Caspian region towards North Africa⁴⁷⁸. Similarly, it was asserted that Budha, the founder of Budhism, was a decendent of Saka Turks; that Hun princes, Bleda and his brother Attila⁴⁷⁹; and Roman Emperor Maksimin was from the Alan Turks⁴⁸⁰. Moreover, it was stated and exemplified in the book that reviews of Aegean and Greek history bore indications that “some of the Greek words meaningless in different languages were of Turkish origin.”⁴⁸¹ Even the language of Ionians were claimed as of Central Asian Turks, not Greek⁴⁸². Another linguistic comment observed in the narration of Roman

⁴⁷⁶ *Tarih I*, İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931, p.28-29

⁴⁷⁷ Mansel, *İlkçağ Tarihi*, p. 11

⁴⁷⁸ *Tarih I*, p.103

⁴⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p.76

⁴⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p.333

⁴⁸¹ *ibid.*, p.181

history was that in a war between Caesar and Gauls, the name of the Galian commander which was *Versengetoriks* was composed of *cenk* and *toriks*, meaning “er-ceng-türk= cenk eri Türk” (Turkish soldier)⁴⁸³.

However, none of these claims existed in the 1942 edition. While Hittites were referred to as *Eti Turks* in 1931 edition, the origin of Anatolian peoples were defined as Protohittites, Luvis and Hurris in the latter book without the mentioning of a relation to Turks⁴⁸⁴. Similar assertions existed for civilizations of Aegean Region referring to their foundation by Cretans and Anatolians living in Greece in 3000 BC. This was clearly expressed in the book by the line “the origin of Greek civilization consisted of those peoples”⁴⁸⁵. On the other hand, the paragraphs about Egyptian civilization tell us that the indigenous peoples were from Hami race and that the land advanced in civilization through Asian invasions of 4000 BC⁴⁸⁶. This evaluation explicitly demonstrates that although there was a clear shift in the narration, referring to Turkish History Thesis even with reservation was still inevitable.

The same reservation was apparent in the book in the expressions regarding Sun Language Theory. For example, it was stated that the most important feature of Sumerians, founders of the earliest civilization, was the invention of script. It was also argued that many words in Sumerian language were very similar to Turkish. This can be regarded as an indicative of the continuity of the language thesis to some extent. This connection about linguistics leads the reader to a consequence of Sumerians being the descendants of Central Asia Turks⁴⁸⁷.

⁴⁸² *ibid.*, p.186

⁴⁸³ *ibid.*, p.307

⁴⁸⁴ Mansel, *İlkçağ Tarihi*, p.49

⁴⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 96

⁴⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 71

⁴⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p.43

6.2.2 Medieval History

The content of the Medieval History book was Turkish, Islamic and European history during medieval times. The first important point regarding this volume is that similar to the previous volume, the text was shortened. Limited and shallow narration about history of Turks is conspicuous in the book. For instance, while the content of Göktürk history is 8 pages in 1932 edition, the section relating entire history and culture of pre-Islamic Turks is limited to 7,5 pages in 1942 edition.

Furthermore, a strong emphasis on Turkishness of pre-Islamic Turkish history is evident in the narrations of the 1932 edition. For instance, throughout the explanation about *Migration of Tribes*, the effect of German tribes on the collapse of the Roman Empire remained in the rear while the migration was presented as if the leading actors were the Huns. Included as well were remarks such as “Hun invasions subverted Europe”⁴⁸⁸, “There were no nations in Europe to confront Turkish cavalries composed of the courageous Huns, practically living on horse-back”, “Entire Europe was full of fear and anxiety”⁴⁸⁹. However, 1942 edition does not hold any overestimations for the role of Huns regarding Migration of Tribes; they were defined as “a part of tribes migrating towards West”⁴⁹⁰.

Another notable point concerning Turkish history in the observed textbooks is counterclaims about the European historians' definition of Turks as uncivilized and barbarian. The discomfort of this claim is apparent in the 1932 edition where nomadic lifestyle of Turkish tribes is ignored for the sake of emphasizing that Turks were civilized people, not barbarians. It was also asserted that, “European Huns were living in cities mostly in wooden houses”, “sitting on chairs and eating on dining tables” and that they had progressed in literature⁴⁹¹. The same defensive reflex is considerably limited in 1942 edition

⁴⁸⁸ *Tarih II*, p.25

⁴⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p.23

⁴⁹⁰ Cavit Baysun, *Ortaçağ Tarihi*, II. Sınıf, Ankara: Maarif Vekâleti, 1942, p.2

⁴⁹¹ *Tarih II*, p.27

in which none of the statements about European Huns in 1932 edition exist. On the other hand, as it can be viewed in the following lines, the information about pre-Islamic Turks aim to give an impression that 'civilized' Turks were not nomadic but rather settled: “Most of the Turks were living in cities and were well skilled at horse-riding and using weapons. Few were nomadic.”⁴⁹²

The 1932 textbook also bears a clear distance to Arabs and Islam. For instance, when referring to Orhon Inscriptions, Göktürk Alphabet was brought up particularly to mark this distance. After giving some characteristics of this alphabet, this was expressed with the following line: “It is undeniable that this alphabet is more suitable to Turkish language than the Arab alphabet.”⁴⁹³ There are no such statements in 1942 edition.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the prominent feature of Islamic history in 1932 edition was a clear remoteness from the Arabs and the religious references of Islam while narrations were simplified into ordinary historical events⁴⁹⁴. However, the same issue was handled in a different manner in 1942 edition. The first remarkable point was that unlike the previous book, there were no humiliating statements pertaining to the Arabs. Yet, the chapter focusing on the pre-Islamic period, with its cautiously selected expressions, was the most informative on this topic. For instance, it was claimed that before accepting İslam Arabs were idolatrous, however, had a big respect for Kaaba; and albeit their superior qualifications such as intelligence, courage and honesty, still lived primitively⁴⁹⁵.

⁴⁹² Baysun, *Ortaçağ Tarihi*, p.24

⁴⁹³ *Tarih II*, p.51

⁴⁹⁴ The similarities of the statements between the second volume of History textbook published in 1932 and Atatürk's own handwritings in *Medeni Bilgiler* about Hz. Mohammad and Islam are noticeable. As Afet İnan states, Atatürk planned this study as a preparation for textbooks. In these notes he explicitly approached the issue in a scientific manner and evaluated the story of Mohammad's prophecy through divine inspiration as “It will be better to leave these fictions aside and evaluate this issue in a scientific and logical context.” in “Atatürk'ün Elyazısıyla Hz. Muhammet ve İslamiyet”, *Saçak*, 26, 1986, p. 27. Actually, the general discourse of Kemalist ruling cadre stands on a distance between the world of Islam and Arabs. This can be regarded as a need of recognition that, from that point on, Republic of Turkey was part of western contemporary civilization.

⁴⁹⁵ Baysun, *Ortaçağ Tarihi*, p.28

Again contrary to the 1932 edition, in explanations on the period of Mohammad, defining him as “Exalted” (*Hazret*), moreso 'prophet' was often replaced by ‘Hz. Mohammad’ in the 1942 edition. Furthermore narrations from religious framework were also abandoned in this issue. This was demonstrated by the assertion that prophecy to Mohammad arrived through a divine inspiration (*vahiy*) and that the holy book Koran with its powerful narration significantly influenced the Arabs⁴⁹⁶.

Carefully selected and softened expressions for Arabs were also observed in narrations of Islamic era. That is to say, there were no tautologies classifying Arabs as primitive before or under Islam⁴⁹⁷. The period of Abbasids and their relation with Turks was explained with reasoning as Abbasid administration benefiting from contacts with the Turks. Furthermore, “superiority of Islam and Arab” was interpreted as “product of benefits developed from Central Asian relations in respect to commerce and civilization”⁴⁹⁸. Nevertheless, the narration concerning Umayyads was an exception. The claim was that they disparaged and harmed non Arabic Muslims so “Turks were disgusted from the disastrous rule of Umayyads and their mal behavior”⁴⁹⁹.

The difference in the two textbooks is also apparent in the narration of Turkish acceptance of Islam. Massive Muslim conversion during Abbasid period was assessed as a major event for Turkish and world history in the 1942 edition. However, it was explained that long contact with Muslims enabled the Turks, to understand Islam extensively and thus provided its acceptance and dissemination among them. It was also asserted that hitherto, Turks were the protectors of the Muslim world and rescued Muslims from dangers they

⁴⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p.29

⁴⁹⁷ *Tarih II*, p.124

⁴⁹⁸ Baysun, *Ortaçağ Tarihi* p.43

⁴⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 40. Interestingly, both sets of books have similar statements about the Umayyad period, which is exceptional within the general attitude because it speaks from within the Islamic tradition and understanding. After all, a negative outlook upon Umayyads is common for both the Sunni and Shi'i groups.

drenched into. The statement “this religion was spiritually more suitable for them than all others”⁵⁰⁰ in the book can be evaluated as a first step of conciliation with Islamic heritage, in other words, disintegration from ideological reflexes of 1930s⁵⁰¹ with a more reasonable approach to the past. Hence, the dimensions of this shift can be better seen in details in the chapter about Muslim civilization. This was the following chapter which included that a bright civilization emerged with the expansion of Islam and this religion brought justice to people⁵⁰². Apart from these, degrading statements about Arabs and ignoring their role in constructing Islamic civilization⁵⁰³ was abandoned in the 1942 edition where it was expressed that this civilization was a combination of the works of Turks, Persians and Arabs. The only unchanged value in this certain edition was the Turkish origin attributed to prominent Muslim intellectuals and scientists such as Farabi, İbn-i Sina, El-Biruni, İmam Buhari⁵⁰⁴.

The chapters related to Muslim Turkish states, although with some differences originating from cautiousness, reveal the attention paid on this subject in terms of Turkish and Islamic history in both textbooks. In other words, there is not a distant stance to this period of Turkish history, yet conserving them appears as an important historical heritage. For instance, in 1932 edition, Great Seljuk Empire was regarded as “The magnificent Muslim

⁵⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p.44

⁵⁰¹ 1930s was the time when there was a perception within Republican intellectuals and ruling cadre that the principles of the revolution were not fully understood and absorbed by the society. Thus this period witnessed certain initiatives on systematizing official ideology. It was also apparent that reactionary movements inside the country and the effects of rise of fascism in Europe during the inter-war years led to a more authoritarian administration. For more information see Chapter 2.

⁵⁰² *ibid.*, p.52

⁵⁰³ The following expression demonstrates explicitly this situation; “During the period of Islam, those occupied with science and education were mostly non-Arabs. The establishment of Islam civilization was a product of the efforts of other nations, especially Turks and Persians.” *Tarih II*, p.162.

⁵⁰⁴ Baysun, *Ortaçağ Tarihi*, p.52

Turkish Empire” which over a short span of time, reached wide frontiers⁵⁰⁵; while in the 1942 edition matched “the foundation of the Great Turkish State” with Malazgirt Victory of the Seljuks⁵⁰⁶. At this point, it must be indicated that this conceptional variation among the two editions was probably due to the political conditions of both times. Returning to our evaluations, in both editions, Turkishness rather than Islam was brought forth when the contributions of the Turkish Islamic states to history of civilization were taken up. In the sections about the administrative, social, economic and intellectual life of those states, the effect and contribution of Islam was disregarded and the mentioned features were explained in terms of being a Turk. For example, architectural monuments of Seljuk period were evaluated as “valuable contributions of Turkish civilization”⁵⁰⁷. Although most of these monuments were built up for religious aims and religious symbols were utilized in their design and ornamentation, none of them were taken up in the narration.

6.2.3 History of the Modern Ages

The textbook covers Ottoman and European history between 14 and 20th centuries. In the content, the sections related to Ottoman history were taken up and analyzed. Similar to 1932 edition, the general approach of the textbook had a strong emphasis on Turkishness. The general outlook and social structure of Anatolia and Turkification of the different ethnical groups during the foundation period of the Empire were explained as; “In this way, Anatolia has started to become Turk with its stone, soil, water and people.”⁵⁰⁸. Likewise, the basic aim of the Ottoman policy of the 14th century was declared as re-

⁵⁰⁵ *Tarih II*, p. 212

⁵⁰⁶ Baysun, *Ortaçağ Tarihi*, p.93

⁵⁰⁷ *ibid.* p.108

⁵⁰⁸ Enver Ziya Karal, *Yeni ve Yakın Çağlar Tarihi, III. Sınıf*, Ankara: Maarif Vekâleti, 1942, p.3

establishment of the Turkish unity⁵⁰⁹. Moreover, 'Ottoman Turks' and 'Turks' used instead of 'Ottomans' in the 1932 edition remained unchanged in many parts of 1942 edition. What is different in this edition was that, it included glorifications and essentialist descriptions concerning Turks. For instance, the expansion and fortification of the Ottomans in Anatolia and Rumelia were attributed to the “superiority of Ottoman Turks” and “perfectness of Ottoman institutions”; and it was claimed that Ottomans with qualifications such as courage, heroism and honesty were the representatives of the “actual, genuine character of Turkish race”⁵¹⁰.

Another striking point of the book is that, Islamization policy of the Empire was handled and assessed together with Turkification as a significant state policy which was ignored in the previous edition⁵¹¹. This can be regarded as the reconciliation of the ruling cadre with the Islamic identity of the Empire which until then was deliberately kept in the background before.

In the textbook, the Classical Age Ottoman institutions and administrative mentality were defined quite positively. In general, the image of “protective state” is prominent in numerous parts of the book. Ottoman land management was compared with European feudalism and regarded as much superior for not having class distinction and that Ottomans were not serfs like the Europeans. Although the Ottoman system was based on state ownership of the entire land, in the book it was asserted that land belonged to the ones living on and cultivating it and that this provided “the loyalty of the people to the state”⁵¹². This claim in the book was fortified with Kanuni Süleyman’s words

⁵⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p.5. However, during the mentioned period, Ottomans were still *uc beyliği* (frontier principality) and their primary aim was to expand domains of influence through *gaza* (holy war) and to obtain spoils through raiding Byzantium. For detailed information, see Paul Wittek, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Doğuşu*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1985

⁵¹⁰ Karal, *Yeni ve Yakın*, p.8. The particularistic character of official historiography with the general formulation “we resemble to ourselves” is distinctively visual here. However, as it can be observed in the above lines, this understanding, through the influence of Barkan's historical writings, was altered to convey the uniqueness of Ottoman institutions.

⁵¹¹ *ibid.*, p.11, 29, 61

⁵¹² *ibid.*, p.9-10

‘peasants were the true masters of the state and thus were protected in most effective ways’⁵¹³. Similarly, Ottoman understanding of administration in 15th century was evaluated as “the core principle of the state is ruling Christians with tolerance” and when compared with the European counterparts, the rights given to Christians were “the consequence of a mature policy superseding the period”⁵¹⁴.

Controversially, the narration in the 1932 edition is relatively distant and even negative to the Empirical times at some points. Enactment legalizing fratricide⁵¹⁵ during the reign of Mehmet II was defended in the 1942 edition as not a barbarian application as put forth by the Europeans⁵¹⁶. On the other hand, in the previous edition it was argued that although there were such applications before Mehmet II, “violence, cruelty and injustice” was not appreciated by anyone⁵¹⁷. In fact, the distant approaches to the Empire were not apparent only on fratriciding, but were related in many parts of the book on other issues as well. One of these concerned the military. In the 1942 edition, military successes were explained with more vigor when compared with the previous edition. In this context, conquest of Istanbul was focused to strictly factual knowledge in the 1932 edition and the resulting demolition of East Roman Empire was mentioned as the event ending Medieval Age. Contrary to this, in the 1942 edition, the conquest, especially Fatih’s ingenuity of sliding the warships over the land, from the Bosphorus to Haliç (Golden Horn) were described as “a mind-blowing great job”⁵¹⁸, and the whole event, shaking

⁵¹³ *ibid.*, p.61

⁵¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.28

⁵¹⁵ After the 15th century, slaying all brothers, natural candidates for sultanship for the sake of the state was made a legal process with Fatih Code of Laws (*Fatih Kanunnamesi*) which was continued for almost three centuries.

⁵¹⁶ *ibid.*, p.26

⁵¹⁷ *Tarih III*, p.36

⁵¹⁸ Karal, *Yeni ve Yakın*, p.21

Turkish and Islamic societies with excitement, was applauded as “the most fascinating action in the world”⁵¹⁹.

The similarity of the two textbooks is that, both of them based the fall of the Empire upon internal conditions which set ground for the narrations of the textbooks to come. In other words, the decline was connected with 'deformation of the order' and deterioration of the institutions leading to defeats in the future wars⁵²⁰.

Examining the difference in the approaches of the two textbooks to late Ottoman political developments and modernization process was also very illuminating for the comparisons. Three basic differences were observed during this analysis. The first was the clear definitions of the modernization process valid in the 1932 edition. The reactionists who were against modernization and aimed to nullify the attempts with revolts were identified in many parts of the book as religious fundamentalists. Comparing the Turkish enlightenment with the European it was asserted that starting from the Renaissance; the West overcame bigotry through constructing social and political life upon scientific fundamentals. Whereas in the Ottoman Empire, prevailing illiteracy and bigotry was the biggest stumbling block to all kinds of progresses and this led the regression of social and political life even in the 19th century. From this viewpoint, the reactionary revolt ending the era of Selim III was regarded as “a religious reaction of functionaries (*ulema*) and Janissaries, performed by exploiting religion for political gain”⁵²¹. Likewise, Abdülhamit II’s sultanate was described as a reactionary period and the basic characteristic of the era was limited to a Sultan-founded extensive secret service and its denouncing activities⁵²². Islamism, the ideology which was given the role of safeguarding

⁵¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.23

⁵²⁰ *ibid.* p. 94-97; *Tarih III*, p. 152-157

⁵²¹ *ibid.*, p.196

⁵²² Yet there is not mention in the textbook of the popularization of education which was a significant progress during this period. As known, the period of Abdülhamit II was a time when all sorts of attacks (military, economic, missionary) of the West were confronted by the Sultan obliging him to develop defense mechanisms he deemed suitable. The tools of defense

the Empire was criticized for being overemphasized by the Sultan and thus, this period was presented with a non-academic but sentimental approach defined as “arbitrary, unsuccessful, dishonorable and boring”⁵²³.

The second remarkable point in the 1932 edition was the scarcity of xenophobia. Explanations on the disloyalty of non-Muslims during 19th century, concerning Greek Patriarchate and Phanariote Greeks can be regarded as the consequence of prejudices for minorities possessing commercial privileges⁵²⁴. There were also some striking verdicts such as; “Patriarchate and a heap of Godless Phanariotes with pecuniary advantages” were working towards the rapid collapse of the Empire because of their “idealist dissimulation of revenge from Ottoman Sultanate for destroying the Byzantine Empire and their quest to revive East Roman Empire”⁵²⁵.

There was a similar approach in the narrations of the Greek Revolt. The interest and fondness Europeans shared for ancient Greek civilization were regarded as exaggerated and expressed as it “appeared more civilized and bright than it actually was”; “the exaggerated stories concerning that period of time were taught as if they were true”⁵²⁶. Furthermore, there were comments on respect and closeness of the west to ancient Greece; and belligerence displayed towards Turks and Muslims. These statements can be classified as reactions to the claims accusing Turks of being uncivilized barbarians. Anger was displayed to the Western support of the Greek independence as well as fury to the perception that the “rebellious Greeks” whom Turks fought most against

were the same the West used for attack: In this respect, Western style educational institutions were designed with Islamic elements, and adapted into Ottomans’ requirements. For detailed information, see Selim Deringil, *İktidarın Sembolleri ve İdeoloji: II. Abdülhamid Dönemi (1876-1909)*, İstanbul: YKY, 2002; Benjamin Fortna, *Imperial Classroom Islam, State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002

⁵²³ *Tarih III*, p.296-297

⁵²⁴ The parallelism between this perception reflected in the textbook and the decision of *Varlık Vergisi* (Property Tax) taken by the parliament ten years after its publication is significant in the sense that the latter targets mostly the non-Muslims in practice although the act did not.

⁵²⁵ *Tarih III*, p.199

⁵²⁶ *ibid.*, p.202

during Independence War, were the descendents of Aristo, Platon and Homeros.

The third point differentiating the 1932 edition is that, the modernization process was defined as period creating a Western domain within the Empire through interference of the big powers in the internal affairs for the sake of assuring safety of the Ottoman minorities. Another pertinent feature of the narration was negligence of internal dynamics; as a consequence, underestimation of the prominent actors and critical milestones of this process. This outstanding accumulation transferred directly to the Turkish Revolution and its core principles are overlooked in the referred issue. The Imperial Edict of Gülhane (*Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu*) declared in 1839, which was the first step on enlarging the rights of Christians in the Empire, was described as the intervention of European states into Ottoman affairs due to Egyptian Question⁵²⁷. The failure of the Tanzimat reforms was also connected to the perception of Muslims that they were “the product of the persistence of the Christian states of Europe” and the reforms were not approached favorably⁵²⁸. Young Ottomans - intellectuals and public officials playing critical roles during this period- were underestimated meanwhile, and were defined merely as young men who were only interested in reading French books and naively⁵²⁹ believed that all problems of the Empire would come to an end with Constitutionalism⁵³⁰. Accordingly, it was reflected that these idealist young men also were not sufficiently informed about the economical, financial and administrative issues of the Empire, that they even “could not understand the essentials of nationality”⁵³¹. Likewise, the significance of Young Turks was ignored in Ottoman-Turkish modernization period. There were prejudiced

⁵²⁷ *ibid.*, p.240

⁵²⁸ *ibid.*, p.248

⁵²⁹ The italics belong to the textbook.

⁵³⁰ *ibid.*, p.254

⁵³¹ *ibid.*, p.255

claims as well which concealed historical realities such as the Young Turks “did nothing but only propaganda in Europe”, “did not learn or carefully follow modern European history” and Committee of Union and Progress ‘consisted of only 3-5 people who had no serious influences within the country’,⁵³².

Contrary to these, the approach and the wording of the 1942 edition was considerably distinct from the previous one. 1839 Imperial Edict of Gülhane was explained as a restriction of royal authority and Sultan’s acceptance of a superior legal power by his own will, in a similar manner to many other European countries. In this context, Mustafa Reşit Paşa, who spent a long time in Europe, with the effect of his experiences, felt the necessity of a renewal in Ottoman state law and declared the Edict⁵³³. Furthermore, relatively more historically accurate and in-depth descriptions can be observed in reference to a group of Ottoman intellectuals, named as the Young Ottomans. It was explained that these people, who went to Europe in the 19th century for various reasons became closely acquainted with the Western institutions, gained a perspective concerning the essential approaches to secure the survival of the Empire and attempted to apply their convictions upon their return. Their contributions to the modernization process and the reforms, especially those in education field were discussed in the book⁵³⁴. Another noteworthy feature in the textbook was that, the section concerning the Young Turks and Second Constitutional Era, a true turning point in Ottoman history, was limited to only one page.

6.2.4 History of the Turkish Republic

The fourth volume in the series, History of the Turkish Republic, covered history of Turkey from the end of the First World War up to 1944, when the textbook was written. The book started with relating the general

⁵³² *ibid.*, pp.297-298

⁵³³ Karal, *Yeni ve Yakın*, p.168

⁵³⁴ *ibid.*, p.170-175

condition of the Ottoman Empire after World War I and the emergence of the consciousness of independence. A less accusing and judging attitude was observed for this period in comparison with the 1932 edition. While the previous edition using an aggressive language with words such as “inglorious”, “rascal”, “impotent”, “coward”⁵³⁵ claimed that the Sultan and his government, consented to living a dishonorable life, in order to preserve their positions by ingratiating the enemy, the 1945 edition differed. It displayed the fears of the Sultan and the insufficiency of the administrators who were “far from being capable of accomplishing the big deeds that Turkish nation expected”⁵³⁶.

The narrations on Mustafa Kemal also differed in the two editions. In many parts of the 1932 edition, Mustafa Kemal was characterized with elaborated practically mystical statements as “he was born to conduct and control people”, “he was born as a soldier” and as a genius, with an extraordinary genesis, always fore-seeing and telling the truth⁵³⁷. He was also defined as totally different from and superior to all other members of the CUP⁵³⁸. To support such attributions even some anachronistic remarks were included in the text such as the idea of founding a Republic was pronounced by him as early as 1900 for he was not content with constitutionalism⁵³⁹. On the other hand, the 1945 edition, presumably because it was after his death, did not contain such statements. In fact, exaggerated glorification around his name was abandoned and Mustafa Kemal was humanized in the book listing his military successes following his brief biography.

There are some other discrepancies between the two editions such as presenting Mustafa Kemal as the 'single man' during National Struggle and

⁵³⁵ *Tarih IV*, p.13-14

⁵³⁶ Enver Ziya Karal, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi: 1918-1944*, Ankara: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1945, p.4

⁵³⁷ *Tarih IV*, pp.18-21

⁵³⁸ *ibid.*, p.18. However, it is well known that, Mustafa Kemal was not one of the most prominent members of the CUP at that time. He was to acquire his fame as military commander of the Turkish forces during Dardanelles battles.

⁵³⁹ *ibid.*, p.18

foundation process of the Republic in 1932 edition. The book was composed to inspire the reader to symbolize the will of the nation with Mustafa Kemal's personality and think of him as the only leader to know and apply the best decisions for the people, that he and his ruling cadre could differentiate what is good and bad for the public and supply the intensive care and protection the newly born nation-state needed. A clear distant stance towards any kind of oppositions is apparent throughout the book; and the opponents are regarded as 'bad'. For instance, Mustafa Kemal was reflected as unquestionably the only leader, totally unopposed during the Erzurum and Sivas congresses. The decisions following the Erzurum Congress were given as indicatives of the aims he specified while he was in İstanbul and that they were attended with full agreement and national support⁵⁴⁰. Needless to say, the opposition displayed during the Sivas Congress to Mustafa Kemal, to his leadership and his rejection to any kind of a mandate were totally omitted whereas these important points were specified in 1945 edition⁵⁴¹.

The new edition, although full of respect and reverence, did not present Atatürk as a single rescuer. Consultations between Atatürk and İsmet İnönü were mentioned at several places, especially in parts explaining critical views and decisions. For instance, renewal of the assembly in April, 1923 was explained as the decision of Atatürk and İnönü, both feeling the necessity of this renewal in order to maintain the unity of the country⁵⁴². It was also asserted that before proclamation of the republic, Atatürk and İnönü worked together and prepared a proposal indicating the basic principles of the Republic⁵⁴³. The book even concluded with: "History will always record the great name of President İnönü with this prosperity [of Second World War] in

⁵⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p.37

⁵⁴¹ Karal, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi*, p.29

⁵⁴² *ibid.*, p.98

⁵⁴³ *ibid.*, p.101

the foreground.”⁵⁴⁴ This, once again is the demonstration of how these textbooks reflected the political atmosphere of the period. The 1945 edition was published when İsmet İnönü was the ‘Unchangeable General President’ and ‘National Chief’ of the country, with the aim of presenting İnönü as the proper leader to pursue Atatürk. The book also gave place to İnönü’s speeches on various occasions even more than to those of Atatürk. Another striking aspect of the book was the selection of İnönü’s 8 page May 19, 1944 speech as the reading assignment given to students at the end of the book⁵⁴⁵. Indicated and underlined in this speech, following a summary of educational improvements, are the basic principles for the country and the public. The significance of the speech is the firm distance drawn between the racist-Turanist views and the ruling cadre. Accordingly, the selection of this speech as the concluding remark cannot be evaluated as ordinary, for it introduced political preferences of the administrators at the time the book was written. Furthermore, it also gave the message that as the Axis approached defeat; toleration, even the implicit support given to marginal nationalist thoughts also came to an end, necessitating decisiveness concerning the new political stance in Turkey.

Returning to comments on the opposition, the narration about Progressive Republican Party (PRP-*Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası*) and Liberal Republican Party (LRP-*Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*) also reflected the same approach and gave the message that Atatürk and his party, RPP already knew and represented general interest, thus there was no need to opposing parties. The opposition in the national assembly was also accused of being the center of reactionists aiming to restore Sultanate and Caliphate. Supporters of PRP were described as “illiterates, puritans discontented with the revolutions”, “ingrate”, “remorseless”, “incendiary” and “traitor”⁵⁴⁶. Similarly, a connection was made with the foundation of LRP and resurgence of reactionists; and

⁵⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p.182

⁵⁴⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 183-190

⁵⁴⁶ *Tarih IV*, pp.190-191

annulling of the party itself just before the Menemen Incident was affirmed as “well-timed, appropriate and in point”⁵⁴⁷. However, there is no such negative attitude towards opposing views in 1945 edition. PRP was not totally reviled; it was stated that there were many sincere patriots within the party, although some were gang-minded. But the book did not refrain from associating Şeyh Sait Rebellion with the PRP and based the causes of the rebellion upon the foundation of the party as well⁵⁴⁸. A similar approach is evident in the narrations of LRP. It was expressed that although the new party did not aim to exploit religion for political gains, the conservatives eventually monopolized it for their own interests. In addition, Menemen Incident was not directly connected with the party, but on the other hand, LRP was accused of causing diversity within the assembly, which led to a social and political unrest⁵⁴⁹.

This understanding was also reflected in the narrations on the reforms in two aspects. Firstly, it was mentioned several times that the reforms and democracy would be announced and applied step by step in line with the readiness of the social and political conditions. Otherwise, the reactionists would have the opportunity to harm the country. Secondly, Republican reforms were handled and analyzed with reference to the Ottoman past, especially the reformative times described as a 'total failure'. There is an obvious settlement of the Republic, disintegrated from its Ottoman and Islamic past. In this respect, whatever belonged to that past was 'evil', 'old', 'reactionist' and 'traditional'; and Kemalist cadre corrected them with reforms. The first aspect appeared in the 1945 edition with reasonings. It was explained in a moderate tone that The Nine Principles (*Dokuz Umde*) constituting the basic foundation elements of RPP did not cover everything in Mustafa Kemal's mind. It was explained that some issues such as proclamation of the Republic and abolition

⁵⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p.200

⁵⁴⁸ Karal, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi*, p.115

⁵⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p.119

of the Caliphate were omitted with the concern that the opposition might take advantage of such measures to start a religious unrest⁵⁵⁰.

The description of the reforms and steps taken in line with the revolution principles however were not based on a clear break from and confrontation with the Ottoman past. Comparing Republican institutions with the Ottoman, the narrations put forth the conditions of Turkey in the 1920s underlining the improvements in social, political and economic areas with reference to numeric data until the end of the Second World War. For instance, unlike the previous edition's disparaging style, the abolition of the Caliphate was explained with its historical background first and then reasoned with its incompatibility with a secular nation state⁵⁵¹. Similarly, the condition of women in the Ottoman Empire was not reflected as totally backward. It was specified that, although Islam as a culture weakened the position of women in legal and social areas, and they lost most of their rights; it was only so in big cities and towns. Provincial women maintained old Turkish traditions and their emancipated status remained unchanged⁵⁵².

The same approach was observed in the narration of core principals. It was stated that, during the last years of the Empire, nationalism gained strength among Turks. Yet, supporters of nationalism did not have a perspective on state organization; their efforts were rather on cultural field. Turkish revolution breaking away from the core, based every movement on this principle⁵⁵³. Likewise, it was expressed that Ottomans attempted secularization in certain areas, but the *ulema* prevented them many times and even led bloody rebellions against the reformers⁵⁵⁴. Secularization attempts in legal system through adoption of European practices during Tanzimat Period such as *nizamiye*

⁵⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p.99

⁵⁵¹ *ibid.*, p.105

⁵⁵² *ibid.*, p.125

⁵⁵³ *ibid.*, p.112

⁵⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.114

mahkemeleri (appeal courts) was also specified in the book⁵⁵⁵. In other words, dynamics of Turkish modernization were not expressed as if they were emerged in the mind of Atatürk and put in practice starting from 1923 as it was in the previous edition; but rather the issue was handled with emphasis on its historical and ideational background in late Ottoman period.

What was noteworthy in the 1945 edition was that, Turkish History Thesis was taken up very exclusively. Brief information on Ottoman historiography was followed by clearly emphasizing the necessity of dependency on national identity in history as well, and that writing a national history would be the important device to provide this. Henceforth, the core ideas of the thesis were listed and highlighted as “studies for the indication of the History Thesis” during the history congresses held between 1932 and 1943⁵⁵⁶.

⁵⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p.120

⁵⁵⁶ *ibid.*, pp.141-143. It is quite interesting to see the basic arguments of the History Thesis with the same emphasis in the 1945 edition as it illustrates numerous diversions from the thesis in many respects. This can be regarded as a preference of the author and IPC to display that the history content was still shaped in line with the Thesis and it was not totally abandoned. It was also declared in the notice entitled “History Textbooks to be Written for High Schools” sent from the Ministry of Education to Enver Ziya Karal, member of the committee and one of the authors of the new textbooks that, the textbooks should be written centring Turkish history and according to the Turkish History Thesis. *Maarif Vekilliği Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi Issue:2- 1186, Ankara, 26 June 1941*

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

One of the radical changes the First World War entailed was the collapse of European Empires. Among them was the Ottoman Empire which, with the effect of nationalist movements among its different elements gave way to Turkish nationalism, leading to the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Emergence of the Turkish Republic did not encompass only the building of a new nation-state from the heritage of the empire, but it also included modernization of a society through a movement history registered as the Turkish Revolution. Within the decade following the declaration of the republic, the ruling cadre introduced radical reforms in conformity with the ideology of the revolutionary spirit, providing fundamental changes to elevate the new Turkish state to the level of contemporary civilization. The most crucial and pertinent among the aims of the reformists was to install national identity and consciousness among the people of the new Republic. In order to reach this aim they resorted to utilizing two influential devices, history and education, both instrumental in inciting, acknowledging and canalizing masses, in this case, in line with the official ideology.

Administers of the new state targeted to provide the nation-wide adoption of the official ideology which required possessiveness of official history known as Turkish History Thesis. This thesis was formulated in 1930s which was the period of crystallization of the Republican ideology and integration of the entire Turkish community to the new socio-administrative system in a rather authoritarian way. However, observing that the continuity of revolutionary changes required the cooperation and support of new generations, the ruling elite did not fail to install a new educational system embracing the principles constituting the infrastructure of the state. Throughout

1930s, official historiography served to provide citizens' adherence to the new understanding through new history textbooks as the foremost element.

The impetus in formulating official historiography was to inspire the nation to gain Turkish consciousness. Although tracing the basic characteristics of Turkish race with its ancientness through anthropological studies seemed to be racist; with Karal's definition it was a "defensive historiography"⁵⁵⁷ emphasizing the Turks as mutual participants of the contemporary western world both culturally and historically. This was the main reason of -perceiving ancient Anatolian and Near Eastern peoples as Turks - to adopt Anatolia with its complete past, including, all its values and culture. Therefore, the official historiography of early republican era cannot be evaluated as an exclusionist method aiming to create 'us' and 'others' – referring to internal and external enemies – as generally emphasized in the fundamental characteristics of nationalist histories. Severe criticisms of the racists and pan-Turkists towards the official history and its representatives serves another indicator that the official understanding did not have exclusionist and racist perspective. Although the official history had strong ethnocentric characteristic, the Early Republican historians were not xenophobic, that they pursued a 'humanist' and 'universalist' perspective, at least towards international arena, since the fundamental aim was to be a participant of contemporary civilizations and the way to achieve this was calculated as to "firmly integrate the Turkish history within world history"⁵⁵⁸

Another outcome of this study regarding diversities and contradictions, if any, was the change in the official perception of history with reference to accepted assertion that there was no singular nationalist perspective within the official historiography of a state and that the historians were not direct transmitters of a specific historical perspective. From this standpoint, the views of even some noted historians such as Fuat Köprülü or Şemsettin Günaltay

⁵⁵⁷ Enver Ziya Karal, "Tanzimat'tan Bugüne Kadar Tarihçiliğimiz", *Felsefe Kurumu Seminerleri, III. Türkiye'de Tarih Eğitimi*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1977, p.258

⁵⁵⁸ Halil Berktaş, "Dört Tarihçinin Sosyal Portresi", *Toplum ve Bilim*, 54-55, 1991, p.28

whose approaches to history and evaluations differed from the official view to some extent, can be referred to as significant examples in demonstrating that there was not a directly state-controlled and unified perception of history. Actually, this was in accordance with Atatürk's ultimate aim of developing of an independent and scientific historiography. It was therefore that he founded Turkish Historical Society - later, Turkish History Association - as an independent institution free of political pressures rather than an official one which inevitably would have to be attached to the government administratively and financially. His concern was that such an attachment would or could hinder independent researches and oblige researches to work under the umbrella of the government. The independence sought in the establishment of such an institution was not much possible during the early years since the Republic required a firm loyalty to the nation-state and its foundation philosophy. Additionally, construction of a collective memory through official history was one of the crucial means for it. Nevertheless, the following years did witness the independence of the academic/professional history from the official. It is hence possible to claim that, due to this mentality, different perspectives apart from the official historiography could find a space and theses that can be deemed "antithetical" could be written and discussed during the mentioned period.

Although it appeared to be extreme in some points, official historiography and writing textbooks in accordance with the dominant ideology was quite understandable during the nation-building process in Turkey. This was a pertinent era of constructing national identity within a society unaccustomed to such. In this context; state had total control over education as well as all other institutions. Scholars regarded that this condition ought to be changed and science would gain its autonomy from the state, as predicted also by Köprülü⁵⁵⁹ as; 'this *romantic history* period will also end here and historical studies will be based on scientific and objective methods'.

⁵⁵⁹ Vasilij Vladimiroviç Barthold, *İslam Medeniyeti Tarihi*, (trans.) M. Fuad Köprülü, İstanbul: Kanaat Kitabevi, 1940, p. 23

First clues of Köprülü's predictions were observed as early as the following couple of years. Atatürk's death and the presidency of İnönü witnessed important social and political changes. The years between 1938 and 1946, often identified as a humanistic era, was the period of Hasan Ali Yücel's Ministry of Education, when significant educational and cultural policies also had effects regarding the official understanding of history. In this period the changing attitudes and scopes towards the reactionists and the reciprocal defensive responses and rigid applications of the previous era in order to protect the regime were reduced and the confidence gained provided the fortification of the regime⁵⁶⁰. Accordingly, it became the period when the strong responses towards Ottoman and Islamic identity/culture were decreased. Considering all these facts, this era can also be described as a 'consolidation era'. This shift in official understanding had certain unavoidable consequences upon the educational and cultural policies as well as history writing.

Unlike the previous era, historiography during İnönü Era was shaped within two main dimensions as the academic/intellectual and official aspect. In the academic field and with the affect of particularism, history writing aimed to put forth the uniqueness of Turkish history. This was conducted through creating an image of glorious Ottoman past. This approach unavoidably provided reconstruction of a connection with the recent past and accordingly embracing the heritage of Ottoman and previous Turkish Islamic histories, which was compulsorily disregarded during the foundation years of the Republic. This paved way to development of a conservative approach to history, strongly nourished by Yahya Kemal's thoughts and became more

⁵⁶⁰ The debate in the National Assembly on 'using books written in Arab alphabet in school libraries' is a clear indication of the mildening approach of the ruling cadre. For example, Çanakkale deputy Ziya Gevher Etili strongly opposed this proposal arguing as, "There is a form and smell of a recourse (*rücu*) in the encountered opinion in this protocol. Even a direct recourse. We can never recourse from any of our great reforms that we have made by now." Hasan Ali Yücel, on the other hand expressed that a reaction or recourse was on no account in question. İstanbul deputy İbrahim Alaettin Gövsa supported Yücel as he understood that there were some members of the parliament who were anxious about the regression of the country; but there was no need to fear since the young population was closely loyal to the all principles of the revolution. During his speech, continuous applaudings and 'bravo!' cries can be regarded as the indicator of the strong support from the Assembly. Meclis Zabıtları, Devre 6 cilt 2 içtima F, 10.5.1939

popular in academic (more visible in the studies of Barkan and his followers) and intellectual area as reflected in prominent journals of the time. Actually this approach can also be called as a conservative reaction since it mainly objected top to down modernization understanding of the constituent power visioning a complete break from the past. In this respect, conservative historians and intellectuals looked upon such ignorings as eliminating the uniqueness/genuineness of the historical and cultural values, bringing the Turkish nation to the present. Since their modernization approach was based on the continuity and preservation of cultural values in which religion had a significant place; the awakening of historical consciousness in conformity with tradition and culture with emphasis on Anatolia as the motherland provided historical and territorial unity of Turkish nation gained significance among these intellectuals.

Such version of history got a foothold also among the ruling cadre as early as the end of Hasan Ali Yücel's ministry with the desire to teach the youngsters glorious victories of Turks during Seljuk and Ottoman Empire and reestablish their exceptional place within Turkish history intended to be forgotten. Significant point in this determination was that, it rapidly climbed and became the dominant understanding of history which was also reflected on the textbooks of the following years.

Nevertheless, the irresistible rise of conservative reaction could not find a floor in official dimension at least while Yücel was Minister of Education, since he acquired the collaboration of conservatives with the radical modernists under the same roof. Therefore, an influential conservative approach was not evident in the history congresses and the textbooks of this period.

Regarding the official history formulated as Turkish History Thesis, the Third History Congress as well as the textbooks written in the same year did not demonstrate an overall break, but merely a shift from basic assumptions. When the Third Congress is compared with the previous two, its scientific atmosphere is more evident rather than exhibiting a political mission of disseminating the official approach. In fact, different perspectives were able to voice themselves without receiving direct reactions. An important feature of

the congress was that, the presentations on ancient history explicitly revealed the shift from the history thesis and the perception that civilization was spread throughout the world from Central Asia with Turks. In this respect, ancient civilizations of Anatolia and Near East were no longer regarded as Turkic origin. Another critical point observed in the organization of the Congress was arrangement of separate sessions for Turkish Islamic history and Ottoman period for the first time. Researches on Ottoman history rather focused on the Reform Era since Tanzimat and in this respect, it was evaluated as a historical continuity rather than a break with the Turkish Republic. A characteristic point of the presentations on Ottoman era was peace/reconciliation with the Islamic identity. That is to say, Islam was no longer regarded as a regressive factor within the history of Turks; contrarily its cultural and historical heritage was gradually accepted. The parallel alteration in the understanding of official history was evident in the textbooks written in this period.

As for the issue of history textbooks, one of Yücel's first applications when he was appointed the minister was to order the preparation of new ones. The need for this was not only due to the deficiencies of the previous textbooks. Changing circumstances in socio-political area also reflected on the messages conveyed to students through the textbooks. This was first observed in the preparation of the ordered books that, while the 1931-1932 editions were written by a committee close to the rulers, consisting of both politicians and historians with pronounced political stances in the establishment; the 1942 and 1945 editions were prepared by three academicians with bachelor's degree from leading European universities.

When compared with the textbooks of the previous era, the changes in the new books displayed differences regarding both the attitude and the tone. The change was also observed in refraining from resting the narrations upon the theories of 1930s, i.e. the Turkish History Thesis and Sun Language Thesis, although an explicit break with them was avoided. The narrations on Arabs and Islam were also different as gradual peace with them became evident. There was also a change in the approach to Ottoman past which did not rely purely on breaks, but also paid attention on continuities. Moreover, the negative

overviews of the entire Ottoman past were not observed anymore. Furthermore, smoothing and rasping sharp words was apparent in most of the texts. While the approach to certain issues was biased and very emotional in 1931-1932 editions, the removal of exaggerations and installing comparatively moderate reflections was apparent in 1942 edition.

There were various reasons of the shift from the basic features of official thesis. First of all and the most important factor was the structural transformation in 1940s. As previously expressed, these were the years experienced consolidation of the system and gaining of a confidence that the regime was under security. The fear of regression almost disappeared among the ruling elite and opposing views were no longer stigmatized as 'reactionist'. In this socio-political atmosphere, there was no need in introducing Turkish Republic and its constituents as a clear break from the past. Hence, the official history of İnönü Era witnessed rebuilding historical and intellectual connections Turkish modernization with its recent past.

Secondly; the departure from the basic arguments of Turkish History Thesis could be better understood under the light of humanist worldview of this period. Unlike the previous era, the translations of world classics also indicated how Ministry of Education regarded East and West as contemporary civilizations and that Turkey had a place within this context. The works of Blue Anatolianists, some of whom were the member of IPC and also conducting translation activities in the Office - Sabahattin Eyuboğlu, Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı and Azra Erhat - were also influential in nourishing cultural/humanistic and historical perception of this period. Their understanding of universal history and emphasis on 'being a part of ancient Anatolian civilizations' and 'adopting entire cultural and historical heritage of this land' can have an effect on this shift.

Lastly to mention were the effects of international changes in the understanding of history during the 1940s, promoting social and economic dimensions of history rather than the focusing on political aspects. The impacts of this change on Turkish official and academic history included criticism of the strong nationalist perceptions having ethnisist tones and accordingly,

Turkish academicians became participants of international workshops conducted to remove similar interpretations from the textbooks of certain European countries.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

Enformatik Enstitüsü

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Erdal

Adı : Ayça Erinç

Bölümü: Tarih

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce): History and Education in the İnönü Era: Changes and Continuities on Perceptions of History and its Reflections on Educational Practices

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ:

APPENDIX B
CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

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MS	Çukurova University Educational Sciences	2003
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WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2005- Present	METU, Department of History	Research Assistant
1999-2005	Çukurova University, Department of Primary Education	Lecturer

PUBLICATIONS

Articles published in national refereed journals

Vural, Ruken A.; Akbulut, Hasan; Erdal, Erinç; Güneş, Müslime (2009) “Child Play And Toy In Two Generations: ‘Upon A Childhood History’”, *ÇÜ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 18 (2), 1-13
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APPENDIX C

TURKISH SUMMARY

Bu çalışmanın genel amacı İsmet İnönü döneminde (1938-1950) Türkiye'nin resmi tarihinin temellerini ve bunun eğitim uygulamalarına yansımalarını ortaya koymaktır. Bu çerçevede ele alınan çalışmada, erken Cumhuriyet döneminde resmi tarihin oluşum sürecindeki süreklilik ve değişimler ve ulus-devlet inşasının ideolojik araçları olan eğitim, özellikle tarih dersleri aracılığıyla topluma nasıl aktarıldığı; bakanlık kurul kararları, resmi demeçler, parlamento görüşmeleri, kongreler ile tarih ders kitapları ışığında incelenmiştir.

Bilindiği gibi erken Cumhuriyet dönemi, ulus-devletin inşası süreciydi. Dolayısıyla yönetici kadronun en önemli meselelerinden biri, Türk milletine yeni bir kimlik kazandırmaktı. Bu bağlamda Cumhuriyet'in resmi ideolojisinin temel aktarım araçlarından biri olan resmi tarih, ulusa bir Türk kimliği ve ortak bir bellek aşlamak için önemli bir işlev görmüştür. Bu dönemde eğitimin ve özellikle tarih derslerinin, resmi ideolojinin yeni nesle benimsetilmesinde iki temel araç oldukları görülmektedir. Bu bağlamda çalışma, eğitim ve tarihyazımı olmak üzere iki ana eksene dayandırılmıştır.

Türkiye'de resmi tarih, 1930'larda Cumhuriyetin yönetici kadrosu ve entellektüelleri tarafından şekillendirilmişti. Dolayısıyla çalışmada ilk olarak İnönü döneminin tarihsel ve düşünsel altyapısını oluşturan temel dinamikler incelenmiştir. Buna bağlı olarak, İnönü döneminin resmi tarihinin genel karakteristiği, Atatürk dönemine referansla analiz edilmiş ve her iki dönemin eğitim politikaları ve tarih anlayışlarına ilişkin karşılaştırmalar yapılarak süreklilik ve değişimler ortaya konmaya çalışılmıştır.

Türkiye'de resmi tarihin oluşum süreci, Cumhuriyetin modernleşme ve ulus-devlet oluşum süreciyle yakından ilişkilidir. Dolayısıyla, geçmişten aktarılan gelenek ve kültürel değerlerin kavramsal temellerinin ortaya konması gerekmektedir. Bu nedenle Cumhuriyet ideolojisini besleyen kaynaklar, başka bir ifadeyle ulusal kimliğin oluşumuna ışık tutan resmi ideolojinin tarihsel ve

düşünsel kaynakları ortaya konmuştur. Ancak eğitim ve tarih ulusal kimlik inşasının ayrılmaz parçaları olduğundan eğitim, resmi ideolojinin yeni nesle aktarımında önemli bir araç olarak kullanılmış ve aynı zamanda tarih dersleri aracılığıyla ortak bir bellek ve ulusal bir bilinç oluşturulmasında önemli bir işlev görmüştür. Bu durum, çalışmada öncelikle Erken Cumhuriyet'in eğitim politikalarını ve iktidarın nasıl bir vatandaş yetiştirmeyi hedeflediğini ortaya koymayı gerekli kılmıştır. Bunun ardından ulusal tarihyazımı ve bunun tarih ders kitaplarına ne ölçüde yansıdığı açıklanmıştır. Dolayısıyla çalışma, Atatürk ve İnönü dönemlerinin resmi tarih anlayışlarının analizinden önce eğitim yaklaşımı ve uygulamalarını ele almaktadır.

Bu noktada Faith Childress'in⁵⁶¹ çalışmasında ileri sürdüğü noktalar, eğitim alanında yapılan çalışmalar hakkında, bu çalışmaya da ışık tutacak önemli ipuçları vermektedir. Ona göre geç Osmanlı ve erken Cumhuriyet dönemlerinde eğitim alanında yapılan reformların tarihi oldukça zengin bir biçimde belgelenmiştir. Özellikle kurumsal ve organizasyonel değişimlere odaklanan söz konusu araştırmalar, eğitim programlarının öğrencilerde ulus-devlete güçlü bir bağlılık duygusu ve bilinci kazandırmaya yönelik hazırlandığını vurgulamakta, ancak bu programların hazırlanma ve uygulanması süreciyle ilgili ayrıntılı bir analiz sunmamaktadırlar. Başka bir ifadeyle Cumhuriyet hükümetlerinin eğitim politikalarıyla uygulamalar arasındaki ilişkiye dair akademik bir boşluk söz konusudur. Bu nedenle, çalışmanın önemli bir parçası olarak, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın politika ve uygulamalarını yansıtmaya açısından önemli olan Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi'nin kurul kararları analiz edilmiştir. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı bünyesinde 1926 yılında kurulmuş olan Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi, eğitim politikalarının ve programların hazırlanmasında önemli bir işleve sahip olmuştur. Daire'nin çalışmaları, Kemalist ideolojinin eğitim aracılığıyla genç nesillere aktarılmasında önemli bir rol üstlenmiştir. Cumhuriyet'in önde gelen eğitimcilerinden oluşan Daire'nin; öğretim hedeflerinin, ders içeriklerinin ve

⁵⁶¹ Faith J. Childress, *Republican Lessons: Education and the Making of Modern Turkey*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Utah, 2001

pedagojik yükümlülüklerin belirlenmesi, var olan ders kitaplarının incelenmesi ve yenilerinin hazırlanması gibi kritik görevleri bulunmaktadır.

Yönetici kadronun eğitim anlayışını, başka bir deyişle topluma eğitim aracılığıyla aktarılması amaçlanan değerlerin ve yetiştirilmesi hedeflenen vatandaş profilini ortaya koymanın diğer araçları olarak da; bu konuda yapılmış resmi söylev ve demeçler, bakanlık bünyesinde yapılan resmi yazışmalar ve TBMM Zabıtları, özellikle Maarif Bütçe görüşmeleri, ayrıca eğitim kongreleri 2. bölümde incelenmiştir.

Sıklıkla vurgulandığı gibi, resmi ideolojinin formülasyonunda ve halka iletilmesinde kullanılan bir diğer araç, tarih olmuştur. İmparatorluktan ulus-devlete geçiş süreci olarak da tanımlanabilecek yeni bir düzenin kurulması sürecinde, ‘eski’ ve ‘yeni’ biçiminde bir ayırım yapılmış ve sonraki, bir öncekinden kesin bir kopuş eksenli tanımlanmıştır. Bu geçiş sürecinde yeni bir gelenek ‘icad edilmiş’ ve eski, yeni düzeni meşrulaştırmak için kötü ve yetersiz olarak nitelendirilmiştir. Türk Tarih Tezi adıyla formüle edilen söz konusu resmi tarih, Cumhuriyet’in entelektüellerine, öğretmenlerine ve tarihçilerine Birinci ve İkinci Türk Tarih Kongreleri aracılığıyla tanıtılmıştır.

Bu çalışmanın ikinci eksenini oluşturan tarihyazımı ile ilgili olarak, formülasyon sürecinin temel dinamikleri ve ulusal kimlik inşasındaki rolü ele alınmıştır. Bu noktadan hareketle, yönetici elitin tarih anlayışı ve tarihin, ulusal kimliğin ve ortak belleğin oluşturulmasında nasıl kullanıldığı 3. bölümde ele alınmıştır. Bunun yanında, İnönü döneminin resmi tarihi ve yazılan ders kitapları, süreklilik ve değişimi ortaya koymak açısından Atatürk dönemiyle karşılaştırılarak 6. bölümde incelenmiştir. Bu bağlamda, resmi tarih oluşumunun temel kaynakları olarak tarih kongreleri ve öğrencilere resmi tezleri benimsetmenin önemli araçları olarak da lise tarih ders kitapları analiz edilmiştir. Aynı zamanda resmi yaklaşımı, bunun içindeki farklı görüşleri, ayrıca süreç içinde yaşanan süreklilik ve değişimleri yansıtımları bakımından değerli veriler sunan TBMM bütçe müzakereleri ve resmi söylevlere de önemli birincil kaynaklar olarak referanslar yapılmıştır.

Erken Cumhuriyet döneminin resmi tarihinin ve ders kitaplarının temel karakteristiğini ele alan çalışmalara bakıldığında, iki ana özellik göze

çarpmaktadır. Söz konusu çalışmalarda öncelikle, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin resmi tarihinin ve Türk Tarih Tezi'nin temel varsayımlarının Türk İslam Sentezi'nin resmi ideoloji olarak kabul görülmeye başladığı 1980'lere kadar, fazlaca bir değişime uğramadan devam ettiği ileri sürülmektedir. Dolayısıyla bu çalışmalarda, siyasal, sosyal, ekonomik, kültürel vb. pekçok alanda önemli değişimlerin yaşandığı –ki bu değişimler hem eğitim, hem de tarihyazımına yönelik resmi yaklaşımda da bir dönüşüme yol açacaktır- İnönü dönemine gereken önemin verilmediği görülmektedir. Nitekim, 'konsolidasyon dönemi' olarak da tanımlanabilecek bu yıllar, rejimin keskin köşelerinin törpülenmesine tanık olmuştur. Aynı zamanda hümanist anlayış ışığında kültür ve eğitim politikalarının belirlendiği ve uygulamaya konduğu bu dönem, kaçınılmaz olarak resmi tarih anlayışında da ciddi değişimlere sahne olmuştur. Bu anlamda bu çalışmanın, söz konusu değişimleri ve altında yatan dinamikleri ortaya koyması açısından önemli katkılar sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

Söz konusu çalışmalarda ön plana çıkan bir diğer özellik, erken Cumhuriyet döneminin yalnızca birtakım siyasal kuramcılarının ünlü yapıtları ışığında birincil kaynakların söylem analizi yapılarak değerlendirilmesidir. Bu durumda dönemin tarihselliği, başka bir deyişle özgünlükleri, içinde barındırdığı farklı, hatta çelişen anlayışlar hesaba katılmamakta, hatta yok sayılmaktadır. Bu çalışmalarda teorik çerçevenin izleri dönemin kaynaklarında sürülmekte ve söz konusu teoriler tekrar tekrar onaylanmaktadır. Bunun dışında birtakım resmi söylevler ve demeçler, kararlar, yönergeler veya ders kitaplarından yapılan alıntılar ön plana çıkartılarak sanki yönetici kadronun tamamının görüşünü yansıttığı ve tüm halk tarafından benimsendiği varsayılmaktadır. Konuların tarihsel ve kavramsal bağlamından soyutlanarak yapılan bu tür analiz ve değerlendirmeler; 'saf Türk' ifadesinin, Kemalist milliyetçiliğin dışlayıcı ve Türk olmayanları ötekileştirici yaklaşımının ürünü olduğu yorumu gibi kolaylıkla yanlış çıkarımlara yol açabilmektedir. Benzer bir şekilde kongre sunumlarında veya ders kitaplarında sıklıkla geçen 'ırk' kavramının resmi tarihin ırkçı anlayışını yansıttığı iddia edilebilmektedir.

Bu çalışmada böylesi indirgemelere ve yanlış değerlendirmelere düşmemek için, resmi tarih meselesi kendi tarihsel bağlamında incelenmeye

çalışılmıştır. Çıkış noktası olarak teorik çalışmaların kavramsallaştırmalarından ilham alınmış, ancak farklı kaynak türlerine başvurularak dönemin özgünlükleri; iktidar ve aynı zamanda entelektüelleri ve tarihçileri içerisindeki çeşitlilikler anlaşılmalı ve ortaya konmaya çalışılmıştır. Başka bir ifadeyle topluma milliyetçi bir tarih anlayışı aşılama konusunda her ne kadar tarihçiler resmi tarihin biçimlendirilmesinde en önemli rolü oynamışlarsa da, ortaya koydukları eserler kendi düşünce, değer, tutum ve inançlarının birer ürünü olduğundan, onlar “resmi ideolojinin basit birer aktarım kayışı” değildirler⁵⁶². Bu çalışma için de oldukça büyük bir öneme sahip olan bu saptama, Türkiye’de resmi tarihin formülasyonunda rol oynayan homojen bir tarihçi grubundan söz etmek mümkün olmadığından dolayı, resmi daire içerisindeki veya yakınındaki tarihçilerin ve entelektüellerin izledikleri farklı ve kesişen yolları mümkün olduğunca arayıp ortaya çıkarmayı gerekli kılmaktadır.

Konunun tarihsel bağlamından soyutlanarak genellemelerin yapılma riski, Stefan Berger ve arkadaşları tarafından da tarihyazımı konusuna ilişkin olarak dikkat çekilmiş ve “tüm tarihyazımının aynı milliyetçi ve ırkçı söyleminin bir parçası olduğu uydurması”⁵⁶³’nin sakıncaları ortaya konmuştur. Söz konusu yazarlar, ele almış oldukları incelemenin önemli bir amacının, belirli bir tarihsel bağlamda inşa edilen milliyetçi tarihyazımlarının barındırdığı çeşitlilikleri ve süreç içerisinde yaşanan değişimleri göstermek olduğunun altını çizmişlerdir. Ayrıca tarihyazımının doğasının ulus-devlet ve onu oluşturan dinamiklerden bağımsız olarak anlaşılamayacağını, ama aynı zamanda bu dinamiklerin de tarihçiyi etkileyen etmenlerden yalnızca biri olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Başka bir deyişle tarihyazımı, her birinin diğerlerine etkide bulunduğu siyasal, sosyal, ekonomik, kültürel vb. farklı bağlamlar göz önünde bulundurularak daha iyi anlaşılabilir. Bu durum, bu çalışmada, ana meselenin analizi sırasında sosyal, kültürel, eğitimsel ve siyasal bağlamlara odaklanmayı gerekli kılmaktadır. Özellikle resmi görüşün dışında

⁵⁶² Kevin Passmore, Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan, “Historians and the Nation-State Some Conclusions”, *Writing National Histories*, s. 283

⁵⁶³ age., p. 282

yer alan ve farklı ideolojik duruşlara sahip entelektüellerin düşünce dünyası, ve bunun yansıması olarak oluşturdukları tarih yaklaşımlarının analizinin, dönemin genel karakteristiğine ve ideolojik/düşünsel haritasına yönelik daha geniş bir perspektif sunacağı düşünülmektedir. Bu nedenle, 5. bölümde akademik ve profesyonel tarih çalışmaları hakkında genel bir çerçeve sunulduktan sonra; İnönü döneminde basılan ve muhafazakar düşünceyi temsil eden önde gelen dergiler analiz edilmiştir. Bu incelemenin amacı, resmi görüş ile farklı ideolojik duruşlara sahip muhafazakar düşünürlerin tarih anlayışları arasındaki benzerlik ve farklılıkları, aynı zamanda birbirlerini nasıl beslediklerini ortaya koymaktır. Dönemin entelektüel atmosferinin genel bir çerçevesini yansıtmak amacıyla, sosyalist ve liberaller dahil, farklı görüşlerin tamamını temsil eden dergileri incelemek bu çalışmanın kapsamını aşacağından, aynı zamanda resmi yaklaşımdan en çok beslenen ve onu besleyen düşünsel kaynağı muhafazakar entelektüeller sunduğundan; pan-Türkçü, Anadoluçu ve İslamcı görüşü temsil eden dergiler arasından önde gelenler ele alınmıştır.

Sonuç

Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nın yol açtığı en köklü sonuçlardan biri, imparatorlukların çöküşü olmuştur. Bunlar arasında yer alan Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, bünyesinde barındırdığı milliyetçilik hareketlerinin doğal bir yansıması olarak, 1923'te Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluşuna giden sürecin yapıtaşlarını oluşturan Türk milliyetçiliğinin yükselişine tanık olmuştur. Yeni Türk devletinin kurulması yalnızca imparatorluktan ulus-devlete geçiş sürecini sağlamamış; aynı zamanda toplumun topyekün ve radikal bir biçimde modernleştirilmesinin yolunu açan hamlelerin başlangıcını oluşturmuştur. Cumhuriyetin ilanını takip eden yıllar boyunca yönetici kadro, yeni Türk devletini çağdaş uygarlık düzeyine yükseltmek amacıyla kökten dönüşümler sağlayan ve devrimin ideolojisine paralel köklü reformlar hayata geçirmiştir. Devrimci kadronun amaçları arasında yer alan en önemli hedef, topluma yeni bir ulusal kimlik/bilinç ve ortak bir bellek inşa etmektir. Bu hedefi

gerçekleştirmek için de iki etkili araç ön plana çıktı: Her ikisi de kitleleri resmi ideoloji ekseninde bilinçlendiren, teşvik ve kanalize eden tarih ve eğitim.

Yukarıda da ifade edildiği gibi, yeni devletin yönetici kadrosunun öncelikli hedefi, resmi ideolojinin tüm ulusa aktarılmasını sağlamaktı. Bu aynı zamanda, Türk Tarih Tezi adıyla da bilinen resmi tarihin benimsenmesini gerekli kılıyordu. Söz konusu tez, Cumhuriyet ideolojisinin kristalize edildiği ve tüm toplumun yeni sosyo-politik sisteme oldukça otoriter biçimde entegre edilmeye çalışıldığı 1930'lu yıllarda formüle edildi. Bunun yanında, devrimin kalıcılığının ve sürekliliğinin sağlanması, yeni nesillerin temel prensipleri benimsemesi ve desteklemesini gerektiriyordu. Dolayısıyla Cumhuriyet kadroları, devletin altyapısını oluşturan temel ilke ve değerleri benimsetmek amacıyla yeni eğitim yaklaşım ve uygulamalarını hayata geçirdiler. Resmi tarih ise, 1930'lar boyunca, özellikle tarih ders kitapları aracılığıyla vatandaşlara yeni anlayışı benimsetme işlevi gördü.

Yeni Cumhuriyetin 1930'larda şekillendirilmeye, formüle edilmeye çalışılan resmi tarihyazımının hangi dinamikler üzerine inşa edildiğini anlamak için öncelikle devraldığı geleneği, mirası ortaya koymak gerekir. Öncelikle belirtilmesi gereken nokta; yeni kurulan devlete ve inşa edilen ulusa kimlik kazandırmak amacıyla ortaya atılan resmi tarihin, merkezinde devletin yer aldığı ve özgücü bir tarih anlayışını yansıtıyor olduğudur⁵⁶⁴. “Biz bize benzeriz” ifadesiyle formüle edilebilecek bu tarih anlayışının da aslında erken Cumhuriyetin halkçılık anlayışının bir yansıması olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Bu düşüncenin temelinde de; toplumun, batı toplumlarından farklı olarak sınıfsız, sömürsüz kaynaşmış bir kitle olarak algılanmasından dolayı batıyla karşılaştırılmayacak kendine özgü bir yapısı olduğu varsayımı yatmaktaydı.

Tarihyazımında *özgücülük* olarak tanımlanabilecek olan ve bir ülkenin diğerinden ayrı, müstesna, kendisine özgü sosyolojik ve tarihsel nitelikleri olduğunu kabul eden, dolayısıyla güncel siyasal arayışların bu "özgünlükler"

⁵⁶⁴ Suavi Aydın, “Aydınlanma ve Tarihselcilik Problemleri Arasında Türk Tarihyazıcılığı: Feodalite Örneği”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 91, 2002, s. 56

üzerinden çözümlenmesi gerektiğini varsayan bu yaklaşım; 19. yüzyılın pozitivist paradigmasına karşı yeni bir yöntem arayışı olarak doğmuştur. 19. yüzyılın bilimsel anlayışı olan, bugün de etkileri devam eden pozitivizm; nesnel gerçekliğin, araştırmacıdan bağımsız olarak deneysel süreçlerle incelenebileceği, önceden kestirilebileceği, bilginin keşfedilerek ortaya çıkarılabileceği görüşlerine dayanıyordu ve bu yolla birtakım evrensel doğa yasalarına ulaşmak hedefleniyordu. Bu anlayış doğrultusunda, insan eylemlerinin de doğa olaylarının araştırma yöntemleriyle incelenebileceği görüşü hakimdi. Tarihin bilim olarak kabul görmeye başladığı bu dönemde tarihçiler de pozitivist yöntemlerle nesnel bilgiye ulaşılabilirliği görüşünü paylaşıyorlardı. Ayrıca farklı yaklaşımları benimseseler dahi tarihçiler arasında bir diğer ortak nokta, tek çizgili zaman kavramıyla çalışmalarıydı. Başka bir ifadeyle “tarihte bir süreklilik ve yön olduğu, bir tarihler çokluğunun tersine tek bir *tarih* bulunduğu” kabul ediliyordu. Buna ek olarak, pozitivizme dayalı tarih anlayışı, geçmişte yaşananların değer yargılarından sıyrılarak ve tarafsız biçimde olduğu gibi aktarılması görüşüne dayanıyordu⁵⁶⁵.

18. yüzyılda De Guignes, Davids, Vambery, Cahun gibi bilim adamlarının Çin ve İslam kaynaklarından yola çıkarak Türklerin tarih ve dilleri üzerinde çalıştıkları Türkoloji, erken cumhuriyet dönemi tarihçiliğini besleyen önemli bir damar olmuştur. Ancak buna rağmen Türklerin tarihi konusunda henüz çok az şey biliniyordu ve Osmanlı öncesi Anadolu tarihi büyük ölçüde karanlıktı. Anadolu Selçuklu tarihi ve beylikler dönemine ilişkin Gordlevsky, Paul Wittek ve Çağatay Uluçay’ın öncü çalışmaları ise 1930’ların ikinci yarısından sonra yapılacaktı⁵⁶⁶. Bunun sonucunda dönemin batı tarihyazımında hakim olan anlayış; XI. yüzyılda İslam uygarlığı alanına girmelerinden önce Türklerin son derece geri, tamamen göçebe, her türlü uygarlığa geçiş başlangıcından yoksun oldukları idi. Osmanlı tarihinin Büyük ve Anadolu

⁵⁶⁵ Georg. G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2000, s. 3

⁵⁶⁶ Halil Berktaş, *Cumhuriyet İdeolojisi ve Fuat Köprülü*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1983, s. 16-17

Selçuklu uygarlıklarından aldığı miras bilinmediğinden, Osmanlı uygarlığı onların bir devamı olarak değil, Bizans'ın taklidinden ibaret görülüyordu⁵⁶⁷.

20. yüzyıl başında Osmanlılarda da güçlü bir bilimsel-akademik tarihçilik geleneğinden söz etmek mümkün değildi. Bu noktada hem Türk milliyetçiliğinin en önemli ideologlarından, hem de Cumhuriyet ideolojisi ve yansıması olan tarihyazımına en büyük katkısı olanlar arasında Yusuf Akçura'yı zikretmek yerinde olur. Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti'nin kurucu üyesi ve ikinci başkanı olması, ayrıca Cumhuriyetin resmi tarih tezinin formüle edildiği yeni ders kitaplarının yazar kadrosunda yer alması aslında raslantı değildi. Tarih anlayışı ve çalışmalarında ortaya koyduğu argümanlar, Cumhuriyetin resmi ideolojisi içinde önemli bir yapıtaşı oluşturmasına neden olmuştur.

Akçura'nın Türk tarihiyle ilgili yaklaşımını en kapsamlı biçimde 1903 yılında Paris'te bitirme tezi olarak sunduğu *Osmanlı Sultanlığının Kurumları Üzerine Bir Deneme* adlı çalışmada görmek mümkündür. Söz konusu çalışmada Akçura, Osmanlı kurumlarının Türk ve İslam geleneklerinden oluşan çifte mirasın ürünü olduğunu kanıtlamaya çalışmıştır. Türkler ilişki içinde oldukları farklı uygarlıklardan etkilenmelerine karşın etnik özelliklerini korumuşlar; hatta İslamı benimsedikten sonra dahi törelerine, adet ve geleneklerine sıkı bağlılık göstermişlerdir. Akçura böylelikle "İslami yasalarla Türk törelerini aynı düzlemde ele alarak Şeriatın mutlak olma özelliğini bir kenarda bırakıyor, böylece ona görece, tarihsel bir değer yükliyordu. Türklerin tarihinde İslamiyet, öteki geleneklerden farklı olmayan bir gelenektir yalnızca."⁵⁶⁸ Görüldüğü üzere bu yaklaşım, hem dini idealize eden eski Osmanlı tarihyazımına, hem de Osmanlı öncesi Türk ve İslam uygarlık geleneğini yok sayan batılı tarih anlayışına oldukça ters düşmekteydi. Bu bakımdan, böylesi bir tarih anlayışı, aşağıda ayrıntılı bir şekilde anlatılacak olan Cumhuriyetin resmi tarih görüşüne kaynaklık etmesi bakımından oldukça

⁵⁶⁷ age., s. 20

⁵⁶⁸ François Geogon, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri: Yusuf Akçura, 1876-1935*, (trans.) Alev Er, Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1986, s.29-30

uygun tezler ileri sürmekteydi. Bu tezler daha sonra, Cumhuriyetin bir diğer önemli tarihçisi olan Mehmet Fuat Köprülü tarafından geliştirilerek kullanılacaktır⁵⁶⁹.

Atatürk'ün “muassır medeniyetler seviyesine ulaşma” hedefine koşut olarak resmi tarih yazımı; dünya medeniyetlerinin bir parçası olma, insanlık tarihinin ana akışı içinde kendi tarihine yer açma, hatta ileri giderek o tarihin yaratıcısı olma iddiası ve çabasındaydı. Dolayısıyla, ulus-devlet inşasına meşruiyet sağlayan milliyetçi tarihyazımının temel karakteristiği olan özgücülüğün “öteki” yaratarak “iç ve dış düşmanlar” biçiminde kurgulanması argümanı⁵⁷⁰, Cumhuriyetin resmi tarihyazımı için, en azından 1940lara kadar söz konusu olmamıştır. Her ne kadar Türk ırkının antropolojik karakterini ortaya koymaya yönelik yapılan araştırmalar resmi ideolojinin ve buna bağlı olarak resmi tarihin ırkçı bir nitelik taşıdığı izlenimi uyandırır da; dönemin resmi tarihçilerinin yabancı düşmanı ve ırkçı oldukları söylenemez. Bilakis, en azından uluslararası arenada belirli bir humanist ve evrenselci perspektif kazanmışlardır⁵⁷¹. Dolayısıyla resmi tarih tezinin bu noktada ayrıştırıcı, ötekileştirici değil; bütünleştirici, tekleştirici ve özellikle “uygarlık yaratıcısı ve yayıcısı” söyleminden hareketle, bu bütün içinde farklılıkları asimile edici olduğunu söylemek mümkündür.

Bu çalışmada, tarihyazımında tekil bir milliyetçi yaklaşımın olmadığı ve tarihçilerin de belirli bir perspektifin doğrudan taşıyıcısı ve aktarıcısı olmadıkları varsayımından yola çıkılarak çelişiklere ve varsa zıtlıklara ilişkin ortaya çıkan bir diğer sonuç da, resmi tezlerin kurulmaya başlandığı ilk yıllarda bile tarihçiler arasında farklı yaklaşımları benimseyenlerin olduğudur. Örneğin Fuat Köprülü ve Şemsettin Günaltay gibi dönemin önde gelen tarihçileri, aslında resmi tezlerin dışında birtakım iddialar savunmalarına rağmen, hala resmi daire içerisinde yer alabilmişlerdir. Bu da, doğrudan devlet kontrolünde ve farklı görüşleri barındırmayan, monolitik bir tarih anlayışından söz

⁵⁶⁹ Köprülü konusunda kapsamlı analiz için bak. Halil Berktaş, Cumhuriyet İdeolojisi ve Fuat Köprülü, Kaynak Yayınları, İstanbul, 1983

⁵⁷⁰ Suavi Aydın, “Aydınlanma ve Tarihselcilik Problemleri Arasında”, s. 56

⁵⁷¹ Halil Berktaş, “Dört Tarihçinin Sosyal Portresi”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 54-55, 1991, s.28

edilemeyeceğinin göstergesidir. Aslında bu durum, Atatürk'ün bağımsız ve bilimsel bir tarihçilik kurma hedefinin bir sonucuydu. Dolayısıyla Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti'nin –sonradan Türk Tarih Kurumu'na dönüştü- politik baskılardan uzak ve özerk bir kurum olarak kurulmasını sağladı. Aksi takdirde kurum, hem maddi hem de yönetsel açıdan hükümete bağlı kalacak, onun bir organına dönüşecekti. Böylesi bir kurumun, hükümet organı olarak çalışması, bağımsız araştırmalara gölge düşürecek ve araştırmacıları hükümet şemsiyesi altında, yani onun prensipleriyle çelişmeyecek şekilde çalışmaya zorlayacaktı.

Türk Tarih Kurumu'nun bağımsızlığı, kuruluşunun ilk yıllarında pek mümkün olmamıştır. Zira Cumhuriyet, ulus-devlete ve onun kurucu ilkelerine sıkı bağlılığa gereksinim duyuyordu. Ancak ilerleyen yıllar, hedeflenen akademik tarihçiliğin resmi olandan bağımsızlaşmasına tanık olmuştur. Bu sebeple, bu anlayışın yansıması olarak, Cumhuriyet'in ilk yıllarında bile, resmi anlayışın dışındaki görüşler, bir düzeye kadar kendilerine alan bulabilmişler ve farklı, kimi yerde aykırı sayılabilecek tezler, sınırlı da olsa yazılıp ifade edilebilmiştir.

Birtakım noktalarda aşırı uçlara varmış olmakla birlikte, resmi ideolojiye koşut olarak oluşturulan resmi tarih ve bu doğrultuda yazılan ders kitapları ulus devletin inşası sürecinin sadece Türkiye'ye özgü olmayan doğal sonucuydular. Bu, halkın düşünmeye ve inanmaya alışık olmadığı değerler sistemiyle bütünleşik bir ulusal kimlik oluşturma süreciydi. Bu bağlamda devlet, eğitim öncelikli olmakla beraber, tüm kurumlar üzerinde kontrol sahibiydi. Fuat Köprülü'nün de belirttiği gibi;

Avrupa tarihçiliğinin Türkler hakkında hiçbir ilmi esasa dayanmayan, çok haksız menfi telakkileri karşısında, bizim romantik tarihçiliğimizin aksülameli de ister istemez çok müfrit ve mübalağalı olacaktı ve hakikaten öyle de oldu. Fakat her yerde olduğu gibi bizde de bu romantik telakki milli tarih tetkiklerine karşı umumi bir alaka uyandırmak ve umumi tarih içinde Türklerin rolünü araştırmaya sevk etmek itibariyle psikolojik bir hamle yaratmıştır⁵⁷².

⁵⁷² Vasilij Vladimiroviç Barthold, *İslam Medeniyeti Tarihi*, (çev.) M. Fuad Köprülü, İstanbul: Kanaat Kitabevi, 1940, s. 23

Nitekim bu durum deęişecek ve bilim, iktidardan giderek bağımsızlaşarak bilimsel yöntemlere dayanacaktır. Öngörülen deęişimin ilk ipuçları, oldukça erken bir tarihte, yaklaşık on yıl sonra kendini gösterecekti. Atatürk'ün ölümü ve İnönü'nün cumhurbaşkanlığı dönemi, önemli politik ve sosyal deęişimlere sahne olmuştur. Çoğunlukla 'hümanist dönem' olarak da adlandırılan 1938 ile 1946 yılları arası, aynı zamanda Hasan Ali Yücel'in Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı dönemi idi. Bu dönemde eğitim ve kültür politikalarında köklü deęişimler yaşanmış ve bunlar resmi tarih anlayışına da yansımıştır. Öncelikle bir önceki dönemde rejimin sürekli tehlikede olduğu ve korunması gerektiği yönündeki yüksek kaygılar, dolayısıyla 'gerici'lere yönelik sert tutum ve davranışlar bu yıllarda azalmış ve devrimin sağlamlığına yönelik güven artmıştır. Örneğin Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi'nde Arap alfabesiyle yazılmış kitapların okul kütüphanelerinde kullanımı önerisiyle başlayan tartışma, iktidarın yumuşayan tavrının ve artan özgüveninin göstergesi olmuştur. Mecliste Çanakkale vekili Ziya Gevher Etlili bu öneriye oldukça sert bir biçimde karşı çıkarak "Bu mazbatada beyan edilen mütaleatta bir rücu şekil ve kokusu vardır. Hatta açık bir rücu. Biz şimdiye kadar yaptığımız büyük inkılapların hiç birisinden rücu edemeyiz." demiştir. Diğer yandan Hasan Ali Yücel, gericilik veya geriye dönüşün hiçbir şekilde söz konusu olmayacağını ifade etmiştir. İstanbul vekili İbrahim Alaettin Gövsa ise Yücel'i destekleyerek mecliste bazı üyelerin ülkenin geriye gideceği yönünde endişesi olduğunun anlaşıldığını, fakat böylesi bir korkuya hiç yer olmadığını, zira ülkenin gençlerinin devrim ilkelerine sıkı sıkıya bağlı olduğunu belirtmiştir. Konuşması süresinde diğer üyelerden gelen sürekli alkışlar ve 'bravo' çığlıkları da meclisten gelen güçlü desteğin bir göstergesi olarak nitelendirilebilir⁵⁷³. Söz konusu kırılmaya bağlı olarak, Osmanlı ve İslam kimliğine ve kültürüne yönelik olumsuz yargılar ve tepkisel duruş giderek azalmaya başlamıştır. Tüm bu faktörler göz önüne alındığında, bu yıllar bir 'konsolidasyon dönemi' olarak

⁵⁷³ Meclis Zabıtları, Devre 6 cilt 2 içtima F, 10.5.1939

da tanımlanabilir. Resmi yaklaşımdaki bu deęişim ve dönüşümün, kaçınılmaz olarak eğitim ve kültür politikalarına, ayrıca tarihyazımına da etkileri olmuştur.

Önceki dönemden farklı olarak İnönü dönemindeki tarihyazımı, resmi ve akademik/entelektüel olmak üzere iki ana eksen üzerinde ilerlemiştir. Akademik alanda; Türkiye’de resmi tarihyazımının genel karakteristiklerinden olan özgücülük ve bunun somut ifadelerinden olan “biz bize benzeriz” anlayışının 1938 sonrasında biraz daha biçim deęiştirerek ve muhafazakar bir içerikle bezenerek devam ettiği görülmektedir. Bu muhafazakar restorasyonla birlikte Osmanlı geçmişi, “altın çağ” bulma girişimleri ve “kerim devlet” tahayyülleri üzerinden deęerlendirilecektir. Berktaş⁵⁷⁴, bu yeni oluşan akademik tarihçiliğin, resmiyetin kutsadığı bir ortodoksluğun taşıyıcılığını üstlenmekte ve Osmanlı nizamına alkış tutmakta olduğunu ifade etmektedir. Böylesi tarihçiliğin ideolojik içeriği ise, Türk milliyetçiliğinin daha eski ya da dışsal rakiplerine karşı daha düşmanca bir konuma sokulacaktır.

1938 sonrası Türk tarihyazımında, tıpkı Cumhuriyet’in kuruluş sürecinin “benzersizlik” özelliği üzerinden kurgulanması gibi; bu kez de Osmanlı idare sistemi ve toplum yapısına aynı benzersizliğin atfedilmesiyle özgücülüğün genişletildiğini görmekteyiz. Bu tarih yaklaşımı da 1930’ların sonlarına doğru Ömer Lütfi Barkan tarafından tesis edilecek ve akademik tarihçiliğin ortodoks doktrini haline gelecektir⁵⁷⁵.

Bu yaklaşım, doğal olarak Cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarında yok sayılan yakın geçmişle yeniden bir bağ kurmayı ve Osmanlı ile daha önceki Türk-İslam devletlerinin tarihsel ve kültürel mirasını benimsemeyi sağlamıştır. Temel olarak Yahya Kemal’in düşüncelerinden beslenen söz konusu muhafazakar restorasyonun izlerini, İnönü döneminin önde gelen dergilerine de yansıyan entelektüel alanda da görmek mümkündür. Aynı zamanda muhafazakar tepki olarak da tanımlanabilecek olan bu yaklaşım, temelde devrimci kadronun tepeden inmece modernleşme anlayışına ve kopuş eksenli geçmiş algısına kesin biçimde karşı çıkmaktaydı. Buna göre muhafazakar tarihçiler ve aydınlar, Türk milletini bugüne getiren ve Cumhuriyet

⁵⁷⁴ Halil Berktaş, “Dört Tarihçinin Sosyal Portresi”, s. 39

⁵⁷⁵ age., s. 42

kadrolarınca yok sayılan tarihsel ve kültürel değerlerin özgünlüğünü yeniden ön plana çıkartmak hedefindeydi. Modernleşme anlayışları süreklilik ve içerisinde dinin de önemli bir faktör olarak yer aldığı kültürel/geleneksel değerlerin korunması üzerine kuruluydu. Bunun sonucunda bu aydınların altını çizdiği asıl nokta, kültürel ve geleneksel değerlerle uyumlu, aynı zamanda Türk milletinin tarihsel ve coğrafi bütünlüğünü sağlayan Anadolu'ya özel olarak odaklanan bir tarih anlayışının uyandırılması olmuştur.

Böylesi bir tarih anlayışı, aynı zamanda yönetici kadro içerisinde Hasan Ali Yücel'in bakanlığının bittiği yıl gibi erken bir zamanda ifade edilmeye başlanmıştır. Öğrencilere Türklerin kahramanlıklarıyla dolu şanlı tarihinin öğretilmesi gerektiği vurgusunun hakim olduğu bu yaklaşım ile, şimdiye kadar unutturulmak istenen Selçuklu ve Osmanlı tarihlerinin de ayrıcalıklı yerlerinin yeniden tesis edilmesi gerektiği vurgulanmaktaydı. Burada önemli olan nokta, bu tarih görüşünün resmi çevreler arasında hızla yayılarak resmi tarih anlayışı içerisinde hakim kılınması ve ilerleyen yıllarda yazılan ders kitaplarına da yansımalarıdır.

Buna rağmen, muhafazakar tepkinin önlenemez yükselişi, en azından Yücel'in bakanlığı süresince resmi çevrelerde görünmemektedir. Bunun en önemli nedenleri arasında, Yücel'in hem doğudan hem de batıdan beslenen modernleşme yaklaşımı yatmaktadır. Bu çerçevede Yücel, bakanlık bünyesinde muhafazakarlarla aşırı batıcıların aynı çatı altında uyumlu çalışabilecekleri koşulları sağlamıştır. Dolayısıyla bu dönemin tarih kongrelerinde ve ders kitaplarında belirgin bir muhafazakar anlayışın izlerine rastlanmaz.

Türk Tarih Tezi adıyla formüle edilmiş olan resmi tarihin İnönü dönemindeki durumuna bakıldığında, 3. Türk Tarih Kongresi ve aynı yıl kaleme alınan ders kitaplarının kesin bir kırılmayı değil, ancak temel varsayımlarından önemli ölçüde uzaklaşmayı yansıttığı görülmektedir. 3. Tarih Kongresi'nde önceki ikisiyle karşılaştırıldığında, resmi söylemin aktarımına yönelik politik bir misyondan ziyade, daha bilimsel bir yaklaşımın benimsendiği görülür. Hatta kongrede farklı perspektifler, herhangi bir doğrudan tepkiyle karşılaşmaksızın ifade edilebilmişlerdir. Kongrenin bir diğer önemli özelliği, İlkçağ tarihiyle ilgili yapılan sunumların resmi tezden belirgin

ölçüde farklılaşmış olmasıdır. Buna göre artık, uygarlığın Türkler tarafından Orta Asya'dan tüm dünyaya yayıldığı tezi savunulmamaktadır. Bunun yanında Anadolu ve Yakın Doğu'daki eski uygarlıklar Türk kökenli olarak nitelendirilememektedirler. Kongrenin organizasyonuna yönelik göze çarpan önemli bir nokta, ilk kez Osmanlı ve daha önceki Türk-İslam tarihleriyle ilgili sunumların ayrı birer oturum olarak düzenlenmesidir. Osmanlı tarihiyle ilgili yapılan sunumlara bakıldığında ise, daha ziyade Tanzimat dönemi ve sonrasını kapsayan modernleşme hareketlerine odaklanıldığı ve sürecin, Türk modernleşmesinin bir parçası olarak, kopuştan ziyade sürekliliklere de yapılan vurgularla değerlendirildiği görülür. Osmanlı dönemini ele alan çalışmaların bir diğer önemli özelliği, İslami kimlikle barışma ve uzlaşma sürecinin başlamasıdır. Artık İslam, Türk kültür ve tarihini geriletici bir faktör olarak görülmemekte, bilakis tarihsel ve kültürel bir miras olarak kabul edilmeye başlanmaktadır. Resmi anlayıştaki bu dönüşüm, bu dönemde yazılan ders kitaplarına da benzer şekilde yansımıştır.

Yeni ders kitaplarının yazdırılması meselesi, Yücel'in bakanlık görevine atandığında ele aldığı ilk konular arasında yer almaktadır. Böylesi bir gereksinim, yalnızca mevcut ders kitaplarındaki eksikliklerden kaynaklanmamaktaydı. Sosyo-politik alanda yaşanan değişimler, ders kitapları aracılığıyla öğrencilere verilecek mesajlarda da birtakım değişikliklere yol açmıştı. Söz konusu farklılaşma, ilk olarak ders kitaplarının hazırlanması işinde gözlenmektedir. 1931-1932 baskılı ders kitapları, içinde politikacılar ve tarihçilerin de bulunduğu belirgin bir politik misyona sahip bir komisyona hazırlanmıştı. 1942 ve 1945 baskılı kitaplar ise, yine Türk Tarih Kurumu üyesi olan, ancak çeşitli Avrupa ülkelerinden lisans diplomalarını almış 3 akademisyen tarafından yazılmıştır.

Bir önceki dönemin tarih ders kitaplarıyla karşılaştırıldığında, yeni kitaplarda hem yaklaşım, hem de ifade biçimi açısından büyük farklılıklar gözlenmektedir. Söz konusu farklılıklar öncelikle, kesin bir kopuştan kaçınılmakla birlikte, 1930'ların resmi tezlerinden –Türk Tarih Tezi ve Güneş Dil Teorisi- uzaklaşılması şeklinde yansımıştır. Arap ve İslam dünyasıyla ilgili anlatımlarda bir uzlaşma ve barışmanın izlerini görmek mümkündür. Osmanlı

tarihine yönelik yaklaşımda da bir deęişim söz konusudur; artık Osmanlı gemiři kesin kopuř eksenli deęil, sürekliliklere de dikkat çekilerek anlatılmaktadır. Ayrıca bu dönemin topyekün olumsuzlanarak ve küçültücü ifadeler kullanılarak anlatımına son verilmiş ve metnin büyük bir kısmında önceki kitapta sıklıkla başvurulan duygusal ve abartılı deyiřler törpülenmiş, yumuřatılmıştır.

Resmi tezlerde görülen bu uzaklařma, çeřitli nedenlerle açıklanabilir. 1940’larda yařanan yapısal dönüşüm, söz konusu deęişimlerde ilk ve en önemli faktör olarak karřımıza çıkmaktadır. Daha önce de ifade edildięi gibi, bu yıllar rejimin konsolide olduęu, saęlamlıęına ve devrim ilkelerinin toplumda yerleşmiş olduęuna dair güvenin tesis edilmeye başlandığı bir dönemdir. Geriye dönüleceęi kaygısı yönetici kadro içerisinde büyük ölçüde atlatılmış, her muhalif görüşün ‘gerici’ olarak etiketlenmesinden vazgeçilmiştir. Böylesi bir sosyo-politik ortamda, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’ni ve temel bileřenlerini gemiřten kesin bir kopuř söylemiyle tanıtmının gereęi de kalmamıştır. Buna baęlı olarak da İnönü döneminin resmi tarih anlayışı, Türk modernleşme serüveni içerisinde yakın gemiřiyle tarihsel ve düşünsel baęların yeniden tesis edilmesine tanık olmuřtur.

1930’ların tarih yaklaşımındaki kırılma, ikinci olarak, dönemin hümanist kültür politikaları ışığında daha iyi anlaşılabilir. Özellikle yapılan dünya klasiklerinin tercümesi faaliyetleri, Milli Eęitim Bakanlığı’nın ve dolayısıyla iktidarın çağdař uygarlık algısında bir önceki dönemden farklı olarak hem doęuyu hem de batıyı bir bütün olarak ele aldıęının ve her iki dünyanın düşünce ve deęerler sistemiyle yoęrularak aydınlanmanın saęlanabileceęinin düşünöldüęünün göstergesi olmuřlardır. Önde gelen Mavi Anadolucuların; Sabahattin Eyuboęlu, Cevat řakir Kabağaęalı ve Azra Erhat’ın –ki bir kısmı hem Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi üyesi, hem de tercüme faaliyetlerinin yürütücüleriydiler- ortaya koyduęu eserler de dönemin kültürel/hümanistik tarih anlayışının yerleşmesinde oldukça etkili olmuřtur. Evrenselci tarih anlayışları ve ‘Anadolu uygarlıklarının bir parçası olduęumuz’, ‘bu toprakların tüm tarihsel ve kültürel mirasını benimsedięimiz’ vurgusu, bu deęişimin önemli bir faktörü olmuřtur.

Son olarak, 1940'larda uluslararası arenada tarih anlayışında yaşanan değişimin Türkiye'deki tarihyazımına etkilerinden bahsedilebilir. Söz konusu değişim; tarihin siyasi boyutuna ve diplomatik ilişkilere odaklanmak yerine sosyal ve ekonomik dinamiklerin ön plana çıkarılmaya başlanmasıyla yaşanmıştır. Bu dönüşüm Türkiye'deki resmi ve akademik tarihçiliğe, güçlü milliyetçi ve etnisist tonları ağır basan tarih yaklaşımına yönelik ciddi eleştirilerin yükselmesi biçiminde yansımıştır. Uluslararası kongreler ve diğer bilimsel çalışmalara sıkça katılan Türkiyeli akademisyenler ve araştırmacılar, ders kitaplarından şovenist ve düşmanca ifadeler barındıran ifadelerin çıkartılmasına yönelik yabancı bilim insanlarıyla ortak çalışmalar yürütmüşlerdir.