

THE THEME OF JEWISH CONSPIRACY IN TURKISH NATIONALISM:  
THE CASE OF CEVAT RIFAT ATILHAN

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE THEME OF JEWISH CONSPIRACY IN TURKISH NATIONALISM: THE CASE OF CEVAT RIFAT ATILHAN**

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This study analyzes the discourse of Cevat Rifat Atilhan, a leading anti-Semite figure and a conspiracy theorist in Turkish politics. The principal aim of this analysis is to shed light on Atilhan's conspiratorial mindset which has a considerable influence on anti-Semitism in contemporary Turkey. To this aim, conspiracy theories and anti-Semitism, two main components of Atilhan's discourse are examined in relation to each other from the perspective of nationalist discourse. This study argues that conspiracy theories in Atilhan's discourse which explain social antagonism as a Jewish plot can be considered as instruments to the reproduction of anti-Semitism. Accordingly, the inherent mechanisms of conspiracy theories which rest on the racist and xenophobic brand of nationalism represent the society on the basis of dichotomies. In Atilhan's discourse, this dichotomization is based on the positioning of the Jews vis-à-vis Turkish nation. To the extent that the Jews are represented as enemies vis-à-vis Turkish nation, anti-Semitism becomes likely to be reproduced. The theme of Jewish conspiracy in Atilhan's discourse is better explained by his different positions within Turkish nationalism ranging from Kemalism to racism, from racism to Islamism and conservative tones of nationalism. When his changing positions is examined in relation to the theme of Jewish conspiracy in his discourse, it is realized that Atilhan's discourse have a considerable influence on

the discourse of ultra-nationalist, conservative nationalist and Islamist circles whose way of thinking is dominated by conspiracy theories.

Keywords: Cevat Rifat Atilhan, conspiracy theories, anti-Semitism, Jewish conspiracy, Turkish nationalism

## ÖZ

### TÜRK MİLLİYETÇİLİĞİNDE YAHUDİ KOMPLOSU TEMASI: CEVAT RIFAT ATILHAN ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu çalışma Türk siyasetinde başat bir anti-Semit figür ve komplo teorisyeni olan Cevat Rifat Atilhan'ın söylemini analiz etmektedir. Analizin temel amacı günümüz Türkiye'sindeki anti-Semitizmi büyük ölçüde etkilemiş olan Atilhan'ın komplocu zihniyetine ışık tutmaktır. Buradan hareketle, Atilhan'ın söyleminin iki ana bileşeni olan komplo teorilerine ve anti-Semitizme milliyetçi söylem perspektifinden yaklaşılarak birbirleriyle olan ilişkileri ele alınacaktır. Bu çalışmanın temel argümanı, Atilhan'ın söyleminde toplumsal antagonizmaları Yahudi oyunu temelinde açıklayan komplo teorilerinin anti-Semitizmi yeniden üreten araçlar olarak görülebileceğidir. Bu argüman, komplo teorilerinin ırkçı ve zenofobik milliyetçiliğe dayanan içsel mekanizmalarının toplumu dikotomik temellerde sunması ve Atilhan'ın söyleminde bu dikotominin Yahudilerin Türkler karşısında konumlandırılması şeklinde ortaya çıkmasıyla açıklanabilir. Yahudiler, Türk milletinin karşısında düşmanlaştırıldığı ölçüde anti-Semitizm yeniden üretilecektir. Atilhan'ın Kemalizm'den ırkçılığa ve ırkçılıktan İslamcılık ve milliyetçiliğin muhafazakar tonlarına kadar uzanan Türk milliyetçiliği içindeki farklı pozisyonları onun söylemine hakim olan Yahudi komplosu temasını daha iyi açıklar. Atilhan'ın Türk milliyetçiliği içindeki duruşu, söylemine hakim olan Yahudi komplosu temasıyla birlikte incelendiğinde Atilhan'ın, günümüz

Türkiye'sinde komplo zihniyetinin etkisinde kalmış ultra milliyetçi, muhafazakar milliyetçi ve İslamcı çevrelerin söylemleri üzerinde büyük etkisi olduğu görülecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Cevat Rifat Atilhan, komplo teorileri, anti-Semitizm, Yahudi komplosu, Türk milliyetçiliği

To My Parents

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
ÖZ.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	x
CHAPTER.....	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. ANTI-SEMITISM AND CONSPIRACY THEORIES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONALISM.....	10
2.1. Introduction.....	10
2.2. Nationalism: Self versus Other .....	11
2.3. Anti-Semitism as a Nationalist Discourse .....	13
2.3.1. Christian Anti-Semitism.....	13
2.3.2. Nazi Anti-Semitism .....	16
2.3.3. Islamist Anti-Semitism .....	21
2.4. Conspiracy Theory and Its Relation to Anti-Semitism .....	22
2.5. Concluding Remarks .....	29
3. THE JEWISH IMAGE AND CONSPIRACY IN TURKISH NATIONALISM.....	31
3.1. Introduction.....	31
3.2. Single Party Period.....	32
3.2.1. Kemalist Nationalism.....	32
3.2.2. Turkism .....	47
3.3. Multi Party Period .....	53
3.3.1. Anti-Communism .....	54
3.3.2. Conservative Nationalism .....	56
3.4. Concluding Remarks .....	66

4. THE JEWISH IMAGE AND CONSPIRACY IN ATILHAN’S DISCOURSE	68
4.1. Introduction	68
4.2. Atilhan’s Position within Turkish Nationalism	69
4.2.1. Kemalist Nationalism and Atilhan	69
4.2.2. Turkism and Atilhan	74
4.2.3. Anti-Communism and Atilhan	78
4.2.4. Conservative Nationalism and Atilhan	78
4.3. Themes of Jewish Conspiracy in Atilhan	84
4.3.1. The Balkan War	85
4.3.2. Suzi Liberman	85
4.3.3. Albert Saltiel	87
4.3.4. The Talmud	88
4.3.5. Passover and Blood Libel	89
4.3.6. Free Masonry	90
4.3.7. Communism	91
4.3.8. Capitalism	92
4.3.9. The Protocols of the Elders of Zion	93
4.3.10. The Donmeh (Crypto-Jew)	94
4.3.11. Abdulhamid the II	95
4.4. The Operation of Conspiracy Theories in Atilhan’s Discourse	97
4.5. Concluding Remarks	100
5. CONCLUSION	102
BIBLIOGRAPHY	111

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, my aim is to offer an analysis of the discourse of Cevat Rifat Atilhan, a prominent anti-Semite figure in Turkish politics. I will deal with Atilhan's discourse by providing a critical analysis of his mentality which was mainly based on conspiracy theories. I will use the theoretical tools of the nationalist discourse to explore the relation between the two main components of Atilhan's discourse, anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories, on which the main argument of the thesis is built. I shall argue that due to their inherent characteristics, conspiracy theories in Atilhan's discourse strengthen the image of the Jews as conspirators; thus, they can be regarded as instruments reproducing anti-Semitism. In order to explain this argument, I will look at the primary sources such as books and articles by Atilhan and make reference to the ideologies of the political parties he engaged. I will discuss Atilhan's arguments in comparison to his nationalist contemporaries. Through this investigation, my aim is to shed light on Atilhan's influence on the conspiratorial mindset in Turkish nationalism and in this way to show his significance to Turkish politics with specific regard to Turkish right.

As far as Turkish politics is concerned, Turkish right has a natural inclination to conspiracy theories since the irrationality of equality is inherent to rightist mentality (Laçiner, 2004: 35). Since the 1960s, anti-Semitism as well as anti-communism, two main conveyors of the idea of inequality, became one of the distinctive characteristics of conservative thinking in Turkish politics (Ayvazoğlu, 1991: 38). At this point, Atilhan's thinking highly appealed the conservative nationalist circles. Upon Atilhan's death, the conservative circles led by Eşref Edip, Nizamettin Nazif Tepedenlioğlu and Raif Ongan organized a funeral ceremony in which they gave speech about Atilhan's valuable contributions to

political thought in Turkey. This demonstrates, according to Bali, that Atilhan had a considerable influence on Turkish right which is worth to be taken into consideration. The influence of his anti-Semitic attitude on ultra-nationalist and Islamist circles which declared communism as the enemy and represented it as evil showed itself particularly in the conspiratorial logic of those conservative circles ranging from moderate Islamists to sympathizers of political Islam and to extreme nationalists (Bali, 2001: 245). This becomes more apparent in the words of one of the members of the *Welfare Party*, Bahri Zengin, who stated that the first generation of *Milli Görüş* was influenced by Atilhan (Bali, 2001: 246). For those reasons, it is foreseeable that Atilhan not only had a great influence on the discourse of rightist figures but also on right-wing political parties of his time such as *Nation Party*, *Republican Villagers Nation Party*, *National Order Party* and *National Salvation Party* whose residues still have a considerable place in Turkish politics today.

In this sense, the significance of this study rests on two main reasons. Firstly, Atilhan had a considerable influence on Turkish right. His relations with the Nazis as well as his alignment with leading ultra-nationalist and Islamist figures in Turkish politics made him a key figure in studying Turkish nationalism. Despite that, his discourse has not been given sufficient attention by the scholars studying Turkish nationalism. Hence, the second reason that renders this study significant is the lack of studies on Atilhan's discourse. To my knowledge, the only scholar who studied Atilhan's discourse has been Rıfat Bali. However, his work is limited to a couple of articles and some book chapters. As far as such a shortcoming is concerned, I regard this thesis as an attempt to shed light on an unexplored issue, Atilhan's discourse, a leading anti-Semitic figure having essential influence on Turkish right.

Cevat Rıfat Atilhan was a military man, a tradesman, a politician and a novelist who lived between 1892 and 1967. He fought in the Balkan War, in the First World War and in the War of Turkish Independence which had a significant role

in his discourse. During the First World War and the War of Turkish Independence years, his efforts were found very successful and courageous by the Parliament, and he was given the title of “General of Militia”. He resigned from the Armed Forces in 1922, and started to earn his life from trade. He established a partnership with an Armenian, Panos Der Mangasaryan. They opened a construction company in Istanbul in 1922, and got a very considerable amount of profit. Apart from this, Atilhan established commercial relations with Armenian tradesmen in different countries such as Britain and France, and imported different materials from textile to rubber.

He first published *Bir Facianın İcyüzü* in 1929 which was his first book displaying his anti-Semite position. In April 1933, Atilhan started to publish *Inkilap* which was his first periodical with anti-Semite tendency. He was known by the Nazis for *Inkilap*, and in 1933, he was invited to Munich by the leading anti-Semite writer of German Nationalist Socialist Party, Julius Streicher, who was also publishing an extreme anti-Semite journal called *Der Stuermer*. During this time period, he met Hitler, and observed the ways and means of the campaign against the Jews. When returning to Istanbul, Atilhan brought some anti-Semite material and some money he got from the Nazis in order to establish a Nazi party in Istanbul (Levi, 1996: 102). Since he could not find any supporter, he gave up Nazi-oriented activities, and put all his effort to publish *Inkilap* which he renamed as *Milli Inkilap* by giving it a more anti-Semite tone.

This led Atilhan come to the forefront as the leading anti-Semite figure. Particularly the Jewish community identified him as a key anti-Semite figure. Through some critical articles, Eli Şaul and İzak Şaul blamed Atilhan for promoting anti-Semitism. Upon Atilhan’s aggressive response to these critiques, they involved into polemical discussions. While Atilhan attacked the Jews in Turkey on the grounds that they were ungrateful to Turkey that accepted them as citizens, İzak and Eli Şaul emphasized the considerable service from the part of the Jews to the well being of Turkey and regarded Atilhan’s charges as unjust.

(Bali, 1998b: 24-25). All these polemics strengthened Atilhan's anti-Semite image.

Through Atilhan's relations and solidarity with anti-Semites in Europe, his books were translated in several languages such as German, English, French, Hungarian and Finnish, and published by an anti-Semite publishing house in Germany called *U.Bodung Verlag-Erfurt* which was serving Hitler like a technical assistance office, and organizing international anti-Semite conferences (Bali, 1998: 18). Atilhan himself mentioned about these conferences in his books. In 1934, he attended a congress in Munich titled as "Enemies of Zionists, Communists and Free Masons Congress", and elected as the chairman. In his opening speech, he explained the reason for the convening of this congress as the threat posed by Zionists who allegedly aimed at establishing Free Mason dictatorship and spreading communism all over the world, and mentioned about the crucial need for uniting against this threat (Bali, 1998: 20). Being encouraged by his own propaganda here, he sharpened his language even more in *Milli Inkilap* which resulted in the surveillance of the periodical, and finally, its closure in 1934.

In July 1940, Atilhan was taken to the army to serve in the defensive forces. Two months later, he was arrested, and put in military jail because he was found guilty of insulting the president, attempting to flee abroad, to establish a Nazi party and to be its leader, and attempting to realize a military coup. However, Marshal Fevzi Cakmak interfered with the process by appointing another military judge who concluded that Atilhan was not guilty.

Atilhan was among the founders of *the National Development Party* (Milli Kalkınma Partisi) which was founded in 1945 by Nuri Demirağ. In 1947, together with Sukru Isdeger and Behcet Demirgil, Atilhan established another party, *Turkish Conservative Party* (Türk Muhafazar Partisi), which had two periodicals *Mücadele* and *Milli Inkilap* which had been closed in 1934, and started to be published again.

In the 1950s, Atilhan was writing in different periodicals such as *Büyük Doğu*, *Yeniden Milli Mücadele*, *Serdengeçti*, and *Sebilürreşad* which were conservative nationalist and pro-Islamic publications. Among the themes of his writings, there were Jewish lies, betrays, conspiracies and plots, Free Mason secret organizations, and the antagonism towards communists. The same propaganda is carried out by *Islam Democrat Party* (Islam Demokrat Partisi) which was founded in 1951 by Atilhan and whose base consisted of *Büyük Doğu* writers mostly (Karabatak, 1994: 12). But this party was closed down by court decision for the reason that it is against the principles of the Republic for a political party to have a religious name, symbol or whatsoever (Tunaya, 1995: 348).

In 1952, upon the attack to Ahmed Emin Yalman by Hüseyin Uzmez, Atilhan was arrested to be judged since he had close relations with Necip Fazıl and his *Büyük Doğu* community to which Uzmez was a member. In the jail, he had a dispute with Necip Fazıl who demanded to stay in separate wards with Atilhan. Atilhan was acquitted after a couple of trials. Yet, he was once more in the court because of his book called *Türk İslam Hükümranlığı ve Uğradığı Suikastler* which includes statements violating the principle of secularism. In 1964, he participated Congress of Islamic Countries in Mogadishu, and selected as the president of executive committee of the congress (Atilhan, 1995: 9).

Until his death in 1967, Atilhan's books were published several times in different editions. But not only when he was alive, were his works read, but after his death his books were also edited a lot of times. According to Bali's research, Atilhan's books were edited 7 times in 1972, and 6 times in 1973 (Bali, 1998b: 24). Bali argues that this is not a coincidence; these were the years when Arab-Israeli war took place due to oil crisis which happened at the end of 1973, and continued a couple of years. For him, Atilhan became the expression of anti-Semite tendencies of some, and influenced their way of thinking.

The Jewish image is associated with conspiracy in Atilhan's discourse. The Jews are held responsible for almost all the misfortunes and trouble in political, economic and social sphere. They are represented in stereotypes such as money-lover, self-seeker and plotter which strengthen their position as the potential conspirators against the state and nation. Being inspired by both medieval and modern anti-Semitism, Atilhan employs the themes of Christian, Nazi and Islamist anti-Semitism altogether. While until the mid-1940s the most common themes in his discourse are the Talmud, blood libel, Passover and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, from the mid-1940s on he focuses more on the themes of "Jewish-capitalist-communist alliance", "the overthrown of Sultan Abdülhamid II from his throne by Zionist-Free Mason-Donmeh conspiracy" and "Jewish ideal of world domination". In addition, the themes of black-marketing by the Jews during the Balkan War, the betrayal of the Jews in the Ottoman army in Palestinian Front during the First World War and in Sinai Front during the War of Independence are other sources nurturing conspiratorial mindset in Atilhan.

The analysis of the representation of the Jews as the subject of conspiracy theories in Atilhan's discourse necessitates, firstly, a theoretical framework which establishes the relationship between anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories. Secondly, there is the need of setting Turkish nationalism as the context of analysis with respect to the Jewish image; in other words, it is necessary to deal with the Jewish image in Turkish nationalism in order to reveal the context within which Atilhan speaks out. Thirdly, Atilhan's position vis-à-vis Turkish nationalism is required to be assessed and the themes of conspiracy in Atilhan need to be discussed in accordance. To this aim, I will try to find the answers of the following questions: How can we approach to anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories? How they relate to each other so that the Jews are represented as the subject of conspiracy theories by anti-Semite discourse? What is the place of the Jews as the subject of conspiracy theories in Turkish nationalism? How does Atilhan's conspiratorial mindset relate to the context of Turkish nationalism? How are the Jews represented in relation to conspiracy theories in Atilhan? How and

why conspiracy theories function in Atilhan's discourse? In the following three chapters, I seek to answer these questions.

The first chapter will analyze anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories by approaching them from the perspective of nationalism. The nationalist discourse is about demarcation and dichotomization; it draws the boundaries of the nation; as a result, it excludes as well as it includes along the lines of "us/them" or "Self/Other" distinction. It ascribes opposing characters to the categories so that the Other becomes what the Self is not. The racist and xenophobic brand of nationalism represents these dichotomies in an aggressive fashion such as the enemy Other at the expense of the Self or foes at the expense of friends. Thus, anti-Semitism can be regarded as an articulation of the racist and xenophobic brand of nationalism which draws the boundaries between the non-Jews and the Jews through dichotomization.

Similar to anti-Semitism, conspiracy theories can be considered as the articulation of the racist and xenophobic brand of nationalist discourse. In the representations of conspiracy theories, the nation is under constant threat by the secret alien powers having malevolent aims. While the nation is a peaceful entity in itself, its harmony is threatened by the enemies who conspire against it. This refers to some psychological mechanisms of conspiracy theories. At this point, I will build my argument on what Žižek suggested: the fantasy that the nation is a peacefully coexisting collectivity results in the fantasy that the source of conflict is external (1996: 70). While the impossibility of the nation containing inner conflict finds expression in the conspiracy of the enemy, social conflict gains meaning. However, the meaning that is constructed through some simple and semi-erudite explanation provides a sense of relief which increases the dependence on the fantasy. Here, by following Adorno's claim that semi-erudite thinking serves the reproduction of ideology (2002: 121), I will argue that conspiracy theories which explain social conflict through Jewish conspiracy can be regarded as instruments to the reproduction of anti-Semite ideology.

In order to understand how conspiracy theories relate to anti-Semitism in Atilhan's discourse, Turkish nationalism with regard to the representation of the Jews as the subject of conspiracy must be discussed. The second chapter examines the Jewish image and conspiracy in Turkish nationalism with the purpose of setting the context of Atilhan's discourse. In the years of establishment of the Republic, there was high perception of threat on the part of the Kemalists to the unity of the state and nation which led to political paranoia and construction of conspiracy theories. While the foremost subject of conspiracy theories was the reactionists, the minorities were also viewed as conspirators against the unity of the nation. At this point, I will underline that without any specific emphasis on the Jewish minority, the Kemalist regime implemented the politics of Turkification to homogenize the minorities as a whole into Turkish culture. I will demonstrate that the first instances of the theme of Jewish conspiracy in Turkish nationalism emerged in Turkist discourse in the late 1930s which was mainly revealed by the racist publications. In Turkist literature, the Jews were mostly identified with communists and Donmehs who were regarded as evil conspirators. While the similar tendency was held by the conservative circles ranging from moderates to extremists such as Islamists, they identified the Jews with materialism and held them responsible for the social decay caused by degeneration of the moral and spiritual values. In their eyes, capitalism as well as communism was a conspiracy invented by the Jews who operate in secrecy either as Free Masons or as Donmehs to achieve their ultimate goal of destroying Islam and dominating the whole world.

The third chapter seeks to analyze Atilhan's position in relation to Turkish nationalism and discuss the theme of Jewish conspiracy in his discourse. As far as Kemalist nationalism is concerned, it is difficult to clearly determine Atilhan's position. Here, I will elaborate on Atilhan's changing position vis-à-vis Kemalist practices. While he supported Kemalist politics of Turkification during the early 1930s, he left this attitude towards the late 1930s and rejected the possibility for the Jews to become Turkified. His changing attitude towards a more exclusionary

tone became clearer during the Second World War years. His discourse came closer to Turkist positions and displayed racist and xenophobic characteristics with a considerable effect of his relations with the Nazis. During this period, he strongly attacked the Jews whom he regarded as conspirators against the purity and superiority of the nation. A focus on the changing context of Turkish politics after the mid-1940s in relation to Atilhan's discourse will display the sharp change in his political orientation. This will show Atilhan's alignment with anti-communism along with conservative nationalists. More importantly, it will disclose Atilhan's position vis-à-vis Islam which became a key component of his discourse in the 1950s and the 1960s. In this period, all modern positions such as materialism, cosmopolitanism and capitalism were represented by Atilhan as Jewish conspiracy which became the general tendency prevailing his discourse. After this analysis, I will focus on the specific themes of conspiracy theories through which Atilhan constructed the image of the Jews. At this point, I shall look how conspiracy theories function in Atilhan by concentrating on the psychological mechanisms of conspiracy theories as well as why they function by focusing on inherent characteristics of conspiracy theories. This discussion will try to demonstrate that conspiracy theories in Atilhan which explain social conflict through Jewish conspiracy can be regarded as ideological instruments reproducing anti-Semitism.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **ANTI-SEMITISM AND CONSPIRACY THEORIES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONALISM**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, I will analyze anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories in the context of nationalism. I shall look at how they relate to each other and to nationalist discourse. I will argue that conspiracy theories whose subjects are the Jews can be regarded as ideological instruments that reproduce anti-Semitism. To substantiate this contention, I will initially concentrate on nationalism with respect to the representation of the alien Other. Here, my focus will be the analysis of the nationalist discourse that dialectically constructs the Other vis-à-vis the Self. Secondly, I will deal with anti-Semitism by approaching it as an articulation of the racist and xenophobic brand of nationalism. Here, I will look at Christian anti-Semitism to grasp the medieval roots of hatred towards the Jews. Then, I shall focus on Nazi anti-Semitism and discuss the fascist discourse which represented the Jews as the enemy Other. I will also consider Islamist anti-Semitism and explore the Jewish image in the eyes of Islamists. Altogether, I will look at the specific themes through which the Jewish image is shaped in Christian, Nazi and Islamist anti-Semitism. In doing this, my emphasis will be on the representation of the Jews as conspirators. This will be an introduction to the analysis of the link between the construction of the Jewish image and conspiracy theories, and thereby, direct us to the discussion on the relationship between anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories. Subsequently, I shall concentrate on conspiracy theories and approach them as the articulation of the racist and xenophobic brand of nationalist

discourse. I will look at the characteristics and implications of conspiracy theories in relation to anti-Semitism. I will try to show that both anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories are fed by similar sources of nationalism. Following Adorno's claim that semi-erudite thinking serves the reproduction of ideology, I will argue that conspiracy theories which, by their irrational nature and simplifying structure, explain social conflict as a Jewish conspiracy can be considered as ideological means to the reproduction of anti-Semitism. Eventually, I will briefly enlighten this argument in relation to Christian, Nazi and Islamist anti-Semitism in order to prepare the ground for the following parts.

## **2.2. Nationalism: Self versus Other**

There have been a variety of approaches to nation and nationalism regarding their origins. This debate is mostly characterized as the debate between "primordialism" versus "modernism". Although it is not feasible to present here a comprehensive analysis, it is essential for the purposes of this study to discuss the key differences between these two approaches. Primordialism can be traced to the ideas of German romantics such as Herder and Fichte. Along the lines of the primordialist view of the nation, they contended that nations existed before nationalism. They argued that nations preceded nationalism and regarded the nation as a 'sleeping beauty' waiting to be awakened by nationalist movements that would revive glorious mythic past of the nations which was already present (McCrone, 1998: 28). In this sense, they suggested an essentialist understanding of the nation which viewed the national identity as given and fixed. On the other hand, for modernism, nationalism precedes nations meaning that nationalism invents nations where they do not exist (Gellner, 1994: 56). By focusing on economic and social changes associated with modernity, modernists such as Anderson, Gellner and Hobsbawm argued that nations were largely an outcome of the process of modernization. This is a process of fabrication in which nationalism constantly constructed the nation (Gellner, 1994: 56). In this sense, national

identity is not fixed and given; rather, it is fluid and dynamic. It is reconstructed with respect to the changing context.

In this study, I will approach nationalism from the modernist perspective which regards nationalism as the producer of the nation. That is, I will take the category of the nation not as a given, primordial entity which is stable; but rather a category that is dynamic in which nationalism is argued to constantly construct and reconstruct the nation and draw and redraw its boundaries. Following Anderson who argued that the nation is an imagined political community which is limited and sovereign (1983: 6-7), I will approach the nation as a sovereign collectivity which is imagined within certain limits. By taking these limits as the determinants of inclusion and exclusion, I will discuss the exclusion of the Other from the sphere of the Self which will constitute the ground for further discussions on anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories.

According to McCrone, constructing the national Self intimately involves constructing the Other. This is a dialectical process in which the Self is constructed upon the Other (McCrone, 1998: 108). In this dialectical process, the Self seeks to assert its power and superiority through degradation and exclusion of the enemy Other. At the end, “we the people” is defined against the Others who do not belong, and have different origins; thus, it becomes that “we” are what “they” are not (McCrone, 1998: 118). This becomes a point of mobilization and resistance against the degraded Other so that the sphere of the Self is kept secure. Therefore, nationalism is regarded as “the mobilizing force that coalesced into resistance against an alien and occupying empire, mobilized according to a perceived common history, religion and language” (McCrone, 1998: 119). This characterizes nationalism as “a modern form of the universal ‘us/them’, ‘friends/foes’ distinction which all human groups need to maintain identity and collective existence” (Breuilly, 1999: 45). That means, nationalism is about dichotomies which view the world in black and white. Such dichotomies are inherent to nationalism and imply an all-encompassing world division that “there

is simply no room for those who are neutral innocent, non-aligned, half-way or non-partial” (Kecmanovic, 1996: 51). As Kecmanovic presents a comprehensive account on nationalist discourse, there are goods and evils in the world. There is constant threat through secret plots from the part of the alien and foreign evils to the security and integrity of the goods who then gains a legitimate right to take revenge and prove superiority (Kecmanovic, 1996: 51-67).

Such characteristics of nationalism disclose that there are strong ties between nationalism and anti-Semitism as well as between nationalism and conspiracy theories. As I will show in the following parts of the chapter, both anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories are associated with the racist and xenophobic brand of nationalism. This needs to be examined first in relation to Christian, Nazi and Islamist anti-Semitism and then to conspiracy theories with specific regard to their characteristics and implications.

### **2.3. Anti-Semitism as a Nationalist Discourse**

As I examined, nationalist discourse rests on dichotomization of the national Self and Other which are demarcated by clear lines. The Other is in a constant attempt to cross the line, damage the integrity and threaten the security of the nation through secret conspiracies. Anti-Semitism displays similar characteristics. It identifies the Jews as the enemy constantly threatening the nation by secret plots. Throughout the history, Christianity, Nazism and Islam have employed various images in representing the Jews which was borrowed from the most racist and xenophobic tones of nationalism.

#### **2.3.1. Christian Anti-Semitism**

Christian anti-Semitism is founded upon countless myths. Yet, the point of departure for Christianity was the so-called Jewish conspiracy of killing of Christ. According to Christianity, this became the reason for God’s eternal rage and

punishment which not only resulted in the formation of medieval ghettos but also justified the bloody pogroms of the Jews in the name of God (Glock & Stark, 1966, xv). This led the Jews to be represented as Christ-killer *Judenschwein* (Jew-sow) during the Middle Ages. But in the last decades of nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, the traditional legends which had told about the Jews in the past were revived “as foils for racial mysticism and as instruments of political mobilization” (Mosse, 2000: 195). That means Christian anti-Semitism had gained a racial character in addition to its religious nature which identified the Jews as an evil race threatening moral values and conspiring against Christianity with the purpose of destructing it.

One of the foremost sources of Christianity in justifying the so-called wicked character of the Jews was *the Talmud* which is the written record of an oral tradition comprising rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, customs, and history (Montet *et al.*, 2006: 206). In the eyes of anti-Semites, the Talmud includes a lot of elements which display that Judaism is inherently racist. According to their reading of Talmud, Judaism views non-Jews as a subhuman species deserving only hatred from its Jewish superiors<sup>1</sup>. They argue that the violence on the part of the Jews against non-Jews is legitimized by a statement in the Talmud that “the best of the non-Jews should be killed” which is regarded as one of the greatest conspiracy by the Jews to non-Jews and identified as *blood libel*, namely killing of non-Jews<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the Hebrew term *goy* (pl. *goyim*), which refers to non-Jews, means “cow” or “animal”. For anti-Semites, this idea is supported by a variety of statements in the Talmud and the Jewish law itself which encourages Jews to exploit their non-Jewish neighbor and engage in criminal activities; some go far beyond and maintain that the Jews are committed to subdue non-Jews around the world and even to commit genocide against them. On the other side, the Jews reject such attacks on the basis of the argument that some parts of the Talmud are changed, misinterpreted, and even forged at all to justify anti-Semite claims. For a detailed reading see [http://www.adl.org/presrele/asus\\_12/the\\_talmud.pdf](http://www.adl.org/presrele/asus_12/the_talmud.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> For the Jews, this is also a misinterpretation since this statement is used in a different context. For a detailed reading see [http://www.adl.org/presrele/asus\\_12/the\\_talmud.pdf](http://www.adl.org/presrele/asus_12/the_talmud.pdf).

The accusation of ritual murder, the so-called blood libel, had medieval roots in the legend that the Jews murdered Christian children and used their blood for cooking unleavened bread during the feast *Passover*<sup>3</sup>. For anti-Semites, the ritual murder is a demonstration of vicious nature of Judaism; besides, this Jewish use of blood blasphemed the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross because Easter and Passover coincided (Mosse, 2000: 195). In this sense, as the myths on the Talmud and blood libel display, Christian anti-Semitism constructs non-Jews at the expense of the Jews who are seen as racially evil.

With a conspiratorial mindset, Christian anti-Semites believe that the cases of blood libel remained secret because the Jews were able to keep them secret thanks to their control of the whole market and media. This is one of the main subjects of *the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* which is a literary forgery first published in 1903 in Russian. Being a conspiratorial fiction, the Protocols deal with the weapons that the elders are to use to render the Jews the sovereign race of the world.

The weapons ranged from the use of the French Revolution's slogan, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," to the spreading of liberalism and socialism. The people of the world would be deprived of all faith in God and their strength undermined by encouraging public criticism of authority. At the same time, a financial crisis would be provoked and gold in the hands of the Jews would be manipulated in order to drive up prices. Eventually, there should be in all states in the world, besides the Jews, only the masses of proletariat, a few millionaires devoted to Jewish interests and Jewish own police and soldiers. Blind obedience would then be demanded to the King of Jews, the ruler of universe (Mosse, 2000: 198).

Although the fictitiousness of the Protocols was proved, the anti-Semites believed in their authenticity and regarded them as the evidence of the secret Jewish intentions. In their views, the Protocols were an indication of the strong relationship of the Jews to capitalism, Free Masonry and communism; the articles of the Protocols represented the Jews as a hostile race conspiring against the

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<sup>3</sup> Passover is a major Jewish spring festival, commemorating the Exodus from Egypt over 3,000 years ago. The ritual observance of this holiday centers around a special home service called the *seder* (meaning "order") and a festive meal composed of unleavened bread and lamb meat which the Israelites ate just prior to the Exodus <http://urj.org/holidays/pesach/index.cfm>.

whole world with the purpose of eliminating the sovereignty of the whole nations and establishing Jewish domination.

### **2.3.2. Nazi Anti-Semitism**

In *Anti-Semite and Jew*, Sartre provides a critique of anti-Semitism which gives a comprehensive idea on modern anti-Semitism and on whom he calls “anti-Semite”:

If a man attributes all or part of his own misfortunes and those of his country to the presence of Jewish elements in the community, if he proposes to remedy this state of affairs by depriving the Jews of certain of their rights, by keeping them out of certain economic and social activities, by expelling them from the country, by exterminating all of them, we say that he has anti-Semitic opinions (1995: 7).

While this explanation refers to the concurrence of social, political and economic causes of anti-Semitism, in Arendt’s view, modern anti-Semitism had political rather than economic causes. “Each class of society in Europe which came into a conflict with the state became anti-Semitic because the only social group which seemed to represent the state was the Jews” (Arendt, 1968: 25). The reason was that the Jews were a closed community enjoying privileged status within the society thanks to their good relations with the state. This, in turn, led to the association of the Jews with power and threat.

Because of their close relationship to state sources of power, the Jews were identified with power, and because of their aloofness from society and concentration upon the closed circle of family, they were invariably suspected of working for the destruction of all social structures (Arendt, 1968: 28).

In terms of the economic aspects of modernization, the Jews were already in an advantaged position due to “their longstanding urbanization, their socio-professional specialization, their tradition of literacy and their connections among the diaspora” (Burrin, 2005: 20). This caused a perception on the part of the social strata adversely affected by modernization that the Jews were the main beneficiaries of modernization. They discriminated against the Jews whom they blamed for the threat that free enterprise posed to their old monopolies and the

new technology that made their traditional skills obsolete (Weiss, 2003: 8). Their irritation and hostility resulted in “the identification of the Jews first with liberalism, then with socialism and communism, in short with everything that was undermining the hold of tradition and boding ill for stability” (Burrin, 2005: 21).

The political, economic and social repercussions of modernization coupled with one another became the sources of the fascist aspect of anti-Semitism which was revealed by its politics of devastation of all modern political forms and forces threatening the nation. What Morgan suggests on fascist movements significantly displays the fascist aspect of anti-Semitism:

In a climate of perceived national danger and crisis, fascist movements sought to regeneration of their nations through the violent destruction of all political forms and forces which they held to be responsible for national disunity and divisiveness, and the creation of a new national order based on the moral and spiritual reformation of their peoples and a cultural revolution (2003: 13-14).

It follows from here that anti-Semitism as a fascist discourse is constructed upon the exclusion and destruction of the Jews who threatens the unity of the nation by leading to its decadence morally, spiritually and culturally. This is managed through racist and xenophobic means which constructs the Jewish image as the complete opposite and total negative of the identity that it is itself defending and exalting.

Their [the Jews'] physical, moral, spiritual and cultural characteristics are represented by a dualist system that places them, term for term, in opposition to the characteristics of the anti-Semites: nomads versus those with a fixed seat of habitation, gold versus blood, lies versus truth, cowardice versus heroism. Even religion is not spared. Religion is declared too noble for the Jews and is denied them. Judaism is considered at the very most a code of behavior designed to regulate the lives of the Jews among themselves and the relations between Jews and Gentiles whom they are, it is said, remorselessly encouraged to cheat (Burrin, 2005: 25).

This negative imagery of the Jews is highly nurtured by stereotyping which has a central place in the making of racist and xenophobic language of anti-Semitism. The stereotypical Jewish image in anti-Semitism mostly revolves around the representations of the Jews as coward, money-lover, self-seeker and liar which

stress the perception that Jews are threatening and power-seeking. Such a stereotypical representation serves, first, the overgeneralization of a single Jewish trait, second, the generalization of the overgeneralized traits to all Jews, and third, the creation of the idea that no single individual or group as a whole could have all these characteristics. In *The Authoritarian Personality*, Adorno *et al.*, with a socio-psychological approach, tries to show that anti-Semitism is ethno-centric, and thus, needs stereotyping to emphasize the rigid line between ingroup and outgroup, which, as an outcome, would strengthen its position (Adorno *et al.*, 2001: 82-83). In accordance with the racist and xenophobic character of anti-Semitism,

ethnocentrism is based on a pervasive and rigid ingroup-outgroup distinction; it involves stereotyped negative imagery and hostile attitudes regarding outgroups, stereotyped positive imagery and submissive attitudes regarding ingroups, and a hierarchical, authoritarian view of group interaction in which ingroups are rightly dominant, outgroups subordinate (Adorno *et al.*, 2001: 84).

To put it in political terms, the stereotyping is a motivating tool to evoke the ethno-centric nature of anti-Semitism in the sense that it constructs the Self as superior in morality and ability, power and status while it lowers the Other due to its immorality, inability, lack of power and low status. The power-seeking and clannishness characteristics of the Other refer to moral virtue, self-preservation and loyalty of the Self. All other aspects of the Self are regarded as the opposite of the Other: clean versus dirty, honest versus liar etc. There is a never-ending natural conflict between the Self and the Other. The Other poses a continuous threat to the Self and contaminate it by its evil nature. Thus, the Self feels persecuted and victimized which leads it to attack, extinguish, and segregate the Other.

As such racial and xenophobic characteristics are inherent to Nazi anti-Semitism, it constructs the very similar permanent and irresolvable battle between the Jews and non-Jews. Having borrowed a lot from Christian anti-Semitism, the Nazis gave anti-Semitism a clear-cut racial character and redesigned it along with their ideology. According to Hitler's racial theory, the human races are classified in a

hierarchical order at the top of which Aryan race, the sole creature of human civilization, stands. Below the Aryans, there are inferior races such as Slavs, Latins and Asians who are merely able to maintain civilization. At the bottom of the hierarchy, there are the Jews who not only create nothing but destroy the human civilization as well. From here it follows that Nazism constructed anti-Semitism on the negative imagery of the Aryan race. While Aryan race was responsible for every advance in human civilization, willing to suffer personal loss to advance the race, self-sacrificing, idealistic, hardworking and virtuous, the Jewish race was incapable of creating anything of their own, lacked idealism and the will to sacrifice for the common good (Bytwerk, 2001: 74). This shaped the Nazi idea of “regeneration of German society by encouraging the reproduction of its best elements, and at the same time, the idea of purging and expulsion of the Jews who were regarded as parasites living at the expense of the earth” (Burrin, 2005: 50). This is a significant point displaying the difference of Nazi anti-Semitism from Christian anti-Semitism. To put it clearly, what distinguished Nazism was not that it attacked the Jews, but “the centrality of Jew-baiting and the dedication to an apocalyptic battle” (Bytwerk, 2001: 74). In other words, Nazism did not simply mean hatred and aggression towards the Jews; besides, it was characterized with political mobilization for the complete destruction of the Jewish enemy.

Political mobilization against the Jews was justified by the Nazis through the promotion of conspiracy theories. One of the greatest conspiracies to Aryans, in the eyes of the Nazis, was the invention of inoculation by the Jews. This was an instrument of the Jews to subvert the Aryan blood, as it is stated in the Protocols (Mosse, 2000: 198). In Hitler’s words, the Protocols are a clear evidence of evil Jewish intentions; even if they were asserted to be forgery, “what many Jews may do unconsciously is exposed in the Protocols consciously” (Bytwerk, 2001: 132). Another anti-Semite tome was arguing that “whether or not the Protocols are genuine is not the very concern, rather whether that which is in them corresponds to the reality” (Bytwerk, 2001: 132). While the authenticity of the Protocols was

out of concern, they were seen as the unique proof of wicked Jewish nature as Talmud presents and the evidence of Jewish connection with Free Masonry, Bolshevism and capitalism.

Julius Streicher, the Nazi editor of an anti-Semitic newspaper, *Der Stuermer*, claimed that the whole life of the Jews is ruled by the Talmud. Moreover, he argued that Jewish ritual slaughter of animals was a proof that they treated Gentiles in the same way (Bytwerk, 2001: 127). This idea led the Nazis to regard the Jews as cruel beings and the Jewish women as birth givers to pigs and Devil along the same lines of Christian anti-Semitism. The dehumanization of the Jews was displayed in the Nazi representations as the Jews showing “the tenacity of snake, the cunning of a fox, the look of a falcon, the memory of a dog, the diligence of an ant, the sociability of a beaver” (Mosse, 2000: 197).

While the Protocols, for the Nazis, revealed this wicked character of the Jews, they at the same time displayed the intricate relation between Free Masonry, Bolshevism and capitalism which were seen as Jewish conspiracy against Aryans. The Nazi rule explicitly discriminated those who were members of Free Mason lodges. Some lost their jobs, others ended up in prisons and concentration camps. According to Nazis, Free Masonry was an international organization beholden to Jewry with the political goal of establishing Jewish domination through worldwide revolution (Bergen, 2003: 25-26). Among all revolutions, the Bolshevik Revolution would spread, in the eyes of Nazis, corrupt values such as atheism, cosmopolitanism and equality of all men while the French Revolution would promote the wicked principles of religious toleration, universal suffrage, and equality of all men which are to undermine the idea of inequality of races, discipline and disobedience (Bytwerk, 2001: 75). In this regard, the Protocols meant to Nazis a precious document in mobilizing against the Jewish world conspiracy.

### **2.3.3. Islamist Anti-Semitism**

There were two parallel traditions in Islam concerning the Jews. On the one hand, Muslims shared and strengthened the pre-Islamic Arab feeling of friendship with their Jewish neighbors, both in northern and southern Arabia, who were praised in the Arabic literature of the time for their loyalty, hospitality and generosity (Shaw, 1991: 9-10). This was mostly because Islam considered that the Jews, like Christians, believed in the same God and used the holy books sent by the same God. This was accentuated by the fact that the great figures of the Old and New Testaments, Moses, Isaac, Abraham and Jesus Christ were included in the Koran, with the familiar biblical stories appearing in only slightly altered form in the holy book of Islam (Shaw, 1991: 9-10). For those reasons, like Christians, the Jews were recognized and protected in whatever Muslim community they lived. The clearest example was the Ottoman Empire which granted extensive rights and freedom to Jewish community. After being expelled from Spain in 1492, the Ottoman State accepted them as citizens and gave them a privileged status. Especially Suleyman the Magnificent rewarded the Jews with tax exemptions, concessions for trade and exploitation of minerals (Shaw, 1991: 27). Such privileges led the Jews to control the whole internal and external trade and become the wealthiest community of the Empire (Lewis, 1984: 23).

On the other hand, Islam had a hostile position to the Jews. Since Judaism was the source of all monotheistic religions, it caused problems of rivalry for Islam, as it did for Christianity. Throughout the history, the greatest contention between the Muslim and Jewish world has been the Palestinian issue which became the very source of hatred on the part of Islam towards the Jews. While this is still an ongoing conflict, the establishment of Israeli state in 1948 constituted one of the

landmarks for Islam in the sense of raising hostility towards the Jews and reinforced conspiratorial mindset<sup>4</sup>.

Inspired by Christian anti-Semitism, the Jews were represented by Islamist anti-Semitism as a perverted race deprived of morality. While this perception is largely caused by the so-called ritual murders ordered by the Talmud, the main source of hostility on the part of Islam towards the Jews were the Protocols. Similar to Christian and Nazi anti-Semitism, the Protocols were deemed as authentic by Islamist anti-Semitism and became the very cause of aggression and justification for its call for Jewish extermination (Lewis, 1984: 29).

For Islamists, the Protocols perfectly expose that Free Masonry is a Jewish conspiracy to destroy Islam. This is because they promote internationalism and cosmopolitan values which would lead to weakening of the bonds of both Islam and Arabism (Landau, 2004: 14). As suggested by the Protocols, communism would be encouraged by the Zionists in order to further weaken the values of Islam and corrupt morality. Despite the opposition between communism and capitalism, Islamists assert, capitalism would be sponsored to create conflict between the poor and the rich (Landau, 2004: 14). This would consolidate the material values provided by Free Masonry and communism. Islamists conclude that the Zionist-Free Mason-Communist conspiracy as implied by the Protocols initially targets Islam whose destruction would eliminate all the obstacles for the Zionists to establish their world empire.

#### **2.4. Conspiracy Theory and Its Relation to Anti-Semitism**

Throughout the modern history, conspiracy theories have become popular instruments in explaining crises, wars, disasters and all events of conflict. Thus, it

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<sup>4</sup> This is apparent in the shifting elements of Islamist language. With the effect of the establishment of Israel, Islamists used the word “Zionists”, which is associated with conspiracy, instead of “Jews”.

would be not wrong to say that their lasting popularity can be regarded as their “success”. In order to have a better understanding of their “success”, I will take a general look at their various definitions and characteristics.

McArthur argues that conspiracy theories entail a belief held by sizable number of people that there are powerful and malicious groups seeking more power for themselves to harm others through secret plots (1995: 38). For Skinner, a conspiracy theory reflects “a belief system that asserts that world events are being governed in a secret by a group of ultra-powerful puppeteers behind the scenes” (Skinner, 2001: 106). From here it follows that, invisible powerful groups having malevolent intentions are the subjects of conspiracy theories. They play “a chess-like game by using pawns having no power and being consciously or unconsciously manipulated in line with the interest of the player” (Bozarslan, 2004: 20).

According to Moscovici, conspiracy by its very definition refers to minorities who are regarded as aliens (1996: 45). They represent a religious order, a party or an ethnic community that are connected by very secret and strong ties. The aim of this alliance is to promote social conflict, destroy moral values, and create crisis and defeat. The conspiratorial mindset, Moscovici states, is based on a dual structure which divides the society and actions into two different bodies that are in complete opposition to each other: one class is pure while another is dirty; one is legal while another is illegal; one is patriotic while another is the enemy of the country (Moscovici, 1996: 51). Any contact between them is absolutely harmful since this would lead to contamination and infection on the part of the pure.

Such representations of the enemy refer in fact to the representation of the society to which fear, paranoia and fantasy are inherent (Moscovici, 1996: 52). That is to say, while the society is harmonious, the institutions are strong, and the citizens are loyal, the enemy Other appears on the scene and generates conflict, disharmony and decay. This is where the psychological mechanisms of conspiracy

theories step in. The appearance of the alien Other signifies the repressed inner-antagonism of the society which is projected to alien Other. In this sense, the alien Other is constructed in an imaginary field in which the society's repressed anxiety and phobia of helplessness, hopelessness, loss and separation takes place. It is in fact a scapegoat that is held responsible for the inner-conflict of the society; thus, collective hatred, violence and assault towards the scapegoat becomes legitimate (Girard, 1986: 39). The scapegoat is indeed an innocent victim which is easily identifiable, slightly but significantly different, vulnerable group; anxiety over contamination and death produced a projective assault that is socially permissible and necessary to hate torture and kill it (Loewenberg, 1995:160-161). The scapegoat is inherent to conspiracy theories. Since it is objectively identifiable, it is also a catalyst to the vocabulary of conspiracy theories in the production of symbolic violence. Beyond this, the scapegoat is a very provoking instrument to what Bozarslan calls "discourse on war" (2004: 23). In line with their particular vocabulary, conspiracy theories declare the scapegoat as a "vampire bat" flying over the nation and "sucking its blood", and call for "extermination" which is characterized with call for a battle for the complete destruction of the enemy.

Following Lacan, Žižek analyzed how the imagination of the Other vis-à-vis the Self works. Accordingly, the politics, state and nation are viewed as exempt from conflict; the politics is impervious to allies, the state is territorially enclosed, and the nation is internally peaceful. In other words, the politics, state and nation are antagonism-free entities; the Self is a peaceful entity in itself. The impossibility of the Self containing antagonism leads to the search of the perpetrator of antagonism somewhere outside the Self. This is where the image of the Other is created. The moment of threat perception to the peaceful coexistence of nation is the moment the Other appears on the fantasmatic scene (Žižek, 1996: 70). In other words, the fantasy of the Self results in the fantasy of the Other. The survival of the fantasy of the Self depends on the reproduction of the fantasy of the Other since the fantasy of the Other is the sole agent of repressed antagonism of the Self in reality (Žižek, 1996: 72). In this sense, to the extent that the Self is designed as

a fantasy, it hides the reality of antagonism in itself; and this reality which is repressed and excluded from the sphere of the Self appear as spectral images (Žižek, 1996: 74). Since the Other which is symbolically constructed does not exist in reality, it creates skepticism, panic and anxiety due to its spectral existence (Žižek, 1996: 68). At this point, the absence of the symbolically constructed Other leads to the construction of conspiracy theories which fill the gap between the symbolic and the real (Žižek, 1996: 68). As Featherstone suggests, “the absence of evidence confirms the existence of ever more cunningly disguised plotting”(2001: 36). In this sense, the gap between the symbolic and real becomes the area where conspiracy theories function.

For all those reasons, conspiracy theories prove to have special tools for the construction of the world. Conspiracy theories have their own mechanisms and patterns to make sense of the politics and society. They mainly rest on postulations instead of evidences.

Although, like social sciences, conspiracy theories collect information and discuss the significance, reliability and internal relations of the collected data, they use this analysis with the purpose of verifying their postulations without questioning. The acknowledgement of the postulations as facts without interrogation determines the methodology of conspiracy theories which is based on the use of conspiracy as a system of explanation rather than as a concept. Despite being internally consistent, this explanation is not open to question, verification and negation. Besides, it is recognized as the sole actual explanation which renders alternative explanations meaningless and invalid. This monopoly of explanation removes the concept of hypothesis and excludes multi-variant approach. This leads to the exclusion of all sorts of paradoxes and contradictions which are inherent to social existence (Bozarslan, 2004: 21-22).

At this point, it can be claimed that conspiracy theories have what Adorno calls “semi-erudite” character which means that they are neither rational nor irrational. This is because they are never verifiable, but they are never falsifiable either. This is what makes them “entirely self-confirming belief systems” (Parker, 2001: 194). They offer internally consistent however not verifiable information. In *The Stars Down to Earth*, Adorno offers an analysis of astrology, which he identifies as semi-erudite, in relation to popular culture. He argues that astrology as an articulation of semi-erudite thinking serves the reproduction of ideology. This is

because astrology is a means to coping with the challenges of modern world since it provides simple and unified explanations for the failures and misfortunes of people and in this way gives a sense of relief which results in dependence.

Popper holds a similar idea with respect to conspiracy theories which, for him, are much respected by the society during the times of social conflict. What he calls as the conspiracy theory of society is

more primitive than most forms of theism, is akin to Homer's theory of society. Homer conceived the power of the gods in such a way that whatever happened on the plain before Troy was only a reflection of the various conspiracies on Olympus. The conspiracy theory of society is just a version of this theism, of belief in gods whose whims and wills rule everything. It comes from abandoning God and then asking: "Who is in his place?" His place is then filled with by various powerful men and groups – sinister pressure groups, who are to be blamed for having planned the great depression and all the evils from which we suffer" (Popper, 1972: 123).

For Popper, this meant the secularization of religious superstitions which merely refer to a change in the subject of conspiracy theories while they kept their survival:

The belief in the Homeric gods whose conspiracies were responsible from the vicissitudes of the Trojan War is gone. But the place of the gods on Homer's Olympus is now taken by the Learned Elders of Zion, or by the monopolists, or the capitalists, or the imperialists (Popper, 1972: 341-342).

This example also explains that "collective beliefs in conspiracy theories usually embody or give expression to genuine social conflict" (James, 2001: 78). A conspiracy theory creates and ties together a series of events in relations of cause and effect, and thereby creates meaning. As Parker puts forward, "once we inhabit the elevated universe of conspiracy there can be no unexplained residues, everything has a cause, everything has meaning and nothing can be left out" (2001: 193). While giving meaning to social conflict, conspiracy theories simplifies things as well. As Skinner suggests, this is more than a way of providing emotionally satisfactory identifications and explanations; conspiracy theories make the complex world simpler (2001: 106). This is done by bringing the parts of a complex puzzle together. The end result is a simplified explanation

of the sophisticated reality which means for the critics of conspiracy theories that “the history becomes travesty as complex events are reduced to superstitious plots” (Skinner, 2001: 107). Furthermore, the so-called facts suggested by the conspiracy theories subverts and distorts the course of events so that they create a special mode of collective thinking which also strengthens the belief in the simplicity of the reality (Laçiner, 2004: 34).

To the extent that conspiracy theories create relief through simplification of reality, they render the individual dependent and passive which results in conformism. This can be better explained by looking from the perspective of Adorno who claimed that astrology is passifying just like the popular culture since “by strengthening the sense of fatality, dependence and obedience through supernatural explanations, it paralyses the will to change objective conditions and reproduce the status quo within the minds of the people” (Adorno, 2002: 121).

As far as the relationship of conspiracy theories to anti-Semitism is concerned, it is observed that they have similar structure and functioning. At this point, I argue that because of similar structure and mechanisms, conspiracy theories whose subjects are the Jews can be considered as ideological tools that reproduce anti-Semitism. This is, first of all, because, like conspiracy theories, anti-Semitism is based on dichotomization. Accordingly, the Jews are represented as evil conspirators against the harmony of the nations and the order and authority of the states. By means of their secret and powerful structure, the Jews are able to control and manipulate the politics and society which become unable to resist and victimized. To the extent that the nations and states are represented as helpless and weak victims, the Jewish image is associated with might and cruelty. Thus, in anti-Semitism, the Jew is the object of hatred who is an “internal spy”, “virus”, “parasite” and “microbe” that “contaminates”, “infects” and “kills” its “victim”. Being the character of both anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories, such an agitating vocabulary is the source of production of symbolic violence which leads to an aggressive assault whose object is the scapegoat, namely the Jews.

For Hammer, anti-Semitism more specifically arises from the need for scapegoats. Following Sartre (1995), and Horkheimer and Adorno (1979), Hammer argues that

there is not any intrinsic connection or any causal or otherwise, between the Jew, or the Jewish people, as such and anti-Semitic hatred. Rather, in the eyes of anti-Semite, the Jew is a figure who simply embodies a specific role assigned to him or her by the nature of the scapegoat logic. The anti-Semite hated the Jew not because of he or she was rich or powerful but because the Jew was to represent everything that the logic of domination –the dialectic of enlightenment (2005: 65).

In this sense, the scapegoat is inherent to the logic of anti-Semitism. It represents what is repressed by the society. As Loewenberg puts it:

The Jews symbolize libidinous desires that are inadmissible to consciousness. The unconscious instincts, which have been repressed, have thereby gained a bloody, dirty, dreadful, murderous character. One way of keeping these impulses from consciousness is to see them in Jews, who then become low, debauched anti-social creatures with unbridled sexual lives. These instinctual projections are then exercised and detested as “Jewish” sensuality (1995: 177).

The absence of the symbolic Jew in reality constitutes the grounds for anti-Semitism by means of the conspiratorial logic. That means, anti-Semite discourse, firstly, constructs the Jew as a ghost-like figure which does not exist in reality, and then uses the gap between symbolic Jew and the Jew in reality as its main thesis against the Jews (Žižek, 1996: 68). This gap constitutes the area of operation of conspiracy theories. The Jew as it is symbolically constructed does not exist in reality; but this idea itself becomes the very reason for skepticism, panic and anxiety due to its spectral existence (Žižek, 1996: 68). This is also the very characteristic of conspiracy theories. In other words, the invisibility of the symbolic Jew prompts the paranoia further and thereby results in further construction of conspiracy theories.

Conspiracy theories which explain misfortunes of the nation as a Jewish plot provide simple explanation for social conflict which is easy to adopt. In other words, their explanation is based on the repression of the inner-antagonism of the

society and the projection of all disasters to an easy identifiable enemy figure, namely to the Jews. While this provides a sense of relief, it also creates a dependence on the source of relief which becomes desirable whenever there is social conflict. In this regard, conspiracy theories explaining the social conflict through Jewish conspiracy strengthen the position of the Jews as conspirators. That is to say, they represent politics as an arena in which the Jews as a secret force take place, control and manipulate the course of politics along with their destructive intentions. In this sense, conspiracy theories sustain the Jewish image as conspirator against the state and nation, as it is also offered by anti-Semitism. Therefore, it can be claimed that conspiracy theories which is based on the theme of Jewish conspiracy can be seen as instruments to the reproduction of anti-Semitism.

## **2.5. Concluding Remarks**

Having fostered by the racist and xenophobic brand of nationalist discourse, anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories have a strong relationship to each other. As I displayed by examining Christian, Nazi and Islamist anti-Semitism, conspiracy theories are inherent to the making of Jewish image. While the Talmud and the Protocols constitute principal sources in the representation of the Jews as evil conspirators, they consolidate the position of the Jews as the enemy Other along the lines of racism and xenophobia. Besides, the so-called Jewish conspiracy is a quite simple answer to the misfortunes of society which render the society dependent to simplicity because of the feeling of relief. For those reasons, conspiracy theories which explain social conflict as a Jewish conspiracy can be seen as having a considerable role in the reproduction of anti-Semite discourse.

Turkish nationalism can be regarded as one of the contexts in which the relationship between Jewish image, conspiracy theories and anti-Semite tendency can be traced and discussed. More importantly, it can be approached as a context which had a great impact on the formation and development of Atilhan's

discourse. In this regard, in the following chapter, I will deal with Turkish nationalism and treat it as a laboratory which offers the particular codes of Atilhan's discourse.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **THE JEWISH IMAGE AND CONSPIRACY IN TURKISH NATIONALISM**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, my concern is to examine Turkish nationalism with respect to the Jewish image and the representation of the Jews as the subject of conspiracy, and thereby to prepare the grounds for the analysis of Atilhan's thinking in relation to Turkish nationalism. To this aim, I will look at different variants of Turkish nationalism from the establishment of the Turkish Republic on, and try to assess the representation of the Jews by these variants. Firstly, I shall explore single party period by focusing on Kemalist nationalism. I will analyze Kemalist nation building and discuss it with respect to the practices of the Kemalist regime towards minorities. I will scrutinize the varying tendencies in the main stream Kemalist nationalism towards essentialist, ethnicist and racist tones. Secondly, I shall analyze Turkism and its leading figures who took different positions than the regime, and had a great impact on the course of Turkish nationalism. After I discuss the mentioned variants in relation to the Jewish image, I will examine Turkish nationalism beginning from the mid-40s which corresponds to the transition to multi party period. I shall look at anti-communism which was a strong position in Turkish politics after the late 1940s and had a significant role in the construction of the Jewish image. Subsequently, I will focus on the rising conservative dose in Turkish nationalism with the end of 1940s which found expression in a synthesis of Islam and Turkishness, anti-modernism, anti-capitalism and anti-communism. I will conclude this chapter with a

comprehensive discussion on the construction of the Jewish image by conservative nationalist positions whose key instrument was conspiracy theories.

### **3.2. Single Party Period**

The years between 1919 and 1950 was characterized as the Single Party Period in Turkish political history. Nationalism has been a significant component of this period. It was shaped by the founder and president of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal, during the first 15 years. Briefly speaking, this was a patriotic brand of nationalism, generally stressing the attachment to Turkey, the land and people, rather than the ties to other Turkic or Islamic groups abroad (Landau, 2004: 252). However, Turkish nationalism had different variants during this period. It was mostly associated with Kemalist nationalism since Mustafa Kemal constructed the republican ideology in line with his own vision. Yet, as a result of the developments in political conjuncture, Kemalist nationalism had some changes, variations and deviances within itself which appeared as essentialist, ethnicist and racist tendencies. Such tendencies were not only displayed by the Kemalist regime but also by the leading figures of the time who were not actively involved in politics. As I will show later, they followed a clear racist and Turkist path in an extreme manner.

#### **3.2.1. Kemalist Nationalism**

Having a complex nature, Kemalism and Kemalist nationalism have been highly controversial issues in the studies of Turkish politics. Many different perspectives, opposing views and conflicting contentions have been suggested for the analysis of Kemalist nationalism that cannot be discussed in at length in this study. Having this difficulty in mind, I shall try to limit the boundaries of the discussion on Kemalist nationalism to a single aspect, namely to the issue of minorities, among many aspects such as nation building upon modern, secular and Western principles and anti-imperialism. Such a restraint will also serve the purpose of this

chapter, namely the representation of the Jews as the subject of conspiracy in the context of Turkish nationalism. By considering the fact that the issue of minorities was not homogeneous in itself during the Kemalist rule, I will seek to present a comprehensive analysis of the minority issue with respect to changing political tendencies and context.

When Turkish Republic was founded in 1923, nationalism had an existential meaning; the existence of the nation depended on the existence of nationalism (Copeaux, 2002, 45). Therefore, during the years of establishment, it was proposed that Kemalist nationalism which is the sole guarantor of national unity and solidarity must be protected against any kind of internal and external threat which was associated with minorities and their external collaborators (Copeaux, 2002, 45). In this sense, nationalism was to a great extent constructed upon threat perception that was supposed to be posed by minorities having malevolent intentions in collaboration with foreign powers. In his speech to youth, Mustafa Kemal warned that the republic is in a position that internal and external powers pose a constant threat to the independence and integrity. For this reason, the youth must be alert vis-à-vis any plot from the part of enemies. This approach displays the element of paranoia in the first years of the republic which originated from the idea of vulnerability of the newly founded republic vis-à-vis constant conspiracy of the internal and external rivals. The unique paranoia that the republic was surrounded by constant enemies aiming at destroying Turkey became so central to the construction of Turkish national identity that it led to a social anxiety and psychosis (Akçam, 2002: 60).

For Kemalist regime, the unity and solidarity of the Turkish nation which is guaranteed by nationalism depended on a proper nation building. In line with this, Kemalism adopted a French-model comprising national identity on the basis of citizenship. Accordingly, regardless of ethnicity, race and religion, the citizens enjoy same and equal rights which render them Turkish. In other words, Turkishness is defined by Turkish citizenship; it has a political connotation while

it excludes any kind of ethnic element (Özdoğan, 1996:19). Kemalists put forward that loyalty to the state, which is to be realized by the citizenship rights and obligations, and the unity of nation must come first. To this end, historical and cultural differences should not be reflected on the definition of nation; the understanding of political nation should be disseminated in different parts of the country via a common national education system (Özdoğan, 1996:19). This led to a process of the creation of national belongingness in which the attempt to promote national unity prevailed. National unity, according to the RPP programme, finds expression in the unity of language, culture and ideal; in this regard, the nation is the political and social community composed of citizens who are bound by the unity of language, culture and ideal (Alp, 1998: 286).

This understanding of nation corresponds to the definition suggested by Ziya Gökalp who was one of the prominent figures in Turkish nationalism. He defined the attachment of the individual to the nation on cultural basis. For him, nation is neither a geographical nor a racial and a political entity; it is a cultural community which is composed of the individuals educated with the same language, religion and morals (Gökalp, 1990: 17-18). According to Parla, Turkish nationalism for Gökalp rested on the principle of cultural unity and social solidarity and of egalitarianism which excluded racism and expansionism. The elements borrowed from Islam were not rooted in orthodox teachings but in mysticism. Similarly, they were not political but moral-oriented which strengthens social solidarity (Parla, 1985: 36). Yet, the element of religion in Gökalp's definition was excluded from Kemalist definition. This is because, for Kemalists, Islam refers to Ottoman past which is an old civilization based on Islamic culture. The Kemalists' overall objective was "to establish and rapidly build up a state and society which would be, in all respects, the antithesis of their Ottoman counter parts" (Landau, 2004: 269). In their eyes, the new republic representing a rupture in Turkish history must follow modern Western values in which Islam has no place in sociopolitical domain. In this sense, Kemalists envisage Turkish nationalism as being eliminated from Islamic elements and being enriched through reconstruction of pre-Islamic

Turkish history which is the fundamental framework of the republic (Yıldız, 2001a: 212).

The Kemalist regime not only excluded religion but class and ethnicity as well from the definition of national identity on the grounds that their visibility in public sphere constitutes potential danger to the cohesion of nation (Yıldız, 2001a: 215). This is also a part of Kemalist effort to build a model of society devoid of internal antagonisms and disharmony. In the absence of particular identities, the society would be composed of classless, unprivileged and harmonious people who represent the materialization of the Turkish nation (Yıldız, 2001a: 215). In this sense, unity and solidarity of the nation was the foremost principle in the construction of national identity.

According to Kemalists, unity and solidarity of the nation necessitated a uniform culture. Therefore, there must be one-single culture on which to be united. For the regime, the point of unity was Turkish culture. In this case, those who were not from Turkish culture had to adopt Turkish culture for national cohesion. In this sense, Kemalist conception of nationalism established the grounds for membership to the nation on the adoption of Turkish culture as it was also proposed by Gökalp and Tekin Alp. Accordingly, minorities who were not from Turkish culture and do not speak Turkish may become members of the nation if they adopt Turkish culture and speak Turkish. For Bora, this shows the tension between the political and ethnic content of Kemalist nationalism which is characterized by the impossibility of citizenship being independent from the conception of nation (1998: 29). He argues that Turkish citizenship was encoded by Turkish cultural identity which means that the prerequisite of Turkish citizenship was being from Turkish culture. Similarly, Yıldız puts forward that Kemalism separates the membership to the state and to the nation from each other, and then relates the membership to the state (citizenship) to the membership to the nation (2001a: 213). Thereby, he claims, citizenship which is a legal status

defined at objective level became only possible through the membership to the nation defined at subjective level.

“The politics of Turkification” implemented by the Kemalist regime was in that sense an effort to render minorities citizens which was only possible through meeting the requirements, namely their adoption of Turkish culture. While this politics mainly targeted non-Muslim minorities such as the Jews, Armenians and Greeks having different language and culture from Turks, it also affected non-Turkish Muslim minorities, particularly Kurdish minority<sup>5</sup> as well. Its nature was based on the exclusion of minority identity, language, culture and activity from public sphere which could only be possible through their assimilation into the Turkish culture. In this regard, the politics of Turkification became a tool for homogenizing the nation and rendering Turkish identity sovereign. However, it is critical to note before an analysis of the politics of Turkification that, for many studies on Kemalism, there were some discriminatory practices by the regime which contradicted to the assimilative character of the politics of Turkification. Such practices by the regime displayed some essentialist, ethnicist and even racist aspects which created a tension for the political-territorial definition of the nation which will be discussed in detail.

The politics of Turkification took place in a variety of fields ranging from language, education, settlement, economy, bureaucracy, culture, military to taxation. In the field of language, the language reform was realized. Accordingly, Arabic alphabet was replaced by Latin alphabet which was followed by the exclusion of all Arabic and Persian words from the language and translation of all prayers and worship texts including the call to prayer into Turkish (Güven, 2006: 113). Besides, non-Turkish names of minorities were turkified, Turkish was designated as mother tongue, and speaking Turkish in public sphere was set as an

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<sup>5</sup> The assimilation of Kurdish minority into Turkish culture had utmost importance for the Kemalist regime since the Kurdish question was regarded as a direct threat to the ideal of modern secular nation-state upon which the Republic was founded. For a detailed reading see Yeğen, Mesut. (2002), pp. 880-892.

obligation (Güven, 2006: 113). These were part of the campaign “Citizen, Speak Turkish!” which was launched in 1928 and aimed at excluding non-Muslim and non-Turkish Muslim languages (Güven, 2006: 114). “The Law on Family Names” passed in 1934 banned taking family names which have a relation to other races and nations. Upon an opposition to this law by one of the deputies in the parliament on the grounds that there must be freedom of choosing family names for those who are from a different ethnic origin, the Minister of Interior of the time, Şükrü Kaya, replied that the purpose of this law is assimilation which is indispensable for the unity of the nation (Yıldız, 2001b: 237). While this displayed the assimilative tendency of the regime, there were some practices by the regime which asserted the superiority of Turkishness in essentialist, ethnicist and also racial terms.

The establishment of Turkish Language Association in 1932 which initially served supporting *Sun Language Theory* in parallel to Kemalist construction of history aimed at justifying the superiority of Turkishness. This theory put forward that Turkish is the root-language from which the languages of the world nations derive (Ersanlı-Behar, 1992: 52). In 1932, *Turkish History Thesis* sought to strengthen this superiority in racial terms by arguing that Anatolia was a Turkish land since its first dwellers were the Turks of Central Asia who were succeeded by their Hittite and Byzantine children (Yıldız, 2001b: 185). While the thesis turkified Anatolia throughout the history, it served two main purposes: the purification of the Turkish identity from Islamic elements and Ottoman past, and the assertion of superiority of Turkish race which had the noble capability of creating civilization (Yıldız, 2001b: 180-185). In this regard, both *Sun Language Theory* and *Turkish History Thesis* disclosed the efforts by the Kemalist regime to place the roots of Turkish ethnicity and race at the very depth of history and confirm its superiority.

Settlement was another area of the politics of Turkification. In 1934, the government passed a legislation called “Compulsory Settlement Law” which

separated the population into three and settled them accordingly (Karabatak, 1996: 5-6). The first group is composed of the Turkish speaking Turks, the second is constituted by Turkish speaking citizens who are not from Turkish culture, and the third group is composed of citizens who do not speak Turkish and are not a member of Turkish culture. The citizens in the first group had the right to settle down in any part of the country. However, the second and third group was subjected to the settlement politics of the government. Accordingly, the territory was divided into three: Southeastern and Eastern Anatolia were the territories where the number of those who feel belonging to Turkish culture is to be increased, Middle and West Anatolia were the area of settlement of those who are to adopt Turkish culture, and the remaining territories are to be closed to settlement for geographical, economic and military purposes. The law demonstrates that the implicit purpose of the regime was to assimilate non-Turkish elements, mostly the Kurds, into the Turkish society “through the reorganization of demographic composition of Anatolia on ethnic principles” (Yeğen, 2004: 57).

In the field of education, all the foreign and minority schools were taken under the supervision of Ministry of National Education by a law called “Tevhid-i Tedrisat” and passed in 1924. The Ministry stated that in minority schools, history, geography and Turkish classes are to be taught by Turkish teachers (Kaplan, 1999: 54-60). According to another regulation in 1927, mother tongue of the teachers in foreign and minority schools had to be Turkish (Kaplan, 1999: 54-60). This demonstrated the discriminatory attitude by the regime towards non-Muslims which contradicted to the assimilative character of the politics of Turkification. This attitude by the regime was observed in different fields apart from education.

In the economic field, the fundamental goal was to eliminate non-Muslim minority activity, and render Turks sovereign in the market. To this aim, as Güven mentions, *National Turkish Business Association* which was founded in 1923 played an important role in the purchase and shutting down of the non-Muslim

enterprises, discharge of non-Muslim employees and hiring of Turkish employees instead (2006: 109). In 1925, the travel of non-Muslims to Anatolia was prohibited and all types of travels by non-Muslim citizens were subjected to a special permission (Güven, 2006: 109). In 1934, a specific law banned non-Muslims to carry on some professions. This directly affected self-employed persons, artisans, small traders and street vendors (Güven, 2006: 110). A large-scale campaign was launched for the consumption of national products (Güven, 2006: 110). In the field of bureaucracy, non-Muslims were excluded from public services since they did not meet the criterion of being “Turk” which was regulated by law (Güven, 2006: 112). A center within the Police Department was established to inspect those who apply for military schools whether they are from Turkish race (Güven, 2006: 113).

During the years of Second World War, the elimination of the threat posed by German and Italian fascism was the foremost concern for Kemalist regime. While it sought to keep Turkey out of the war, it regarded Turkey’s entrance to the war as a possibility and acted accordingly. Since the regime viewed minorities as potential conspirators in the case of war, it increased the tone of discrimination towards non-Muslims in order to eliminate their so-called destructive actions. In the field of military, the government passed a legislation in 1941 by which it recruited non-Muslims to the army, and sent them to work in labor camps in different regions of Anatolia (Güven, 2006: 135). In doing so, the government had two fundamental goals: firstly, in the case of Turkey’s entrance to the war, possible non-Muslim actions against the state could be eliminated, and secondly, it could constitute a Muslim bourgeois class by placing ethnically Turkish citizens to the craft and trade sector which was mainly occupied by non-Muslims (Güven, 2006: 135).

The harshest policy towards non-Muslims during the war period was *the Capital Levy* which aimed at taxation of improper personal benefit emerged due to war conditions and equal allocation of economic disadvantages caused by war

conditions (Ökte, 1987: 15). Aktar mentions that the implementation of the legislation includes consecutive periods such as support by the media, operation by the commissions which determine the amount that is to be paid by the charged groups, announcement of the names of the charged and the amounts they had to pay, the sale of the capital of those who do not pay the debt in due time period through distress, and the payment of the debt by those who do still not pay the debt after distress through physical labor in labor camps. When the process considered altogether, one can realize that the most disadvantaged groups among all tax payers are non-Muslims; this displays the fact that the legislation is an example of the general politics of the Kemalist regime against minorities (Aktar, 2006: 135-136). The implicit goal was the suspension of minorities from economic sphere and their replacement by the Turks. This is clear in the statements of the prime minister of the time, Şükrü Saracoğlu, who declared that "...we are the Turkish, Turkists, and shall ever remain Turkists", expressed the party's rejection of the sovereignty of the capital and classes, and restated that for the government, the sovereignty is of Turkish nation (Aktar, 1996b: 102).

At this point, Bali questions whether the regime really wanted to turkify the minorities. For him, the regime's attitude towards minorities was quite contradictory. On the one hand, it persistently declared that Turkish Republic embraced all minorities as citizens provided that they sincerely adopt Turkish culture, language and ideal; yet, on the other hand, it implemented some discriminatory policies towards non-Muslims that displayed the its rejection to recognize non-Muslims as equal and full citizens<sup>6</sup>. This rejection can be considered as a demonstration of the regime's doubt about non-Muslims; in the eyes of the Kemalists, they were "strangers whose loyalty was suspect"<sup>7</sup>. For Bali, this perception was mostly based on the collective memory of the republican elites. The collaboration of non-Muslims with Allied Forces during the War of Independence became a trauma for Kemalists that they regarded minorities as the

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.rifatbali.com/images/stories/dokumanlar/basel.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

internal compradors of external enemies which resulted in discriminatory treatment by leading to the unsuccessful implementation of the politics of Turkification<sup>8</sup>.

As mentioned before, the politics of Turkification targeted minorities in general. That means, the regime had the same distance to all non-Muslim minority groups regarding the implementation of the politics of Turkification. However, Bali argues, its policies mostly affected the Jewish minority since the Jews became the most visible minority group in the public sphere as a result of the forced emigration of Armenians in 1915 and the population exchange in 1923 by which most of the Greek population was sent to Greece (2003: 403). Whether this contention is justifiable is not the very concern of this study. Yet, it can be argued that the Jews were seen by the regime as the most likely minority group that can be assimilated into Turkish culture. This is firstly because the only non-Muslim minority that does not speak its native language were the Jews. While Armenians and Greeks were speaking their native language, the Jews were speaking Ladino, instead of Hebrew, which was Castillian Spanish mixed with Turkish, Greek and French words. "If they had spoken Hebrew, they could easily argue that according to the rights granted to the minorities by the Lausanne Peace Treaty, they could continue to speak and teach Hebrew freely"<sup>9</sup>. Yet, they had already renounced the minority rights granted by Lausanne which became a point of reference for the regime in identifying the Jewish community as a role model for Armenian and Greek communities by stating that they should also follow the Jewish community to become true Turkish citizens (Bali, 2008: 22). Indeed, from the past, the Jews had a good relation with the Ottoman Empire which accepted them upon their expel from Spain in 1492 and granted them extensive rights thanks to which they acquired a wealthy and comfortable life; in return for these, the Jews served to the well-being of the empire. None of the non-Muslim groups except the Jews had such a positive image in collective memory of the republican elites. For those

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<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

reasons, it can be claimed that the regime considered the Jews as the most obedient minority group that can be turkified while the Turkification of Armenians and Greeks were regarded almost unachievable. Therefore, the Jewish community became the main target of the politics of Turkification.

That the Jews were the main target of the politics of Turkification was mostly apparent in the media representations concerning the campaign of “Citizen Speak Turkish!”. There was a general tendency by the newspapers and periodicals of the period which were in favor of the regime to construct the Jewish image by means of stereotypes. Particularly the comic papers criticized the Jews on two bases: their bad accent or denial of speaking Turkish, and their economic activity which rendered them dominant in the commercial sphere (Bali, 2003: 403). By means of stereotypes, the Jews were represented as incapable of speaking Turkish and thus insufficient to be counted as Turkish. They were not only constructed as unpatriotic but in addition exploiters of the patriotic feelings of Turks (Mallet, 1996: 29). Besides, the Jews were represented as close hand traders who are moneygrubber profiteers worshipping to money (Mallet, 1996: 28). These representations were supported by many physical and behavioral stereotypes which strengthened the negative imagery. Such negative representation of the Jews displays that on the one hand the Jews were tried to be turkified, but on the other hand, there was some reluctance concerning their Turkification. For Bali, this is because the Jews, like other non-Muslims, were regarded as free riders who lived a wealthy life thanks to hospitality of the Turks without having fought in the War of Independence and shed blood for the fatherland; moreover, they continued their commercial activities during the war and accumulated wealth<sup>10</sup>. This led to some uneasiness caused by the feeling of being exploited.

While the media representations were concerned particularly with the Jews among other minorities, the regime kept the same distance towards all non-Muslim minority groups. The only occasion that gave a clear sense about the regime’s

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<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

attitude towards the Jews was *the Thrace Incidents of 1934*. Being one of the greatest attacks to the Jews in Turkey, the Incidents were committed by the population living in the Thrace region who aimed at ousting the Jews from their area of settlement (Levi, 1996a: 249). Upon the attacks, the Jews had to flee in masses who were subjected to physical violence, blackmail, plunder and boycott. The regime's attitude about the Incidents was revealed by the media declaration by İnönü:

The rights and freedoms of each and every citizen are equally protected by Turkish law. Thus, anti-Semitism is against the fabric of Turkey. It can only be a momentary foreign influence. We cannot let this epidemic disease infect our country. Those who are responsible for these incidents are insane people; there is no reason for a normal Turkish citizen in engaging into such actions. All perpetrators will be caught and punished. The injured citizens may safely return their home (Levi, 1996b: 15).

The statement demonstrates that the regime denied any hostility against the Jews which was regarded as an alien idea and an insane effort while it emphasized the citizenship on the basis of rights and freedoms. However, the studies on the Thrace Incidents have argued that the statement by the government is not truthful when some factors are taken into account. While some studies regarded the government as indifferent to the incidents, some others argued that the government shared the responsibility. Accordingly, the government behaved indifferently because, despite its knowledge on the conflict going on in the region, it interfered too late and made a public declaration after people were injured and left their town; moreover, it did not provide any financial aid for the injuries of the Jews although it called for their return to home (Levi, 1996b: 16). There are also arguments which state that the government implicitly provoked the population in the region to disturb and expel the Jews (Karabatak, 1996: 13). This was because the presence of the minorities who were regarded as potential betrayers in such a strategic region constituted a considerable problem vis-à-vis approaching German and Italian fascist threat (Aktar: 1996a, 49). In this sense, it was not astonishing that the Incidents coincided with the ratification of the Compulsory Settlement Law which also aimed at banishing the minorities from the strategic points (Karabatak, 1996: 11). The very recent book of Bali can be considered as a

reliable source in trying to better and perhaps fully understand the underlying causes of the Incidents since it negates the whole debate on the Incidents by presenting a variety of documents that justify that the Incidents were a conspiracy by the government. According to the report got from the Republican Archive of Turkish Prime Ministry, İbrahim Tali Öngören, the General Inspector of the Thrace region of the time, presented an official report to Recep Peker, the general secretary of the RPP, a short time before the Incidents. Being a product of a 33-day inspection by Öngören in the region, the report proposed the cleansing of the Jews from the region on the grounds that they engage into espionage which threatens Turkish life, economy, security and reforms. Moreover, the report claimed that the Jews aim at establishing a Palestine in the Thrace and acquiring the whole resources of the region. It stated that the government should not let the Jews to suck Turkish blood any more<sup>11</sup>. This document proved that the Incidents were manipulated by the government with the purpose of eliminating Jewish presence that was seen at the expense of Turkish well-being.

In a nutshell, the Thrace Incidents of 1934 which was proved to be a conspiracy by the government was kept secret during the rule of Kemalists. Even İnönü declared that there is no room for anti-Semitism in Turkey. Following this, one may argue that Kemalist nationalism had two different faces one of which was based on the republican discourse on the legalist/voluntarist conception of citizenship which was inclusive and open to be acquired by those who adopted Turkish language, culture and ideal. In other words, as stated before, the prerequisite of being a Turkish citizen was adopting Turkish culture. However, for some scholars, the legalist/voluntarist conception of citizenship is quite problematic in terms of its internal structure. For Zürcher, there is a tension which is originated from an ambiguity inherent in the Kemalist conception of Turkish culture and national identity. The problem is rooted, in his view, in the contradiction between “organic view of Turkish culture” and “voluntarist/legalist conception of nationality” (2000: 179). For Kemalists, as Tekin Alp expresses,

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<sup>11</sup> For a detailed reading see Bali, Rifat N. (2008).

people are born in a culture and grow up in this culture. In this sense, culture is fixed and cannot be acquired later (Alp, 1998: 294). Following Gökalp's distinction between culture and civilization, Tekin Alp argues that culture consists of the sentiments and attitudes adopted from the earliest childhood onwards from one's parents and immediate surroundings, but civilization is the high culture consciously learned at a later age which is international and can be changed at will (Alp, 1998: 178). While, on the one hand, seeing culture as natural and as a product of history that cannot be changed at will, Kemalist regime forced and expected minorities to adopt Turkish culture on the other hand. In Zürcher's view, this is a clear indication of the tension between the biological understanding of culture as a prominent element of national identity and the legalist/voluntarist concept of citizenship identified by Atatürk's well-known maxim "How happy who says I am Turk" (2000: 178).

As far as the second face of Kemalist nationalism is concerned, it was a secret face which was discriminatory along the essentialist, ethnicist and even racist lines. This was mostly revealed by the practices such as purging non-Muslims from the economic and bureaucratic field and rendering them deprived of some cultural and economic rights that place them in a disadvantaged position. Even some of Atatürk's statements justified that there are some ethnicist and racial aspects of Turkish identity. He claimed that Turkish nation is superior to all other nations since it possessed special qualities which were products of an ethnic and racial identity (Parla & Davison, 2004: 71). In his speech on Keriman Halis, the winner of 1932 Miss World Contest, he stated that as the referees recognized, Turkish race is the most beautiful race in the world (Parla & Davison, 2004: 74). In this sense, his statements are particularly important since they demonstrate the essentialist aspect of Kemalist nationalism.

When examining the origins of essentialist aspect in Kemalism, a special attention should be given to the political context of the 1930s. This time period was characterized by decay in liberal democracies, and a rising support for

dictatorships. The expansionary politics of fascist regimes in Italy and Germany became the most significant concern especially for European countries; eliminating the fascist threat became their first and foremost concern. For Turkey, it was inevitable to be affected by racism after the Nazis came to power in 1933. According to Arslan, this was because of a specific reason; Turkish modernization was based on Westernization which means the prevailing values and tendencies in the West were to be adopted by Turkey (Arslan, 2002: 410). In this sense, Turkish History Congress by which Sun Language Theory was proposed, Turkish History Thesis, and the campaign of “Citizen, Speak Turkish” were the symptoms of racist influence from the West. Towards the Second World War and during the war, even more increase in the racist dose was observed in governmental policies. As mentioned before, the requirement of being from Turkish race for being hired in public institutions such as military schools and academies, discharge of some non-Muslims in public services from their office, and *the Capital Levy* were the outputs of the regime’s ethnic and racial tendency which is also clear in the statements of the members of the government.

Recep Peker characterized Turkish nation as the most superior nation in terms of racial purity; for him, the superiority and purity of Turkish blood is what makes Turkish nation survive without any degeneration even in the face of severe war conditions throughout the history (Peker, 1984: 13-16). He often mentions about the people living in different parts of the world and having Turkish blood (Bora, 1998: 36). Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, Minister of Justice, also refers to “outside Turks” by stating that “...when our racial brothers living in most remote parts of the world fall on hard times, we feel it from the hearth since we are the members of the same nation which makes us one-single body” (Önen, 2005, 196). These statements unveil that Kemalist nationalism was not devoid of some racist inclinations. However, the lack of evident declarations and practices by the regime made it impossible to claim that it pursued racist, Turkist or pan-Turkist goals. Therefore, it must be restated that the Kemalist regime was to a great degree affected by the political context of the 1930s without aligning itself along the

same lines. As far as some extreme nationalist circles outside the government are concerned, they were explicitly attracted by the prevalent totalitarian movements of the time which led their ideology to be examined as a specific variant in Turkish nationalism, namely Turkism.

### **3.2.2. Turkism**

The early 1940s were the years Turkish nationalism appeared with its most extreme tones, namely in the form of Turkism and pan-Turkism. Indeed, the origins of Turkism do not lie in a racist understanding. The fundamental element was culture rather than race which proposed Turkism as a cultural ideal in the late 1890s and early 1900s. This ideal was represented by two prominent figures, Yusuf Akçura and Ziya Gökalp, who were known as first generation Turkists. Akçura put forward that the ideals of Turkism was materialized and came into being in Turkish Republic (Landau, 1981: 74). This demonstrates that Akçura confined the ideal of Turkism with the boundaries of Turkish Republic. Likewise, for Gökalp, extending the ideal of Turkism outside the boundaries of the republic which finds expression in the unification of Turks, namely in pan-Turkism or in the ideal of *Turan*, is not to be discussed in the near future. As expressed before, Gökalp defined the attachment of the individual to the nation on cultural grounds rather than territorial basis. For him, nation is neither a geographical nor a racial and a political entity; it is a cultural community which is composed of the individuals educated with the same language, religion and morals (Gökalp, 1990: 17-18). In this sense, first generation Turkists defined nation on common cultural grounds rather than ambitious expansionist foundations.

Second generation Turkists led by Hüseyin Nihal Atsız and Reha Oğuz Türkkan who appeared at Turkish political scene in the late 1930s did have a strong racist standing as opposed to first generation Turkists who limited race to cultural and historical terms. Being highly affected by Nazism, second generation Turkists, however, relied on racism which was based on an essentialist understanding.

Their point of departure was unique racist idea of inequality. Accordingly, human races are unequal in terms of capabilities, aesthetics, and political and cultural features which determine their place in the hierarchy of races. In this regard, some races are superior to others thanks to their special characteristics.

Blood is one of the foremost identifier of race, in Turkism. Being the leading figure of Turkists, Atsız made a special emphasis on blood which renders Turkish race superior to other races. As a teacher, journalist and novelist, he envisaged Turkish blood as a blessing by which Turkish race became the strongest not only in terms of biological and physiological features but also in terms of culture and morals (Bakirezer, 2002: 354). Türkkan, as well, stressed the greatest role of Turkish blood in the superiority of Turkish race. While the emphasis is on the physiological and anthropological characteristics of race in Türkkan, he also sees the blood not only as the conveyor of the material but also of the spiritual values (Önen: 2005, 297). In Atsız' and Türkkan's thinking, the Anatolian peasant is the symbol of Turkish spirit and morality since his blood is pure and not mixed. Therefore, the development and well-being of villages must be one of the priorities to keep Turkish blood superior (Özdoğan, 1990: 201-202).

The special emphasis on the protection of Turkish blood as pure and unmixed which is the only way to keep Turkish race superior led Türkkan to conclude that those having other blood than Turkish should be excluded from intellectual, political, administrative and social sphere, and even expelled from the country (Önen, 2002: 362-363). Similarly, Atsız strongly opposed to mixing of blood because he sees it as contamination; he was also against the assimilation of minorities to Turkish culture since he deems culture, blood and race as natural giving which cannot be acquired after birth. Following this, he is against the Kemalist politics of Turkification on the grounds that minorities do not have Turkish blood which makes them impossible to be Turks. Atsız was especially concerned with the Jews which he displayed as follows:

We neither expect the Jews will be turkified; nor do we want them to turkify. Even the muck put in the oven cannot transform into iron; in the same way, whatever the Jews do, they cannot be Turks. Turkishness is a privilege which cannot fall to the Jews' share<sup>12</sup>.

His words demonstrate his judgment on the impossibility of Turkishness being attained by the Jews. This is a very central idea to his thinking. For him, even if the Jews do not speak any other language than Turkish and are Turkish citizens in front of law, they cannot be real Turks (Bakırezer, 1996: 25). This attitude also implies the xenophobic element in Turkism.

As Ertekin argues, xenophobia is a fundamental element of Turkism that reinforces Turkism's political mission as well as its ideological position; it takes its power from the uneasiness caused by the cultural and economic position of minorities in Turkey (2002: 375). Turkists regarded minorities as internal enemies who are not simply the object of complaint but the object of mobilized hatred through ideological elements. By mentioning their economic activity within national boundaries, Atsız represented minorities as corruptors and contaminators of pure and superior national fabric. The economic activity of the Jews was represented in relation to conspiracy in Atsız.

Money is God for the Jew who is a corrupt merchant. To make money, he does not hesitate to betray the flag thanks to which he survives. He is the enemy of the country he lives. However, his enmity is not explicit but sneaky which was proved by his espionage during the world war<sup>13</sup>.

While Türkkan was in favor of expulsion of minorities initially from the economic sphere and then from other spheres (Türkkan, 1940: 85), Atsız went far beyond and proposed ethnic cleansing (Atsız, 1933: 16). For Atsız, this was a matter of blood. As long as minorities live within the boundaries, superior Turkish blood is threatened by inferior blood; in the case of mixing, superior characteristics of Turkish race are eliminated and replaced by inferior characteristics<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Atsız, Nihal. "Musa'nın Necip (!) Evlatları Bilsinler ki:", in *Orhun* 7, 9 April 1934, p.18.

<sup>13</sup> Atsız, Nihal. "Komünist, Yahudi, Dalkavuk", in *Orhun* 5, 12 March 1934, p.9.

<sup>14</sup> Atsız, Nihal. "Veda" in *Orkun* 68, 8 January 1952, p.4.

The construction of Turkish blood as the most superior and purest blood by Atsız results in an obsession based on the continuous production of conspiracy. This creates skepticism and vigilance, and leads to a constant tendency to search for an internal enemy who is seen as the potential corruptor of purity of Turkish blood. For Atsız, those who do not have Turkish blood and seem as if they are Turks are potential contaminants; therefore, one must be doubtful about their loyalty to Turkishness and Turkish state. In this sense, he strongly opposes to the elite recruitment policy of Ottoman Empire which was a traditional practice of displacing the young Christians (*devşirme*) in order to recruit from among them future officers and administrators of Ottoman State; this policy was, for Atsız, one of the greatest conspiracy against Turks throughout the history (Arslan, 2002: 421). Moreover, Atsız argues that minorities in the Ottoman army whose blood is mixed and impure are responsible for the defeat of Ottomans (Özdoğan, 1996: 21). In this sense, Atsız constructs Turk as a superior race capable of perfectly govern and fight thanks to his noble blood; incapability is only the case when “other” blood penetrates and contaminates the noble self.

The Jews are the main subject of conspiracy in Atsız. For Atsız, the Jews are one of the most inferior races who lack root, history and morality. Thus, they live as parasites and microbes on other nations with an ultimate aim of killing this nation. Atsız blames the Jews since they betrayed during the War of Independence that resulted in Turkey’s defeat (Bakırezer, 2002: 354). Atsız relates these conspiratorial characteristics of the Jews to their evil morality. For him, when one Turkish and one Jewish child who were born at the same day are taken and are taught Esperanto language, Turkish child will be brave and honest and the Jewish child will be coward and dishonest as it is always the case (Bakırezer, 2002: 354). Atsız follows that

there are two types of Jews. The first one is the real Jew which is identified from his language. Another is Donmeh<sup>15</sup>, namely crypto-Jew, which cannot be identified from his language. In order to identify him, one needs to look at his face carefully. In fact, they have no difference; both of them say “you the Turks” “we the Jews”<sup>16</sup>.

According to Turkists, Turkish youth has to play a special role in safeguarding Turkish race and blood vis-à-vis conspiracy from the part of enemies. Addressing the Turkish youth, Atsız gives an outline of the ideal society to be created by the younger generation. Accordingly, all Turkish children will be educated along with the nationalist-militarist principles, theaters and cinemas will be subjected to control since they are instruments of popular education, and all publications detrimental to culture, tradition and morality of the Turkic nation will be banned (Özdoğan, 1990: 200). The detailed outline of educational model Atsız offered in 1942 included a more straight parallelism to the Nazi militarist and racist conception of education (Özdoğan, 1990: 201).

Among the teachings of Turkism, war and militarism have a great place. Particularly the youth is encouraged to fight in order to protect Turkish blood pure and thereby guarantee the superiority of Turkish race. Along with social Darwinism, Atsız argued that war is the everlasting reality of life which is the area of reproduction of relative power between races. By means of war, good races and bad races can be differentiated; bad races extinct and good races survive. Therefore, war has the quality of improving racial inheritance (Ertekin, 2002: 372). This militarist aspect of Turkism is evident in Atsız’ criticism of Mustafa

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<sup>15</sup> Donmeh is the Jew who is a Muslim in appearance. This has some historical origins. When the Jews were exiled to Babel, they lived by yearning for returning Palestine. This led to a belief that a Messiah would come and release them. Sabbatai Sevi was one of those who wanted to benefit from such a hope and declared himself Messiah in 1648. While he was welcomed and supported by many Jews, he could not find acceptance among the rabbis. Upon the suspect of Ottoman government, he was interrogated and understood that he was cheating which led him to be obliged to become Muslim. Although he and his supporters became Muslims, he did not lose his belief that he is the Messiah. This meant that he appeared as Muslim but pursued Judaism in fact. This points out the origins of the term “Donmeh”/ “crypto Jew” and “Sabbatainism”. Accordingly, Donmehs lived a double life based on appearing as Muslims in the public sphere while fulfilling rites of Judaism in their private lives. For a detailed reading see Montet, *et.al.* (2006), pp. 565-572.

<sup>16</sup> Atsız, Nihal, “Komünist, Yahudi ve Dalkavuk”, in *Orhun* 5, 12 March 1934, p.4.

Kemal's maxim "Peace at home, peace in the world" on the grounds that there is a perpetual threat to the survival of the nation; if you do not attack you will be attacked (Bakirezer, 1996: 25). In a similar aggressive tone, Türkkan proposed that all the nations than Turkish must be eliminated for the survival of Turks; war is inevitable and it is the motive for evolution and civilization (Önen, 2002: 364). In this regard, for Turkism, militarism is an existential instrument.

Such a militarist drive of Turkists resulted in expansionist thinking. The reason for Turkists often to be named as Turkist-Turanists is their expansionist aspect. From the 1930s on, Atsız was a committed follower of both cultural and political pan-Turkism; he called for Turan based on a common glorious history and aiming at the recreation of a huge dominant state led by Turkey (Landau, 2004: 58). He defines himself as Turkist since he believes in the superiority of Turkish race and as Turanist which is, for him, the political goal of Turkism in the short term (Bakirezer, 2002: 353). Atsız thinks Turan ideal is a political rather than a cultural construct; its motto is initially the unification of Turks which would then lead to world domination. (Önen, 2005: 285-286). More clearly, Atsız asserted that Turkish national ideal cannot be limited to progress within the present frontiers and should even envisage an imperial expansion next to aiming at a Pan-Turkic union composed of members of Turkish race (Özdoğan, 1990: 206). At this point, Türkkan differs from Atsız by claiming that the way to Turan is gradual. Accordingly, unless Turkey develops and strengthens, it is not possible to unify with racial brothers; Turkey which is the only conveyor of Turanism would be a stop to the way to Turan (Önen, 2005: 287).

In a nutshell, Turkism aimed at Turan, the union of superior Turkish race having the purest blood among all races that is to be realized by the heroic struggle of Turkish youth against all inferior races and conspirators such as the Jews. It was the late 1930s and early 1940s Turkists became very active on the political scene. This exactly coincided with the Second World War years which became a very difficult period for the Turkish government in its efforts to eliminate the fascist

threat and remain out of the war. However, the sharp increase in the racist tone of Turkists put them in a difficult position which made them conclude that racist thinking cannot be allowed to penetrate into society. It stated that Turkists follow anti-constitutional aims which are against the principles of the regime. İnönü expressed that the campaign held by Turkists constitutes a great threat to the ideal of creating a strong nation bound by the patriotism and to the indivisible unity of the state; racism is separatist while Turanism is against constitution (Özdoğan, 1990; 109-110). In 1944, Atsız, to stand first on the list, and many other adherents of racism and Turanism were arrested by a government decree and underwent a trial which was known as “The Case of Racism-Turanism”. This became an indication that Kemalist regime excluded racism and Turanism from official ideology and sought to eliminate its penetration into the society.

### **3.3. Multi Party Period**

With the end of Second World War, the world conjuncture was shaped by the hostility between liberal democratic orders and communist regimes. Turkey, being turned his face to the West from the beginning, accordingly positioned itself with the democratically governed states of the West. This required introduction of democracy to Turkish political life. Thus, multi-party system was launched in 1945. After *National Development Party* and *Democrat Party* (the DP) were established, the elections were held in 1946 which was resulted in the victory of the RPP. This was followed by a period in which opposition became a new component of Turkish politics. The elections of 1950 ended up with the victory of the DP which has changed the course of politics in Turkey.

In the multi party period, Turkish nationalism had a conservative tendency which was mainly characterized by an opposition to modernism that found expression in anti-capitalism, anti-cosmopolitanism, anti-communism and Islamism. While anti-communism was a constant state-sponsored position, the place and dose of other conservative positions differed in official ideology. Here, I shall examine all these

tendencies under conservative nationalism. The fact that anti-communism had a broader base ranging from Turkists to Islamists necessitates a specific look. Thus, I will also scrutinize it under a separate heading in addition to exploring it as a part of Islamism.

### **3.3.1. Anti-Communism**

From the end of 1940s on, anti-communism appeared as one of the general tendencies in Turkish nationalism. It became an issue of compromise between conservative circles such as Turkists, pro-Islamists and ultra-nationalists. Particularly Turkist-Turanists came to the forefront in the anti-communist discourse, and attacked communism with a sharp language. First of all, communist bloc led by Soviet Union constituted for Turkists an obstacle to the realization of pan-Turkist ideal. Secondly, perhaps more importantly, communist ideal of equality contradicted with the fundamentals of racism which rested on inequality of races. In line with this, Türkkan sharply rejected communism on the grounds that equality in production, consumption, goods, money, domestic affairs, and woman is impossible (Türkkan, 1941: 18). Similarly, Atsız stated that Turkish nation who recognized land ownership even in its nomadic period cannot be communist (Önen, 2005: 315). Besides, Atsız argued that the middle class shall remain as the sovereign intellectual class within the society; in the sovereignty of proletariat, nations would be Hottentots<sup>17</sup>.

The construction of communism as evil led to the identification of communists of Turkey as non-Turks and turkified hybrids. Atsız identified them as rootless with obscure background and inferior blood<sup>18</sup>. Türkkan agreed that nine tenth of communists in Turkey are Salonica Jewish Donmeh, Albanian, Circassian and Arabs (Önen, 2005: 316). The fact that Marx was a Jew made Turkists argue that

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<sup>17</sup> Atsız, Nihal. (1965), “Tarihin Akışı Değiştirilemiyor”, in *Ötüken: Makaleler IV*, no.21, p.77.

<sup>18</sup> Atsız, Nihal. (1964), “İşte Sosyalizm”, in *Ötüken: Makaleler III*, no.6, p.343.

communism is a Jewish invention. For them, this argument was justified by the fact that the leading figures of German communism, Luxemburg and Liebknecht, were also Jews (Önen, 2005: 316). Atsız regarded communism as a Jewish conspiracy aiming at a systematic extermination of Turkish race<sup>19</sup>. According to him, communism was the collaborator of the Jewish alliance of Zionism and Free Masonry seeking to destroy nations and races. Therefore, they were represented as the fundamental enemy figures in Atsız:

Zionism is our enemy. It is an hostile idea to humanity since it builds the interests of the Jewish race upon the malaise of other races. It hides its imperialist aims by showing itself as the national ideal of the Jews. This became clear during the First World War in Palestinian Front when the Zionists committed espionage and betrayed our armed forces. Free Masons are other enemies of ours. Free Masonry is a secret organization having foreign origins. It was established to pursue Jewish interests. In the course of time, it gained an international character and served the destruction of all nations and nationalisms just as communism<sup>20</sup>.

In this regard, the association of communism with Zionism and Free Masonry was regarded as a trivet by Atsız. This means, the positions such as communist, Zionist and Free Mason were equalized, characterized by the Jewishness, and constituted mutual reference to each other. For those reasons, anti-communism became the main ideological bloc for Turkism to become functional in the political sphere. Though liberalism and Islamism were recognized as opponent ideologies<sup>21</sup>, they were not perceived by Turkism as hostile as communism; even they were allowed to penetrate into Turkism at necessary moments (Ertekin, 2002: 373). Especially Islamism was let creep into Turkism toward 1948 when the threat perception regarding the establishment of Israeli state was on its peak. This can be observed in the statements of Atsız. While in the 1930s he was sharply rejecting Islam, in the 1950s, he stated that the religion of Turks is certainly Islam which

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Atsız, Nihal. "Veda" in *Orkun* 68, 8 January 1952, p.6

<sup>21</sup> For Turkism, each ideology pursues the interests of a specific race. In this sense, Islamism serves to Arabs, liberalism to British, and internationalist communism to Slavonic races.

borrowed some elements from old Turkish religion, Shamanism, and became national religion since ten centuries<sup>22</sup>.

Anti-communism was also a decisive attitude of the RPP government which denied any communist influence on official standpoint. This was such a strong position that the penetration of some ideologies, which was excluded from the regime before, was this time allowed to get into, even sympathized and justified vis-à-vis the threat posed by communism. The RPP government, which arrested those having link to racism and Turanism and brought to trial by “The Case of Racism-Turanism”, was stating after a couple of years that those who were brought to trial by this case were real nationalists standing against the threat of communism (Özdoğan, 1990: 126). This became a desperate act by the RPP and demonstrated its contradictory tendencies within itself.

### **3.3.2. Conservative Nationalism**

From the late 1940s on, Turkish nationalism revealed a conservative character which was mostly identifiable in its relation to Islam. Indeed, Islam started to have a widening place in Turkish nationalism. Koçak argues that this was a period in which Turkish nationalism identified Islam as an ally which was previously perceived as a threat and danger due to ideological foundations of Kemalism; in the new context, Islam was tried to be fused with Turkishness which was possible through the mutual use and support of Islam and Turkish nationalism by each other (Koçak, 2002: 609). While the relaxing standpoint of the RPP government concerning secularism and a decrease in its authoritarian tendencies as a result of transition to multi-party system played a role in this situation, the threat posed by communism had also a great impact in the strengthening of religious commitment and rising of Islam.

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<sup>22</sup> Atsız, Nihal. “Veda” in *Orkun* 68, 8 January 1952, p.9.

After the RPP regime, the place of Islam in Turkish nationalism strengthened even more. This had two main reasons among many. Firstly, as stated before, the republican regime in accordance with its secular ideological construct denied Islam on the grounds that it has a strong reference to Ottoman past. Islam could only have a functional role in ordering the morals of the society if it was modernized and rendered devoid of superstitions, and adapted so to national identity (Bora, 1998:118). Despite this, Kemalist regime silenced Islam as much as possible for it could threaten the official standpoint. The DP period, on the contrary, became a new era in which religious practices are encouraged and freely exercised. Secondly, during the Cold War, Turkey, being the ally of liberal democratic regimes of the West, had to promote religion against the atheism of communism so that it could secure its borders from the penetration of communist influence. Altogether, religion became a state-sponsored component of the national politics which was an attempt to fill a significant gap of official ideology rather than being a deviation (Bora, 1998: 125). Here, the gap originated from the absence of spiritual component in national identity. In this sense, religion came to be an element of strengthening not only the morals and but the national homogeneity as well.

Necip Fazıl Kısakürek came to the forefront as one of the leading figures of the 1950s. As a conservative nationalist, his discourse was based on identification of Turkishness with Islam although he rejected a racial definition of national identity; however, his discourse constitutes an example of chauvinist and racist character of nationalism identified on the basis of religion (Bora, 1998: 130). His struggle was becoming the voice of those whose religious feelings were repressed at a course of time in which practicing Islam was under pressure. He sought to revive the repressed religious feelings of Muslims, and with a conservative populist tone he addressed “the pain they felt at the very depth of their spirit because of being subjected to oppression” (Bora & Erdoğan, 2003: 634). Being the passionate defender of Islam against those who malign it, Necip Fazıl

intellectually displayed the merits of Islam which rendered him a special thinker in the field of Islam (Özdenören, 2004: 137-143).

Concerning nation and nationalism, Necip Fazıl had a radical position as he states in *İdeolocya Örgüsü*. For him, limits of nationalism are determined by Islam; otherwise, nationalism would be aimless and loose. At this point, he proposes Sharia, Islamic law, as the determinant of the limits and argues that outside the limits of Sharia, nationalism is destructive for self-preservation and leads to rough and fanatic worshiping to images and idols. In order to reach to infinity within the limits, loving Turk would mean reaching to the level of ideal nationalism since the Turk has the best faculties of loving God and the one who loves God most is the Turk (Kısakürek, 1997: 70-89).

Necip Fazıl's position becomes clearer in *Büyük Doğu* which was a political periodical owned and edited by himself from 1943 on. As Cantek displays, one of the prior subjects of *Büyük Doğu* was belief in God which was heavily questioned and emphasized by the intellectuals of the periodical. While this gave a scholarly outlook to the periodical, a provocative language as a part of political romanticism used by Islamist opposition beginning from 1946 led Necip Fazıl to be named as a reactionary and ultra-religious. The production of articles nearly in the form of a party program and the replacement of moral and spiritualist emphasis by yearning for a society defined on the basis of Islam resulted in polarization between the writers, and some of them left the periodical (Cantek, 2003: 646-647). Although they shared Necip Fazıl's anti-modernist ideas, they distanced themselves from him due to their diverging stance which was mostly based on support of the DP regime<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> *Büyük Doğu*, particularly in its third period between 1949 and 1951, was in a straight opposition to the new DP government. This resulted in the subjection of the periodical to sanctions applied by the government. However, in the following periods between 1951 and 1959, the relations with the government were relaxed to some degree due to the attitude of the DP which was based on benefiting from Necip Fazıl's name who was seen in a position representing Islamist rightist circle which constituted the potential of center-right votes. The periodical also came closer to the DP by stating that the DP did not have the mentality of the RPP, on the contrary, it is different, honest

Opposition to modernism was the prominent concern in *Büyük Doğu*. The general attitude of the periodical was that increasing effect of modernism and capitalism in the 1950s led to social decay which loosened morality and distanced the society from its substance rooted in Islam. The writers agreed that commercial and financial capital played a great role in the emergence of degenerated materialism, cosmopolitanism and cultural and moral depravation which resulted in loose commitment to religion. This unease is displayed in Necip Fazıl's words:

Even if you build factories, they won't function; even if you mention about law, the corruption cannot be prevented; no matter how much you talk about democracy, it is not possible; even if you have the expectancy about Turkish artists and thinkers, it is for nothing because you don't have the elementary reader, the Koran<sup>24</sup>.

This demonstrates that *Büyük Doğu* associates morality with Islam which, in turn, determines the periodical's position vis-à-vis prevalent trends of the period such as democracy, secularism, liberalism, capitalism, Zionism and communism.

The standpoint of *Büyük Doğu* towards these trends was largely displayed by an article published in 1947 which explicitly introduced the friends and enemies of the periodical. Accordingly, the enemies were the RPP, all the cheaters in opposition, Donmeh, communist, atheist, Muslims against the Sunna, and those who are deprived of self-preservation and honor; the friends are the real Muslims, real Anatolianists and the whole admirers of freedom, opinion and arts<sup>25</sup>. Such a clear positioning disclosed why *Büyük Doğu* had the tendency to construct conspiracy theories and places the Jews at the center of conspiracy. In accordance with conspiratorial mindset, the conservative nationalists established the politics on dualities which refer to an alignment of good and evil against each other. While Muslims were identified with goodness, morality, righteousness and

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and ascetic. This was interpreted as an interest-based policy on the part of Büyük Doğu which resulted in getting financial aid from the secret fund of the prime ministry. For a detailed reading see Cantek, Levent. (2003), pp.645-655.

<sup>24</sup> Kısakürek, Necip Fazıl. "Kıraat Kitabı", in *Büyük Doğu* 12, 18 January 1946, p.2.

<sup>25</sup> Kısakürek, Necip Fazıl , "Biz ve Onlar", in *Büyük Doğu* 72, 19 December 1947, p.16.

honesty, all the categories and positions negating Islam were regarded as evil, immoral, wicked and dishonest and represented as the sources of threat. Therefore, Donmeh, communist, and capitalist became the threatening positions which were characterized by Jewish conspiracy.

The hostility towards capitalism and communism from the part of *Büyük Doğu* was indeed a criticism to the modern secular character of the regime. While in the 1950s the regime came closer to the West, the process of capitalism gained momentum which meant, for conservative nationalists, degeneration of traditional and moral values as a result of introduction to materialism. At this point, they emphasized religion with the purpose of removing the excesses of modernism and reconciling it with tradition; this emphasis became stronger to the extent that they associated modernism with militant secularism which was also associated with communism in their eyes (Cantek, 2003: 653). Since communism was perceived as an immense threat eradicating religious commitment, anti-communism became a passionate campaign in *Büyük Doğu*. At that point, the construction that communism is a Jewish invention brought the theme of Jew to the agenda. Jewishness was identified with materialism, expediency and degeneration. On the other hand, Free Masonry associated with Jewishness became the subject of conspiracy theories mostly because it is a secret organization. Free Masons were regarded as scapegoat of all evils the country experienced. In the Islamic literature, capitalist and communist were equalized with Jewishness and Free Masonry which were held responsible for the evil outcomes of modernism and capitalism (Cantek, 2003: 654).

In principle, *Büyük Doğu* was not in opposition to democracy and liberalism; on the contrary, democracy and liberalism were its ideals which could only be reached through relegation of the sovereignty from people to God. Such an anti-secular stand finds expression in political Islam which reveals itself in the words that the only real reform is republicanism; yet, the effort must be put to contemplate about examining and revising this reform in order to have the Islamic

order<sup>26</sup>. Islam is also the source of nine main principles of *İdeolocya Örgüsü* by Necip Fazıl; they are spiritualism, moralism, nationalism, individualism, communalism, circumstantialism, regulationism, interventionism, and precautionism in capital and properties which, in Necip Fazıl's words, altogether are rooted in Islam even if they seem the ideals of other opponent ideologies (Cantek, 2003: 652). According to him,

the real justice and equality which are aimed by socialism and communism are, in fact, originated in Islam; the precautionary measures for the excessive consumption and the abuse of rights and freedoms which are created by capitalism and liberalism, are indeed found in Islam; not only the essence and the fine limits of democracy and freedom of expression but also the restraints of excessive harmful individual freedom is in Islam; the substance of excellent order envisaged by Nazism and fascism are rooted in Islam; all is in Islam!<sup>27</sup>.

Through such a discourse, Islam was constructed as a superior ideology and exalted as the bearer of all principles which are regarded as virtues while other ideologies were reduced to duplicators which implies their inferiority. Furthermore, Islam was represented as the purifier of the evils of other ideologies which becomes an idea strengthening their hostile position.

While *Büyük Doğu* was one of the leading periodicals of the period, other conservative nationalist periodicals were steering the general tendency of the time. *Yeniden Milli Mücadele*, the unofficial publication of *Nation Party*<sup>28</sup> during the 1960s, underlined Islamic measures which are to be the basis of the understanding of Turkish nationalism whose source is Turkish thinking, Turkish action, Turkish institutions and Turkish life system based on a specific religious, moral, legal, economic and social system fed by Islam (Taşgetiren, 2002: 614-617). For the periodical, the deadly enemy of Turkish nationalism was the group of cosmopolitan abusers who exploit Turkish economy and economic power of

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<sup>26</sup> Ongan, Raif, "İnkilap Şeklinde İrticai Ele Almak" in *Büyük Doğu* 30, 13 October 1950, p.6.

<sup>27</sup> Kısakürek, Necip Fazıl, "Davamız-Davamız", in *Büyük Doğu* 37, 12 July 1946, p.8.

<sup>28</sup> Atılhan was a member of the NP and was a candidate for NP in the 1965 general elections. For a detailed reading see Bali, Rifat. (2001), p.213.

Turkish society and transfer it to dominant economies of the system (Taşgetiren, 2002: 614-617). Such an anti-imperialist discourse was coupled with an anti-Zionist tendency, and the Jews were identified with individual materialism, namely with capitalism, and with social materialism, namely with communism.

*Serdengeçti* which was established by Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti in 1947 stated in its first issue that nationalism is a goal to be attained rather than being an instrument. The motto of the periodical, in Osman Yüksel's words, was that "we are Turks as much as Tanrı Mountain and we are Muslims as much as Hira Mountain". This displayed that the periodical incorporated the different elements of Turkism and Islamism in a different fashion which resulted in a great support by those who opposed to irreligious aspect of Turkism (Ayvazoğlu, 2002: 567-568). Necip Fazıl, who substantially encouraged Osman Yüksel and spent time with him in the jail upon the assassination of Ahmet Emin Yalman, defined him as an old Turkists and new Islamist (Ayvazoğlu, 2002: 567-568). The most common themes in Osman Yüksel's thinking was the hostility against communists and Donmehs. Through a highly insulting language, he attacked Donmehs and communists by declaring them rootless and homeless Bolsheviks (Bora, 2002: 915). For him, the country was not saved by those who came from the other side of the Meriç River (Bora, 2002: 915). This disclosed his skepticism towards those came from Balkans, namely Donmehs.

Another periodical reflecting similar tendencies of the period was *Sebillürreşad* whose owner and chief editor was Eşref Edib. Like Atilhan, many other pro-Islamist writers contributed to the periodical. Despite being pro-Islamist, *Sebillürreşad* adopted a standpoint based on secularism, democracy and human rights which were raising values of the time. Even if it criticized secularism due to its limitation on religious freedom, it does not deny secularism if religious and conscientious freedom is guaranteed. It sees democracy as a regime sanctified by Mohammad, and political parties as a system through which religious concerns are given voice (Bostan Ünsal, 1996: 38). This is an unusual understanding of

Islam which is in favor of continuous progress and improvement. Accordingly, Eşref Edip argued that the progress of Muslims depends on their embracement of Islam which would itself provide the drive for progress. Those who are hopeless cannot be Muslims; and without being a Muslim, emancipation cannot be realized (Arabacı, 2004: 125). Interestingly, the periodical used the vocabulary of socialism such as emancipation, progress, equality and freedom although it had a clear-cut anti-communist standing. This was because, for *Sebilürreşad*, only Islam which was totally denied by communism could provide with emancipation, progress, equality and freedom. The belief that communism is associated with Jewishness and Free Masonry is also observed in *Sebilürreşad*. This was displayed by Eşref Edip's words that

there are three main threats posed to Turkish nation and state which are identified as black, yellow and red reaction; the black reaction aims at christifying Turks, the yellow reaction is Free Masonry and Jewishness, and the red reaction is communism and atheism<sup>29</sup>.

In this sense, similar to Islamist literature of the period, *Sebilürreşad* constructed the Jews on the basis of conspiracy whose subject was the Jews themselves who are characterized as communists, Free Masons and Donmehs.

An overall sight to the construction of the Jewish image by Islamist literature reveals that the Jews are represented as communists, capitalists, Free Masons, and Donmehs conspiring against morality, namely against Islam. As the subject of Islamist conspiracy theories, the Jews' ultimate aim is to destroy Islam and to establish Jewish world domination. In the eyes of Islamists, this is to be achieved gradually. The first step is the destruction of Turkey which would then render possible the destruction of Islam. An examination of the themes of conspiracy by Islamist literature will clarify Islamists' positions.

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<sup>29</sup> Edip, Eşref. "Türk Milletini ve Devletini Tehdit Eden Tehlikeler: Kara İrtica, Sarı İrtica, Kızıl İrtica" in *Sebilürreşad* 91, November 1950, p.245.

The Jewish image in Islamist literature was shaped by a series of themes which were common to popular and political Islam of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Among all, the most common theme was the overthrown of Abdülhamid the II from his throne as a result of a plot by the alliance of Zionist, Free Mason, and Donmeh. Islamists argue that Abdulhamid's overthrown was a kind of revenge taken by Zionists. This was because Abdulhamid rejected the proposal by Theodor Herzl, the leader of Zionism, which was based on the sale of some territory and residence permit in Palestine in return for a great amount of money. In the eyes of Islamists, Abdulhamid's attitude became an obstacle for Zionists in achieving their ultimate aim of having world domination whose base would be Israel. The fact that a large number of the CUP members were Free Masons and Salonica Donmehs constituted, for Islamists, sufficient proof to assert that Zionists took revenge via their Free Mason and Donmeh brothers, namely the CUP (Bali, 2001: 293)<sup>30</sup>. Being the trauma of Islamists, Abdülhamid's overthrown from his throne became the main source of all paranoia upon which countless theories of conspiracy are constructed.

Second common theme in Islamist literature was that the chief rabbi representing the Jewish community in the Ottoman State, Haim Nahum, convinced İnönü, promised and made concessions to British commission during the Lozan Conference that Islamic trend in Turkey is to be limited and caliphate is to be eliminated (Bali, 2001: 313). Therefore, Islamists held Haim Nahum responsible for the abolition of caliphate which, they believe, served Jewish interests.

Thirdly, the article titled as "Damn with Sheria!" published in 1936 in "Kemalism" by Moiz Kohen who was a Turkish Jew and later changed his name as Tekin Alp became one of the provocative subjects for Islamists in having their

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<sup>30</sup> It was true that a considerable number of the CUP leaders were Free Masons or had close relations with Free Masons, and Salonica Donmehs who played a great role in shaping the CUP ideology. However, Landau argues whatever they were involved in the CUP, and reached leading positions, refrained from assisting Zionism and even opposed to it; most, very probably all, allegations of Free Masonic-Jewish or Free Masonic-Zionist collaboration have been presented without any solid proof whatsoever. For a detailed reading see Landau, Jacob. (2004), p.18.

anti-Semite and anti-Zionist position. In their eyes, Moiz Kohen's passionate secular attitude in line with Kemalism indicated that he declared war against Islam with the purpose of destroying it. This led them to conclude that he was a Jewish spy in disguise of a Muslim which shows that he is a Donmeh (Bali, 2001: 313).

Similarly, Islamists heavily attacked to Ahmet Emin Yalman, being a Donmeh and a committed defender of secularism, due to his polemical discussions with Necip Fazıl in the early 1950s (Bali, 2001: 314). Behind the enmity of Islamists towards Donmeh, there is the perception that Donmeh seeks to impose his modern and cosmopolitan life style backed up by Western secular education to conservative people which led to the erosion of national values and culture (Bali, 2001: 414).

Apart from this, Islamists also employed international anti-Semite themes such as the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. The Protocols were presented as the document of the secret plans of the Jews aimed at establishing a world empire (Bali, 2001: 334-335). They were cited and used many times by Islamists as a source in scientific and popular work. Atilhan was the first to publish the Protocols in Turkey. He published it in 1934 in *Milli Inkilap* (Bali, 2001: 322). After him, Necip Fazıl published the Protocols in *Büyük Doğu* in 1946, many other conservative nationalist publications including *Sebilürreşad* published it as well (Bali, 2001: 325).

Beyond all, the establishment of Israel in 1948 became the greatest source of motivation for Islamists to make provocative anti-Zionist publications in which Arab-Israel conflict was represented as a Muslim-Jewish conflict (Bali, 2001: 325). Because of the change in the status of power of the Jews, the attack by Islamist became stronger which reinforced the conspiratorial mindset further.

### **3.4. Concluding Remarks**

The Jewish image and conspiracy had a changing place and emphasis in different periods of Turkish nationalism. In the years of establishment, there was high perception of threat to the unity of the state and nation. This led to a political paranoia and construction of conspiracy theories whose subjects were the reactionaries and the so-called external enemies aimed at dividing the Republic. The enemy was either the reactionaries or foreign powers.

Towards the mid-1930s, the enemy is constructed on more specific grounds. The politics of Turkification demonstrates that the minorities were seen as potential distorting elements for the national unity. In this sense, the struggle to assimilate them into the Turkish culture displays that they were regarded as potential internal enemies. While on the official level there is no sign of an antagonism to any of the minority groups including the Jewish minority, on the societal and intellectual level there emerged a kind of hatred towards the Jews which is arguably affected by the spread of Nazism. This tendency was reinforced by the start of the Second World War, and there emerged an anti-Semite literature particularly through the popular publications of the time. By means of an exclusionary attitude, Jewish image was constructed on stereotypes borrowed from the themes of Christian and Nazi anti-Semitism. The greatest place in anti-Semitism was occupied by Turkists who even proposed expulsion and cleansing of the Jews.

The late 1940s provided anti-Semitism with proper context to become functional in the political sphere. The rising anti-communism was welcomed particularly by Turkists and Islamists who, in line with the traditional assumption that communism is a Jewish invention, attacked the Jews by declaring them the main actors of the so-called communist conspiracy. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, conservative nationalists identified the Jews with materialism and hold them responsible for the social decay caused by degeneration of the moral and spiritual values. In their eyes, like communism, capitalism was also a conspiracy invented

by the Jews who operates in secrecy either as Free Mason or as Donmeh to achieve their ultimate goal of destroying Islam and dominating the whole world.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE JEWISH IMAGE AND CONSPIRACY IN ATILHAN'S DISCOURSE

#### 4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I shall concentrate on Atilhan and his discourse. By taking his books and articles as a point of reference, I will try to assess his place in Turkish nationalism with specific regard to Jewish image and conspiracy. Initially, I will look at Atilhan's discourse in the 1930s and try to evaluate his position vis-à-vis Kemalist nationalism. By exploring his discourse in the late 1930s and early 1940s, I will demonstrate his relations with Nazis which had a considerable impact on the ethnicist and racist elements of his discourse and on his rapprochement to Turkism. Then, I will examine Atilhan's discourse after the mid-1940s which will show the change in his political orientation. I shall point out his changing tendency towards a more conservative tone which was mainly associated with anti-communism and conservative nationalism. By means of this analysis, I will try to show Atilhan's representation of the Jews and conspiracy in relation to Turkish nationalism. Afterwards, I will focus on the specific themes of conspiracy theories through which Atilhan constructs the image of the Jews. At this point, I shall look at how conspiracy theories function in Atilhan's discourse. I will explain this on the basis of some psychological mechanisms by making reference to Žižek. I will argue that Atilhan's fantasy of the nation is based on the peaceful existence of the nation which is exempt from conflict; this is followed by another fantasy about the Jewish enemy who conspires against the nation and creates conflict from which the nation suffers. I will also look why conspiracy theories function in Atilhan's discourse. I will explain this with reference to

ideological aspect of conspiracy theories. I will argue that Atilhan presents such a relaxing approach to the social conflict that explains the reason for the conflict by Jewish conspiracy and thereby relieves the nation vis-à-vis social crisis situations that cannot be given meaning beforehand. In this sense, conspiracy theories in Atilhan strengthened the position of the Jews as the subject of conspiracy, and thus, became ideological instruments in the reproduction of anti-Semitism.

## **4.2. Atilhan's Position within Turkish Nationalism**

### **4.2.1. Kemalist Nationalism and Atilhan**

During the early republican period, the foremost concern for the Kemalist regime was preservation and survival of the newly established state and the unity of the nation vis-à-vis any kind of internal and external threat. It is quite apparent that Atilhan had the same concern during the early 1930s. When he published the first issue of *Inkilap* in April 1933, he primarily focused on the founding republican reforms realized by Mustafa Kemal, and declared that *Inkilap* would devote itself to safeguard these reforms which would protect the state and nation against the threat posed by internal enemies who are in collaboration with external enemies aiming at destroying the Republic<sup>31</sup>. In this sense, along the same lines with the regime, Atilhan viewed the Republic as a vulnerable entity to malevolent intentions of the enemies. Putting aside this similarity, Atilhan differed from the Kemalist regime in that he identified the enemy with the Jews, among other minorities, while the regime identified minorities as a whole with potential internal enemies. In other words, in Atilhan's discourse there is a particular emphasis on the Jews who are characterized as the specific enemy conspiring against the nation.

Along the same lines with the Kemalist regime, Atilhan pursued a secular world view and defended the closure of religious orders and lodges. Among others, he

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<sup>31</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Saygılı Okuyucularımıza" in *Inkilap* 1, April 1933, p.1.

dealt with Free Mason lodges which he deemed as Judaic orders. For him, it was sarcastic that Free Masonry which was a secret religious order could survive despite the principle of secularism (Atilhan, 1935b: d). Therefore, Atatürk who closed down Free Mason lodges was glorified in Atilhan's discourse (Atilhan, 1951: 139). In this sense, by making use of the Kemalist principle of secularism, Atilhan justified his enmity against Free Masonry which was for him Jewish in origin. It is important to note that it is not possible to find any reference to other religious orders in Atilhan. Thus, his hostility towards Free Masonry became the only point of reference that presents the opportunity to assess Atilhan's position vis-à-vis religion in the 1930s. This is because Atilhan did not express any view about religion/Islam in the sense of opposition or favor. That means, religion/Islam became an unsaid subject in his discourse at least until the end of the 1940s.

The Kemalist politics of Turkification which was mainly caused by the paranoia of the division of the nation had a considerable place in Atilhan's discourse. During the early 1930s, he was a committed supporter of this politics which can be identified through the campaign in *Inkilap* and *Milli Inkilap* mainly promoting speaking Turkish. However, the campaign in these periodicals mostly targeted the Jews, among other minorities, and criticized their bad accent or their denial of speaking Turkish. For Atilhan, it is a great ingratitude on the part of the Jews that they reject speaking Turkish although they are indebted to Turkey which accepted them as citizens upon their expel from Spain and granted them extensive citizenship rights by which they got out of difficulties and acquired wealth and welfare<sup>32</sup>. Atilhan thinks that in order to get clear of their debts to Turkey, the Jews must speak Turkish, adopt Turkish culture and behave like Turks. This clearly shows Atilhan's commitment to the politics of Turkification which is also visible in almost all numbers of *Inkilap* and *Milli Inkilap* through small boxes filled with the text "Citizen, Speak Turkish and Make All Speak Turkish". The

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<sup>32</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Yahudi Aleyhtarlığı" in *Inkilap* 4, July 1933, p.2.

campaign had an increasing tone of aggression in the course of time, and turned out to be such an offensive attitude that Atilhan justified violence against the Jews who rejected assimilation. In an article, he appreciated and exalted the physical attack to the Jews by the students from Darülfünun upon their denial of speaking Turkish<sup>33</sup>. In Atilhan's view, this was a legitimate response to the Jews because they acted ungratefully in rejecting speaking Turkish. This became the point where Atilhan's language started to sharpen by strongly emphasizing superiority of Turkishness. This displayed a change in his discourse from assimilative attitude towards an exclusionary stance. In this regard, although Atilhan initially supported the Kemalist politics of Turkification which was mainly the product of the paranoia of the division of the nation, his discourse changed its path and started to position itself against the politics of Turkification.

One of the first instances of Atilhan's exclusionary tendency towards the Jews became his article about a Jewish photographer in Turkey. Accordingly, the Jewish photographer produced a photo album of Atatürk which was composed of the photographs and some scripts on Atatürk. For Atilhan, this is an unacceptable act because he thinks it should be a Turk only who has the right to produce such an album; a foreigner cannot know Atatürk as a Turk does<sup>34</sup>. Atilhan presents this in such an aggressive way that he even blames Turkish photographers because of letting the Jewish photographer produce such an album. This shows the changing tendency of Atilhan; while he was supporting Turkification of the Jews and promoting the Jews to act in the way a Turk does, later his position started to change. He even declared the Jews as foreigners and denied their reverence and admiration to Atatürk. Such an exclusionary tendency appeared in Atilhan's discourse particularly towards the mid-1930s. These were the years in which he had a visit to Nazi Germany which had a great impact on his ideas.

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<sup>33</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Darülfünunlu Gençleri Alkışlamalıyız" in *Inkilap* 1, April 1933, p.12.

<sup>34</sup> Atilhan, "Gazinin Eseri" in *Inkilap* 1, April 1933, p.20.

Atilhan was known by the Nazis for *Inkilap*. In 1933, he was invited to Munich by the leading anti-Semite writer of German National Socialist Party, Julius Streicher, who was also publishing an extreme anti-Semite periodical called *Der Stuermer*. Atilhan became Streicher's guest for some time<sup>35</sup>. During this time period, he met Hitler, and observed the ways and means of the campaign against the Jews. When returning to Istanbul, Atilhan brought some anti-Semite material and some money he got from the Nazis in order to establish a Nazi party in Istanbul (Levi, 1996: 102). At the gate of Istanbul University, he distributed several armbands and rosettes with gamma cross to the students, and painted the walls of some public buildings and ships with gamma cross (Bali, 1998a: 19). Such an attempt from his part ended up with disappointment since he could not find any supporter. Giving up Nazi-oriented activities, he put all his effort to publish *Inkilap* whose name was changed to *Milli Inkilap*. The reputation of *Milli Inkilap* came to be known at the international arena. An anti-Semite pro-Nazi Swedish periodical called *Nationen* mentioned about Atilhan, and described the publication of *Milli Inkilap* as the revival of Turkish world. It added that a movement against Zionism led by Atilhan had started in Turkey, and *Milli Inkilap* had a very meaningful role in fighting for the freedom of Turkish nation (Bali, 1998b: 22).

Being encouraged by these experiences and developments, Atilhan changed his position towards a more radical stance. This was quite apparent in his opposition to the politics of Turkification. Similar to Atsız, Atilhan argued that if the Jews speak Turkish like a Turk, and get Turkish names, their difference from a real Turk cannot be realized so that they become able to creep inside us like spies (Bali, 2003: 404). The rationale behind the opposition to assimilation was based on the racist idea that Turkishness is a matter of blood, thus, it is not possible for a

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<sup>35</sup> A close personal relationship between Atilhan and Streicher can also be observed in *Der Stuermer*, September 1934. An article titled as "Die Juden in der Turkei" (Jews in Turkey) starts by praising *Inkilap*, and continues that the Jews in Turkey were boycotting German goods, and even they reject speaking Turkish. The article concludes by praising *Inkilap* whose motto is "Turkey belongs to Turks". For a detailed reading see Bali, Rfat. (1998a), p.19.

Jew to be a Turk even if he changes his name and religion. Turkishness is also a matter of spirit; thus, the Jews cannot be thought as Turks because of their character which is weak in terms of morals<sup>36</sup>.

The idea of weak morality of the Jews was supported by *Inkilap* and *Milli Inkilap* through the publication of a variety of articles not only by the readers but also by internationally published anti-Semite newspapers and periodicals which represented the Jews in stereotypes. An article by a reader stated that money is the God of the miserly Jew who without doubt steals, lies, cheats, plots, betrays for getting money<sup>37</sup>. This image of the Jews couples with additional stereotypes concerning appearance and biological and racial features of the Jews which leads Atilhan and his periodicals to be positioned along with racist viewpoints. The translation by *Milli Inkilap* of an article by Theodor Fritsch, a leading German anti-Semite, constitutes an example for this viewpoint. Pertaining to genetic and biological features of the Jewish race, Fritsch states that Jewish body is middle-sized, and short in length. The back side of the head is straight, and the face is middle in size. The nose is big, the lips are thick, and the mouth is broad<sup>38</sup>. While these racial features are the point of reference of anti-Semite discourse in stereotyping the Jews, they are also used in the representation of the Jews in the caricature pages of *Milli Inkilap* which displays the Jews as bad-looking and dirty persons harassing beautiful non-Jewish ladies as suggested by the anti-Semite reading of the Talmud<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Bilinmelidir", in *Milli Inkilap* 1, 1 May 1934, p.5.

<sup>37</sup> Şemsi, "Alçıklar", in *Inkilap* 5, August 1933, p.9.

<sup>38</sup> Fritsch, Theodor. "Yahudiliğin Hakiki Mahiyeti", in *Milli Inkilap* 2, 15 May 34, p.7.

<sup>39</sup> *Milli Inkilap* 1, 1 May 1934, pp.15-16. The caricatures on these pages are presumably taken from *Der Stuermer* which, in accordance with anti-Semite reading, illustrates Jewish men harassing non-Jewish women based on the teaching in *Talmud* stipulating that harassing non-Jewish women by Jewish men does not mean committing adultery since non-Jewish women are merely an animal to be abused.

The stereotypical image of the Jews became also an effective tool in Atilhan's campaign on the exclusion of the Jews from the economic domain. The campaign by *Inkilap* and *Milli Inkilap* revolved around the promotion of boycotting Jewish goods and stopping buying from Jewish shops which would, in Atilhan's words, eliminate the dominance of the lousy and hook-nose Jew from economic sphere and render Turks sovereign in national market<sup>40</sup>. In line with this, Atilhan declared that *Milli Inkilap* neither publishes any advertisement of Jewish shops, factories and companies nor accepts any subscription from the part of the Jews<sup>41</sup>. On the other hand, the periodical promoted Turkish shops, factories and companies in its advertisement pages by emphasizing that their goods and services are "real" Turkish<sup>42</sup>. While these were the general components of the campaign, a radical suggestion to be included in the campaign came from Reşat Vedat. Being one of the writers of *Inkilap*, he pointed out that the movement against the Jews has only a sentimental character in Turkey; however, Turkey has to promote the movement against the Jews at the political and social level, as Hitler does in Germany, which would be a more effective strategy in getting rid of Jewish domination on the market<sup>43</sup>. Such radical voices displayed that even though it was not explicitly put into words, the periodical had an undeniable inclination towards Nazism which became more evident in its alignment with Turkist positions.

#### **4.2.2. Turkism and Atilhan**

*Inkilap* and *Milli Inkilap* are the unique sources to analyze Atilhan's position with regard to Turkism since they include the elements directly addressing to Turkism. First of all, *Milli Inkilap* was displaying its attitude towards Turkism by

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<sup>40</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Boykot, Boykot, Boykot", in *Milli Inkilap* 1, 1 May 1934, pp.6-7.

<sup>41</sup> *Milli Inkilap* 4, 15 June 1934, p.18.

<sup>42</sup> *Inkilap* 1, April 1933, p.28.

<sup>43</sup> Vedat, Reşat. "Yarım Kan", in *Inkilap* 5, August 1933, p.7.

publishing the advertisements of Turkist periodicals such as *Birlik*, *Orhun*, *Çığır*, *Geçit* and *Kastamoni* with an advertorial stating that these are the nationalist periodicals to be read by Turkish youth<sup>44</sup>. The publication of Atsız' article by the periodical made clearer its standing concerning Turkism. Here, Atsız stated that

we neither expect the Jews to be turkified nor want them to be turkified because this is impossible due to the special racial characteristics of Turks which cannot be possessed especially by the Jews; the sole expectation of ours is that the Jews know their limitation, otherwise our response would be harder than that of Germans<sup>45</sup>.

This exclusionary and provocative tone is also observed in the articles of other writers of the periodical such as Ak Bekir who argues that the Jews, the greatest cheaters and cowards, do not deserve living in Turkey<sup>46</sup>. Another writer, Osman Oğlu Lemi, represents the Jews as vampires who creep into nations, contaminate and degenerate them. He continues by addressing to Turkish youth with an insulting attitude that they should be aware of the pure and superior blood in their veins which must be protected against the Jews having the most poisoned blood in the world<sup>47</sup>.

The concern for the pure and superior blood as emphasized by Turkism had a considerable place in Atilhan's discourse. For him, Turkish race possesses the purest and most superior blood having special characteristics. Only the preservation of its purity and superiority without any degeneration would sustain the superiority of Turkish race. At this point, in *Inkilap*, Atilhan publishes an article of a doctor, Demir Ali, concerning racial health which supports his standpoint. The article states that the health of the Turkish race means the strength of Turkey, and thus, the health of Turkish race must be the main programme of

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<sup>44</sup> *Milli İnkilap* 3, 1 June 1934, p.16.

<sup>45</sup> Atsız, Nihal. "Musa'nın Necip (!) Evlatları Bilsinler ki", in *Milli İnkilap* 4, 15 June 1934, p.9.

<sup>46</sup> Ak Bekir, "Türkler-Yahudiler", in *Inkilap* 2, May 1933, p.6.

<sup>47</sup> Osman Oğlu Lemi, "Almanya'dan alınacak Dersler", in *Inkilap* 2, May 1933, pp.2-3.

the Turkish reform<sup>48</sup>. The publication of such an article which forms a link between the reproduction of healthy race and a strong country displays that Atilhan's discourse marks some racist features revealing itself in the politics on health.

Not only the politics on health but also the politics on demography proposed by Atilhan reveals the place of the idea of race in his discourse. Accordingly, Atilhan calls for a new demographic policy to make Turkey composed of real Turks. This rests on a couple of actions such as settling of Turks living in Bulgarian and Rumanian territories to Turkish territories, increasing the birth rates, making each new born Turkish child a citizen of Turkey, protecting Anatolian peasants and their children by law, sending young doctors to Anatolian villages, and passing a law for Anatolian peasants to marry with more than one woman; in Atilhan's words, the ultimate goal here is to recreate Anatolia with a population of 50 million composed of a pure and substantial Turkish density<sup>49</sup>. While Atilhan envisaged a quite large number of population for the 1930s, the main point that draws attention in his idea is the emphasis on Anatolian peasant who is similarly identified by Turkism as the conveyor of pure Turkish racial traits. In this sense, Atilhan aligns himself with Turkists by putting weight on the role of Anatolian peasant in the maximization of population which would, in his view, reproduce racially pure and superior Turkish nation.

Atilhan's ideal of racially pure and superior Turkish nation is not always limited to the boundaries of Turkey. That means Atilhan has a tendency towards the ideal of Turan although this is a quite implicit attitude. In his own words, Atilhan is in favor of a great Turkey having a large population with high levels of morality, science and technology which would be the country for all Turks in the world to

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<sup>48</sup> Demir Ali, "Sağlık Bilgileri", in *Inkilap* 5, August 1933, p.41.

<sup>49</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Anadolunun Nüfusunu Arttırmalıyız", in *Milli İnkilap* 3, 1 June 1934, p.3.

be unified<sup>50</sup>. This turns out to be an implied awareness campaign on Turkish populations in different parts of the world. Atilhan mentions about East Turkistan, which separated from China by declaring its independence in 1933, and calls for aid to this new Turkish state which is, in his words, composed of racial brothers<sup>51</sup>. Atilhan strengthens this Turkist approach through some articles written by the National Turkish Students Association which is a community of university students having Turkist standpoint. In the articles, there are statements concerning the so-called Turan blood which gives Turkishness a superior character and enables Turkish youth to protect Turkish state against the potential enemies<sup>52</sup>. In this sense, Atilhan's discourse displays a slight tendency towards expansionism and emphasis on youth which are among the foremost elements of Turkist discourse.

While *Milli Inkilap* was increasing its racist dose, it became the target of some publications which strongly criticized its provocative tone. Rusçuklu Fahri, the owner of *Işık*, which was published in Izmir blamed Atilhan for evoking anti-Semitism (Bali: 2001: 234). Despite such criticisms, the RPP government remained silent to the increasing provocative language of *Milli Inkilap*. On 1<sup>st</sup> July 1934, the most inciting article ever was published. The writer of the article, Osman Oğlu Rasih from Uzunköprü, attacked the Jews with an extreme aggressive fashion.

(...) Edirne bleeds...Glorious Fridays of Edirne became Saturdays because of the wicked Jews. They are the most rootless in the world. Therefore, God condemned them to oppression which is his justice. Why we allow those cursed by God to live inside us while they are sucking our blood<sup>53</sup>.

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<sup>50</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Milli Gaye", in *Inkilap* 5, August 1933, p.12.

<sup>51</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Şark-ı Türkistan", in *Milli Inkilap* 1, 1 May 1934, p.2.

<sup>52</sup> Behire from Ankara Ticaret Mektebi. "Biz Aşkımızı Yaşatalım", in *Inkilap* 2, May 1933, p.34.

<sup>53</sup> Osman Oğlu Rasih, "Kari' Yazısı", in *Milli Inkilap*, 1 July 1934, p.8

The publication of this article just before the outbreak of the Thrace Incidents of 1934 led to some contentions that the insulting publications by *Milli Inkilap* played role in the outburst of the Thrace Incidents of 1934 (Aktar, 1996: 46). Thereupon, the RPP government initiated an inspection, and at the end, the periodical was closed in 1934 because of being found motivating for anti-Semitic feelings.

#### **4.2.3. Anti-Communism and Atilhan**

Being the general character of Turkish right from the end of the 1940s on, anti-communism was also one of the prominent positions in Atilhan's discourse. Along with the Turkists, Atilhan thought that communism aims at spreading the idea of equality which is a very dangerous belief threatening the idea of superiority of Turkishness. This means, in the lines of racist idea, he denied that Turkish race can be equal to other races in the world. This led him to identify communism as evil and communists as rootless having inferior blood. In the same lines with Turkists, communism was Jewish in origin which was, in his view, justified by the fact that Marx was a Jew. With reference to Hitler's argument in "Mein Kampf", Atilhan stated that socialism and internationalism, being the easiest ways to destroy a nation, are conducted by an alien race, namely the Jews (Atilhan, 1935b: 73). This idea became for Atilhan, in conjunction with Turkists, a point of departure in his anti-communist stand. Yet, his anti-communism was not limited to his Turkist position fed by Nazism; in addition, as I will point out later, he had an anti-communist stance from a different perspective which was based on a conservative brand of nationalism.

#### **4.2.4. Conservative Nationalism and Atilhan**

The changing political conjuncture with the end of Second World War led to great changes in Turkish politics headed by transition to multi-party politics from single-party regime. In relation to this, Atilhan's discourse displayed considerable

changes towards a conservative tone which became visible not only through his publications but also through the political parties he joined or established himself.

Atilhan was among the founders of the *National Development Party* (Milli Kalkınma Partisi) which was the first political party founded in 1945 with the transition to multi-party order. Being led by Nuri Demirağ, the party was established by Atilhan and Huseyin Avni Ulaş. As the first opposition party in the multi-party system, it defended the minimization of bureaucracy and liberal economy, as opposed to the principle of statism of the RPP, which would be the key engine of political and social development<sup>54</sup>. In order to acquire party leadership, Atilhan got into a competition with Demirağ, but could not become successful and left the party together with Ulaş (Tunaya, 1995: 638-645).

In 1947, together with Sukru Isdeger and Behcet Demirgil, Atilhan established another party, *Turkish Conservative Party*. The party had two publications, *Mücadele* and *Milli Inkilap*, which was closed in 1934 and started to be republished in 1948. Atilhan was the owner and chief editor of *Milli Inkilap* which gave him the opportunity to clearly reveal the party's position, namely his own position. The prevalent tendency of *Milli Inkilap* was a radical opposition to the RPP and the DP. It criticized the RPP because of its elitism and authoritarian practices at the expense of political and social well being of the country and the improvement of democracy<sup>55</sup>. For Atilhan, like the reforms realized in 1839 and 1908, the reforms of 1923 were also not useful in developing the new state because they did not rest on the people's will; they exploited national will, national treasure, national struggle, national economy and traditions by deteriorating the welfare of the society<sup>56</sup>. This was a quite different attitude

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<sup>54</sup> <http://www.nuridemirag.com/mkp.htm>. Quoted from "Milli Kalkınma Partisi", in *Bütün Dünya*, March 2003, Ankara: Başkent Üniversitesi Kültür Yayınları.

<sup>55</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Maksat ve Gaye" in *Milli Inkilap* 1, 10 July 1948, p.1.

<sup>56</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Bütün Milletçe Mesuliyet Özündeyiz" in *Milli Inkilap* 3, 28 August 1948, p.1.

displayed by Atilhan who fully supported the republican reforms before. While he was defending the reforms realized by the Kemalist regime during the early 1930s, he became quite critical to these reforms during the late 1940s. Atilhan also criticized the DP on the grounds that it is a fictitious party invented by the RPP to show the West that the RPP itself created a democratic order through the introduction to multi-party system<sup>57</sup>. According to Atilhan, the DP lacks character; this is because at the beginning it adopted the six arrows as a part of the constitution which meant that it recognized Turkish language as the one-single official language, but later, it did not show respect to this principle and remained silent to the Jews rejecting speaking Turkish which demonstrates that the DP's ideology is imposed by the Wall Street Jews<sup>58</sup>. This was a critique of capitalism which was associated with the Jews in Atilhan's discourse.

In order to direct Turkey to the right path, Atilhan proposed that the principles of *Turkish Conservative Party* as stated in the party programme should be realized. Accordingly, the child, family, tradition and morality are to be given utmost importance; justice, morality, democracy and welfare are to be chief values to be guaranteed and preserved; it would not be allowed that honorable, virtuous and hard-working people are exploited by the self-seekers; the peasant and his welfare would be the priority<sup>59</sup>. Atilhan proposes that these principles are to be realized in the light of Islam since Islam regulates the world by presenting the best conditions for justice, morality, democracy and welfare to develop and consolidate<sup>60</sup>. In this regard, it was the first time that the party radically displayed through *Milli Inkilap* that it was in favor of an Islamic order which finds expression in an anti-secular state. This was also supported by a clear emphasis on the idea of Muslim

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<sup>57</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "DP Niçin Muvazaa Partisidir" in *Milli Inkilap* 2, 16 August 1948, p.1.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Türk Muhafazakar Partisinin Esas Programından Bazı Maddeler" in *Milli Inkilap* 1, 10 July 1948, p.2.

<sup>60</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Din Davamız", in *Milli Inkilap* 1, 6 August 1948, p.3.

brotherhood and Turkish-Arab solidarity<sup>61</sup>. Briefly speaking, Atilhan's conservative thought which materialized in *Turkish Conservative Party* and in its publication, *Milli Inkilap*, rested primarily on Islam which is represented as the unique guarantor of the desired values of justice, morality, democracy and welfare.

After leaving *Turkish Conservative Party* for unknown reasons, Atilhan established *Democrat Party of Islam* (Islam Demokrat Partisi) in 1951 and became the president of the party. *Büyük Cihad*, unofficial publication of the party, announced that the foremost goal of *Democrat Party of Islam* is to upgrade Turkey to the level of most civilized nations by creating a strong economy and prosperous society which would be realized through the values of morality, tradition, justice and freedom and through the elimination of all cosmopolitan ideas such as communism and Free Masonry which destroy these values (Karabatak, 1994: 5-6). The founding members of the party mainly rested on Necip Fazıl's *Büyük Doğu* community which annulled itself in 1951 for a short time period; they wrote in *Büyük Cihad* along with Atilhan concerning the evils of communism and Free Masonry and called for action to eliminate all enemies of religion and morality (Karabatak, 1994: 7-11). Besides, the party was in collaboration with *Fedaiyan-i Islam Association* and *Organization of Muslim Brothers* which were Iranian in origin (Karabatak, 1994: 7-11). Upon the rapid opening of countless branches of the party throughout the country which had anti-secular practices such as praying during the hoist of Turkish flag, the Ministry of Interior Affairs communicated with the Ministry of Justice and stated that the required steps to close this party should be taken (Karabatak, 1994: 7-11).

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<sup>61</sup> Upon the establishment of the party, mufti of Jerusalem Muhammed Emin El Huseyni sent a message to Atilhan, and presented his good will by emphasizing his support to Turkish and Arab solidarity and brotherhood which is the fundamental goal of the party. When Arab-Jewish war began in 1947, which resulted in the establishment of Israeli state, Atilhan attempted to create a volunteer Turkish army to support the Arab army against the Jews. This was welcomed by the mufti of Jerusalem who sent some money to Atilhan for necessary expenditures. However, Turkish government's reaction was certain here; it intervened the process, and prevented Atilhan to accomplish his plans. Then, Atilhan used the money for his own purposes. For a detailed reading see Bali, Rifat. (1998a).

Eventually, the party was closed down in March 1952, just after seven months of its establishment, by court decision for the reason that it operated against the principle of secularism and violated the constitution; the activities of all branches were banned, and Atilhan and other founding members were subjected to judicial inquiry (Tunaya, 1995: 638-645)<sup>62</sup>. After the closure of the party, Atilhan should have possibly returned back to *Turkish Conservative Party* since his name stands on the list of members of Central Administration Board of the party in 1952 (Tunaya 1995: 641). From the mid-1950s to his death in 1967, Atilhan left active participation to politics, and concentrated more on writing which became such a productive period that he wrote great amount of books and countless articles in several periodicals which explicitly displayed his conservative tendency.

The prevalent character of conservative nationalism during the 1950s, as I explained in the previous chapter, was based on identification of Turkishness and Islam with each other. Following Necip Fazıl, Atilhan became one of the committed supporters of this view. In *Bütün Çıplaklığıyla 31 Mart Faciası*, he argued that there are various factors that played role in Turkish sovereignty in three continents; however, the one, among all, namely Islam was the indisputable prominent factor in Turkish success and victory since Islam is the unique source that gave Turks such an enormous spiritual strength and belief that no other nation could overwhelm. On the other side, Atilhan states that Turk are from a distinguished race which had great services to Islam and self-sacrifice in the name of Islam; Islam entered to Europe thanks to superior features of Turkish race which rendered Turkish army brave and glorious (Atilhan, 1959b: 170-171).

The general belief among conservative circles that Islam is the origin of Western values was supported by Atilhan as well. He asserted that Islam is the guide for true democracy, justice, equality and freedom because of the fact that all these

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<sup>62</sup> Among the legal grounds of inquiry, there was also the role played by *Democrat Party of Islam* along with *Büyük Doğu* in the assassination of Ahmet Emin Yalman by Huseyin Uzmez in November 1952 in Malatya where the party opened its first branch. For a detailed reading see Karabatak, Haluk. (1994).

values derive from Islam. However, Atilhan argued, in the West, these values were distorted by the inclusion of the principle of secularism and lost their authentic meaning<sup>63</sup>. This is because in Islam, religion and worldly affairs are tightly connected to each other; Islam preaches morality and virtue, and creates honesty, security and confidence in the worldly order<sup>64</sup>. For Atilhan,

those who talk about secularism and close their eyes to the significant role of Islam in every aspect of life such as commerce, army and family are fascinated by secularism which is merely a fashion of the day. Those are not aware of the fact that they disregard democracy which they seemingly embrace; this is because they did not recognize that secularism is the absence of mutual interference between religion and state, on the contrary, they construct the relation between state and religion unilaterally, namely in an undemocratic manner, by granting the state the right to intervene the religion while denying the intervention by religion to the state (Atilhan, 1959b: 132-133).

The discussion about secularism, as I mentioned here, became one of the most common subjects during the 1950s in Atilhan's discourse.

The establishment of Israeli state in 1948 became a rupture in Atilhan's discourse by changing his route towards a more conservative stance which centered on an intense antagonism to communism, capitalism, Free Masonry and Zionism which he regarded as Jewish invention. As I shall point out later, his antagonism was characterized by an aggressive and offensive tone which materialized in conspiracy theories whose subjects were the Jews. Against all kinds of Jewish plot, Atilhan proposed Turkish-Arab union along with the general tendency in the conservative nationalist circles of the 1950s. This is because he sees the conflict on Palestine as an issue of Islam, rather than perceiving it as an issue of Arab states<sup>65</sup>. According to him, this union should be a political, economic, social and cultural federation which could be the sole entity to destroy malevolent Jewish

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<sup>63</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Sözün Özü", in *Sebilürreşad* 5, June 1948, p.68.

<sup>64</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Din Davamız", in *Sebilürreşad* 10, August 1948, p.155.

<sup>65</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Müslüman Memleketlerinde Tedkikler: Yahudi Siyaseti", in *Sebilürreşad* 51, July 1949, pp.10-11. Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Türk-Arap Birleşik Devleti", in *Sebilürreşad* 258, December 1957, p.122.

intensions<sup>66</sup>. He disseminated this view in the States of Islam Congress which took place in 1964 in Somalia and in which he was selected as the president of executive committee (Bali, 1998a: 22). Although he was sued because of his anti-secular opinions and his call for Jihad in his book, *Tarih Boyunca Islam ve Uğradığı Suikastler*, which was published in 1960, he continued to criticize secularism with a sharp language until his death in 1967.

Atilhan's criticism to secularism and other Western values was mostly related to his threat perception to Islam. In his view, the Jews, as the producers of these values, were conspiring against Islam with the purpose of destroying it and establishing their own sovereignty. This resulted in a constant anxiety which led Atilhan to have a paranoid mindset and construct conspiracy theories. With the aim of decoding Atilhan's logic towards the Jews, I reserved the following part for the elaboration on the specific themes of conspiracy in his discourse. In doing this, my purpose is to illuminate how and why conspiracy theories work in Atilhan's discourse. This will show the psychological and ideological aspects of his discourse. This will also reveal the relation of his discourse to Christian, Nazi and Islamist anti-Semitism.

#### **4.3. Themes of Jewish Conspiracy in Atilhan**

The Jewish image in Atilhan is mainly a product of conspiratorial mindset. In Atilhan's discourse, the Jews are the subject of conspiracy and represented as the plotter operating secretly to reach their wicked intensions. The secrecy and wickedness of the Jews in Atilhan highly depends on some psychological mechanisms and ideological reasons which explain his relation to different anti-Semitic positions. Here, by looking at the themes of conspiracy, I will try to show the way psychological mechanisms operate. This will give the opportunity to

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<sup>66</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Müslümanlığın Büyük Hedefi-4", in *Sebilürreşad* 70, January 1950, pp.310-312.

analyze the ideological reasons for the functioning of conspiracy theories in Atilhan's discourse.

#### **4.3.1. The Balkan War**

One of the common themes of Jewish conspiracy in Atilhan is the Balkan War which was resulted in the defeat of Ottomans and lost of Edirne to Bulgaria. In Atilhan's view, Edirne was lost to Bulgarians since the Jews in the region engaged in black-market activities which led Ottoman army to be deprived of some basic food, and suffer from hunger. In Atilhan's words, this demonstrates that "the bloody blade of Israel" secretly operated and resulted in the misery of countless soldiers and civilians<sup>67</sup>. Atilhan held the Jews responsible from the defeat of the Ottoman army on the grounds that it was impossible for a strong, brave and glorious Ottoman army to be defeated. In this sense, the trauma caused by the failure of the Ottoman army was repressed and projected to the Jews who were blamed for the defeat.

#### **4.3.2. Suzi Liberman**

Atilhan held the so-called Jewish spies in the Ottoman Army responsible for the Ottoman casualties in Palestinian and Sinai Front during the First World War. In this sense, his approach differs from the classical reading which links the failure in Palestinian and Sinai mainly with the Arab insurgence provoked by the British. While not rejecting Arab revolt as a reason for failure in Sinai Front, Atilhan deems the actual reason as the espionage on the part of the Jews in the Ottoman Army (Atilhan, 1933: 61-74). According to his writings, not only the soldiers but also the Jewish women like Suzi Liberman made intrigues in order to achieve their ultimate goal of destruction of the Ottoman army. In Atilhan's discourse,

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<sup>67</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Nasıl Yahudi ve Mason Düşmanı Oldum?" in *Büyük Doğu* 22, 18 August 1950, p12.

Suzi Liberman is one of the most essential characters upon whom the stereotypical Jew is constructed.

As Atilhan illustrates in *Yahudi Casusu Suzi Liberman*, Suzi is a young beautiful lady living around Palestine with her family during the years of First World War. She meets a Turkish soldier, Adnan who fall in love with her. After she introduces him to her family, Adnan starts to have regular visits to the family. After a while, he has very good relations with the family who gains his confidence, and makes him accept to sleep at their house upon their insistence. At one night while Adnan was sleeping with the effect of barbiturate put in his coffee, Suzi takes the confidential letter on secret military information from his jacket out. Adnan realizes this next day. This results not only in the execution of Suzi and her family but Adnan's as well<sup>68</sup>. Atilhan presents the story with reference to Suzi Liberman's diary which constitutes, in his view, sufficient proof to argue that it is not a fictitious story like "The Diary of Anne Frank"<sup>69</sup>; on the contrary, Suzi Liberman's diary displays the whole truth about Jewish intrigues which was witnessed by the Ottoman army itself. In the later editions of the book, it was stated that the book was also found very useful by the General Staff, and its 40 thousand copies were distributed to the army in 1935 in order to make the soldiers aware of the possible threat, and draw lessons.

In the foreword, Atilhan states that the military records are the proof of the story. While this is not the main concern here, the way Atilhan handles the story deserves attention. By presenting the diary as a proof, he holds Suzi Liberman responsible for the failure of Ottomans instead of exploring the reasons for the involvement and failure of the Ottomans in the war. Similarly, instead of

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<sup>68</sup> Atilhan was in the military investigation committee which made the decision of execution. Although he was offered great amount of bribe, he did not change his opinion. Gün, Suat. "Yahudi Casusluğu" in <http://www.biroybil.com/showthread.php?t=2721>, 10 December 2005. For a detailed reading of the story see Atilhan, Cevat Rifat (1935a).

<sup>69</sup> In the eyes of anti-Semites, the Diary of Anne Frank was an invented story aimed at justifying Zionist claims; it is about a Jewish girl who suffered from the anti-Semite practices of Nazi-Germany.

questioning Nazi politics towards the Jews and thinking of the possibility of the authenticity of Anne Frank's diary, Atilhan discusses whether Liberman's or Anne Frank's diary is real. These constitute an indication of his imagination of the Jews as plotters constantly threatening the inner excellence of Ottoman State which is internally an antagonism-free entity. Therefore, the disappointment with the failure resulted in a traumatic attitude which materialized in Suzi Liberman.

#### **4.3.3. Albert Saltiel**

Albert Saltiel is a Jewish figure associated with revenge in Atilhan's discourse. Accordingly, after resigning from the Armed Forces in 1922, Atilhan started to earn his life from trade. He established a partnership with an Armenian citizen, Panos Der Mangasaryan. They opened a construction company in Istanbul in 1922, and got a very considerable amount of profit. Apart from this, Atilhan established commercial relations with Armenian tradesmen in different countries such as Britain and France, and imported different materials from textile to rubber. He sent Koran to the Muslim tradesmen in India, and in return, he imported tea from them. When Mangasaryan migrated to Paris, he became the single owner of the company. He opened another factory where he produced shoes. In order to sale his products, he opened a shop, and rented an additional shop. At the same time, he continued his construction business, and built roads and bridges in Eskisehir (Atilhan, 1951: 176-179).

Such a brilliant business life, in Atilhan's own words, was interrupted by a Jewish conspiracy, and no revenues from the business in Eskisehir could be collected (Bali, 1998: 17). Within a very short time period in 1928, Atilhan's shop was closed down by a court decision (Atilhan, 1951: 182-183). After searching for the reason, he found that the Jewish owner of the shop, Albert Saltiel, had arranged an illegal document to expel Atilhan from the shop. According to a phone call between Atilhan and Saltiel, Saltiel asked Atilhan whether he knows what Zionism means, and told that he was expelled from the shop in the name of

Zionism since Zionism is the revenge of the Jews who were killed in Palestine (Bali, 1998: 17). Afterwards, Saltiel sold the shop to a Jewish man at a very reasonable price. This event became the focal point of one of the books of Atilhan, *Bir Facianın İcyüzü*<sup>70</sup>. It also became the end of Atilhan's business life since, in Atilhan's words, American Express Bank whose vice managers were Jewish terminated the credits given to Atilhan, and he ended up with a great loss (Atilhan, 1951: 186). In this sense, Atilhan declared Albert Saltiel as the scapegoat of his failure in business. This also coincides with the themes of Nazi anti-Semitism regarding the hostility to Jewish economic activity within national boundaries which became an instrument of mobilization against the Jews.

#### **4.3.4. The Talmud**

As in the anti-Semite literature the Talmud is a great source of hatred towards the Jews, it is an object of attack in Atilhan's discourse as well. Since it is the testimony of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, customs, and history, Atilhan takes it as an original source clearly indicating real Jewish intentions. This is displayed by his translation of an article from the 19<sup>th</sup> issue of a Canadian periodical, *Le Patriote*, which states that the Talmud declares the Jews as a distinguished and superior race, and preaches the Jews that non-Jews can only be animals serving to the superior Jewish race in their eventual goal of dominating the world; thus, the Talmud states, it is legitimate to exploit non-Jews for Jewish intentions<sup>71</sup>. Atilhan supports this claim by making reference to Luther who states that, according to the Talmud, the Jews do not work since non-Jews work for them; they are the masters of non-Jews who are merely slaves (Atilhan, 1958: 134). Another reference by Atilhan to Wahrmund points out that the Talmud states that the possessions of non-Jews are counted as unowned since they do not have the right to possess; therefore, it is legitimate for the Jews to seize the

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<sup>70</sup> For a detailed reading see Atilhan, *Cevat Rifat*. (1929).

<sup>71</sup> Atilhan, *Cevat Rifat*. "Boykot, Boykot, Boykot", in *Milli İnkilap* 1, 1 May 1934, pp.6–7.

possessions of non-Jews (Atilhan, 1958: 135). Following these statements from the part of European anti-Semites, Atilhan concludes that

the Talmud is the principal source that unmasks the real Jewish character. It is the proof document showing that the Jews are from an evil race with a low morality seeking to establish a wicked order based on their own interests (Atilhan, 1958: 137).

For Atilhan, this is also clear in the arguments of Herder and Luther. While Herder asserts that Jews are the parasites contaminating the world throughout the history, Luther argues the Jews are like snakes biting non-Jews and poison them (Atilhan, 1958: 133). In this regard, the Talmud which has a significant place in Christian and Nazi anti-Semitism has also great implications in Atilhan's discourse. The representation of the Jews as evil through the Talmud produces hatred which is mobilized by means of the use of provocative language and turns out to be symbolic violence towards the Jews. This becomes an indication of how Atilhan's discourse relates to the fascist discourse.

#### **4.3.5. Passover and Blood Libel**

Passover and Blood Libel stem from the Talmud which, in anti-Semite discourse, orders the killing of the non-Jews. In the same lines with the anti-Semite literature, Atilhan asserts that for the Jewish festival, Passover, unleavened bread is cooked from the blood of Muslim and Christian children through a pin barrel; this is a Jewish tradition for the satisfaction of greed and grudge towards the non-Jews (Atilhan, 1958: 7). In the foreword of *İğneli Fıçtı*, Atilhan discusses the authenticity of the killing stories.

Some say that these stories are inventions, false accusations or merely myths; yet, can there be any smoke without fire? (Atilhan, 1958: 5).

This shows that Atilhan thinks the sharp reaction of the Jews is related to the fact that they performed such cruel killings. The killing stories display in his view "the horrible conspiracy by the Jews aimed at destroying Islam and Christianity" (Atilhan, 1958: 117). His emphasis that such atrocity cannot be carried out by

human beings has a provocative character which not only has a mobilizing but also a justifying effect to attack the Jews. In this way, very similar to fascist discourse, violence against the Jews becomes legitimate.

#### **4.3.6. Free Masonry**

In Atilhan's discourse, Free Masonry is associated with the Jews. This is because, Atilhan argues, from the place of worship to the rituals and symbols, almost all characteristics of Free Masonry and Judaism are the same (Atilhan, 1954: 5). For him, the French Revolution has a key importance in indicating the relation between Free Masonry and Jewishness. To explain this relationship, Atilhan makes reference to an article of Leon de Poncins who was a French anti-Semite. For Poncins, before the French Revolution, it was not possible to determine a relationship between Jewishness and Free Masonry; but towards the end of the Revolution, the Jews started to join Free Mason lodges. That's why the ideals of the Revolution, freedom, fraternity and equality, became the principles of Free Masonry (Atilhan, 1935b: 26-27). Particularly, the humanitarian approach founded by the Revolution is quite dangerous because, as displayed by the Declaration of 1744 by the Free Masons, it rejects any religious authority over individual, and thereby leads to atheism (Atilhan, 1935b: 29). This became the greatest reason for Atilhan's attack to Free Masonry. For Atilhan, the atheist principle of Free Masonry had extremely dangerous implications such as the destruction of Ottoman Empire. Atilhan states that

the aim of Free Masonry is to destroy Islam and to establish a democratic republic on the basis of cosmopolitanism in which religion and God has no place. This can only be realized through the destruction of the Ottoman State which owns Palestine since it would prepare the grounds for the demolition of Muslim unity and eventually lead to the destruction of Islam (Atilhan, 1954: 50-51).

For Atilhan, this demonstrates that Free Masonry has a political character since it aims at eliminating a sovereign state and replacing it by its own domination. Atilhan states that this is apparent in *Acacia*, a publication owned by Free Masons. It mentions in its 1904<sup>th</sup> issue that the fundamental political goal of Free

Masonry is to combat religion and to protect democracy and secularism which would be carried out by the Free Mason lodges functioning as secret political organizations (Atilhan, 1951: 18). In Atilhan's opinion, not only are the lodges political but religious as well; this is because they operate like a sect or a religious order which perform the superstitious worships, ceremonies and meetings (Atilhan, 1951: 112). Atilhan mentions that "Atatürk was a great far-sighted leader since he discovered the threat posed by secretly operating Free Mason lodges, and closed them down"<sup>72</sup>. Here, Atatürk is exalted because of his great struggle against the malevolent intensions of Free Masonry whose secrecy and immoral values caused the imagination that it is a wicked conspirator threatening the everlasting internal peace of the nation.

#### **4.3.7. Communism**

In Atilhan, communism is Jewish in origin. He establishes the relationship between communism and Jewishness through Free Masonry.

...communism is internationalist. It is originated from Free Masonry since the ideologues of communism, Marx and Engels, are the members of the British Mason lodge, and the 'Communist Manifesto' is the propaganda of Free Masonry (Atilhan, 1951: 10).

Atilhan points out that *Akasya*, the greatest periodical of Free Masonry, in its 164<sup>th</sup> issue in 1903, calls for communism, by stating that 1789 Revolution realized by Free Masonry is to be followed by a socialist revolution which necessitates the collaboration of Free Masons and the proletariat (Atilhan, 1954: 29). Atilhan quotes from another German periodical, *La Tonia*, published in 12 July 1849 that towards the aim of defrauding the humanity, socialism is the major ally of Free Masonry; thus Free Masonry should give a great support to socialism (Atilhan, 1951: 10). Atilhan argues that "socialism is the most appropriate ideology for Free Masonry to ally due to its denial of religion and God which is a facilitating tool for Free Masonry in reaching its ultimate aims" (Atilhan, 1951: 11-13).

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<sup>72</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Farmasonların Din Düşmanlığı", in *Sebilürreşad* 3, June 1948, p.42.

Atilhan mainly relies on the logic of conspiracy in explaining the relationship between communism and Free Masonry. According to him,

communism and Free Masonry are the twin brothers and the sons of a Jewish mother. They are indeed equal to each other; what make them different are only the masks they wear. Both are rooted in Jewishness. They have common objective of establishing Zion, Jewish sovereignty in the world. They cooperate with each other in secrecy to destroy Turkey as the first target, and then to obtain Palestine from where on great Jewish sovereignty would spread the whole world<sup>73</sup>.

Being one of the common themes of anti-Semite discourse, the alliance between communism and Free Masonry was represented as a conspiracy by the Jews who are declared as the scapegoat of the inner conflict of countries. In line with this tendency, Atilhan holds the alliance of Free Masonry and communism responsible for the degeneration of the society, moral values and religion which were regarded as the reasons for internal conflict.

#### **4.3.8. Capitalism**

In Atilhan's discourse, capitalism is a Jewish invention. For him, the Jews are aware of the most destructive methods to corrupt humanity which finds expression in capitalism.

Wild capitalism is the fundamental instrument for the Jews to seize the whole world. It created the interest, gave little money to the poor, and rendered the poor life-long dependent; in the course of time, the interest became a Jewish culture which sustained the debt and led the money to be the might of the Jews. The triangle of interest, debt and money created the notion of capital. The increase of capital became the foremost condition for the survival of the Jews (Atilhan, 1950: 22).

Besides, for Atilhan, the capital in the hands of the Jews enabled them to control the media and finance which led to the promotion of consumption and degeneration of traditional and moral values by strengthening the position of the Jews (Atilhan, 1958: 47). Therefore, he thinks that the conditions for the survival of capitalism are the conditions for the survival of Jews. This was the fundamental

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<sup>73</sup> Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. "Siyonizm, Komünizm ve Farmasonluğa Karşı Beynelmielel Dünya Teşkilatı", in *Sebilürreşad* 4, June 1948, p.54.

point of departure by Nazi Germany in its hostility towards the Jews. Thus, it is arguable that Atilhan's anti-capitalist position includes fascist components. His anti-capitalism also relates to the Islamist perspectives that deny the interest and strongly oppose to the decay of traditional and moral values.

#### **4.3.9. The Protocols of the Elders of Zion**

Atilhan was the first to publish the Protocols in Turkey. The first publication was a translation from the Swedish anti-Semite periodical, *Nationen*, by *Milli Inkilap* in 1934. Afterwards, Atilhan published the Protocols regularly not only in his periodical but in his books as well. In the same lines with anti-Semite literature, he believed in the authenticity of the Protocols. In *İslamı Saran Tehlike ve Siyonizm*, Atilhan reserved a broad place to name them one by one (1950: 86-87). Although it is not easy to summarize them, one can distinguish three main themes: a critique of liberalism; an analysis of the methods by which world domination is to be achieved by the Jews; and a description of the world state which is to be established (Cohn, 1969: 61).

For Atilhan, “the Protocols clearly indicate that Jewishness has a strong relationship with capitalism, Free Masonry and communism” (1950: 93).

They [the Protocols] are capitalist in nature. They state that through the control of the media and finance, the young generation is to be educated immorally, family life is to be destroyed, the art is to be degraded, the spiritual life is to be destroyed, luxury and fashion are to be promoted, thinking is to be delayed, hatred between social classes are to be created, fiscal stability is to be damaged, economic crises are to be prompted, trade policies that destroy funds are to be generated, and the termination of governments are to be prepared (Atilhan, 1950: 88).

The relation between Jewishness and Free Masonry in Atilhan is also largely constructed by means of the Protocols which state that all types of government are to be changed, and controlled through assigning key positions to individuals being part of secret entities. This proves that

Free Mason lodges are the fundamental political offices of the Jews to obtain information in order to take action in achieving their eventual goals. Not only are they political but religious as well because they rest on Jewish tradition and superstition. These show that Jewishness as a nation and religion refers to a secret organization called Zion which is materialized in Free Masonry, and became a political and social front against the whole world throughout the history (Atilhan, 1951: 139).

By making reference to Poncins, Atilhan states that

throughout the history, the Jews used two great ideologies of their own invention as morphine for the rest of the world to achieve their objectives easier. For the rich, they promoted capitalism which provided great pleasure by means of exploitation of masses; for the poor, they prompted socialism which led to the production of hatred against the rich ones (Atilhan, 1951: 36-37).

This means, for Atilhan, the Jews provided for themselves the proper field of action to achieve their ultimate goal. This reemphasized the image of the Jews as conspirators in Atilhan's discourse.

#### **4.3.10. The Donmeh (Crypto-Jew)**

The common belief among conservatives that the Donmehs never adopted Islam and practiced Judaism in secrecy was central to Atilhan's discourse as well. According to Atilhan, the Donmehs are the most dangerous conspirators since they have a double identity, a visible Muslim and an invisible Jewish identity, which make them unidentifiable and untraceable by giving them a large room for free action. Atilhan claims that

thanks to their invisible identity, the Donmehs acquired high economic and political status but exploited all rights and opportunities granted by Turkey which viewed them as Muslim brothers; they corrupted national fabric for their malign intentions" (Atilhan, 1950: 36-37).

For Atilhan, the Donmehs pose a great threat to national culture and moral values since they were educated on the basis of Western principles and lived a cosmopolitan life; therefore, he regarded them as agents of modernism and secularism eroding traditional values (Bali, 2001: 414).

As it is the general tendency in conservative circles, Atilhan associated Salonica, where the Donmehs come from, with conspiracy. That means it was the city in which the CUP came into being with the purpose of realizing revolution and overthrowing Sultan Abdulhamid from his throne which would destroy Ottoman Empire and establish the new republic led by a Salonican leader, Atatürk (Bali, 2001: 414). This is for Atilhan a very well planned conspiracy which was also supported by the relation between the Donmeh CUP members and Free Masons. In Atilhan's discourse, the Jews, Donmehs, Free Masons and the CUP members were equalized and regarded as the most dangerous alliance aiming at destroying Islam through the destruction of the Ottoman State. To this aim, Atilhan argued, "this alliance led by the CUP promoted Western principles while prompting enmity against Islam, religious values and religious leaders which resulted in 31 March Incidence" (Atilhan, 1959b: 165).

Apart from the CUP members, one of the main Donmeh figures in Atilhan was Ahmed Emin Yalman who not only got reaction from Atilhan but also from the Islamist circles because of his sharp secular attitude. His assassin, Hüseyin Uzmez, regarded Yalman as the key agent of the secret powers which governed Turkey behind the scene (Bali, 2001: 415). Having close relations with Uzmez, Atilhan attacked Yalman with a sharp language and called him "Ahmed Emin Salamon" to stress his Jewish identity and harshly criticized him for his rejection of financial aid to the army during the War of Independence (Atilhan, 1972: 61). According to Atilhan, Yalman was one of the arrogant Donmehs who owned the media and finance and lived in welfare thanks to Turkish Republic.

#### **4.3.11. Abdulhamid the II**

Abdülhamid the II is one of the key figures who have a great place in Atilhan's discourse.

Abdülhamid is a great statesman pursuing national interests against conspirators. He brilliantly fought against the alliance of Zionist-Free Mason-Donmeh, namely the CUP,

who intended to demolish the empire. However, the alliance became so strong that, at the end, he was overthrown by this alliance upon 31 March Incident (Atilhan, 1959a: 167-168).

This is for Atilhan a very well planned plot by the alliance of Zionist-Free Mason-Donmeh. Along with the Islamists, he thinks that the primary reason for Abdülhamid's overthrown is his rejection of Theodor Herzl's proposal. Accordingly, Herzl being the founder of Zionism demanded some territory and residence permit in Palestine in return for a great amount of money. This was a part of the Zion ideal of the establishment of Israeli state in Palestine. Abdülhamid's rejection of the proposal became a reason for hatred, and led to the preparation of a plot that would overthrow him from the throne. The plot was based on the agitation of Turkish nation by means of the media for a rebellion by making them believe that religion is under threat. In this way, for Atilhan, the people were represented as bigots who rendered the retaliation by the army legitimate<sup>74</sup>.

Atilhan thinks 31 March Incident was a conspiracy to destroy Turkey which would lead to the destruction of Islam. For him, the Zionist-Free Mason-Donmeh alliance was so secret that it was impossible for the people to realize their covert intentions (Atilhan, 1959a: 109). Moreover, people were so impressed by the ideals established by the Revolution of 1908 that they could not grasp the threat posed by the alliance. They were also made to believe that Abdülhamid was engaged into corruption, had a poor government of the state, and behaved in a very despotic fashion. In line with conspiratorial logic, Atilhan denied these possibilities and regarded the so-called alliance of Zionist-Free Mason-Donmeh as the scapegoat of the inner conflict in the Ottoman Empire. For him, this is a zero-sum game; the overthrown of Abdulhamid is the starting point for the decline of the Ottoman Empire which means that it is the starting point for establishment of Israeli state (Bali, 2001: 293).

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<sup>74</sup> For a detailed reading see Atilhan, Cevat Rifat. (1959b).

#### **4.4. The Operation of Conspiracy Theories in Atilhan's Discourse**

As I tried to display, the themes of conspiracy in Atilhan's discourse are largely fed by themes of Christian, Nazi and Islamist anti-Semitism altogether. After this point, I will concentrate on how conspiracy theories operate in Atilhan and try to explain this on the basis of some psychological mechanisms inherent to conspiratorial mindset. Then, I will seek to explain why conspiracy theories work in Atilhan's discourse by dealing with ideological aspects of conspiracy theories. I will conclude by looking at the implications of conspiracy theories in Atilhan's discourse.

The psychological mechanisms can be helpful to understand how conspiracy theories operate in Atilhan. The representation of politics by Atilhan largely depends on dichotomization and demarcation of the society. There is black and white which are separated by a clear line. The black side represents the Jews who are wicked and have malevolent intentions while the white side represents the non-Jews who are good and coexisting peacefully without conflict. Whenever there is a conflict, it is because of the Jews who cross the line.

The tendency to hold the Jews responsible for all conflict and misfortunes is the main characteristic of Atilhan's attitude in explaining politics. In this sense, only Jewish penetration and presence in the political sphere brings wickedness; in the absence of the Jews, the politics is devoid of trouble, the state is sovereign, and the nation is peaceful. This logic demonstrates that Atilhan constructs politics, state and nation on the basis of a fantasy in which the politics is impenetrable to allies, the state is territorially enclosed, and the nation is internally peaceful. In other words, he designs politics, state and nation as antagonism-free entities; the nation is a peaceful entity in itself. The impossibility of the nation containing antagonism leads to the construction of an external perpetrator. Along with the Žižekian discourse, it can be argued that this is where the image of Jewish Other is created, in Atilhan. The moment of threat perception to the peaceful coexistence

of nation is the moment the Jews appear on the fantasmatic scene (Žižek, 1996: 70). In this sense, to the extent that the nation is designed as a fantasy, it hides the reality of antagonism in itself; and this reality which is repressed and excluded from the sphere of the nation projected onto Jews who appear as spectral images, namely as symbolic Jew (Žižek, 1996: 74). The absence of the symbolic Jew in reality becomes the key explanation of how conspiracy theories function in Atilhan's discourse. What makes conspiracy theories function becomes the gap between the symbolic Jew and the Jew in reality. The Jew as it is symbolically constructed does not exist in reality; but this idea itself becomes the very reason for skepticism, panic and anxiety due to its spectral existence (Žižek, 1996: 68).

Following this argument, one may conclude that in Atilhan's discourse, the Jewish spies in the Ottoman army during the Balkan War and the First World War represent the impossibility of the weakness of Ottomans in terms of military. Suzi Liberman is the symbolic figure of the repressed trauma of failure in the Palestinian Front. She is a spectral image which gives her an unreachable and unobtainable status. Her absence in reality renders her even more powerful which sustains the fantasy. Similarly, once there is a suspicion about Atilhan's success in commerce, Albert Saltiel intervenes and displays the wicked morality of the Jews which explains Atilhan's failure. Once there is a suspicion about Abdulhamid's reign as a period devoid of antagonism in itself, conspiracy appears on the scene to eliminate this suspicion and to create the alliance of Free Masonry and Donmehs as the perpetrator of antagonism. It constructs Free Masonry as a secret and malevolent organization seeking to have more power for itself, and to destroy Ottoman State. In the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the conspiracy also functions through the skepticism whether the alliance of capitalism, communism and Free Masonry as constructed by the Protocols exists in reality. The conspiracy operates in a way that the symbolic alliance cannot be questioned and verified. In this sense, the spectral image of the Jew as a capitalist, communist, Free Mason or Donmeh creates a de-centered subject which cannot control the meaning and the logic of a blurry network he/she is within (Žižek, 1996: 76).

The question of why conspiracy theories function in Atilhan's discourse is largely clarified in Atilhan's own words:

What is the reason for the lost of Ottoman states one by one after 1908 Revolution? Why did Western imperialism arise and cause difficulties for the state? Why was Ottoman army defeated? The answers to these questions are pathetic as well as simple. The betrayal by the Zionists is responsible for all these misfortunes! If these parasites did not betray to Islam and Turkishness, the great Ottoman Empire would survive as the leader of the Islam today (Atilhan, 1959a: 35-36).

Here, Atilhan explains the decline and collapse of the Empire on the basis of the betrayal by the CUP which he regarded as the collaborator of Zionism. Accordingly, the Western values accommodated by the CUP led to weakening of the state, and thus of Islam and of Turkishness. In Atilhan's explanation, the answers to the questions are quite simple which tries to remove whole complexity about the reality by providing uniform, easy and satisfactory solutions. It construes the reality through oversimplification and explains the sophisticated events in such a way that no intricacy remains at the end. In doing this, it provides a sense of relief vis-à-vis the difficulty of coping with complex reality and becomes the reason for the functioning of the conspiracy theories.

The Protocols are more essential in the sense of displaying why conspiracy theories function in Atilhan and in conservative positions in general. The Protocols imply, in simple terms, a critique of liberal capitalism through revealing the so-called real intensions of the Jews who were identified with wild capitalism, Free Masonry and communism. The Protocols identify the modern conditions people are faced with such as the erosion of family life and traditional values, the promotion of luxury and fashion, the excessive taxation and the economic and social crisis, and list them one by one by making them clear, simple and easy to be made sense. As a result, the complexity of the modern world was given meaning: all we suffer is because of the Jews. In this sense, the Protocols are a way out for the modern man to make sense of the social conflict and endure the misfortunes. Because of having such a nature, not only the Protocols but other conspiracy theories in Atilhan as well create addiction and captivate the reason after a while

so that the position of the Jews as conspirators becomes stronger and anti-Semitism is produced and reproduced. As Adorno suggested, the irrational thinking serves the reproduction of ideology within the minds of people by passifying reasoning and strengthening the sense of dependence and obedience (2002: 121). In this sense, conspiracy theories function because they give a sense of relief and thereby create mental addiction vis-à-vis the crisis of capitalism.

Last but not least conspiracy theories in Atilhan's discourse had some aspects that showed resistance to the general functioning of ideology. That means, Atilhan's representation of the Jews as the subject of conspiracy sometimes included subversions that rendered the subject position of the Jews problematic. For instance, while Atilhan declared the members of the CUP as the enemies of the nation in alliance with another enemy figure, Free Masonry, he showed great respect for Atatürk who came from the same cadres with the members of the CUP. He not only showed respect but exalted Atatürk by glorifying him as a great Turkish leader in *Milli Inkilap* in the 1930s and appreciated Atatürk later in the 1950s because Atatürk closed the Free Mason lodges during the Kemalist rule. In this sense, there are some inconsistencies in Atilhan's representation of the CUP, Free Masonry and Atatürk. Moreover, Atilhan defended that some leading patriots such as Namık Kemal unintentionally became Free Mason with the purpose of serving the country; some American presidents became also Free Masons for the same purpose (Atilhan, 1951: 204). From here, it follows that Atilhan recognized a patriotic component in Free Masonry which displayed incoherence to his representation of Free Masonry. This discloses that the Jew is not devoid of some contradictions as the subject of conspiracy in Atilhan's discourse.

#### **4.5. Concluding Remarks**

Atilhan's discourse revealed various tendencies ranging from Kemalism, Turkism to conservative brand of nationalism that was mostly imbued by Islam. While in the early 1930s he was a committed supporter of Kemalist politics of

Turkification with specific respect to the Jewish minority, during the late 1930s his discourse started to be prevailed by the theme of Jewish conspiracy which led to a change in his position towards the politics of Turkification. He emphasized the impossibility of Turkification of the Jewish figures such as Suzi Liberman and Albert Saltiel. The Talmud and Blood Libel became one of the foremost themes of conspiracy in Atilhan's discourse that showed the increase in the racist dose in his discourse. From the mid-1940s on, he aligned himself with anti-communist stand of Turkism and represented the Jews as well as Donmehs as the subject of communist conspiracy. During the 1950s and 1960s, Atilhan took a conservative position which was mostly associated with Islam. The most common theme of his discourse became the Protocols of the Elders of Zion through which he strongly attacked Free Masonry, communism and capitalism.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

The contemporary popularity of conspiracy theories display that they are regarded as reliable explanations to the political and social crises that modern societies face with. That the Holocaust was planned by the Jews who used Hitler as a pawn for the realization of their ultimate goals of the establishment of Israel and that Saddam Huseyin was an agent of CIA which used him as a puppet in the outbreak and justification of the Gulf War easily and quickly explain the greatest disasters that contemporary societies confront with. Similarly, that the Jews were informed and ordered to stay at home when Mossad bombed the synagogues in Istanbul at one swoop clarifies why there were no casualties or injuries on the part of the Jews at that day. From here on, one may argue that conspiracy theories have strong inherent mechanisms that convinces, and creates belief and acknowledgement of the presented explanations as facts.

Throughout this study, I sought to find the answer how and why conspiracy theories work so that they become popular and reliable explanations to the tragedies of the society. For the purposes of this study, I searched for the answer within Atilhan's discourse with specific respect to his representation of the Jews as the subject of conspiracy. I found that conspiracy theories can be thought as nationalist texts in terms of their characteristics. As far as Atilhan's discourse is concerned, conspiracy theories serve another nationalist text, anti-Semitism. In other words, conspiracy theories which explain social conflict by Jewish conspiracy can be taken as tools of the reproduction of anti-Semitism. This is mostly because their character and working mechanisms rest on the racist and

xenophobic brand of nationalism which is also inherent to anti-Semitism. The representation of the Jews as black-marketer, money-lover and blood-sucker conspirators by Atilhan during the 1930s and 1940s can be viewed as a disclosure of how his conspiratorial mindset reproduces anti-Semitism. Similarly, his identification of communism, Free Masonry and capitalism as a Jewish conspiracy in the 1950s and 1960s displays that the themes of conspiracy in Atilhan correspond to the themes of anti-Semitism so that they contribute to the reproduction of anti-Semite ideology.

By means of a sharp language, conspiracy theories in Atilhan stereotype the Jews and identify them with inferiority. The alleged statements in the Talmud, the Protocols and the myths about the Passover and Blood Libel in addition to ordinary physical and behavioral stereotypes used for the Jews support this agitating language so that they altogether become a mechanism to produce hatred and hostility towards the Jews. Thus, it can be proposed that conspiracy theories in Atilhan's discourse legitimize the use of violence at least at symbolic level. Through the fantasy that there is an invisible and secret enemy who seeks to impose its demands and authority through conspiracy on the nation, and the declaration that this enemy must be destroyed, conspiracy theories in his discourse become "a discourse on war against the enemy" (Bozarlan, 2004: 23). In this sense, I regard conspiracy theories in Atilhan as instruments serving the reproduction of anti-Semitism.

To clarify this argument, I investigated the psychological mechanisms of conspiracy theories in Atilhan which explain social conflict on the basis of demarcation and dichotomization. While Atilhan views the nation as an antagonism-free entity, he regards the Jews as conspirators damaging the harmony of the nation and holds them responsible for the misfortunes of the nation. As Žižek suggested, the repressed anxiety and phobia of helplessness, hopelessness, loss and separation of the nation is projected onto the Jews in Atilhan's discourse. Therefore, the Jews are held responsible for the failure of the Ottoman Army in

the Balkan War and the First World War because it is not possible for the Ottoman army to be defeated in the absence of Jewish espionage. In this sense, the Jews are constructed in an imaginary field in which the nation's repressed paranoia takes place. As an example, Suzi Liberman is the symbolic figure of the repressed trauma of failure in Palestinian Front. The survival of this imagination of the nation as well as the army depends on the reproduction of the imagination of the Jew as the malevolent conspirator since this imagination of the Jews is the sole agent of repressed antagonism of the nation in reality (Žižek, 1996: 72). Therefore, Albert Saitiel has to intervene and show his wicked Jewish character in order to remove the suspicion about Atilhan's failure in commercial life. Similarly, once there is a suspicion about Abdulhamid's reign as a period devoid of antagonism in itself, Jewish conspiracy appears on the scene to eliminate this suspicion and to create the alliance of Free Masonry and Donmehs as the perpetrator of antagonism. It is important to note that the gap which emerges out of the absence of the symbolically constructed Jew in reality creates skepticism, panic and anxiety, and thus, provides with the very area for the operation of conspiracy theories. In this regard, that the alliance of capitalism, communism and Free Masonry as proposed by the Protocols is absent in reality leads to doubt, fear and unease which prepares the area for the operation of conspiracy theories and even push them further.

Such representations of Atilhan's discourse were highly affected by different positions within Turkish nationalism. As I tried to demonstrate in the course of this study, Atilhan did not have a stable political standpoint throughout his philosophy; he many times changed position and swayed from side to side. What was stable in his discourse was his hostility towards the Jews. However, he attacked the Jews from different positions within Turkish nationalism. In this sense, his discourse can be regarded as eclectic.

As far as Atilhan's commitment to the republican reforms during the early 1930s is concerned, one may assert that he is a dedicated defender of Kemalism. This

idea can be supported through his promotion of Kemalist politics of Turkification. Yet, what made Atilhan different from Kemalists was his explicit emphasis on the Jewish minority concerning the implementation of the politics of Turkification. In line with the Kemalist regime, Atilhan followed the principle of secularism which was mostly apparent in his support of the closure of Free Mason lodges by Atatürk which he regarded as religious orders. Yet, he interestingly did not touch upon the issue of reactionism in his discussions about secularism. In this sense, his priority concerning threat perception differed from Kemalists as well. That is to say, while the reactionism was viewed by Kemalists as the foremost threat to the unity of the state and the nation, for Atilhan the Jews were the greatest threat to the survival of the Republic. Accordingly, the source of political paranoia was the so-called Jewish conspiracy rather than Islam in Atilhan's discourse.

As I mentioned previously, Atilhan had a clear inclination towards Turkism in the late 1930s and early 1940s. This is initially displayed through his distance from and later his rejection of the policies of Turkification. Along with Atsız and Türkkan, he denied the possibility of the Jews to become turkified on the grounds that Turkishness was a matter of race and spirit that cannot be acquired later. He also agreed with the Turkist position that communism was a Jewish and Donmeh conspiracy to contaminate Turkish race. While he regarded the Anatolian peasant as the true conveyor of the Turkish blood and emphasized the significance of Turkish youth in keeping Turkish blood pure and superior, he differed from Turkist by certain points. Accordingly, in Atilhan's discourse, there was no reference to pre-Islamic past of Turks whose roots rest on Central Asia. On the contrary, Atilhan regarded Turkey as the continuity of the Ottoman past. In this sense, nor was Islam a rejected idea in his discourse like in Turkism.

The fact that Atilhan aligned himself with Turkist positions during the 1930s and early 1940s and had close relations with the Nazis creates the idea that he had an inclination towards fascism. Therefore, whether he can be considered as a fascist needs to be discussed. Apart from his inexorable hostility to the Jewish race, his

effort to establish a Nazi party and his respect for some fascist principles such as pure and healthy race and expansionism can be regarded as supporting evidences that he had a fascist tendency. Yet, such elements remain insufficient to identify him as a fascist in classical terms. However, when the psychological mechanisms of Atilhan's discourse are considered, it is quite possible to observe how his discourse is imbued with the psychology of fascism. This is mostly apparent in the representation of the society vis-à-vis Jewish conspiracy. That means, there is a continuous emphasis on Turkish society which is wronged and defeated by the Jewish conspiracy. To the extent that the society is represented as the victim of Jewish conspiracy, the psychological mechanisms that foster fascism keep survival. In Atilhan's discourse, the society is imagined as a weak entity vis-à-vis secret powerful Jewish organizations. In so far as the Jewish conspiracy destroys social order and weakens the might of the state, it produces hatred and aggression towards the Jews which is at the very hearth of the psychology of fascism.

Perhaps one of the positions Atilhan was strictly associated with was conservative tones of nationalism. From the late 1940s on, Atilhan embraced Islam and identified it as the foremost character of Turkish race along the same lines of conservative figures of the period led by Necip Fazıl. This became also apparent in the programs of the political parties he was involved. The very popularity of the theme of communist-Zionist-Free Mason-Donmeh alliance among the conservative circles had the greatest place in Atilhan's discourse. He attacked the so-called alliance by positioning himself in the same lines of Islamists on the grounds that it was a Jewish alliance aiming at contaminating traditional values and morality and replacing it by materialist principles that would lead to the destruction of Islam and to the establishment of Jewish world empire. When compared to other conservative nationalist figures such as Necip Fazıl, Eşref Edip and Osman Yüksel, Atilhan arguably had a distinct position concerning the place of the theme of Jewish conspiracy in his writings; the way the capitalist, communist, Free Mason and Donmeh were represented by Atilhan was relatively similar to the representation of conservative nationalists. What made Atilhan

different was his enduring concentration on the theme of Jewish conspiracy while mostly excluding other themes of conservative thinking from the center of his writings. While almost all of his books are about the Jews as the subject of Free Mason and Zionist conspiracy, the conservative nationalist contemporaries of Atilhan concentrated on the general subjects of conservative thinking such as Islam, secularism and democracy. This difference led Atilhan to come to the forefront as the leading anti-Semite figure.

By means of conspiracy theories, Atilhan offered easy, unified and simple answers to the complexity of the politics. This provided with a sense of relief and gave meaning to social conflict. In Atilhan, the Jews were responsible for all misfortunes because they were evil as clearly verified by the Talmud and pursued malevolent intentions as clearly proved by the Protocols through certain agents of their own, namely communism, capitalism and Free Masonry. In this explanation, everything was very clear. Nothing left unexplained. This mentality created an implicit dependence to conspiratorial thinking that offered irrational explanation and easy solution to the sophisticated reality: Jewish conspiracy.

By looking from a broader perspective, the logic of conspiracy as offered by Atilhan gained an increasing popularity in Turkey particularly from the 1990s on. This was mainly because the politics was characterized by instability and insecurity largely due to the pluralization of the various political actors which are in an intricate relation to each other. This led to decentralization of the sources of political power by constituting proper grounds for the conspiratorial mindset. That is to say, conspiratorial mindset was quite helpful in explaining the complex relations of politics through easy and simplified answers. This explains why the major sources of political conflict having sophisticated reasons during the 1990s such as the revival of Kurdish question and the rise of political Islam were sought to be explained on the basis of conspiracy theories. By means of conspiracy theories, it became quite easy to assign the greatest role in the rise of political Islam to the United States which was believed to bring Sheria. Likewise, through

conspiratorial logic, the European Union was represented as the agitator of the assertion of Kurdish identity which allegedly aimed at dividing and ruling Turkey. While the analysis of such sophisticated questions necessitated a kind of multi-variable explanation, conspiracy theories offered simple explanations that removed the need of deliberation and analysis. As far as it is concerned that Turkish society was undergoing a process of consumerism during the 1990s which led to impoverishment of reasoning and creation of alienated subjects to politics, it becomes more understandable why conspiracy theories gained increasing popularity and actuality.

While conspiracy theories simplify the reality and make the sophisticated structure of the politics understandable, they passify the individual who do not need to think and analyze. In this sense, they offer an anti-democratically structured society, in which masses are not involved in politics, and politics is performed by political elites; the reality is determined by certain mechanisms which enable invisible and influential conspirators to make political elites operate, and change the fate of society through some plots (Belge, 2004: 33). This leads to a belief that individuals are passive beings whose actions cannot change the course of politics and material conditions. This implies the normalization of submissiveness of the individual in the lines of fascism and all totalitarian ideologies. While the masses are passified, they become unable to act as individuals. They can only exist as the part of the totality in complete obedience and discipline. This unconditional conformity and absolutism constantly reproduces inequality since people's will are excluded from the political and social processes.

At this point, it becomes quite appealing that conspiracy theories are respected not only by ordinary people but by some intellectual elites as well. This shows that conspiratorial logic has penetrated into whole layers of society which necessitates a different reading of conspiracy theories to make sense of this wide belief and reliance. Accordingly, conspiracy theorists argue that

information is hidden or limited by secret sources of power. Therefore, people know to the extent that they were allowed to know. What they know or what they suppose to know is largely shaped by the secret and sophisticated sources of power that are governed from one-single center. Those who try to unveil these secret sources of power and to present “facts different from facts” vis-à-vis widely recognized facts are accused of being “conspiracy theorists” (Çimen & Yılmaz, 2003: 7- 9).

According to such alternative readings of conspiracy theory, conspiracy is what is hidden by those who are conspirators themselves. By means of secret and complex mechanisms, the conspirators are able to keep power which can be sustained through the manipulation of the society. The manipulation takes place either through hiding or distorting facts or giving limited information about facts. In this regard, theories of conspiracy seek to uncover what is hidden and limited by the secret sources of power. This is a challenge to the widely acknowledged facts offered by the secret sources of power whose authority and power are undermined through the disclosure of what people cannot see, realize and know. That is to say, the alternative reading of conspiracy theories represents conspiracy theorists as providers of the so-called real facts which are in fact manipulated by the secret holders of power. They also represent the history as a conspiracy which is manipulated by the historians who present the historical facts through some filter that captures secret relations, leaders, and organizations while presenting the history as an arena where visible actors and observable events take place (Akar, 2003: 10-11). Thereby, the so-called real key actors and relations are overlooked and the history cannot be analyzed properly. In order to have a better understanding of the history, one needs to look at what is behind the scenes; this would reveal secret plots and conspiracies that provide the real information to have a true analysis of history (Akar, 2003: 13).

As a conspiracy theorist, Atilhan represents the history as a Jewish conspiracy. In his discourse, to extent that the so-called hidden and distorted historical facts are uncovered, the society becomes conscious and aware of what is really going on in the political scene. In this way, Atilhan tries to keep people alert against the danger and threat posed by the Jews. This can be regarded as a call by Atilhan for

awakening vis-à-vis Jewish conspiracy. Following this, one may argue that the traces of Atilhan's discourse in contemporary Turkey display itself in the very sources of popular culture. The various books by Yalçın Küçük and Soner Yalçın who argued that Turkey is ruled by a Jewish dynasty which is composed of Donmehs and the best-sellers such as *Musa'nın Çocukları Tayyip ve Emine* and *Musa'nın Mücahiti* which justify the so-called relations of the *Justice and Development Party* (the AKP) to the United States and Israel demonstrate altogether how the theme of Jewish conspiracy penetrated into Turkish society. Other sources of popular culture such as *Kurtlar Vadisi* and *Sağır Oda* having the highest rating scores among other television serials reveal that Atilhan's logic of conspiracy is highly respected by Turkish society. Besides, the representation of the IMF as a Zionist organization by ultra-nationalist and Islamist circles which is believed to create the economic crisis in 2001 for its own survival, the belief that September 11 attacks were realized by Mossad which is allegedly justified by the absence of the 4000 Jewish employers at the building at that day, and the representation of the synagogue bombings in Istanbul in 2003 as a plot by those who intended to position Turkey along with the Israel and United States alliance in the Middle East altogether show that Turkish society has a considerable inclination to view Turkish history as a Jewish conspiracy. While this can be considered as the very reason for the survival and reproduction of anti-Semitism in contemporary Turkey, it reemphasizes the undeniable influence of Atilhan's conspiratorial mindset on contemporary Turkish society.

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