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**Turkish Nation-Building Process: An Analysis of Language, Education, and
Citizenship Policies during the Early Republic (1920-1938)**

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June 2008**

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in
partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Abstract

This study seeks to analyze the Turkish nation-building process during the early Republican period (1920-1938). In doing this, the substantive focus will be on three main dimensions –language, education, and citizenship – with particular emphasis on the rhetoric and actions of the political elite.

By looking at language, education, and citizenship policies, and their formulations, the present analysis will make three main propositions: First, and in contrast to the existing literature on nations and nation-building, it will be demonstrated that the process of Turkish nation-building was neither a smooth nor an automatic process. Moreover, during the period under analysis, there were competing definitions of nationhood which were taken up, and discussed by the political elite. The final conceptualization of nationhood –which took an assimilationist form with an ethnic understanding attached to it – was formed over time. At times, the process was wrought with tensions as illustrated by the heated debates among the political elite.

Second, the present analysis will seek to bring together two different ways of looking at nation formation. More specifically, the analysis will attempt to bridge the gap between those works which only underline the role of ideas in the formation of nations, and those which emphasize the role of structural forces. By paying attention to the “voices” (and actions) of the political elite, this study will demonstrate that it is not only ideas, nor is it only structural forces that matter. Rather, the crystallization of the contents of Turkish nationhood illustrates the interplay of ideological as well as geopolitical and political forces.

Third, a detailed analysis of the trajectory of Turkish nation-building and the formulation of Turkish nationhood reveals the complexity of this process. The existing literature on Turkey tends to treat the Kemalist era as an undifferentiated whole. The present work will remain critical to such an outlook. Instead, and by looking at the shifting conceptualizations of nationhood, it will seek to demonstrate the complexity and contingent nature of the Turkish nation-building process.

Résumé

La présente recherche a pour but d'analyser le processus de l'établissement de l'Etat nation turque au début de la période républicaine (1920-1938.) Pour se faire, trois dimensions centrales –soit la langue, l'éducation et la citoyenneté- en feront l'objet substantif avec une emphase toute particulière sur la rhétorique et les actions de élite politique.

L'analyse fera trois propositions centrales à travers l'étude de la langue, de l'éducation et de la citoyenneté. Primo, et en opposition à la littérature sur les nations et l'établissement des nations, il sera démontré que le processus en Turquie n'était pas nécessairement automatique ni sans obstacles. De plus, durant la période en question, ils y avaient plusieurs définitions concurrentes de la nations qui étaient adoptées et débattus par l'élite politique. La conceptualisation finale de la Nation –qui a pris un tournant assimilationniste à caractère ethnique- n'a pris forme que à travers le temps. Le processus a même était marqué par des tensions comme le démontre les débats enflammés au sein de élite politique.

Secundo, l'analyse tente de réconcilier deux manières différentes de voir la nation et sa formation. Plus spécifiquement, l'analyse essaye de diminuer le faussé entre les travaux qui ne souligne que le rôle des idées derrière la nation, et ceux qui mettent l'emphase sur les forces structurelles. En donnant d'avantage d'attention aux « voix » (et actions) de élite politique, cette analyse démontre que ce n'est ni seulement les idées ni que les forces structurelles à elles seules qui jouent un rôle. Au contraire, la cristallisation du contenu de la Nation turque illustre la dynamique entre les facteurs idéologiques, géopolitiques et politiques.

Tercio, une analyse détaillée de la trajectoire qu'a pris l'établissement et la formulation de la nation turque révèle la complexité du processus. Les écrits sur la Turquie existants voient la période kémaliste comme un tout non distinct. Le présent travail reste sceptique d'une telle approche. Au contraire, il démontrera, en observant les conceptions de la nation changeantes, que le processus de construction de la nation turque à été complexe et souvent interdépendant.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

This study seeks to explain the nature of the Turkish nation-building process during the Kemalist era (1920-1938) through an analysis of its three dimensions: language, education, and citizenship. These three terrains reflect the main axes along which the political elite discussed, defined and redefined the constituent elements of the nation and the rules of belonging.

Moving beyond an understanding that takes nations and nationhood for granted, the present work is aimed at analyzing the processes through which the Turkish nation was formed. In doing this, the focus will be on the rhetoric and actions of the political elite: By focusing on the voices (and actions) of the political elite in different venues (i.e. the General National Assembly (GNA), their editorials, books, memoirs, speeches delivered outside the Assembly) the present study analyzes the trajectory of Turkish nation-building.

I. Theoretical Points

The study seeks to substantiate three main theoretical points: Firstly, an in-depth analysis of the early Republican period informs us that the Turkish nation-building process was composed of various stages. By corollary, one of the main propositions will be that the Turkish nation did not come into being in an automatic fashion. Nor was the process smooth. Rather, the Turkish political elite conceptualized nationhood in a variety of forms at different stages. As well, at times, the content of these conceptualizations remained vague.¹ Moreover, the process itself was periodically wrought with tensions – as exemplified by the heated debates among deputies. An analysis of the trajectory of Turkish nation-

¹ This vagueness is best illustrated in relation to the content and direction of educational policies. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, the clarification of concepts such as “national education”, “national element”, “national character” etc. took time, and it entailed a series of differing interpretations and definitions in the hands of the elite. An attention paid to this particular aspect of the nation-building process is also in line with the critique of the “elite manipulation view” which assumes the manipulative, strategic and rational character of elite actions. For more on the “elite manipulation view” and its critiques see Brubaker (1998).

building process through its various stages and through tracking the issues and moments of discussion, debate and transformations also mark the contingent character of the nation-building process – or what Brubaker (1996) refers to as “nationness as event”.²

Secondly, the analysis brings together two different but ultimately complementary approaches to nations. As Schnapper notes, the literature on nations and nationalism has long been divided into two “camps”: One side – exemplified by scholars such as Anderson (1992) and Kedourie (1993) [1960] – emphasizes that the “existence of the nation necessarily implies that men previously elaborated the idea of it” (Schnapper, 1998: 38). As a result, the works of these scholars tend to ignore the “concrete and institutional dimension of national construction” (*Ibid.*, 38). The other side, led by Deutsch (1953) (and Schnapper adds Gellner (1983))³ focus on the economic and technological forces in the rise of nations (and nation-building) at the expense of the role of ideas and political institutions (*Ibid.*). As well, Schnapper contends that the latter approach, and in particular Gellner, “...underestimate the role of passions and the will” and the desire to affirm one’s (nation’s) dignity and sovereignty (*Ibid.*, 147). Using the case of Turkey, this study will aim at bringing together the structural and ideological variables which shaped the political elites’ conceptualizations of nationhood (as well as their actions).

Thirdly, looking at the process of nation formation through an analysis of its three main dimensions (i.e. education, language, and citizenship) we can discern the shifting roles and meanings attributed to religion and ethnicity within the matrix of Turkish nationhood. These two variables are often treated as having a fixed role and place in the rise of nations and definitions of nationhood. For example, in the works of Anthony Smith (2004; 1999a; 1986b) the “*ethnie*” is

² Brubaker refers to “nationness as event” as “something that suddenly crystallizes rather than gradually develops, as a contingent, conjuncturally fluctuating, and precarious frame of vision ... rather than as a relatively stable product of deep developmental trends in economy, polity or culture” (*Ibid.*, 19).

³ Although I would argue that politics could certainly be deduced in Gellner’s arguments, Schnapper rightly notes his lack of interest in ideas: “In the case of nationalism ... the actual formulation of idea or ideas, the question concerning who said and wrote precisely what, doesn’t matter much” (Gellner, 1983: 126).

situated at the center of all nation formations. Consequently, the element of ethnicity, ethnic roots etc. are understood as the necessary building blocks of a nation. In contrast, the Turkish case illustrates that an emphasis on ethnicity did not *always* occupy the same level of significance in the rhetoric and the actions of the Republican elite. Moreover, and in relation to the rules of belonging to the nation, the treatment of different ethnic groups (e.g. the Kurds) shifted over time. In this respect and in the hands of the Republican elite, ethnicity itself became a concept whose content was transformed from one period to the other.

The same argument should also be made for the case of religion: As will be demonstrated in the substantive chapters, over time the roles, meanings and significance attached to religion changed. For instance, while the role of religion was consistently emphasized in relation to the content of education during the early years of the Republic, it was relegated to the background in the 1930s. Yet, when we turn our attention to the content of discussions in relation to language policies, and immigration practices, we observe that religion continued to be present as an important element of nationhood. This also leads us to the conclusion that the role of religion during the process of Turkish nation-building, and the concomitant process of the definition of nationhood must not be treated as a “strategic tool” in the hands of the Republican elite.

The existing literature on nations and nationalism is rich with works that focus on the rise of nations. Yet, these works mostly discuss why nations emerged in the first place instead of looking at the process itself. Differently put, they do not analyze the actual mechanisms through which the constituent elements of nations were conceptualized. This weakness is especially discernible in the studies that focus on Turkish nation-building. More specifically, the existing literature tends to approach the Kemalist era (and the nation-building process) as an undifferentiated whole. In numerous works the formation of the nation and the definition of its constituent elements are treated in a unilinear fashion and as part of an inevitable transition from the empire to the Republic. For example, in his classic text *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Bernard Lewis (1968) presents us with a trajectory where the establishment of the Turkish Republic is understood as

the apotheosis of Turkish liberation and Turkey joining the ranks of the Western world.

Other works are characterized by generalizations emphasizing the positivist-rationalist outlook of Kemalist reforms (Kazancigil and Ozbudun, 1981), the inclusive understanding of nationhood (Kili, 1971; Kili and Gozubuyuk, 1985), the ethnic understanding of the nation (Canefe, 2002), or an exclusive stress on the charismatic leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (Cecen, 1995). As a result of these and similar sweeping generalizations the complexity and contingent nature of nation-building process is often underestimated. However, and as will be demonstrated in my substantive chapters, an in-depth analysis of the Turkish nation-building process denies such generalizations.

II. The Dynamic Nature of Nation-Building and the Turkish Case

It was during the course of my empirical research that the three dimensions of the present analysis – language, education and citizenship – came into focus. Through the observation of these three dimensions certain shifts (or stages) could be discerned in the concerns, motivations, and interests of the political elite (as well as the structural conditions they were facing) which consequently found their reflections in the (changing) conceptualizations of nationhood and the rules of belonging to the nation.

As mentioned above, this study looks at nation-building as it was conceived by the political elite. It is also informed by works which understand nations and nationalism as essentially connected to the political sphere (Hall, 1993; Breuilly, 1993). The substantive chapters will demonstrate that the discussions and speeches of the Republican elite around the constitutive and expressive elements of the nation were political and ideological in nature. In this sense, the present study is also a critique of those accounts which underscore cultural elements in their treatment of nations and nationhood.⁴

⁴ For example, ethnosymbolic approaches to the study of nations has a cultural emphasis at the expense of an almost total neglect of the political sphere (Guibernau, 2004).

The examination of the three dimensions of nation-building is broken down to three sub-periods which emerged out of the analysis of the data. The first period (1920-23) starts with the opening of the Grand National Assembly (GNA) and ends with the promulgation of the Republic. The second period (1924-1929) is marked by a series of radical transformations which ranged from the Hat Law to the secularization reforms. The third period (1930-1938) could be defined as the years when the RPP (Republican People's Party) consolidated its powers; and the period when the nature of the nation and the rules of belonging were crystallized along linguistic (assimilationist) and ethnic lines - with religion remaining as a "silent" yet present element.

The trajectories of the three terrains of nation-building (language, education, and citizenship) exhibit that nationhood was informed by ideological, political, economic, and geopolitical forces. Moreover, the significance assumed by each of these elements changed over time, and also differed depending on which terrain one focuses. Finally, within this matrix the meanings and roles attributed to for example, religion and ethnicity shifted over time.

In addition, and as the substantive chapters will underline, the level of confidence that the elite possessed, their outlook on the imperial policies, and their evaluation of the success and/or failure of their own policies were also decisive in shaping the direction and content of their actions.

The analysis of the first terrain, language policies, reflects the shifting articulations of nationhood. Following the opening of the GNA, language issues were discussed by the elite –and always in relation to nationhood. During these early years (1920-23) the political elites' interest in language issues partly stemmed from their conceptualization of language (and its policies) as tools to legitimate the regime and the Revolution. Thus, political and ideological factors in part account for their interest in language issues: The simplification of language, for example, was seen as a necessity which would bridge the gap between the elite and non-elite eventually contributing to the legitimacy of the regime. The geopolitical context at the time was also of significance: The ongoing struggle against the occupation of territories was conceptualized as a Crusade.

Consequently, during this period the elite emphasized that Islam and Turkishness was one and the same. This outlook was best illustrated by the elites' discussions about changing the names of certain towns so as to reflect this –religious – understanding of nationhood.

The following period (1924-1929) demonstrates a shift in the direction of language policy: Achieving linguistic assimilation became a central concern for the elite. Assimilation was also defined as a central marker of belonging to the nation. This voluntarist understanding of nationhood was accompanied by a continuing attention paid to the religious dimension of the nation. In addition, the rhetoric of the elite also brought out the significance of language policies as a tool to solidify the imperial exit, to exhibit that the nation was going through a Westernization process, and to reflect (the RPP's ideal of) social equality.

During the last decade of the Kemalist era language policy was seen and used as a tool to strengthen the regime through the inculcation of the RPP principles. This effort at 'remolding the minds' of the citizenry demonstrates the heavy ideological content of language policies during the 1930s. The period was further characterized by an aggressive assimilationist approach: Muslims, non-Muslims alike all were expected to assimilate if they wanted to be defined as a "real Turk". The aggressiveness of the approach as well as the strong language employed signified that the elite were responding to their perceived failure in achieving linguistic assimilation in the previous decade. Thus, the realization of success in this field became a central concern for them in order to demonstrate (to themselves and to the rest of the population) their power and confidence in 'getting things done'. During this same period, the religious understanding of nationhood lost its centrality; and this was instead replaced by the addition of an ethnic element to the already present assimilationist definition of the nation. Yet, it is important to note that the latter emphasis remained central to the rules of belonging.

When we turn our attention to the second terrain, education, we observe that the earlier years were dominated by a religious conceptualization of nationhood. This, of course, is also in line with the analysis of the linguistic

dimension described above. Regardless of the formalized, factional (and so ideological) divisions within the Parliament,⁵ the political elite was in agreement that religion and religious education was central to the strength, happiness and the unity of the nation. In other words, religion was seen as making up the moral basis of the nation, and á la Durkheim, it was the source of social solidarity. The direction of education policies was also informed by economic concerns: the creation of a skilled labor force was prioritized, and the efforts were directed to achieving this via reforming the education system. In addition, the first half of the 1920s was characterized by the elite's concern to keep foreign schools under control with the aim to demonstrate regime confidence and strength.

The second half of the 1920s was marked by a continuing interest in creating a skilled labor force through schooling. Added to this (and similar to the central outlook on language issues) was the central role attributed to assimilation: Loving one's nation and being part of the nation came to be defined by learning the Turkish language and culture through schooling. This was also the period when religious education was brought under state control. Differently put, while moral/religious education was still perceived as important, the state itself took on the task of defining the institutional make-up, administration and the very content of this education.

The last decade of the Kemalist era, on the other hand, was the period when educational policies were reshaped so as to reflect the ideological outlook of the RPP. This shift also parallels the change observed in relation to language policies during the same period. More specifically, the content of education was remodeled to include the "Six Arrows" (i.e. nationalism, republicanism, populism, statism, laicism, and transformationism) of the Party. Within this context the state's role as a moral agent was also clarified: The state, in designing its education policies aimed at disciplining and controlling the minds (and bodies) of the citizenry. During the process of these shifts religion ceased to be part of the elite's rhetoric. Instead, and in conjunction with the assimilationist role attributed to education (the former also informed the definition of nationhood), an ethnic

⁵ I discuss these divisions within the First Assembly in Chapter 5.

element was brought to the fore. The latter took center stage in the rewriting of history. In this context, ethnicity played a part in the elite's attempt to reestablish the dignity and self-confidence of the nation.⁶

The third and final dimension –citizenship – again illustrates the complex nature of the nation-building process. During the first period (1920-1923) discussions on minorities and belonging to the nation demonstrate the religious understanding of the nation. More specifically, anti-Christian sentiments were prevalent. These sentiments in turn were shaped by the geopolitical context of the time, and the elite's efforts to distance themselves from the Ottoman policies on minorities. The redistribution of economic and political power was also part of this picture: The Republican elite sought to reorganize the political and economic spheres so that the power was monopolized by Muslim elements only. Yet, Muslim elements were not treated as a homogenous category either: While Kurds were understood as the true owners of the nation (alongside the Turkish elements), a more suspect outlook was assumed toward other groups (such as Circassians, Arabs, and Albanians). This was the first step in the creation of a hierarchy of citizens which fully crystallized in the following period.

The second half of 1920s was marked by a clear differentiation between citizenship and Turkishness. Although all –irrespective of religion and ethnicity – were considered to be citizens, belonging to the nation was dependent on a more complex set of definitions. One of the determinants of the rules of belonging was religion. Based on this, certain groups –Armenians and Greeks – were pushed to the periphery of the nation. However, this exclusionary understanding of nationhood (which was also coupled with some exclusionary practices) existed side by side, and in tension with, a more assimilationist understanding: The elite underlined common ideals, common culture (and especially common language) as definitive elements of belonging. Within this framework ethnicity was seen as a “technicality” that the citizens should be taught to unlearn.

Different from what was discerned in the areas of language and education, in relation to citizenship (and immigration) policies and practices religion

⁶ This point is best illustrated by the development of the Turkish History Thesis.

remained a significant determinant during the 1930s. This was reflected, for example, in the desirability of Muslim immigration into the country. Moreover, while an assimilationist understanding of nationhood was still present, an ethnic element of Turkishness was closely attached to it. Hence, and similar to the latter part of 1920s, voluntarist and exclusionary understandings of nationhood continued to exist side by side.

III. Why Study the Turkish Political Elite?

The significance of the political sphere and the role of political elites in the formation of nations have been amply demonstrated in the literature.⁷ Whether it is to define the nature and contours of citizenship, or to establish a centralized education system, the elites are central –although not necessarily the only agents in national histories. Of course, historically the specific roles they played differed from one case to another. In countries where the formation of the nation was the outcome of revolutions (such as in the case of Turkey, Japan) elites tend to assume a higher significance. In these cases (we should also add the formation of nations out of ex-colonies to this category) the political domain becomes central to our understanding of the direction and nature of nation-building. Differently put, nation-building becomes a “project” which is then carried out by the political elite.⁸

Gellner once remarked that “the crucial power in transitions is the power to decide which turning to take, being at the wheel at the big and rare road-fork: generally, these turnings are approached once, and the decision determines just what subsequent road-forks, if any, will be available” (1964: 67). In the Turkish case, those who were behind the steering wheel and thus undertaking the transition from empire to republic were the political elite. Consequently, the

⁷ For some examples of works which focus on and emphasize the role of political elites in nations and nationalism, see Breuilly (1982; 1996), Ikegami (1995), Brubaker (1992; 1996), Greenfeld (1992), and Zimmer (2003a; 2003b).

⁸ This is not to imply that societal groups do not play any role in nation-building. Rather, I suggest that it is predominantly the political elite who define for example, the content of the education, the definition of citizenship etc. which are central to the clarification of the rules of belonging.

present study is an analysis of the political elite –their ideas, ideals, interests, and subsequent actions. This is done through hearing them “talk” in the Parliament, and in other venues. As well, the present analysis takes into consideration what kind of structural forces impacted on the decisions and actions of the Republican elite. Given this focus, the success or failure of their nation-building project would be out of our scope.⁹

The process of Turkish nation-building was essentially a “top-down” affair which was initiated and carried through by the political elite. Historically, the decisive break of the “nationalists” (which were to become the Republican elite) with the Istanbul government was the acceptance of the Sevres Treaty by the latter in August 1920. The Treaty which divided the country among the British, French, Greeks, and Italians initiated a resistant movement. The end result of this movement was first, the opening of the GNA in Ankara, second, the victory of the War of Independence, and finally, the promulgation of the Republic.

While initiating change, the political elite held all power. Neither did they have to accommodate any serious resistance from different groups in society.¹⁰ The period under study was a single party era; and the Republican People’s Party (RPP) remained the governing party all throughout. Even though there were some attempts to introduce other political parties into the system, these attempts (for various reasons) failed (Tuncay, 1999). It was only in the 1950s that the country made the transformation to a multi-party system. As a result, during the Kemalist era we see a specific group of individuals who had a say in defining who would belong to the nation as well as in conceptualizing the constituent elements of nationhood.

⁹ There are a number of works which evaluates the success and failure of the nation-building process. For example, see Keyder (1997b), and Mardin (1997b). As well, the issue of success versus failure was also addressed by the contemporaries themselves. For an example of this see Berkes (1997). As well, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu – who was part of the political elite himself - analyzes the failure of the Kemalist project in his novels *Ankara* (1934) and *Panorama* (1953-54).

¹⁰ There are minor exceptions to this such as the Kurdish rebellions which were perceived to be destabilizing by the political elite.

The Ottoman Empire had long been characterized by continuing tensions and confrontations between the center and the periphery (Mardin, 1973). Some of these tensions (such as those between urban dwellers and nomads and between local notables and the imperial center) persisted into the Republican years. The imperial center tried to exert its control over these nomadic populations and local notables by a variety of policies and sometimes by sheer force. The outcome of this persistent tension was the suspicion and distrust felt by the center toward the periphery – where the latter was defined as a rebellious force (Heper, 1985; Ozbudun, 1993). This particular perception of the peripheral forces continued into the Republican years, and defined the way the elite drew up their policies and the rules of belonging.

Another legacy of the Ottoman Empire was the absence of an aristocratic class. This particular characteristic of the Empire provided the Republican political elite with a relatively free rein during the process of nation-building (Keyder, 1997b). Similarly, the initial weakness of the bourgeoisie and its further feebleness in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars also helped strengthen this relative independence of the Republican political elite.¹¹

In addition, a working class as it had existed in Western Europe was not present in the Turkish case. Hence, different class interests, demands, and conflicts which had played a significant role in shaping the trajectories of nation formation in the West (Mann, 1993) were not part of the configuration of actors in Turkey. Out of this picture, the Republican political elite emerge as the main actors of defining and undertaking change.

Given the centrality of the political elite in nation-building, it should also be emphasized that they did not create a nation *ex nihilo*. First, the political elite

¹¹ Under the Ottomans, and especially during the 19th century, a (commercial) bourgeoisie was on the rise – the majority of which belonged to the non-Muslim population. However, following the Balkan Wars, the First World War and the loss of territories which ensued this bourgeoisie was no longer within the confines of modern Turkey. The ones who remained behind were soon to leave. In addition, and following the National War of Independence, the material resources that this non-Muslim bourgeoisie had left behind was appropriated by the state; and later redistributed to help the emergence of a native bourgeoisie. “What this distribution achieved was both to expedite the creation of a native bourgeoisie and to make it beholden to the state” (Keyder, 1997b: 40). This link between the state and bourgeoisie was further solidified when, following the civil war, the state started to undertake state-led economic policies (Keyder, 1987).

belonged to a group with a particular “history”: they had been educated at “Westernized” schools; and had worked as civil servants, military men, teachers or even as members of the Assembly under the Ottomans. Until the very end, and swimming against the current of nationalist movements in the Western provinces, their main goal was to save the Empire. To this end, they also became dissenters, strong critiques of the center. They perceived the downfall of the Empire as a result of the doings of the imperial center as much as a result of the disloyalty of some of its subjects. However, their understanding of the downfall as a result of the actions of the imperial administration did not stop them from believing in the power of the state in shaping society. In contrast, they conceived of the state as the source (and initiator) of economic development, and as the moral agent ensuring the happiness of the nation’s citizens. In this sense, theirs was a continuation of the old patrimonial tradition.¹²

Furthermore, the Republican elite were convinced that their duty to the people was to restore the latter’s dignity. In doing this, however, their outlook was and remained elitist. As Ozbudun notes, for the Republican elite “politics was seen not as a process of accommodating and aggregating diverse demands and interests of social groups but of discovering what is right for the entire society” (Ozbudun, 1993: 252-53). They were the teachers, the leaders and the makers of the new nation.

Finally, it should be noted that all throughout the Kemalist era, members of the Parliament did keep an eye on the societal reactions to the transformations they carried out. Hence, they did not operate in a vacuum. Moreover, their rhetoric and policies did change as a result of how these reactions were interpreted by the elite themselves.

¹² As Kazancigil also points out “The Young Turks and Kemalists although very different from the traditional Ottoman bureaucrats ... were heirs to the old patrimonial tradition, which assumed the dominance of the state over civil society and reserved the monopoly of legitimacy and authority of state elites, at the expense of social and economic elites” (Kazancigil, 1981: 48).

IV. Why Study the Political Elites and Turkish Nation-Building Process?

Works on nations and nationalism have typically focused on cases where nations emerged against an existing state (Szporluk, 1998; Brubaker, 1998). As well, there has traditionally been a preoccupation with European cases. Non-Western experiences –when looked into – have been discussed as a mirror image of the Western route. Differently put, those elements which were present in the West and which explain the rise of nations have been juxtaposed to the absence of the same elements in other, non-Western cases.

Turkey has certainly been one of the neglected countries: Theoretical debates and case studies alike have mostly relegated it to the background.¹³ However, this relative lack of interest does not make the Turkish case sociologically less appealing. In fact, the creation of the Turkish nation and its historical bases sets it apart as a unique case. This uniqueness is partly revealed by the fact that Turkey's nation-building process resists attempts at a neat fit into the existing typologies of nationalism. For instance, after reviewing his four different types of processes through which the "congruence between culture and state" was achieved, Gellner concludes that the Turkish case is "profoundly eccentric" since it does not fit easily into any of his four types (1997: 242).¹⁴

Turkish nation-building is one of the most extreme cases of transition from empire to nation. During this transformation not only the territorial boundaries and the nature of the population had shifted, but also state-society relations and the legitimization bases of the state were all significantly altered. Differently put, the transition from empire to nation entailed the simultaneous reconfiguration of economic, political, ideological and cultural spheres. Moreover, these radical changes took place at a head-spinning pace – all compressed into the time frame of the present study.¹⁵

¹³ There are some exceptions to this case. For example, see Breuilly (1982).

¹⁴ For a detailed look at his four different "time zones" which characterized different routes to nations and nationalism see Gellner (1996b).

¹⁵ However, and despite the differences which separate the Turkish case from others, it is still possible (and useful) to categorize it as a case of "state-framed nationalism". As defined by Brubaker, state-framed understanding of nationhood and nationalism refers to the conception of

An analysis of the formation of the Turkish nation through the prism of its three main dimensions (i.e. language, education, and citizenship) presents a number of challenges to the literature of nations and nationalism. One recently formulated approach to nations and nationalism is ethnosymbolism. A central theme underscored by this approach is the element of continuity which defines a group of people as a nation. Differently put, those myths, memories and symbols all of which are associated with an *ethnie* become the major determinants of nations (as well as nation-building) (Smith, 1986a). This approach fails in two respects: first, and as noted by Guibernau (2004) it heavily relies on a cultural understanding of nations at the expense of the political sphere. Certainly, the Turkish case illustrates the significance of the political sphere. Secondly, the emphasis on (historical) continuity should be questioned. Smith emphasizes that “identification with a past is the key to creating a nation, because only by ‘remembering the past’ can a collective identity come into being” (1996a: 383). History writing, knowing one’s past, and feeling an affinity to it, are of course central elements –especially to the success of nation-building projects. However, it is also important to look at which history comes to the fore. In other words, it is not the case that just any history would do. Thus, we should look at how this history (or histories) was sifted through by intellectuals, political elites and other relevant actors. In addition and as will be discussed below, in the Turkish case, it was not historical continuity that defined history writing. Rather, in the hands of the political elite and intellectuals, history became highly fractured.¹⁶

Turkey also presents a challenge to the modernist accounts of nations and nationalism. Although there is so much to be learned from Gellner’s account of nations and nationalism, in one crucial respect his arguments do not fit the Turkish case: Turkey was not one of Gellner’s industrial societies up until the end of 1930s. Yet, we see that the 1920s and 1930s were decades during which

nation as “congruent with the state, as institutionally and territorially ‘framed’ by the state” (Brubaker, 1998: 300).

¹⁶ Works which seek to apply ethnosymbolic approach to the Turkish case fail for these two main reasons. Neither do these works pay due attention to the complexity of the process of nation-building. For an application of ethnosymbolism to the Turkish case, see Canefe (2002).

nationalism as an ideology took a stronghold, and the nation was built. Hence, Turkey in this respect is an interesting example which deviated from the “norm”.

Finally, the Turkish case also runs counter to those works which emphasize the incompatibility of Islam and nationalism. Armstrong (1982), in his defense of this position, underlines that the nomadic nature of Islam historically fostered an ethos of nomadism as opposed to feelings of attachment for a territory –which in turn was an important ingredient for nationalism. This is contrasted to Christianity which was a territorially based religion. Another scholar, Hasting (1997) compared Christianity with Islam, and pointed out one significant difference between them: In the case of Islam, the understanding of Arabic as a sacred language blocked the emergence of vernacular nationalisms while in the Christian world no such impediment existed. Despite these arguments, what we see in the Turkish case was not an incompatibility of Islam and nationalism. Gerber (2007), for example, demonstrates that the above arguments do not hold when one analyzes how Islam was understood under the Ottoman Empire. The incompatibility thesis does not fit the Republican Turkey either. As will be demonstrated in my substantive chapters, Islam (for different reasons) was certainly part of the political elite’s rhetoric, and had a place in the process of defining and legitimating the nation as well as defining the rules of belonging to the nation.

V. Chapter Outlines

The first four chapters seek to situate my substantive discussions in a historical context as well as locating them theoretically and methodologically. Chapter 2 outlines the main debates within the literature of nations and nationalism. In doing so, it also discusses some of the alternative explanations suggested in the literature as to the rise of nations while locating the Turkish case in these debates. Chapter 3 consists of a discussion of the methodology adopted in this study (i.e. process tracing). In addition, it outlines the nature of the data, how

it was collected, difficulties faced in data collection as well as a brief explanation on why and how I chose the time frame of the present study.

Chapters 4 and 5 set the historical context through sketching the main developments leading up to the promulgation of the Republic. In doing so, I first discuss the Ottoman Empire, and how it was structured paying special attention to the millet system and state-society relations. This is followed by an examination of the 19th century reforms attempts and their impacts on different religious and ethnic groups in the Empire. The analyses in these two historical chapters also seek to bring out the main ideological currents of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. More specifically, a discussion of the Young Turks, their policies are detailed out. Finally, with the aim to locate where the Republican elite came from, I chart out some of the main characteristics of their socioeconomic origins.

Chapter 6 is an analysis of the content of language policies during the Kemalist era. The discussion pays special attention to the changing nature of these policies as well as language issues as a reflection of the different conceptualizations of nationhood. Similarly, chapters 7 and 8 look into the process of nation-building, and the definition of the rules of belonging through analyzing the contents of education and citizenship respectively. These three chapters also aim at identifying the reasons for the shifts in the content of the policies, and in the conceptualizations of nationhood. Finally, in chapter 9 the main findings are summarized. This chapter will also suggest directions for further research.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

I. Introduction

This study addresses the literature on nations and nationalism, and nation-building. A growing scholarly interest in nation-building characterized 1960s and 1970s. During this period, a lot of this interest was directed toward understanding the recently liberated ex-colonies, and their efforts at state and nation-building. Mostly developed within the modernization framework these earlier works discussed the process of nation-building as a result of modernizing forces (Deutsch, 1953). As Brubaker notes, one of the major shortcomings of this literature was its dismissal of ethnicity as a variable. More specifically, ethnicity was seen in opposition to nationhood, and was ignored as a component shaping the nation-building process (Brubaker, 1992: 81). To this shortcoming must be added the scant attention paid to the political sphere. Even though scholars did acknowledge that nations were essentially political communities, their works did not include the political elite as agents directly or indirectly shaping the nation-building processes. Neither did ideological factors enter into these analyses.

Recent literature rectified the above shortcomings while presenting us with other challenges: As Szporluk (1998) notes, the majority of studies done on nations and nationalism focus on nations that emerged against an already existing state. As a result countries such as Turkey do not (or only peripherally) appear as part of the literature and are relegated to background discussions.

In this chapter my main goal is to give an overview of the main debates and arguments in the literature on nations and nationalism. After making a conceptual note, I will first discuss the debate over the character of nations and the efforts at categorizing them. More specifically, this section will focus on the “civic versus ethnic” debate. The following section will look into alternative explanations offered to account for the rise of nations. In the final section I will briefly outline how the Turkish case has been dealt with in the literature. My

discussion will seek to review some of the works done on Turkish nation-building and to situate the case at hand within the wider literature.

II. A Conceptual Note

The literature on nations and nationalism has long engaged itself with clarifying what a nation means. Some scholars define nations along subjectivist terms. Subscribing to this outlook, Seton-Watson points out that “a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one” (1977:5). Similarly Connor maintains that “the essence of the nation is not tangible. It is psychological, a matter of attitude rather than fact” (1972: 42). A conceptualization of the nation along such subjective lines has a number of problems. More specifically, such definitions have been criticized as being too broad and as failing to distinguish national units from other collectivities such as ethnies (Gellner, 1983; Schnapper, 1998).

Moving away from subjective definitions the present study is going to adopt a (general) definition of nations which emphasizes the nation’s political nature. Accordingly, and following Schnapper, nations will be understood as “the integration of populations in a community of citizens, whose existence legitimates the internal and external action of the state” (1998: 16). Nation-building in turn is defined as the process through which a “community of citizens” is created, and its specific and unique constituent elements are defined and institutionalized.

In addition to the presence of a variety of competing definitions of nation, the literature is also (at times) characterized by a conceptual confusion of “nations” and “states”: While some scholars completely conflate the two (Giddens, 1985),¹⁷ others choose to talk about “states” and “state building” instead of “nations” since the latter is ‘too puzzling a concept’ (Tilly, 1975).

While acknowledging the relationship between the two concepts (i.e. “a nation is a community which tends to produce a state of its own” (Weber, 1991:

¹⁷ Giddens defines as “a collectivity existing within a clearly demarcated territory, which is subject to a unitary administration, reflexively monitored both by the internal state apparatus and those of other states” (1985: 26).

176)), the following discussions will be based on a conceptual distinction between nations and states which is also reflected in Schnapper's above mentioned definition.¹⁸

III. Categorizing Nations: Civic and Ethnic Nationhood as Organizing Principles

Categorizing different types of nations and nationhood has long been a scholarly endeavor. These categories have in turn been used not only to classify different countries but also different geographical regions. Meinecke's work on *Cosmopolitanism and the National State* [1907] was one of the earliest attempts in this direction. His classification took the form of dividing nations into two distinct groups as political nations (*Staatsnationen*) and cultural nations (*Kulturnationen*). The former was characterized by a common political history and constitution. The latter, on the other hand, was based on common literature, religion, and culture (Meinecke, [1907] 1970). Although Meinecke acknowledged the historical complexities involved in the development of nations (and hence the potential problematic nature of such a classification) his ideal types have long become a norm in sociological literature.

Moving into the second half of the 20th century it was in Kohn's works (1944; 1955) that we find two disparate categories of nations: Western nations organized predominantly along civic lines; and their Eastern counterparts along ethnic lines. Similar to Meinecke, Kohn discerned two different organizational principles – one based on political, the other on cultural (and also bloodlines). Furthermore, the distinction also involved a normative dimension. Kohn's depiction of civic nationalism of Western Europe was associated with the championing of liberty, inclusiveness, and universalism in these countries. This in turn was contrasted to its Eastern European counterparts, which were

¹⁸ As emphasized by Weber: "... nation is ... not identical with the 'people of a state', that is, with the membership of a given polity" (*Ibid.*, 172).

characterized as being exclusivist, particularistic, mystical and in short illiberal (Kohn, 1944: 329-32).¹⁹

More recently, in his comparative analyses of the French and German cases, Brubaker (1996) outlined a similar categorization.²⁰ His argument directed our attention to the more civic understanding of nationhood in the French case where the rules of belonging were framed (predominantly) along political lines. In this particular case nation is comprised of citizens who share an attachment to a political nation. On the other end of the spectrum is Germany where belonging was based on an ethnic understanding of nationhood – with an emphasis on culture and belonging defined along descent lines.²¹

This pursuit of categorization is both useful and problematic. It is useful since it provides the students of nations and nationalism with a general frame and ideal types to work with. At the same time, it is problematic since such categorizations can easily lead to an over-reliance on and reification of these (artificial) boundaries. As well, the very fact of labeling some nationalisms (and by implication nations), as “good” and others as “bad” remains an ethnocentric, and oversimplified snapshot of what in reality is a richer and more complex reality.²² As Hall notes, there is nothing inherently good about civic nationalism and that “civic nationalism may be as resolutely homogenizing as is ethnic nationalism” (Hall, 2003a: 28). Similarly, Yack reminds us of how intolerant a civic nation could be – as demonstrated by the case of present day United States as well as the French nation under the Jacobins (1999:115-6). Furthermore, nation-building processes and the final forms nations had taken have historically

¹⁹ Following a similar line of classification Plamenatz equated Western nationalism with attitudes of respect and cooperation and the Eastern ones with aggressive policies grounded on feelings of inferiority (Plamenatz, 1968; 1976).

²⁰ See also Ra’anan (1991) for a slightly different typology (i.e. Western (civic), Eastern (cultural/ethnic) and Southern (religious) nationalisms).

²¹ The analyses which focus on Turkey have also been largely framed along civic versus ethnic lines. With only a few exceptions scholars have acknowledged these distinctions and sought to situate Turkey accordingly. For an example see Kadioglu (1996).

²² Even though the normative dimension of this dichotomy has been criticized by many scholars some still hold on to the “good natured” civic nationalisms argument, and contrast it to the less benign ethnic ones. For an account which gives support to civic nationalism see Ignatieff (1994).

involved the fusion of both civic and ethnic elements – albeit in differing doses (Schnapper, 1998).²³

There are some analytical complications with a binary conceptualization of nationhood as well. As Brubaker emphasizes, the fundamental problem with the civic vs. ethnic categorization emanates from what each includes and excludes: If we were to define a civic understanding of nationhood as one which (in its strict form) involves “acultural, ahistorical, universal, voluntarist and rationalist understanding of nationhood”, then, we are running the risk of “defining the phenomenon out of existence” (Brubaker, 2004: 137). He goes on to remind us that “even the cases most often cited as paradigmatic of civic nationalism – France and America – involve a crucial cultural component” (*Ibid.*, 137). On the other hand, if one were to expand the definition so as to include common values, customs and memories, then one is blurring the distinction between civic and ethnic – ultimately rendering the categories useless.

The same problem is faced when defining what exactly constitutes an ethnic understanding of nationhood. A strict or “thick” definition is bound to be simplistic – based narrowly on biological descent; and would be unable to capture the characteristics of any (Western or Eastern) nation. A more encompassing definition, on the other hand, runs the risk of being too heterogenous. Either way, and as rightly emphasized by Brubaker, the core of the problem lies in situating culture as a variable: “The uncertain place of culture in the civic-ethnic scheme, calls into question the usefulness of the distinction itself” (*Ibid.*, 139).

Going beyond this scheme of binary categorizations would thus have the merit of capturing historical complexities. Put differently, understanding how and why certain elements (and not others) came together during specific nation-building processes would challenge us to leave binary conceptualizations of nationhood behind (Ozirimli, 2003).

²³ Schnapper also notes that these rigid categories have distorted scholars’ interpretation of classic texts on nations and nationalism. For instance, in her discussion of the main arguments of Renan and Feichte, she demonstrates the complexity of their arguments, which do not accord well with a binary way of classifying nations (1998: 139-40). Recent works have consistently pointed out the shortcomings of using such binary categories. Instead, these works emphasize that all nation-building processes combined elements from both. See for example, Hall (2003a); Schnapper (1998); Kumar (2003).

Brubaker's "modest alternative" as he calls it is what will be utilized in my discussion of the Turkish case. Instead of operating within ambiguous as well as highly restrictive civic versus ethnic categories Brubaker proposes to draw a distinction between "state-framed" and "counter-state" understandings of nationhood (Brubaker, 2004; 1998).²⁴ State-framed understanding of nationhood simply denotes the prevalence of the state – as opposed to citizenship- as its point of reference: nation (and nationhood) is "territorially and institutionally 'framed' by the state" (Brubaker, 1998: 300). In the case of counter-state nationalism, notions of nationhood are shaped against the territorial and institutional frame of an existing state or states.²⁵ Hence, there is nothing inherently civic with the former; nor is there anything inherently ethnic with the latter form.

This alternative way of framing different understandings of nationhood has the additional merit of looking at state policies through which nations are defined. More precisely,

"The notion of state-framed nationhood or nationalism enables us to talk about the way in which linguistic, cultural, and even (narrowly) ethnic aspects of nationhood and nationalism may be framed, mediated, and shaped by the state" (Brubaker, 2004: 144-45).

Instead of trying to situate cases into artificially defined and rigid dichotomous categories, the above analytical framework enables us to ask fruitful questions: What are the actual contents of state policies? What do these policies tell us about the understanding of nationhood in a specific country? The present study will be informed by this particular conceptualization: Using Brubaker's two

²⁴ For a different attempt at moving beyond the civic-ethnic division, see Nielsen (1999). He remains critical to this division and instead suggests that all nationalisms should be seen as cultural. Yet his argument falls prey to what Brubaker (2004) points out as too broad a categorization which in turn fails to capture different conceptions of nationhood and national identity. Ozkirimli offers us yet another way of going beyond this division by defining nationalism as a particular form of discourse. More specifically he proposes that we should redefine nationalism as "a particular way of seeing and interpreting the world, a frame of reference that helps us make sense of and structure the reality that surrounds us" (2005: 30).

²⁵ Reevaluating the French case through utilizing the above scheme shows us that "culture is constitutive – and not simply expressive- of French nationhood". Furthermore, this is a culture that is shaped by the state (*Ibid.*, cf. 306). It is also important to note that there is nothing contradictory about "state-framed" nationhood or nationalism having a cultural content either.

(alternative) types, the Turkish case could be defined as a case of “state framed nationhood”. Furthermore, the use of this particular definition will (re)direct our focus toward an analysis of the specific contents of state policies and elite rhetoric as they relate to issues of language, education and citizenship.

IV. The Rise of Nations: Alternative Paths and Explanations

a. Modernist Accounts versus Ethno-Symbolism

One of the main divisions in the literature of nations and nationalism pertains to how old nations are. Modernists²⁶ have long been arguing that nations are a recent phenomenon. Most famously, it was Gellner (1983) who underlined that nations and nationalism came about as a result of the particularities of industrial society; and thus reversed the traditional wisdom which argued that it was nations which engendered nationalism. In his framework, nations are all about the merging of the cultural and political spheres. Furthermore, cultural continuity, according to Gellner is contingent and inessential (1996a: 369).²⁷ What was more significant for Gellner was that there was nothing natural or manifest about nationalism or nationality (1964: 150); and that the clue to our understanding as to why nations came about lied in the inner workings of industrial societies.

Writing in 1972 W. Connor had complained about the lack of interest in or the deliberate neglect of scholars of ethnicity when discussing the formation of nations. In particular, his criticisms were directed towards the works of Karl Deutsch (1953) (and others) who adopt such frameworks. In his article Connor criticized the latter of assuming a smooth, automatic transition between modernization and the formation of nations – completely ignoring the conflictual nature of the process (Connor, 1972). ‘Bringing back the ethnic origins of nations’

²⁶ For example, Gellner (1983), Anderson (1992), and Hobsbawm (1990).

²⁷ “The cultural shred and patches used by nationalism are often arbitrary historical inventions. Any old shred or patch would have served as well” (Gellner, 1983: 56). For a detailed discussion of contingency in Gellners argument see Beissinger (1998).

thus was a considerable shift in the literature (Smith, 1986b); and ethno-symbolism could be understood as an extension of this effort.

More recently, ethnosymbolic accounts – represented by the works of Anthony D. Smith (1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2004), John Hutchinson (2005), and John Armstrong (1982) – have sought, and contra Gellner, that ‘nations did not have navels’.²⁸ According to this perspective it is the symbols, myths, memories and values that are central to the formation of nations. Furthermore, Smith also establishes a relationship between *ethnies*²⁹ and nations arguing that “the latter are modeled on, and often develop from earlier ethnic communities” (Smith, 2004: 196). Consequently, different shapes and forms nations take are essentially informed by different types of *ethnies*.³⁰ At the heart of this approach is an emphasis of the significance of myths of ethnic origin and ethnic selection, and myth-memories of golden ages (*Ibid.*, 197).

Hence, ethnosymbolic accounts challenge modernist scholars (such as Gellner (1983), Anderson (1991), Hobsbawm (1983a), and Breuilly (1982)) on two main accounts: First, nations are old; and second, ethnic roots are a necessary condition for the emergence of nations (and nationalisms).

Although arguments along ethnosymbolic lines are significant contributions to present literature (hence, corrects, for example, the earlier neglect of the role of ethnicity in the studies of nations and nationalism), it nonetheless remains as a predominantly cultural analysis at the expense of the political sphere. More particularly, it ignores that symbolic elements themselves (their selection, the specific uses they are put to etc.) are politicized during nation-building processes (to which the Turkish case is an example). Differently put, the link between culture and politics is what seems to be missing in these accounts. Consequently, they leave out a number of questions unanswered: “Who decides

²⁸ For a recent discussion of this approach, its different aspects as well as some of the criticisms raised against it, also see Guibernau and Hutchinson (eds.) (2004). For a detailed critique of the approach, see Ozkirimli (2003).

²⁹ Smith defines *ethnie* as “a named unit of population with common ancestry, myths, and shared historical territory, and some measure of solidarity, at least among the elite” (2001: 19).

³⁰ Smith goes on to distinguish between three main routes to nation-formation: “a. bureaucratic incorporation of other classes and regions by an upper class ethnic state, b. vernacular mobilization by a returning intelligentsia intent on rediscovering its communal roots, c. pioneering settlement by an ethnic fragment wedded to a providentialist destiny” (2004: 197-98).

what is authentic or not? For which purposes? How does the selection process [of myths, symbols etc.] take place? Which premodern materials are selected, and which ones are left out?" (Ozkirimli, 2003). As Ozkirimli points out "what matters is not the presence of premodern cultural materials, but the selection process, the ways in which these are used and abused" (*Ibid.*).³¹ Similarly, Zimmer maintains that "what matters with regard to the construction of national identities is less what resources political actors draw upon than how they put these resources into practical use" (2003a: 181).

b. The Rise of Nations in Western Europe and Beyond

Works focusing on nations and nationalism suggest a multitude of variables in explaining the rise of nations. Looking mostly at Western European cases, a number of scholars have underlined the role of war-making in the rise of nations. In Tilly's analysis, for instance, warfare appears as the central variable for the development of the modern state, demarcation of national territories, and the strengthening of the notion of national sovereignty (Tilly, 1975; 1990).

Another account, which incorporates the military sphere but also moves beyond that, is that of Mann's (1993). In his second volume on *The Sources of Social Power* we follow the creation of nations and notions of nationhood as contingent on military, economic, ideological and social forces. Similar to Tilly, Mann's account also recognizes the dual creation of modern states and nations and their impacts on each other. However, different from Tilly, Mann delves into the differing nature(s) of nations which crystallized as a result of the dynamic interaction between military, economic, ideological and political spheres.

Central to Mann's analysis is geopolitical rivalry and how different states dealt with the rising and changing demands of warfare. It is during this - what he calls the "militarist phase" that class and regional grievances were politicized on a

³¹ This is not to say that ethnicity, ethnic solidarity and homogenization are insignificant elements in understanding the rise of nations, and the process of nation-building. However, as Zubaida notes "ethnic homogeneity and solidarity are often products of a stable history of state and nation formation" (1989: 329) as opposed to being a precondition to it.

national scale. The end result in every case is the creation of nations and nationalisms –albeit in different forms: In the case of Britain and France, nations were “coterminous with existing states” and hence took the form of “state-reinforcing” nations and nationalism. In the case of Austria-Hungary, Ottoman and Russian Empires we see the emergence of “state-subverting” nations. Finally, Prussia is an example of a third type of nation which he calls “state-creating” (Mann, 1995; 1996).

All three types in turn initially developed as a result of a drive toward democratic representation, and demands for political citizenship: “Over matters of political representation and state reform, class and national consciousness developed and fused” (Mann, 1996: 151). Yet depending on the regime type of the country and the way the political elite reacted to such demands nations and nationalisms took different forms. In cases where the state responded to demands for democracy by institutionalizing representative institutions, nations developed a milder form of nationalism. In other cases where failure of such institutionalization was the outcome, exclusionist forms of nationalism took root. Moreover, these latter cases also “seem to have had a more ethnic base” (Mann, 1995).

The links between geopolitics, the economic and political spheres are also part of Colley’s *Britons: Forging the Nation* (1992). Concentrating on the British case, her study focuses on geopolitical rivalry and its effects on the formation of national consciousness.³² According to Colley, the British nation was forged predominantly by external forces and their subsequent impacts on the domestic scene. Within this context, the loss of Transatlantic territories, the revolution in France, and warfare on the continent as well across the ocean led to significant changes in the political and social scene. During this period, “Britishness was superimposed over an array of internal differences in response to contact with the Other, and above all in response to conflict with the Other” (Colley, 1992: 6). Linked to this was the role of religion, and more specifically Protestantism, which

³² In terms of timing she situates this development in the period between the Act of Union of 1707 and the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837 (Colley, 1992).

gave the people a sense of worth, and place in history. Moreover, since its influence transcended class, linguistic and other divisions, Protestantism also played a role in the unification of the country (*Ibid.*, 19). It was religion (in the context of protracted warfare) which played a role in converting “peasants into patriots” (*Ibid.*, 389).

Defeat in America and wars with France brought the governing elite under attack. In an urge to stop the erosion of their legitimacy the elite turned to a demonstration of their patriotic ways.³³ However, this patriotism did not automatically translate into an embrace of nationalism. Neither did it lead to an effort to expand national consciousness from above. In fact, a sense of Britishness developed from below.

According to Colley, the political elite were hesitant and at times hostile to nationalism mainly because this could potentially lead to demands on power-sharing (i.e. expansion of political participation). It was through the actions of different social and sectional groups – driven by their aspirations and enabled by the state’s urgent need to recruit soldiers – that national consciousness developed (Colley, 1986). “Almost all sectional interest groups in Britain resorted to nationalist language and activism to advance their claims to wider civic recognition” (*Ibid.*, 116). This in turn resulted in the increasing salience of classes as well as the development of national consciousness.

Both in Colley’s and Mann’s accounts the rise of nations are inextricably linked to warfare and (the rise of) classes. Furthermore, in Colley’s account a deliberate involvement of the governing elite became part of this picture after 1870s – at a time when Britain’s imperial power was on a decline. It was only within this context that the political elite resorted to nationalism and nationalizing policies³⁴ (*Ibid.*, 117).

³³ This attempt of the reassertion of their power also went hand in hand with another process: the mixing of the non-English elite with their already politically powerful English counterparts. As a result, and strengthened by intermarriages, increasing numbers of Welsh, Scottish and Anglo-Irish elite became part of the governing elite (*Ibid.*, 165-191).

³⁴ For example, it was only after during this later phase that national education system was put into place (*Ibid.*, 117).

Moving away from warfare and economic transformations and focusing instead on the political elites' ways of thinking and acting Liah Greenfeld's account on the rise of nations and nationalism offers us yet another variable at work. Looking at Russia, England, France, Germany, and United States of America Greenfeld underlines that it was not industrialization that had led to the rise of nations and different understandings of nationhood. Instead, in all of these five cases it was the elite and their actions that mattered which in turn should be analyzed through their responses to a specific form of 'identity crisis'. It was as a result of this crisis that nationalism and national consciousness developed, and a specific national identity crystallized. In Greenfeld's words:

"[Nationalism] was a response of individuals in elite sectors of society who were personally affected by ... contradictions and were placed by them in a state of status-inconsistency" (Greenfeld, 1993: 49).

Caught up in the middle of significant and often fast-paced social and political transformations, elites found themselves in a state of anomie. Put differently, "their status did not correspond to its traditional definition, and thus they were rendered marginal" (Greenfeld, 1990: cf.551). In the English case it was the Henrician aristocracy, but also the gentry and the literate urban population which were faced with this status-inconsistency and the insecurity that was attached to it. In France, it was (initially) the nobility (Greenfeld, 1992). Eventually, and a result of their ambivalent and often contradictory social status the elite turned to nationalist ideas as their solution. In other words, nationalist ideas were the only force to restore the dignity, which the elite had lost (Greenfeld, 1990; 1992).

In this framework various understandings of nationhood emerge as the direct result of the ideas, and actions of the elite class (including intellectuals as well as the political elite). It is them who meddled with a series of ideas and carved a particular understanding of what nation meant, which eventually served

the purpose of fighting against their status-inconsistency and the “*ressentiment*”.³⁵ In Greenfeld’s formulation national identity “guarantees status with dignity to every member of whatever is defined as a polity or society. It is this quality that recommended nationalism to European (and later to other) elites whose status was threatened or who were prevented from achieving the status they aspired to” (Greenfeld, 1993: 49).

In non-Western European contexts, such as Russia, the fight to regain dignity and to eliminate the status-inconsistency involved a struggle with alternative interpretations of the image of the West. “Transvaluation of values”³⁶ was the ultimate outcome of *ressentiment*. The turning point in the Russian case seems to be the conflictual policies of Catherine the Great: Some of the changes she brought about worked to stabilize the situation of the nobility.³⁷ Yet some others had exactly the opposite effect – intensifying the anxiety and insecurity of the very group of people she sought to strengthen. According to this account, the formation of Russian national identity was a consequence of these ambivalent and at times contradictory policies by the imperial center, and the consequent reactions of the nobility.

The Russian nobility and intellectuals first seized the West as their ideal. However, as soon as reaching this ideal was perceived to be an impossibility they moved on to a new stage where the West was dissected and its undesirable sides were exposed. The eventual definition of the nation came when the elite brought forth an understanding of what a Russian was through turning inwards. This final stage involved them leaving the Western notions of reason behind, and instead embracing their spiritual side. Accordingly, Russianness was connected to the “soul” which in turn was derived from “blood and soil” (*Ibid.*, 588); and the Russian peasant, one group that was not contaminated by Western civilization, became the national symbol.

³⁵ Borrowing the term from Nietzsche, Greenfeld uses the term to mean “a psychological state resulting from suppressed feelings of envy and hatred and the impossibility to satisfy these feelings” (Greenfeld, 1990: cf. 551).

³⁶ Greenfeld defines transvaluation of values as the process through which “imported ideas were reinterpreted to the internal reality of the country” (*Ibid.*, 551).

³⁷ For instance, with the 1785 Charter of Nobility, they acquired a number of economic and status privileges including tax exemption (*Ibid.*, 559).

Even though Greenfeld's account is rich with detail, and significant in its attempt to bring in the elites and their impact in shaping nationhood, it nevertheless reduces a complex process to the feelings of *ressentiment* and responses to it. In doing so, the work ignores the actual "political fields" (Brubaker, 1996) in which these understandings of nationhood take shape. Thus, a more fruitful approach would be to situate the elite – their rhetoric, and actions – within the structural conditions they were facing.

V. Nation-Building and the Turkish Case

The Turkish case has both similarities and differences when compared to the Western European cases. Works on nations and nation-building usually treat Turkey in a precursor fashion. When it does appear, it is approached as a success case where radical transformations were undertaken from above. There are a number of arguments which come out of these works that help us understand the Turkish case.³⁸ However, still Turkey does not fit neatly or completely in any of the above discussed frames or theories. When looked at the specific dimensions of nation-building –as is done in the present study – Turkish experience shows at times similarities, at other times differences to the country-specific cases above.

Similar to Western European cases, and with regard to the conditions under which the new nation was forged, geopolitical rivalry and conflicts were of central significance in Turkey: While nationalist movements and the Balkan Wars shook the Empire deeply, the First World War dismantled it completely. The political elite who would be in charge of nation-building had to deal with the consequences of these military defeats while also fighting against the occupation of some parts of the country. Thus, the concerns and preoccupations of the elite, especially during these early years, were heavily shaped by the experience of military disasters and the War of Independence.

³⁸ For example, Breuilly's (1982) comparative work –which pays attention to the political character of nationalism (as well as nation-building)

The Republican elite ‘inherited’ a territory which was predominantly agricultural, very poor, and illiterate. In other words, industrialism or industrialization was not part of the initial conditions; rather it became a goal. In this respect, Turkey does not fit in well with Gellner’s (1983) main framework of nationalism and nations emerging as a result of the logic of industrial societies. Contrary to the cases discussed by Mann (1993), nor were class struggles or the demands of different classes for political participation was part of the equation. It was not the presence but rather the absence, for example, of a bourgeoisie, that the Republican elite were faced with.³⁹

Until recently, the works that look into the formation of the Turkish nation have been mostly descriptive in nature. Some of these works can easily be read as an uncritical celebration of the Kemalist era – listing and underlining the reforms, and underlining the success of the nation-building project. To this should be added accounts which interpret the process as a result of the pre-planned actions of a rational, modernizing and (completely) homogenous political elite. In these latter accounts the process of nation formation appears to have been an automatic and thus smooth process – swiftly reaching the goals which had been set out at the very start.⁴⁰

These explanations certainly underestimate the dynamic and (at times) conflictual nature of the Turkish nation-building process. They do so in a number of ways: They ignore the divisions among the political elite itself – especially during the initial years of the Kemalist regime.⁴¹ As well, they also push aside the assimilationist as well as differentialist policies that were implemented during this period.⁴² Finally, these works are generally characterized by sweeping generalizations regarding the nature of the Kemalist reforms. My analyses in the substantive chapters will seek to demonstrate the complex character of nation-building which is dismissed in these official narrations of Republican history.

³⁹ For more on this, also see Chapter 1.

⁴⁰ See Kili (1994), Lewis (1968), Cecen (1997; 1995) Tunaya (2002), Karal (1981) and Heper (1985) for a treatment of the early Republican period along these highly romanticized lines. Also see Gulalp (1994) for a critique of this literature.

⁴¹ For two works which point out the weakness of such an approach see Demirel (1994), Yildiz (2001).

⁴² For example, Kili (1994).

More recently, there have been significant efforts at building a more analytical understanding of the early Republican era. Numerous works have been published concentrating on specific aspects of this period.⁴³ Other studies have tried to position the Turkish case within the civic versus ethnic axes (Kadioglu (1996). There have also been attempts at applying some of the current sociological approaches to the Turkish case.⁴⁴ The present study will be informed by, yet at times, be critical to this recent literature. More specifically, my aim is to add onto the existing works through demonstrating the dynamic and complex nature of the Turkish nation-building process.

⁴³ For example, see Ersanli (2003;2002) on the Turkish Historical Thesis; Ustel (2004) on education policies; Tuncay (1999) on the Party structure; Kandiyoti (1991a) and Arat (2004; 2000) on the status of women under the Republic; and Bali (2001; 1999) on the state of the Jewish-Turkish minority during the early Republic, Bora (1997) on national character/identity, and Parla and Davison (2004; 2008) on Kemalism, and secularism. I refer to these works in more detail in my substantive chapters.

⁴⁴ One such attempt comes from Canefe (2004) who applies ethnosymbolist approach to the Turkish case, and argues it to be a perfect fit to understanding the Turkish case. My main disagreement with Canefe's account is the emphasis she places on ethnicity as the main building-block of nationhood. As my discussions will reveal, the ethnic element of nationhood came late, and was always accompanied by a stronger –assimilationist – understanding.

Chapter 3 – Methodology and Sources

I. Introduction

This is an historical sociological study of the construction of the Turkish nation. The focus is further confined to three terrains (i.e. language, education, and citizenship) and how the political elite formulated the contents of and the rules of belonging to the nation. Accordingly, an analysis of whether and/or to what extent the Kemalist cadres were successful in their endeavors is not part of the present study's scope.⁴⁵

The early years of the Republic were characterized by a series of reforms which pertained to the building of the Turkish nation. These transformations were debated in, ratified and undertaken by the Grand National Assembly (and so the RPP) – thus by the political elite. Consequently, an analysis of the formation of the new Turkish nation clearly directs us to the study of the political elite itself.

In the introduction to his *Nations and Nationalism* Hobsbawm maintains that “nations and their associated phenomena ... [are] dual phenomena, constructed essentially from above, but which cannot be understood unless from below” (1990: 10).⁴⁶ Nation formation is indeed a process which involves both the political elite and the various groups in society. Differently put, even in cases such as Turkey where the constituent elements of the nation were shaped by the political elite, their definitions and the direction of their policies did not take place in a vacuum. In the Turkish context those societal reactions to the actions of the state which were perceived as being significant by the elites themselves certainly played a part in redirecting their actions. However, on the whole, the political elite remained as the central agents of the nation-building process. Consequently, the focus of the present study is going to be limited to the political elite, their perceptions, discussions and actions.

⁴⁵ For a work which captures the distinction between the process of nation-building, and its actual outcome (i.e. the success/failure of the Kemalist elite) see articles in Kasaba and Bozdogan (eds.) (1997).

⁴⁶ For the same line of argument raised in the context of German nation-building, see Sheehan (1981: 16).

One potential danger in concentrating our attention on the political elite is to see their actions as being strategic and calculating (Brubaker, 1989). Although there is certainly some truth to the self-interested, manipulative nature of elites, this way of conceptualizing the nation-building process disregards the complexity of the process. Rather, my attention will be directed towards the processes through which the interests of this elite were identified and constituted (Brubaker, 1998: 291-292; Mann, 1993: 21).

The present chapter includes discussions of the methodology used, the nature of the data, and the process of data collection. In the first section I will briefly review some of the arguments raised against the usefulness of historical sociology. In the second section, I will address the strengths and limitations of single (historical) case studies. In the third section, I will focus on the specific research methodology followed in this study –namely, process tracing. The fourth section will discuss the nature of the data, and the process of data collection. The sixth and seventh sections will provide some brief notes on the Republican elite's background and their biographies, and the selection of the time frame respectively.

II. A Brief Note on the Field of Historical Sociology

The very foundation of sociology as a discipline has been historically grounded –exemplified by the works of the “fathers of sociology” such as Alexis de Tocqueville, Karl Marx, and Max Weber. Yet, there was a “partial eclipse of historical sociology” (Skocpol, 1984) which dates back to the aftermath of World War II, and which lasted until the 1970s.⁴⁷ Even after its “rebirth” and a continuous stream of groundbreaking contributions to sociology,⁴⁸ from time to

⁴⁷ For detailed discussions underlying the reasons for this “eclipse” as well as the rise of historical sociology see Smith (1991), Skocpol (1984), and Calhoun (1996).

⁴⁸ To cite a few from a very long list of such contributions, we should include the works of Moore (1966), E. P. Thompson (1963), Tilly (1975), Bendix (1977), Anderson (1974), and more recently Hall (1985), Skocpol (1979), Goldstone (1991), and Mann (1986; 1993). For a discussion of the contributions of British historical sociologists, see Hall (1989).

time, the “usefulness” and legitimacy of historical sociological works have been questioned.

Some sociologists hold the belief that history and sociology are and must stay as separate disciplines; and they urge sociologists to refrain from doing historical research except when it is absolutely necessary. Goldthorpe (1991), an advocate of this line of argument, maintains that history is a study of “relics” – thus an incomplete study of the past. Sociology, on the other hand, is concerned about contemporary issues and must remain to do so. According to Goldthorpe the limitations faced in the form of “incomplete relics”, the “absence of control over data generation”, and the consequent problematic nature of the evidence make the legitimacy and usefulness of historical sociology highly suspect.

The claims that the methods and data used by historical sociologists are inferior to those who choose to focus on present-time social phenomena lack a sound basis. Such assumptions are also counterproductive for the discipline as a whole.

Convincing arguments against these claims have been offered by a number of historical sociologists. For example, and directly addressing the arguments of Goldthorpe, Mann (1994) underlines that even though historical sociological work faces certain limitations, the discipline of sociology as a whole is not immune to methodological and data problems either.⁴⁹ Differently put, regardless of whether a sociologist is studying the past or the present, obstacles surrounding data gathering and interpretation as well as issues surrounding methodology are a constant. The crucial point for any sociologist is to recognize these limitations, and if possible to remedy them.

Despite difficulties faced by sociologists of different ‘persuasions’, the important point to remember is that

“Sociology which is neither parochial nor concerned to generate wholly abstract propositions⁵⁰ about the nature of any human society must include the study of the past in its framework” (*Ibid.*, 46).

⁴⁹ For a detailed discussion of this point see Bryant (1994).

⁵⁰ Another attack against historical sociologists came from “rational choice theorists” who urged the former to formulate abstract propositions and in a fashion which would not be context-dependent (Kiser and Hechter, 1991). For a critique of this particular argument see Mann (1994).

The present study is informed by this particular understanding of sociology. Accordingly, while acknowledging the challenges presented, for example by the limited access to historical data, I will aim to link evidence and theory so as to suggest ways of refining the latter.

III. Note on Single-Case Research

The rise of historical sociology after 1960s took the form of a heavy emphasis on comparative analyses which – until recently – also have been accompanied by a certain amount of skepticism towards single historical case studies. This skepticism, according to Rueschemeyer, “... rests ultimately on the mistaken identification of a single case with a single observation” (2003: 318). Consequently, it was thought that single case studies have no bearing on causal inference. Instead, they should be relegated to the role of generating new hypotheses.

Once we dispel the confusion between the concepts of a case and an observation, it becomes clear that single case studies actually can and do test an existing theory.⁵¹ Here, Hall’s distinction between the two concepts becomes significant: He defines a case as “a single unit where the outcome being investigated is unit-level variation” while an observation is “a piece of data drawn from that unit and pertinent to the theories being examined” (Hall, 2003: 396). Thus, based on this distinction, it is possible for a case to provide not only one, single observation “on the principal outcome of interest”, but also a number of observations which could then be used to test a theory “including ones bearing on the causal processes specified by the theory” (*Ibid.*, 396). The same point is also stressed by Rueschemeyer:

“... the study of single historical cases can do much more than merely generate initial hypotheses. It not only can develop new theoretical ideas, but it can also

⁵¹ Also see Mahoney (2001a), and George and Bennett (2005) on the strengths of single case studies.

put them to the test, and use the results in the explanation of outcomes” (2003: 307).

Through paying close attention to theory, evidence, and the link between the two, single case studies can and do lead us to an examination and testing of theoretical propositions. As pointed out by Bennett and Elman “case studies are often mistakenly criticized for having a “degrees of freedom” problem, when in fact within-case methods may provide evidence that bears on multiple testable implications of a theory within a single case” (2006: 460).

Moreover, the depth of data which is present in single case research allows these studies to capture the complexity of social and political processes, such as nation-building. Of course, the researcher should be wary of the fact that, although possible,⁵² a single case study is rarely enough by itself to refute a general theory in its entirety. However, a misfit between the findings of the case and the existing theories do prompt us to ask new theoretical questions as well as suggest modifications to existing explanations. This is also the aim of the present study: Through looking at the process of nation-building in Turkey, I will seek to capture the dynamic and complex nature of this process. In doing so, and using historical data, I also will address the gaps in the existing literature as well as suggesting certain modifications to it. As well, even though this is a single case historical study, the analysis will also be informed by comparative as well as other case studies done in the field.

IV. Process Tracing

This study adopts “process tracing”⁵³ as its research method. This particular method is especially useful for testing theories as well as developing new theoretical questions when the researcher is focusing on a single case (Hall,

⁵² Here, E. P. Thompson (1963) analysis on the formation of English working class comes to mind.

⁵³ The method of process tracing appears and is discussed under other names. For example, Campbell (1975) refers to it as “pattern matching”. A very similar method is discussed by Hall (2003) as “systematic process analysis”.

2003: 396; Mahoney, 2003: 360-61; Goldstone, 2003: 47; Bennett and Elman, 2006; George and Bennett, 2005).

Goldstone defines process tracing as the analysis of a case as a "... sequence (or several concatenating sequences) of events and showing how those events are plausibly linked given the interests and situations faced by groups or individual actors" (Goldstone, 2003: 47).⁵⁴ Moreover, the method does not assume that actions will have intended consequences. Rather, it emphasizes that "actions are understandable in terms of the knowledge, intent, and circumstances that prevailed at the time decisions were made" (*Ibid.*, 47-8).

Bennett and Elman (2006) suggest that in within-case or single case studies which utilize the process tracing method, certain conditions must be met for the outcome of the analysis to be convincing. Two of these conditions refer to period-selection, and the consistency of the evidence.

In relation to the first condition Bennett and Elman (2006) draw our attention to the fact that: "An account that runs from a suitably chosen beginning to the end of the story is likely to be more persuasive than one that starts or ends at an odd or unconvincing moment" (2006: 463). The choice of the particular time period of the present study was made keeping this warning in mind. The opening of the GNA in 1920 started off the process of nation-building (which is also illustrated by the lively debates and discussions within the Parliament). The end point, 1938 was chosen since the event of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's death marked the end of the Kemalist regime which was followed (especially in the following decade) by a change of the political life of the country (i.e. transition to a multi-party system). As well, by the end of the 1930s a particular understanding of nationhood was crystallized.

Second, a process tracing analysis is based on evidence which –preferably – is consistently present all throughout the narrative. The relation of this evidence to the main explanation(s) of the case under study would be stronger if the former

⁵⁴ As an illustration Goldstone refers to his own study on revolutions where the main argument is a causal link between population growth in agrarian bureaucracies and revolution. In order to demonstrate this link, he did not start with a demonstration of a statistically significant link between these two variables. Rather, and using his cases, he built a causal chain (of events) which connected population growth to revolutionary conflict (2003: 48).

covers multiple data points (*Ibid.*, 464). This condition is also met in the present work. For instance, the argument that the role of religion had changed its form and content over the years is supported by looking at data coming from the three main dimensions of nation-building (i.e. language, education, and citizenship).

Finally, this study will also be informed by the (Weberian) interpretative approach to the historical sociological phenomenon at hand (Weber, 1991).⁵⁵ Consequently, “narratives” or sequential accounts of concrete, specific events as well as the actors which take part in these events (Stryker, 1996: 304) will be central to my discussions.⁵⁶

V. Data Collection and the Nature of Archival Resources

The present study is based on an in-depth analysis of archival and other primary sources. The archival materials pertaining to the Republican period are found in two main archives. The first of these is the Prime Minister’s Republic Archives (Basbakanlik Cumhuriyet Arsivleri). The second is the archives at the *Grand National Assembly Documentation Center* (Turkiye Buyuk Millet Meclisi Arsivleri). The nature of the data found in each of these archives is different.

The data available at the Republican Archives consist of documents catalogued under individual Ministries. They mainly consist of one or two page documents. Data collection in this Archive was undertaken through utilizing ministerial catalogues.⁵⁷

More specifically, the data collected in the Prime Minister’s Republic Archives come from four catalogues: the *Catalogue of the Cabinet Resolutions* (Bakanlar Kurulu Kararlari Katalogu), the *Catalogue of the Directorate of*

⁵⁵ It should be noted that Goldstone’s definition of process tracing also incorporates an interpretative approach to sociology.

⁵⁶ What Stryker calls as “strategic narrative”, is relevant here. He notes that “strategic narrative means incorporating particular views of history, of theory and of their interrelationship” (*Ibid.*, 310). Thus, in a general sense, it refers to “figuring out who did what, when, where, why, and with what consequences” and tying these to theory (*Ibid.*, 309). Thus, as a tool, strategic narrative not only pays attention to the link between theory and evidence, but also to the relationship between actors and events (and/or processes).

⁵⁷ These catalogues provide indices by subject, keyword and name. There also exists a summary (i.e. one or two sentences) of the content of each document.

Religious Affairs (Diyanet Isleri Baskanligi Katalogu), the *Catalogue of the Private Secretary* (Basbakanlik Ozel Kalem Mudurlugu Katalogu), and the *Catalogue of the Republican People's Party* (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Katalogu).

My survey of these catalogues covered the period between 1920 and 1938. As mentioned above, these documents are mostly one or two page documents, giving a summary, or sometimes the original text of the resolutions taken.⁵⁸

The first catalogue, the *Catalogue of Cabinet Resolutions*, mainly consists of documents such as summaries of various laws enacted; drafts of laws; official decrees passed; and decisions approved by the Cabinet on individual applications for citizenship. These documents include a brief summary of decisions made (i.e. one or two page documents).

The *Catalogue of the Directorate of Religious Affairs* contains relatively limited data in volume. The existing data comprise of letters and documents that had been sent to various branches of the Directorate by the Cabinet.⁵⁹ In relation to the content, the material includes a variety of matters including copies of some of the laws passed by the Grand National Assembly; rules that should be followed during national holidays; the abolition of caliphate; and various issues pertaining to the religious sphere (such as the resolution on the appropriateness of wearing hats during prayers). Similar to the Catalogue of Cabinet Resolutions, these documents are one or two page documents with no further details attached.

The documents under the *Catalogue of the Private Secretary* predominantly pertain to late 1940s. This catalogue includes correspondence between top politicians; short notes written on their travels around the country, and telegraphs sent to some Members of the Parliament. There are also some letters written by various individuals to the Prime Ministers; and news on Turkey which had appeared on foreign newspapers and magazines.

Finally, the documents of the Republican People's Party (the *Catalogue of the Republican People's Party*) were also researched. It should be noted that not

⁵⁸The catalogues in this archive pertain to the period 1920-1950. Most of the documents in these catalogues belong to later periods, thus remain outside of the time frame of this study.

⁵⁹The documents in this collection do not cover all cities and towns in Turkey. However, they are representative as they do include the major towns and cities.

all the documents belonging to this catalogue are available for researchers. The organizational structure of the Party consists of 14 bureaus. These bureaus deal with organization and elections; citizen complaints and requests; information-gathering; inspection; *People's Houses* (Halkevleri); military affairs; education and culture; (Party) publications; workers and unions; economy; health; judicial affairs; and financial affairs.⁶⁰

The content of the existing Party archives ranges from documents on women's admission to the Party, letters sent by citizens to the Party, information on celebrations held at various towns and cities during the "Turkish Goods Week" (*Yerli Mallari Haftasi*) to the activities organized by and letters sent to various People's Houses.

The collection available at the Archives of the Grand National Assembly proved to be a much richer and sociologically more interesting source. Consequently, the present study utilizes this data most extensively. These sources are completely catalogued, and directly accessible to researchers. In these archives, a survey of the transcripts of the *Zabit Ceridesi* (Transcripts of Parliamentary Debates) for the period 1920-1938 was undertaken. The *Secret Minutes of the Closed Sessions of the Grand National Assembly* for the period 1920-1924 (which were published in 1985) was also surveyed.

It is important to note that there exist limits to the availability of and access to the archival data at the Grand National Assembly. The main shortcoming here is the unavailability of the minutes of various committees. This limitation, however, is partly remedied as a short summary of the discussions that had taken place at the committees is usually included in the main text of the transcripts.

Transcripts of the Republican People's Party Congresses are another primary. These general congresses took place in 1924, 1931, and 1935. Some of the issues discussed in the Parliament were first brought up, albeit in a more general fashion, during these congresses. Hence, this particular source is a good

⁶⁰ At the time of my archival research out of these 14 bureaus, documents belonging to only the first 5 bureaus were fully catalogued. Moreover, the existing collection is but only a small part that remained after the destruction of most of the Party's files.

accompaniment (i.e. to corroborate evidence) to the *Zabit Ceridesi*. As well, the Party's rules and regulations are also incorporated into the discussions in substantive chapters.⁶¹

In addition to the survey of archival data, this analysis also makes use of other primary sources. The Kemalist political elite included within its corpus a number of journalists, writers and scholars. The works published by these members of the GNA included memoirs as well as works analyzing the state of Turkey under the Republic. In order to substantiate the main arguments I consistently refer to autobiographical books, speeches, and other published works of and by the main political personages and intellectuals of the period.

Finally, another rich source of data was newspapers and magazines. Most of the influential members of the Kemalist regime not only published books but also continuously contributed articles and columns that appeared in newspapers. Although the list of newspapers that can be surveyed is a long one, I limited myself to the newspapers that had national, thus relatively wide, circulation. The newspapers and journals I surveyed included *Ayin Tarihi*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Hakimiyet-i Milliye (Meydan)*, *Milliyet*, *Servet-i Funun*, *Son Posta*, *Tan*, and *Yedigün*.

As mentioned above, two main problems pertaining to historical research on Turkey is the extent of the documents that have been catalogued and their accessibility. During the last decade, there have been developments in the first sphere; and a lot of the previously unclassified material is now available for researchers. However, this development is deceptive if we consider that the state archives are still largely not accessible to researchers. In an attempt to counteract these limitations, and as outlined above, I gathered data from a variety of sources ranging from parliamentary papers to press releases. It should also be added that despite the above limitations the extent of the data was ample enough to conduct an in-depth analysis.

⁶¹ The minutes of the Party meetings are not available. However, a recent publication (Y. Demirel and O. Z. Konur (eds.) (2002) *CHP Grup Toplantisi Tutanakları (1923-24)* [Minutes of Group Meetings of the RPP], Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları), which was compiled from a private collection was also surveyed.

VI. Note on the Early Republican Elite's Background

As will be discussed in Chapter 5 the political elite who founded the new nation was composed of military men, bureaucrats, professionals, teachers, tradesmen and religious men who had been brought up and worked under the Empire in different capacities, and (in some cases) served at the Ottoman Assemblies. Furthermore, they belonged to a generation which directly experienced the modernization efforts undertaken by the imperial center. Even though these efforts were constantly interrupted and mostly failed, still, they did leave a legacy behind them. The Republican elite were very much inspired by these developments: Sometimes through standing against them, and sometimes reinterpreting these past efforts did they built the new nation. Consequently, knowing where the elite came from is crucial to situating their actions, interests and ideas in their proper context.

The section of the thesis which looks at the social background of the early Republican elite thus aims at an outline of the socio-economic basis of these deputies. The biographies which are given out in the body of the text and in Appendix I are compiled from a variety of sources. More specifically, information was gathered from *Britannica*, and *Türk ve Dünya Unluları Ansiklopedisi* as well as an extensive use of the *Album* – the GNA's serial publication of biographies.⁶² Given the wide time span of the research, I restricted my biographical information to those Members of Parliament who had been most 'active' and/or who frequently appear in my texts.⁶³

⁶² In some cases I also relied on the information given in autobiographical and biographical publications.

⁶³ Here, I define active Members of Parliament as those who held ministerial offices for more than one period, and/or those who had been relatively more vocal during the Assembly meetings.

VII. Note on the Time-Frame

Historical sociological analysis is temporal in nature. In this study the analysis within the substantive chapters –which are outlined along topical lines – follow a temporal sequence.

More specifically, the period under analysis spans from 1920 to 1938. This time frame is chosen to cover the Kemalist era in its entirety – from the opening of the GNA in 1920 until the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1938.

In each substantive chapter I further divided the era into three different sub-periods. The first period covers from 1920 to 1923. It thus starts with the opening of the GNA and ends with the end of the War of Independence and the promulgation of the Republic. This is also the period when the political elite were preoccupied with demarcating the territories; and establishing national sovereignty.

The second period spans from 1924 until the end of the decade. These years were characterized by an intensified effort in transforming all spheres of the society in an attempt to build the new nation. Almost all of the significant Kemalist reforms were shaped, and carried out during this period.

The third sub-period covers the last decade of the Kemalist regime, starting in 1930 and ending in 1938. This last period addresses the main debates, and steps taken by the political elite after they laid down the basic contours of the new nation.

VIII. Note on Translations and Names

All throughout this work I have used the English spelling for all personal and place names.

All translations of the primary sources quoted in the manuscript are mine.

Chapter 4 – The Ottoman Empire: Its Political and Social Structure, and the Reform Attempts of the 19th Century

I. Introduction

The link between the Empire and the early Republican period has been, until recently, ignored in scholarly literature.⁶⁴ As Deringil observes “the received wisdom is that the Turkish Republic was almost some form of immaculate conception” (1993: 165). This chapter aims at moving away from this understanding and so historically locating the substantive focus (i.e. the early Republican era) of the present study.

A background analysis of the Ottoman Empire⁶⁵ is significant for two main reasons: First, the Republican elite were the products of this empire. They had received their education at the imperial institutions. They had served in the Ottoman army, and the bureaucracy. As well, the Republican elite belonged to a generation when significant political and social transformations were taking place in the Empire. They not only witnessed these transformations, but they were also actively involved in them. Thus, setting the historical background is imperative in understanding how the Republican elite perceived the Ottoman Empire and how these perceptions shaped their actions.

Second, it was from the Empire that the Republican elite had inherited the main institutional structure of the state. In this sense too, there are continuities between the Republic and the Empire, which in turn necessitates situating the former in a wider, historical context. Stressing the element of continuity, Zürcher (2004) notes that with the exception of the religious institution, the Republican elite took over the Empire’s army, civil bureaucracy, and financial institutions. Furthermore, and similar to the Ottomans, the Republican elite attributed a high

⁶⁴ There are exceptions to this general neglect. For example, see Deringil (1993); Karpas (2000); Köker (1998), Berkes [1964] 1998; Mardin (1991; 1966); Güllalp (1994), and Zürcher (1998).

⁶⁵ The Ottoman Empire, just like all empires, was not a static entity. Since its inception there were continuous changes to how the core and the periphery lands were organized. As well, the presence or power of the center was not evenly distributed: As one moved from the center to the peripheral regions its power weakened. While I recognize the complex and intricate picture of the Empire, in this chapter I will aim at outlining the main imperial contours as it existed in its later phases. For a discussion of the “variegated and fluid structure of Ottoman rule” see Kasaba (2006).

level of significance to the centrality of the state in organizing society (Mardin, 1997b: 70; Köker, 1998). With this emphasis came an effort to establish and preserve the loyalty of all to the state. These continuities and legacies all worked to shape the Republican elite's goals and actions in constructing the new nation.

II. Chapter Outline

The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section I will outline the main contours of societal and political organization of the Ottoman Empire. This section pays particular attention to the *millet* system thus situating the state of affairs of different religious and ethnic elements within the imperial structure.

In the second section I discuss the reform attempts of the 19th century and their consequences for Muslim and non-Muslim subjects. These reforms were fuelled by the need to put an end to the economic and military decline of the empire. As well, they were necessitated by the nationalistic uprisings in the Western provinces. The changes enveloped political and ideological as well as economic and military spheres. It was during this period that Ottomanism became the ideological basis which inspired the content of the reform attempts: Ottomanism was thought as a social and political glue to bind quite disparate groups in the empire. Although a failed attempt, Ottomanism and the reform attempts in general were significant in introducing a redefinition of the boundaries between the sultan and his subjects. Yet, as will be pointed out, the changes came too late, and when they did come, they were incomplete. Instead of diffusing tension and establishing cooperation between groups, it had exactly the opposite effect, and contributed to imperial collapse.

In the third section I deal with yet another ideological shift, this time from Ottomanism to Islamism. Under the Hamidian regime this particular shift had the result of reinforcing the rift between Muslim and non-Muslim groups in the empire – adding fuel to nationalist movements. The highly oppressive nature of the regime further contributed to a social and political environment where problems were suppressed instead of debated and resolved. The absence of not

having a “voice”, or the lack of channels for “interest articulation” (Hirschman, 1970) alienated especially the non-Muslim communities of the empire. As Hall argues:

“socio-economic factors, the combination of social inequality with a cultural marker, can undermine social stability. Still, politicized national consciousness – that is, the move from cultural awareness to the demand for a state of one’s own – resulted most of all from the behavior of the state with which nations interacted. *Where there was no voice, there was no loyalty – making exit an attractive and rational option*”⁶⁶ (2003: 22).

III. Societal and Political Organization under the Ottomans

“Keyserling [sic] would call them [the Ottoman Turks] extroverts; and like some extroverts, such as the Anglo-Saxons, the ruling passion of the Turks was empire-building” – *Halide Edib*⁶⁷

The political and administrative structure of the Ottoman Empire was essentially a patrimonial one⁶⁸: The sultan was the “head of the household” and exercised his authority through his administrative, religious and military staff. He also was the owner of all lands and resources, which were given out to his subjects for their livelihood. The subjects in turn were responsible to the sultan for paying taxes and serving in his army. As well, the imperial structure was based on the fusion of ideology and politics. The sultan’s power and authority were legitimated first and foremost on religious grounds: He was the representative of God on earth, and was responsible to his subjects that justice and fairness were maintained. After the Ottoman sultans acquired the title of “caliph of all Muslims” religion acquired an additional significance. This divine character of the legitimacy basis coexisted and was further strengthened by the hereditary succession of the dynasty (Mardin, [1990] 1999; Findley, 1980).

⁶⁶ My emphasis.

⁶⁷ Adivar (1930: 2).

⁶⁸ Here, I will follow Findley (1982; 1989) and Mardin (1997; 1962; 1958) and other scholars who defined the Ottoman structure (especially during the pre-19th century periods) as patrimonial. For a different perspective, see Gerber (2000).

In perpetuating the above social and political structure the sultan was aided by his ruling elite. The elite was divided into the “men of the sword”, the religious elite (*ulema*), the Palace Institution, and the Scribal, or “men of the pen” (members of the civil bureaucracy) (Shaw, 1976: 115-34).

The preoccupation of the elite was with securing a continuous transfer of wealth and resources from the periphery to the center as well as ensuring their redistribution. In addition, the elite were central to maintaining a controlled presence of autonomous organizations. The Ottoman elite, like any imperial center, faced significant material limits to their power to infiltrate society. Thus, it was impossible for them to completely crush the existence of all organizations, which could potentially pose a threat to central authority. Neither was absolute control desirable. However, the center did attempt to oversee the activities of autonomous organizations as much as it could (Inalcik, [1973] 1994; Findley, 1980).

In addition to the above mentioned goals, the preoccupation of the elite consistently revolved around the goal that society and economy should function smoothly, and that the state remained strong while territories kept expanding (Mardin, 1997: 207). Maintaining stability in turn necessitated safeguarding the happiness of the imperial subjects. However, here, the stress was always on the state and not on the subjects. Put differently, the elite held the belief that if the state remained intact and powerful then happiness for all would be automatically secured.⁶⁹ Accordingly, the energy and resources of the imperial center were all geared toward realizing this goal.

⁶⁹ This emphasis is best and most famously illustrated by the “wheel of justice”. First written during the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent (who ruled from 1520 to 1566), it became especially popular in the 19th century. The “wheel of justice” is composed of eight different elements all of which are connected to each other. The “wheel” starts with the understanding that “justice is the source of the salvation of the world”. The world in turn is a “vineyard, its walls, the State. The State is regulated by the Sharia, The Sharia cannot take effect without the presence of Land. Land cannot be seized without Soldiers. Soldiers cannot be enlisted if there is no Property. Property is accumulated by the Subjects. The Subjects are made Slaves to the Ruler through Justice” (Mardin, 1958: 81).

The non-elite were also divided into different categories. The main basis of their organization took the form of a *millet*⁷⁰ system where the population was first and foremost categorized along religious lines. Within each *millet*, further divisions reflected ethnic differences (Karpas, 1982: 142). As Karpas notes, “while the basic *millet* was universal and anational, the small community had distinctive local, ethnic, and linguistic peculiarities. The *millet* system therefore produced, simultaneously, religious universality and local parochialism” (*Ibid.*, 147).

There were three main *millets*. The first one to be established was the Orthodox *millet* – composed of Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbians, Albanians, Wallachians, Moldavians, Croatians, Ruthenians, Caramanians, Syrians, Melkites, and Arabs. All of these ethnic groups came under the single jurisdiction of the Greek (Orthodox) patriarchate. Armenians and Jewish subjects had their separate *millets*. While the Jewish *millet* was more or less a homogenous unit, the Armenian *millet* included different ethnic elements such as Georgians, Syrians, Copts, Armenians, Chaldeans, and Abyssinians (*Ibid.*, 146).

All of these three *millets* had the right to establish and control their own schools, hospitals, hotels, and hospices for the old and the poor (Shaw, 1976: 151). The legal system also reflected the division of different groups into *millets*: personal affairs (as well as the public law) of the Muslims were covered under the Sharia law, whereas the non-Muslim *millets* were left to be governed by their respective leaders (*Ibid.*, 134-5).

Furthermore, the administration of *millets* took a pyramidal form. For instance, in the case of the Orthodox *millet*, even though all of the above mentioned ethnic groupings were part of the Greek patriarch, at the lower echelons the leaders reflected ethnic and linguistic differences of their respective communities. These leaders were in constant communication with higher levels of clergy. In this way individuals had access to the Ottoman ruling elite through a

⁷⁰ Until the 19th century, the term “millet” was used mainly to characterize Ottoman religious groups. It is only from the 19th century onwards it increasingly came to denote “nation” (Mardin, 1997: 116). For the transformation the meaning of the word underwent, see Kushner (1977: 23-25).

chain of various tiers of clergy that belonged to their respective communities (Shaw, 1976; Karpát, 1982).

With the *millet* system the Ottoman ruling elite sought to incorporate different ethnic and religious groups into the imperial structure while also administering them via a system of decentralized accommodation. In this sense, the system reflected a solution to the ruling of the continuously expanding territories which was further accompanied by the limited power of the imperial center. Moreover, *millet* leaders were not servants of the sultan like everyone else, but were recognized as imperial bureaucrats –having jurisdiction over their respective communities (Karpát, 1982: 145). Maintaining such vertical links and dispensing of specific privileges⁷¹ made it easier for the sultan and his Palace elite to appease the non-Muslim communities and preserve a certain level of loyalty to the House of Osman.⁷²

Within this structure, Turkish subjects were not necessarily situated high on the social, political or economic hierarchies. In fact, and although the Ottoman state was founded by Turks⁷³, the latter soon lost their central presence as territories continued to expand. Even within the ruling class itself the imperial structure came to include not only Turkish but different ethnic groups and converts to Islam.⁷⁴ In addition, within the *millet* system Turks did not compose a separate group. Rather, they were defined as part of the Muslim population.⁷⁵ As Berkes notes, they thus “...constituted an amorphous entity (politically, culturally,

⁷¹ Exemptions from certain forms of taxation as well as exemption from military service (until the 20th century) were two main privileges that were extended (Shaw, 1976; Shaw and Shaw, 1977).

⁷² *Millet* system was further held together through the administrative units (*eyalets*) that transcended religious and ethnic variations. The fact that the boundaries of these units cut across ethnic and religious boundaries prevented these groupings from becoming autonomous political units. However, towards the end of the 19th century changes to the administrative units eroded this particular control mechanism and contributed to the strengthening of nationalist movements among non-Muslim communities (Karpát, 1982).

⁷³ There is now agreement among historians that the Ottoman state was built by ethnic Turks who had come to Anatolia and Asia Minor from central Asia during the 13th century. For an extensive discussion of the origins of the Ottoman state see Kafadar (1995).

⁷⁴ To be considered a full member of the Ottoman ruling class, one was required to demonstrate loyalty to the sultan; to be ready to follow the customs, behavior and language forming the “Ottoman way”; and to convert and practice Islam (Shaw, 1976: 113).

⁷⁵ Even though Muslims were not officially recognized as a separate *mille*, their organization was very similar to that of the non-Muslim subjects. Similar to the latter, the Muslim community included different ethnic elements for all of whom the *Seyhulislam* acted as the religious head of the community (Karpát, 1988).

and religiously). Their cohesion and existence depended entirely upon their association with the state" ([1964] 1998: 326).

The usage of the word "Turk" also manifests how Turkish elements were perceived under the Empire: The name "Turk" often had pejorative connotations, referring to "uncivilized", "unpolished" stock of peasants. Hence, "Turkishness was objectively (*en soi*) in the fore but consciously (*pour soi*) in the background" (Ortayli, [1995] 1999: 64).⁷⁶

Contemporary European observers and travelers also drew attention to the point that calling someone a Turk was an insult. Sir William Ramsay noted in his book on Turkey that:

"At the present day the name 'Turk' is rarely used and I have heard it employed only in two ways, either as a distinguishing term of race ... or as a term of contempt (for example, you mutter 'Turk Kafa' where in English you would say 'blockhead'" (quoted in Kushner, 1977: 20).

A negative perception of Turks manifested itself in the works of the contemporary Ottoman writers as well. Some of these writers went so far as to purport that Turks should not be given power in administrative affairs since they were of a 'rebellious disposition'.⁷⁷

This general portrait of the imperial organization remained intact until the 19th century, from whence onwards Turks started to occupy the majority of the ruling class positions. Similarly, it was only after 1890s that Turks started to be perceived as a distinct group with a history of their own which was separate from the Ottomans. Yet, even then the perception of Turks being a "unique" group – or a 'people' – remained an idea entertained by a small group of intellectuals and statesmen (Mardin, 1999: 182). The full blossoming and clarification of the

⁷⁶ For similar discussions of the connotations of the word "Turk" see Lewis (1968), and Guvenc (1994).

⁷⁷ Regarding this attitude, Ortayli mentions the example of Mustafa Ali from Gelibolu who, in his *Nushat'us Selatin* (1581) remarked that the Turks should be given some land, but not much more than that because if a higher rank was bestowed on them, they would rebel ([1995] 1999: 64). For other examples of the word Turk used in a derogatory manner by the Ottoman elite themselves, see Kushner (1977), 20-21.

meaning of Turk and Turkishness as the basis of (national) identity had to wait until the Republic.⁷⁸

IV. Reforming the Empire, and Attempts to Create an Ottoman ‘Citizenry’

The preservation of the imperial structure could only be achieved as long as the center was capable of exerting its control over the periphery. However, as with all empires, this was a delicate pursuit given the limited size of the Ottoman bureaucracy, its vast territories, and a heterogenous population.⁷⁹ After an initial period of centralization the Ottomans sought to attain control over the periphery through incorporating local elements into the main body. More specifically, the extraction of resources as well as the administration of lands was relegated to local notables (*ayans*). The creation and detailing of the *millet* system was another reflection of this form of decentralized administration. Despite these efforts, however, developments that took place in the 19th century had significant destabilizing effects.

During the 19th century constant military defeats, economic bottlenecks, uprisings in various provinces, and geopolitical considerations forced the imperial center to seek ways to reform the system. One significant occurrence was the uneven economic development between provinces. In the 19th century western provinces of the empire went through a rather fast process of integration into Western markets. Exports (mainly agricultural, but also manufacturing) from the region increased – leading to the development of a new, and mostly non-Muslim commercial bourgeoisie. This new class quickly built and extended its ties with Western European states. Close ties were established with ease due to non-Muslim groups’ cultural proximity to Western Europe as well as the eagerness of the European powers to provide these merchants and intermediaries with resources to promote trade (Kasaba, 1988).

⁷⁸ The reasons as to why a clear sense of Turkishness did not flourish during these years are discussed in the following sections.

⁷⁹ See Doyle (1986) for a discussion of the weakness of empires from a comparative perspective.

Added to all these developments was the general loss of control of the Ottoman center. Their declining ability to exert power over the periphery lent local notables and primates within the *millet* system an enhanced level of control over their immediate environs (Ortayli, [1995] 1999: 62; Karal, 1982).

It was during this time that the success of Russians and Western powers in procuring the support of the non-Muslim population started to alarm the imperial center. Western powers had clear economic and geopolitical interests in the empire. As a result, they became heavily involved in domestic affairs. They were especially interested in keeping a close eye on the status of the non-Muslim population (Ortayli, [1995] 1999: 114-5). For the Russians, this interest stemmed from their desire to gain territories from the Ottomans. For the British, on the other hand, the main concern was to keep the Empire away from disintegration since disintegration would have spelt the rise of Russian control over the area. Amidst these geopolitical and economic pursuits, the status of non-Muslim Ottoman subjects became a political tool used by both sides.

On the Ottoman side, the center felt the need to ensure the loyalty of its non-Muslim subjects. At the same time, the reforms which were designed to give rights and privileges to non-Muslim *millets* were thought to be effective weapons to appease the British, and also the French. The strategy of appeasement became particularly important during this period given the need to secure military and economic support for the Empire (Mardin, 1958: 145).

Reform attempts that followed from the above concerns were clearly seen first and foremost in the military sphere: Warfare tactics and weaponry were updated and modernized (Shaw, 1976). Furthermore, under the guidance of Western military officers a new education system was established.⁸⁰ Although this new system was put into effect with the aim to recapture the glorious days of the past, it had another, unintended consequence: A new generation was growing up with new ideals – highly critical to traditional way of doing things. As will be

⁸⁰ In 1834 the War Academy (*Mekteb-i Ulum-u Harbiye*) was established in Istanbul. By the end of the 19th century the Academy and other military schools were providing distinguished education on various topics including mathematics, foreign languages, and geography (Ortayli, [1995] 1999: 136).

discussed in the next section, this particular outcome led to important ideological and political changes.

19th century reforms were not relegated to the military sphere. More importantly this century marked a redefinition of the relationship between subjects/individuals and the imperial center. With the *Gulhane Rescript* (the Noble Rescript of the Rose of Chambers) of 1839 equality of all subjects before the law, state's guarantee of the lives, property, and honor of every individual were proclaimed. As well, the reform entailed the abolishment of tax-farming, reduction of the power of provincial elites, and the weakening of the independent position of the *ulema* (the religious elite).

The Rescript, however, had its limits. It did not unequivocally set forth freedom of religion and creed. Nor did it proclaim political equality between Muslims and non-Muslims. For example, the latter group was still barred from performing any public services (Karal, 1982: 382). Thus, more than anything else these changes aimed at a re-centralization of power in the hands of the imperial bureaucracy and the appeasement of the non-Muslim minority rather than a radical transformation of the existing imperial political and administrative structure (Deringil, 1998b; Mardin, 1958; Shaw, 1968).

It is significant to mention that the *Tanzimat* elite who undertook these reforms was a new elite compared to their counterparts of the classical age.⁸¹ *Tanzimat* statesmen and bureaucrats were raised along religious lines; but at the same time they had exposure to Western culture and languages. Compared to their predecessors they were more eager to “borrow” from the West. In addition, this new elite was mainly situated within the civil bureaucracy as opposed to belonging to the military cadres. Most of those who supported the reform attempts were coming from diplomatic backgrounds. Hence, the Edict of 1839 was clearly the product of a new elite (Ortayli, [1995] 1999: 91; 109; 111).⁸²

⁸¹ For a detailed discussion of the *Tanzimat* elite, see Mardin (n.d.: 46-54).

⁸² In his work on the 19th century Ortayli ([1995] 1999) stresses that the Edict did not come about as a result of Western pressures. Instead, it was an effort on the part of the elite to save the empire through recentralization. However, it is interesting to note that the early Republican elite looked back at *Tanzimat* reforms as a “shameless” imitation of the West, undertaken as a result of

The effort to restructure the empire was not limited to the Gulhane Rescript: The proclamation of the Imperial Rescript (1856), the introduction of the first Ottoman Constitution (1876), and the convening of the Parliament (1877) followed the 1839 reforms. All of these changes were clear signs that the imperial center was trying to revive its control over its subject population in the face of increasing domestic problems and external interference with its affairs.

With the aim of further incorporating the non-Muslim population into the imperial structure, the Rescript of 1856⁸³ declared that non-Muslims were now allowed to enter public service. They were also free to enroll into military and civilian state schools (Karal, 1982: 388).⁸⁴ As a result, the number of non-Muslims joining civil bureaucracy increased significantly.⁸⁵

In addition, the Rescript of 1856 guaranteed complete freedom in the exercise of all religious beliefs, and the equal treatment of all subjects in matters of administration of justice, taxation and military service. At the same time, the ancient privileges of the *millet* system were reaffirmed (Berkes, [1964] 1998: 152).⁸⁶

Another significant development was the enactment of the first Citizenship Law (*Tabiyet-i Osmaniye Kanunnamesi*) in 1869. The Law was first

Western pressure. A detailed discussion on how the Republican elite viewed the reform attempts of the 19th century is presented in the following chapters.

⁸³ Even though the Gulhane Rescript (1839), and the Imperial Rescript (1856) both pertained to rights and freedoms, there was also a difference between them. While the former was about the protection of the lives and property of all Ottoman subjects, the 1856 Rescript included the provisions for reordering the religious and social life of the non-Muslims of the Empire. For a detailed discussion of these provisions, and the developments that had led up to it, see Bozkurt (1989).

⁸⁴ The Rescript also paved the way for non-Muslims to be members of the Ottoman Parliament. The first Parliament was composed of 115 deputies in total, out of which 48 were non-Muslims coming from various provinces (Karal, 1982: 394). With the same decree non-Muslims were made liable to military recruitment too. However, they were, at the same time, given the option of sending substitutes or purchasing an exemption (Findley, 1982: 342).

⁸⁵ Findley cautions us that there still existed limits to this change. More specifically, "...the traditional pattern of their [non-Muslim civil servants] affiliation with the official cadres did not change as much as the decree indicated largely because the period ended without the promulgation – let alone general application- of the promised rules" (1980: 195-96).

⁸⁶ Even though the *millet* system was kept intact, there was also a structural reorganization. For example, with the Rescript, religious leaders of different *millets* were stripped of their power to tax their communities. Instead, this was to be done from the imperial center. As well, the *millet* schools were to be kept. Yet, their activities were to be controlled by the center. Hence, the movement was towards a secularization of the *millet* system – limiting the power of community leaders to the religious sphere (Bozkurt, 1989: 56).

and foremost designed to exert direct control over the non-Muslim population of the empire. The center wanted to control that the non-Muslim subjects were paying their taxes; and that they were not bypassing the rules which governed economic activities through becoming citizens of other states (Unsal, 1998: 12; Nomer, 1971: 28; Aybay, 1991: 25). These were becoming a significant problem for the Ottomans since those who acquired foreign citizenship could, and did, enjoy economic privileges that existed under capitulations.⁸⁷ Hence, the citizenship law stemmed partly from economic concerns. As well, it “bolstered the powers of the government by delimiting the legal population from the increasing number of foreign residents and their proteges who appealed to international treaties for legal and fiscal immunity” (Salzmann, 1999: 45).

The language of the law itself deserves attention: the Law referred not to Ottoman “citizens” but to Ottoman “subjects”. The direct equivalent term for citizenship is *vatandaslik* in Turkish, whereas *tabiiyet* (which is the word used in the Law) refers to being a subject. As well, until the early 20th century, *vatandas* (citizen) did not appear in Turkish dictionaries.⁸⁸ Even when it came into use, the word referred not to “citizen” but to people who shared the same territory (“*hemsehari*”)⁸⁹ (Unsal, 1998: 13). In short, and as reflected in the language of the law, there was no radical change with regards to the definition of the boundaries: the individual was still a subject; and the sultan was the uncontested provider and ruler.

⁸⁷ Capitulations refer to privileges given to foreign merchants doing business in the Ottoman territories. They were first extended to Venetian merchants in the 14th and 15th centuries. The aim of the Ottoman state was to encourage trade on their lands. In the 16th century the same privileges were also extended to France, Britain, followed by the Dutch Republic, Austria, and Prussia. The privileges included freedom of movement for the foreign merchants (and their merchandise); concessions on customs dues; and the right to settle disputes through their own courts. Initially, during the 15th and 16th centuries, these capitulations were bilateral. However, by the 18th century they became unilateral (Pamuk, 1990: 146-47). Moreover, during the 19th century many Armenian and Greek merchants started to acquire passports from those countries which had the capitulation privileges. In this way, non-Muslim Ottoman subjects strengthened their wealth at the expense of their Muslim counterparts (Keyder, 1993: 10).

⁸⁸ It was only in 1901, in Semsettin Sami’s *Kamus-u Turk*, that there was an entry for the word.

⁸⁹ The literal translation of “*hemsehari*” is “those living in the same city/town”.

The first article of the Law declared anyone born from an Ottoman mother and father, or only father, as Ottoman.⁹⁰ Hence, the basis of being an Ottoman was first and foremost defined along descent lines (*jus sanguinis*). A territorial understanding (*jus soli*) remained secondary to the Law, and was only considered in exceptional cases.⁹¹

At this point it should be noted that even though descent appeared to be the principal rule of acquiring citizenship, here, it did not have any particular reference to blood or ethnicity. The highly heterogenous composition of the subject population precluded such an understanding. Rather, and in the final analysis, being an Ottoman was inextricably linked to a territorial understanding (and loyalty to the sultan).

The Law also included provisions for the foreigners residing in the Empire: all (including foreigners) who were residents within imperial territories were automatically considered Ottoman subjects unless they presented the authorities with evidence to the contrary (*Ibid.*, 26). Again, the aim of this specific article was to regulate the (economic) activities of the non-Ottoman population. Finally, it was stipulated that Ottoman citizenship could be granted to those foreigners who had continuously lived in the empire for a period of five years (Cin and Akgunduz, 1989: 314).

Although there was more of a pragmatic (i.e. economic) reason behind the enactment of the 1869 Citizenship Law, it was nevertheless a significant moment since with this Law there was an effort at defining who a subject was. This specific (re)definition clearly left the religious sphere out. In fact, this Law was the first of its kind to be enacted in the Islamic world (Aybay, 1998: 38). Yet, the understanding of citizenship as expressed by the Law was not in line with a modern understanding of citizenship as we have it today: Although the Law did not specify it, the subjects were still expected and required to extend their

⁹⁰ Even though the Law abolished the division between the Muslim and non-Muslim subjects, the principle of equality did not apply along gender lines. For example, the Law stipulated that a woman who married a “foreigner” would lose her status as an Ottoman subject. On the other hand a “foreign” woman who married an Ottoman subject was considered an Ottoman subject herself. The application of the Law along these lines continued until 1929 (Ustel, 2004: 26).

⁹¹ The second article stated that those who were born within the Ottoman territories had the right to apply to become an Ottoman “subject” within three years after majority (Aybay, 1991: 26).

allegiance first and foremost to the Ottoman sultan. In this respect, we can only talk about a crystallization of the term “Ottoman subject” and nothing more. Tied to this definition of ‘citizenship’, the conception of nationhood (in so far as we can call it that) was clearly a supranational one.

The spirit of the Citizenship Law manifested itself in the 1876 Constitution.⁹² The latter defined the Empire as a multinational state: There was no Ottoman “nation”, but an Ottoman “state” which included different religious groups and “nationalities” (Tunaya, n.d.: 28). Parallel to the Citizenship Law, the relationship of the Ottoman subjects to the sultanate was not defined along religious lines. Instead, all subjects (irrespective of their religion or creed) who lived within the territories of the Ottoman Empire were declared to be Ottomans (Kili and Gozubuyuk, 1985; Aybay, 1991).

The Constitution further stipulated that the sultan was the center and head of the constitutional system. In fact, the rights of the sultan were expanded with this constitution: He had the right to appoint Members of Parliament. He also could dissolve the Parliament anytime he saw fit. Thus, the sultan “...was not bound by the Constitution; the Constitution was bound by his will” (Berkes, [1964] 1998: 246).

The ‘language issue’ was another interesting aspect of the 1876 Constitution. Article 18 stated that eligibility to public office was conditional on the applicant’s knowledge of Turkish. As well, Turkish was declared to be the official language of the State (Unsal, 1998; Karal, n.d.). Accordingly, debates in the Chambers were to be conducted in Turkish (Article 57). Yet, it is important to note that this was more of a pragmatic decision rather than an effort to forge a linguistic unity across the empire. More specifically, the requirement to speak Turkish in the Chambers came about as a solution to the problem of the heterogenous character of the Ottoman Assembly, and the many languages spoken by the members of the Parliament.⁹³

⁹² For debates surrounding the Constitutional movement see Berkes ([1964] 1998), and also Tunaya (n.d.: 28-9).

⁹³ In fact, Abdulhamid’s own thoughts on the language issue were contradictory. Around this time there was a heightened debate on language among intellectuals and some statesmen. Abdulhamid,

In the 1876 Constitution, the rights extended to Ottoman subjects were very limited indeed. The inviolability of property, personal freedom, and equality before law were the three main rights extended. Even the existing and limited rights and freedoms, however, were devoid of any sanction (*Ibid.*, 247). As well, there was not a word about basic civil rights such as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, or the right to form associations. On the contrary, these were strictly prohibited by Article 113 (*Ibid.*, 33).⁹⁴ Hence, following Mann (1993), if we divide civil citizenship into two components – individual and collective – we can easily conclude that while the former was clearly limited, the latter did not exist at all.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the Constitution was never fully put into effect (Aybay, n.d.). Furthermore, the forfeiture of almost one third of territories during the second half of the 19th century made it impossible to maintain the coalition supporting the representative government (Salzmann, 1999). Shortly after 1877, Abdulhamid II closed down the Parliament using domestic security reasons as his excuse. It was to remain closed until 1908.⁹⁵

In sum, 1876 Constitution and the rights extended were the products of an urgent need to keep the Empire intact, especially in the face of nationalist movements in Western provinces. Thus, different from the Western European cases, the extension of (limited) civil liberties and citizenship did not come as the result of an effort by the center to contain class struggles. Nor was it the result of a “fiscal-military crisis”.⁹⁶

19th century was also marked by the creation of dualities within different spheres: Within the bureaucracy the new, Western elite was existing side by side

addressing this debate, expressed his views as such: “Arabic is a beautiful language. I wish Arabic would be the official language. I myself proposed Arabic to be the official language when Hayreddin Pasa was the Prime Minister [*sadr azam*]. That time Sait Pasa ... opposed it. He said [if we did that] there would be no Turkishness left. That was nonsense. Why would it [Turkishness] have disappeared? On the contrary, we would have had closer ties to with Arabs” (quoted in Karal, n.d.: 317-18).

⁹⁴ This article also gave full powers to the sultan to banish from the country, without court or trial, any person of whom he doubted (Berkes, [1964] 1998: 245).

⁹⁵ For a discussion underlying the decision to close down the Parliament, see Karal (1982: 399).

⁹⁶ For a contrast between the Ottoman case and its Western counterparts see Mann (1987) where he elaborates on the various routes to citizenship in Britain, the U.S., Germany, France, and Austria.

with more traditional elements. In the sphere of law, equality of all subjects, and privileges to non-Muslim communities remained as two sides of the same coin. Finally, the education system also had a dual nature. Religious schools and the newly established secular schools were part of the same system (Alkan: 2000).⁹⁷ These dualities proved to be impediments to a genuine transformation of these spheres. Furthermore, different factions within the ruling elite itself sometimes completely obstructed, at other times slowed down the process of change. More importantly, the move away from one of the traditional sources of legitimacy, namely the Islamic religious-legal tradition and custom, meant that the ruling elite was inevitably more dependent on the will of the sovereign. This in turn limited the success of the reform efforts (Findley, 1980: 166-67).

V. An Ideological and Political Shift: From Ottomanism to Islamism

As mentioned above, with the first half of the 19th century significant shifts in the ideological and political spheres started to take place. One such shift was the formulation of Ottomanism. In fact, it was this ideology that underlined the 1876 Constitution. Ottomanism was characterized by an emphasis on the equality of all subjects of the empire regardless of their religion or ethnicity. For an empire whose legitimacy and power were fast eroding Ottomanism was the ideological manifestation of an attempt at survival.⁹⁸

The enforcement of early 19th century reforms necessitated an increase in the number of civil servants at different levels. This need was remedied by the opening up of new schools (such as *Mulkiye Mektebi*, the School of Civil Administration).⁹⁹ These schools, just like the newly-established military schools,

⁹⁷ The fundamental element that led to transformation in the education system was the need to achieve economic modernization. For this end, the system was partly secularized. Moreover, in the late 19th century, there was the effort to create an "Ottoman citizen" using the education system as a channel. However, the changes did not bring about any significant changes. For a discussion of education policies during Tanzimat era, see Alkan (2000: 56-67).

⁹⁸ A similar ideological shift with similar underlying goals in mind was also experienced in the Austria-Hungarian Empire. For a discussion of the development of Austrianism, see Wank (1997).

⁹⁹ Founded in 1859, *Mulkiye* initially offered degrees in Public Administration, and Political Science; and in time expanded to include other social science disciplines. The majority of this school's students were coming from Muslim communities. Findley notes that especially in the late

soon became centers where new ideas (liberalism, nationalism, and also constitutionalism) were being debated. The Young Ottomans, the ardent supporters of Ottomanism, belonged to this new, Western-looking generation of bureaucrats.¹⁰⁰

There was a reaction against the *Tanzimat* reforms, and the iron-fist of the higher echelons of bureaucracy. One of the substantive criticisms of the Young Ottomans against these reforms centered on the argument that the reforms meant a move away from Islam (and hence towards secularization) without putting anything in its place. *Tanzimat* consisted of nothing but empty promises, and lacked the ideological power to move subjects closer to each other. According to these bureaucrat-intellectuals the goal should be to combine Islamic principles with 19th century liberalism (Mardin, 1990: 216-17).

Their proposal was essentially about creating a delicate balance between two alternatives: excess Westernization was to be prevented; yet, the empire had to adopt certain Western principles into its existing Islamic structure. The presence of a well-functioning Parliament was perceived to be one such road towards this change. The creation of "Ottoman citizens" based on the principles of freedom and equality was another. In relation to the Parliament, Young Ottomans advocated that sovereignty should belong to all. Yet, this sovereignty was to be based on and legitimated through Sharia principles.¹⁰¹ Hence the patriotism of the Young Ottomans was Islamic in content. Furthermore, and within this framework, there still was no differentiation between Turks and the Muslim community as a whole.

19th century Muslim student body reached its peak. The same period also witnessed a diversification in terms of the backgrounds of the students. They did not only belong to upper classes (which traditionally had been the norm) but also to humbler backgrounds such as craftsmen or small traders and peasants. In the case of the latter group, having access to the new education system was a significant source of social mobilization (Findley, 1989: 116-118). Finally, the representation of non-Istanbul students also increased (Szyliowicz, 1975: 27).

¹⁰⁰ Almost all of the Young Ottomans had served out in life as civil servants. Most of them were coming from the Translation Bureau (Mardin, 1958). Even though their influence started to dwindle after 1875, their ideas opened up debates on a variety of issues including what consisted a nation, the language question etc. for the generations that followed.

¹⁰¹ This position was most clearly reflected in the works of Namik Kemal (1840-1888), a prominent Young Ottoman and poet – who achieved prominence as the "Fatherland Poet" (Deringil, 1993).

Ottomanism failed to take roots in the Empire. This failure was partly due to the tyrannical rule of Abdulhamid, and partly to the disillusionment of the Young Ottomans themselves (Mardin, 1958: 175). Another reason was the reactions coming from the Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The former felt the changes signaled a move away from Islam. The latter, on the other hand, were concerned about losing their privileges under the new system.¹⁰² Finally, there was also a similar reaction from among the elite themselves: one (more conservative) faction of the elite wanted to block reform attempts as, according to them, it contradicted the legitimization basis of the empire. In other words, their fear was, parallel to the Muslim population, that the reforms would lead the empire toward secularization, and away from the teachings of Islam.¹⁰³

Yet, even if there had been the necessary determination at the level of the elite, the necessary mechanisms to inculcate these ideals were not in place. For instance, a well-regulated education system, which could have been one such integration mechanism, did not exist.¹⁰⁴ The 1869 Law on Education stipulated the establishment of a standardized and compulsory primary education system. Yet all was left on paper. When it came to its enforcement the imperial center left the burden of opening up schools mostly to neighborhoods (in towns), and members of village communities (in the country) (Ortayli, [1995] 1999: 189-90). Thus, Ottomanism never touched the majority of the population and had a lifetime of a little more than a decade.

The inability of the center to enforce reform measures could be seen in other (judicial, administrative etc.) spheres as well. As Keyder (1997b) notes, changes came too late.¹⁰⁵ And when they did come, they did not materialize fully: "In all these cases [i.e. Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian nationalisms] nationalism

¹⁰² One exception to this reaction against the reforms was the Jewish *millet* who welcomed the changes (Bozkurt, 1989).

¹⁰³ For reactions against the Tanzimat reforms, see Bozkurt (1989). Also, for a more general discussion see Shaw and Shaw (1977); and Shaw (1976).

¹⁰⁴ For similar arguments, which points out the institutional and economic problems that led to inhibit significant and real changes see Salzmann (1999; 1993).

¹⁰⁵ The relationship between timing and the failure of Ottoman reforms is also raised by Wank (1997). Quoting Motyl, Wank argues that "incorporation [of different ethnic and religious groups] must come during an empire's ascendancy, when the core is still flush with victory ..., peripheral elites are still resource poor ... and international threats are minimal" (1997: 98).

resulted from a mercantile-bourgeois impulse, and was a reaction to the slow pace of economic and political change in the core of the empire” (1997b:33).¹⁰⁶ The consequence was a lack of trust (of both Muslim and non-Muslim subjects) towards the system. The instability, which followed from this lack of trust further contributed to the rise and acceleration of nationalist movements. Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian nationalisms can best be understood given this background of frustration (Ibid., 33).

Once the sultan and his high level bureaucrats acknowledged the impossibility of holding on to their power through establishing Ottomanism as an (imperial) identity, there was a turn to Islamism. This shift was also brought about by the loss of land populated by non-Muslim subjects¹⁰⁷, which in turn forced the center to appease its remaining – and mostly Muslim – population.¹⁰⁸

Islamism gave Muslims the promise of “... a type of spiritual “citizenship” within an imaginary “umma” superimposed over the modern political map” (Salzmann, 1999: 51). Moreover, as Deringil notes the turn to Islam should also be seen as a turn toward Hanefi Islam in particular. Within this context, for example, the non-Hanefi Muslim population was a target group that needed “civilizing” (1998b: 66-7).¹⁰⁹

The stress on religion most clearly manifested itself in the education policies of the imperial center: the significance of providing students, even at higher levels of education, with the necessary (and Hanefi) religious knowledge

¹⁰⁶ The same point can also be extended to the case of Russian and Habsburg empires. As Hall points out “in the empires of the Ottomans, Habsburgs, and Romanovs, state’s policies of rationalizing their possessions (especially through linguistic policies) came too late” (2003: 21).

¹⁰⁷ After the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War the Empire lost most of its remaining territory in Europe, and in the Caucasus. These losses were also important since they tilted the ethnic balance. More specifically, there was a significant number of Muslims who were uprooted and who emigrated to the Empire from Russia (McCarthy, 1983a).

¹⁰⁸ Some historical accounts on the period argue that Abdulhamid’s Islamist policies were a result of the resentment of the Muslim population. However, Keyder cautions us that this link is not that clear. According to him it seems more likely that “... his [Abdulhamid’s] Islamism was primarily directed at consolidating the allegiance of the Arab subjects of the Empire” (1997b: 36). This argument is also echoed by Karpas (2000) who stresses that around this time Arabs were on the verge of seeking their existence as autonomous states. It was on the account of keeping the Arab provinces within the Imperial territories that a turn toward Islamism could be understood.

¹⁰⁹ Within the Muslim population, nomadic populations (of Kurds, and Arabs) were especially considered to be “savage” and in need of “civilizing through [religious] education” (Deringil, 1998b: 41).

was at the core of the agenda (Alkan, 2000). Tied to this, there was also an attempt to educate the sons of Arab and Kurdish sheikhs. For this purpose the Tribal School (*Mekteb-i Asiret*) was established in 1892.¹¹⁰ The founding of the School is also an excellent example of the imperial center's clear intention to "Ottomanize nomads" and thus make them the loyal subjects of the sultan (Deringil, 1988b: 41). As well, the students were to acquire the necessary knowledge in the courtly affairs so they could serve in official capacities following the completion of their education (*Ibid.*, 101). Thus, in addition to inculcating them with the "right" religious beliefs, great emphasis was also placed on strengthening loyalty to the sultan (*Ibid.*, 108).¹¹¹

Moreover, one of the many goals of the 1869 Law on Education was establishing control over non-Muslim schools. With this law, all non-Muslim schools were required to get their curricula approved by the Ministry of Education. In 1880 this Law was ratified. This was accompanied by making Turkish a compulsory course in these schools (1894). In 1887, an inspectorate was established for non-Muslim and foreign schools (*Ibid.*, 105). Even though the execution of these changes remained ineffective,¹¹² these examples are significant in illustrating the tools with which the imperial center was trying to control the subject population. In the final analysis, such measures were aimed at revitalizing the Empire.

VI. Conclusion

This chapter discussed the main contours of the social and political structure of the Ottoman Empire during the 18th and 19th centuries. As well, it outlined the nature of the major reform attempts during the latter century. As Kasaba notes "despite their weakness, and despite the fact that they ultimately failed to save the empire, the reforms of the 19th century gave the Ottoman

¹¹⁰ Following a boycott, these schools were shut down in 1907 (Alkan, 2000: 73).

¹¹¹ Deringil compares this device of social engineering to the policies of Thomas Babington Macaulay in British India where there was a similar interest in creating "... a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, morals and intellect" (1998a, 222-23).

¹¹² For some of the main reasons behind this failure, see Deringil (1998b), Shaw and Shaw (1977).

Empire enough breathing space that it survived for more than sixty years after Tsar Nicholas I of Russia first described it as a “sick man” in 1853” (2006: 211). It is to a discussion of this “sick man” that I will turn to in the following chapter.

Chapter 5 – State Transformation, and Imperial Demise

I. Introduction

The present chapter is an outline of the main developments during the last two decades of the Ottoman Empire. Accordingly, I will discuss the rise of the Young Turks movement, and its later crystallization as a political party under the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). Finally, I will also sketch the socioeconomic background of the early Republican elite.

II. Chapter Outline

In the first section I will review the ideological and socioeconomic backgrounds of the Young Turks. An understanding their background¹¹³ is particularly important since the majority of the Republican elite was either actively involved in or was inspired by the Young Turk movement. In this section, I demonstrate that despite differences in their ideological make-up, loyalty to the sultan and the caliphate as well as a stress on the Muslim character of the empire defined the Young Turks' rhetoric, aims and actions. Hence, they were not nationalists in the sense that some of them were later going to become under the Republic. Neither did they advocate policies along the lines of the Islamists of their generation. The main goal of their activities revolved around rescuing the empire.

The second section looks into the developments during the final decade of the Empire. This was the period when the CUP came into power, and its policies started to be progressively radicalized. The shift in their policies could best be understood within the context of state-minority relations as well as the changing

¹¹³ As a movement, Young Turks started to organize themselves during the last decade of the 19th century. CUP was to become the political organ of the Young Turk movement. CUP's first rise to power took place after the 1908 Revolution. The following year, a counterrevolution forced them down. In 1911 they were ousted from the government. However, in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars they again came to power (1913) and stayed in control until the end of the end of World War I. See Hanioglu (1995); Aksin (1987); Ahmed (1969), Kansu (1995), and Zurcher (1984) for detailed accounts of the rise and development of CUP.

geopolitical context: Both the bureaucracy and the minorities saw their problems in religious and ethnic terms (Keyder, 1987: 77). During this late period, the concerns of the minorities took the shape of “rejecting the Ottoman state as a legitimate field to be conquered and utilized” (*Ibid.*, 77). When this state of affairs was accompanied by the loss of territories and a financial and political weakening of the center, the CUP policies further radicalized culminating in the Armenian massacre.

The defeat in the First World War set off another process – this time of resistance to the occupying forces, and a political reorganization in Ankara. The national resistance movement was carried through by the members of what would be the Republican elite. The third section looks into the socioeconomic background of these elite. Drawing on two main studies – both of which are based on primary sources – I will highlight some of the main characteristics of the early Republican elite. More specifically, I will outline the occupational and educational backgrounds of the deputies. In addition, I will address the nature of the division within the First Assembly.

III. In Pursuit of Saving the Empire: Ideological Debates, and the Rise of the Young Turks

The last decade of the 19th century was characterized by a sway towards Islamism – accompanied by the consolidation of a ‘police-state’. This turn of events signaled an end to state modernization as well as the liberal franchise. During Abdulhamid’s reign new ideas and possible routes for societal reorganization was only discussed in private circles and underground cells. The rise of the Young Turk movement and the founding of its influential organization – the CUP- were products of this highly repressive era.

Despite their name, Young Turks “... all styled themselves Ottomans and this was an important point for them” (Berkes, [1964] 1998: 305). Similar to Young Ottomans, their goal was the salvation of the empire rather than the creation of a new nation. Accordingly, they identified themselves with the state;

and their loyalty was extended to the sultan as opposed to a “fatherland”. An excerpt from

Rusen Esref Unaydin’s¹¹⁴ interview (conducted in 1919) with Rauf Orbay¹¹⁵ illustrates this main outlook stressed these central concerns:

Orbay: “You know that once the CUP [members] said that I was anti-German. ... After they said I was anti-British. However, I am neither one nor the other.

Unaydin: Who are you?

Orbay: I am a subject of the Muslim Caliphate. I am a loyal subject of the Ottoman sultanate. I am a servant of my country. That is the education I received from my mother and father. My [formal] education was along these lines too. ... My father had a last will for me. May he rest in peace; he used to say “My son, we took refuge from the Caucasus in the country of the caliphate. This place accepted us unconditionally ... It is thanks to this calip¹¹⁶hate, this sultanate that I received my education. ... If we do not work for this country we would be showing ingratitude”. I will keep my father’s advice till the end” (Unaydin, 1982: 245).

If the preservation of the Empire was the central aim, then what did the Young Turks conceive to be the possible routes to achieve this aim? The answer to this question was not a straightforward one and was subject to intense debate. Yusuf Akcura’s¹¹⁷ *Uc Tarz-i Siyaset* (Three Types of Policy) is of special

¹¹⁴ Rusen Esref Unaydin (1892, Istanbul -1959) Journalist, statesman, a close friend of Atatürk, and a staunch defender of Kemalism. He was born into a prominent and religious family. His father was a medical doctor. After his training in education, he started teaching Turkish and French literature at various schools. Beginning in the early 1910s he also was contributing pieces to newspapers and journals. Esref became actively involved in the War of Independence. Following that, he also worked on the Lausanne committee as the press adviser. In 1923 he entered the GNA as deputy from Afyonkarahisar. He remained a Member of Parliament until 1933 when he became the secretary-general for the President’s office. Following that post he served as ambassador.

¹¹⁵ Rauf (Huseyin) Orbay (1881, Istanbul – 1964) was an army officer, and statesman. He belonged to a poor Caucasian family who had immigrated to the Ottoman Empire. He was trained in the Naval Academy. He fought in the Balkan Wars, and afterwards in the War of Independence. Orbay worked in the Ottoman Parliament as Naval Minister. After the armistice he was exiled to Malta. On his return to Turkey he entered the GNA. In 1924 Orbay joined the opposition party – *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Firkasi* (Progressive Republican Party). Following the dissolution of the PRP he moved to Europe and stayed there for some years. Orbay was also accused, tried, and acquitted of an assassination attempt against Mustafa Kemal. In the following years even though he was asked (by Inonu and Atatürk) to rejoin the RPP he never consented to it. He only reentered the GNA after Atatürk’s death.

¹¹⁶ The interview was originally published in *Tasvir-i Efkar*, No. 2910, 1919.

¹¹⁷ Yusuf Akcura (1876, Simbirsk (Olyonovsk), Russia -1935): Renowned writer and intellectual of Tatar origin, known for his formulation of Turkish nationalism as a possible basis for the nation. He also had an active political life during the early Republican period. Akcura attended the Military Academy in Istanbul, during which he was arrested due to his involvement with the

significance here since it summarizes the main axes of these differences of opinion and ideology: Ottomanism, Islamism, and Turkism.

a. Alternative Routes to Saving the Empire: Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism

Akcura's discussion of Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism is an examination of the alternative ways to save the Empire. More specifically, he evaluates each route in terms of its applicability and desirability – the latter referring to the possibility of unifying the population. However, while he outlines the strengths and weaknesses of each, he is quick to dismiss Ottomanism as a viable solution.

According to Akcura, trying to revive Ottomanism was a futile exercise. This was so due to the discontent it would (and did) create both within the Muslim and non-Muslim communities. As well, Ottomanism, if pursued, would possibly initiate opposition from outside. With regards to this specific point, Akcura stated that Russia would be against Ottomanism on religious grounds, and would demand that privileges should continue to be extended to non-Muslims. Thus, the policy should be left to rest forever (Akcura, [1904] (2000): 27-31).

After considering the second route, Islamism, he again voiced his reservations. Following this path would aggravate the already existing tension between the Muslim and non-Muslim populations. Furthermore, even though Islamism as a policy could potentially draw the Muslim world closer together

Young Turks, and was exiled. He studied political science in France and contributed articles for the newspapers *Mesveret*, and *Surayi Ummet*. After he completed his studies he went back to Russia. He taught geography and Turkish literature in Kazan at the *Muhammediye Medrese*. After the 1908 Revolution he came back to the Ottoman Empire; worked as a teacher and became one of the founders of the *Türk Dernegi* (Turkish Society, 1908). He also was present in the founding of the *Türk Ocagi* (Turkish Hearth, 1912). In addition to being a member of the Hearth, he also started publishing the journal *Türk Yurdu* (Turkish Homeland), the official publication of the association. He stayed as the editor of the journal until 1931 when the Turkish Hearths were closed down. Besides having an active intellectual life, Akcura also ventured into politics. In 1922 he was appointed as an advisor to the division of Eastern Countries, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1923 he became deputy from Kars, and served in the Assembly until his death. Akcura also worked as the president of the Turkish History Council.

such a turn of events would not be to the liking of Western Powers and would be ardently opposed by them. Thus, Islamism did not seem to be a viable solution in the long run (*Ibid.*, 31-33).

Finally, Akcura turns his attention to Turkism. Should this be the policy the Ottomans must put into effect? He outlines two shortcomings in relation to Turkism: First, it could set in motion an interference by Russia in imperial politics since the latter had its own Turkish-Muslim population; and so they would resist a unification of Turks so close to their homeland. Second, Turkism would mean moving away from that part of the Ottoman population, which was Muslim but not Turkish. This would in turn create a division within the Muslim population in general.

Despite these shortcomings and difficulties, Akcura also alludes to the point that Turkism, via uniting Turks in the West (i.e. Western provinces) and the East, could herald the beginnings of a glorious civilization (*Ibid.*, 33-35). Furthermore, since most Turks were Muslims, religion could be used as a basis for unification. Akcura was aware of the declining significance of religion as an organizing principle in the Western world. Yet, according to him, secularization did not necessarily mean religion was less significant. Instead, "... religions, only through uniting with ethnicities/races, through aiding and even servicing ethnicities/races, preserve their social and political significance" (*Ibid.*, 35).

In the final analysis and despite his personal inclination towards Turkism, rather than providing a clear cut answer Akcura ended his article with a question: "Which one of the policies, Islamism or Turkism, is the most beneficial and feasible policy for the Ottoman state?" (*Ibid.*, 36). This would be the main question which would occupy the minds of the ruling elite and intellectuals throughout the period under discussion.

b. Who were the Young Turks?

The background of Young Turks was different from that of the Young Ottomans. Even though the ranks of the former is sometimes presented as being

heavily dominated by military officers, a closer look at the higher echelons of the movement that they comprised a heterogeneous body. Yet, despite differences certain commonalities could still be discerned: Almost all of the higher echelon members (with one exception) were Muslims. There were no Greeks, Armenians or Bulgarians among them. Moreover, they were educated in modern, Western-inspired schools founded in the 19th century. Their family backgrounds differed – ranging from sons of landowners, lower-echelon civil servants to higher dignitaries and generals. However, in general, Young Turks belonged to an urban and literate background. It was between 1906 and 1908 that this heterogeneous picture started to change; and officers started to outnumber other groups (Zurcher, 2003: 279).

A look at their ethnic backgrounds leads us to conclude that most were from the borderlands of the Empire. Of the seven founders “... four came from the Russian Caucasus, one from the Albanian area in the Western Balkans and two from Kurdistan. Ethnically, not one was an Ottoman Turk” (*Ibid.*, 280; Hanioglu, 2002: 87).

The same characteristics also held for the early members of the Central Committee (*Heyeti Merkeziye*) and the most prominent and politically active members for the period 1908-1918: They predominantly came from the (southern) Balkan areas of the Empire as well as the Aegean region. There were practically no members from the Arab Provinces. Neither do we see any presence of the Caucasus region. Those members of the Committee coming from Anatolia added up to four only; while only one of the prominent activists came from this region (*Ibid.*, 281).¹¹⁸

The Albanian presence was relatively significant within the movement and they played an important role during the 1908 Revolution. However, their involvement increasingly aimed at seeking Albanian independence rather than saving the empire (Hanioglu, 2002: 88). As for the Arab presence it was very thin. In short, it can be concluded that it was those ethnic groups that “... were fighting

¹¹⁸ As Zurcher notes, the lack of representation from Anatolia is interesting since later on it was this very region which became the coveted fatherland of the Republican elite (*Ibid.*, 281).

against strong nationalist groups backed by the Great Powers” (*Ibid.*, 88) that found the Young Turk movement appealing. Among these groups were members of the Jewish¹¹⁹ and Kutzo-Vlach¹²⁰ communities (*Ibid.*, 88).

The ideologues/intellectuals of the movement and the CUP Party were also members of the borderlands. In fact this characteristic becomes more pronounced within this particular group. Some of these intellectuals and ideologues were also central to the rise of Turkish nationalist discourse; and later on, to the nation-building project under the Republic. Among the most influential names were Tekin Alp (néé Moise Cohen), Ziya Gokalp, Yusuf Akcura, Mehmet Emin Yurdakul, Ahmet Agaoglu, and Huseyinzade Ali Turan. Of these six very prominent names four were born in the Russian Empire; one was part Turkish, part Kurdish; and one belonged to a Jewish family from Macedonia (Zurcher 2003: 282).

Finally, even though post-1908 leadership levels were primarily occupied by military officers, the mass basis of the movement was more heterogenous. It included middle-class civilians – civil servants holding jobs at the middle echelons of the imperial bureaucracy, merchants, and artisans as well as military officers (Tekeli and Ilkin, 1977: 376-77; Berkes, [1964] 1998: 329).¹²¹

¹¹⁹ The Ottoman Jewry provided full support to the Young Turks. Their stance on economic and political sovereignty of the Empire resembled that of their Turkish counterparts rather than that of the Armenians’ and Greeks’: Both Turks and Jews had an interest in the strengthening of the Empire (Ahmad, 1996: 29-30).

¹²⁰ The negligible size of the Kutzo-Vlach community meant that their support did not have any material significance in realizing the goal of uniting Ottoman communities (Hanioglu, 2002: 88).

¹²¹ Since there were thousands of members of the Party and partisans of the movement, and since there are no Party records available on their composition it is impossible to arrive at clear-cut conclusions regarding their characteristics. However, given the existing information it can be assumed that they came from a variety of backgrounds. As well, the nature of center-periphery relations was of significance. Tekeli and Ilkin note the presence of civil servants and military officers serving in the Balkan provinces (and more specifically in Salonica, which formed the basis of the movement): This group was highly frustrated with the imperial center. The fundamental source of their frustration was financial: Payments of their salaries were highly irregular. In addition, they did not see much opportunity for themselves to get ahead in the bureaucratic hierarchy (1977: 376). Thus, for them, joining the CUP was a reaction against the center, and an attempt on their part to find their niche in the existing system.

c. Politics in Theory and Politics in Action

Given their background it is not surprising that the Young Turks were very sensitive to what was happening in the various (and especially Balkan) provinces of the empire. Not only did they (as military officers) travel the empire, but were also brought up in the provinces where deep divides between Muslims, and non-Muslims defined the social fabric. In addition, they had received their education at institutions which were established along Western lines. In the course of their education the stark contrast of political and social life between the West and the Ottoman Empire further crystallized in their minds. As well, it was at these institutions that they were introduced to Western ideals, and ideas. Finally, their socioeconomic background differed from that of the non-Muslim subjects of the empire. As sons of middle class Ottomans there were two avenues open to them: the army and the bureaucracy. As Zurcher notes, this was a paradoxical situation:

“They represented the authority and prestige of the state, but at the same time they lived in relative poverty, wages often being in arrears for months if not years. They could see with their own eyes the impotence of the state, which they were taught to revere, in the face of the representatives of foreign powers and of the Ottoman Christians who fell under their diplomatic protection” (Zurcher, 2003: 283).

Thus, it is not difficult to conjecture that these factors, when coupled with their personal experiences, shaped their ideological and political stances.¹²²

The main outlook of the Young Turk movement and the policies of the CUP remained elitist in nature (Hanioglu, 1986; Zurcher, 2000; Mardin, 1983). This elitism found its expression in their preoccupation with educating the masses. For Ziya Gokalp,¹²³ for instance, the ‘people’ needed guidance by the

¹²² The same argument should also be made about the intellectuals of the time. For example, see the memoirs of Ahmet Emin Yalman (1956), a prominent journalist with close connections to the Kemalist cadres, where he talks about his upbringing and the environment of Salonica at the time.

¹²³ Ziya Gokalp (1876, Diyarbakir – 1924): Sociologist, renowned intellectual, and ideologue of Turkish nationalism. In his writings he discussed possible sources of national identity, to conclude that Turkish nation was first and foremost based on a common cultural foundation as opposed to being a political or ethnic community. His ideas influenced many of the reforms undertaken

elite so that the former's true (Turkish) identity, which existed at the subconscious level, could be brought up to the level of consciousness. Of course, the elite here referred not to the members of the Ottoman center, but to the Young Turks themselves – of which Gokalp himself was a member (Arai, 1992: 47).¹²⁴ Despite their seeming adherence to *halkcilik* (populism) the rhetoric of Kemalist political cadres would be a continuation of this elitist outlook.¹²⁵

The priority of the Young Turks (and later for the CUP government) had been consistent and always centered around saving the empire. Consequently, they remained loyal to the office of the sultanate and caliphate. In an equally urgent manner, they also advocated the reconvening of the Parliament and the reinstitution of the Constitution. However, during its early, formative years, the movement's plan did not go beyond these two main goals. In fact, Doctor Nazim Bey, one of the most ardent and radical of the Young Turks, stated:

“I know that the Society [Young Turks] had a program. If you ask me now I cannot tell you much, but it was probably something voluminous. However, there was no one preoccupied by it. We were saying “let the Parliament be brought back ... we'll think about [what we'll do next] after” (Aydemir, 1965: 290).

As discussed in the previous chapter, there were major limitations (especially with regards to rights and freedoms) in the 1876 Constitution. Yet, the Young Turks were not concerned with these deficiencies; and vehemently worked

during the early Republican period. Before the Republic he joined the CUP and held an active role in the Party as a member of the Central Council. During this period he was in Salonica where he came into contact with European and liberal Turkish circles. In 1919 he was exiled to Malta. When he came back to Turkey in 1921 he did not have a warm welcome – the members of the Ankara Parliament having little sympathy for former CUP members. Despite that Gokalp joined the GNA in 1923 as deputy from his hometown. He started working as an elected member of the Education Committee, which proposed changes to school curriculum and textbooks. He was also a member of the committee during the preparation of the 1924 Constitution. The clauses on secularism as well as the clauses on the freedom of conscience and thought were shaped by him.

¹²⁴ Zurcher contends that most of the Young Turk politicians and thinkers (and Kemalists alike) were influenced by Gustave Le Bon's ideas on the masses, and the need for the elite to lead them (Zurcher, 2005: 22).

¹²⁵ Mardin cites the Young Turks' activist outlook as another characteristic of the movement. Influenced by theoreticians like Sorel, “...such general activist views had worked well to energize the Young Turk officers in Macedonia around 1902-08: they adopted the tactics of their Bulgarian terrorist enemies, bringing to life a view of political action promoted by the Macedonian revolutionary organization, the “Black Hand”, a tactic known in Turkey as *komitecilik*, i.e. committee action” (Mardin, 1997: 121).

to bring back the Constitution. Their support for the constitutional regime was not based on a strong belief in the liberal and/or democratic ideals. Rather, for them, the constitution was "... an instrument and an emblem of modernity" (Zurcher, 2000: 151).

Young Turks were also preoccupied with the question of the *millet* system. More specifically, they conceived the existence of the *millet* system as the root of separatist movements, and hence a potential threat to territorial unity. Accordingly, they rejected any privileges to be extended on the basis of religion or ethnicity. Instead, every individual was to be treated equally as Ottoman citizens (Berkes, [1964] 1995: 331). In a sense, theirs was a new Ottomanism (Hanioglu, 2002) – seeking the unity and representation of all ethnic and religious groupings in the Empire. In fact, Ziya Gokalp was stressing a clear Ottomanist rhetoric in his early writings; and was envisioning that "the Ottoman lands will be the free and progressive America of the East" (quoted in Berkes, [1964] 1998:332).

The Young Turks' loyalty to the sultanate and the caliphate did add a touch of Islamism to their actions and rhetoric. For instance, when the CUP government came to power the political elite stressed the significance of unity within Muslims, and the fact that the state belonged to the Muslims (Zurcher, 2000: 166). Similarly, in the economic sphere they encouraged the development of a Muslim bourgeoisie.¹²⁶ Yet, despite these emphases, they were not Islamists. They never sought to base the societal organization on the unity of Islam and the state. On the contrary, they removed the *Seyhulislam* from the cabinet during World War I (Zurcher, 2000: 172). They also reduced the influence of the *shariat* law (Berkes, [1964] 1995). In 1913, the *ulema* and religious courts came under state control whereby they were required to acknowledge the authority of the secular appeals court (Arai, 1992: 93).¹²⁷

Despite the above mentioned steps there was no rejection of the role of religion in societal organization. Rather, these reforms were designed to establish

¹²⁶ See Ahmad (1996) for a detailed analysis of the CUP's economic policies.

¹²⁷ For a detailed outline of the CUP's reforms during this period, see Shaw and Shaw (1977).

the state's control over the religious institution. More specifically, it was hoped that if the state had a stronghold over the religious sphere, then Islam could be purged off its superstitious and backward elements, which it had been inhabiting within itself (*Ibid.*, 94).¹²⁸

Neither were the Young Turks Turkish nationalists (along the lines of the Republican elite). Here, a differentiation should be made between the Young Turk intellectuals, and those members of the movement who occupied decision-making positions (Zurcher, 2000). In the intellectual circles, the significance of the Turkish element in the empire was certainly emphasized. Yusuf Akcura's writings, the most prominent one being *Uc Tarz-i Siyaset* (Three Types of Policy ([1904])) as well as Ziya Gokalp's works criticized the imperial center for having undermined the Turkish elements for centuries. They thus called for a reversal of this state of affairs. For them, Turks were the true founders of the Ottoman Empire; and the societal and political organization should reflect this fact.

As well, the Young Turk intellectuals and ideologues pushed for the simplification of the Turkish language. Around this time there was certainly a great interest in Turkish history and language among these circles. The founding of *Türk Dernegi* (Turkish Association) in 1909, *Türk Yurdu* (Turkish Hearth) in 1912, and *Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti* (Turkish Homeland) in 1911 all testify to the growing interest in the Turkish roots as a possible source of imperial identity. In addition, these associations were closely tied to and funded by the CUP.¹²⁹

Despite the growing interest in Turkish language, history, and Turkism as a possible policy to save the Empire, the content of these discussions and analyses remained vague. Even the language of the debates was not clear. For instance, most of the time "Turks" were used to mean "Muslims" and vice versa. Similarly, "Ottomans" was used interchangeably with "Turks" (Hanioglu, 1986: 632). Moreover, the CUP did not establish the content of who a Turk was. As Hanioglu (1986) notes, the urgency of keeping the empire intact was a constraint on the

¹²⁸ Regarding their approach to Islam, Hanioglu (1986) argues that it was pragmatic in nature. More specifically, they were using Islam more as a tool to push people toward opposition, and thus against despotism.

¹²⁹ See Arai (1992) for a detailed discussion of these associations, and a content analysis of their publications.

way to a full development of Turkish nationalism. This was so, as putting the stress on Turkish character of the empire would have further encouraged separatist elements.

In short, Young Turks were essentially Ottoman Muslims (Zurcher, 2000). As Zurcher concludes:

“The Unionist ideology was nationalist in the sense that they demanded the establishment of a state of their own. ... But the nation for which they demanded this political home was that of the Ottoman Muslims – not that of all of the Ottomans, not only that of the Turks and certainly not that of the Muslims of the world” (2000: 173). Consequently, their ideology and consequent actions could be best understood as the “ethnicizing of religion” (*Ibid.*, 173).

Consistent with this outlook, the policies they undertook combined elements from Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism. Again quoting Zurcher, they were “motivated by a peculiar brand of Ottoman Muslim nationalism, which was to a very high degree reactive” (*Ibid.*, 173).

IV. The Final Days of the Empire

The outcome of the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and the changed material conditions greatly reshaped the psyche of the CUP elite. In the aftermath of the Wars, the loss of significant tracts of imperial territories was accompanied by a population movement: Around 50,000 Greeks left Asia Minor while close to 50,000 Bulgarians started their emigration to Bulgaria. Meanwhile, Greeks in Western Thrace were forced to leave for Greece (Adanir, 2005: 22).

It was also during this period that the CUP's relations with the Greek and Armenian communities in the Empire were altered. In the case of the latter community the rising tension were to end with the killing of a significant part of the community through forced deportations (*Ibid.*, 23).¹³⁰ Among other things

¹³⁰ The number of Armenians who were killed as well as the nature of the deportations (i.e. whether it was systematic) is the subject of an intense and highly politicized debate between Turks and Armenians. The Turkish officials (and some academics) hold onto the claim that the loss of lives did not occur because of a systematic policy and totaled somewhere between 100,000 and 300,000 (some even mention 10,000 as a figure). The Armenian side, on the other hand, gives the

these developments meant that the nature of the population of what was to be the Turkish Republic was changing fast; and the direction of change was towards religious homogenization.

a. Political Radicalization

The second constitutional period (1908-1918)¹³¹ was marked by a shift in the dynamics within the CUP. It was during this time that the “activists” as opposed to intellectuals and publicists of the Young Turk movement gained in strength (Zurcher, 2000: 136-37).¹³² Further, within the Empire itself, the domestic landscape was changing. More specifically, the imperial center was losing its grip over the different ethnic and religious communities. By the end of the 19th century, and with the signing of the Berlin Treaty minority affairs became inextricably linked to the presence of foreign states in domestic affairs: Russia, the USA, France, and Britain became directly involved in protecting non-Muslim communities. While Greeks had close relations with France and Britain Armenians moved closer to Russia. There was also the affinity between the majority of the Ottoman-Greek community and the independent Greek state (Keyder, 1987: 55).

The already delicate nature of the relations between the center and different communities worsened after the Balkan Wars. Faced with territorial losses and in an effort to keep the Empire intact, the CUP government turned to Turkification policies.¹³³ Minorities, and especially Greeks and Armenians, were the main target of these policies. According to Keyder, these two communities

loss of lives at 1,500,000 as well as emphasizing the systematic nature of the killings. The issue is intensely debated between and among Turkish politicians and academicians as well. For an overview of these debates, see Kaplan (2005).

¹³¹ For a detailed account of this period see Kansu (2000).

¹³² It was during this time that Talat, Enver, and Cemal triumvirate came to power; and the influence of radicals such as Dr. Nazim and Bahaeddin Sakir strengthened (Hanioglu, 1986).

¹³³ The manifestations of Turkification policies were visible in the economic sphere. It was during this period that the CUP launched a program to build a ‘national economy’. This was a program which aimed at strengthening the hold of the state over the market. One role of the state in the economy was to support and further build up the Muslim capital. For more on these policies see Toprak (1982); and Keyder (1987).

“... were seen not only as carriers of the logic of the market, and as bourgeois agents of a capitalist social system”, but more importantly “as the internal support of an imperialism preventing the bureaucracy from reconstituting the traditional class balances” (*Ibid.*, 64).

Turkification policies alienated not only non-Muslim but also Muslim communities. By this time, the latter did not hesitate to show their frustration. The Albanian revolt of 1910-11 was one such anti-CUP reaction.¹³⁴ Similarly, the strengthening of Arab nationalism was developing as a response to CUP’s policies (Ahmad, 1969).

In the case of Armenians, and in spite of the Armenian pogroms which had taken place during the Abdulhamid regime,¹³⁵ the CUP government and Armenians kept their alliance until the outbreak of World War I.¹³⁶ The descent into genocide emanated from the interaction of the shifts in the geopolitical sphere (i.e. World War I, the role of Russia) and the imperial dynamics (i.e. Christian economic privileges and strength) (Mann, 2005, chapter 5; Akcam, 2001).

b. The Persecution of the Armenians¹³⁷

Despite some arguments to the contrary, the existing evidence suggests that the 1915 killings was not a long-drawn policy decision of the Unionists. Rather, it was only by the end of February, beginning of January of that year that

¹³⁴ The Revolt was a reaction against the CUP policy of making Turkish the main medium of communication by all communities. Albanians, who had been accustomed to having a high level of autonomy under the previous Ottoman administrations, were resistant to any idea of centralization of the government and their policies to unify communities (Shaw and Shaw, 1977: 287-88).

¹³⁵ For pre-1915 events, see Akcam (2001: 126-37).

¹³⁶ The alliance was based on the need of the CUP government to ensure as much support as they could from different communities. Even though they were in power, and especially during their first few years, they still did not establish a stronghold over the governance of the Empire. It was the old, traditional local notables and clerical elite which had the power in many towns – especially in the peripheral regions. Hence, the CUP had an interest in trying to maintain the support of the Armenian community. Moreover, on some issues such as constitutionalism and taxation, both parties shared the same stance (Kansu, 2000; Ahmad, 1993).

¹³⁷ The literature on Armenian genocide is vast. In this section, I will outline the main contours of events instead of presenting the debates in the existing body of works. For some comparative approaches see Mann (2005) and Akcam (1992; 2004).

a policy was shaped (Akcamlar, 2001). Before then, the level of mistrust toward Armenians was kept at bay among the CUP administration.

According to Akcam during the opening years of the 20th century a 'Turkish national identity' was heavily shaped by a desire to revenge - which in turn was a result of lost territories and the massacre of Muslim populations in these lost lands. The massacres of the Muslim population (especially in the Balkans) and the subsequent migrations into Anatolia (following the Crimean War), Serbian uprisings, the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-78, and later on the Balkan Wars created vivid images in the minds of what was at loss (Akcamlar, 2004: 92-3; Zürcher, 2000: 160; interview with Halil Berktaş in Kaplan (2005)). These images of suffering were reminders of the diminishing power of the Empire, and a consequent feeling of a loss of superiority. At the face of these humiliations, the CUP government quickly declared that new Ottomanism was ineffective. The hope of saving the Empire was now seen possible only through a homogenization, or Turkification process. The forced 'relocation' of Armenians was the tragic consequence of this process.

The efforts at Turkification manifested itself in the economic sphere:¹³⁸ The CUP administration was seeking to transfer as much wealth and resources as possible into the hands of the Muslim population. Prior to the outbreak of the First World War land ownership had become a concern for the CUP government. One of their major frustrations was the recent land purchases in Eastern Anatolia by Armenian merchants (Keyder, 1987: 67). It was the First World War which gave an opportunity to the CUP to reverse this state of affairs. As Zafer Toprak notes:

"During the war, political actions played a significant role in the transfer of certain fields of economic activity into the hands of the Turkish-Muslim guilds, and enterprising Muslim-Turkish entrepreneurs filled the vacuum left by the Armenian Deportations" (quoted in Akcam, 2004: 142).

¹³⁸ The General of Aleppo province had sent an annual report to the Ministry of Trade in 1917. This report also illustrates the economic aspect of the political decision that was carried out: "It is with pleasure that I report that we have, in accordance with the government's wishes, succeeded in completely transforming the conditions here and in the district of Maras. My province has been cleansed of Christian elements. The merchants and business owners, who two years ago were 80 percent Christian are now 95 percent Muslim and 5 percent Christian" (quoted in Akcam, 2004: 142).

The Armenians' demand for autonomy and the Russian involvement just prior to the War aggravated the situation. Now, "the economic resentments [of the CUP] were being channeled away from class toward ethnonationalist conflict" (Mann, 2005: 130).

The outbreak of the War was significant since it gave enough power to the CUP administration to pursue its goals without interference. Further, it provided the administration with a justification for what was going to come. The involvement of a small number of Armenians with the Russian government and army during the War (Dadrian, 1995) and the defeat at the Russian front in January 1915 were the final turning points. No matter how small¹³⁹ this involvement might have been, it was enough to alarm the CUP leaders as well as justify any policy towards preempting further possible threats. The leaders blamed the defeat on those Ottoman-Armenians who had joined the Russian forces. In March 1915 the weapons of Armenians serving in the army were taken away. They were then sent to work at transportation, and road construction where they died because of hunger, cold or were executed. The scale of killings heightened in April 1915 with mass deportations of civilians from different parts of the country –wiping out almost the entire Armenian community (Akcem, 2001).

c. A Brief Look at the National Independence Movement (1919-1922)

Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, the signing of the armistice in 30 October 1918 and the signing of the Sevres Treaty in 1920, what had remained of the Empire was brought under the control of the Allied Powers: Greeks claimed the Izmir region; the Cilicia region was claimed by the French and the Armenians. In the immediate aftermath of these developments, Societies for the Defense of the National Rights were established all over the country. Their members were predominantly of CUP origin. Locally based support came from

¹³⁹ The extent of Ottoman Armenian involvement in the Russian army is still debated. While Armenian sources estimate it to have been around 1,000-2,000 the Turkish army reports put it up to 6,000 to 15,000 (Mann, 2005: 136).

Muslim businessmen in places under occupation (Keyder, 1987: 81).¹⁴⁰ The goal was to successfully resist the presence of Western Powers, and regain national sovereignty. With this goal in mind, they started to organize regional congresses. Between 1918 and 1920, twenty eight congresses took place (Tanor, 1992).

The Erzurum Congress which was held in July 1919 is usually considered to be the starting point of the national resistance movement. The resolution of the Congress clarified the aim of the Societies, and hence the national independence movement: loyalty to the sultanate and the caliphate was of paramount significance. As well, the unity of Muslims (i.e. Turks and Kurds) was emphasized. The ultimate goal was the sovereignty of these two elements, and hence of the (Muslim) nation (Zurcher, 2000: 164-65). This resolution was echoed in the Sivas Congress in September 1919 and in various speeches of Mustafa Kemal during this period.¹⁴¹

The culmination of these congresses was the declaration of *Misak-i Milli* (the National Pact) in January 1920. The central statement of the Pact was:

“The totality of the parts within the lines of the armistice which are inhabited by an Ottoman Muslim majority, which is united in religion, race and origin ... forms a whole whose partition cannot be accepted in reality or in law for any reason whatsoever” (quoted in Zurcher, 2000: 170).

The reaction of the Allied Powers to this Pact was to take control of the Istanbul government. In its immediate aftermath, a number of deputies of the last Ottoman Parliament were sent to exile in Malta. For the leaders of the National Resistance Movement this was the final impetus to create a political center away from Istanbul, and seek to achieve their goal set out in the *Misak-i Milli*.¹⁴² Headed by the major actors of the National Independence Movement, the Grand National Assembly (GNA) opened in Ankara in April 1920. With the additions of some of the formerly exiled deputies, the First GNA took its shape.

¹⁴⁰ Keyder also notes that the support of Muslim businessmen could be seen as a result of the transfer of property following the Armenian deportations as well as the property they took over from the Greek population who had migrated to Greece (*Ibid.*, 81).

¹⁴¹ See ASD (1997) for examples of speeches along these lines.

¹⁴² For more on these developments see Tuncay (1999), and Zurcher (1998).

V. The Early Republican Elite and their Background¹⁴³

The elitist character of the Ottoman bureaucratic cadres started to weaken with the introduction of new educational institutions in the 19th century. The new schools, which were free of charge, drew students from various provinces of the empire.¹⁴⁴ Especially for students from lower classes access to these schools meant an opportunity to move up the social ladder (Mardin, 1981; Kazancigil, 1981).

The political elite that came to power in 1920 were the product of this new generation. These first members of the GNA largely consisted of deputies who had been outside the Palace circles and the Ottoman Assembly. In the First Assembly the deputies who had served in the Ottoman Parliament amounted to 23% of all deputies that composed the GNA (Frey, 1965: 164).¹⁴⁵

A quick glance at the political elite during the first three decades of the Republic (1920-39) exhibits some, more or less consistent, characteristics. First, all throughout the Kemalist era the political elite were predominantly comprised

¹⁴³F. W. Frey's (1965) The Turkish Political Elite still remains the most extensive study conducted on the socioeconomic background of the Republican political elite. For a summary of some of his findings, see Frey, F. W. (1975). The following discussion is going to draw on the data presented in these two studies. It should also be mentioned that the data on the first two Assemblies is far from perfect. In places where there exists insufficient data on individual deputies, Frey had collected data from a variety of sources including obituaries, biographical encyclopedias, biographies, and political party publications. For a detailed discussion on the available data and the methodology he uses, see (1965; 16-25). I also referred to a more recent study (which slightly differs from Frey) conducted by Demirel (1994).

¹⁴⁴In terms of the ethnic backgrounds of these students, the ones coming from the Western provinces (Turks, Albanians, and Bosnians) of the empire were overrepresented while Arabs (from Asia) and African provinces were underrepresented. Other ethnic minorities such as Greeks, Slavs, Jews, Armenians, and Maronites were not allowed to military schools, and were consequently underrepresented in *Mulkiye* (Rustow, 1981: 73).

¹⁴⁵In his book on the First Assembly, Demirel notes that out of a total of 426 deputies, 339 were new deputies, and 87 had served at the Ottoman Assembly (1994, 91). These numbers changed (although not radically) during the First Assembly period mostly due to deaths and also resignations. More precisely, 88 new deputies, and 12 deputies that had come from the Ottoman Assembly left at the end of the First Assembly (Demirel, 1994, 108). It should also be noted that neither Demirel nor Frey follow this particular group through to the next Assembly. Nevertheless, it would not be wrong to assume that their numbers must have declined after the First Assembly.

of military men, bureaucrats and agents of the state.¹⁴⁶ Second, the Kemalist elite were an educated elite. Third, the majority of the deputies had been born within the borders of modern Turkey. Fourth, those deputies with official backgrounds were the ones who consistently held top leadership positions. Fifth, the participation of women in the GNA was almost negligible; and it remained so all throughout the single-party era.

Looking at the overall picture of the Assembly members, Deringil makes a comparison with the Kuomintang in China, and the Sun Yat-sen movement. In all those cases, he contends, the elite were “confined to the socially mobilized but unassimilated intelligentsia and the small middle classes” (Deringil, 1993: 168). Finally, the majority of the CUP members found their way into the GNA. In this particular sense, we can talk about a certain historical continuity.¹⁴⁷

a. Occupational Background

All throughout the Kemalist era the majority of deputies belonged to the official group.¹⁴⁸ This group was followed by professionals, the economic group (i.e. engaged in trade and commercial activities), the religious group, and journalists.

In the First Assembly (1920-23), the official group constituted the largest group in the Parliament (43%).¹⁴⁹ More specifically, this group consisted of military men, bureaucrats, teachers, and all agents of the state. Among this body of deputies we see government officials as constituting the majority (23%); followed by military men (15%), and teachers (5%). The second major

¹⁴⁶Below, I will follow the categories defined and used by Frey (1965) when discussing different groups in the GNA.

¹⁴⁷ At the same time, Ankara government also distanced themselves from the CUP administration. According to Akcam, this was due to the CUP’s involvement in the Armenian genocide. During the War of Independence the leaders of the nationalist movement had to make sure that the CUP and their movement was not the same (Akcam, 2004: 194-96).

¹⁴⁸This is different from the multiparty era which was characterized by the dominance of professional and economic groups.

¹⁴⁹Demirel gives us a slightly different figure for this group (46.9%) (1994, 147).

occupational group was the economic group¹⁵⁰ (19%) while professionals¹⁵¹ and the religious group constituted 18% and 17% respectively (Frey, 1965: 181). Finally, journalists accounted for 2% of the GNA.

Table 1
Occupational Backgrounds by Assembly*

Assemblies

Occupations	I (1920-23)	II (1923-27)	III (1927-31)	IV (1931-35)	V (1935-39)
Officials	43%	54%	54%	45%	48%
Professionals	18%	20%	22%	22%	24%
Economic group	19%	14%	16%	22%	19%
Religious group	17%	7 %	4%	3%	3%
Journalists	2%	4%	5%	7%	5%

*Adopted from Frey (1965). The numbers may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

During the Second Assembly (1923-27), the most drastic change is observed in the religious group: From 17% they dropped to a mere 7%. Between 1923 and 1927 the official group continued to increase in number. Now constituting 54% of the GNA, they had absolute majority. The professional group (20%) and the economic group (14%) also had a relatively considerable presence. During the next three assemblies (1927-39), the majority position of officials was

¹⁵⁰This group included bankers, deputies who owned agricultural lands, and those who were engaged in trade activities. This last group constituted the majority, and was followed by landowners and bankers.

¹⁵¹The professionals included lawyers, doctors, and engineers. Within this group, lawyers constituted the majority (13%) followed by doctors (4%). No engineers were present during the First Assembly (*Ibid.*, 181).

more or less maintained (54% during the Third Assembly, 45% during the Fourth Assembly, and 48% during the Fifth Assembly).¹⁵²

After the Second Assembly there was a continuous decrease in the numbers of deputies belonging to the religious group. More precisely, their numbers declined down to 4% during the Third Assembly, and to 3% during both the Fourth and Fifth Assemblies.¹⁵³ During the same period the professional group continued to make up the second largest group. In the following two Assemblies they constituted 22% of the Parliament. Their numbers slightly rose in the Fifth Assembly, reaching 24% (*Ibid.*, 181). Finally, the economic group accounted for 16% in the Third Assembly, 22% in the Fourth Assembly, and 19% in the Fifth Assembly.¹⁵⁴

In short, when looked at their occupational backgrounds officials maintained their stronghold over the Parliament during the Kemalist era. They were followed by professionals, and the economic group. Journalists had a fairly consistent presence of around 6% all throughout the period. The religious group, despite having a presence in the First Assembly, was reduced to a minority with almost negligible presence.

b. Education

Kemalist elite was an educated elite mostly composed of military officers and civil servants. Looking at the period 1920-57 Frey concludes that over 60% of the deputies had obtained some training at the university level (*Ibid.*, 43). When looked only at the single party era, a similar picture holds. This is especially

¹⁵²While the official group was the largest one almost consistently, when we look at the composition of the newly elected deputies, there was a decline in their numbers during the Fourth Assembly. More precisely, between 1931-1935, the newly elected officials were 23% compared to 57% in the preceding assembly (Frey, 1965: 209-210).

¹⁵³In the Third Assembly there were only 2 deputies belonging to the religious group who got newly elected. In the Fourth and Fifth Assemblies there were no newly elected deputies (*Ibid.*, 210).

¹⁵⁴When looked in terms of the occupational backgrounds of the newly elected deputies, the Fourth Assembly appears to be an exception. During this period, the newly elected deputies belonging to the economic group jumped up to 41% compared to 17% in the Third Assembly (*Ibid.*, 210).

significant since during this period three fifths of the male population was illiterate (*Ibid.*, 43). Moreover, the figures on education levels reflect stability over the single-party years – remaining above 60% (Frey, 1965: 208).¹⁵⁵ It was only after the Fourth Assembly (1931-1935) that there was a significant jump in university level education (when it went up to 80%).

c. Localism

During the First Assembly there existed a high level of localism. Over three fifths of the deputies (62%) had been born in the provinces they represented (Frey, 1975: 59; 1965: 187). After this period, the numbers show a steady decline, which continued into 1935. It was only after the advent of multiparty system that localism started to pick up again. More specifically, especially from the Second Assembly onward, the number of deputies who had been born in the provinces they represented declined – falling down to 34% by the Fifth Assembly (Frey, 1965: 188).

As localism declined, the overrepresentation of some regions also became clear. During the Kemalist era, Marmara and Aegean regions (and to a lesser extent the Mediterranean region) were consistently overrepresented in every Assembly starting with the Second Assembly. More specifically, it was the deputies coming from the Istanbul region that increased in number (see Table 2). Of course, this change was taking place at the expense of Eastern and Central Anatolian regions (*Ibid.*, 186). The situation during the First Assembly, for instance, was just the opposite. During 1920-23 it was the South Eastern parts that were overrepresented, followed by the Aegean region.¹⁵⁶

A quick look at the birthplaces of the deputies leads us to conclude that the majority had been born within the borders of modern Turkey. Foreign-born

¹⁵⁵Regarding educational levels Frey notes that most of the “unkowns” in his data come from the First Assembly. Thus, data on this initial period is of uncertain reliability, while for the Second Assembly has 80% coverage (*Ibid.*, 176).

¹⁵⁶For this early period, Demirel notes that 16.9% of the deputies were representing the Southeastern Region, whereas 14.9% represented the Aegean region. Marmara region, on the other hand, was one of the underrepresented regions (6.9%) along with Middle-South Anatolia (7.1%) and Northeast Anatolia (7.3%) (1994, 138-39).

deputies consistently constituted a minority. When we look at individual assemblies, we see that foreign-born deputies accounted for 11% and 13% of the Grand National Assembly in the First and Second Assemblies respectively. These percentages increased slightly during the Third Assembly (16%), going down incrementally in the Fourth (15%). Finally, in the Fifth Assembly their numbers increased to constitute 21% of the Parliament (*Ibid.*, 185).

Table 2
Deputies born in the province of Istanbul*

Assemblies

	I (1920-23)	II (1923-27)	III (1927-31)	IV (1931-35)	V (1935-39)
Deputies from Istanbul	8%	13%	17%	16%	24%

*Frey (1965: 186).

Table 3
Localism and Foreign-Born Deputies by Assembly*

Assemblies

	I (1920-23)	II (1923-27)	III (1927-31)	IV (1931-35)	V (1935-39)
Localism	62%	60%	49%	49%	34%
Foreign-born	11%	13%	16%	15%	21%

*Figures adopted from Frey (1965).

d. Leadership Levels

If we look at the members of the GNA on the basis of leadership level, we see that the majority of top leaders belonged to the official group, had university education, and came from the Western regions of Turkey.¹⁵⁷

Around 87% of the top leaders in the First Assembly had university level education. This figure remained stable all throughout the Kemalist period (*Ibid.*, 253). Moreover, the middle leaders, and the backbenchers were consistently less educated compared to the top leaders.

The majority of top leaders came from the western provinces of the country. More precisely, during the first two assemblies 32% and 45% of top leaders had been born in the Marmara and Aegean regions respectively. This number jumped up to 55% in the Third Assembly. In the last two assemblies, there was a slight decrease, although the figures remained above 40% (*Ibid.*, 252).

Finally, the top leaders consistently belonged to the official group. These positions were to lesser degrees filled by professionals and the economic group. The former were the dominant element within the middle leaders, while the backbenchers overwhelmingly belonged to the economic group (*Ibid.*, 256).

During the first two Assemblies, governmental deputies and the military almost equally belonged to top leadership. After this initial period, the former appear to have occupied middle leadership positions. However, they were still consistently in leadership roles as opposed to belonging to the backbenchers. The military, on the other hand, held top leadership positions all throughout the Kemalist era, and so was highly favored both in relation to different groups, and also among the officials' category (*Ibid.*, 260).¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷Here I will follow Frey's distinction between the top leaders, middle leaders, and backbenchers. Within this categorization a top leader is one who "had at least the equivalent of durable ministerial importance" while the middle leader refers to a "deputy occupying an Assembly office and minor party offices, or held a ministerial position briefly" (1965: 244). The backbenchers are defined as those who held no leadership position other than the committee membership assigned to each nonleader deputy (*Ibid.*, 243).

¹⁵⁸ During the first five Assemblies, more than half of the top leadership positions were held by official groups (49, 66, 61, 60, and 65%). Professionals decreased in number at top echelons,

e. Women in the Grand National Assembly

Women had been relegated to the backstage of social, political and economic life all throughout the Ottoman period. This pattern was partly broken during the First World War when mobilization for the war effort drove women out of their homes and into the work place where they worked as clerks, teachers, factory workers, and nurses. However, their inclusion into the political sphere had to wait until 1930s. It was in 1930 that women received the right to vote in the municipal elections. In 1935, they obtained the right to vote in national elections along with the right to become a deputy in the Grand National Assembly (Frey, 1965: 154).

From 1935 until 1957 only thirty eight women served in the Parliament. Thus, even after their inclusion into the political sphere, women remained overly underrepresented. The ratio of reelection is another illustration that they never occupied a significant part in the national legislature. Frey notes that only six out of thirty eight women deputies were reelected (*Ibid.*, 154).

One significant characteristic of women deputies was their high levels of education. Two thirds of all women deputies had received university-level education. This was especially striking not only given the high level of illiteracy in the country as a whole, but also the very limited opportunities women had in improving themselves. Moreover, when we look at the particular occupational groups we notice that they were mostly teachers. Nearly two-thirds of women belonged to this group. They also predominantly came from the Istanbul region. In other words, among women deputies, the level of localism was very restricted. 42% of women deputies were born in Istanbul compared to 16% of their male counterparts. Further, only 26% of women deputies had a connection with the region they represented as opposed to 58% of male deputies (*Ibid.*, 154-55).

especially after 1923, only replenishing themselves in the 1930s (37, 18, 21, 23, 24%). Finally economic groups seems to have held top positions at a stable rate after 1923 (3, 11, 11, 11, 7%) (Frey, 1965: 256).

f. Opposition in the First Assembly

As noted above the First Assembly (1920-1923) was divided into two groups: The First Group, and the Second Group. The works focusing on the analysis of these two groups characteristically note that the First Group was composed of those who were the faithful followers of Atatürk. The Second Group, on the other hand, is depicted as conservative, and anti-secular (Sapolyo, 1958; Eroglu, 1982). However, more recent works demonstrate that the Second Group was fundamentally opposed to authoritarian forms of governance. These works also illustrate the heavy emphasis placed by this Group on the extension and protection of rights and liberties. More precisely, this opposition group focused its attention on blocking any actions which could monopolize political power in the hands of a selected group of individuals. Most of all, they were sensitive about the need to establish the rule of law in modern Turkey (Demirel, 1994).

Table 4

Some characteristics of the First and Second Group deputies in the First Assembly*

Characteristics	First Group	Second Group
Size	202	63
Served in the Ottoman Assembly	26.7%	22.2%
Newly selected	73.3%	77.8%
Localism	66.7%	73%

*Figures adopted from Demirel (1995).

There were a number of differences between these two Groups. First, there was a difference in size. The First Group was considerably larger in size – with

around 202 deputies while the Second Group remained around 63 deputies. The rest did not sign on with any of these camps and thus stayed “independent” (Demirel, 1995: 119-133).

The second difference was with regards to the number of deputies who had served in the Ottoman Assembly: The deputies who belonged to the First Group, and who had served in the Ottoman Assembly were 26.7%. The figure for the Second Group was 22.2%. The figures for the new deputies were close to each other: 73.3% for the First Group, and 77.8% for the Second Group (*Ibid.*, 137).

There was also a marked difference between the two groups on the basis of the specific regions they represented. Middle-North Anatolia, Southeastern Anatolia, and the Marmara regions were heavily represented by deputies belonging to the First Group while deputies from the Second Group characteristically represented the Black Sea region, and Northeast Anatolia (*Ibid.*, 139).

Finally, the two groups differed when we look at levels of localism. Members of the Second Group dominantly came from provinces in which they were born. In other words, the level of localism is higher for the Second Group (73%). This figure is 66.7% for the First Group (*Ibid.*, 141).

As mentioned above, the majority of the Republican political elite had high levels of education. This characteristic becomes pronounced within the First Group. While 36.6% of the deputies from the First Group had high levels of education, in the Second Group this figure is 34.9%. Moreover, 17.3% of the First Group were graduates of medreses. For the Second Group, the percentage is lower (14.3%) (*Ibid.*, 144).¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ According to Demirel (1994) the fact that *medrese* educated deputies were mostly found in the First Group runs counter to the argument dominant in the literature that it was the Second Group which was conservative, closed-minded, religious, and wanted to hold on to the Imperial ways. Demirel further notes that members of the First Group who were also present in the Second Assembly were dominantly graduates of Darulfunun (the university), War Academy and War College graduates. After 1923, those who had received medrese and high school education were significantly cut off from GNA (1994: 597).

Table 5
Occupational Backgrounds of Deputies from the First and Second Groups

Occupational background	First Group	Second Group
Officials*	48.5%	49.2%
Professionals*	16.8%	15.9%
Economic+	21%	16%
Journalists+	3	3
Religious*	9.9%	3.2%

*Adopted from Demirel (1995), pp. 148-149.

+Adopted from Frey (1965), p. 311.

Finally, when looked at the occupational backgrounds, it is evident that deputies belonging to the religious group within the First Group were a larger group (9.9%) compared to the opposition (3.2%). The distribution of professionals in both groups appears to be at par: 16.8% in the First Group, and 15.9% in the Second Group. As for the officials, they comprised a slightly larger group in the opposition (49.2%) compared to the First Group (48.5%) (*Ibid.*, 148).

VI. Concluding Remarks

In first half of this chapter I outlined the main internal changes which took place in the Ottoman Empire during its last two decades. These changes were due to a combination of the shifting dynamics within and outside the Empire. Similarly, the disintegration of the Empire was due to both internal and external causes, and the interaction between the two. As will be pointed out later on, the conditions under which the Empire collapsed would have significant impact in shaping the Republican elite's rhetoric and actions.

Writing on the French Revolution Hunt reminds us that “if the revolutionary politics cannot be deduced from the social identity of revolutionaries, then neither can it be divorced from it. The Revolution was made by people” (1984:13). Following Hunt’s reminder the second half of the chapter has been devoted to a review of the socioeconomic background of the Republican elite.

Chapter 6-- Language Policies and Building the Nation

I. Introduction

Language unites as well as divides individuals and collectivities. As Schöpflin puts it: “at both the cultural and political levels, language comes to acquire a symbolic, identity-marking quality” (Schöpflin, 2003: 482); it becomes a boundary-setting mechanism. It is through language that individual and collective memories are narrated, stored, interpreted, and reinterpreted. Thus, a common language does make it possible to think of ourselves as belonging to one big imagined community (Anderson, 1992). Language as a nation’s link to its past also makes it a powerful - if not a necessary- medium on which nationality could be based. In the hands of the political elite it further becomes a tool for articulating power.

a. Language Policies and National Experiences

Characteristically, language policies were part and parcel of the formation of nations and nation-building projects. When shouldered by the state, these policies typically aimed at homogenization and assimilation (Weber, 1977) as well as achieving efficiency in the running of state bureaucracy.

Although language policies have been on the agenda of most nation-building projects, the pace and direction (i.e. goals and the specific nature) they took as well as the significance paid to these policies differed historically. In most cases, such as France, linguistic unity as opposed to linguistic diversity came to be the defining characteristic. Further, and in the Western European context, the emergence of this unity took place in rather a slow fashion, and assumed an assimilationist form.

France was a prime example of state preceding the nation. Here, changes in the linguistic sphere started as early as the 17th century, but remained very

limited in scope and unconnected to nation, or nationalism.¹⁶⁰ Even after the French Revolution deliberate efforts to unify the language were slow to come by. Weber notes that as late as the second half of the 19th century “French was a foreign language for a substantial number of Frenchmen, including almost half the children who would reach adulthood in the last quarter of the century” (Weber, 1977: 67). Even though the revolutionary political elite perceived the spreading of the French language as a source of political and ideological unity, and speaking it a sign of a true Republican, language unification required a long time. The spread of industrialization, migration from rural to urban areas, conscription to the military as well as the unification and nationalization of the education system helped to make French language the common medium of communication among citizens (Weber, 1977).

Even during the – albeit short-lived – heyday of assimilationist policies, debates on language remained political in tone rather than ethnolinguistic. As Brubaker notes, the French case exemplifies the making of ‘Utopian speakers out of all citizens of Utopia and not vice versa’ (Brubaker, 1990: 390). This in turn was congruent with the republican insistence of the definition of the nation along contractual lines.

More specifically, language issue was tied to individuals’ rights as citizens. A unified language (and press) was seen as a major instrument in enabling the citizens to know what their rights were – a major component of a democratic regime. In 1794 the Committee of Public Safety declared that:

“The monarchy had good reason to resemble the Tower of Babel; but in a democracy, to leave the citizens ignorant of the national language and incapable of controlling the government means to betray the fatherland. It means to recognize the blessings of the printing press, for every printer is a teacher of the language and the legislation” (Kohn, 1967, quoted in Mann, 1993: 240).

¹⁶⁰ The French Academy, which was founded in 1635 was essentially an institution preoccupied with refining the French language –keeping the already learned audience in their minds. Accordingly, for example, their criticisms against borrowing from English were based on the fact that it was unnecessary (rather than being un-French) (Fishman, 1972: 78). Similarly, and going back to the 16th century, the old regime did not attribute any connection to language and patriotism; and made no efforts to nationalize the French language (Ford, 1993: 12).

The politicization of language and achieving linguistic unity as a political and national necessity became apparent only during the last decade of the 19th century. From then onwards, the French Republican elite articulated the nation using language as a constitutive element of national identity. This shift in the elite's rhetoric was due to three main factors: the need to efface the monarchical past; the reaction to the New Right (which advocated linguistic pluralism and regional autonomy); and the anticlerical disposition of the Republican elite (Ford, 1993: 10-28).¹⁶¹

In the English case, changes in the linguistic landscape seemed to have started earlier than it did in France. The English case also brings forth economic transformations as a significant element in shaping the future of the language on the island. More specifically, rapid rates of urbanization and internal migration initiated language homogenization (Colley, 1986). In addition, the internal spread of English was more due to pressures from below as opposed to state initiative. For example, Colley notes that "the accelerating decline of Welsh and Gaelic after 1750 was in part ... [due to the fact that] many working-class Welsh and Scottish families saw the English language as a ticket to greater geographical mobility and employment prospects" (Colley, 1986: 112).¹⁶²

While linguistic unity and homogenization was the general direction for most nations, in some cases such as Belgium, and Switzerland linguistic diversity was the end result. On Switzerland, Laitin notes that "Swiss national identity developed over centuries, and did so without a need for a common language" (*Ibid.*, 15). Yet, language remains a significant part of their national consciousness, especially at the cantonal level.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ It was especially in the 1880s that the use of patios was more and more associated, by the Republican elite, with clericalism and reaction. Accordingly, all efforts were concentrated on killing the patios through schooling; and as a result, education legislation also acquired central significance in the eyes of the elite (Birnbau, 2001: 122).

¹⁶² For a similar emphasis put on internal migration, as well as the integration of markets, see Watkins (1991) who discusses the impact of these changes on various Western European countries.

¹⁶³ In Switzerland, "a common "Swiss" culture is built upon clear notions of cantonal autonomy" (*Ibid.*, 15). Moreover, for each canton, language rationalization has been an important preoccupation.

Finally, historically, language –while unifying the populations within- also worked to separate the “true owners of the nation” from “foreigners” or more “primitive peoples”. In this way it acted as a boundary mechanism. In the case of Germany a direct contrast with the French was used to strengthen one’s identification with the nation. Jahn, a German nationalist and activist, wrote:

“He who teaches his children the French language, or permits them to learn it, is delirious; ... he who allows his daughter to study French is about as good as he who teaches his daughter the virtues of prostitution” (cited in Fishman, 1972: 53).

Similar contrasts abound between Finnish vis-à-vis Swedish, Hindi vis-à-vis Persian, Urdu vis-à-vis Sanskrit – to cite a few examples (*Ibid*, 67).

b. Some General Observations on the Turkish Case

While the pace of linguistic change was characteristically slow in Western countries, it proceeded at a faster pace in late nation-building cases. As will be discussed below, in the Turkish case transformations in language were spread out over a little more than two decades.¹⁶⁴ At the end of the 1930s not only the major reforms such as the switch to the Latin alphabet were achieved, but also an institutional setup was established to solidify the direction of language policy. Furthermore, all these changes took place under the strict control, initiation and support of the political elite themselves.

In the Turkish case, the contrast between Turkish and other languages took a slightly different direction when compared to the countries discussed above. Not only was the political elite critical of borrowing from foreign languages, but they were also critical towards their own imperial past – that is, towards the Ottoman language. In addition, even though the nation was and remained (predominantly) Muslim and Koran was read and recited in Arabic, the influence of Arabic as well as Persian was also opposed to.

¹⁶⁴ Here, my emphasis – as it is in the rest of the study – is on the elite’s actions and not on the consequences (i.e. failure or success) of the reforms.

An analysis of the Kemalist period presents us with three main, general observations regarding the language question and nation-building: First, in the Turkish case the homogenization and engineering of language was tied first and foremost to social cohesion and national unity. As argued by Kymlicka and Patten:

“It is hard to carry out a program of social justice when the political community is fragmented into identity groups that do not share the affective bonds of common citizenship and see cooperation with one another solely as an instrument of mutual advantage. A successful nation-building project can help to ensure that language no longer serves to separate individuals into distinct and mutually antagonistic groups, but would become one of the defining bonds of a common identity” (Kymlicka and Patten, 2003: 39).

Similarly, in the Turkish case, language became a tool in the hands of the political elite to bind the nation’s people together. However, as will be discussed below, the attention paid to different aspects of the language question changed over time as perceptions of nationhood shifted from one basis to another. Differently put, language policies reflected the shifting articulations of nationhood.

Second, and related to the above point, the language question was essentially a question of politics and ideology. As Hobsbawm succinctly put it, “politics and not culture is at the core of ... language manipulation” (1996: 1078). Turkish nation-building process clearly manifests such an instance of “politics at work”. Under the Republican regime the politicization of language meant that language policies became tied to the elite’s concern to solidify their Revolution in the hearts and minds of the people. Consequently, and to achieve this aim, the elite saw the language issue as one that could aid them in establishing a consistent and close communication between themselves and the people. In this sense, language homogenization and standardization would also aid the elite in legitimating their presence and their actions.

Third, for the Republican elite loyalty to the territorial nation and language went hand in hand. Linked to this, sharing the same language became one of the pillars of nationhood. In other words, the reflection of one’s loyalty to the nation

came to be increasingly measured by whether the person used Turkish as his/her main means of communication (both in public and private spheres). Hence, speaking Turkish became indispensable to the rules of belonging to the nation.

c. Chapter Outline

Below discussion is outlined in a chronological fashion – analyzing language policies in three different periods. Here, the main goal is to demonstrate the defining elements of the debates and the consequent direction of language policies for each period. In doing this, the emphasis will also be on drawing out the shifts (which took place over time) in the nature of these debates and policies.

During the early period (1920-23) debates over language were tied to a religious (i.e. Muslim) conception of nationhood. This period also witnessed an emphasis on language as the main determinant of being a nation. By corollary, building a new nation, and purging the language of its foreign (i.e. both Ottoman and Western) elements was seen as proof of the Republic's and its peoples' independence.

The second period (1924-1930) had a stress on language policy as a tool for assimilation. Language was directly connected to membership to the nation. This was also the period when major reforms towards laicization were taking place. Yet, a closer look at the language policies demonstrates that the process of laicization (in the legal and to a certain extent political spheres)¹⁶⁵ did not automatically find its reflection in the linguistic sphere. Differently put, there were still debates on language issues, which entailed the religious dimension of the nation. Finally, during this period language policies were defined as part of the elite's Westernization attempts.

The last decade of the Kemalist era was marked by institutionalization efforts. One of the most important developments in this direction was the founding of the Turkish Language Society in 1931. These years also witnessed a full-blown effort to further assimilate those groups whose first language was not

¹⁶⁵ I will discuss some of these processes in the following chapters.

Turkish. In the 1930s assimilation efforts were directed not only towards non-Muslims (i.e. the Jewish community) but also towards (non-Turkish) Muslim groups. This full-blown and rather aggressive approach to linguistic assimilation could be attributed to the earlier failure of the elite to make Turkish the only language in the public arena. Finally, 1930s also saw the birth of the Sun Language Theory. Taking its formal form in 1936 the Theory was an attempt to “scientifically” prove that Turkish was the source of all languages. Furthermore, and in line with the Turkish History Thesis,¹⁶⁶ Sun Language Theory linked Turkish race/ethnicity with Turkish language. Yet, as will be argued below, this link did not mean that ethnicity became the definitive variable in shaping the direction of language policies. Rather, the overarching and most central element that characterized this period was the aggressive tone of assimilationist policies and rhetoric.¹⁶⁷

II. Language and Nationhood during the First Assembly (1920-1923): Issues of Religion, and Legitimization

Following the opening of the GNA the references made on the language issue were directly linked to a particular (i.e. religious) understanding of nationhood. The reforms that were proposed during this and later periods led to changes in the linguistic sphere which were in line with (and reflective of) the elite’s perceptions and articulations of nationhood. Differently put, language was one of the main pillars through which notions of nationhood were articulated. At the same time, language issues were expressive of these notions.

During this early period language question and its link to nation-building and nationhood centered around three different concerns: First, there was the issue of the standardization and simplification of the language. As will be discussed below, this specific concern was seen significant by the elite since it was through a unified language that the nation itself could be truly established. Hence, and in

¹⁶⁶ See Chapter 7 for a detailed discussion of the Turkish History Thesis.

¹⁶⁷ As also argued by Cagaptay (2002), in the 1930s the definition of the nation as well as belonging to the nation were intertwined with language; and the latter did not comprise any ethnic or racial connotations.

this sense, language was perceived as a significant step in establishing the sovereignty of the nation. Second, a religious perception of nationhood manifested itself through debates on language. This aspect was indisputably present, for instance during deliberations on altering the names of certain towns and villages, which appeared to be un-national (i.e. non-Muslim, and non-Turkish). These deliberations illustrate how language had a *symbolic* as well as a *political* character – *reflective* of the fact that this was a Muslim nation. Third, language question was taken up in the context of legitimizing the regime and the actions of the elite through bridging the gap between themselves and the people; and using language as a tool in the process.

a. Simplifying and Nationalizing the Language

As mentioned above, one of the concerns pertaining to language issues had to do with the nature of the language itself (i.e. grammar, vocabulary as well as choice of names etc.). Before analyzing the content and the implications of these debates it should be noted that the language question had a history that predated the Kemalist regime. Arguments advocating linguistic simplification in the early 1920s were – to a certain extent – reminiscent of the debates that had taken place in the late 19th century. During this latter period language question was taken up within the context of the highly repressive Hamidian regime.¹⁶⁸

Two characteristics of these earlier debates are of significance: First, during the late 19th century language question was defined and deliberated only amongst a relatively small circle of scholars and intellectuals. In other words, the majority of the population (including the majority of the political elite itself) was removed from or not informed about these debates. Second, the emphasis of most

¹⁶⁸ For the case of 18th century Prussia and Austria Mann (1996) talks about the rise of a “proto-nationalism” through activities in the fields of literature, philosophy, and philology: “Literary revivals and cultural and linguistic ‘proto-nationalism’ among German academics or Polish nobles were not anti-state and they did not command popular support, but they were creating a more universal community of identity, the cultural or linguistic ‘people’ – though the people did not yet identify with it” (1996: 157). The case of the late Ottoman intellectuals and their inquiries into linguistics can be compared to what Mann is describing here. If anything, these debates were harbingers of what was going to come. However, at the time they did not initiate any substantial changes.

of these discussions remained along social, cultural and philological lines as opposed to having political or ideological coloring to them. As Kushner notes, "... their prime concern was social, rather than nationalist; not Turkification of the language, but its elevation to an all-purpose medium of literature and writing" (1977: 59). Those intellectuals who attempted to ground the language debate on a nationalist rhetoric remained exceptions. Similarly, efforts by these (minority) nationalist intellectuals to organize themselves around associations did not amount to much. For example, *Türk Derneği* (Turkish Society) was founded in 1908 with the aim to promote language purification as well as making Ottoman Turkish the basis of a "national language". Yet it was forced to close its doors two years later.¹⁶⁹ In contrast to this earlier period, under the Republic the questions of language were clearly situated within a political, ideological, and nationalist framework.

When language question was taken up again by the Kemalist elite, they firmly laid out its relationship with nationhood. Besim Atalay¹⁷⁰ was one deputy who underlined this link. According to him the language of any nation did and should reflect the character of that nation. Atalay raised the following points when the program of the Executive Committee of Commissioners was presented in 1920:

"... [T]here are certain truths which are not presented in any governments' declarations that would bring forth the science and culture (which are necessary for nations and nationalities) under one national body. ... We all know that our language, the medley of a language we have now, was never seen anywhere in the world, at anytime. Just like our manner of dressing [comprises of] fez, turban, kalpak..."

Voices from the ground: It is the same in Europe.

Besim Atalay: Not to this extent. It is everywhere classified, separated into communities. Just like an Arab comes and walks around with his *maslah* [cloak]; a Frank comes ... and walks around with his hat; or someone who belongs to some other nation comes to our country and wears his own national clothes,

¹⁶⁹ According to Karal, the problem with this (and similar organizations) was that their aims were too ambitious (Karal, n.d.: 326). For a detailed discussion of language debates during the late Ottoman period see Kushner (1977), and Karal (n.d.).

¹⁷⁰ Besim Atalay (1882, Usak – 1965) was a statesman known for his interest in Turkic languages, and his role in the language reforms during the Kemalist era. He joined the GNA in 1920, and was a deputy during the first seven Assemblies. In addition to publishing a number of works on Turkish languages of Kipchak and Chagatai, he also translated Koran into Turkish.

when a word or synthesis enters our language, it holds on to its characteristic, its own rules. ... If we were to bring together the words that are used by our common people, and thus comprise a national body, surely, we would be demonstrating, without doubt, that we are a civilized and modern nation” (ZC, 9.5.1336/1920, 243-44).

Just like the education system needed reorganizing,¹⁷¹ so did language: its grammar should be restructured; its vocabulary purged of foreign elements etc. such that the orderliness of the language could be a true reflection of the orderliness of the new nation. More significantly, Atalay’s insistence that ‘without a purified language there is no nation’ occupied a central part in various speeches by the members of the GNA.

b. Nationalization of Language, and the Religious Character of the Nation

The following year Atalay brought another issue to the table. This time he presented the GNA with a bill to change the names of those villages, towns, cities and ports, which could be deemed “irreconcilable with Islam and Turkishness”. Atalay presented the reasons behind his draft proposal as follows:¹⁷²

“Even though our rule has reached almost 1000 years, we still have not left a name on this soil which would characterize us. Even the word Anatolia is still not our language. It is not a national word. ... We, who have been living on this soil –which we had inherited from the Hittites (who were one of us) 3000 years ago – *we are under the obligation to change the name of this soil into Turkish and Islam*”¹⁷³ (ZC, 9.5.1337/1921, 269).

The bill found support from deputies – two of whom also addressed the GNA. Sivas deputy Mustafa Taki (Dogruyol) Efendi:¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ See Chapter 7 for my discussion of education policies.

¹⁷² There were a number of changes made to names of various villages and towns in the following assemblies. Some of these changes will be pointed out in the following section.

¹⁷³ My emphasis.

¹⁷⁴ Mustafa Taki (Dogruyol) (1873, Sivas – 1925): worked as a civil servant in various provinces of the Empire. He joined the GNA in 1920 where he was listed as an independent deputy.

"I thank Besim Atalay for his idea. ... All the names of villages and townships are generally foreign names. ... What does Ankara mean; is that our Turkish? What does Tokat mean; what does Sivas mean? ... This is not clear. To us, they don't mean anything. ... [Keeping these names] will have repercussions for the future. We gave Izmir to Greeks because it was called Izmir [Smyrna] ... Why should we give it? Of course, it doesn't mean that the places [with foreign names] should belong to foreigners; that is a different matter. However, why should we not designate a place, which has connections with our own nationality and religion, with a name in our own language?" (ZC, 9.5.1337/1921, 270).

During the same session Gaziantep deputy Yasin (Kutlug) Bey (who was a member of the First Group)¹⁷⁵ reiterated the above lines of argument:

"There is a province called Rumkoyu [the Greek Village]. ... There is not one Greek there. Hence, this place has nothing to do with Greeks in terms of its water, soil, or roots. Because the name of the place was Rumkoyu, Babiali [the Ottoman administration] had sent us ... a Greek administrator. I plead to you; more than [changing the names of] villages, it is imperative to change the foreign names in the provinces, and *give them names that would really be proper to Islam*"¹⁷⁶ (ZC, 9.5.1337/1921, 270).

It is of significance that in the above quotes deputies used Turkish and Islam together, and sometimes interchangeably. Clearly, the elite discerned place names as important markers of national identity – religion being a major determinant of this identity. Accordingly, it was only through the alteration of these names that the Muslim-Turkish character of the new nation could manifest itself.

Taking the above arguments one step further, Besim Atalay also pointed out the possible consequences of keeping these names as they were:

"They are reincarnating the names which had been buried three, five thousand years ago. They say "Thrace" and we accept this. This is what all nations do today. They are immediately changing the names of the nations under their rule. It is our religious and national duty to do [the same]. Because, as long as these names – Anatolia, Ankara, Konya, Likonia – are kept ... they will seek legal claims. I believe it is not agreeable for us to call this nation Turkish and Muslim, and still use the same names they had used may be for thousands of years" (ZC, 9.5.1337/1921, 270-71).

¹⁷⁵ Yasin Kutlug (1889, Sanliurfa – 1973): belonged to a family of landowners. He joined the GNA in 1920. During this time he was a member of the First Group. He also was a member of the Independence Tribunal. Kutlug was not reselected to the GNA in 1923.

¹⁷⁶ My emphasis.

These addresses to the Assembly are important as they brought up a particular conceptualization of nationhood by the elite. This conceptualization was directly tied to religion. Turkishness was also defined not along ethnic but religious lines. The proposed changes were also demonstrative of the elite's attempt to dissociate themselves from their Ottoman predecessors. However, so far, the dissociation only entailed a linguistic dissociation. Differently put, the religious dimension of the nation – which had been the legitimating principle of the Empire – was still a salient point here. Instead, the emphasis was put on the “medley of a language” (i.e. the Ottoman language) which had to be left behind. Solidifying imperial exit, and establishing the new nation's sovereignty was significant especially to position themselves as a unique nation in the eyes of the Western-civilized world. Possessing a standardized Turkish, devoid of foreign grammar rules and vocabulary was perceived to be one concrete proof demonstrating to the Western world that Turkey was a sovereign nation.

The main underlying reason for the stress on the religious character of the nation lied in the developments of the period under analysis. This was a period when the elite had not yet completely proven their strength in the eyes of their own people or the Western powers. 1920-1923 was the period when the Ankara government was preoccupied with demarcating national territories. Capitulations¹⁷⁷ were still intact; the Allied powers had control over considerable tracts of land. Greece was, with the support of Britain, trying to lay claims to certain (especially Western) territories. Moreover, negotiations regarding the articles of the Lausanne Treaty were still pending. It was this geopolitical context that partially shaped the direction and content of the debates.

Religious themes were also central to many of Mustafa Kemal's speeches during this early period. As Mardin notes, “To gather and energize a population materially and morally depleted by Turkish involvement in the Great War, Mustafa Kemal was appealing to the Muslim identity of some and to the Turkish

¹⁷⁷ See Chapter 4 for the definition of capitulations.

patriotism of others by defining his goal as the salvation of the *millet*”¹⁷⁸ (1997: 116).

Writing in 1938, the renowned novelist and journalist Peyami Safa¹⁷⁹ also stressed the significance of religion as a constitutive element of nationhood during the War of Independence. According to Safa this stress on religion emanated from the requirement to maintain as high a level of social solidarity as possible. He further maintained that this link between religion and nationhood had nothing to do with “Islamism, the Islamic law or a clerical mentality”. Rather, it was

“... a link that bolstered national sentiment during a time of struggle which made it necessary to strengthen all elements that bind individuals together. In fact, even the religious sentiments of the time were nationalist” ([1938] 1988: 50).

Hence, the emphasis on religion was a direct consequence of a series of interconnected, external as well as internal circumstances. One final element that should be considered here is the composition of the elite itself. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the First Assembly had a rather heterogenous composition – combining in it those who had religious and traditionalist tendencies as well as the more Western-oriented, yet still Muslim, deputies. Given this composition religion could be seen as a bridge – connecting a heterogenous elite body that belonged to different ideological stances as well as past personal experiences. In other words, religion established a common ground for deliberations and dialogue; and contributed to a certain sense of unity among deputies. Hence, the

¹⁷⁸ As mentioned in Chapter 4, the word “*millet*” initially had religious connotations. During the late 19th century, it also acquired a secular meaning (i.e. nation), taken from its Western usage. Here, Mardin is referring to the duality of the word’s meaning, and the reasons why it was conveniently used by Mustafa Kemal.

¹⁷⁹ Peyami Safa (1899, Istanbul –1961): Writer and journalist. His father was the renowned poet Ismail Safa. He worked as a teacher during 1914 and 1918; and as a journalist from 1918 until 1961. Safa was one of the staunch supporters of the simplification of the Turkish language. He was an active member of the Turkish Language Society and Turkish Hearths. Even though he attempted to join the GNA in 1950 he was not elected. He became a follower of the Democrat Party after 1950. In addition to his many novels and journal articles Safa also published *Türk İnkılabına Bakışlar* (Perspectives on the Turkish Revolution) in 1938 where he analyzed different currents of thought as well as Kemalism. In his early writings he tried to find a balance between Westernism, national culture and the Kemalist reforms. His later writings shifted more towards mysticism and religion; and sought to synthesize these with Western ideals.

close connection between language and religion should also be understood within this specific context.

c. Language Policy and Political Legitimacy

The need to extricate language from foreign influences was raised again in 1923 – this time by Tunali Hilmi.¹⁸⁰ His proposal for a “Turkish Law” which outlined the necessary transformations and the ways of implementing them was rejected after a commission deliberated it. However, there was a brief discussion of the proposal in the Assembly when Tunali Hilmi and Besim Atalay put forth their arguments in defense of the bill.

In his speech Atalay stressed the relationship between being a nation and having a ‘national’ language. In addition, he held that language was the main channel, a bridge, between the common people and the elite/state. As well, and by implication, language purification was seen as requisite for legitimating the newly built regime and the Revolution.

“... No language [of any other nation] is so adulterated as ours. ... Just as yesterday’s [elite] without ideals amply added Arabic and Persian into our language, today they are adding Frankish and whatever else. If today we fail to save our language from foreign rules and foreign capitulations – just as our government is freed of political capitulations – we will not be a complete and mature nation. ... If we are a nation, we will have a language. If we are a nation, [our] language [will be] our vehicle to bring forth our sentiments and feelings to the people. If you were to pick up any newspaper, please tell me which person, which peasant, which tradesman understands it? ... This nation needs a language; [it] needs literature, [it] needs theatre. ... All these will be done with language. ... The reforms of Mesrutiyet, and even the *last reform –which was born from the soul of the people- even that one, if it were to become manifest within the souls of the people, if it were to make an impression on the souls of the people, ... it has to be spoken with the language of the people, it has to be written in the language of the people.*¹⁸¹ Since we are the government of the people, since we are populists, we must refer [this issue] to a council, a committee composed of

¹⁸⁰ Born in today’s Bulgaria, Tunali Hilmi (1871 – 1928) joined the Young Turks, and for a while worked as the secretary of the CUP. In 1920, he served in the last Ottoman Assembly. He was in the GNA from 1923 until his death in 1928. Hilmi was known for his advocacy for the simplification, and Turkification of the Turkish language, expansion of women’s rights and the Republican policies regarding rural development.

¹⁸¹ My emphasis.

experts; they should consider [these matters] at length, and bring forth the language we need" (ZC, 1.9.1339/1923, 338).

Atalay's speech clearly outlined three issues at hand: First, proving that the new nation was not a continuation of the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, there was the need to purge the language from Arabic and Persian words and rules. Second, and linked to the first, a language which did not include any foreign elements was essential since this would be demonstrative of the existence of an independent nation. Finally, the gap between the elite and the people should be bridged if the political, and social changes initiated by the former were to be successful, and have legitimacy. In this last meaning, language was as a "vehicle" to reach out to the people, and make the elite's aspirations and goals the same as those of the people's.

Another assenting voice to the proposal was that of Mehmet Fuad:

"... The majority of the people are farmers and peasants. The main language of the farmers is Turkish. When a newspaper reaches the peasant it is the hodja who reads it. The peasant does not understand anything from it. Since our government is Turkish, there is a need [for us to achieve] the progress and elevation of the Turkish language" (ZC, 1.9.1339/1923, 341).

Clearly, the Republican elite saw the language question as a tool for legitimating and strengthening their power through the simplification of language. Thus, different from the French case, the elite's main concern did not revolve around making language intelligible to the masses so that they could know and understand their rights.

In sum, the early discussions on language demonstrate that the political elite consistently alluded to the nation's Muslim-Turkish character. In addition, linguistic transformations were deemed desirable since they would bridge the gap between the elite and the people. Finally, these changes were essential in solidifying the sovereignty of the nation in the eyes of the West¹⁸² as well as in

¹⁸² Compared to the way the elite perceived the Ottomans, the West had a more ambivalent standing in their rhetoric. The former was clearly dismissed as a possible basis for identity. In relation to the West, there were two different outlooks, which stood in tension. On the one hand, the Republican elite sought to prove to the West that they were one of 'them'. The standardization

the eyes of the people themselves. During this early period, language did not appear to be linked to who a “real” Turk was. Put differently, the link between rules of belonging and language assimilation (which would become pronounced in the coming years) did not seem to be a concern during the early years of the GNA. Neither were specific ethnic groups, their loyalty/disloyalty to the nation, their assimilation etc. part of the language debates.

III. Assimilation and Westernization through Language Policies (1924-1929)

1924-1930 was marked by radical and rapid transformations in all spheres of life. As Halide Edip¹⁸³ noted in her article “Dictatorship and Reforms in Turkey” (1929), this was a period of “doing” instead of “thinking”. Analyzing these transformations Edip noted that

“The new generation is morbidly impatient to see a new world rise overnight. Hence such words as “liberalism” and “freedom of thought”, which lead to a slow growth, are now out of favor in politics. ... There has never been such emphasis on “doing” instead of “thinking” as there is today. Dictatorships have the appearance of “doing” all the time, whether they accomplish lasting changes and affect internal reconstruction or not. Accordingly, they are the latest fashion in politics” (Adivar, 1929: 28-29).

Now that the territorial integrity and national sovereignty were secured, the center of attention inside the GNA shifted to organizing and reorganizing national life. This stress on “doing” certainly reflected itself in the multitude of laws ratified by the Assembly. Through law-making the elite attempted to

of Turkish language was one manifestation of this outlook (since the West had followed the same path). At the same time, however, the elite also aimed at purging the language of Western rules (as well as words). This was seen as essential to mark the difference between the new nation and the West. More specifically, such purging was significant to demonstrate to the Western world that they were a unique and sovereign nation.

¹⁸³ Halide Edip (Adivar) (1883, Istanbul -1964) was a famous novelist, supporter of women’s emancipation, and was heavily engaged in the social, and political as well as literary movements of her time. She married the politician Adnan Adivar in 1917. Edip was actively involved in the War of Independence in Anatolia. She also took part in the Turkish Hearth clubs. An ardent patriot, in time she became critical to Kemalist policies. After her travels outside of Turkey, she returned back to Istanbul in 1939, and became a professor of English Literature at Istanbul University. She also served as Member of Parliament (1950-54) after the transition to a multiparty system.

redefine and reorganize all spheres of life – ranging from dress codes, the alphabet to the abolition of the caliphate.

In addition to the changes undertaken in various spheres of life, this period was also marked by a significant shift in demographics: Following the Greek-Turkish population exchange of 1923 the country had lost a significant proportion of its non-Muslim population.¹⁸⁴ This meant that the majority of the population was now Muslim in origin. Yet, despite the religious homogenization of the country, ethnic composition remained mixed. The influx of Turkish and non-Turkish immigrants coming to Turkey in the 1920s and 1930s (from the Balkan countries as well as from the provinces of the Soviet Union) contributed to this heterogeneity. Linguistically too the immigrants were a diverse group.¹⁸⁵ In 1935, the majority of the population (around 14 million out of 16 million) spoke Turkish. The second largest linguistic group was Kurdish (around 1,500,000); followed by Arabic (around 150,000), Greek (around 100,000), Circassian (63,000), Armenian (57,000) and Ladino (33,000) (*Istatistik Yilligi* [Statistical Yearbook], 1938-39, Vol. 10).¹⁸⁶ This heterogeneity was seen as a challenge and a problem that should be tackled by the Republican elite. Thus, in this period we observe the beginnings of a preoccupation with assimilation.

¹⁸⁴ The population exchange agreement between the Turkish and Greek governments was carried out between 1923 and 1925. This exchange was not a voluntary one; and so no choice was left to individuals. Moreover, it was carried out along religious lines rather than ethnic or linguistic lines. It was agreed that those Greek-Orthodox groups who resided in Turkey and those Muslims residing in Greece were to be moved. The exchange excluded Greek-Orthodox population residing in Istanbul, and those Muslims residing in Western Thrace (Ari, 2000: 18). As a result the immigrants coming into the country were Muslims, yet most of them did not speak Turkish. For a detailed analysis of the diplomatic progression of the exchange, see Aktar (2006).

¹⁸⁵ The population movements, which took place in 1920s was marked by the emigration of Muslims from the Balkans and Thrace. These groups which included Albanians, Bosnians, Pomaks as well as Turks were all Muslims. However, linguistically, they were a diverse group. For example, Albanian Muslims spoke Albanian; Pomaks spoke Bulgarian and Bosnian Muslims spoke Serbo-Croatian (McCarthy, 2000: 30). The linguistic diversity of the new nation would decline over the years. Yet even by 1930s, there was some variation. According to the census figures of 1927, out of a total population of approximately 13,500,000 13.58% of the population was non-Turkish speakers. In this group were included Kurdish (1,184,446), Arabic (134,273), Judeo-Spanish (119,822), Armenian (67,745), Albanian (21,774), Bulgarian (20,554), and Crimean Tatar (11,465) (*Istatistik Yilligi* [Statistical Yearbook, Vol. 3: 45-57]).

¹⁸⁶ Other languages included Albanian, Georgian, Persian, Pomak (Bulgarian), Bosnian (variants of Serbian and Croatian), and Tatar.

The significance of language heightened in the late 1920s. The content of discussions was –to a certain extent – similar to what had been discussed during the previous (1920-23) period. More specifically, the simplification and Turkification of the language; and concerns over establishing the legitimacy of the regime (and hence the wider transformations) were again taken up and deliberated in various sessions. However, new concerns also started to be added on top of the already existing ones. One such concern was to demonstrate (through language policies) to the Western world that Turkey was a civilized nation. Westernization thus became a theme especially pronounced with the Alphabet Reform in 1928.

The other new element, which had not received attention in the first Assembly and which acquired significance now was language policy as an assimilation tool. Tied to this a common language was articulated as the central marker of belonging to the nation. Accordingly, it was imperative for those who wanted to be part of the nation to achieve and demonstrate complete linguistic assimilation.

a. Language as a Marker of Belonging, and Solidifying Imperial Exit

The second half of 1920s brought the relationship between language and belonging to the nation to the forefront. Atatürk's talk in Adana (17 February 1931) captures this association:

“One of the very visible qualities of nationality is language. A person who says he belongs to the Turkish nation, first and foremost and for sure, must speak Turkish. If a person who does not speak Turkish claims that he embraces the Turkish idea, it would not be right to believe this. In Adana there are more than 20,000 citizens who do not speak Turkish. If the Turkish Hearth tolerates this, if the youth, all political and social institutions remain insensitive at the face of this state of affairs, it will be possible for this state which has been continuing at least for a hundred years, to continue for many hundreds of years to come. What would be the consequence of this?” (Korkmaz (ed.), 1992: 191).

The two themes - ‘language as a determinant of belonging to the nation’, and ‘language as reflective of the nation’s unity’ – were also elaborated upon in

Ahmet Agaoglu's¹⁸⁷ piece titled "*Milli Suur*" [National Conscience]. Defining national conscience as the bringing of national identity (*milli benlik*) up to the level of consciousness and its subsequent internalization by the people, he added:

"The main factors in the establishment and the creation of national consciousness are: Language, religion, literature, esthetics, and shared history. ... But for these to bring forth national conscience, they should be ... nationalized; they should direct the children of the nation toward a definite and shared ideal. Neither a medley language that is not understood by the majority of the nation, nor a religion that is closed to the masses, nor a history that is cosmopolitan and that talks about the biographies of the sultans ... render this duty" (*Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, No. 1189, 8.9.1340/1924; republished in Kaplan et. al (eds), 1981, Vol. 1, 97).

In his piece Agaoglu made references to other countries and their experiences. For instance, he pointed out the multitude of religions and languages as being the most important problem India had to tackle. This was contrasted to Britain where despite differences of opinion on various issues, a common identity – Britishness – existed, and which kept the nation together (*Ibid.*, 101). In the final analysis, he argued, the goal of the Republican elite should be to learn from these examples and achieve linguistic homogenization of the nation.

Parallel to the previous period, late-1920s exhibited the elite's intolerance and impatience to remove themselves away from their Ottoman past. The Ottoman *millet* system, through which the non-Muslim populations were extended the right to establish their own schools and preserve their language, was seen as a grave mistake. A renowned Jewish-Turkish intellectual, Avram Galanti,¹⁸⁸ referred to the devastating consequences of this policy in one of his articles. According to Galanti language meant nation. If minorities were permitted to speak their language, then divisive currents among the nation could not be

¹⁸⁷ An émigré from Russia, Agaoglu (1869 – 1939) embraced Turkish nationalism in his writings. He was educated in history, political science and law. While in Russia he advocated the unification of Russian Muslims. After the occupation of Istanbul he was exiled to Malta. Agaoglu entered the GNA during the Second Assembly. In 1930 he joined the opposition party, the Republican Progressive Party. After the dissolution of the Party, he ended his political career and taught law at the university.

¹⁸⁸ Avram Galanti (Bodrumlu) (1873, Bodrum – 1961) was a scholar renowned for his works on Turkish Jewry. He taught and published extensively on Ancient History, and Languages. He also served as a Member of Parliament between 1943 and 1946.

prevented. Consequently, the reversal of the Ottoman policy was perceived as an urgent need in order to (ideologically and politically) homogenize the population. Moreover, Galanti emphasized that being a Turk first and foremost required speaking Turkish. It was through the use of language that one acquired a sense of belonging.

“Those elements who live in Turkey and whose language is not Turkish ... could be Turks by word, name and officially. However, they cannot be Turks by soul, idea and heart. Because they cannot feel Turkishness. Because they are lacking Turkish [language] which is one of the factors that makes one feel Turkish” (*Aksam*, 5 May 1925; republished in M. Kaplan et. al (eds.), 1981, Vol. 2, 548).

Clearly then, language problem was now directly tied to determining the rules of belonging to the nation. Consequently the problem of assimilating the non-Turkish speaking groups also came to the forefront. Differently put, linguistic assimilation was perceived as compulsory for belonging to the nation.

b. Language Policies and Assimilation

Language as an assimilation tool became significant after the population exchange of 1923. Hamdullah Suphi (Tanrioever)¹⁸⁹ raised this point in the GNA:

“In those places where there is an overwhelming majority of Turkish inhabitants, if there are any languages [spoken] other than Turkish we must remove them (applause). They located those groups that speak Greek along the Island shores. That was a big mistake. Tomorrow, or the next day, after things calm down, if a contact develops between the shores of the islands, if the Greek speakers come in touch with the Greek islands there will be no possibility of drowning this foreign language” (ZC, 30.10.1340/1924, 92).

Two years later Besim Atalay drew attention to the same matter. While acknowledging the still heterogenous ethnic and linguistic character of the nation, he addressed the GNA:

¹⁸⁹ Hamdullah Suphi (Tanrioever) (1885, Istanbul – 1966) was a writer, poet, statesman, and a renowned orator. He was active at *Türk Ocakları* (Turkish Hearths). He served in the GNA until 1950 when he resigned from the RPP, and joined the Democrat Party.

“... Why would an Albanian who comes here speak Albanian? A Bosnian would speak Bosnian; a Circassian would speak Circassian? If they were to do so, they should go to Albania, Caucasus, Arabia. They are nations too; I have respect, however if they come here they should speak Turkish” (ZC, 20.3.1926, 271).

During the same session Atalay further emphasized the link between nation-building and language in general, and the linguistic homogenization of the population in particular:

“... It is the unity of language which binds people together ... Don’t go far. Go to Ulucanlar here, you’ll hear Albanian at coffeehouses. Go to Safran Han, you hear Kurdish. Go to Tahtakale, there are the chirping sounds of Arabic. The whole country is like that... Romania procured decisions so Hungarian is not spoken. Arabs don’t use [certain] Arabic words because Turks are using the same ones. When will we make the language of the people we call Turks, Turkish?” (ZC, 20.3.1926, 271).

One illustration of this attempt to linguistically assimilate minorities was a campaign launched by Istanbul University’s Faculty of Law. In 1928 the Student Association of the university decided on the slogan they were going to use in this campaign: “Citizen Speak Turkish!” The campaign only lasted for three months and then died off.¹⁹⁰ However, it did spark public debates about language; and the political elite became more vocal about these issues.

The same year Avram Galanti published his *Vatandas Turkce Konus!* [Citizen Speak Turkish!] ([1928] 2000). Even though different ethnic and linguistic communities were targeted for assimilation it was the Jewish community, which received a lot of attention.¹⁹¹ Galanti’s work exemplifies this attention. In his book Galanti detailed the multiplicity of ethnic and linguistic groups in Turkey. In addition to presenting the diverse nature of the linguistic map of the country, the book also aimed at persuading the Jewish community to lay aside their own language and embrace Turkish. As well, the book was a

¹⁹⁰ The campaign originally started in Istanbul. From there, it spread to other major cities. For the reactions of the Jewish community to this campaign as well as the tensions it created between them and Turks, see Bali (2001 [1999]).

¹⁹¹ The need to (linguistically) assimilate the Jewish community also received attention from Jewish intellectuals living in Greece in the 1920s. There, learning and using Greek was deemed to be significant for the survival of their community. For a discussion of the position of the Greek-Jewry in relation to language question, see Mazower (2006: 377-80).

defense of the Jewish community in Turkey – explaining the historical reasons as to why the community was still holding on to their language.¹⁹² In this last respect, Galanti's book was an effort to propose a conciliatory approach which would acknowledge the desires and needs of both sides.¹⁹³

According to Galanti one of the reasons why the Jewish community held on to their language was the absence of a printing press at the time of their immigration to the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century. This left the community with no option but to establish their own printing presses, which in turn meant the development of an inward-looking, culturally isolated community. Furthermore, in places where members of the Jewish *millet* lived in closely-knit neighborhoods, their language survived since there was no need to acquire Turkish (*Ibid.*, 26-7). Galanti traces the coming of a self-declared messiah, Sebetay Sevi (1629-1676) into the midst of the Jewish community as another reason. According to him, the movement that Sevi attempted to initiate in the community led to a highly conservative attitude towards acquiring and using Turkish as a medium of communication (*Ibid.*, 31). As a result, he concludes that the "Sevi incident"¹⁹⁴ had devastating effects on Ottoman-Jewry. Despite the tolerance of the Ottomans as well as the attempts of some of the more liberal thinking Jewish religious leaders, the community held on to its language.

For Galanti, the solution to the language problem was education. It was only through encouraging minorities to be schooled at Turkish institutions that the problem could be solved ([1928] 2000: 5). Galanti also complained about the

¹⁹² The Jewish community in Turkey predominantly spoke Ladino which is a Judeo-Spanish language (Rodrigue, 1995).

¹⁹³ The general tone of his book also testifies to this effort: Galanti refrains from blaming any one party for the persistence of the language "problem", and instead gives an account of historical events with a rather neutral tone.

¹⁹⁴ The movement headed by Sabetay Sevi led to a division within the Jewish community itself. This unrest eventually alerted the Ottoman center. The sultan at the time, Mehmet IV, forced Sevi to convert to Islam. As Neyzi tells us "according to a common tale still told, Sevi entered the Sultan's court with a pigeon under his cloak. By releasing the pigeon after the apostasy, he symbolically declared that the soul who converted was not his own, but that of the animal upon his breast" (2002: 143). Following that, his followers started to lead a "double-life": their public identity was that of a Muslim; while in their private lives they continued to follow the teachings of Sevi. The majority of this community were expelled from Salonica where they lived and settled in Turkey after the 1923 population exchange (*Ibid.*, 143). For a detailed discussion of the Sabbatians, also see Baer (2004); Mazower (2006: 69-76); and Bali (2004).

existing system at non-Muslim high schools where French was being taught instead of Turkish. At the same time, he underlined that it was not the responsibility of the Jewish (or non-Muslim) communities to undertake the teaching of Turkish. Rather, he wrote, if people say that "... 'this is Turkey, everyone should know Turkish'. This is true. But the duty of teaching everyone Turkish lies with the state" (*Ibid.*, 8). The system that existed in the USA was, for Galanti, a good example of what the Turkish state should aspire to do:

"The [state] in the United States of America opens up evening schools for [teaching] English for those immigrants who go there; and in order for them to admire America, they show the American flag the first class, and they say words that would inspire affection [to the nation]" (*Ibid.*, 46).

The USA was of course an instance where the educational institutions became important vehicles for the assimilation of immigrants. As Hobsbawm notes, the problem of national identity – that of making Americans out of immigrants – meant that schools shouldered the task of political socialization "... by such devices as the worship of the American flag, which, as a daily ritual in the country's schools, spread from the 1880s onwards" (Hobsbawm, 1983b: 280). Galanti's proposal similarly aimed at merging a variety of linguistic groups into one, and with that, raising the consciousness of belonging to one nation.

Around the same time, the same issue was also taken up by another renowned Jewish intellectual, Tekin Alp.¹⁹⁵ In his book *Turklestirme* [Turkification] ([1928] 2001) he dealt with the language problem within the general framework of nation-building. Tekin Alp, following Ziya Gokalp and Ahmet Agaoglu, saw language as one of the central elements in nation-building.

¹⁹⁵ Tekin Alp (nee Moiz Kohen) (1883, Serez, Macedonia -1961) was a renowned intellectual, known for his works supporting the Turkification policies of the Republic. He came from a Jewish family, and studied law in Istanbul. He also was active in many organizations over the years, all of which had a (Turkish) nationalist coloring to their goals. Tekinalp was also a member of the CUP, and hailed the 1908 Revolution as a great victory. After World War I he became a staunch Kemalist, and changed his name to Munis Tekinalp. He wrote a number of pieces on the regime, as well as lecturing at the *Halkevleri* (People's Houses). His ideas were very much shaped by Ziya Gokalp, as well as French thinkers and sociologists such as Gustav LeBon, and Emile Durkheim. Even though he never pursued an active political life, for a while, he was a member of the Istanbul Municipal Assembly.

He argued that compared to religion and ethnicity, which could be alternative bases of creating a people, language offered a sturdier base. This was because “we see a community of people who –due to their language unity- had survived for a thousand years, [but] one could change religions twice or three times” (*Ibid.*, 48). Hence, language was durable; and so it could and should be a firm basis of nationhood. In addition, in worldly affairs language was a more significant source of social (and national) solidarity and identification than religion. He supported this specific point through reference to the Greek nation:

“A Christian Greek is proud of a polytheist Plato, Aristoteles, Socrates. On the other hand it is never expected from a Christian [East] Indian to feel proud of Christian Newton, and Galileo owing to them sharing the same religion” (*Ibid.*, 49).

Tekinalp further maintained that for the Jewish community to become part of the Turkish nation there were certain things, which needed to be there; and language was one such element. More specifically, he encouraged the Jewish community to follow his version of the Ten Commandments:

- “1. Turkify your names.
2. Speak Turkish.
3. Say at least part of your prayers in synagogues in Turkish.
4. Turkify your schools.
5. Send your children to national [Turkish public] schools.
6. Engage in national affairs.
7. Socialize with Turks.
8. Uproot the community spirit.
9. In the area of national economy do your duty expressly.
10. Know your rights.” (*Ibid.*, 75)

It is significant that more than half of these “commandments” directly (or indirectly) refers to language. Tekin Alp, expanding on these items, wrote:

“... It is imperative to have a Turkish name to be a Turk. Even your co-religionists in other countries have nationalized names for they understood this obligation. ... Give genuine [pure] Turkish names to your children who are going to be born from now on. ... In public places speak Turkish with those who know Turkish. Speaking Turkish ... performs a deep impact on the soul. ... Prayers

[said] in Turkish on the one hand would move you closer to God, on the other closer to the fatherland” (*Ibid.*, 75-6).

Tekinalp’s Ten Commandments (of assimilation) was directed towards the Jewish community. As a community, Jews were perceived differently by the Republican elite when compared to Greek and Armenian communities. The latter were seen as traitors. The elite further shared the conviction that their assimilation into the country was neither possible nor desirable. The Jewish community, on the other hand, had been loyal to the Ottoman administration in the past. They did not have any territorial ambitions. Moreover, they also have been advocates of the changes that the Republican elite have been undertaking. Jewish intellectuals, professionals, and religious leaders have been consistent in trying to establish good relations with the Kemalist regime (Bali, 2004). Hence, it is not surprising that both Galanti and Tekinalp devoted a lot of time and effort to try and find ways for their community to be accepted by the elite and the nation at large.

It is also important to note that assimilation as a goal was not limited to the Jewish community. Rather, the second half of 1920s were characterized as a time when belonging to the nation was defined as being tantamount to linguistic assimilation for all groups. In his book *Devlet ve Meclis Hakkında Muhasebeler* [Thoughts on the State and the Assembly] Celal Nuri (Ileri)¹⁹⁶ discussed the definition of belonging to the nation. To start with, he asserted that even though the 1928 Citizenship Law defined the Turkish citizen, there was a difference between this official definition and the “real” Turk. According to Ileri the definition of the latter was based on language and religion. To clarify his point he came up with a few examples:

“[Consider] Hasan Bey originally from Damascus ... who had left his country [of origin] a long time ago. There is no fault with his language. He had married a woman outside of his hometown. Their children were born in Uskudar [a neighborhood in Istanbul]. The neighbors do not consider him as a foreigner. On the other hand, it is hard for the neighborhood not to consider a Hanna Efendi as

¹⁹⁶ Ileri (1881, Gelibolu – 1938) joined the GNA in 1921, and served as a deputy until his death. In addition to his political career, he contributed articles to a number of newspapers as well as publishing a number of works on the Republic. He was known for his writings on women’s rights, and the simplification of the Turkish language.

a foreigner who lives in Beyoglu [in Istanbul], who had kept his Catholic faith, and Arabic language as a Christian, and an Arab" (Ileri, 1932: 95).

So, he asks, "what is the reality?" and goes on to list certain conditions to be considered a (real) Turk:

"1. Turkish should be the person's only language; he should speak Turkish with his family; he should think in Turkish; he should count in Turkish. He should talk in Turkish in his sleep. 2. Even though he could be one who is indifferent to religion, or a non-believer, he should come from the Muslim roots, or he should convert to [Islam]. Particularly, his official religion should not be anything but Islam. 3. He should not have any characteristics of the yellow or the black races. 4. Ethnic origins are not a question here." (*Ibid.*, 97-8).

c. Rules of Belonging: Language, Religion, and the New Nation

Clearly, and as laid out by Ileri in his above writing, belonging to the nation revolved not only around language but also religion. Diverse ethnic origins do not come into this formulation as long as the individual spoke Turkish, and was of Muslim descent. In Ileri's formulation, language and religion appear as the two pillars of the new nation capable of creating a base for loyalty and belonging; and overrides the significance of ethnicity as an alternative basis. As well, it is also interesting that he is advocating a linguistic assimilation which extends over and beyond the public sphere, and spills over the private life of the individual. Hence, it is not enough for the individual to use Turkish when conducting business, for example, but he/she also should be dreaming in Turkish!

Religion and its relation to nationhood were not only isolated to Ileri's work. It also came up in the deliberations in the GNA –and in relation to language. One of the debates revolved around the issue of changing the names of certain towns. This particular matter brought up the religious dimension of nationhood.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ The timing of these discussions was also interesting since it came *after* a series of reforms aimed at laicization including the abolition of the caliphate. See Appendix 2 for the dates of the main reforms.

In December 1924 the name of Kirkkilise was changed to Kırklareli.¹⁹⁸ The report of the commission from the Ministry of Interior endorsed the proposal stating that:

“... [after] the discussion of the motion it was considered suitable to change the aforementioned name [which] had nothing to do with our national history; and the article of the law was accepted in the following manner” (ZC, 15.12.1340/1924, 155).

When the changing of names was discussed a second time in the GNA, a number of deputies emphasized that names, which could be deemed as not national and/or which had reference to Christianity should be paid attention to. Hence, parallel to the discussions which had taken place in the previous Assembly, the perception underlying these addresses was that the nation had a strong religious character. Consequently, Turkish names could only be truly appropriate or deemed to be truly Turkish if they did not contain non-Muslim references.

Within this context, language itself was not the central concern. Rather, it was the connotations of the names themselves. As a result, language question was clearly politicized with a religious aspect attached to it. Dersim deputy Feridun Fikri (Dusunsel) Bey¹⁹⁹ addressed the Assembly stressing the need to change non-Muslim names:

“In Dersim there are certain centers of township. For example Basvartanik ... You all know that Vartan is an Armenian name. ... The continuance and permanency of such un-national names is not proper. ... [It should not be permitted] for such un-national names to influence the beautiful towns of our country” (ZC, 20.12.1340/1924, 190).

¹⁹⁸ Kirkkilise translates as Fortychurches; whereas Kırklareli can roughly be translated as “the land of the Forties”.

¹⁹⁹ Feridun Fikri Dusunsel (1892, Istanbul – 1958): Lawyer and statesman. His father, Mehmet Muncibey was a novelist. Dusunsel received his early education in Istanbul; and then attended Istanbul Faculty of Law. Following the completion of his degree he served in the army. In 1923 he received his Ph.D. degree from Paris Faculty of Law. Dusunsel became a deputy of Dersim (Tunceli) in 1923. In the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Assemblies he represented Bitlis. Dusunsel was one of the most vocal deputies of the GNA having given 575 speeches in the GNA.

Recep Peker,²⁰⁰ the Minister of Interior, echoed Fikri Bey's sentiments stressing that "the matter of changing names is ... because they are un-national" (ZC, 20.12.1340/1924, 191). Ergani deputy Kazim Vehbi also assented to the changing of names – especially those that had direct references to Christianity:

"... I, under no condition, accept this church word, which is an especial symbol of Christian cruelty/oppression. This inauspicious name is present all over the motherland. They should communicate, with a circular, to all provinces the modification of names that are churches; and they should alter all these names" (ZC, 20.12.1340/1924, 192).

The opposition to the changes was drowned at the face of above voices. There were only two members of Parliament, Biga deputy Samih Rifat,²⁰¹ and Tunali Hilmi²⁰² who raised their objections. Neither did their objection directly challenge the underlying rationale of the proposals. Rather, for example Samih Rifat underlined that this particular matter should be approached from a "scientific" point of view:

"... There are some names which we do not deem to be Turkish since they are not part of the words used today. However, may be they are Turkish; and they date back to prehistoric times. These [words] are deeds that prove [and] confirm the connection of Turks with Anatolia. ... It is not in our hands to infringe, to say that they are not Turkish on the basis of thought. This is something which should be settled by science, and expertise" (ZC, 20.12.1340/1924, 192).

²⁰⁰ Recep Peker (1889, Istanbul -1950) was one of the most influential ideologues of the Kemalist era. After attending Staff College he served in the army during the Balkan Wars, and the First World War. He was also actively involved in the War of Independence. In 1920 he worked as the general secretary at the GNA. His active political life involved him serving as the Minister of Defense, Public Works, and the Interior, as well as secretary general to the RPP. He was influential in the insertion of the principles of statism and reformism as part of the Party's Six Arrows. Peker was criticized by many because of his authoritarian politics.

²⁰¹ Samih Rifat (1874, Istanbul – 1923): While he was working as a civil servant, he started to contribute poems and articles to various journals and newspapers. After 1908 he also worked as mayor in various towns. Samih Rifat actively participated in support of the national resistance movement, and he entered the GNA during the Second Assembly as a deputy from Biga. In the 1930s he also worked at the History Society and Turkish Language Society. A nationalist writer, he was known for his advocacy for the simplification of the Turkish language.

²⁰² Tunali's main objection was based on the grounds that changing names would create confusion (*Ibid.*, 192).

At the end of the session, the name change for Kirkkilise passed and was justified on the grounds that the new name was “in harmony with the history and tradition of the area” (*Ibid.*, 193).

Similarly, in 1925 Hacin (a town in Eastern Turkey, where Armenians had long inhabited)²⁰³ was changed to Saimbeyli by a decree from the Ministry of Interior. The rationale behind the decision was stated as follows:

“It was communicated [from the locality of Hacin] and was deemed acceptable that the name of the township Hacin be changed to “Saimbeyli” in honor of Saim Bey who had shown extraordinary heroic courage and died on the field of battle during the National Movement” (PMA, 6/2410; 14.5.1925).

In this particular case even though there were no specific references as to the reasons why the name needed to be changed in the first place, it is clear that the objective of the elite was surely to remove as many non-Muslim names as possible. The fact that Hacin was a town predominantly inhabited by Armenians made it a legitimate target. Moreover, there was a symbolic significance to the name that replaced Hacin: The town was renamed after one of the heroes of the War of Independence.

In sum, at a time when the process of laicization was underway,²⁰⁴ the discussions in the GNA demonstrate that nationhood was still being perceived along religious as well as linguistic lines. Thus, despite the emphasis in the existing scholarly literature which defines the period as a ‘period of secularization’ the elite still understood and articulated the nation along religious (as well as linguistic) lines.

d. Language as a Reflection of Social Equality

Issues of language were not limited to assimilation and removing “un-national” names from the map. Debates were also tied to the social and political

²⁰³ Hacin and its environs were inhabited predominantly by Armenians. In 1915 Hacin Armenians were forced to migrate to Syria (PMA, 52/338, 27C.1333/12.5.1915). Eventually, and with the support of the French they were allowed to return back.

²⁰⁴ See Appendix 2 for some of the main transformations during this period.

sphere in a different manner. More specifically, there was talk of refining, and transforming the language so as to reflect the elite's desired characterization of the social structure. This desired and idealized social structure was in turn a manifestation of the populist ideology²⁰⁵ of the Republican regime and the RPP.

Tunali Hilmi's motion on the "law regarding titles" (Lakab Kanunu) set off discussions in the Parliament which manifested the above mentioned dimensions of the language issue.²⁰⁶ Hilmi's proposal entailed the banning of such addresses as "aga",²⁰⁷ and "efendi" from appearing on identity cards.²⁰⁸ During the session, even though there was mention of the character of the language itself,²⁰⁹ the speeches delivered were all tied to the political and social spheres. More specifically, Tunali Hilmi made the point that

"According to my understanding, [the institution of] *agalik* has collapsed today. In that case, [for the commission] to accept two such addresses like "bey" and "aga" would mean bringing back something that was harmful and that had collapsed. ... What does Pasha Efendi, Hanimefendi mean? I do not understand anything from this. ... [These are] naturally the end result of certain buffooneries that have been continuing since the oldest ages; and they are such harmful things that they have even produced an effect on our morals" (ZC, 11.1.1926, 108).

Hakki Tarik Bey went on a deliberation of the social consequences of keeping such addresses intact:

²⁰⁵ Kemalists defined and used populism in three different, yet interrelated ways: "One was popular sovereignty or rule by the people. The second was equality before law and a rejection of group and family privileges. The third was a solidarity view of society that held that the Turkish nation was 'constituted not of classes but of solidary, closely interdependent occupational groups'" (Ozbudun, 1993: 253). One of the "Six Arrows", populism was defined and included as part of the Party Program (and one of the ideological principles of RPP) during the Third General Congress in 1931. However, before this period the elite continuously had made references to populism. In fact as far back as to the CUP, populism appears as a principle –albeit in different forms (Tekeli, n.d.: 1929-35). For a more detailed discussion which focuses on the third aspect of populism, see Parla and Davison (2004).

²⁰⁶ Even though the motion was turned down at the time of this proposal, it was brought up again in November 1934 and was ratified. At the time of the above discussions the committee working on the draft did not find it necessary to pass a law regarding this matter. Rather, they suggested that it was enough for the government to issue a by-law.

²⁰⁷ "Aga": lord, or local big landowner, or [rural] master.

²⁰⁸ "Efendi" translates as gentleman, master. It was also a title in Ottoman days given to literate people, members of the clergy, Ottoman princes, and army officers up to major.

²⁰⁹ Regarding the language itself, Tunali Hilmi said: "... My biggest hatred, biggest enmity is against Arabic and Persian rules; foreign rules. Just as every language is spoken [based on] its own rules, so should this language be spoken [using] its own rules" (11.1.1926, 108).

“... [aga, bey, efendi] these three words separate the people into three ranks, and you, the Grand National Assembly of the Republic, with these three words continually separate the people into three ranks. ... The revolution we are absorbing should forbid anybody from addressing the people in such hierarchical manner. ... In times like this when there is a need for the revolutionary mentality that we represent to live, the employment of words which would separate [the people] into different classes must not be allowed” (ZC, 11.1.1926, 110-11).

Hence, in a very direct manner, the issue of personal address and titles was linked to the Republican ideal of populism. In this sense, the question at hand was not a simple language question per se but had wider ideological connotations. Language became a mirror through which the ideals of the Republican elite as well as the nature of the new nation were articulated. These speeches were demonstrative of the Republican elite’s definition that nation was composed of individuals that made up a homogenous whole irrespective of (in this case) class differences. By the same token, language itself should testify to (the ideal of) social equality of all under the Republic.

e. Language, Westernization, and Moving towards the People

A simplified language – purged off foreign elements – as a reflection of the Westernized nature of the new nation and its people was another recurring theme during this period. Similarly, language policy came to be understood as a tool to achieve Westernization. The pronounced emphasis put on Westernization came out strongly when the adoption of the new alphabet took place in 1928.²¹⁰

The Law announcing this transformation was ratified by the Assembly without any objections. Despite the absence of any opposition within the GNA some deputies, intellectuals and university professors voiced their criticisms outside the Assembly.

²¹⁰ An alphabet committee was formed to discuss and propose changes. It included three deputies (Falih Rifki Atay, Rusen Esref, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu); three members from the Ministry of Education (Mehmet Emin Erisirgil, Ihsan Sungu), and experts (Ragip Hulusi, Ibrahim Grandi, Ahmet Cevat Emre) (Korkmaz (ed.), 1992: 124).

Outside the GNA Halide Edip was one such critical voice. Her main objection to the reform stemmed from the fact that a fast and radical transformation such as this one would cut off the roots of culture, paralyzing the coming generations.

“Without a past, without a memory of the accumulated beauty of national consciousness, there will be a certain crudeness, a lowering of aesthetic standards” (Adivar, 1929: 43).

However, she quickly went on to add that the adoption of the new alphabet remained a necessary evil:

“Yet, with all its drawbacks, if one thinks of the Turkish nation two hundred years hence, the measure appears merely as a serious step towards that ultimate psychological unification with the West which seems to be the Turkish destiny” (*Ibid.*, 43).

According to Edip this ‘psychological unification’ with the West was also made easier because of the developments elsewhere. In her article she notes that it was in 1925 “at a conference in Baku, with a large number of Turkish delegates from all over Russia, [they] adopted the Latin letters” (*Ibid.*, 41). For the Republican elite this particular development meant that they did not have to worry about isolating the rest of the Turkish world, and “impairing the cultural unity of the Turks” by changing the alphabet. On the contrary, they would be moving closer to them (*Ibid.*, 41).

In his memoirs one of the members of the language committee, Ahmet Cevat Emre,²¹¹ outlined a number of reactions/criticisms against the change. More specifically, he cited Ismet Inonu,²¹² some of the professors at Darulfunun (Istanbul University), and some newspapers as having raised objections.

²¹¹ Ahmet Cevat (Emre) (1876-1961) was a renowned linguist. In 1897 he was interned due to his support for the Mesrutiyet reforms. Following the 1908 Revolution he came back to Istanbul. Emre taught Turkish and linguistics at the Istanbul University. He was actively involved during the language reforms as well as working at the Turkish Language Society. Emre also was an MP between 1935 and 1939.

²¹² Even though Emre includes Inonu among the critics, Inonu’s own public and GNA speeches around the time of the reform demonstrate his approval of rather than his reservation about the reform.

According to Emre there were three main arguments presented against the reform. First, it was argued that such a radical shift would lead to difficulties at best and chaos at worst in the functioning of the state departments. Second, there was the question of how individuals were going to make use of the old published works. Third, it was argued that the assessment of whether a nation was civilized could not be based on the easiness, difficulty or the type of alphabet used. Thus, according to these critics of change it only made sense to continue using the existing alphabet which had been in use for centuries (Emre, 1956: 21-26).

Those who favored the change came up with their own reasons. One of the main justifications was a pragmatic one and it was linked to economic modernization. The deputies, including Mustafa Kemal who addressed the Assembly prior to the ratification of the Law all emphasized the ease with which the new alphabet could be learnt. As such, there was great merit in adopting it – especially if the elite were to fight high levels of illiteracy in the country. This was in turn the key to the creation of a skilled labor force in the country.²¹³ Mustafa Kemal's address to the GNA preceding the enactment of the Law had this stress:

“... The great Turkish nation could get away – with the least effort, and taking the shortest way – from ignorance only through a vehicle such as this which suits its beautiful and noble language (applause from the floor). This key to reading and writing is the Turkish alphabet only, adopted from the Latin foundation (applause from the floor). A simple experience has shown it as clearly as the sun how Turkish letters taken from the Latin foundation are suitable to Turkish language and how easy it is for the elderly Turkish sons to read and write (applause from the floor)” (ZC, 1.11.1928, 4).

İsmet İnönü²¹⁴ echoed the above ideas:

²¹³ In the existing literature the purpose of accelerating the process of literacy and education typically appears as the main reason justifying the transformation. For example, see Ahmad (1993). However, as will be discussed here there were other, equally significant justifications for the reform.

²¹⁴ İsmet İnönü (1884, İzmir-1973): Army officer, statesman, second president of Turkey. He was trained as an artilleryman and served in the Ottoman army. İnönü joined the CUP in 1909; won two battles (named after him) against the Allied powers; and in 1920 he entered the GNA. He was made the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1922, and signed the Lausanne Treaty the following year. He was Mustafa Kemal's chief executive until 1937 when a rift between them developed. İnönü served as Prime Minister between 1923 and 1937. Following Mustafa Kemal's death, he became

“... The attempt is the attempt to rescue the nation from ignorance. ... This alphabet is simple ... it gives our citizens the hope and determination to learn” (ZC, 1.11.1928, 8).

Other justifications were also raised both within and outside the Parliament. First, Mehmet Emin Bey’s speech in the Assembly touched on the issue of bridging the gap between the elite and non-elite groups through the adoption of the alphabet (which consequently would make it easier for people to read). This stance was further accompanied by an emphasis on progress and westernization:

“... Arabic letters were not capable of carrying the voice of science and art to the people. They were not able to spread the spirit of progress and civilization. There were chasms between the elite and the people. ... With these new Turkish letters ... fourteen million Turks would form one body ... on the road to progress and civilization. ... Just as Gutenberg [sic] had formed the new world culture and civilization through the letters he had carved out, so would the Turks form the new Turkish culture and civilization. ... Just as God had created all humans and creatures out of a few elements, so would the Turkish nation create its new science, its new art ... and its new world with these new letters” (ZC, 1.11.1928, 9).

In one of his editorials Yunus Nadi²¹⁵ appealed to the nation to embrace the reform (and the new culture which it implied) as swiftly as possible. He wrote:

“We are moving away from the old culture since we left the old alphabet behind. It is not possible to claim that we wrapped ourselves in the new culture as long as we fail to take possession of the new writing. This state of affairs is the state of binamaz [one who does not perform the daily prayers] who stands between two

the second president of Turkey. Inonu encouraged the transition to a multi-party system. He became the leader of opposition after 1950; retired from politics in 1972 when his party program was not ratified by the GNA.

²¹⁵ Yunus Nadi (Abalioglu) (1880, Fethiye -1945): Acclaimed journalist, statesman, and a radical nationalist. After studying law for some time, he started working for the newspaper *Malumat*. Was arrested and sent into exile by the Hamidian regime. When he finally returned back to Istanbul he took up writing for newspapers again – this time for *Ikdam* (Effort) and *Tasvir-i Efkar*. In 1910, Nadi also started contributing to one of the publications of the CUP. The following year, he entered the Ottoman Assembly. In 1918, he founded the newspaper *Yeni Gun* (New Day). Nadi also served as a deputy in the GNA from 1923 to 1943. In 1924, he founded his newspaper *Cumhuriyet* (Republic) which is still in publication today.

mosques. In this case the important point is to quickly leave the transition period behind and to assimilate into the new culture” (*Cumhuriyet*, 4 August 1929: 1).²¹⁶

Deliberations over the alphabet were also accompanied by the simplification of the language. This issue was in turn discussed in the context of populism. Writing in 1924, a renowned journalist and editor Ahmet Emin Yalman²¹⁷ stressed that:

“As long as the observation of Arabic and Persian orthography continues in [our] writing Turkish language will be bound to remain the language of the elite. It cannot be the language of the people. ... Even among the elite those who can read a passage from beginning to end is very rare” (“Latin Letters”, *Vatan*, no. 339, 19 March 1924; republished in Kaplan et. al (eds) 1981, Vol. 2: 18).

Mahmut (Soydan) Bey²¹⁸ reiterated the above line of argument:

“The simplification of our language is also the command of our great revolution; because the greatest object of our revolution is to move toward the people. The basis of the Republic is populism. On account of this, it is first and foremost imperative to move the written language closer to spoken language of the people” (*Milliyet*, 24 February 1929: 1).

In like manner, writing about the alphabet reform in his memoirs Falih Rifki Atay²¹⁹ stressed that:

²¹⁶ In one of his articles around the time of the reforms he underlined that “... With the language reform our glorious Turkey will, in less than a year, be just like Europe by holding the real key to civilization and knowledge. ... The true meaning of the new letters is this: a Turkey which – truly and materially – has joined Europe” (*Cumhuriyet*, 1 December 1928: 1).

²¹⁷ Yalman (1888, Salonica – 1972) was the founder of *Vakit* (Time) and *Vatan* (The Fatherland) newspapers. Raised under the Hamidian regime, he became a staunch critic of despotism. After the armistice, he was exiled to Malta for two years. In his writings he remained committed to liberal and democratic ideals. In 1925 he was tried for his support of the Progressive Republican Party.

²¹⁸ Mahmut Soydan (1883, Siirt – 1936) was a writer and statesman, and the founder of the newspaper *Milliyet* (Nationality). After his training in the Military Academy, he served in the army. For a while, he was the tutor to Abdulhamid’s son. In 1920 he went to Anatolia and joined the National Resistance Movement. Soydan became a deputy in 1923.

²¹⁹ Falih Rifki Atay (1894, Istanbul -1971) was a renowned journalist, statesman and writer, and one of the closest companions of Atatürk. In 1922 he entered politics, and became a deputy in the GNA. He also continued writing for various newspapers including *Milliyet* (Nationality), *Ulus* (Nation), and *Hakimiyeti Milliyet* (National Sovereignty), and published a number of books on Atatürk, and the political and military developments of early Republic.

“The first assertion of populism is to move the language towards the understanding of the people; that is, to maintain the spoken language as the basis” (Atay, 1969: 468).²²⁰

In one of his articles Celal Nuri (İleri) directed everyone’s attention to the fact that this change heralded a move away from the East towards the West; hence towards civilization:

“... Through this substitution the Turkish nation is coming out of the Asiatic group; and tearing itself forever from the past. As a result of this development Turks, who belong to the Oural-Altai branch of nations will definitely join the European world, as the other progressive Oural-Altai nations have done – such as the Magyars, Finns and Estonians. The Turkish Revolution cannot stop half-way. Half-revolution is compromise. The substitution of Arabic characters by those of Latin characters is one more step in the campaign for civilization” (May 5-6-7, 1928, *İkdam*, republished in Levonian (1932): 92).²²¹

Similarly, Siirt deputy Mahmut (Soydan) wrote in *Milliyet* that:

²²⁰ Language reforms had taken “Istanbul Turkish” as the ideal and desirable basis to be used as the “measuring rod” when reconstructing the language. In the report prepared by Ibrahim Grantay, a member of the Language Committee, it was stated that “... today, through taking the fine and perfect spoken language of Istanbul, which our common and literary language relies on, our committee attempted to bring into existence an alphabet that is most suitable and convenient from theoretical and practical aspects” (*Elifba Raporu* [The Alphabet Report], 1928, republished in Korkmaz (ed.) (1992): 53-57). This particular choice of Istanbul Turkish also found support outside the Parliament. One of its advocates was Ziya Gökalp. In a posthumous publication of one of his articles he stated that such a choice was a most suitable one since “... In every nation it is the same. The language of one group is spoken, the others become “patois”. “The conventional language becomes silent. Then this conquering language becomes the national language. Mostly the prevailing [language] is the one within the domains of the sultanate [imperial center]. This is so since all political and scientific terms are born and perfected there” (*Türk Yurdu*, Vol. 21, February 1928: 2). For a discussion of Gökalp’s writings on language, also see Heyd (1950).

²²¹ In the same series of writings İleri also touched on the issue of how – with disastrous consequences – Arabic had been adopted: “... In the olden days the written language was Arabic. Our forefathers who used Turkish in conversation only had recourse to Arabic for enlightenment. Thus Arabic civilization and culture gained a gradual influence on Turkish society. What a misfortune for the Turks that this has continued for a thousand years! We do not deny the Arabic-Persian civilization, the Islamic civilization. This civilization was the connecting link between the ancient Greek civilization and the civilization of the European renaissance. ... The Islamic civilization is like a shooting star. Its period of brilliancy is very short. ... It is true we met the Mistress of Civilization, but after she was already old. ... The Arabic alphabet is scientifically unfit for Turkish and its substitution is indispensable. Latin characters are preferable as a substitute. For one thing, they are international; secondly they have assumed such qualities to be used not only by the Latin, Slav and German races but even by Oural-Altai races such as Finns and Magyars. Such a substitution ... will fulfill our need, at the same time enabling us to enter into the international culture” (May 5-6-7, 1928, *İkdam*, published in Levonian (1932): 90-1).

“... The Turkish nation has remained backward in science and general knowledge because we had tried to read and write in a foreign language. We shall remedy the sins of our forefathers. We shall create a perfect language worthy of a civilized nation” (*Milliyet*, 24 February 1929: 1).

In sum, both inside and outside the GNA, the Republican elite justified the adoption of the new alphabet on economic as well as ideological grounds. Related to these, the discussions included references to being a civilized/Western nation, as well as creating a world which outsiders would envy. As well, the changes would be yet another break away from the Ottoman times; hence, asserting the sovereignty of the new nation.

IV. Institutionalization and Heightening of Efforts at Assimilation (1930-1938)

Following the Alphabet Reform Fazil Ahmet (Aykac) Bey²²² reiterated the goals of this change:

“We should not think about the Language Reform only in the sense of making reading and writing easier. ... The biggest benefit [of this Reform] is not to narrate dangerous and superstitious [knowledge] to those generations which will be raised under our culture. We should bring into existence a body of thought, which will feed these new heads, new minds with the enlightenment of new views and new subjects” (ZC, 17.5.1933, 15, 144).

The determination to fully execute the Alphabet Reform was coupled with a new significance attributed to Turkish. As highlighted above, language became a vehicle with which the ideological bases of the RPP (and the Kemalist Revolution) could be disseminated to and inculcated into the minds of the people.

The 1921 and 1924 Constitutions had declared Turkish as the official language of the new Turkish state. In 1931, the RPP endorsed that “speaking Turkish” should be one of the criteria for Party membership.²²³ It was stated that

²²² Ahmet Fazil Aykac (1884, İstanbul – 1967) was a poet and statesman. Aykac worked as a teacher in various institutions teaching French, psychology and pedagogy. He was in the GNA between 1927 and 1938.

²²³ In the previous Regulations of 1923 and 1927, language was not part of the membership criteria. Rather, in these two earlier Regulations it was stated that “any Turkish citizen who embraced Turkish culture” might become a member of the Party.

“... all Turkish citizens who speak Turkish and who accept Turkish culture and the Party’s principles may join the Party” (RPP 1931 Regulations, 4).²²⁴

In addition, language question was also brought up in the 1931 Party Program and at the Party Congress of 1935. In the Program it was emphasized that the Party was going to continue its serious efforts in making Turkish language a “national and perfect language” (RPP 1931 Program, 36). The same stress was present in the following (1935) Program. Rasih Kaplan’s²²⁵ speech is characteristic in terms of showing the attention that was devoted to language during this period:

“... A lot of Turkish citizens are not using Turkish. ... For example, in Ankara there are places where Kurdish is spoken. In other places Albanian is spoken. The Spanish expelled the Jews; we embraced them. They are speaking not the language of the people who embraced them, but of those who had expelled them. ... They have been living among us almost a century, they are Turks; they do not speak Turkish. They speak Albanian, or Greek. ... Isn’t it time to take some action against this? Unless a nation is jealous of its language, it is difficult to preserve its presence. ... *The citizens who live with us will speak our language*”²²⁶ (RPP 1935 Party Congress, 149).

The last decade of the Kemalist regime tightened its grip over achieving linguistic assimilation more so than the previous decade: Turkish should be the language of the people both in public and private spheres. It should be standardized and purified to reflect its true origins. Moreover, all these changes should be institutionalized. This very focused and (as will be demonstrated) increasingly aggressive direction of the language policy can be explained as a result of the failure of achieving linguistic assimilation of non-Turkish speaking citizens. Differently put, the elite was realizing that they were falling short of their desired goal. Once it was clear to them that language policy was not being realized as much as they expected, they tried to mount their efforts in this

²²⁴ The same eligibility criteria were repeated in the 1935 and 1938 Regulations as well.

²²⁵ Kaplan (1883, Akseki – 1952) was born into a religious family, and received *medrese* education himself. In 1906 he went to Egypt to improve his Arabic and knowledge on Theology. On his return to the Empire he started to work as a member of Konya General Assembly; and for the Ministry of Education. In 1920 he entered the GNA as deputy from Antalya. He served in the Assembly until 1950. He was one of the most vocal members of Parliament, and during the First Assembly was a member of the First Group.

²²⁶ My emphasis.

direction. The persistent public appearance of languages other than Turkish was taken as a sign that the basis of national political unity (and with it the power of the regime itself) was not yet secured. Moreover, it is significant that in the above quote Kaplan makes a distinction between citizens and “us” (i.e. “The citizens who live with us will speak our language”). Hence, the clear, linguistic line drawn between being a citizen and belonging to the nation continued to persist.

a. Criticizing the Ottoman Past, and Remolding the Minds

Similar to earlier periods 1930s witnessed heavy criticisms being raised against the Ottoman policy of tolerance in general and the “palace language” in particular. During his speech at the Ankara People’s House, Denizli MP Necip Ali (Kucuka)²²⁷ highlighted these past mistakes:

“... The Ottoman language was a language, which was composed of three different languages that had nothing to do with each other in terms of linguistics.²²⁸ Language is the clearest manifestation of a nation’s moral [spiritual] identity. ... It was the sincerity and non-egotistical tolerance of the Turkish nation that had given foreigners the boldness to come closer to our most sacred existence. Foreign words had infiltrated our language so much that this issue is a big problem today” (*Ayin Tarihi*, No. 3, 1934, 25).

Thus, it was this (reckless) tolerance of the Ottomans that had long been responsible for the Turkish language to deteriorate, and became infiltrated by foreign words. There was another mistake that had been made: the building (and legitimization) of the Empire had centered on Islamic principles. According to Ibrahim Necmi (Dilmen)²²⁹ the dismissal of the Ottomans to form a national

²²⁷ Necip Ali (Mehmet) Kucuka (1892, Denizli – 1941): statesman. Kucuka belonged to a family of merchants. He received his higher education at the Faculty of Law. While at school, the First World War broke out and he served in the Eastern Front. Kucuka joined the National Resistance following the occupation of Izmir. He joined the GNA in 1923 as deputy from his hometown Denizli. The following year Kucuka was part of the Ankara Independence Tribunal. He remained in the GNA until the 7th Assembly. He had various published works including books on women and law, children and law.

²²⁸ The Ottoman language was a composite language made up of elements of Persian, Arabic and Turkish.

²²⁹ Ibrahim Necmi Dilmen (1887, Gumulcine, Greece – 1945) was a linguist, and a significant figure during the language reforms. He studied at the Istanbul Law Faculty. After, he taught

presence and their persistence on building an empire along Byzantine and Iranian lines had led to the weakening of Turkish language. More specifically, the critical ingredient accounting for this weakening was the Ottomans' desire to assume the caliphate of all Muslims. Later on, a similar mistake was made during the 19th century when the Ottoman center and the intellectuals began to praise another foreign (i.e. French) language.

The inescapable result of these policies was the emergence of a rift between the people (i.e. Turkish elements) and the elite. However, Dilmen also stated that this rift did not mean the demise of Turkish. Despite all attempts at its complete destruction the language survived in its cleanest and purest form in the hands of the common people (*Milliyet*, 14 September, 1932, 2). Given such a history the language reform was simply about "bringing back" Turkish into common usage; and it was the most natural course of action to take. Changes in the linguistic sphere would thus be one of the clearest demonstrations of imperial exit. The success or failure of language policies would also be a litmus test for the capability of the elite to reorganize society as well as their success at building a solid national basis and national consciousness.

Furthermore, the persistence of a highly embellished and complicated language was perceived to be at odds with the populist outlook of the regime. Besim Atalay reiterated these points during one of his addresses in the GNA:

"It is language, history and architecture that make nations. The books that are being written remain confined within the members of a community that is similar to that of the writers themselves. They cannot deliver books, which would be taken up by the masses. ... It is imperative to produce literature for the masses, to elevate its language so it is capable of expressing every idea. ... Today's language ... is yesterday's palace language" (ZC, 25.5.1937, 18, 220).

literature and languages at various schools. In 1931 he worked as inspector at the Ministry of Education. In 1935 he entered GNA as deputy of Burdur and remained so until his death. He also was one of the founders of the Turkish Language Society, and one of its first presidents. He was known for his support for the Kemalist language reforms; and published a number of works on Turkish language, grammar, and literature.

The problem of using language as a communication tool with the masses (and hence underlining the populist ideology of the regime) was taken up by Sukru Kaya²³⁰:

“There is no doubt that with a little effort we will speak the language of the people. As we always and everywhere declared our goal is not to the people, but with the people and for the people” (ZC, 25.5.1937, 221).

Thus, the reasons behind language reform clearly were not only about language simplification and solving the problem of illiteracy. It was also about leaving a cultural and political past behind. The cultural legacy of the Ottomans was seen as being an artificial one –composed of disparate and un-Turkish elements. More particularly the elite maintained that the Ottoman language and culture had its direct impact on the minds of the people. With a composite language and culture the minds of the individuals were likewise bifurcated. According to Falih Rifki Atay in the Ottoman days the language that was used had produced “cliché minds”. These minds were molded by the clichés taken from Arabic as well as Western languages. The changes that language had gone through during the imperial days did not in that sense imply anything radical. Rather, the changes had meant the replacement of the old cliché with a new one (i.e. Western) (*Hakimiyeti Milliye*, 2 October 1932).

Finally, Fuat Kopru²³¹ was another intellectual who maintained that the Language Reform would have two very significant consequences: It would reform

²³⁰ Kaya (1883, Greek island of Kos – 1959): renowned as one of the staunchest supporters of laicism. He was trained as a lawyer. After he completed his studies he worked in various government jobs. In 1919, he was arrested and exiled to Malta. Following his release in 1921, he returned to Anatolia and participated in the War of Independence. Kaya entered the GNA during the Second Assembly; and served as an MP from 1923 until 1938. During this time, he held a number of ministerial positions including the Minister of Interior, Agriculture, and Foreign Affairs. He also was the general secretary of RPP during 1936 and 1938. His political life ended when he opposed the appointment of Inonu to Presidency.

²³¹ Fuat Kopru (1890, Istanbul -1966): Renowned historian, and statesman. He belonged to a prominent family that had worked in the palace for generations and at high positions. After studying law for a while he left his studies, and for two years (1908-10) he wrote for the periodical *Servet-i Funun* (Treasure of Sciences) and the newspaper *Tanin* (The Echo). Kopru also taught Turkish literature at a number of high schools in Istanbul. When he was 24 years old he was appointed as professor of history of Turkish literature. In 1924 he founded the Turkology Institute. The same year he started working as the undersecretary for the Ministry of Education. Three years later, Kopru was appointed to the presidency of the Turkish History Commission. His active

the minds and tastes. According to him, this particular Reform signaled the beginnings of a Turkish Renaissance. With the coming back of the simplified and “real” Turkish, the minds of everyone, and more importantly, that of the children were going to be reshaped (*Cumhuriyet*, 29 October 1933, 44-46). Thus, and parallel to the goals of the education policies around the same time, language policies were to be redesigned so as to reshape the minds of the citizenry along Kemalist (and RPP) principles.

b. Belonging through Assimilation

All throughout the 1930s language as the main criterion of the rules of belonging was a recurring theme in the Parliament as well as in the articles that appeared in the newspapers. Ahmet Emin Yalman underlined this point in his article “The Big Difference Between”:

“Today, there are some groups in our country who are considered Turkish citizens by law as a result of historical reasons of having lived here ... As long as these groups remain strangers to the community with regards to language and culture, it is impossible for them to be considered [our] Turkish brothers in its full meaning. ... Every citizen who proves himself to be of us through their actions, considers the interests of Turkish nation as his own, speaks Turkish with his family in his home, embraces Turkish culture and language has earned the right to be treated a Turk” (*Tan*, 17 March 1937, 1-10).

The link between being a citizen and belonging to the nation was not an automatic link. Differently put, the ties that bounded the individual to the state did not necessarily testify to belonging to the nation. The main rule and testament for belonging was language (and hence, linguistic assimilation).

political life in the GNA spanned the period from 1935 to 1943. He later was forced to resign from his party membership due to his articles, which were found to be against the fundamental principles of the RPP. In his later years he remained active in political life, and became one of the founders of the Democrat Party. Koprulu is considered to be the first academic who built the basis for scientific studies in Turkish and Ottoman history.

In like manner Edirne deputy Seref Aykut²³² wrote about language as the main pillar of Turkishness:

*"In Turkey there is us –the Turks, and citizens of Turkey. It is through language that common ideals are established and that the citizens of Turkey can become Turks."*²³³ It is for this reason that we ask our Turkish citizens ... to show respect to Turkish language. ... It would not be wrong to look for the reasons why we could not teach Turkish to the Muslims from lands like Albania, Syria, Bosnia (which had been under our control for hundreds of years), even to Crete which is Turkish ... We will not make the same mistake again. We will make Turkish language and Turkish culture dominant in Turkey" (*Cumhuriyet*, 7 May 1937, 3).

The difference between citizens of Turkey and being a Turk clearly manifested itself; and within this context this difference was drawn by linguistic lines. Moreover, there was also a great anxiety among intellectuals and the political elite that linguistic heterogeneity equaled political and national demise. Conversely, linguistic homogenization equaled political and national unity. Hence, there was a growing emphasis placed on this latter aspect.

Following this main framework, it was suggested that education and reforming the language were two ways to achieve the goal of language unity. For example, Berc Turker (Keresteciyan)²³⁴ raised the question of Turkish as part of the medium of teaching at foreign and minority schools. In response, the Minister of Culture, Saffet Arikan²³⁵ reminded the Assembly of the strict control these schools were coming under:

²³² Aykut, (Mehmet) Seref (1874, Edirne – 1939): Statesman. He graduated from Istanbul Law Faculty, and worked for various newspapers and journals. For a while, he also practiced law. Aykut served in the last Ottoman Assembly. After its dismantling he was exiled to Malta. In 1921 he was released, and went to Ankara to join the GNA. He served as a deputy only during the First Assembly. When he could not continue his deputyship in the next Assembly, he went back to practicing law. In 1931 he once again joined the GNA from Edirne, and remained in the GNA until his death in 1939.

²³³ My emphasis.

²³⁴ Berc Turker (Keresteciyan) (1870, Istanbul – 1949): Statesman of Armenian origin who – during his political career- emphasized that the Turkish nation was composed only of Turkish citizens without any ethnic or religious divisions. Studied at Galatasaray Lycee and Robert Colleges. After graduation he started working for the Ministry of Finance, and the Ottoman Bank. His political career began when he joined the GNA during the 5th Assembly as a deputy from Afyon. He stayed as a deputy during the following two assemblies.

²³⁵ Saffet Arikan (1888, Erzincan – 1947): military man, and statesman. He fought in the War of Independence. In 1923 he entered the GNA, and served as a deputy until 1947. During this time he also worked as the General Secretary of RPP as well as the Minister of Education (1935-38).

“The control of minority and foreign schools has been further tightened this year. ... Just like in our schools, [we] ordered deputy principals to be appointed to these schools so that records can be kept in Turkish. ... We pay a lot of attention to cultural studies in foreign schools. Cultural studies are taught in Turkish. In addition to having 11-12 hours of Turkish classes, history, geography and civic classes are [also] taught in Turkish at minority schools. ... To me, the most significant thing is culture, and the thing that is going to reinforce this is for these classes to be taught in our language” (ZC, 26.5.1937, 18, 258-9).

Furthermore, language directly reflected national character. According to Edirne deputy Seref Bey Turkish was a language, which did not pay any premiums to sycophancy. This characteristic became more pronounced if Turkish was to be compared to Arabic or Persian. Seref Bey maintained that the eulogies written in Turkish lacked superficiality, buffoonery as well as sycophancy (which had been the norm under the Ottomans). Instead the simplicity, purity and depth of Turkish were reflections of an ancestry “which feels and thinks deeply” (*Hakimiyeti Milliye*, 9 December 1933).

c. Institution-Making and Situating the Nation on the World Map

The reformation and transformation of the language with the aim to reflect the nation’s (civilized) character eventually led to the founding of the *Türk Dil Kurumu* (Turkish Language Society)²³⁶ in 1932. The Society was to concentrate not only constructing a new vocabulary and publishing new dictionaries but also shedding light on the history of the language. These two goals were clearly highlighted during a press conference given by Ibrahim Necmi Dilmen, the general secretary of the Society:

“Our work on language has two different goals. One is the question of science. ... The other is a more practical business. We want 18 million Turks to be literate

Arikan was one of the statesmen who were instrumental in the founding of Village Institutes (*Koy Enstitüleri*) which were established to achieve rural economic and cultural development.

²³⁶ From its founding the Society was in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the RPP, and the People’s Houses. As well, there were a number of intellectuals and deputies actively involved in the Society. Some of the names included Besim Atalay, Ibrahim Necmi Dilmen, and Resit Galip.

in the shortest possible time. This in turn depends on the published things to be written in a clean, simple and familiar language that could be understood by all. ... Coming to the scientific part of our work ... a language theory is going to be developed. ... Through this ... the unknown presence of Turkish language is going to emerge; and on the other hand, [we will research into] the etymologies of the ancient Greek, Latin, Arabic and Persian languages [to unravel] their similarities and links to Turkish" (*Ayin Tarihi*, 1935, No. 22, 16-17).²³⁷

Talking on the history of Turkish language, Dilmen maintained that the research in this area was most valuable since it would demonstrate that Turkish was the source of all languages:

"Going back to the origin of languages, it is seen that the mechanisms of voice and the expression of feelings through voice is the finest in Turkish. ... Once this discovery emerges it will be known that ... even those words which are thought to be foreign, even all foreign languages have their source in the rich presence of Turkish" (*Ibid.*, 15).

The same year Dilmen further reiterated the works of the Society, paying special attention to historical studies:

"It is the duty of the Turk to heighten the real presence of Turkish language and to show that it is the mother of all languages. ... In order to find out the presence of Turkish in the ages before the written word it is required to look into the ... spoken languages in the far away and pure Turkish lands. We found the dictionaries of dialects like Yakur, Covas, Kirghiz, and Altay, which have lived as spoken languages and not mixed with the Islamic literature suitable for this purpose. ... The etymologies of Greek and Latin languages which are thought to be the source of European languages show that these languages stemmed from the Turkish language. Research into the Arabic and Persian languages which are thought to be the source of light in the East demonstrates that they came from the rich source of Turkish language" (*Ayin Tarihi*, No. 22, 22-25).

In sum, one goal of the Society was to scientifically prove that the Turkish language was the origin of all languages and thus civilization. It was argued that unearthing and presenting the evidence was a duty owed not only to the Turkish

²³⁷ For a more detailed discussion of Society's goals and activities see Ibrahim Necmi Dilmen's article "İkinci Dil Kurultayına Doğru [Towards the Second Language Congress]" published in *Ulku*, 1934 Vol. 3, No. 18, 409-412 (and republished in Kaplan et. al (1981): 81-7).

people but also to the rest of the world.²³⁸ This understanding consequently included the goal to inform the Western world about their origins as well as the origins of the Turks.²³⁹

Through striving to unearth the “true” sources of Turkish language and its links to other languages the elite was attempting to achieve four goals that complemented each other: First, they were trying to distance themselves from the hybrid language of the Ottomans. Second, they were attempting to move the new nation closer to the Western-civilized world. Third, they were trying to establish unique origins of the nation which would separate them from the rest of the nations.

Finally, during this last decade of the Kemalist era the need to revert Turkish language back to its most “pure and true” – and thus, Asiatic origins was emphasized. This point which was raised at the first convention of the Turkish Language Society in 1932 was to culminate in the Sun Language Theory at the third convention in 1936.²⁴⁰ The sources of the language were clearly talked about through referencing the pre-Islamic-Turkish past.²⁴¹ This in turn was a manifestation of how the elite’s perception and discourse of the constituents of the nation took on an additional ethnic coloring. Rather than religion (i.e. Arabic), it was now the ethnic (and pre-Islamic) origins of the language which were underscored. However, it should also be emphasized that this ethnic coloring should be situated within the context of the increasingly assimilationist policies (and politics) of the time. In other words, and in contrast to those works which use the Sun Language Theory as evidence of the Republican state’s ethnic understanding of the nation, linguistic assimilation appears as the central

²³⁸ For an argument along these lines also see Yunus Nadi (Abalıoglu)’s article “Dil Akademisi [Language Academy]”, *Cumhuriyet*, 1936.

²³⁹ As will be discussed in the following chapter, the same emphasis was also there with the rewriting of Turkish history and the development of the Turkish History Thesis.

²⁴⁰ Based on rather intricate and complicated arguments, the Theory sought to demonstrate that Turkish was the origin of all languages. For a discussion of the Theory, see Cagaptay (2002).

²⁴¹ This deliberate effort at filtering out any words that did not go back to the Asian steppes was criticized only by a few including Huseyin Cahit Yalcin, a prominent journalist of the time. He remained against such a policy since it would mean forcing change whereas languages should be let to live out their natural course. Other prominent scholars and statesmen of the time who were attending the convention took their turn to voice their criticism against Yalcin. For an example of criticisms raised see Hasan Ali Yucel’s speech (*Birinci Turk Dil Kurultayi*, 1932: 277-300).

development of the period. Consequently and in the final analysis, this added stress on ethnicity did not translate into a decline in significance of the assimilation policies and rhetoric of the elite.

d. More Efforts at Assimilation

As mentioned above, 1930s was also a time when minorities came under attack. The criticisms that were voiced in the newspapers as well as in the GNA all revolved around the issue of assimilating those groups, which were insisting on using their own language in public as well as in private spheres. For example, according to Aka Gunduz²⁴² the fact that the Jewish community was still using their own language was a problem. Yet, he went on to say that this problem could not be (and had not been) solved through passing laws or through pressures from their religious leaders. In one of his articles Gunduz underlined the difference between the Jewish community and the Greeks in Turkey:

“Turkish Jewry is not like our Greeks or Armenians. The situation of the Jews is truly a very sad affair. The Greeks have their language and they speak it. There are also those who speak the official language which is Turkish. The Armenians have a national language and they speak it. There is the official language, which they also speak more often. However, the poor Jewish citizen does not have a national language; he does not know the official language... In a scientific and societal way, Jews compose a community (*ummet*) as opposed to a nation. Their religious and community language is Hebrew. If they can call it a national language, let them speak it. They are free. However, they are unfortunate as not to know even that. ...” (*Tan*, 10 January 1938, 5).

Turkish Jewry was thus seen as an easy target from whom more was expected. Since ‘they did not have their own national languages’, it was conceived only natural that they should embrace the official language as their own. This was imperative if they wanted to belong. Moreover, they were not seen as posing any threat to national unity. Thus, their linguistic assimilation was

²⁴² Aka Gunduz (1886, Salonica-1958) was journalist, novelist and statesman. After he attended military school he went to Paris. On his return he was exiled to Salonica. Following the 1908 Revolution he began his career as a journalist. When Istanbul came under British control he was exiled to Malta. Gunduz returned back to Turkey in 1923, and was in the Parliament from 1932 until 1946.

desirable as well as imperative. Nadir Nadi,²⁴³ writing in *Cumhuriyet*, praised the enthusiasm of the Jewish community to join in the efforts of the Republican project. However, he went on:

“Truly, the only condition for being a Turk as it is understood in Kemalism is to sincerely feel oneself as a Turk. However one cannot be a Turk by idle talk; it must be proven. Even though the Republic was founded close to fifteen years ago our Jewish citizens have not moved forward towards our community. The broken French and Spanish they use amongst themselves are still offending our ears” (*Cumhuriyet*, 20 July 1938, 6).

In an interview he gave to the newspaper *Tan* the Jewish-Turkish scholar Tekin Alp acknowledged the reluctance of the Jewish community to speak Turkish. According to him, this was clearly something they could not afford to do if they wanted to survive. The only solution was to assimilate into the majority culture.

“Jews in Turkey did not have their own language, culture or ideals. ... [the Spanish they speak] is nothing more than an idiom. ... Thus, the community of 80,000 is completely devoid of a language. ... Just like Sultan Beyazit saved the Jews ... who had fled from Spain so will the Kemalist Turkey save them from a spiritual death through making them embrace their [Turkish] language, culture and ideals” (*Tan*, 9 March 1937, 10).

As such, Tekinalp saw linguistic assimilation the only solution for the community’s survival in the new nation. Consequently, assimilation should not even be questioned.²⁴⁴

The link between the main elements of Kemalist nationalism, language and the situation of minorities was also articulated by Gunduz. In one of his

²⁴³ Nadir Nadi (Abalıoğlu) (1908, Muğla –1991): journalist, statesman, and son of Yunus Nadi Abalıoğlu. He studied political science in Vienna and Lausanne. For a while he taught sociology and civics at the Galatasaray Lycee. Following his father’s death in 1945 Nadir Nadi took over the newspaper *Cumhuriyet*. In addition to his career in journalism, he also entered the Parliament in 1950 after he joined the Democrat Party and worked as a deputy first from Muğla, and then Istanbul.

²⁴⁴ Leaders of the Jewish community were active in trying to achieve linguistic assimilation, and they did publicly voice their concerns all throughout the 1930s. Levi notes that an example of these efforts was the forming of special commissions, and opening up schools for private Turkish instruction (Levi, 1996: 96).

articles the Greek community came under attack. After pointing out that language was one of the elements of Turkish nationalism, he continued:

“Greeks are obliged to learn Turkish by nature, and to survive. Speaking no other language than Turkish in public will mean his joy and virtue in living under one and highly esteemed flag. Just as the Greek should know Homer, he should also know Yunus Emre. ... Being a Turkish citizen does not dissociate the Greek from his nationality. What we want is a love for and knowledge of the [Turkish] language” (*Tan*, 9 January 1938, 5).

Here, as Gunduz maintained, there was a direct link between linguistic assimilation and the duties of every citizen. For example, in his article on the First Language Congress, Yunus Nadi encouraged all citizens to attend the Congress with a reminder that all citizens, irrespective of religion and ethnicity, were members of the Language Society. He continued to say that since all citizens were equal before the law, so should they share the responsibility of all requirements of citizenship (which included speaking the same language). This was true for all non-Muslim and non-Turkish groups (*Cumhuriyet*, 4 September 1932). It is also significant that linguistic assimilation was tied to the *duties* of citizens. This of course contrasts sharply with the French case where linguistic assimilation was seen desirable since it would enable citizens to know and practice their rights as well as being involved in every aspect of national life.

In the 1930s, it was not only Jews and Greeks who came under attack. Criticisms for not embracing the Turkish language also spilt over to other minority groups. In this were included Muslim groups such as Bosnians, Kurds, Albanians and Circassians. Aka Gunduz raised the following points regarding all these different groups:

“Who are we saying “Citizen Speak Turkish” to? Who do we want this from? First of all, we want that from the Turks. Turks speak Greek! They speak Albanian! They speak Bulgarian! They speak Arabic! They speak Kurdish! ... Second, we want it from Circassians. First of all, there is the unity of land, and religion [between us]. ... Third, the Bosnian is the same. Bosnian means from Bosnia; it is not a nation. Through the ages they were so much part of our language, religion, history and polity that the name of the Bosnian today is Turk (they say “Turcin”). ... Fourth, there are two types of Albanians. One is an Albanian from Albania; the other is Turkey’s Turkish Albanian who has melted

into Turk's air, water, land, history and destiny. The air ... of the first one is different. ... The second one is one of us. ... Fifth, there is no Arab community, no Arab nation in Turkey. There are Turks who speak Arabic. ... Sixth, the masses called Kurds – who speak Arabic – are the same as Turks” (*Tan*, 8 January 1938, 5).

Language was seen as the main element which would lead to societal unity; and again, speaking Turkish was directly defined as a citizen's duty. Hence, it was not one particular group which was targeted. Rather it embraced all religious and ethnic groups. Consequently, (Muslim) immigrants from the Balkan region²⁴⁵ or the residents of certain towns such as the eastern town of Maras²⁴⁶ were not exempt from such criticisms. In an article published in *Cumhuriyet*, it was mentioned that the majority of the population of Maras was still speaking Arabic in public spaces as well as at home. It was further declared that this state of affairs was intolerable: “When we cannot tolerate foreigners to speak their own language ... how and until when should we keep silent about those of us who have no ethnic/racial connection with the language [they use]? (*Cumhuriyet*, 27 November 1937, 7).²⁴⁷ The common (Muslim) religion that these ethnic groups shared with the Turks made it even more urgent that they should learn and use Turkish.

The desire to assimilate all those who did not speak Turkish was also coupled with a desire to “discipline” them. One example in this direction was a decision made by the Municipality of Izmir. In an article published in *Cumhuriyet* the decision was outlined; and strongly supported:

²⁴⁵ Another example of how the Muslim groups from different ethnic backgrounds were part of these criticisms comes from Ahmet Emin Yalman. In one his articles Yalman wrote about Albanians, Circassians and Bosnians who had immigrated to Turkey as groups that must assimilate. He stated that assimilation was essential in order to maintain political and societal unity; and harmony of the nation (*Tan*, 4 March 1937, 1-8).

²⁴⁶ In an article published in *Cumhuriyet*, it was mentioned that the majority of the population of Maras was still speaking Arabic in public spaces as well as at home. It was further declared that this state of affairs was intolerable: “When we cannot tolerate foreigners to speak their own language ... how and until when should we keep silent about those of us who have no ethnic/racial connection with the language [they use]? (*Cumhuriyet*, 27 November 1937, 7).

²⁴⁷ Similarly, “In Mersin, for instance, Kurds, Cretans, Arabs and Syrians were fined for speaking languages other than Turkish” (Cagaptay, 2006b: 59).

“The Municipality of Izmir has started a struggle around the matter of speaking Turkish in the town. Orders were given to civil servants to punish those street vendors who sell [their products] by calling out in a language other than Turkish. Those civil servants that do not pay attention to the street vendors calling out in the language of their choice will also be punished. This is a beautiful order which the Municipality of Istanbul should also immediately adopt; however, the real beauty of this order is going to manifest itself when it is executed” (*Cumhuriyet*, 7 March 1933, 3).

The aggressive approach adopted by the political elite, the media, and some of the municipalities was testament to the continuing and heightened attention paid to language question. It was especially those deputies (who were contributing articles to newspapers and journals) who carried on with the mission of the elite to achieve linguistic homogeneity. However, in the GNA too, there were similar attempts and rhetoric. In both venues, both outside and inside the GNA, the urgency of this matter of assimilation was in turn linked to the fact that failure or success in this particular area was considered to be demonstrative of the elite’s success or failure in establishing national unity.

One important example illustrating the attention paid to strengthening national unity, and doing away with rival (i.e. ethnic and tribal) identities through assimilation was the *Soyadı Kanunu* (Surname Law) of 1934. With this Law, everyone was required to have a last name. As well, it was not allowed for those foreign names (including “foreign ethnicities), and tribal names to be adopted. In this way and as Hamdi Bey noted in the GNA the state was banning these specific last names for the reason that they might “infringe upon national unity” (ZC, 21.6.1934, 23, 245). As Sukru Kaya also noted:

“We want to do away with the foreign nationality names. ... For example, there are thousands of names like Arab, Circassian, Chechen. Those should not be allowed. ... Hence, our goal is to abolish the separation which is not there in fact, but which lives in the minds [of the people]” (*Ibid.*, 246).

Moreover, such a step was imperative in order to show the strength and determination of the majority. Again, in the words of Kaya:

“Why should we call them Kurd Memet, Circassian Hasan, Laz Ali? First of all, such a thing would show the weakness of the majority itself. ... It is not good to leave these differences [intact]. If this person has a little bit of a feeling of difference [from the majority] then let us erase that in schools and in society; then that person would be just as much as a Turk as I am and will serve the country. There are many people who belonged to foreign ethnicities who had served the country in this way. Why should we distance these people from ourselves?” (*Ibid.*, 249).

Hence, and as the above quotes demonstrate, the systematic attempts at assimilation not only targeted the non-Muslims, but Muslim groups as well. Speaking Turkish and using Turkish names once again was underscored as one of the central manifestations of belonging to the nation as well as the unity of the nation itself.

e. Language and Nationalism

In addition to their preoccupation with assimilation, in the mid 1930s the elite also undertook another significant change: On February 7, 1933 it was decided that calls to prayer would be recited in Turkish instead of Arabic.²⁴⁸ The decision led to some discomfort and anxiety in certain parts of the Muslim community. For instance, in Bursa, one of the major towns, there were riots following the news. Siirt deputy Mahmut (Soydan) Bey addressed this discomfort in one of his articles. He wrote:

“The Bursa incident is not a matter of religion, but a matter of language. Should we say our prayers in our own language or in a foreign language? In the Revolutionary Turkey should this matter even be debated? We left that period behind [us] long ago” (*Milliyet*, 9 February 1933).

Recep Peker, the then General Secretary of RPP, was adamant that any diversions from the revolutionary path should not be tolerated. In a letter he sent to the RPP’s Central Committee he urged all Party members to collaborate with

²⁴⁸ Prior to this, an official announcement was made (18 July 1932) that calls to prayer would be in Turkish in Istanbul.

the government and report all incidences of disobedience (PMA, 8.2.1936; 490.01/611 121 1).

Following his plea some party members did actually voice their concerns in their regions. One such complaint came from an eastern town, Maras. A. Onaran, RPP's Burdur deputy wrote in his letter (which was addressed to the General Secretary) that

"The police had observed calls to prayer conducted in Arabic from the minarets; the culprits were brought to justice. ... Even though the muftu of this region is not a bad man, he is a fanatic and old-fashioned. I find it expedient that he be warned by your [Party] authority" (PMA, 10.1.1936; 490.01/611.121.1).

A similar letter addressing the issue of call to prayer reached the General Secretary from the RPP's Yozgat bureau. In the letter it was mentioned that in one of the villages close to Yozgat a hojha by the name of Raif was sent to jail following his calls to prayer made in Arabic (PMA, 24.4.1936; 490.01/611.121.1).²⁴⁹ Even though there were reactions to the change, the Republican regime was stern in its stance: It was not only the assimilation of different ethnic and religious groups, and the simplification of the language which was significant. It was understood that one of the most visible ways to reflect the national character of the regime and its people was through making calls to prayer in Turkish. The change was also perceived to be the 'progressive'/'modern' way of doing things. This was so, since Arabic was associated with the Ottoman days. However, and as Parla and Davison argues (2008), these interventions by the state exhibit the not-so-laicist nature of the regime. The change in the language of call to prayer illustrates that not only "the Qur'an was reaffirmed and individual ties with God were promoted and secured under an authoritarian regime" (Parla and Davison, 2008: 69), but the language of religion in public spaces was also decided on by the elite/state themselves. Hence, in these ways the state was not dissociating itself from the religious sphere, but rather, it was bringing the latter sphere into its strict control. In this sense, it is significant to note that religion still

²⁴⁹ A similar case was also reported from Izmir where an Ahmet Efendi was jailed for two days, and had to pay twenty liras because he was using Arabic (PMA, 8.11.1934, 30.10.00/26.150.21).

remained on the scene. Even though its relationship with the nation (within this context) remained a “silent” one, it nevertheless was there. Thus, it would be misleading to conclude that the attempts at laicization completely did away with the role of religion as reflective of nationhood.

V. Concluding Remarks:

In this chapter I discussed the content and direction of language policies during the nation-building decades. In doing this, I underlined the changing nature of these policies over time. These changes cannot be attributed to the self-interest of the political elite. As demonstrated earlier,²⁵⁰ the Republican elite was a highly educated elite. They not only were in command of the complex Ottoman language and Turkish, but many of them also had a grasp of one or more European languages. Yet, they wanted to and did simplify and purify Turkish language.

It was argued that the politicization of language and it becoming a constitutive element of nationhood was a result of different forces. First, there was the desire of the political elite to dissociate themselves from their imperial heritage. In this respect language reform was one but an effective (and visible) tool to solidify imperial exit. Second, language was perceived as a reflection of nation’s sovereignty and unity. Hence, language homogenization was perceived as a logical extension of the demonstration of this sovereignty and unity. Moreover, the assimilation of all non-Turkish speaking individuals became a way for the political elite to test and solidify their own power and legitimacy. Hence, when in the 1930s they saw that their goal of assimilation was still not realized, efforts toward this direction was further strengthened. Finally, language unity came to mark territories of belonging: only those groups which were linguistically assimilated were considered as having the “right” to be Turkish. Those who failed to do so were to be left at the outskirts of the nation.

As Zimmer correctly points out, the use of language by the political elite can be both organic and voluntarist in nature, and at different points in time. For

²⁵⁰ See Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of the elite’s educational background.

example, in the French case, and in the hands of the French revolutionaries, linguistic assimilation was seen as proving one's loyalty to the nation which was created on the basis of political will. Conversely, in the hands of the anti-Dreyfusards language acquired a more organic character – making it impossible for the Jews to become French even if they mastered the language (Zimmer, 2003: 181). In the Turkish case, once assimilation was established as the central goal by the elite, the rule of belonging to the nation was consequently linked to linguistic assimilation. With the exception of Armenians (of no mention was made), all Muslim and non-Muslim non-Turkish speakers were encouraged to learn and use Turkish as their main medium of communication. This in turn would demonstrate the loyalty of one to his/her nation as well as prove that they were 'real' Turks. Thus, the emphasis on assimilation by the Republican elite was akin to a voluntarist understanding of nationhood.

Within this framework, religion was also an important constituent of nationhood. Especially during the early periods, this religious understanding of the nation was at the forefront. Even after the major laicization reforms were carried through, an analysis of language issues does illustrate that religion was still understood to be a determinant of the content of nationhood although assimilation was taking center stage. Finally, during the 1930s the dimension of ethnicity was added to this matrix. However, as noted above, this later addition of the ethnic element did not exist in contrast to or at the expense of the assimilationist outlook, but more in conjunction with it – the latter having more weight in the elite's rhetoric.

Chapter 7– Education Policies and Building the Nation

I. Introduction

The transformation of subjects into citizens entails a reeducation process at a massive scale. One significant channel in achieving this transformation is the education system. Eugene Weber summarizes the role of schooling concisely in the context of nation-building in France:

“... [S]chools provide a complementary, even a counter-education, because the education of the local society does not coincide with that needed to create a national one. This is where schooling becomes a major agent of acculturation ...” (1976: 330).

As well, education or “exo-socialization” is an integral part of ensuring the proper functioning of industrial societies (Gellner, 1983). It is through schooling that individuals develop the capacity to communicate with each other in a context-free manner; and that they come to share the same (and so homogenous) culture. According to Gellner, if nationalism is an integral component of industrial society, then, education becomes a critical medium to ensure the homogenization of culture for this society to be maintained (Gellner, 1983; 1996b). Education is above all about creating new (and modern) persons. Consequently, struggles over education policies are not simple conflicts over design, but struggles over “the kind of person that were being made and thus about the limits of political units” (Szporluk, 1998: 28) as well.

Finally, the role of schools in moral education and social disciplining of future generations should not be underestimated. In some countries, which Hroch defines as “state-nations” (i.e. France, England, and Sweden), education historically served the interests of state integration through increasing its coherence. In other cases (i.e. multi-ethnic empires) the primary goal was to “...educate the young generation in the spirit of loyalty towards the state and its ruling nation” (Hroch, 2006: 28).

a. Educational Policies and National Experiences

Despite similarities of the functions of education systems, one cannot fail to notice the differences in the processes through which these systems came into being. Parallel to the homogenization and nationalization of language, nationalized education systems were built at varying paces, at different points in a nation's time, and with varying contents.

The cases of Britain and France offer us two examples as to how and why things progressed in diverse fashions. In Britain the expansion of national consciousness preceded rather than followed from the nationalization of education. Up until the end of the 19th century, the ruling elite did not see the need to, and indeed were apprehensive of, encouraging the development of anything remotely close to what Colley calls "popular national consciousness" (Colley, 1986; 1992).²⁵¹ Consequently, the development of a nationalized education system came only after 1870s at a time when the state and the ruling class were struggling to maintain their (imperial) power and when national consciousness was already well developed. Furthermore, even during the critical period of 18th and early 19th centuries when national consciousness was expanding, deliberations on the education system were focused on and limited to social control only – as opposed to being a matter of national indoctrination (Colley, 1986: 105). Hence, it would not be wrong to conclude that in the case of Britain the development of a national educational system was not one of the pillars in the development of the nation and nationhood.

France, on the other hand, exhibits a slightly different route. Efforts aimed at inculcating young generations with ideas and ideals of how a perfect citizen should be dates back to 1792. However, during this early period, it is hard to talk

²⁵¹ Colley argues that the ruling elite's initial reluctance was due to their relatively strong hold over the empire. As well, Protestantism – for a considerable amount of time- did fulfill a function of holding different social and sectional groups together. Finally, the elite were also reluctant since the potential (political) costs of pursuing nationalist policies would be high: such policies were too closely linked to demands on political participation and thus made the elites uncomfortable (Colley, 1982: 108).

about a systematic approach to creating citizens. It was only in the late 19th century that such efforts came into full force. In the 1880s “Jules Ferry’s school system was a political instrument in the service of nation building” (Schnapper, 1998: 109). The state wanted to turn not only peasants into Frenchmen but also “all Frenchmen into good Republicans” (Hobsbawm, 1983b: 271). This also coincided with the period when the Third Republic was facing a political crisis.

Education acquired a central significance in the 1880s when citizenship requirements became not only assimilationist but predominantly Republican in nature.²⁵² The expansive definition of citizenship was partly a product of the confidence of the political elite in relation to its powers of assimilating different groups. Nationalized institutions such as schools and the military were to be the main agents in this process (Brubaker, 1990: 396; Schnapper, 1998: 50). As a result, schooling entailed not only the teaching of morals, manner, literacy, the French language, but more importantly schools became institutions through which national and patriotic sentiments were inculcated (Weber, 1976: 333).

b. A Brief Look at the Turkish Case

In the Turkish case education became the preoccupation of the elite from very early on. This preoccupation was linked not so much to the importance of education in creating a skilled labor force but more so to the strengthening of the regime, and creating a sense of belonging to the nation. More specifically, the Republican elite saw education as being central to the creation of a homogenous culture which in turn would build and solidify national unity and consciousness. In this respect, the Turkish case closely resembles the French example. As to the specific content of education, this “state-framed nationhood” (Brubaker, 2004) had an emphasis (earlier) on religion, and on cultural and more specifically linguistic elements. Its ethnic emphasis was incorporated later on, and became manifest in the attempt at developing a “Turkish History Thesis”.

²⁵² In 1889 it was ratified that French nationality was to be conferred upon all people based not only on residence but also on the persons’ adopting the “mores, habits and character ... [of] the country of their birth” (Brubaker, 1990: 395).

The works dealing with Turkish nation-building and national identity formation typically treat education policies as an extension of the regime's desire to Westernize the new nation (Kazancigil and Ozbudun, 1981). These works correctly point out the influence and goals of some of the wider reforms, and ideals (e.g. laicization, economic development) in shaping the education system. However, and as will be illustrated below, the determinants of educational policies went beyond and above the generalizations that exist in the literature. Furthermore, the emphasis put on different determinants at different periods of time also shows that the focus and content of educational policies shifted over time—a point which is overlooked in the existing literature. In addition, the discussions on education and its policies also demonstrate how the political elite understood and defined nationhood (and vice versa).²⁵³ Finally, these discussions and debates also reveal that the clarification of the contents of educational policies took time: Having started off by vague references to concepts such as “national education” and “national element”, the political elite slowly crystallized a particular understanding of education which would be largely based on an assimilationist understanding, and would overlap with the ideological bases of the RPP.

c. Chapter Outline

The chapter is organized chronologically and divided into four sections. In the first section I will look into the early period which stretched from 1920 to 1923. During this period, religion was an important constituent element of education policy. Similar to discussions pertaining to language issues, here too, the stress on religion was in line with a specific (i.e. religious) understanding of nationhood. Moreover, the concern to ascertain national unity was one of the primary elements in the framing of education policy during this early period.

²⁵³ This relationship between definitions of nationhood and the content of education have generally been neglected in the literature on Turkey. For an exception to this general neglect see Ustel's work (2004) where which she focuses on the relationship between Kemalist education policies, the content of textbooks, and national identity formation.

Finally, the pragmatic significance of education (i.e. the creation of a skilled labor force) was of concern as well. While attention was paid to national unity, religion and creating a pool of skilled labor power in the designing of policies, religious and ethnic minorities and their assimilation were not part of the elite's immediate concern. When discussed, the presence of minority and foreign schools were perceived as a threat to national unity. However, and as opposed to an effort at assimilation, the primary concern was to closely watch their activities, and keep these schools under control.

The second half of 1920s was a departure from the early years of the GNA. This departure entailed an effort at laicization in the education system. More specifically, the changes exemplify a transformation in the outlook on religious education: It was not completely dismissed. Instead, the state took on itself to determine the content and institutional composition of education on religion. Moreover, it was during this period that the populist outlook of the RPP found its reflection in education policies. Finally, even though the assimilation of minority groups did not appear to be a central theme brought up in the GNA discussions, the state's practices and the changes they brought about demonstrated that assimilation was becoming part of the education policy.

In the 1930s, the focus of education policies was redesigned to reflect the goals as well as the ideological bases of the RPP. Differently put, these policies came to be directly tied to the ideological as well as political spheres. First and foremost, the policies aimed at teaching the children the Six Arrows of the RPP, and turning these Arrows into ways of living, acting and thinking for the children. 1930s was also the period when a heavy stress was laid upon disciplining minds and bodies. Moreover, this preoccupation with disciplining was not limited to the young population, but extended over to the adults. Consequently, the state/Party clearly appeared as moral agents; and educational institutions became their vehicle. As Halide Edip noted, there also was a change in the philosophy of education policy in general:

“The purely cultural and liberal has yielded in late years to the utilitarian spirit, the idea of learning is for its use rather than for its intrinsic value gaining ground and ousting the platonic ideals of the earlier Westernizers” (Adivar, 1929: 43).

It was also during the 1930s that one specific aspect of national culture – history – became the center of attention. The preoccupation with history writing was linked to an ethnic understanding of the nation. As Smith notes, “identification with a past is the key to creating a nation, because only by ‘remembering the past’ can a collective identity come into being” (Smith, 1996a: 383). Yet, the nature of (re)writing of history varies from case to case. Although nation-formation invariably entails “picking and choosing” (or re-writing) of history, there is also the question of continuity versus discontinuity in history writing. For instance, the Royal Historical Society was founded in Britain in 1868 with the specific aim of directing research in history and biography (Ersanli, 2002: 236). In this particular case, the approach to history writing emphasized continuities. Similarly, in Finland a rewriting of history which took place in the late 19th century was an effort to underline historical continuities in the nation’s history (*Ibid.*, 238).

As mentioned above, in the Turkish case the attention paid to history writing came about only in the 1930s. It was only then that a certain sense of urgency was felt by the elite in establishing the new history of the new nation. This urgency manifested itself in the rapidity with which the two History Congresses were organized; and textbooks commissioned and written. Another characteristic is the extremes that collaborators of these projects went to in rewriting history: Certain periods of history were completely ignored while the significance of other periods became overly pronounced. In the hands of scholars (some of whom were also members of the political elite) history became highly fractured. This, of course, contrasts to Smith’s stress on continuity in the re-writing of history (i.e. Smith, 1996a). Furthermore, during this phase of the Republic history writing was approached not as an academic endeavor, but more so as a direct political and ideological tool utilized to restore the nation’s worth and dignity.

II. The First Assembly and National Education: Building National Unity and the Creation of a Skilled Labor Force through Education (1920-1923)

The first few years following the opening of the GNA, the immediate focus of the political elite was on emerging victorious against the last remainders of the Ottoman state in Istanbul, and also demarcating the national territories. Yet, they also deliberated on a variety of domestic issues; and education was one of them.²⁵⁴ In fact, the significance attributed to education was manifest: The First Congress of Education was summoned in July 1921 “at the height of the national struggle while the Battle of Sakarya was looming” (Alkan, 2000: 126). As well, a questionnaire given out to the members of the first Assembly revealed that 37% of the respondents singled out education as the most significant element which would contribute to building a ‘healthy’ future for the new nation (Demirel, 2004: 10).

Mustafa Kemal’s many speeches in and outside the Parliament also brought forth the significance attributed to education. In 1923, when addressing a group of teachers in the city of Kutahya, he likened educators to an army; and underlined their role in instilling minds with the love for the motherland:

“... You, members of the education army, I will ... tell you the value and sacredness of the army you belong to: you belong to an army who explains to the army [of soldiers] who kills and are killed why they kill and are killed” (ASD, II, 24.3.1923, 167-68).

The elite’s interest in education, and hence their motives in redesigning the system, stemmed from two sources: First, education was perceived to be a

²⁵⁴ It should be mentioned from the outset that the situation the country was in at the time made it impossible to undertake radical changes in the education system. For example, in the 1920 Program of the Committee of Executive Commissioners, and after outlining the main goals to be followed regarding education, it was stated that “... Today our first concern is to establish good management of the present schools” (ZC, 9.5.1336/1920, 241). Hence, coming up with incremental changes to the already existing system instead of a complete transformation was the direction they wanted (and could afford) to take. However, below discussion is still significant as it sets out the main path of the changes that was to come in the following years as well as how the elite perceived the education system should be.

central tool in the inculcation of the idea of national unity and the indivisibility of the nation. Second, there was a more pragmatic aspect – which was linked to the economic sphere: to achieve a certain level of homogeneity among the population as far as the basis of knowledge and skill was concerned. In other words everybody should go through the same education system; acquire the same basic knowledge and have the necessary basic skills so that economic modernization could be accomplished. This particular interest directly corresponds to the making of Gellner's "mobile man" (Gellner, 1983).

During the early years of the GNA three main areas of concern framed the debates on education: financial constraints faced; the problem of agency (public vs. private organization of the education system), and the actual content of education.

Members of Parliament were in agreement that the existing education system needed restructuring. Individual deputies demanding changes to the system were also quick to point out the financial obstacles they were facing. There was frequent talk about the inadequacy of the number of schools, teachers, and other infrastructure that the new nation had inherited.²⁵⁵ The need to rectify this dire situation required major expenditures. Accordingly, one main issue appeared to be finding ways to extract and extend more resources toward education.

a. The Issue of Agency: Community Action versus the State

In addition to the financial concerns that were raised, another topic of discussion pertained to the administration of the education system (i.e. whether it should be developed and administered by the state or left in the hands of local and private agents). Concerning this issue there existed a division among deputies: one side claimed over-centralization to be the source of all inefficiency, and corruption. Consequently, it was argued that the best solution to all problems

²⁵⁵ For examples of concerns raised about this particular aspect, see ZC, 4.10.1336/1920, 478-79; ZC, 10.2.1337/1921, 169, and ZC, 9.5.1336/1920, 243.

would come from the people and communities themselves. On the other side of the spectrum were those who held that the system was in need of centralization and nationalization. The financial incapacity of private individuals and communities to build and maintain educational institutions necessitated the state to step in and take action.

The organization of the education system under the Ottoman Empire had fallen in between these two ends of the spectrum. As mentioned in Chapter 4, even though the Ottoman center tried to coordinate the education system it also transferred a lot of the responsibility to communities.²⁵⁶ The majority of the early Republican elite were adamant at changing this state of affairs and coming up with a nationalized and standardized system.

The Minister of Education Rıza Nur's²⁵⁷ speech in the GNA looks at both sides of this debate on agency. After acknowledging the problems the system was inflicted by, he continued:

“... [W]ho is to blame? The people? The government? I think both. ... Some of us go to extremes. We say populism; we go to the people ... [and] blame the government. Some of us are statists; we say that nothing could come from the people. However, according to me this problem cannot be solved by going from one extreme to the other” (ZC, 4.10.1336/1920; 480).

His final proposal for a solution was based on having the state as the major coordinating agent. According to him, the reason underlying this particular solution stemmed from the absence of community organizations. Thus, and by

²⁵⁶ For example, under the Ottomans it was the responsibility of village communities in the country and neighborhoods in the urban areas to open up schools. This was so especially in the 19th century. As well, different millets were free to open and maintain their own schools and the Ottoman center did not interfere with such activities. Thus, in addition to the dualism within the system (religious versus secular education), there was also a division along community lines (i.e. Muslim versus non-Muslim). Establishing a standardized system all over the Empire was tried out during the Hamidian period, albeit without any success. The intercommunal education remained exceptional, only limited to a few provinces. See Somel (2001) for a detailed account of how education system worked and changed during the late 19th century.

²⁵⁷ Rıza Nur (1878, Sinop – 1942) was a medical doctor by profession, who became active in politics early on in his life. Even though he was a member of the CUP for a while, he eventually turned away from them, and joined the opposition. After having served in the last Ottoman Assembly, he worked in the GNA as the Minister of Education; and Health. He was a staunch (racist) nationalist. Following his falling apart with Mustafa Kemal he left politics and went to Paris to return back only in 1939.

default, the state was the only agent that could undertake changes and maintain the system. His resolution was to be the point of agreement in the GNA.

The debate over private versus public control and coordination of the education system was carried over to the predicament of minority schools. The strong presence of non-Muslim community schools was given as another reason for the state to play a significant role in education.

In 1921, the Minister of Education Hamdullah Suphi (Tanrioever) stressed that Greek and Armenian schools should be supervised closely. Even though, he pointed out, these schools were not as significant in terms of their potential (i.e. harmful) effects as those run by the Americans, the English, and the French, still, attention should be paid to them. He continued to argue that it had been a political weakness on the part of the Ottomans to have given the Greeks and Armenians freedom in administering their own schools. Of course, the major concern was that these schools could potentially become centers of political dissent – hence a danger to national unity. This threat, according to him, was blatantly obvious considering the situation the nation was in: “We are faced with a Smyrna tragedy. The main reason for the catastrophe we are fighting against is ...those churches and schools we had permitted [to function]” (ZC, 10.2.1337/1921, 169).²⁵⁸ He continued:

“... We open our schools for the whole country and all people, and the education provided by our schools embraces all elements. They will come [if they want to]; receive education in our schools... *The tolerance we have shown until today has been due to our political fears, the weakness of our polity*²⁵⁹ ... Which independent nation could you imagine ... take France, Germany, Italy. Would they knowingly allow political, divisive currents on their soil? ... [W]e are going to universalize our taxes, and they will pay. The doors of our schools are open to anybody. As for their religion: we did not transgress that for centuries. And we do not intend to do so after today. If they want to maintain their religious

²⁵⁸ In different occasions Mustafa Kemal also stressed the potential dangers of dispensing freedom to foreign schools. During an interview with a French journalist he commented on the schools that had been set up and run by the French: “The majority of French schools are run by fathers and nuns. Therefore, there is an occupational dimension. Thus, we could be worried about them engaging in religious propaganda. Despite this, we want your schools to remain intact. However, having privileges that [even] our schools do not have is not agreeable. Your institutions can only stay if they abide by the same laws that Turkish institutions are subject to” (ASD, Vol. III, 1987: 90).

²⁵⁹ My emphasis.

education, we will gather Christian children somewhere once a week; the priests will come, and lecture on religion" (*Ibid.*, 169).

Despite a facade of tolerance toward foreign [and minority] schools there was a clear aversion to them. Tanrioer's speech also illustrates that the case of foreign and minority schools was one area where the political elite, through taking initiative, should demonstrate to everybody that they were strong and in charge of the nation. A failure in stopping these schools to have free rein, on the other hand, would be a proof of regime weakness. Hence, and in this way, educational system and policies also became a vehicle to illustrate the might and confidence of the political elite.

The aversion to foreign and minority schools became more overt during the same session. As expressed by Suphi in the above quote, the main fear stemmed from these schools' potential influence in mobilizing students toward separatist goals.²⁶⁰ Put differently, foreign schools were seen as centers of political (and religious) propaganda. Again, lack of control over these schools was understood as demonstrative of the state's weakness. Accordingly, strict measures as to their functioning were seen imperative.

However, and as Suphi acknowledged, there also existed limits to containing the activities of foreign schools. These limits were shaped by the need to portray a positive image of the nation to the Western world:

"... I am saying this in view of the effects they [would] cause: if there were not some repercussions, I would not leave one single foreign school within the whole of Turkey. However, *this is an external as much as an internal issue*²⁶¹. ... The day we close the American schools, what would be its reactions in America? We should discuss [that]. Similarly we should take the possible repercussions into account if we were to close down Italian schools... Hence, there is only one solution in our hands, and that is to advance our schools in such a way that [we

²⁶⁰ Avram Galanti was another prominent figure of the time who voiced the same concern in one of his articles. In order to justify his cautious attitude toward foreign schools, he looked back at history: "It is known to all that the 1821 Greek uprising was undertaken by those who were educated in Greek schools in Istanbul and Salonica. The Greek state, which had secured its independence with the aid of Russia, Britain and France, attempted and was successful in turning those Ottoman-Greeks (who did not speak Greek until then) into Greeks through schooling. ... The reason for citing these examples is to demonstrate what schools can achieve with children" (Kaplan et al (eds.), 1981: 545-46; originally published in *Aksam*, May 1925).

²⁶¹ My emphasis.

have] no need for foreign schools. When our schools provide the necessary knowledge and education, rest assured that not one single family would send their children to foreign schools" (ZC, 10.2.1337/1921, 170).

It is clear that the issue of foreign schools was one where domestic concerns (i.e. 'we cannot tolerate any threats to our national unity which could emanate from these schools') clashed with external/foreign policy concerns (i.e. 'we have to portray a certain image to the outside world'). The 'happy medium' was thus proposed as: 'let us make our schools better so everyone would come to ours'.

Following a question by a deputy regarding whether the government had any intention of closing down the Greek and Armenian schools, Suphi replied:

"... I closed down all the Greek schools within the province of Antalya. In the province of Trabzon too, I gave orders to close down the Greek schools, which did not possess official licenses and I closed them down. Thus, as much as the delicate situation we are in allows I am trying to close down schools that are [centers of] political propaganda, and attract those children to our schools" (ZC, 10.2.1337/1921, 170-71).

The fact that Armenians and Greeks were singled out as the arch-enemies of the government and the Turkish people, it is not surprising that their schools were especially targeted. Accordingly, the immediate concern became ensuring that any potentially divisive activity of these schools were inhibited.

In sum, state's involvement in coordinating and maintaining the education system was justified firstly on economic grounds (i.e. the inability of communities to finance and open schools). Secondly, the status of foreign schools raised another, this time, political justification of state's presence and control of the education system. At this time, the need to establish state's control was not defined by a desire to assimilate minority (non-Muslim) communities into a homogenous, national culture. Rather, administering these schools so as to impede any threats to national unity was the priority. As well, it was emphasized by the elite that such control would demonstrate the strength of the state.

b. The Content of Education: Religious versus Scientific Education, and the Issue of Moral Agency

In addition to financial constraints, and the problem of agency, the third theme that framed the discussions on education was the content of education itself. Here, the role of religion often appeared as one of the pillars of education. Religious education and its significance were also spelt out in conjunction with the need to provide scientific (i.e. secular) studies. The former was advocated mainly on the grounds that it was the source of individual (and as a result societal) happiness. Scientific knowledge was also seen essential since it was through that economic progress could be achieved. As well, education was, and should be a tool used in securing national unity. In short, three major components can be discerned in relation to the content of education: education as a channel to acquire technical knowledge and skills; as the source of individual and societal happiness; and as a tool to inculcate the love of one's nation (and consequently ensure national unity).

In 1920, the program of the Committee of Executive Commissioners (*İcra Vekilleri Heyeti*) presented its goals in relation to education:

“...[T]o provide our children with an education which is in *every sense religious and national*²⁶² ... to inculcate in them such qualities as individual initiative and self-confidence ... to bring into view scientific textbooks which would be agreeable with the national disposition, and conditions of our geography and climate, our historical tradition and society; to form the body of our language through composing dictionaries from the populace ... to have our history, literature and culture written by experts so as to elevate the national spirit ... to record and protect our history [traditions], to have Western and Eastern works of science translated into our language” (ZC, 9.5.1336/1920, 241).

During the discussion of the 1920 program Rıza Nur asserted that “... in our program we put religious education (*terbiye*) above all else” (ZC, 9.5.1336/1920, 244). The elite did not have any qualms in speaking for the need for religious, national, and scientific/secular education in the same breath.

²⁶² My emphasis.

Even though the terminology used remained vague at times²⁶³, the national character that was alluded to during the GNA sessions included a religious dimension. An exchange between the Antalya deputy Rasih (Kaplan) Efendi (who was a member of the First Group) and another (unnamed) deputy reflects this stress on religion:

Rasih Efendi: "... [in the Ottoman Empire] with every change of the minister there came an English mentality, a French mentality, a Swiss mentality, a German mentality. But the soul of nations is education. The soul of education in turn is - if Turkish, it's Turks, if Islam, it's Islam; if French then French".

A deputy: Are not Turks Muslim?

Rasih Efendi: "[When we say] Turk it means Islam. All the Muslim world and also Europe accept that the world of Islam is referred to as [that of the] Turks" (ZC, 4.10.1336/1920, 478).

Thus, not only the Islamic roots of the nation and its people were underlined but also it was suggested that the basis of education should not be completely extricated from religion. During the same session Hacı Suleyman (Bilgen) Efendi,²⁶⁴ a representative of Izmir and an independent deputy,²⁶⁵ echoed the same sentiments:

"... All happiness comes from religion [and religion in turn is] based on education. It is due to science and knowledge that a devout man's [place] in this world and the next is prosperous. Because religion is a line of conduct in everyday life, protector of good fortune, consolation for calamity, shelter in times of hardship, refuge against danger and a wall of support and a sure shelter in days of affliction. Those men who lose their religion due to ignorance are bereft of happiness. ... Since we are going to the people, let's flatter people's sentiments. The interaction between the people and us has diminished. Let us spend at least part of the money we receive from the people towards them, [let us] work for the fulfillment of their religious duties; and let us render service to at least a fraction

²⁶³ Although references were consistently made to national spirit, "our history, our traditions" the content of these references were not directly defined. For example, one of the goals was stated as "bring[ing] into view scientific textbooks which would be agreeable with the national disposition". However, there was no clear explanation as to what exactly national disposition referred to. Neither was the connection between scientific textbooks and national disposition was elaborated upon.

²⁶⁴ Hacı Suleyman (Bilgen) Efendi (1856, Aydin – 1923): He received his early education in Aydin. For a while he worked as a medrese teacher. In 1908, for one year, he served in the Ottoman Assembly. Bilgen was actively involved during the National Resistance Movement. In 1920 he became an (independent) deputy. He was not reelected in 1923.

²⁶⁵ During the First Assembly, an independent deputy referred to one who was neither listed under the First nor the Second Group (Demirel, 1995).

of the distance between the government and the people” (ZC, 4.10.1336/1920, 475-76).

Religious education was thus defended on the grounds that it secured individual happiness. The latter in turn was perceived to be inextricably linked to societal happiness. In fact, individual happiness was a concern as far as it served the maintenance of societal happiness. While securing happiness, (religious) education was also conceived as a tool to bridge the gap between the elite and the people.

At this point, it should also be noted that all throughout Kemalist era the Republican elite never thought of education as a devise to encourage individualism. Individualism, autonomy, independent thinking was never a significant theme of their discussions or speeches. Instead, it was the attachment of the individual to the nation that made the nation’s (and thus the individual’s) presence full and complete. This particular emphasis became the core understanding on which education policies were built.

In 1921, the Minister of Education Hamdullah Suphi outlined his government’s goals on education:

“... [to] return our children back to the roots of their nation, to make them loyal to their past. ... We have to have scholars who will raise our education system to the high level it deserves. ... Today’s scholars should be men who know the sciences of the east and the west. [We] should order the Ministry of Religious Affairs to [protect] the conscience of our children against the currents coming from the West. They [the Ministry of Religious Affairs] should hasten the effort necessary to train our true scholars” (ZC, 10.2.1337/1921, 170).

Three points should be mentioned here: First, it is of significance that Suphi points out the responsibility of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in coordinating education. Consequently, what is suggested here was not a secularization of the system but rather an integration of religious and scientific/secular teaching as well as the complete involvement of the state in *both* aspects of education. Second, we see an attempt to bring up generations through instilling in them ideas that were deemed necessary and acceptable, rather than

presenting them with a wide spectrum of currents of thought.²⁶⁶ Inculcating the “right” ideas, in turn, was to be an area where not only the Ministry of Education, but also the religious authorities should be involved in.²⁶⁷ Hence, acquiring and strengthening the “right” ideas were tied to religious education; and as a corollary limits were to be established to embracing the Western ideas and ideals.

In 1921 Hacı Atif Efendi –who was a member of the First Group – addressed the GNA and clearly expressed the desirable vision for the future education system.²⁶⁸

“Education is Islamic education ... All sciences should be taught; however, traditions of Islam should be adhered to and all should follow the prayers and the ritual ablution. [That is] the men who are being educated should be educated so they adhere to the traditions of Islam” (ZC, 10.2.1337/1921, 166-7).

Again, religion appears as one of the defining elements of the content of education. Educating the “souls” of individuals was considered to be of significance for personal happiness. At the same time, however, religion was not to be pushed onto people at the expense of science education.

It is also of significance that the above deputies who emphasized the role of religion (and religious education) for the nation were all members of the First Group (with the exception of Hacı Süleyman Efendi who was an independent).²⁶⁹ Hence, and in contrast to the literature on this era which characterizes the First Group as “progressive and positivist” and the Second Group as “traditionalist, and

²⁶⁶ This defensive attitude towards different currents of thought was an element that came to define Turkish nationalism. In his analysis of Mustafa Kemal’s speeches, Parla stresses the same point. See his (1992), Vol. 3, 312. Also, see below for quotes from Mustafa Kemal’s speeches, and addresses to teachers.

²⁶⁷ The need for the Ministry of Religious Affairs to be involved in education was also mentioned by Mustafa Kemal when he addressed the GNA two years later: “...Gentlemen, there are sciences that the children of our country must together and equally acquire. Unity in education ... is important from the point of view of societal progress and advancement. For that reason, it is to be desired that there is unity of mind and cooperation between the Ministries of Religion, and Education” (ASD, Vol. I, 1.3.1923, 318).

²⁶⁸ (Mehmet) Vehbi (Bolak) Bey, who was the Minister of Education between 1922 and 1923, was another MP who was known for his advocacy for maintaining religious education as the main pillar of the education system. During the First Assembly he was a member of the First Group. For his ideas and policies on education see Gunes (1985: 228-29).

²⁶⁹ For the description and a brief discussion of the First Group see Chapter 5. For a detailed discussion on the First Assembly see Demirel (1995).

so highly religious”, the above discussion on the content of education makes it clear that these boundaries are at times more complicated than suggested.

Mustafa Kemal’s own speeches also addressed the issue of religion and religious education. When he addressed the GNA in 1922 he made reference to past mistakes and set the main goals of national education under the Republic:

“Gentlemen! For centuries the governments that ruled our nation had displayed a desire to expand education. However, since they could not escape from imitating the east and the west [in their attempt to] arrive at this desire the people were not able to escape ignorance. In the face of this sad truth, the path we must follow as the basis of our education policy should be thus: I had said; the true owner of this country and the fundamental element of our society is the peasant.²⁷⁰ It is this peasantry which, until today, has been left out of the light of education. Hence, the foundation of education policy we will follow should be, first and foremost, to remove ignorance. ... The first goal of our education program is to teach all peasants how to read and write, and *give them enough information on geography, history, religion and morality so as to acquaint them with their country, nation, religion, world,*²⁷¹ and teach them four mathematical operations. ... The growth of our nation’s genius and as a result, its rise to the level that it deserves in civilization is possible through training technical experts and through exalting our national culture” (ASD, I, 1.3.1922, 245).

Kemal’s reference to the need to teach (peasants) religion as well as history and geography reflects the fact that he was in no hurry to (completely) dismiss religious education. As well, one of the main goals of the elite (and education policies) was to help individuals to come to the realization that they belonged to a bigger whole – the nation. Linked to this, another goal of the education system became the inculcation of a national culture. The following year, talking about the significance of having books translated into Turkish, Kemal emphasized that:

“Writing and translating [books] are the most important vehicles in support of national sovereignty, and diffusion of national culture” (ASD, I, 1.3.1923, 317).

²⁷⁰ The theme of peasants being the “true owners of the country” was a recurrent one in his speeches. As Mardin notes, this emphasis had its roots in the writings of Ziya Gokalp “which had originally trickled down from Herderian romanticism” (1997: 116).

²⁷¹ My emphasis.

In another speech, this time during the opening of the Education Congress in 1921, he again made reference to national culture:

“When I talk about a national education program, I mean a culture which is far away from the previous era’s superstition and [far away] from those foreign ideas which have nothing to do with our natural disposition, and those influences from the east and the west, and [a culture which is] in complete harmony with our national character and history. Because the full development of the national genius could only be ascertained by such a culture. Culture is in harmony with the basis. That basis is national character. When educating our children and youth, they should especially be inculcated with the necessity to defend national ideas ... with force and devotion against every opposite [harmful] idea and the requirement to fight against all foreign elements that would go against his presence and unity” (ASD, II, 16.7.1921, 19-20).

His insistence on an education that purged itself from superstitious elements certainly refers to religious elements. Religion was to be tolerated as long as it was in harmony with the “national character”. Put differently, religion (and religious education) and its role in the new nation should be reframed. More importantly, the contents of this religious education was to be defined by the state itself.²⁷² The following year Mustafa Kemal reiterated his outlook on the content of education:

“... There are forces that make a nation a nation; that leads to progress and prosperity: forces of ideas, and societal forces... If ideas are meaningless, illogical, full of sophistry, those ideas are diseased. In the same way, if societal life is saturated with rules and traditions that are bereft of reason and logic, that are useless and harmful, [then societal life] will be paralyzed. For those who want to save the country, the nation, patriotism, good will and sacrifice are qualities that are indispensable. ... However, in order to see a disease in society, in order to cure it, and to make society progress in accordance with the needs of [our] age, these qualities are not enough; in addition to these qualities there needs to be knowledge and science. The center of knowledge and science ... is schools. ... Knowledge and science are going to be our guide in the political, societal life of our nation, and in the ideational education of our nation” (ASD, II, 27.10.1922, 47).

It should be noted that the weight given to religion by Mustafa Kemal was less marked when compared to the addresses of the deputies in the GNA. The

²⁷² For more on this point, see below discussion on the second half of 1920s.

importance of religious education was not denied. However, its contours were to be very clearly defined: It should be purged of any superstitious elements; and it should be accompanied by scientific education.

Moreover, national culture was clearly mentioned as the basis of national education. Here, national culture was defined only through a reference to what it was not: national culture was not what came from the West, or the East. Hence, it was something unique. Yet, the basis or content of this uniqueness was not clarified. In sum, a close link was established between national culture, national character, and national education system. Yet, the very contents of these terms were specified on the basis of what they should not be, rather than what they were.

The above quotes all demonstrate the role of education in the creation and preservation of the new nation. Nation-building was to be pursued through establishing an education system which would inculcate love and loyalty to the nation; and it would also be based on principles of reason and logic. Teachers' role was all encompassing: not only were they there to achieve high levels of literacy and to impart scientific knowledge. They were also there as moral agents. Differently put, the perception of "the notion of school as an organized moral environment" (Durkheim, 1972: 208) explains the emphasis put on education. Finally, it was not only the teachers who became the principal actors and moral agents here. It was the state and the political elite itself.

Even though the content of education lacked in clarity, Inonu did attempt to elaborate what the elite thought national education meant. In his speech delivered to a group of teachers he defined national education by what it should not include:

"We say we want national education; what does this mean? We can understand this more clearly by its opposite. If one asks what the opposite of national education is, we can say that it is probably religious education or international education. The education you are going to deliver is not religious, not international but national. This is the system. Time will prove that religious education does not form an opposition to national education; and both forms of education will develop ... in their own paths. When it comes to international education; fundamentally, religious education is a form of international

education. Our education is going to be ours and will be for us" (quoted in Kaplan, 2002: 791).

Besim Atalay's speech in 1920 echoed that of Kemal's and Inonu's. Atalay mentioned that what had existed under the Ottomans, both in terms of religious education, and education in general had been at fault. More specifically, religious education had not been there to inspire religious feelings in the souls of the children. Rather, it was a system, which had been based on memorization of texts only. It was because of this reason that it did not have any positive effects on the individual.

"... [Under the Ottomans] we were behind when it came to national education. At one time, we wanted to be like the Persians, the Orientals. We could not be like the Persians. At one time we wanted to be like the Westerners. There is no doubt we could not have been [like them], because [moral] character [nature; hulkullah] does not change" (ZC, 9.5.1336/1920, 244).

Hence, the implication is that the basis of national education should reflect the unique nature of the people which compose the nation. In other words, national education should be *sui generis*. The content should embrace religious, national and secular (scientific) elements and melt them into one system. Moreover, the main pillar of this system was to be the 'national element'. Only through such a system could a new individual and a new citizen be brought into being.

In addition to the stress on establishing a national education system, which would reflect the true character of the nation, Mustafa Kemal's various speeches also referred to a more pragmatic dimension of education. Education was there to equip individuals with a certain skill set which would in turn be employed for the furthering of societal good. In other words, there was an economic interest in securing a solid basis for education. Even though this specific aspect was not raised in the GNA meetings, it does come through clearly in Kemal's speeches.²⁷³

²⁷³ For a similar discussion of this pragmatic approach to education see Parla (1995, Vol. 3, 313-14).

“... On one hand, while trying to remove ignorance, on the other hand, [we should] establish the fundamentals of our education method and to provide primary education – which is indispensable to make the children of our country really effective and productive in social and economic life – in an applied form. ... It is imperative even at the secondary education [level] to observe a practical and applied method of learning and training” (ASD, I, 1.3.1922, 245).²⁷⁴

This particular direction to education was again reiterated in his 1923 address in the GNA:

“... Gentlemen, the way which should be pursued in education and instruction is rather than make knowledge a decoration, a vehicle of oppression, or a cultured [civilized] amusement for the individual, to make it into a practical and employable tool which will ensure success in material life. Our Ministry of Education is paying attention to this basis” (ASD, I, 1.3.1923, 316).

Educating individuals so they could be productive members of the economy and society was also discussed by Celal Nuri Ileri in his article “Milletin Tecdidı” [Nation’s Renewal]. Ileri was highly critical of the *medrese* system on the grounds that it was primarily based on memorization. Instead, he stressed that education should be practical; should aim at giving individuals tools they could make use of in the labor market. In his article he gave the example of schools administered by Americans in Turkey which had these technical and practical aims in mind; and which were very successful in recruiting Armenian students:

“... The Armenian children who are recruited are not taught Ibn Sina, Ibn Rusd, Ibn Bacce. Half of the work hours are devoted to lectures, the other half to studying arts/crafts. ... [After learning his craft], the child both studies, and also through putting the craft he learnt into use, he pays for his schooling ... [Eventually] he earns money and when he gets his diploma he owns capital ... to open up his shop” (29 November, 1338/1922; republished in Kaplan et. al (eds.), 1981, Vol. 1: 56).

In sum, during this early period education was seen as a vehicle to establish and solidify national unity. As well, one of its main functions was

²⁷⁴ At another occasion Mustafa reiterated: “... It is necessary, on the one hand, to try to remove ignorance, and on the other hand to raise individuals that are practical, effective and productive in societal life. And that is possible through having the primary and secondary education in a way, which is practical. It is only through this that society [can] have businessmen, and artists. As well, we will educate technical experts so as to flourish our national genius” (ASD, II, 27.10.1922, 49).

defined as securing individual and consequently societal happiness. However, the understanding of what a “national education” should entail was left vague: The attempts at defining what was meant by national education or national element focused on not what it comprised of, but what it should leave out. Finally, the above discussion, and in contrast to some of the existing works in the literature, illustrates the significance attributed to religion as part of the education system.

III. Unifying the Minds, Assimilation, and Laicism (1924-1929)

All throughout the 1920s foreign (and minority) schools attracted the attention of the elite. This attention was due to their concern about national unity, and the perceived presence of divisive forces and ideological currents. Initially, and as discussed above, the elites’ main emphasis was on controlling the activities of minorities as opposed to assimilating them through educational institutions. In the second half of the 1920s, the reason behind the need to control foreign and minority schools became closely tied to developing a sense of nationhood; and creating “real” Turkish citizens. Accordingly, the assimilation through the education system also became a significant concern.

a. Education, Assimilation and Nationhood

In one of his articles, Falih Rifki Atay expressed the significance of national education for future generations:

“... Out of those people who had received their early education from foreign or a combination [of foreign and Turkish schools] not a person had been raised who is a valuable individual for the Turkish nation. ... It should be the Turkish teacher, and a Turkish school, which should be giving the first/early education to a Turkish child. ... Assume that Turkish children receive their early education from a foreign (nation’s) school: [in that case] the next generation will not belong to the Turkish nation, but to that [foreign] nation” (*Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 21 March 1929, 1).

Avram Galanti, a prominent Jewish-Turkish scholar of the time, specified the harmful effects of foreign schools. According to him, these schools were inhibiting the inculcation of feelings of love for the motherland. Neither were they helping with linguistic assimilation:

“On Rhodes, which now belongs to Italy in accordance with the Lausanne Treaty, there is an Alliance school that uses French as the medium of education. Italy ordered this school to stop schooling in French, and adopt Italian as the medium. This is because Italy obviously knows that a child who receives his education in French graduates from school not as an Italian but as French. He will love not Italy, but France. This situation is akin to a mother who leaves her baby to be raised by a wet nurse” (first published in *Aksam*, 5 May 1925; republished in Kaplan et al. (eds.), 1981: 553).

Galanti also underlined the significance of assimilation through education –especially in reference to the Jewish community in Turkey. For him, schooling was the only solution for linguistic assimilation (2000 [1928]: 5). Similarly, another Jewish-Turkish intellectual, Tekinalp urged the Jews to send their children to Turkish public schools as well as to speak Turkish (2001 [1928]: 75).

Moreover, belonging to a nation meant acquiring the culture of that nation through education. It was on this particular ground that foreign schools were not desirable. In the words of Ziya Gökalp:

“Belonging to a nation is partly voluntary, and partly involuntary. It is the consequence of culture [also education] [*terbiye*] that is involuntary. If a person receives English education, it means he is partly English. He cannot be wholly Turkish. He, partly making use of his will, determines his adherence [to a group] by saying “I am from such and such a nation”. However, if the will and culture oppose each other, there will be a lack of harmony in the individual’s soul. ... Natural character is one thing; one’s name [and] nation is another thing” (*Türk Yurdu*, Vol. 21, February 1928, 7).

Thus, the education system should be a significant medium to accomplish the unity of minds and the creation of a national culture as well as representing one of the main embodiments of this culture. As Beissinger notes “nationalism is not simply about imagined communities; it is much more fundamentally a struggle over defining communities – and particularly a struggle for control over

the imagination about community” (1998: 175). This struggle for control was what the political elite was engaged in; and education was one channel of such control.

The Republican elite and intellectuals of the time saw the unity of mind emanating from the unity of the education system. Gokalp, writing in 1923, pointed out that having a unified education system was significant since it was only through that the unity of minds could be achieved.

“In this country there are three layers of people differing from each other by civilization and education: the common people, the men educated in medreses, the men educated in [modern] secular schools. The first is still not freed from the effects of Eastern civilization; the second are still living in Eastern civilization; it is only the third group which has had some benefits from Western civilization. ... We shall succeed in unifying our learning and education only when we have one civilization; only then shall we be a homogenous nation – intellectually and spiritually. We cannot afford to hesitate any longer” (Berkes (ed.), 1959: 278).²⁷⁵

b. Education and Laicism

It was with the goal to unify the minds that the education system itself was unified with the passing of *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu* (Law for the Unification of Education) on 3 March 1924. With this Law, all educational institutions, including foreign and minority schools, were brought under close control of the Ministry of Education.

The first article of the Law declared that “all scientific and educational institutions in Turkey are connected to the Ministry of Education” (TBMM Kavanin Mecmuasi [GNA Law Journal], vol. 2, 242). In accordance with this Law, institutions providing religious education also came under the Ministry’s administration. The second article established that “All medrese [religious schools] and schools which are administered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, or by private foundations are turned over to and brought under the Ministry of Education” (*Ibid.*, 242). Similarly, the Ministry of Education assumed the task of founding faculties at the university level which would train religious specialists

²⁷⁵ First published in the journal *Yeni Mecmua* [New Journal] (No. 68, 1923); and reprinted in Turkculugun Esaslari [The Bases of Turkism] (1923).

(*Ibid.*, 242). Hence, with this Law a complete nationalization and centralization of the education system was achieved. The Ottoman system, which had been a bifurcated one, ceased to exist.

At this point it is important to note that the above changes did not amount to the state becoming anti or irreligious. Thus, in this sense, we cannot talk about a ‘secularization moment in education’. Rather, the changes in the education system reflected a particular form of laicization if we define laicization as “the political regime subordinate[ing] religion to its authority” (Parla and Davison, 2008: 63). This laicization entailed the creation of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (in 1924) which was “charged with the duty of disposing of all cases concerning the Exalted Islamic Faith which relate to beliefs, and rituals of worship” (*Ibid.*, 63). Moreover, the *Imam Hatip Okullari* (Pastors and Preachers Schools) were to be supervised by the Ministry of Education; and their staff was to be appointed as state personnel under the Directorate’s bureaucracy (*Ibid.*, 65). As these changes indicate, and as Parla and Davison underline, the state did not disestablish religious instruction. Nor did they remove themselves from shaping and maintaining the contents and administration of religious education and its various institutions. Rather, the state “maintained a keen interest in religious affairs since the abolition of the caliphate. Kemalist intention and practice has been tantamount to creating a new division of labor in and among state departments concerning religious functions” (*Ibid.*, 66).²⁷⁶

The unification and laicization of the system did have its opponents. A week after the Law had passed, deputies debated Ministry of Education’s budget. During the session a number of MPs asserted their reservations about the change. The main point of contention revolved around the role of the state in inculcating values and ideals based on Islamic principles as well as training teachers and

²⁷⁶ In 1924 high schools still included a course on religious teaching (such as courses on Koran, religious learning and religious sciences). As well, and as Alkan notes, “on appropriate occasions, the teacher was supposed to relate the heroic deeds of the Prophet in order to instill a love for Islam” (2000: 218). It was in 1927 that alterations in the curriculum started to take place. More specifically, religion courses gained a more secular character; and before long, they were completely taken out of the elementary, and then the secondary curricula (*Ibid.*, 128). The only exception to this was village elementary schools where religion classes were kept until 1940 (Kaplan, 1999: 159).

students in theology. These opponents perceived the recent change – especially the closing down of significant number of medreses- as a ‘sinful’ shift away from Islam. Further, they argued that the change undermined the character of the people.

Raif Efendi, one such dissenting voice, argued that it was due to “the soul of Islam” and the soldiers’ devotion to God that the War of Independence had been won:

“The thing you call Turkishness, gentlemen, [is about] placing Islamic faith into the Turkish nation’s bosom. Without *imams* [and] teachers, [people] would turn into savages ... The aim of the unification of the education system is for all educational institutions including the religious, scientific ones to be pulled under one center. It does not mean the closing down of some and keeping the others” (ZC, 17.4.1340/1924, 818).

Raif Efendi²⁷⁷ also pointed out that he was not proposing a return to the old ways of instruction and education. Rather, he advocated that the new system should be organized so that it would be inclusive of religious education. Another deputy, Kamil Efendi,²⁷⁸ stressed a similar point of view. During his address to the GNA he emphasized moral education to be the basis of solidarity among individuals:

“There are thousands of peoples [nations] each thinking in different ways. Consequently, the thing that keeps them together is moral education” (ZC, 17.4.1340/1924, 815).

²⁷⁷ Raif (Dinc) (1874, Erzurum – 1949): received his education in Erzurum. In 1887 he graduated from Mektebi-i Nuvvab. He was in the Ottoman Parliament. During the War of Independence he went back to Erzurum, and help with the organization of resistance. He also contributed to the assembling of the Erzurum Congress. In 1923, he became a deputy from Erzurum. He also was a deputy during the 5th, 7th and 8th Assemblies.

²⁷⁸ Miras (Midas) Mehmet Kamil (1875, Afyonkarahisar – 1957): studied theology at Darulfunun (Istanbul University). He also taught at the Faculty of Theology. Miras published works on different aspects of Islam. He also served at the Ottoman Parliament. In 1923 he entered the GNA as deputy from Afyonkarahisar.

Moral education in turn was tantamount to religious education (*Ibid.*, 814-15); and having one without the other was impossible. Accordingly, he urged the Ministry to ensure necessary guidance and teaching on religion/morals.²⁷⁹

The Minister of Education (Huseyin) Vasif (Cinar)²⁸⁰ Bey acknowledged the criticisms; and defended his ministry's position. Part of his defense was based on the weakness and complete uselessness of the old Ottoman *medrese* system. This system had been based purely on memorization and should not be allowed to continue. In addition, many *medreses* had insufficient number of teachers: most schools were dependent on one or two teachers for instruction whereas more numbers were needed to provide sufficient and quality education. Therefore their existence could no longer be justified.²⁸¹

Despite opposition, the reform was carried through. While through these reforms the role and function of religion was strictly contained and defined by the state, there was also an increasing emphasis on a more pragmatic approach to education. The elite emphasized the role of schools in training children to enhance their capacity and to be able to contribute to economic change and development. Moreover, this was also tied to raising individuals who would remain loyal to their fatherland. In 1926 the Minister of Education, Mustafa Necati (Ugural),²⁸² expressed these two elements/goals of education:

“... The duty of the Ministry of Education is not only to schoolchildren. It is also the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to deal with various matters regarding the education of the nation. ... What is it that our education gives to

²⁷⁹ Other MPs who gave support for this position were, among others, Mustafa Fevzi Efendi and Ibrahim Efendi – both of whom were members of the First Group during the First Assembly. The latter called attention to the fact that “Since we cannot be without religion, we must have religious education. ... This [religious education] is also the order of our Koran” (*Ibid.*, 817).

²⁸⁰ Huseyin Vasif Cinar (1895, Izmir – 1935): Statesman. He was actively involved in the War of Independence. During the Second Assembly he joined the GNA as a deputy of Saruhan. He also worked as the Minister of Education in 1924 and again in 1929.

²⁸¹ Moreover, he also expressed the point that medreses were seen as vocational schools. As a result, they should not be allowed to exist as part of the elementary and secondary level education.

²⁸² Ugural, Mustafa Necati (1892, Izmir – 1929): Statesman, he studied law in Istanbul. For a time, he worked as a teacher and practiced law in his hometown. In 1919 he published a newspaper (*Dogru*), supporting the National Resistance. The following year he entered the GNA. Ugural served as the Minister of Justice; and the Minister of Exchange, Construction and Resettlement during the Second Assembly; and as the Minister of Education during the Third Assembly. At the time of the First Assembly, he was listed as a member of the First Group. He stayed in the GNA until his death in 1929.

our children? They endlessly read books; and even though the children have a lot of things in their minds they are not able to succeed in the practical world. ... Because of this we are going to make the curriculum of elementary schools in accordance with practical life. We see the need for reforming the elementary schools in a way so that they give practical rather than theoretical education, and to train children in a patriotic, nationalistic way” (ZC, 20.3.1926, 268-69).²⁸³

According to the Republican elite, one of the achievements of this new education system could be found in providing equal access (to education) given to children from all social classes. The unified system of secondary education was made free. Moreover, the state began to financially support students coming from lower classes. Thus, the children of the Republic were given the chance for education no matter how poor they were. Ihsan Sungu, a member of the Committee on Education, referred to all these characteristics of the new education system as “populist and nationalist”, and thus different from those systems in the West. The system in the West was based not on equal opportunity, but on one’s social class (*Terbiye*, No. 21, 1930, 270-80; republished in Kaplan et. al (eds.), 1981, Vol. 2, 576-77). The present goal of the Ministry was in line with the regime’s populist outlook.²⁸⁴

When it came to students from non-Turkish, non-Muslim communities, however, assimilation was the main goal. Following the unification of the education system, minority schools were brought under strict control. This entailed the requirement for these schools to employ a certain number of Turkish teachers; as well as revisions to the curriculum so as to include instruction in Turkish. Education policy (just like the language policy during the same period) became assimilationist in character.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ The emphasis on acquisition of skills through the education system continued into and in fact intensified in the 1930s. When, in 1930, Ismet Inonu was introducing the program of the new cabinet, he would remind the deputies that the government would continue to pay close attention to vocational training and specialization (*Hukümet ve Programlari* [Cabinets and Their Programs], 1988, Vol. 1: 40).

²⁸⁴ Another manifestation of this populist outlook was the founding of Maarif Cemiyeti [The Education Society] in 31 January 1928. The Society was established with the aim to help poor students and build more schools.

²⁸⁵ For the case of Jewish minority schools see Bali (1999: 185-91). Also see chapter 6 for the stress on assimilation through education.

IV. The RPP and the Ideological Bases of Educating the Citizenry (1930-1938)

In their 1931 Program the main goal of the RPP was spelt out as educating Turkish citizens along nationalist, republican and laicist lines.²⁸⁶ The content of this education should be devoid of any superstitious or foreign ideas; and instead should be national and patriotic. The Party also put stress on the teaching of history:

“Our Party gives emphasis to the citizens’ knowing the deep Turkish history. This knowledge is a sacred gem feeding Turk’s skills and might ... [and] his unbeatable strength in the face of any currents that would harm national presence” (RPP 1931 Program, 35).²⁸⁷

It was maintained that this knowledge of history would provide Turkish people with strength to withstand any threats to their national presence. For the first time under the Republic it was during this last decade of the Kemalist regime that education policy was based on the principle of “the unity of the Party and citizen” (Ustel, 2004: 136). In accordance with this principle the government’s 1936 program for elementary schools aimed at reworking the 1926 program so that the goals in education would become in line with the goals of the RPP (*Ibid.*, 143).

In line with the policies of the previous decade, during the 1930s there was still an emphasis on protecting all citizens in general and the youth in particular, from “foreign and hence harmful” ideologies. In his address at one of the People’s Houses²⁸⁸ Sukru Kaya pointed out that the operations of the Houses were all geared towards taking only technical knowledge from outside.

²⁸⁶ Also see Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, 1923-1933 [Turkish Republic, 1923-1933], 1933: 152-153 for an outline of these principles in relation to education.

²⁸⁷ The same goals were reiterated in the 1935 RPP Program.

²⁸⁸ After People’s Hearths closed down in 1931, People’s Houses were founded the next year. From its inception, the Houses were part of the RPP – dealing with the cultural and educational aspects of the Kemalist Revolution. In a general sense, and as Necip Ali Kucuka expressed, the Houses were institutions aiding the nation-building project (See his address delivered in 1933 in Kaplan et al. (eds.), 1981: 659-675). They were thought of as places where citizens would get together, and every such meeting would be “... an opportunity for strengthening, refining, and

“Apart from that [technical knowledge], we will build our own high culture within the framework of our own national character; and we have started doing that. There is not one idea or occupation taken from external ideologies, towards which we could incline” (*Cumhuriyet*, 22 February 1938, 1-6).²⁸⁹

This emphasis was perceived to be part and parcel of Turkish nationalism. Recep Peker made this connection very clear when he addressed the RPP: In his speech, he defined Turkish nationalism as a shield that would protect the nation from any foreign threats in the form of ideas. He further specified that Turkey should embrace nationalism so it could protect itself from anarchist, Marxist, fascist, internationalist, and (religious) fanatic propaganda (RPP 1935 Congress, 45).

One reflection of this line of thinking could be seen in the way the elite discussed sending students abroad as well as sending them to foreign schools in Turkey. Berc Turker wanted citizens to be encouraged to send their children to Turkish universities. In 1935 he addressed the GNA saying:

“After all these years why are we still sending our children to Robert College...? Why are we sending our daughters to St. Jan [sic] D’Arc? ... This state of affairs should be ended. There should be established an organizational basis in our country so our children could go to schools willingly ... and the rich will not send their children to Cambridge, Oxford. They should send them to our universities. ... They should say “we can send our children here” and in that we should not be losing our money to Europe” (ZC, 25.5.1935, 3, 255).²⁹⁰

elevating the character of the citizen” (Inonu’s address delivered in 1934, and republished in Kaplan et al. (eds.), 1981: 677). According to the renowned author Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar “People’s Houses are places where Turkish nation comes together regardless of differences in class, status, education, occupation and wealth; [they are places where] national consciousness is bonded. ... It is through these Houses that we are going to build a continuity which is based on the idea of a nation. The new and prosperous Turkish nation is going to make peace with its recent and distant past in these Houses. ...” (“Preparing for a Celebration”, first published in *Ulku*, 16 February 1944, No. 58; republished in *Yasadigim Gibi* [As I Lived It] [1970] (2000): 48). Throughout the 1930s the Houses continued to spread their presence all over the country, and their activities soon included a variety of areas including literature and language, fine arts, sports, social assistance, courses, libraries and publications.

²⁸⁹ The idea of taking technical knowledge from the West and at the same time building the nation’s unique, national education system was also asserted in the Assembly. For an example, see Fazıl Ahmet Bey’s address to the GNA (ZC, 17.5.1933, 15, 142).

²⁹⁰ The Minister of Education, Abidin Özmen’s response to such comments was more moderate. He acknowledged the weaknesses of Turkish schools with regards to foreign language teaching. Yet, he defended the schools on the grounds that they were fully equipped and capable of producing good citizens (*Ibid.*, 260).

In addition to their opposition (to sending students to foreign schools in and outside Turkey) on financial grounds, the MPs also had reservations about the possible outcomes of foreign education. Manisa deputy Refik Sevket Bey called those who sent their children to foreign schools (which were run in Turkey) “snobs”. He continued:

“From the time our children open their eyes we should show them the Turkish facial features as opposed to the Frankish hat. Not to teach our children their mother tongue when they are receiving elementary education is to let another nation’s education into our own; and nationalist Turkey cannot allow that. ... I always prefer the supposed shortcomings of our schools to the supposed goodness of their schools. ... Those individuals who have been the agents in the state’s history, us, all of us; none of us are people who were taught in foreign schools” (ZC, 25.6.1932, 9, 315).

Turkish youth was seen as a significant target group who needed protection from these external ideologies and propaganda. This protection should be provided not only by making sure the curricula fulfilled the (nationalist) criteria, but also injecting the youth with a high dose of discipline. Recep Peker:

“The youth is going to be equipped with feelings which would put the revolution and all sovereignty principles and the protection of the nation first. This youth is also going to be equipped with a capacity to use its intelligence in making decisions, and that this intelligence will be present in a disciplined manner” (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreteri Recep Peker, Soylevleri [Republican People’s Party, Speeches of the General Secretary Recep Peker], 1935).

Disciplining the minds of the Turkish youth became part of the Republican project in general, and the RPP’s goal in particular. People’s Houses was one such institution, which had this particular mission in mind. One of the activities of the Houses was to maintain libraries. However, the list of books, which these libraries would stock were minutely controlled. Those books written on communism were especially to be kept out of reach. In his letter to the General Secretary of People’s Houses, Sukru Kaya wrote:

“The government has agreed upon banning the books on the attached list which were thought to inculcate the youth (who will rule over the public opinion and the future of the country) with communism. ... Even though I do not assume that these kinds of works will find their ways into the People’s Houses, if by mistake they do, I request them to be taken off the library stacks and be sent here immediately. With the last circular I sent I had communicated that no tolerance should be shown toward foreign ideas at the People’s Houses” (PMA, 8.4.1938, 490.01/4.17.19).²⁹¹

An RPP publication also pronounced the vigilance shown by the People’s Houses when it came to controlling the source and nature of knowledge:

“In the People’s Houses there can – on no condition – be backward or internationalist ideas. The People’s Houses work loyally for the revolution and within a nationalist atmosphere that embraces all citizens with a feeling of brotherhood” (Turkiye Cumhuriyeti, 1923-1933 [Turkish Republic, 1923-1933], 1933:17).

This stress on disciplining and remolding the minds was linked to the idea that too much freedom extended to individuals was not a desirable thing. Mus deputy Hakki Kilicoglu expressed this specific argument in the GNA:

“I like freedom very much. However, it is such a weapon that it can be harmful when too much of it is given into the hands of those who do not understand it. For that reason the works the children are going to read, the [public] places they are going to frequent ... should be kept under control until at least they graduate from high school” (ZC, 26.5.1937, 18, 253).

At the RPP Congress in 1935, Recep Peker made it clear that the Party did not intend to have a youth who would “... sit down when we tell them so, and stand up when they are told to do so – mindlessly following instructions” (RPP 1935 Congress, 49-50). Yet, he added, there should still be a strong emphasis on discipline. “The biggest national capital is the national genius. And it should be nourished” (*Ibid.*, 50); and it was through a disciplined education that this genius would be brought out.

²⁹¹ A rather long list of books, which were to be kept out of these libraries, was attached to the letter. The list included works by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Bukharin as well as works on the Soviet regime written by Turkish scholars.

The goal to discipline the Turkish youth soon was soon expanded to encompass the entire population of the new nation. In other words, in the 1930s the RPP and the political elite saw that their role as educators should be extended to all citizens of the new nation. In fact, People's Houses was a significant example illustrating that education of citizens should not and could not be confined to schools. Education and re-education should be defined so as to target all citizens of the Republic; and should define all spheres of their lives.

An instance which exemplifies the stress put on disciplining citizens could be seen during debates over the closing times of movie theatres. This particular discussion was tied to the central notion of the elite that the state was responsible not only educating and disciplining the children of the nation, but also the adult population.²⁹² The debate was related to creating a "new citizen" who would be physically and mentally healthy. Citizens' mental and physical health was a manifestation of nothing but being a civilized nation where citizens were always eager to work their utmost. The Minister of Interior Sukru Kaya defended their decision to close coffee shops, movie theatres etc. at 11 o'clock at night:

"It might be that night-time vagrancy was often seen in the past. But just as the Republic has accomplished the work of a century within ten years, so does the Republic expect many deeds from its citizens. For the citizens to do the work of ten days in one day ... they should be working hard. We should be protecting his health and time. It is as a result of this need that we limited the hours [for movie theatres, coffee shops etc.] to be open until 11. ... Underpopulation and past neglects urge us to work with more self-sacrifice. We are required to give [the citizen] this opportunity to work" (ZC, 25.12.1933, 19, 137).

All these efforts at disciplining and educating the citizens were intimately tied to the inculcation of the main Kemalist principles. In 1936 Aka Gunduz addressed the problem of the absence of a foundation where the Kemalist principles were an organic part of all levels of schooling. Hence, he continued:

²⁹² A year earlier Esat Sagay (the Minister of Education at the time) sent out a "Circular on Regulating Movie Theatres" which detailed out movies children should not be exposed to. On his list was (any) movie that would "damage the national ideal", "arouse religious sentiments in either a positive or negative fashion", and "weaken the sentiments of discipline in students" (quoted in Kaplan, 1999: 191).

“Let us first build this foundation. ... Let us incorporate the ideology of the Revolution into the education system” (ZC, 26.5.1936, 11, 244).

In a similar vein, Elaziz deputy Fazil Ahmet (Aykaç) addressed the Assembly:

“We accepted to be democrats, republicans, revolutionaries, and populists. ... This means that our Party/government’s education policy should resort to all measures in order to realize these courses of action both in the areas of thinking, body, and moral character.” (ZC, 17.5.1933, 15, 143).

Thus, the Six Arrows of the Republic, which were the ideological bases of the regime, and principles along which the new nation was based on, also became the defining element of the education system and policies.

The other, related components of national education were outlined by the Minister of Education Esat (Bozkurt) in 1932. They included history and the inculcation of the necessity and desirability of the individual melting into the nation and the state. Thus, in a very Rousseauian fashion, the will and interest of each individual citizen was to be identified with that of the nation: the nation and the citizen were one and the same; and they were an indivisible whole. The goal of educational institutions at all levels should reflect this premise. These elements were further linked to being a civilized nation. In his own words:

“When we say national education: it is first and foremost a development that is symmetrical to Turkish nation’s national and historical character. ... In every area, in sciences, arts, agriculture ... To reach a form and boundary that defines what a civilized state, civilized nation should be... this is the requirement. ... There will be no egoism in the Turkish child; and Turks will never grow up to be pessimistic (applause). ... Every Turkish child will know that their own interest substitutes that of the nation’s. “I will do it, I will know this”. This [way of thinking] is going to leave the mind of the Turkish child. He will say “I am going to work for the nation and the country”” (ZC, 25.6.1932, 9, 324-5).²⁹³

Hence, the birth of the new citizen was declared, with his positivist outlook, and a disciplined mind and body. Furthermore, this new person was

²⁹³ The same points were also echoed by an Elaziz deputy, Fazil Ahmet Bey, during the same session (*Ibid.*, 318-19).

clearly different from the generations brought up under the Ottoman Empire. Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu²⁹⁴ emphasized this specific point in his article titled “The Harm of Silence”:

“Look at the men who have been successful in life; they are always bold, talkative, and amiable people. It is the same for nations. ... We are adamant to be bolder than any other nation. We should expand a lot of energy in erasing the image that is left in the minds and spirits of the monstrous, comical and pathetic image of the Turk which had been passed down from generation to generation in the old Ottoman Empire” (*Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 2 March 1929, 1).

As mentioned above, this new person/citizen was also distinguished from his predecessors through his unconditional and boundless loyalty to the nation and the state. The ideal citizen was one who put the nation and the state first. Just like it had been the coexistence of religion and the state which had formed the legitimacy basis under the Ottomans, now, it was the coexistence of nation and the state (Koker, 1998). It was this latter duality which now informed the new understanding of nationhood.

In creating the citizenry through schooling, the emphasis was on teaching them their obligations and duties to the state and nation. Rights and freedoms of individuals were thus relegated to the background. It is also of significance that religion completely disappeared from discussions on the nature of education. When writing about the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education, Afet Inan touched on the fact that now, religion was strictly a personal affair:

“All citizens knowing and loving the Republic, and recognizing religion and its rules of creed as spiritual ideas that exist outside the boundaries of this world are [two] important bases that knowledge/education should inculcate” (Inan, [1931] 1998: 294).

²⁹⁴ Yakup Kadri (Karaosmanoglu) (1889, Cairo-1974): Prolific writer, and statesman, and an ardent supporter of Kemalist principles. He was born into a famous feudal family. His first encounter with Young Turks was in Egypt, in 1906. Two years later he came to Istanbul where he studied law. During that time he also started writing and publishing his literary pieces. He spent three years in Switzerland due to his poor health. There, he developed an interest in the non-orthodox Bektasi sect of Islam. Following the promulgation of the Republic he joined the GNA and served as deputy of Mardin (1923-31), and Manisa (1931-34). He resigned from the RPP in 1962 since he believed the Party was moving away from Kemalist principles. Three years later he retired from politics.

Neither was ethnicity part of the elite's topic of interest in the GNA. Education policy was defined and goals were outlined for all groups (ethnic, and religious). However, 1930s did mark a preoccupation with the rewriting of history which manifested an ethnic undertone to the understanding of nationhood.

V. Turkishness, Education and the Rewriting of Turkish History in the 1930s

Daniel Bell, in explaining what he calls "the great irony of nationalism" underlines that while "nationalists admit that their nation remains to be built, they [also] make claims to take its full and complete existence for granted" (2001b: 1216). The Republican elites' rhetoric was certainly reflective of this paradox.

In the 1930s there was a great deal of energy spent on rewriting the Ottoman past, and writing the national history. This national history would pronounce the significance of certain historical events and eras while leaving others completely out or simply downplaying their importance. In the hands of its writers history became highly fractured and engineered.

Furthermore, it was not only scholars and intellectuals, but also members of the Parliament and the RPP who devoted significant attention to the rewriting of history. As novel situations in general call for a reevaluation of the distant or immediate past, so was it in the Turkish case. This reinterpretation of history was closely linked to the political elite's goal of reeducating the citizens (Ersanli, 2002).

According to Peyami Safa the fundamental desire of the Kemalist Revolution was to merge the principles of nationalism and civilization. Attention paid to history and language was central to strengthening the basis of nationalism, and reaching the standards set up by the civilized world (Safa, [1938] 1988: 128). As well, the aim of the Revolution was to give back to Turks their dignity and self-confidence. Safa wrote:

“The dignity of the French and the Italian comes from their carrying the Latin genius like a crown on their heads. In the words of all thinkers, all artists, the synthesis of Latin genius is one of the bases of their self-confidence. The English carries on his ... forehead the dignity of the Anglo-Saxons. German culture appropriates to his Germanic dignity his Goethe, Kant, and Wagner” (*Ibid.*, 127).

Turks on the other hand, were very much diseased by an inferiority complex, which, according to Safa, stemmed from the belief that they belonged to a backward Asian race. In addition, there were the more recent embarrassments that followed military disasters including the Balkan Wars. Thus, the aim of the Kemalist Revolution was to show the Turks themselves (and to the outside, Western world) that they could be and indeed were part of the European civilization and that their history was a glorious one (*Ibid.*, 127). The attention paid to history in general and history (re)writing in particular had these two major goals in mind.²⁹⁵

In relation to cases of late nation-building such as the ones in Asia and Africa, Smith notes that the “lack of any shared historical mythology and memory on which state elites can set about ‘building’ the nation” was a major difficulty (Smith, 1986a: 258). This lack of memory which was associated with a lack of an ethnic core, meant that “there is no place from which to start the process of ‘nation formation’” (*Ibid.*, 258). In the case of Turkey, it was not the lack of memory which was the problem but the abundance of it. In other words, the problem here was that not all of this history was seen as desirable to take its place in the history books, and the popular consciousness of the people. Hence, the elite faced the challenge of sifting through this history and appropriating only certain portions of it. It was through this sifting process that ethnicity became a constitutive element of this history too.

²⁹⁵ Tekinalp pointed out similar reasons when outlining the significance of research into Turkish history. More specifically he mentioned the need to correct the history which had long been taught in a distorted way. The goal of history writing should be to glorify the name of the Turk and its nation ([1936] 1998: 143). Addressing the nation, Mustafa Kemal reasserted the above goals: “We find it significant to move education forward through a simple program which would enable us to graduate more and more children. We are paying attention to bodily development as well as mental. More significantly, we, with much excitement, hope to elevate the national character to those high levels that are inspired by our deep history” (21 April, 1931; *Ataturk’un Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri* [Circulars, Telegrams and Proclamations by Ataturk], 1991, Vol. 4: 608).

a. Discovering the “Deep History”: Turks as Harbingers of Civilization

One of the preoccupations of the political elite thus became searching for this “deep history”. Following the founding of the Turkish History Society²⁹⁶ in 1931, 1930s witnessed the birth of the *Türk Tarih Tezi* [Turkish History Thesis]. In a 1933 RPP publication the goal of the Turkish History Society was described as:

“To look at history not from the perspective of the Europeans but from the point of view of reality alone; ... with this perspective, to determine the place where the Turkish ethnic really stood [in history]; ... to pay due to the big role played by the Turks in the history of civilization – a role which the Turk’s enemies are trying to hide” (*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, 1923-1933* [Turkish Republic, 1923-1933], 1933: 197).

The project was an extensive one: it aimed at “scientifically” demonstrating the origins of the Turkish people. In so doing, the connection between the Turkish and other civilizations was also to be analyzed. The results of these studies were to be published in the form of books²⁹⁷ and textbooks,²⁹⁸ which would be made part of the curriculum at schools.

²⁹⁶ After the Turkish Hearths were closed down and made to dissolve into the body of the RPP in 1930 a Historical Research Society was founded. The Society took over the regulations and programs of the Turkish Hearths. It later changed its name to Turkish History Society (Ersanli, 2003). Yunus Nadi explained the reason as to why the Party and the Turkish Hearths merged: “Foreigners are looking for a [hidden] meaning behind this; yet it is a simple merger. It is perfectly natural that instead of some citizens looking for a national culture in different institutions that all citizens working to establish national forces [under one institution] (quoted in Ersanli, 2003: 113).

²⁹⁷ One important publication that came out of this project was *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hallari* [The Main Forms of Turkish History]. The book was the product of the cooperation of a number of intellectuals, scholars and statesmen (most of them also MPs) including Afet Inan, Yusuf Akcura, Samih Rifat, Resit Galip. In this book, the effects of other civilizations on Turks’ history were completely ignored. Moreover, in a work of 600 pages, a mere 50 pages were devoted to the discussion of Ottoman history. As such, the work remained incomplete and not satisfactory even to Mustafa Kemal who had supported the project from its very inception. Ersanli attributes its main weakness to the underlying political goals: the project was rushed, and academic debate on methodological problems was suppressed (Ersanli, 2002: 804; 2003: 119-125).

²⁹⁸ For a discussion of such a textbook published in 1932 see Ersanli (2003: 126-136).

The discussion on the Turkish History Thesis was not only confined to discussions and research in the academic circles but also carried over to the Parliamentary sessions and newspapers. In all these different venues the history of Turks was treated as being synonymous with the history of world civilization. With this came a certain stance towards the Western world as well. This stance was dual in nature: On the one hand, it was stated that there was a clear difference between Turks and the Western world. This difference in turn stemmed from the argument that it was the Turks who brought to the Western world everything that was good and desirable. At the same time proximity between the Turks and the West was also underlined. This proximity was specifically based on the argument that both Turks and the Western European populations shared the same racial origins.

Regarding the role of Turks in history many deputies and intellectuals pronounced the same point: Turks have always been the precursors of everything good and civilized. In one of his articles titled “The Role of The Turk in History”, Ahmet Emin Yalman quoted Sukru Kaya’s address in the GNA:

“Human history started with the Turks. If there had been no Turks perhaps there would not have been history; and for sure civilization would not have progressed. ... For the humans to free their selves from a static state, and move on to a dynamic one, and for the structure we call history to be built there was a need for dynamic elements. The evidence for the fact that Turks were one such dynamic element is growing every day. ... Turks had built the first organized army in the world; they were the ones who prepared the foundations for a societal presence in the national sense” (*Tan*, 11 February 1937, 1-10).²⁹⁹

Edirne deputy Seref Bey’s speech reiterated the above points:

“If there had been no Turkish nation there would have been no history in the world. There would not have been nations in the world; there would not have been Europe in the world (applause). It is the Turkish nation that when ... they

²⁹⁹ For the full text of Sukru Kaya’s speech in the Assembly, see (ZC, 5.2.1937, 16). Hikmet Baydur’s speech in the GNA following the death of Atatürk is another example of how the elite wanted to rewrite Turkish history. Talking about Atatürk, Baydur said: “[Atatürk] researched Turkish history, and he saw that many Western scholars had found that Turks were the harbingers of civilization; however, they did not want to confess this. Starting from there [Atatürk] deepened the history ... And then he stated that the first civilization is the Turkish civilization. Turks are the fathers of all nations in the civilized world” (ZC, 14.11.1938, 27, 25).

came to Europe they found them living inside tree trunks. Turks, on the other hand, were mining; they were getting timber from trees. So, we are more civilized (applause)” (ZC, 14.5.1931, 4, 43).³⁰⁰

Through defining the role of the Turks as the harbingers of civilization, the elite were aiming at regaining the dignity of the nation. This heavily engineered understanding of history could only be complete when accompanied by a rewriting of the Ottoman history.

b. Rewriting the Ottoman Past

As discussed in the previous chapter, from the very beginning the Republican elite struggled to distance themselves away from the Empire and its policies.³⁰¹ During the 1930s we see the same trend continuing albeit in a slightly changed manner: In the earlier decades the elite was emphasizing that the Turkish elements inside the Empire had always been the victims. They were the ones who were pushed around, and made fun of. Moreover, they never had their deserved place in the administration. Instead it had always been converts to Islam who had occupied high positions.

In the 1930s the emphasis on the role of Turks was altered. Instead of Turks being the victims of the Empire, the emphasis was now put on them being the only people through whose actions the Empire was kept together. Further, it was because of the Turks that all past and more recent battles had been won. This redefinition of the role of Turks during imperial times was also consistent with the aim of restoring the nation’s dignity: The victims of the previous interpretations of history now became the victors. Edirne MP Seref Aykut’s talk is one example of this attitude:

³⁰⁰ For two other examples along the same lines, see Mahmut Esat Bozkurt’s speech at the First Turkish History Congress (1933), 5-7; and Tekinalp’s *Kemalism* [1936] 1998: 149.

³⁰¹ It should be pointed out that during the early 1920s the elite had a more defensive attitude especially in the international arena. Accordingly, when dealing with the Western powers they were not hesitant to glorify the Empire as well as the Republic. When, however, dealing with domestic matters their approach was one of harsh criticism against the Ottoman policies.

“In Turkish history, that is in the history of the Ottoman Empire ... it was always the Turks who won the victories. It was the Turkish children who were winning victories in Korent [sic], ...before Baghdad, in the deserts of Egypt, ... but the Ottoman sultans, the Ottoman administration did not know how to benefit from these victorious results. ... Now, the national conscience, national presence has merged. There is no relationship whatsoever between the Turkish nation and the now gone Ottoman Empire. We buried it in history. The national Turkish state is the state of Ataturk. All who worship the religion of Ataturk should know this” (ZC, 31.7.1936, 12, 320).

In addition to putting a certain distance between the Turkish Republic and the Ottoman Empire, there was also an effort to separate parts of the latter history into its components, and categorize these components as good or bad. Thus, the attitude was not a complete dismissal of the Ottoman past.³⁰² Rather, there was an attempt at appropriating specific elements of this history. Whatever was defined as being good was talked about as the deeds of the Turkish elements while everything bad was attributed to the Sultans, and external actors. So, for example, the earlier periods of the Empire were clearly talked about with admiration. It was the later periods that were defined as being corrupt, full of religious conservatism and susceptibility to external influences – factors, which, they argued, eventually led to the demise of the Empire.³⁰³

Hamdullah Suphi (Tanrioer)'s speech delivered at one of the Turkish Hearths is a manifestation of this new interpretation of Ottoman history. In his speech Tanrioer mentioned that Turkish history dated back 1200 years. However, in his interpretation this history had not always been a “bad” one. Rather, it was only after the reign of Sultan Ahmet III that decline and corruption had started.

“Small mansions, parks that surrounded Kagithane, the Bosphorus, Halic shores began with the reign of Sultan Ahmet III. ... The ostentatious palaces we see along the shores and hills of the Bosphorus date back to the Tanzimat period” (*Ayin Tarihi*, 1930, Vol. 22, No. 74, 6206).

³⁰² Here my argument differs from scholars (for example Ersanli (2002)) who argue that Ottomans and their history were completely dismissed.

³⁰³ For the role of sharia in the demise of the Empire, see Tekinalp [1936] 1998: 157-58.

In 1933 the speech delivered by the then Minister of Education Hikmet Bey is another example of how different periods in Ottoman history received different interpretations:

“Until the last three to four hundred years all of the innovations in the field of civilization came from the brachycephalic Turks who had come from Asia. Farabis, Ibn-i Sinas, Birunis, Ulug Beys are all from our race. ... After, a deep fanaticism, a regressive spirit and idea stumbled on everything ... Amidst the darkness a downfall started in political, military, scientific and economic [spheres]” (*Ayin Tarihi*, 1933, No.1, 8).

Afet Inan's³⁰⁴ paper delivered at the Second Turkish History Congress is yet another expression of this new outlook on Ottoman history. In her speech Inan talked about the early days of the Ottomans as being glorious and victorious – a testament to the power of Turks in state-building and administration. The later periods, on the other hand, were marked by bad administration, the influence of external enemies and the development of a bifurcated (and ineffective) system of governance as a result of reforms (*İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi* [Second Turkish History Congress], 1937: 760-63).

c. Searching for the Racial/Ethnic Origins of the Nation

This rewriting of Ottoman history was coupled with a new and heavy emphasis on the pre-Islamic Turkish history as well as an interest in the racial origins of Turks. The pre-Islamic period was admired for its pureness, and

³⁰⁴ Afet Inan (1908, Salonica – 1985): one of the adopted children of Mustafa Kemal; was trained as a teacher in Bursa. After she finished her studies she was sent to Lausanne (on Atatürk's request) in order to improve her French. In 1929 she returned back, and started working as a teacher. Two years later she became a member of the Turkish Historical Society. Later on, she studied social sciences in Geneva. On her return to Turkey she taught history at various universities. Inan published many works on the history of Turks, Turkish women, and Atatürk. One of the most important of her works was the *Civic Manuals*, which she co-wrote with Atatürk. During the early years of the Republic she also did research which supported the “Turkish History Thesis”.

justness; and for the proximity of its leaders to the people. Sadri Maksudi (Arsal)³⁰⁵ pronounced the significance of the pre-Islamic history:

“During the Ottoman times, children’s heads were filled with a false history. Turkish children who think their history only started 600 years ago with a tribal life of 400 tents cannot feel, understand the greatness of Turks. It is imperative to teach the Turk that Turks were an old nation who had created the oldest civilizations. ... The national feelings of the individuals are in harmony with their conviction about the greatness of their races” (ZC, 27.5.1934, 22, 321).

As for the “Turkish character” which had been in existence before the Ottomans, Halil Mentese raised some significant points:

“Why was the course of Turkish civilization greater in those [pre-Ottoman] days? Because in those days the Turk was in possession of his destiny. His leader used to live with the army, with the people. Religion was not yet ruling over public offices. ... It was after the reign of Sultan Suleiman [the Great] that the bases of state authority were violated one by one. ... One of these [violations] was the absence of a separation between religious affairs and the state. This weakened the state” (ZC, 22.5.1935, 3, 161).

This understanding of the place of Turks during pre-Islamic ages was the polar opposite of how Turks were depicted under the Ottomans. Under the Ottomans and more specifically during the reign of Abdulhamid II, Turks were described as a “rebellious disloyal tribe in the pre-Islamic period but became civilized with the adoption of Islam” (Alkan, 2000: 76).

In short, 1930s marked a decade where history writing was highly selective, and mostly dismissive of (especially the late) Ottoman period. In doing this, history writing itself became a search not for continuities but rather discontinuities in history. Differently put, pronouncing the close link between the

³⁰⁵ Sadri Maksudi Arsal (1880, Kazan – 1957): Historian, Law professor and statesman. His father belonged to the *ulema* class. After receiving *medrese* education in Kazan, he graduated from Teacher’s College in Russia. He further studied sociology, and graduated from the Law Faculty in Paris. On his return to Russia he represented the Caucasus Turks in the second and third Dumas. Following the 1917 Revolution he became the first President of the state that was formed in the Kazan province. In 1918, he went to Finland and France. Arsal came back to Turkey when he was offered a teaching position at Ankara Law Faculty. He was in the GNA during the fourth (1930-1935), fifth (1935-1939), and ninth (1950-1954) Assemblies. His published works centered on Turkish history and law. Arsal’s work on the Turkish Language (*Türk Dili İçin*) is considered an important contribution to efforts at reforming the language. However, he became a center of criticism because of his opposition to some of the attempts at the Turkification of the vocabulary.

pre-Islamic Turks and the (ideal) Turk under the Republic meant that the history in between these two periods was highly suppressed. As Ersanli maintains, “the continuities that Turkish History Thesis and the Sun-Language Theories were based on was nothing than a bridge between Neolithic civilization and secular Republic” (2003: 239).

The renowned intellectual and statesman Tekinalp was one of the many who was preoccupied with Turkish history. In his work *Türk Ruhu* [The Turkish Spirit] he differentiated between different periods of Turkish history. One period goes back to pre-Islamic days when the Turks were leading a tribal life and were nomadic. During this period Turks led their own, separate lives which were different from that of the people they conquered. They did not mix with the indigenous people. They always kept their eyes toward their homeland in Asia. They held on to their culture and ways of living (1944: 18). This state of affairs, according to Tekinalp, also differentiated Turks from their counterparts in the Western world: Those nomadic conquerors in the West had no qualms about mixing with indigenous people. As a result, they were torn away from their original spirit/characteristics as a community (*Ibid.*, 18).

It was only after the conversion to Islam that the Turkish spirit underwent a change. This was so among the elite classes who started adopting Arabic and Persian culture. However, amongst the simple folk the true spirit of the Turk continued to live. It was this spirit, this inner strength that the Republic was first and foremost trying to revive. Moreover, according to Tekinalp all the “six arrows” of the RPP were in line with the characteristics of the ancient Turks. In other words, the principles of statism, republicanism, reformism, nationalism, laicism and populism had their roots in the deep, old Turkish history (*Ibid.*, 252-57).³⁰⁶

³⁰⁶ For instance, Tekinalp states that the Turks never in their history reserved any space for religion in public affairs. They had always been indifferent to religion; but at the same time tolerant toward the people that came under their control (and their practicing their religion). Thus, according to him, the Republican elite were not doing anything contrary to the ancient spirit of the Turks when they undertook the secularization reforms (*Ibid.*, 255).

Through demonstrating the “deep” history of Turks, and through linking this ‘rediscovered’ past to the present, the elite also aimed at solidifying the “fact” that Turks were an “organic” nation. Kutahya deputy Recep Bey:

“Turks are not a made-up, “artificial” nation who take refuge in the shadow of the five, ten centuries behind him. Hence, we are building an eternal state which will realize an ideal that embraces the past as well as the future ages” (*Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 26 April 1933, 1-3).

This new history was accompanied by a new interest in the racial origins of Turks. This was an attempt at “scientifically proving” that the Turks belonged to the “white race”, which in turn was another support for the argument that civilization of the Western world originated with the Turks.

Denizli MP Necip Ali Bey’s speech delivered at the Ankara People’s House reflects this turn to racial origins:

“Other nations wanted to define us as a foreign and enemy nation – belonging to the yellow race, residing in Asia and Europe. [The historical research we have been doing demonstrates that] today nobody in the world can deny that Turks are the real descendants of the ancient, civilizing, brachycephalic race” (*Ayin Tarihi*, 1934, No.3, 24).

The element of race was one topic that was central to presentations at the Turkish History Congresses. Scientific research, coming up with evidence to prove that Turks belonged to the white race was the common thread to almost all papers. This attempt in conducting archeological, anthropological and ethnographic studies on the Turkish race was perceived as an imperative to demonstrate the true history of Turks to the world. By corollary, the “scientific evidence” would also show the world the true history of civilization.

An Anthropology professor from Istanbul University, Sevkett Aziz Bey, who gave a talk at the First Turkish History Congress alluded to the studies done by Western scholars on Turkish history. These works, he acknowledged, were important. However, they were not without their faults “because these Western works do not classify Turks as a white race. ... We do not have any relationship to the yellow race” (*Birinci Turk Tarih Kongresi* [First Turkish History Congress,

1933], 48-9). According to him, the Turkish race was defined as one of the most beautiful examples of the white race since Turks were “tall, with long and white faces; straight or Roman noses, regular lips, often with blue and without slanting eyes” (*Ibid.*, 159). Hence, it was required for the Turks to write their own history; and reveal the ‘truth’ to the rest of the world (*Ibid.*, 49).³⁰⁷

The efforts to scientifically demonstrate that Turks did belong to the white race can also be seen looking at the papers delivered at the Second Turkish History Congress. Two such presentations focused on the “evidence” gathered from blood types and fingerprints. First was Professor Sadi Irmak³⁰⁸. His results were based on his research conducted on 400 individuals belonging to various nomad groups in Anatolia. According to Irmak his study clearly demonstrated that “our nation diverges from the Asian nations and manifest similarities to the northern European nations” (*İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi* [Second Turkish History Congress], 1937: 841-45).³⁰⁹

The history thesis which was developed essentially during the First and Second History Congresses was heavily criticized in the following decades.³¹⁰ However, even in the 1930s there were disagreements and divisions among scholars. For instance, during the First Congress the renowned historian Fuat Koprulu, and Zeki Velidi Togan remained in opposition as to the validity and scientific nature of the studies. Both, and especially the former, were concerned about the methodologies used in these studies. They also pointed out significant deficiencies, which would result from such methodologies (Ersanli, 2003: 189-231).

³⁰⁷ Tekinalp was another scholar who included the physical features of the Turks in an attempt to demonstrate that they belonged not to the yellow Mongol race. Citing the works of Western scholars as well as ancient Arabic, Chinese sources, Tekinalp concluded that Turks were “tall, with pinkish complexion, beautiful faces” etc. ([1936] 1998: 145-49).

³⁰⁸ Sadi Irmak (1904, Seydisehir - 1990): Professor of Medicine, and statesman. After studying law for a while he went to Berlin and completed studies in medicine and biology. On his return to Turkey he worked as a teacher. In 1939 Irmak was promoted to professorship at Istanbul University. He joined the GNA in 1943. During 1945-48 he worked as the Minister of Labor. He also was the Prime Minister between 1974 and 1975.

³⁰⁹ Professor Nureddin Onur presented a paper along the same lines. His work focused on blood types. After stating that “the origins of the white race is A blood type; and the origin of the colored race is B blood type”, he went on to prove that Turks belonged to the first category (*Ibid.*, 849-51).

³¹⁰ See Ersanli (2002) for a discussion of the main criticisms, which came after the Kemalist era.

When we look at the Second Congress we see that these “dissident” voices were silenced. As Ersanli notes “the most significant difference between the First and Second Congress is the disappearance of the limited discussion grounds [which was there during the First Congress]” (Ersanli, 2002: 808).³¹¹ Hence, both the institution itself, and the congresses became venues for self-congratulation of the nationalist elite as well as legitimization grounds rather than being platforms of academic research and debate (Copeaux, 1998: 47-8).

VI. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I demonstrated how the aims and content of education policies shifted throughout the Kemalist era. Thus, despite the existing literature’s overemphasis on Westernization, secularization and the creation of a skilled labor force, the debates and policies reflect that there were other, equally significant, elements that the elite was concerned about. “Catching up with the West” and “being like them” was certainly part of their preoccupation. However, this was not the sole element that determined the content of the debates, and the direction of policies. Neither was there a wholehearted embrace of all things Western. Rather, the outlook on the West was of a guarded nature. Similarly the stress placed on secularization in most of the contemporary analyses on the Kemalist era should be qualified. As argued above, the Republican elite did not completely pushed religion and religious education aside. Rather, they tried to control and define its boundaries and its content.

For the Republican elite education was a tool to maintain support for the regime and the RPP (which became significant in the 1930s), a tool for social control and assimilation as well as a mechanism through which a sense of belonging could be inculcated. In achieving these goals, linguistic and cultural

³¹¹ Ersanli argues that the absence of criticisms at the Second Congress could be seen as a result of the presenters’ lack of grasp of the historical sciences. This was so since “some of the people who attended and directed the history congress were not even historians. For example, H. Cemil Cambel was a soldier; and Semsedding Gunaltay a politician by occupation” (Ersan, 2003: 225-26).

elements of the new nation were stressed. Moreover, and in contrast to the studies which argue that an ethnic understanding of the Turkish nation had been present from the very inception of the Republic, a closer look at education policies illustrate that the ethnic element only appears during the 1930s, and in the area of history writing. More importantly, the rewriting of history was an attempt to regain a sense of self-confidence, and dignity which had been destroyed with the demise of the Ottoman Empire.

Throughout the period under analysis, the content and direction of educational policies were defined and redefined. First, during the early years of the GNA education was seen by the elite as one of the mechanisms through which national unity could be established (through the control of the system in general, and minority and foreign schools in particular). Second and starting in the second half of 1920s, the elite also saw education policies as a tool to achieve assimilation of non-Muslim groups into Turkish culture. Third, and in the 1930s, education policies were shaped with the aim to inculcate and strengthen the ideological bases of their regime.

Finally, these shifts were also tied to shifts in content and direction of educational policies were also tied to how the elite understood the (contents) of nationhood. Starting off with an understanding of nationhood along religious lines there then was a switch to an assimilationist understanding –to which an ethnic component was added in the 1930s. During this process religion and its role in education (as well as in history) was reinterpreted. As mentioned above, the state did not dismiss the significance of moral/religious education of its citizens. Rather, the role of administering and defining the contents of this education was taken on by the state itself. As Parla and Davison put it, “Kemalists established (not disestablished) a modern, nationalized version of pristine Islam, combined with the accompanying sources of civic religion based on the national characterological virtues of the pre-Ottoman Turkish national culture, that is, the old central Asian ones” (2008: 67). Thus, the state “promoted Islam as a social morality system that is, along with nationalism, also functional in providing the social cement to bind the community together” (*Ibid.*, 70).

Chapter 8– Citizenship and Building the Nation

I. Introduction

This chapter looks into the determinants of citizenship and nationality during the Kemalist era. In line with previous chapters, the focus is on the political elite and how they conceived citizenship and nationality. As discussed in the previous chapters, education and language policies were reflective of how the elite defined the content of the new nation. Similarly and naturally, issues of nationality and citizenship were at the center of the process of building the nation, and determining the rules of belonging.

Defining citizenship is first and foremost about creating a link between the individual and the state through which rights and obligations for both parties are legally formulated. Citizenship is also an identity. In this latter meaning, the definition of citizenship is directly linked to nationhood, and membership to the nation. Thus, “debates about citizenship, in the age of the nation-state [and, during the process of nation-building] are debates about nationhood – about what it means, and what it ought to mean, to belong to a nation-state” (Brubaker, 1990: 380).

a. A Brief Overview of Citizenship and Nationhood Literature

In his classic work on the development of citizenship in England, T. H. Marshall tells us about the conditions under which three different types of citizenship (civil, political, and eventually social) evolved over time. Marshall situates these developments within a context of conflicts between social groups and social institutions; and further ties them in with the forces of capitalism. Within his framework, the evolution of citizenship tells us not only the story of the emergence of equal rights and freedoms for all but also the story of gaining “real membership of a real community” – which is a national community

(Marshall, 1950). Thus, Marshall holds that “coterminous with the birth of civil rights in the 18th century and the development of national institutions is a modern national consciousness” (quoted in Barbalet, 1988: 89).

Although acknowledging the weight of his arguments, recent literature on citizenship remains critical to Marshall’s account for various reasons.³¹² Citizenship and the different forms it had historically taken are explained from a variety of perspectives. Turner, for example, approaches the development of citizenship as the “unintended consequence of social struggles and political violence” (2000: 36). Hence, warfare, migration, civil wars all contributed to the development of citizenship through setting in motion the forces of modernization (Turner, 1986). Differently put, “whatever forces push modernization forward also develop and expand citizenship” (1993: 12). Religion also enters his model especially as a determinant of the specific type of citizenship which would emerge out of the above conflicts (Turner, 2000).

Looking at a number of cases (including Prussia, Russia, Britain and the United States), Mann’s discussion of the emergence and extension of citizenship rights suggests that the process was linked to the geopolitical contexts (especially warfare) in which countries were situated. Yet, on themselves geopolitical events were not sufficient to bring about change. Rather, and more importantly, the process of the development of (political, civil and social) citizenship was also tied to “ruling class strategies” – strategies dealing with the existing and rising classes and their demands; and the cohesion (or its lack thereof) of the ruling class itself (Mann, 1987). In his account these variables acting together account not only for the emergence of citizenship but also for the timing of the development of different citizenship types (i.e. civil, social, political, and economic).

Other analyses, for example Tilly’s historical account, primarily look at the changes in the military sphere and its impact on the emergence of citizenship. In Tilly’s model, the rise of citizenship was one of the end results of the expanding military activity and all the consequent forces which were put into

³¹² For some of these recent works which criticize Marshall’s scheme, see Mann (1987; 1993); Barbalet (1988); Roche (1987); Somers (1993; 1998); Turner (1990; 1993); and Giddens (1982).

motion as a result of it. The increase in military activity, professionalization of armies, their expansion in size, changes in military technology and the rising costs associated with these changes were mostly shouldered by ordinary people. However, they were not shouldered without a fight. On the contrary:

“Both ordinary people and their patrons fought war-impelled taxation, conscription, seizures of goods and restrictions on trade by means ranging from passive resistance to outright rebellion ... The very acts of intervening, repressing, persuading and bargaining formed willy-nilly the institutions of direct rule. Out of struggle emerged citizenship” (Tilly, 1995a: 230).

Thus, the rise of citizenship was ultimately connected to the pressures ensuing from the changes at the military sphere and at the level of the state – and also shaped by the conflicts between different groups in society.³¹³

One significant effort in trying to present a comparative analysis which ties citizenship, nations and nationhood together comes from Brubaker. His comparison of France and Germany suggests two different conceptions of nationhood; and as a result, two different definitions of citizenship. France is an example of a nation that had been formed after the state formation was complete. The elaboration of the idea of nationhood was carried through by the bourgeois stratum of society; and the emergent understanding of the nation was one where citizenship (defined mainly along territorial lines) became the central determinant of belonging (Brubaker, 1990; 1992). As Schnapper notes, “more than in any other country, the model of integration “in the French way” is founded on the idea and the value of the individual citizenship, on the formal, juridical and political equality of the citizen-individual” (Schnapper, 1998: 51). The harmonization of the relationship between the citizen and the nation first emerged in August 1789. It was then that the “nation became an encompassing entity and a source of deep unity and equity. “Citizen” came to be invested with its connotations of equality and fraternity” (Fitzsimmons, 1993: 32).

³¹³ Also see Downing (1988); and Janowitz (1976) for two accounts which pay considerable attention to war-making in general, and the relationship between the organization of the military and citizenship in particular.

France eventually came to exemplify a case where citizenship ruled over nationality; and thus where – as Tallien put it, “the only foreigners ... are the bad citizens” (quoted in Brubaker, 1990: 389). Under the 1889 Law, all persons born in France were defined as French citizens. The inclusive nature of citizenship was in line with the civic definition of the nation. According to Brubaker, the reasons underlying this particular understanding of nationhood and citizenship cannot be explained by the demands of the military for more soldiers. Nor was it a result of any demographic interests (i.e. population increase) on the part of the French state. Rather, it was a political necessity. More specifically,

“It was a response, first, to the ‘shocking inequality’ that exempted even French-born foreigners from military service while Frenchmen had to serve up to five years. ... Secondly, the civic incorporation of second-generation immigrants was a response to the incipient development of ‘different nations within the French nation’³¹⁴ (*Ibid.*, 395).

These political concerns – coupled with the confidence of the political elite in their ability to assimilate foreigners into French soldiers and citizens – led the way to a predominantly inclusive and political understanding of the nation and rules of belonging (*Ibid.*, 395).

Contrast this to the German case: the creation of the nation preceded that of the state; and arose out of the tensions between two different (i.e. Prussian and German) traditions. The German nation was a case where an ethnocultural definition of nationhood prevailed (Brubaker, 1992). This specific understanding of nationhood, and the underlying distinction between nation and state found its manifestation in the citizenship Law of 1913, which was defined solely along descent lines. Moreover, the political elite wasted no time debating any alternative definitions. For them, creating a citizen body along French lines (i.e. taking *jus soli* as the central principle) was out of the question.³¹⁵

³¹⁴ More specifically, it was the possibility of a foreign domination in Algeria, and the threat of a strengthening Italian presence in Southern France that determined the political elite’s policy direction (*Ibid.*, 395).

³¹⁵ Brubaker differentiates between two camps to which the political elite belonged: those who advocated a strictly ethno-nationalist perspective versus those who supported a statist perspective. However, both groups shared the conviction that a definition along *jus soli* lines was neither

Two main determinants of the German tradition of nationhood were the Romantic movement, and the “distinctive political and cultural geography of central Europe”. The former celebrated the *Volkgeist* as the constitutive element of the nation. The state in turn was expressive of nationhood (Brubaker, 1992). The latter determinant, the distinctive political and cultural geography, should be understood in conjunction with the demographic changes at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. German nation was shaped in the face of an increasing economic need for immigrants (in addition to the already present non-German population). A citizenship law along descent lines was the only one which would (and did) give the power and freedom to the state to control this non-German (and especially Polish) population.

A third variable explaining the particular crystallization of citizenship and the nation was the previous (state-centered and assimilationist) policies and especially their failure in assimilating Poles. Given this historical failure, the German elite did not possess the confidence which their French counterparts had, and they consequently redirected their policies toward dissimilationist lines (*Ibid.*, 398).

Similar conceptions of nationhood and citizenship also crystallized in Poland during the years following World War I. Here, differentialist, dissimilationist policies and practices aimed at Jews and Germans mirror Germany’s treatment of Poles. Essentially, “The new Polish state ... was conceived as the state *of* and *for* the ethnolinguistically (and ethnoreligiously) defined Polish nation, in part because it was seen as made *by* this nation against the resistance of Germans, Ukrainians, and Jews” (Brubaker, 1996: 85).³¹⁶ The end result was that Germans were seen as a group who *could* not be assimilated (due to their identification with Germany as opposed to Poland); while Jews *should* not be assimilated (since their loyalty was perceived as suspect). The state of other

desirable nor possible (1992: 122-29). As Brubaker notes: “From a state-national point of view, it is the *strength* of attachment that is decisive ... From an ethnonational point of view, it is the *kind* of attachment that matters” (1992: 126). Either way, *jus soli* was not seen as an option.

³¹⁶ For more on the Jews on Polish lands, also see Fink (2004).

groups such as Ukrainians, and Belarussians were different owing to the concern to keep the Polish territories intact as well as these groups' weak articulation of their identities along nation/nationalist lines. As a consequence, they were deemed to be two groups whose assimilation was desirable, necessary, and possible (*Ibid.*, 88-100).

b. Some General Observations on the Turkish Case

Under the Ottoman Empire, redefining the subjects' relation to the sultan and the Porte was first tried in the 19th century. It was the Citizenship Law of 1869 which marked a turning point. The main underlying force behind the Law was tied to economic concerns. More specifically, the imperial center was concerned that the non-Muslim producers and traders of the Empire were becoming too independent; they were seeking the protection and citizenship of Western countries in order to have economic privileges. The Citizenship Law in turn aimed at "bolster[ing] the powers of the government by delimiting the legal population from the increasing number of foreign residents and their proteges who appealed to international treaties for legal and fiscal immunity" (Salzmann, 1999: 45). Through creating a body of "Ottoman citizens" the imperial center sought to reinforce their economic authority as well as to ensure loyalty toward the Sultan and his administrators. Yet, the challenge of uniting peoples did not succeed.³¹⁷

When the Republican elite retook the challenge of creating the citizenry the definition of citizenship combined territorial and descent based understandings. Moreover, the vertical link which had existed under the Ottomans (between the subject/citizen and the sultan) was also transformed. However, the assumed, yet ideal, convergence of citizenship and nationality under a nation-state (Ra'anan, 1991: 11) did not take place. The sharp division between the rules of belonging to the citizen body and belonging to the nation persisted all throughout the Kemalist era, and became even more manifest in the 1930s. This separation

³¹⁷ See Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of this Law.

revealed itself in design and application of immigration and resettlement policies. As Brubaker points out, “citizenship is a neat category ... Membership in contrast is a messy category” (1989: 15); and the Turkish case certainly illustrates his point.

Different from the experiences of Western European countries, in the Turkish case the definition and extension of citizenship did not come along as a result of the demands of different classes or through the political elite’s concerns to contain and regulate class conflicts. Rather, the process was initiated and carried through exclusively by the political elite themselves. During the process the elite not only divided the nation into two bodies (“citizens” versus “true owners of the nation”) but it also demanded full loyalty to the nation and state by all. Furthermore, citizenship was defined as a category where obligations rather than rights of individuals were stressed.

When defining citizenship (as well as Turkishness) the Republican elite were dealing with a population which was relatively homogenous along religious lines, yet heterogenous along ethnic lines. Since the second half of the 19th century, there has been a continuous flow of immigrants into the Ottoman Empire. Crimean Tatars and Circassians coming from Russia as well as Muslims of varying ethnic backgrounds formerly living in the Balkans had made their ways to the interior regions of the Empire. After the Balkan War of 1913, immigration from this area reached its peak. “At this time Macedonia and Thrace, inhabited by approximately 1.5 million Muslims were lost to Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria (Karpas, 1985: 75). These movements continued (although not at the same magnitude) all throughout the Kemalist era. As well, the movements initiated a number of policies (both immigration and settlement) which manifest how the Republican elite perceived the integration of these different groups into the nation.

When we redirect our attention to immigration laws and practices, and cases of naturalization and denaturalization, the Turkish case presents a challenge to the existing literature. The widely held assumption in the literature is that if a country has inclusive citizenship rights, the same inclusive understanding would

also be found in its immigration laws (e.g. France). Conversely, exclusive, strictly descent-based citizenship laws would go hand in hand with exclusionary immigration (and naturalization) laws and policies (e.g. Germany until recently) (Brubaker, 1989; 1990). In the case of Turkey we see that the Citizenship Law of 1928 was an inclusive one. So was the definition of Turkishness as it was phrased in the 1924 Constitution. Yet, those who would be allowed into the country as immigrants were (covertly or overtly) defined according to the desirability (or undesirability) of the group to which they belonged. The criterion of desirability in turn was determined along religious and/or ethnic origins. In the final analysis, despite the inclusive character of Turkishness (as stated by law), and a relatively expansive understanding of citizenship, immigration laws remained exclusionary.

All throughout the Kemalist era repopulating the country was an important goal for the elite.³¹⁸ Hence, they were sympathetic to allowing individuals in for purposes of economic revitalization.³¹⁹ As well, immigration was also perceived as desirable since the individuals coming in were mostly from the former Ottoman lands which had fallen into the hands of the 'infidel'. These lands were places where 'we had been the masters for centuries'. Consequently, the elite perceived it as their duty to 'save these individuals from becoming slaves on the same lands where they had been masters for centuries'. In this way immigration was also tied to a sense of moral obligation felt by the elite. When these elements were also coupled with the need to repopulate the new nation – a relatively 'liberal' approach to immigration emerged in the sense that the borders were kept open. However, still, there was a clear understanding that not anybody would be a desirable candidate.

In sum, the Kemalist regime took on the task of reinventing and redefining the rules of belonging. This was done with a backdrop of the Ottoman legacy (i.e. the millet system), and an ethnically (and to a lesser extent religiously) heterogeneous population. One aspect of this process of redefinition was extending

³¹⁸ Total population figures were: 16,699,185 in 1914; 13,629,488 in 1927; 16,157,450 in 1935; and up to 18,790,174 by 1945 (Bali, 1999: 561).

³¹⁹ This is different from the French case discussed above: According to Brubaker, in the French case it was not demographic or military concerns, but political considerations that had shaped their immigration laws and policies.

citizenship to all. The second aspect was the creation of a hierarchy of belonging: non-Muslims versus Muslims; and Turks versus Arabs, Circassians etc. (and eventually Turks versus Kurds). These two aspects that emerged from the process of defining citizenship and nationality fully crystallized in the 1930s.

Moreover, the process of redefinition of different communities as well as forming a cohesive, national unit out of them entailed a combination of assimilationist and dissimilationist rhetoric and policies. Different from some of the European and East European cases discussed in the literature (Brubaker, 1996), in the Turkish case these two different forms of rhetoric and policy did not follow a consistent pattern. Neither were the assimilation and dissimilationist policies were applied in a mutually exclusive fashion with regards to different ethnic and religious communities.

The assimilationist approach of the political elite, especially during the second half of the 1920s and 1930s, was informed by the memory of the Ottoman policies; and was shaped in opposition to it. Furthermore, the elite was more confident in trying to assimilate the Muslim, non-Turkish groups (versus non-Muslim groups). Despite this, there also was a ranking in their minds with regards to which Muslim groups would be easier to assimilate. This ranking in turn was shaped by the real and perceived activities of these groups under the Ottoman Empire.

While assimilationist policies and rhetoric characterized the elite's approach toward Muslim-non-Turkish groups, non-Muslim groups faced a different reality. The latter was concurrently subjected to assimilationist and dissimilationist policies. For some groups, such as the Armenians, the elite's rhetoric and actions were clearly dissimilationist. On the other hand, and in the case of the Jewish community, while the rhetoric of the elite remained mostly assimilationist, their actions were differentialist in nature.

Finally, a note should be added about the literature on Turkey. Until recently Turkish scholars largely remained uncritical to Kemalist regime's goals and policies. When this outlook was extended to a discussion of minorities, immigration, citizenship and nationality issues, the literature have traditionally

depicted an inclusive and even liberal understanding of the nation (Kili, 1994). More recently, scholars have also addressed the exclusionary practices of the regime with an accompanying emphasis placed on an ethnic, organicist understanding of nationhood (Parla, 1991992; 1992a). These latter works tend to explain the exclusionary practices through their incumbency upon the regime type (i.e. authoritarian); as the doings of one person (i.e. Mustafa Kemal); or as a result of the unique context (i.e. War of Independence) the country was in.

Below discussion will demonstrate that the rhetoric and policies under analysis cannot be explained away by the regime type. Differently put, it was not because of the authoritarian character of the regime, but because of their failure to assimilate the population that the elite resorted to increasingly aggressive, and exclusionary practices. It will be argued that their discussions and policies manifest that there was not one, but multiple variables (i.e. economic, ideological, political and geopolitical) at play. Moreover, at different time periods, some of these factors acquired more significance compared to others.

c. Chapter Outline

What follows is a discussion of the creation of Turkish citizenry as well as the formulation of immigration policies. In doing this, I will describe and analyze the processes in a chronological fashion. Accordingly, the first section will deal with the debates that took place during the early years of the GNA (1920-23). These discussions mostly pertained to the state of non-Muslim communities. The specific nature and content of these discussions were shaped by the geopolitical context of the time. Leaving the Ottoman policies behind was another determinant. Finally, deliberations on the rules of belonging were intertwined with the issue of redefining who would hold economic and political power in the country.

The second period (1924-1929) was a period of major domestic transformations. It was during this time that the 1924 constitution and the 1928

Citizenship Law were ratified. As well, these years were characterized by a stress on creating a “westernized/civilized” citizenry.

Finally, the 1930s was when the state accelerated its effort to monitor and assimilate the recent immigrants as well as some of the existing populations (especially the Kurds). These efforts were embodied in the Settlement Law of 1934 through which the elite sought to exert their control over specific populations through delineating geographical spaces.

II. Minorities and Issues of Belonging (1920-1923)

The official definition of minorities in present time Turkey is based on the Lausanne Treaty (1923). With the signing of the Treaty all non-Muslim citizens of the Republic³²⁰ – that is, the Greek Orthodox,³²¹ Armenians, and Jews – were officially defined as minorities (Oran, 2004).

During the first few years following the opening of the GNA, the actions, perceptions and attitudes of the political elite towards minority groups were shaped by four major elements: First, there was the ongoing negotiations process in Lausanne. Second was the experience of the War of Independence. These two experiences/processes made up the geopolitical and territorial dimensions which shaped the elite’s rhetoric and reactions.

Third, members of Parliament consistently referred to the Ottoman past, and the need to distance themselves away from the imperial policies on (religious and ethnic) minorities. Hence, the imperative of imperial exit was another factor shaping the nature of their rhetoric. The attempt to achieve and legitimate imperial exit was also connected to the conception that the “true owners” of the

³²⁰ The Treaty considered minorities primarily as individual citizens of the Republic; and so “communal membership remained secondary in deciding the legal status of the non-Muslim peoples” (Soner, 2005: 294). It should also be pointed out that shortly after the signing of the Treaty, non-Muslim minorities in Turkey were “encouraged” by the government to opt out of the articles on minorities, and thus forfeit their rights. The first non-Muslim group to do this would be the Jewish community in September 15, 1925 (Aktar, 2000c). This was followed by Armenians (17 October, 1925) and Greeks (29 October 1925) renouncing their privileges (Levi, 1996: 31). For a detailed discussion of the Treaty’s minority section see Soner (2005), and Oran (2004).

³²¹ Oran reminds us that other Christian communities that lived in Turkey were also covered under the Lausanne Treaty. Yet the Republican regime did not recognize them as minorities (2004: 67).

nation (i.e. Turks) had suffered under the Empire. The attempt to regain their 'well-deserved' place in the nation created 'outsiders' and minorities. In this last sense, the Turkish case also fits in with Brubaker's depiction of "nationalizing nationalisms" (Brubaker, 1996).³²²

The fourth element was the restructuring of the economic sphere through a transfer of power from non-Muslim to Muslim-Turkish groups. This goal manifested how the Republican elite envisioned the exact place of minorities within the Turkish nation. All of these four elements were important in defining who was going to be part of the new nation

a. Talks in Lausanne and the non-Muslim Minorities in Turkey

During the talks in Lausanne the Allied Powers were of the opinion that the Turkish state should grant privileges to minorities - akin to those that had existed under the Ottomans. Moreover, the Powers' proposed definition of minority groups initially included not only non-Muslims, but also Muslims who adhered to non-Sunni denominations of Islam.³²³ However, Turkish delegates were adamant in opposing any proposals, which could potentially replicate the Ottoman *millet* system. The possibility of such replication was perceived as potentially divisive and hence highly threatening to national sovereignty and unity.

The proposal to incorporate non-Sunni Muslims within the definition of minorities was also rejected. Riza Nur, who was one of the delegates in Lausanne, wrote about the negotiations in his memoirs:

³²² Brubaker defines "nationalizing" nationalisms as cases where "the core nation is understood as the legitimate "owner" of the nation. Despite having "its own state, the core nation is conceived as being in weak cultural, economic or demographic position within the state. This weak position – seen as a legacy of discrimination against the nation before it attained independence – is held to justify the "remedial" or "compensatory" project of using state power to promote specific ... interests of the core nation" (1996: 5).

³²³ In 1912 the Christian community in Turkey was around 20% of the population. This number declined to 2.64% by 1927 (McCarthy, 1983a). For example, the Armenian population was a mere 77,433 in 1927 (Keyder, 1993: 27). In 1935 the majority of the population (98%) was Muslims where Kurds (following the Turks) were the second biggest group composing 9% of the population (Cagaptay, 2006a).

“Westerners think that we have three kinds of minorities: ethnic minorities, linguistic minorities, and religious minorities. This is a great threat for us. ... [By defining minorities along] ethnic lines, they will put the Circassians, Bosnians, Kurds etc. side by side with the Greeks and Armenians. By language, they will make those Muslims who speak different languages minorities. By religion, they will make two million *kizilbas* [Alevi]³²⁴ who are real Turks, minorities. Hence, they want to divide us” (Nur, Vol. 2, 1992: 259-60).³²⁵

As Nur stated, the priority of the Ankara government at the time was to establish a basis of territorial and national unity. His understanding of what a minority was or should be was clearly based on religion. Talks in Lausanne also crystallized in this particular direction. In the finalized version of the clause, the central variable used for the definition of minorities was not language; nor was it ethnicity. Rather, it was the non-Muslim groups which were recognized as minorities (Oran, 2004: 62).

The activities of different minority groups and the alliances they had formed during the War of Independence were significant factors shaping the elite's attitudes. The Greek Orthodox community and Armenians were especially singled out as having been ungrateful to the Ottomans and their tolerance. Accordingly they were portrayed as a group of traitors. Mustafa Kemal's speech at the Adana Turkish Hearth³²⁶ was strong in its denunciation of the Armenians: “In this blessed country Armenians have no rights at all. The country is yours, it belongs to Turks” (ASD, Vol. II, 1997: 130).³²⁷

This singling out of Christian minorities in the country was also tied to how the War of Independence itself was perceived. 1920-1923 was the period when the Ankara government was preoccupied with demarcating national

³²⁴ Alevi ethnically belong to the same group as the founders of the Ottoman state; and they are the Shi'ite minority in Turkey. Linguistically the majority of Alevi speak Turkish. However, there are also smaller communities where Kurdish, Arabic and Azerbaijani-Turkish are spoken (Oran, 2004: 56).

³²⁵ Also see his speech explaining the negotiations 2.3.1339/1923, 4-8 (T.B.M.M. Gizli Celse Zabıtları, 1920-1924 [Secret Minutes of the Closed Sessions of the Grand National Assembly]).

³²⁶ The speech was delivered on 6 March 1923.

³²⁷ Anti-Armenian sentiments were also due to the activities of nationalist Armenian groups. For example, in the aftermath of World War I the assassination of some of the prominent Ottoman leaders by Armenian nationalists had caused reactions against this group (Mango, 1999a).

territories. The fight was against the capitulations as well as the dividing up the territories in the hands of the Allied Powers.

Given this set of external, geopolitical context (and pressures which ensued) anti-Western and anti-Christian sentiments were often and very strongly expressed by the political elite. The territorial and economic control possessed by the Allied Powers was seen as an imperialist and capitalist attack on the country. In addition, and more markedly, these developments were named a Crusade –an attack waged against the office of the sultanate (the House of Osman, which was still the representative of all Muslims). Consequently, and as put by Mustafa Lutfi Bey, the goal of the GNA was first and foremost to “...save the abode of caliphate, save Istanbul from the hands of enemies...” (ZC, 10.7.1336/1920; 228). The Western world (or Europe as it often was referred to) represented a “...body which was working for the annihilation of Islam. Europe’s direct attack is against Islam” (ZC, 3.6.1338/1922; 137).

As well, Western Powers were seen as conspirators who were trying to weaken the nation on the pretext of protecting minority rights. Put differently, the issue of minorities was defined as part of “... the struggle between Muslims and Christians” (ZC, 3.1.1339/1922, 170). Consequently, the cause of all internal tensions was attributed to external sources (i.e. Western powers). Many deputies expressed that the disagreements taking place over the definition of minority rights during Lausanne sessions were due to Western powers’, and more significantly Britain’s, insistence in protecting their own interests. It was thought that, under the guise of equality for all, the West was trying to push Christian groups into a more privileged position. Further, these efforts were seen as a testimony that the West was still waging a war against Muslims. The desired end result was the weakening of Turkey – a Muslim country – through destroying its national unity.³²⁸

³²⁸ For other examples reiterating the same argument, see ZC, 3.1.1339/1923, 167; 177-178 as well as ZC, 4.1.1339/1923, 179; 181.

In criticizing the proposed clause on minorities, Sirri Bey underlined that "... [F]or sure minority means Muslims and Christians in our country" (ZC, 3.1.1339/1923: 157). Moreover, he clearly ruled out a definition of minorities on the basis of ethnicity. This understanding was also extended to the "Mosul problem": since Mosul was populated mainly by Muslim elements, it was only natural that it should be part of the Republic; and that there was to be no preferential treatment of Muslims based on their sects (*Ibid.*, 157).³²⁹

This reactionary stance towards Christian groups was not immediately extended to the Jewish community. Jews were seen as a group which was possible to "maneuver" and consequently, were not perceived as a threat to national unity. When Riza Nur addressed the GNA to inform them about the negotiations in Lausanne, he did not mince his words:

"[referring to the population exchange with Greece] Minorities will not remain here. With the exception of Istanbul³³⁰... [Voices from the floor: "Armenians?"]. But my dear friends, how many Armenians are there? [Voices from the floor: "The Jews?"]. There are about 30,000 Jews in Istanbul. *They have not caused any trouble so far* [Noises from the floor]. *You know the Jews: they would go in whichever way they are pulled. Of course, it would be better if they were not here*"³³¹ (2.3.1339/1923, 8, *T.B.M.M. Gizli Celse Zabıtları*, 1920-1924 [Secret Minutes of the Closed Sessions of the Grand National Assembly]).

It is clear that the political elite had an exclusionary attitude toward all non-Muslims, including the Jewish. However, it was always Armenians and Greeks who were the direct and immediate targets of such an approach. Despite his overtly racist attitude toward everyone except Turks, Riza Nur made it clear that as long as a non-Muslim group seemed docile enough (and eager to assimilate), their presence could potentially be tolerated. Since Jews were perceived to be such a group, there was no need to 'take action'. Greeks and

³²⁹ During the same session Bitlis deputy Yusuf Ziya Bey also echoed these sentiments in relation to minorities in general, and Kurds in particular (ZC, 3.1.1339/1923, 166).

³³⁰ Also, Turkish delegation in Lausanne initially argued for the exchange of all Greek orthodox population residing in Turkey (including those in Istanbul). For more on their position on minorities see *T.B.M.M. Gizli Celse Zabıtları*, 1920-1924 [Secret Minutes of the Closed Sessions of the Grand National Assembly], Vol. 3, 1.1.1338/1922: 1172-1173.

³³¹ My emphasis.

Armenians, on the other hand, were clearly the “outsiders”; and according to a common sentiment as expressed by Niyazi Bey

“A government which would allow Greeks and Armenians into this country is a government which would be loathed as a whole” (18.2.1941/1925, 509 (T.B.M.M. Gizli Celse Zabıtları, 1920-1924 [Secret Minutes of the Closed Sessions of the Grand National Assembly]).

Hence, the (initial) definition of the boundaries of belonging was first and foremost determined as a reaction to external, geopolitical affairs; and was religious in content. The Ankara government was trying to make it understood that it was them (the Turks) and not the external powers who would define what a minority group was. So, it was national sovereignty and the legitimacy of their power in the eyes of the outside world which became one of elite’s preoccupations and a determinant of their actions. For example, the population exchange between Greece and Turkey was considered a desirable solution since lowering the number of non-Muslims in the country would also translate into lowering the risk of Western interference in its internal affairs.³³²

b. Who is going to Hold Political and Economic Power? Religion and the Issue of Non-Muslim Minorities

Resentment and contempt for Christian groups were also voiced in relation to these groups’ economic power. Earlier, the weak economic presence of a Muslim bourgeoisie and the ways to rectify this situation had been a theme discussed by the Young Turks and the members of the CUP government (Ahmad, 1996).³³³ Now, the new elite were similarly making references to the need to

³³² The same conclusion is also reached by Aktar (2000b). According to Aktar it was not the possibility of tensions arising between these two communities (if they were to live side by side), but the possibility of interference from outside that drove the political elite in accepting the exchange as a solution.

³³³ However, at the time the efforts of the CUP did not lead to any significant changes. This was due to the continuing presence of capitulations. It was only after the First World War that capitulations were abolished, and slowly, the Muslim capital started to acquire some strength (Keyder, 1993: 11-12).

strengthen the Turkish/Muslim bourgeoisie.³³⁴ In addition, the issue was conceived as a zero-sum game: It was thought that the strengthening of a Turkish/Muslim bourgeoisie could not take place unless the economic power of the non-Muslim elements was significantly curtailed. The justification for this argument revolved around the disloyalty of non-Muslim groups – especially during the War of Independence. More specifically, it was argued that they were, and had always been, faithful followers of (Western) European countries, pursuing their own (economic as well as national) interests.³³⁵ It was also thought that given the opportunity they would use their wealth to pursue their own interests as opposed to being concerned and interested in increasing the welfare of Turkish society and economy.

One lively session in the GNA took place on 18 November 1920 during a discussion on the criteria of deputy (s)elections. Here, the debate focused on the issue of whether deputies should be selected such that they would represent the main occupational groups in the country. The concern was on securing a fair representation for each group. Within this context the question of (Christian) minorities was inevitably raised since under the Ottomans non-Muslim groups had considerable economic power as well as a more visible presence in certain occupations. Accordingly, concerns were raised as to whether a system of selection on the basis of occupational groups would jeopardize a fair representation of Muslims. Mahmut Esat Bey's³³⁶ reply to these concerns

³³⁴ One significant change was the state claiming the properties left behind by the Armenians and Greeks who had left the country between 1914 and 1920. Prior to the CUP era Armenians and Greeks had acquired a near monopoly in trade and industry. For instance, towards the end of the First World War, in Izmir Greeks owned 344 businesses operating in the industrial sector (out of a total of 391) (Keyder, 1993: 28). As stressed by Keyder, claiming these properties helped the emergence of a Muslim bourgeoisie (*Ibid.*, 26).

³³⁵ As mentioned above, the Turkish delegation in Lausanne initially proposed the population exchange of all Greeks in Turkey. Armenians were also discussed in this context. As Ismail Suphi Bey mentioned in his address in the GNA, one of the reasons for this all-inclusive population exchange was economic: "As you all know it is the Greeks and Armenians in Istanbul who are the tradesmen. Once the Greeks are gone ... the factories are going to be passed onto Armenians. ... It is the Armenians who are going to benefit. It is because of this that no Armenian or Greek should be allowed to stay" (25.12.1338/1922: 1155, Vol. 3, *T.B.M.M. Gizli Celse Zabıtları*, 1920-1924 [Secret Minutes of the Closed Sessions of the Grand National Assembly]).

³³⁶ Mahmut Esat Bozkurt (1892, Kusadasi -1943) was one of the most unswerving supporters of Kemalist reforms and an important ideologue of the regime. He was influential in shaping the new legal system of the Republic. Bozkurt was born into a family of farmers and merchants. After he

reflected the dominant view. After pointing out that Muslims would be present in all occupational groups, he continued:

“... [T]hose who fear that we will let Christians into the Assembly is groundless. ... There are no threats here gentlemen. ... May be in the Ottoman Assembly it would have been wrong to say something against Christians. ... They [Christians] resigned from the citizenship of this nation; and they resigned through treason and pulling up arms. They are the ungrateful children of the Ottoman history and do not have any rights left in this country. In a country which is trying to defend its own rights they are spies of imperialism and ungrateful children of this nation. They do not have any business in this Assembly, gentlemen” (ZC, 18.11.1336/1920, 390).

Christian groups were thus defined as outsiders due to their (perceived or real) alliance against the Ottomans and also against the new Turkish nation. According to the elite, the Ottoman tolerance and all the privileges that had been extended to them under the Empire were abused by them. On that account, it was thought only natural that they should be excluded from having any voice in the country.³³⁷ Differently put, the political incorporation of non-Muslim groups or their members into the Assembly was rejected.³³⁸ Political power had to be monopolized by the Turkish (Muslim) elements. As well, and associated with this, economic power of the non-Muslims also would not be allowed to translate into political power.

studied law at the University of Istanbul, he went to Switzerland to do his doctoral studies. He came back to Turkey following the Greek occupation of Izmir and joined the national resistance movement. He served in the GNA from 1920 up until his death in 1943 during which time he held various ministerial positions. When he was working as the Ministry of Economy, he advocated the building of a national economy based on Turkish entrepreneurship as well as the establishment of a mixed economy. He also gave lectures at the Ankara Law Faculty, and wrote a number of books the most famous of which is the *Ataturk Revolution* (1940).

³³⁷ This same point was echoed two years later by Rauf Bey as well as other deputies who addressed the GNA during a discussion on specific clauses of the Lausanne Treaty. For the whole text of this session see ZC, 3.1.1339/1923, 141-171.

³³⁸ It was only in 1935 that for the first time non-Muslim deputies joined the GNA (as independent deputies). Among these were Dr. Nikolas Taptas, Berc Keresteciyan, Istemat Zihni, and Samuel Abrevaya (Bali, 2004: 164). However, as Bali notes, their inclusion only had a symbolic significance (*Ibid.*, 179). Hilmi Uran, who was the Minister of Public Works in 1935, mentions the entrance of non-Muslims into the GNA as a step initiated by Inonu. He writes: “As a result, it was thought that Berc Turker would represent the Armenians, Ozdamar would represent Turkish Orthodox population which was headed by Papa Eftim, Dr. Taptas would represent the main Greek body, and Abrevaya the Jewish [community]” (quoted in Bali, 2004: 180).

The link between non-Muslim communities and economic power came up again when the GNA was deliberating a bill on the public bidding for the (re)construction of houses, which had been damaged during the War of Independence. It was decided that the construction firms would have tax exemptions up to 10 years. This in turn raised the question of the involvement of non-Muslim firms in these projects. Saruhan deputy (Huseyin) Vasif (Cinar) Bey expressed his concerns:

“... [U]nfortunately the population exchange treaty could not banish the Greeks. As well, there are the Jews in Izmir who represent a threat for the Turkish economy. ... Today, many civilized countries of the West are enacting laws ... to protect the majority. They are protecting the economic [privileges] of the majority. ... The Greeks and the Jews should not be benefiting from this clause. Without doubt ... Turks have acted faithfully and they exhibited devotion to this homeland, shed their blood ... there are Muslim elements. Undoubtedly, these brothers have the right to benefit from this clause. ... By using the term Turkish [I mean] all those elements who are working for this country with all their soul. However, one should admit that the Greek elements, the Greeks who had been traitors yesterday, do not have the right to live in this political community [and possess] the same rights. Because they betrayed [us]. ...” (ZC, 4.11.1339/1923, 218-19).

Cinar went on to say that he also saw the Jewish elements as a potential threat for the economy (*Ibid.*, 220). Thus, his proposal included the insertion of a clause, which would only exempt Turks from taxation.³³⁹

This viewpoint did raise some disagreements. For example, (Mustafa) Necati (Ugural) Bey was of the opinion that the primary concern should be the reconstruction of the whole nation and providing for the needs of the people (*Ibid.*, 222). As well, Abidin Bey (who was a member of the committee drafting

³³⁹ During this period, it was still the non-Muslim groups as well as foreign investors and businessmen who had the stronghold over exports, manufacturing etc. This state of affairs started to change after the Greek-Turkish population exchange of 1923 and 1924 and as a result of the protectionist policies the state adopted. Those who came to Turkey as a result of the exchange were mainly farmers. In contrast, those who were forced to leave the country were dominantly involved in industrial sector as well as trade; and they lived in urban areas (Aktar, 2000b: 25). The absence of the latter group became very visible after the population exchange. This change also presented an opportunity to remedy the situation through creating a Muslim bourgeoisie. It should also be noted that amidst this change members of the Jewish community were able to acquire or hold on to their strength in the economic sphere in the 1920s and 1930s. This was mainly due to the fact that after most of the Armenian and Greek population had left Turkey, the Jewish community was able to fill the void (Levi, 1996: 17). Consequently, their presence was perceived as a threat to the rising Muslim bourgeoisie.

the law) pointed out that (Huseyin) Vasif (Cinar) Bey's argument was not echoed by the majority of the committee. He also stressed that passing a clause so as to benefit only the Turkish entrepreneurs would be strictly against the Lausanne Treaty. Hence, his reply to Vasif Bey's concerns concentrated on the need to respect the already existing Treaty. He reminded his fellow deputies that

"... [T]here is the law. A Greek can come and reside in Izmir. ... This person will build a house. ... If you analyze the Amnesty Protocol, you will see that we had given them the right to be pardoned. ... Why are we not afraid of them coming to our country and conducting business according to the rights extended by law to minorities, but that we are afraid of our own elements? Gentlemen, we should essentially be afraid of our lack of direction in economic affairs" (ZC, 4.11.1339/1923, 222).

Tunali Hilmi, on the other hand, shared the concerns of (Huseyin) Vasif (Cinar) Bey:

"... Ninety out of a hundred new houses will again be constructed by Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. Fifty out of a hundred will be constructed by Westerners. We will think that poor Turkish people are made homeowners. ... These clauses first of all are written for the rich, secondly, for Armenians, Greeks and Jews. Thirdly, they are designed [in favor of] Western capitalists" (ZC, 4.11.1339/1923, 219).

The above debate is a clear reflection of the elite's outlook and their determination in curtailing any economic benefits that might accrue to non-Muslim minorities. The discussion also sheds light on the issue of who the elite saw as the true owners of the nation. In this particular case the term "owners" clearly referred to Muslim elements –regardless of their ethnic backgrounds.³⁴⁰ Finally, the concerns raised above manifest one of the main characteristics of "nationalizing states" as defined by Brubaker (1996): to reserve key economic positions, and benefits to a particular ethnic, religious, or linguistic group.

The link between who would belong to the nation and the economic sphere came up once again when the Lausanne Treaty was discussed in the GNA:

³⁴⁰ Also see Bali (1999) for other examples of the economic exclusion of non-Muslim groups. Most of these exclusionary practices were not backed by laws. However, in practice they were executed widely.

Rauf Bey: "... [A]s you know, the Allied Powers tried to include linguistic, racial minorities into the minorities debate. Our delegation made [them] accept that their explanations along those aspects are only indicative of non-Muslims. ... [The Allied Powers] today have become the protectors of Christians and ... [they] say "hold them to equal treatment". This is their formula. Gentlemen, after they say "hold them to equal treatment" they address us again and say that these gentlemen are going to work, they will earn money, they will make their fortune" (ZC, 2.12.1338/1922, 144).

During this session economic policies that had been pursued by the Ottomans were also scrutinized. Ottoman tolerance regarding the economic activities of non-Muslims was recalled, and the present debates over minority rights were blamed as a design of Westerners:

Refik Bey: "... A century ago minorities in our country – without any exceptions – possessed the same privileges and [rights under] natural law just like a Muslim citizen. And it was owing to that they built many a mansions, wealth, happiness and lives. Neither the Greeks, nor the Armenians who are called minorities did or could contest this. ... We never entertained an idea of transgression against the livelihood of a nation, [or against its] sanctity. Our religion forbids that, our nationality forbids that, our history forbids that. However, neither Piyer Lermi [sic] ... nor Lloyd George, or any of his successors want to acknowledge this truth" (ZC, 4.1.1338/1922, 177-78).

Once again, religion was clearly a variable that came into play: Political and economic power was to be extended to Muslims. It was also the Muslims who 'naturally' belonged to the nation. Ethnicity was not an important factor in defining belongingness. Within this framework, for example, it was emphasized over and over that Turks and Kurds were one and the same:

Suleyman Necati (Güneri) Bey:³⁴¹ "... The history of Turks and Kurds have been together ... Before the coming of the Armenians to the East, two thousand years ago, there was the Turan people which established a great civilization, and today the people we call Kurds are descendents of this people ... Turks and Kurds are

³⁴¹ Suleyman Necati (Güneri) (1892, Bingöl – 1944): He studied law at the Konya Law School. After graduation, he worked as a teacher for a while. Güneri served as a deputy in the last Ottoman Assembly. He attended the Erzurum Congress. He joined the GNA in 1920 and was left out of the Parliament the following Assembly. During the First Assembly Güneri was one of the founders of the Second Group. In 1926 he was tried for the İzmir assassination attempt and was acquitted. He rejoined the GNA in 1937 as a Zonguldak deputy and served for two years. After 1939 he returned back to teaching.

not different peoples. Secondly, when looked at the history there was no separate name given to Kurds. [Kurds] are not a different nation from Turks and history has established this fact for certain. ... If we look at history after Islam, we see that Kurds and Turks always walked together, and together they wrote the history of Islam. ... These [Kurds and Turks] are so inextricably linked; both along blood-lines, both in terms of history, both in terms of nationality and religion they are one body. ... We do not have racial minorities in this country” (ZC, 3.11.1338/1922; 350).

Vehbi Efendi: “... There is no Turk, or Kurd in this Assembly; there is one Muslim body...” (ZC, 25.1.1339/1923, 510).

In the above context and with reference to the position of Kurds, the rejection that they should be defined a minority group was justified using history and religion. The fact that Kurds and Turks had shared the same history and religion for centuries was seen as enough evidence to make any claims for an independent Kurdish nation preposterous.³⁴²

During the same session, Mufid Efendi likened the Turkish government to human body, and echoed the above sentiments:

“... Turkish government is akin to the human body: the body is Turkey. ... [T]he heart of this body, the Turkish government is the Turks – when a sickness comes to the body of a person doctors first strengthen the heart in order to cure the sickness. They cure that heart. Thus, the Turkish government, and so this heart, must strengthen the organs of the body such as the hands, the mouth, eyes, tongue, and ears. ... Since Turkishness is the organ of this Turkish government, because its hand is independent, because its tongue is independent they should not be assuming that they are different races, [different] nations. ... Even though there was no mention of the word race in the St. Germaine Treaty they wanted to apply it to Austria, they had placed the word race here. ... Turk means Kurd, Kurd means Turk. We do not have divisions. ... We understand minorities as religious minorities. The only minorities for us are religious minorities” (ZC, 3.11.1338/1922, 364-65).

³⁴² It should also be noted that no mention was made of the different sects to, which Kurds belonged. For example, the majority of Kurds belong to the Alevi sect; and a smaller group to the Sunni sect (Oran, 2004: 60). This historically differentiated them from the Hanefi Muslims, which had been the official sect of the Ottoman Muslims and the empire. Despite these differences, in the above quote, Islam is (purposely) used as a unifying force. Islam/being a Muslim was used as a blanket term.

Diyab Aga,³⁴³ the Kurdish deputy representing Dersim (a town, which was heavily populated by Kurds) addressed the issue of minorities along similar lines:

“... There is no difference among us. Our name, religion, and God are all one and the same. ... We are all one. There is no such thing as Kurdish-Turkish problem. All of us are one; all of us are brothers. All are the sons of the same mother, and father. [Our] religion, ethnîe [kavim] are one and the same. But the enemies are coming up with traps to set us against each other” (ZC, 3.11.1338/1922, 347).

Even though Diyab Aga’s address denied that there were problems between Turks and Kurds (in eastern Anatolia), it was still acknowledged that there were tensions.³⁴⁴ Yet the existing tensions were attributed to “nomadism” rather than signifying a conflict stemming from religious and ethnic differences. As well, Western powers were blamed for tipping a natural balance, which had been intact for centuries. Another Kurdish deputy, Yusuf Ziya (Kocoglu) Bey,³⁴⁵ echoed the same sentiments:

“I am a Kurd. However, I am of those Kurds who hope for the elevation of Turkey; the honor of Turkey, the progress of Turkey (applause). The reason for this is the language [I have]; my literacy which gives me honor. These [Turkish language and literacy] belong not to Kurds, who are my ethnîe, but to Turks. This is why I want the elevation of Turks. ... The spirit of the Kurds has not been poisoned. It has not been injected with the poison of politics. I implore you not to inject this poison; the English has approached [them] with their syringe to inject

³⁴³ Diyab (Yildirim) Aga (1852, Hozat (Tunceli) – 1935): He came from a family of Kurdish tribal leaders. His father was the chief of the *Ferhat Usagi* Tribe. When his father died, Diyab Aga became the sole owner of considerable tracts of land. He supported the Nationalist Resistance Movement, and entered the GNA in 1920. In 1923, he was not reelected as a deputy and returned back to his hometown. He was a member of the First Group.

³⁴⁴ A year earlier there had been a Kurdish rebellion – known as the Kocgiri Rebellion- in the Dersim region. The rebellion was aimed at preserving the Kurdish and Alevi character of Dersim. Even though it lasted almost two months, Kocgiri Rebellion remained as a “local incident” and was not perceived by the center as a major threat to the Turkish state (Bozarslan, 2005: 101-02). Between 1924 and 1938 there were 17 Kurdish rebellions (Somel, 1997: 79).

³⁴⁵ Yusuf Ziya (Kocoglu) (1882, Bitlis – 1925): statesman. After he completed his studies at the Bitlis secondary school he went into trade. For a while, he also worked for the Directorate of Education. In 1920 he entered the GNA. While there, Kocoglu joined the Second Group. In 1923, he was left out of the Parliament, and went back to his hometown. Yusuf Ziya was one of the leaders of the “Azadi Cemiyeti” which was founded in 1923 with the main goal of achieving Kurdish independence. Following the Beytussebab rebellion in 1924, he was found guilty and was executed.

this poison” (6.3.1339/1923, 163 (T.B.M.M. Gizli Celse Zabıtları, 1920-1924 [Secret Minutes of the Closed Sessions of the Grand National Assembly]).³⁴⁶

Yusuf Ziya’s address illustrates the rather tenuous relationship between the GNA and the Kurds as well as illustrating how the Kurds were perceived – as illiterate nomads. This tension was also present during the War of Independence when Kurds were initially either openly opposed to fighting alongside Mustafa Kemal and his friends, or going along with them compliantly but with a certain level of reservation. In fact, in 1919 some Kurdish notables had allied with the British with the hope of establishing an independent Kurdistan (Mango, 1999: 5). Their later support for the Societies for the Defence of National Rights only materialized when the promise of an independent Kurdistan looked like an unattainable dream. Moreover, Kurdish tribes gave their support to the War of Independence since they thought it was only through this struggle that the sultanate, caliphate and the unity of the empire) could be saved.³⁴⁷

Despite these previously existing tensions the political elite were not hesitant to declare Kurds as the “true owners of the nation”. One of the main reasons for this initial inclusion of Kurds was the relative weakness of their movements. Even though late 19th century and early 20th century witnessed Kurdish rebellions on and off, these were not seen as major threats to central authority. This was certainly the case in the early part of the 1920s (Bozarslan, 2005: 102). As a result, Kurds were considered a non-threatening group, which still promised successful assimilation. Moreover, through their inclusion to the nation the elite were also attempting to further inhibit any ideas of separation. This was especially significant to maintain territorial unity.

³⁴⁶ Ibrahim Arvas, another MP of Kurdish origins, voiced the brotherhood of Kurds and Turks in his memoirs: “It would be sinful to attribute anything bad to this community [of Kurds] who were Turkish in origin, and who had changed their language. ... It is the duty of the members of government to teach this community – the majority of which are Turks – Turkish language; and to raise them with Turkish culture” (1964: 26).

³⁴⁷ It was also during this period that giving provincial administrations power over the running of their territories was debated. The plan presented Kurds with a significant chance to run their own affairs in their provinces; and with relative independence. However, all remained as a possibility; and when the 1924 Constitution was drafted (and ratified) there remained no word of a self-government within the framework of devolved local government (*Ibid.*, 18-9).

In short, it is clear that the definition of minorities was, first and foremost, based along religious lines as opposed to ethnic lines. Accordingly, Christians were pushed to the fringes of the new nation while Muslim elements were talked about as the true owners of the Republic. Within this context, and consistent with the stress on religion, when Turkish elements were referred to, it was implied that the term embraced Kurds as well. Finally, within the non-Muslim community a certain hierarchy of desirability (or undesirability) was also surfacing: there were the strictly unwanted groups (i.e. Armenians and Greeks) who should not be assimilated, and those who could be tolerated (i.e. Jews).

c. Defining the Rules of Belonging, and the Issue of non-Turkish Muslim Groups

The question of belonging to the new nation becomes more complex when we focus on Muslim elements only. The conceptualizations of different ethnic groups that made up the Muslim community exhibited what can be called a “selective approach”. Differently put, Muslim elements were not treated as a homogenous group. Rather some groups were seen as more benevolent than others. Thus, even though a reference to ethnicity in conjunction with religion was not made outright (i.e. “we” referred to all Muslim elements) deputies also expressed that not all Muslims had equal rights to membership to the nation. As such, for instance, Arabs and Albanians (as well as Circassians and Bosnians) were not treated the same as Turks and Kurds.

There were some extremist voices in the GNA who wanted “to pull out their [Circassians and Abkhazes³⁴⁸] teeth and nails just like [they do] to a bear, and then tell them to “dance””.³⁴⁹ Others based their justification for the need to control and ‘neutralize’ by arguing that “it is not possible not to feel sympathy to one’s own ethnicity”. In other words, even though there were individuals who

³⁴⁸ Abkhazians are a branch of Circassians who had converted to Islam during the 16th century (Karpas, 1985: 66).

³⁴⁹ See Abidin Bey’s speech during a closed session on 20.1.1338/1922: 1213-14, T.B.M.M. Gizli Celse Zabıtları, 1920-1924 [Secret Minutes of the Closed Sessions of the Grand National Assembly].

acted with great intentions, as a group, it was assumed that these non-Turkish Muslims would eventually end up serving the interests of their “own kin”.³⁵⁰ As Necip Bey pointed out, the consensus was that

“It is only Turks who would have sympathy for Turks. ... There are exceptions to this. However, they [also] harm us ... It is especially imperative to specify [the state of] the police forces. Today, the justice system, the police – and this is the truth – are in the hands of Circassians and Albanians” (*Ibid.*, 1214).

This outlook manifested itself at various times during the GNA sessions. The debate over a motion to clarify the eligibility criteria to be a deputy was one example. The motion was brought to the GNA with a specific clause, which included the criterion that the candidate should be a resident (for a consecutive of five years) within the territories of the Republic (and not the Empire).³⁵¹ When explicating the reason why this motion was brought to the attention of the Assembly, Erzurum deputy (and a member of the Second Group) (Suleyman) Necati (Guner) Bey referred to the decline of the Ottoman Empire, and the imperative of not repeating the old mistakes again:

“... There is the great debris of the Ottomans in front of us. If we were to analyze the reason [we see that] Turkish people were trampled upon and [the Ottomans] left Turkishness in the hands of foreigners. ... Can a French citizen say anything other than that he is French? Over there, there is one Frenchness and one citizenship. [Look back at] history, it was not like that with us. You will see men like Bosnian Mehmet Pasha, Circassian Veli Pasha. There are no Turks. Every ethnic had lived within this society with its own national identity and as a consequence Turkishness was destroyed. From now on we have to establish citizenship within the territories of Turkey. We cannot repeat the same mistakes. The reason behind this proposal is this” (ZC, 2.12.1338/1922; 162).

The issue of who would be eligible to hold political power was primarily determined along religious lines. However, here, it was distinctly highlighted that being Muslim was not enough. Even though Necati Bey did not define the

³⁵⁰ Anti-Circassian sentiments were also connected to the recent mutiny of ‘Circassian’ Ethem (January 1921) –who, despite his earlier role in the National Resistance Movement later allied with the Greek forces.

³⁵¹ This criterion was especially interesting, and raised protests from different members since based on it, Mustafa Kemal did not qualify to be a Member of the Parliament (because he had spent many years traveling around the Empire).

specific content of Turkishness, it was clear that Bosnians, and Circassians were not part of this group.

Similarly, and during the same session, Arabs and Albanians were singled out as outsiders. The reasons behind this were again taken back to the Ottoman days, and especially to the period immediately preceding its collapse. Huseyin Avni (Ulas) Bey³⁵² addressed the Assembly blaming these two groups – while his speech was interrupted by applause from the floor:

“... There will not be Arab or Albanian deputies in Turkey ... For centuries we paid tribute to the Arabs. ... [addressing Mustafa Kemal] you saw yourself how they kicked us out of Arabia. We guarded the territories of the Albanians with our presence, thinking they are a noble people, and you know how we were driven away from there. ... We can no longer make these people deputies. They cannot usurp the rights of this nation by saying “I am a deputy”” (*Ibid.*, 160-61).

Emin (Gevelioglu) Bey,³⁵³ a deputy from Canik, echoed the sentiments of Huseyin Avni (Ulas) Bey:

“... In my country there cannot be an Arab or Albanian deputy. And by saying this I am echoing the sentiment of the whole nation. ... What we think is that Turkey belongs to Turks, to those who live in this country. Those others [like] our Albanian co-religionists, Arab co-religionists [should] go and serve in their own country; [should] work for the peace and happiness of their countries, and we will be proud of them” (*Ibid.*, 162).³⁵⁴

³⁵² Huseyin Avni Ulas (1887, Erzurum – 1948): Lawyer and statesman; one of the members of the opposition (Second Group) in the GNA. He studied law at Istanbul University. During the First World War he served in the army. Ulas also actively served during the War of Independence. He was present at the opening of the GNA and worked at various commissions. He joined the Second Group in 1921 – voicing his opposition. In 1923 he went back to working as a lawyer. The following year he became involved in the founding of the *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Firkasi* (The Progressive Republican Party). After the assassination attempt against Mustafa Kemal he was tried and acquitted.

³⁵³ Emin Gevelioglu (1889, Samsun – 1934): Studied law at Istanbul Law Faculty. He worked as an instructor at the Baghdad Law Faculty; and as a public prosecutor in Kavala. Following the Balkan Wars he came back to Istanbul and worked for the Police Department. Gevelioglu also published a newspaper for a while. He was a deputy in the last Ottoman Parliament. After the dismantlement of the Parliament he joined the GNA. There, he was a member of the Second Group. He was not reselected after the First Assembly; and went back to practicing law in Samsun. He reentered the Parliament in 1931, and died while he was still serving.

³⁵⁴ A deputy of Kurdish origins, Feridun Fikri (Dusunsel) Bey referred to Ernest Renan and how in France, nationality principle was based on an understanding of shared ideals, and a determination to live together. For him, this understanding should also be the basis of nationality in Turkey – accompanied by the assimilation of non-Turkish groups. “... Let the Albanian go to Albania, the Arab go to Arabia. .. However, from now on, there are various kinds [of people] who will remain

The sources of this exclusionary attitude towards Arabs and Albanians were similar to the sources of anti-Christian sentiments: The doings of Arabs and Albanians when they had been under the Ottoman rule were singled out as proofs of treachery. Furthermore, both groups had headed strong nationalist movements. As a result, their assimilation would have been complicated. Hence, they were considered as outsiders.

d. So, Who is a Turk?: Religion and Turkishness

Tied to the discussions over minorities was the debate about the constitutive elements of Turkishness. Although there was a certain level of disagreement over the definition of who a Turk was, there also emerged a clear link between religion and Turkishness. Differently put, during this period being a Turk was defined first and foremost along religious lines. Moreover, these discussions also included references to the Ottoman past. When these two elements are pulled together an interesting picture emerged: Even though there was an effort to situate the new nation and its defining characteristics as far away from the Ottomans as possible, religion (which was the governing and legitimation principle under the Ottomans) still remained a significant variable in defining who a Turk was.

The definition of Turkishness was brought up during a contention over terminology used in a bill. While some deputies insisted that the word “Ottomans” should be used to define the people of the new nation, others wanted the term “Turkiyeli” (i.e. those from Turkey):

(Voices from the ground) What does Osmanli mean? It should say “every Turk”.
Huseyin Avni: What would those – who are not Turks – do?

in this country. What is going to happen to them? .. If Circassian, we'll call them Circassian. However, there is no Circassian. *In our country there is only one nationality; and there are those who belong to different ethnicities. However, they share one culture. And that is the Turkish nation. ... We should agree on one fundamental for those who had served and struggled for this country. And that is the commonality of culture; that is, to melt into this nation. Those who do not want to melt into this nation do not have a place here*” (ZC, 10.7.1336/1920, 272).

Yusuf Kemal Bey: "Turkiyeli means those who have Turkish citizenship".

Lutfi Bey: "What is meant by Ottomans is "the citizens of the Ottomans".

Necib Bey: "The term Ottoman does not comply with the Constitution. Instead, if we say Turk, we would be confining it only to Turks. So, I propose we say "citizen""[voices from the ground: it should be "individual"]].

Feyzi Efendi: "Some of us want to play around with the word Ottoman. ... For seven hundred years our forefathers vaunted this word. The word Ottoman is a most beautiful word" (ZC, 5.11.1337/1921, 70).

Thus, the debate, first and foremost, revolved around whether the citizens of the new nation could still be referred to as Ottomans or not. Besim Atalay reminded the deputies that the name Ottoman was not a name of a nation. As well the history of Turks went further back than the Ottomans:

"... [the word Ottoman] is a tribal name, a family name. ... After Turks converted to Islam they started to mention tribe. Before that, they were referred to as Turks or by the name of the tribe [oymak] which were closer to them. There is no place in our age or history to refer to tribal names. The name Turk or Turkiyeli [from Turkey] should be suitable" (ZC, 5.11.1337/1921, 71).

In the end, the wording of the clause was changed so that instead of the word Ottoman, "every individual who is a member of the government of the Turkish Grand National Assembly" was inserted.

This particular choice of wording is significant since it defined nationhood as it was tied to the political sphere. The nation and the state were held to be one and the same. As well, citizenship/membership to the nation is defined by membership to the state. The membership criterion was devoid of any ethnic connotations as it stood in this particular formulation of the clause. However, later discussions manifested that the specific content of membership was not confined to being a member of a political community. Rather, the religious dimension appeared yet again as another and significant marker of belonging.

As expressed by Rasih Efendi (who was a member of the First Group): "[When we say] Turk it means Islam. All the Muslim world and also Europe accept that the world of Islam is referred to as [that of the] Turks" (ZC, 4.10.1336/1920, 478). Samih Rifat Efendi (Deputy of Biga), talking about various definitions of nationality explained that in Turkey:

“Nationality has so far not been defined by blood [lines]. The bond of nationality is not only composed of blood; it is culture, it is religion” (22.9.1339/1923, 271 (T.B.M.M. Gizli Celse Zabıtları, 1920-1924 [Secret Minutes of the Closed Sessions of the Grand National Assembly]).

The Islamic character of the nation and its people found its clear expression in the second article of 1924 Constitution:

“The religion of the Turkish State is Islam, its official language is Turkish”.

This article passed through the Assembly without any debate. As well, the addresses of the deputies manifest how they perceived Islam and being Muslim in perfect harmony with Turkishness:

Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul) Bey:³⁵⁵ “[in reference to Mohammed] He founded God’s state which gave honor to the infamous, freedom to the slave, right to the weak, happiness to the destitute; and the name of this state was Republic (applause from the floor). ... The same state that Prophet Mohammed had founded fourteen centuries ago in Mecca is founded today by the Turkish people in Ankara” (ZC, 29.10.1339/1923, 96).
(Mehmet) Seref (Aykut) Bey:³⁵⁶ “... The Turks took the Koran in their hands, and they shed all their blood for its glorification. Here is the history of Islam. This is a nation which ... has executed the sacred and sublime duty that had been handed over to it without batting an eyelid” (ZC, 2.3.1338/1922, 34).

Similarly, during his address to the GNA in 1922, Mustafa Kemal asserted that:

³⁵⁵ Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul) (1869, Istanbul -1944): Poet, and statesman. After studying at *Mulkiye* for a while, he left school and started working as a civil servant in different capacities. During this period he also joined the CUP. However, he was soon distanced from the CUP regime because of his ideas expressed in his poems. He was one of the founders of the Turkish Hearth, and *Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti* (Turkish Homeland). In 1912 he left the CUP, and resigned from his position of major to Erzurum. He became a member of the Ottoman Assembly in 1914. Four years later he founded the *Milli Türk Fırkası* (National Turkish Party) with his friends, with the aim to strengthen Turkish nationalism. Yurdakul served in the GNA as a deputy (from Sebinkarahisar, Urfa, and Istanbul) from 1923 until his death. His poetry reflected his political position against Ottomanism, and Islamism, and his support for Turkish nationalism.

³⁵⁶ A deputy from Edirne, he was part of the First Group during the First Assembly. Even though he was not selected again for the Second Assembly period, he was a deputy in the 4th, 5th and 6th Assemblies.

“... Turk and Islam – The Turkish state is going to be the most fortunate state in the world owing to the fact that it is the source for the manifestation of these two [elements] (ZC, 1.11.1338/1922, 311).

It should be noted that Mustafa Kemal’s speech was delivered when the GNA decided that the office of the caliphate belonged to the House of Osman, and that the caliphate was going to be appointed by the GNA. Thus, here, Mustafa Kemal and other deputies expressed that the fulfillment of their duties was tied to the religious sphere. Further, the basis of the nation was not to be relinquished from its religious dimension. On the contrary, the true owners of the nation were perceived to be Muslims. Since the Assembly was the Assembly of the (Muslim) people, the representative of Muslims was to be appointed by the Assembly.³⁵⁷ Given the context in which it was delivered, his speech could be interpreted as a way to appease the more religious members of the GNA as well as his concern not to alarm the general public. However, similar references were also made in different contexts and over a period of time by many members of the Parliament. For instance, during a session on the budget allocation to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, (Mehmet) Seref (Aykut) Bey underlined that national life was not entirely separate from religious life. He went on to say that:

“Life in the West and East are different. ... In addition to our private life not resembling the West our societal life also does not resemble the West in any way. ... While the light that had traveled from the East to the West was resulting in revolution, we ... did not rule according to the teachings of our religion ... and look what happened to us? ... The West is not without its religion. Essentially a nation cannot be without its religion. The revolutions done in the West were not done to get rid of religion. On the contrary, they are revolutions done to strengthen the spiritual life. ... A nation can only survive if it forms its own basis out of its culture and custom. It only survives if it acts in conformity with its culture, custom and religion. ... *It is only, and only the Ministry of Religious Affairs which possesses [the power] to give direction to the government of the Grand National Assembly ... We tend to think that religious life and national life are two different things. No, gentlemen, they are not different*”³⁵⁸ (ZC, 24.8.1338/1922, 348-51).

³⁵⁷ 1 November 1922 marked the abolishing of the sultanate as well as the transfer of the power of appointment of the caliphate to the GNA.

³⁵⁸ My emphasis.

Seref Bey further specified religion as the element which sustained “noble sentiments”. Islam was also talked about as social glue. Ali Sukru Bey³⁵⁹ expressed this point:

“... When the government is drafting its program it should do it in a way so as to bind the common people. ... It should pay attention to the element of religion” (ZC, 18.9.1336/1920, 183).

This attention to religion was also defended on the grounds that people would only feel attached to their nation if the definition of the nation had a religious dimension. Defining the nation along Western lines was seen inadequate (ZC, 18.9.1336/1920, 182). Hence, the soul of the people and the soul of the nation should be in harmony, and in building this harmony religion was seen as an essential and natural ingredient.

Finally, religion was also perceived to be a mobilizing force in fighting against Western powers. An alternative force, that is communism, was also taken up but quickly dismissed as a viable option. Deputies expressed that the fundamentals of communist ideology were already there in Islam, and that there was no need to imitate Russia.³⁶⁰ Instead, the new nation should embrace Islam if it were to effectively fight against the enemy.

Hamdullah Suphi: “... Did we use the great inspirational capacity of religion in this great struggle? ... If we had resorted to the help of religious men, if we had explained to the people who gather around the religious abodes every Friday, what kind of an abyss we were going towards ... if we had benefited from the effective force of our religion, how good it would have been” (ZC, 25.9.1336/1920, 292).

Moreover, Turks were still seen as defenders of the world of Islam. In other words, the struggle at hand was not only significant in terms of national sovereignty but also essential for the survival of the Muslim community at large.

³⁵⁹ Ali Sukru Bey was part of the Second Group. He remained a deputy of Trabzon until his death in April 1923.

³⁶⁰ For two examples of such references to communism, see ZC, 8.7.1336/1920, 206; and ZC, 18.9.1336/1920, 183.

Ismail Suphi (Soysallioglu)³⁶¹ Bey:³⁶² "... There is a world of Islam [and] Turks are the bearers of it, [and they are] the biggest enemy of the English. ... [The English] would like to trample upon the Turks so that they could keep the world of Islam under their control for another few centuries" (ZC, 10.7.1336/1920, 222).

Mustafa Lutfi (Azer) Bey³⁶³: "... With the help of Islam, religion, we are going to fight against the whole world. ... What is the goal of the Assembly today? To save the office of the caliphate, to save Istanbul from the ugly hands of the enemy" (ZC, 10.7.1336/1920, 227-28).

Hence, religion was understood as an ideological glue –ascertaining unity, and giving strength of spirit to the members of the new nation.

In sum, during this early period of nation-building religion was one of the main signifiers of the new nation, and the rules of belonging. However, religion was not an automatic criterion to belong either. Differently put, not all Muslims were equal. Thus, the secondary element which comes into play is ethnicity: it was Kurds, and Turks who were seen as the "true owners of the nation". Other Muslims were expected to forget their ethnic backgrounds, and adopt and melt into Turkish culture. Finally, religion was also the determinant of who would hold economic and political power. More specifically, the extension of power to non-Muslims was considered to be out of the question.

³⁶¹ Demirel lists Ismail Suphi Soysallioglu as part of a group of deputies from the First Assembly "whose name was listed under the First Group, but who acted independently of the Group" (1995: 131).

³⁶² Ismail Suphi Soysallioglu (1884, Istanbul – nd.): He studied law. After 1908 he started to contribute articles to *Servet-i Funun*. He also wrote for and administered the publication of a newspaper (*Sura-yi Ummet*) by CUP. In 1912 Soysallioglu left *Servet-i Funun*, and worked as a teacher. During this period he was also a supporter of Turkish nationalism. Following the occupation of Istanbul he escaped to Ankara and at the recommendation of Mustafa Kemal, started to write for the newspaper *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*. He entered the First Assembly as a deputy from Burdur.

³⁶³ A deputy from Siverek, Mustafa Lutfi was listed under the Second Group.

III. Negotiating Boundaries of Belonging: Citizenship, and Nationality (1924-1929)

1924 brought forth a new Constitution for the Republic. The first three articles of the 1924 Constitution were ratified without any significant deliberation.³⁶⁴ With these articles it was established that:

Article 1: "The Turkish State is a Republic."

Article 2: "The religion of the Turkish State is Islam, its official language Turkish, and its capital is Ankara."

Article 3: "Sovereignty belongs unconditionally to the people."

Celal Nuri (Ileri), who was the secretary for the Constitution Committee, reminded deputies that one of the factors that preoccupied the Committee members during the drafting of the Constitution had been the nationality issue. Referring to the Ottoman days, he pointed out that the Empire had been a multinational one. As a result, the Turkish nation/elements had not been taken into account (as an independent, separate group) in the drafting of the 1876 Constitution. The new Constitution was different since it paid attention to Turks (ZC, 9.3.1340/1924, 225).

a. Citizenship and Turkishness As Defined by Law

Four years later, in 1928, a new Citizenship Law was ratified. The Law (Nr. 1312) defined citizenship on the basis of a combination of two main principles – *jus sanguinis* and *jus soli* –. The former principle was the defining one: The first article stipulated that all who "were born in Turkey from a Turkish father or mother or their children born outside Turkey" were Turkish citizens (ZC, 22.5.1928, 262).³⁶⁵ Articles 3 and 4, through detailing the rules of citizenship for

³⁶⁴ There were some discussions about the exact (semantic) formulation of the first Article. The second article was not even debated.

³⁶⁵ In the articles following this, it was also stipulated that those foreign women married to Turkish men were automatically considered a Turkish citizen. In contrast, Turkish women married to foreigners would keep their Turkish citizenship (Aybay, 1991: 28).

the children of foreigners born in Turkey, expanded the definition of citizenship.³⁶⁶

There were no deliberations on any of the articles of the Law in the GNA.³⁶⁷ Moreover, the justification for the new law was short and simple: All the different committees which had reviewed the proposal stated that a change was necessary as the 1869 Law was not sufficient enough to fulfil the “national desires”. In addition, it was emphasized that the new Law was “in agreement with modern views and theories” (Addendum to the proposal; Minutes of the Committee, ZC, 22.5.1928, 2).³⁶⁸

The main principles of the 1928 Law should be read alongside the definition of “Turk” (or Turkishness) as it was endorsed in the Constitution. Article 88 of the Constitution specified who would be considered Turkish:

*“The inhabitants of Turkey are considered Turkish in relation to citizenship irrespective of religion and ethnicity.”*³⁶⁹ All those who are born of a Turkish father resident inside or outside Turkey; or who are born of a father who is a settled foreigner in Turkey and who choose to be Turkish at the age of majority; or who are accepted to be Turkish in accordance with the Citizenship Law are Turkish” (ZC, 20.4.1340/1924)

As it was outlined here, the Constitution offered an expansive, inclusive definition of Turkishness. Differently put, all citizens irrespective of their religion or ethnic background were considered Turkish. However, some deputies were not satisfied with this formulation of Turkishness.

During the session Yozgat deputy Ahmet Hamdi proposed an amendment to the above article so as to include “Turkish culture” in the definition of Turkishness. In response to this proposal Celal Nuri (Ileri) stressed that the article should be in line with the provisions of the Lausanne Treaty:

³⁶⁶ Article 3 stated that those who were born in Turkey from foreign parents; and who reside in Turkey could apply for citizenship within three years of reaching majority. Article 4 stipulated that those who were born in Turkey from foreign parents, and who were born after 1 November 1929 would be considered Turkish (Dustur, III, 678).

³⁶⁷ This contrasts with the prolonged and heated debates in other countries such as France and Germany (Brubaker, 1992).

³⁶⁸ One important consideration in adapting an expansive citizenship Law was to repopulate the country (Aybay, 1991: 28).

³⁶⁹ My emphasis.

“Gentlemen, we are not determining nationality based on ethnography. The 37th article of the Lausanne Treaty states thus: Turkey pledges to recognize the provisions from 38 to 44 as the fundamental laws; and that no law, rule or official procedure is incompatible with or runs against these provisions. The 39th article of the Treaty states: Turkish citizens who are non-Muslims will benefit from the same Civil Law as Muslims do” (ZC, 20.4.1340/1924, 909).

Thus, he added that “it is not possible to include a word like “culture” here” (ZC, 20.4.1340/1924, 909). This exchange started off a debate on who was a Turkish citizen, and who was a Turk. Hamdullah Suphi (Tanrıöver) took pains to draw a clear boundary between the two, which should be quoted at length:

“It could be our desire to extend the title Turkish to all those who live inside our political territories. However, as you can see, we just came out of a difficult struggle; and none of us feel in our hearts that the struggle is completely over. We are saying: The citizens of the state and Turkish Republic are completely Turkish. On the other hand, the government is struggling to isolate those Greeks and Armenians who had been working for foreigners; it is trying to take out the Greek and Armenian [elements] who are working for the institutions that foreigners had established. If they were to say to us “No, according to the law that passed through your Parliament they are Turkish” how are you going to answer? ... The word citizenship is not sufficient to remove this desire [to isolate these elements] which is present in the minds and hearts. ... *But there is one truth. They cannot be Turks;*³⁷⁰ even the Assembly cannot make the fugitive Greeks and Armenians Turks. ... There are Jews in France. Their schools are French schools. Their language is the French language. They are culturally French; even though these people are Jews, they are French by ancestry. You should be sure that even though these men remember that they come from a Jewish ancestry, they carry with them a feeling of Frenchness. In England too there are those who are not English by ancestry. ... [A friend of mine] asked me “What should I be doing to be a Turk?” ... I told him that it was possible for him to be a Turk. The Jews who had been expelled from Spain and came to this country with their Spanish will be Turks after they accept the language of the country, and consider Turkish schools their own. ... But if he comes here while keeping the language of the country that had expelled him, remains Jewish in the middle of Anatolia, reads in Jewish language, has private schools, would the law forbid them from being Jewish? (voices from the ground: No)” (ZC, 20.4.1340/1924, 909-10).

In his speech Suphi made reference to Armenians too. He underlined that Armenians had lived side by side with Turks for a long time and shared the

³⁷⁰ My emphasis.

latter's culture. Initially there was no difference between them and the Turks. "It was possible to refer to them as Christian Turks. However, propaganda came in between them" (*Ibid.*, 909); and they ceased to be Turks: "Here, if we were to pass a law saying that [they too] are Turks, would we be getting rid of the difference between us? And who among us could say that they [Armenians] would become Turks as a result?" (*Ibid.*, 910).

Even though the draft Article was clear about the principle of Turkishness, it is also apparent that the political elite objected to an overlap between citizenship and nationality – especially for some groups. Armenians and Greeks were not clearly seen as nationals.³⁷¹ According to Suphi, Jews on the other hand, could be considered nationals if they embraced Turkish culture (through linguistic assimilation).

Despite his earlier reserve, Celal Nuri (Ileri) later during the session elaborated on his understanding of Turkishness:

"Our true citizens, Muslims, who belong to the Hanafi sect, speak Turkish" (*Ibid.*, 910).

Yet, he continued to point out the complexity of the situation:

... Not all the children of the Turkish Republic are Turks or Muslims. What are we going to do with those? ... If we do not extend Turkishness to them ... how are we going to call them? ... I am asking Hamdullah Suphi Bey ... Do we have an option in our hands [rather than calling them all Turks]?" (*Ibid.*, 910).

The above reference to 'Hanafi Muslims, speaking Turkish' is significant especially since the majority of the Kurdish population was Shafi'i³⁷² Muslims,

³⁷¹ The pattern of denaturalizations that were carried through also illustrates who was considered as belonging to the nation. During 1920s and 1930s, the Cabinet of Ministers signed the termination of many Armenians on various grounds and in accordance with the 1928 Citizenship Law (Cagaptay, 2003: 606). The ninth and tenth articles of the Law prescribed the conditions under which citizenship could be terminated (by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers). These conditions were: taking up citizenship of other countries without the permission of the government; joining the armies of other countries; and serving a foreign state in any capacity (*Dustur*, Vol. 9, pp. 994-98).

³⁷² Hanafi and Shafi compose two of the four Orthodox Sunni Schools of law.

who did not speak Turkish (Kirisci and Winrow, 1997: 96). During this period the tensions between the Kemalist regime and the Kurdish minority were mounting. Despite the early references to a “brotherhood” between Turks and Kurds, following the Seyh Sait rebellion of (February-April) 1925 the government would decide to take a firm stand against any sign of disobedience against the regime.

Kurds, on their part, were uncomfortable with the reforms undertaken by the Kemalist regime. One important development for them was the abolition of the caliphate. In the eyes of the Kurdish notables this meant that the brotherhood between Turks and Kurds, which was defined along religious lines, had come to an end. This concern was expressed in a letter sent by Seyh Sait to Kurdish notables and tribal leaders:

“In the past we [Kurds and Turks] shared the caliphate; and this used to give our religious people the common and deep emotional basis of belonging to the same community as the Turks. Since the abolition of the caliphate the only thing left behind for us is the Turkish force [pressure]” (quoted in Bozarslan, 2005: 109).

Even though scholars are wary to name the Seyh Sait rebellion as being completely nationalist in nature, they are in agreement that it was a significant resistance to central authority in Ankara (Bozarslan, 2005; Kirisci and Winrow, 1997). Moreover, the rebellion was a sign that the Kurds were reacting (at least partially) against the loss of a sense of solidarity and trust which had been established on the basis of religious unity. With the abolition of the caliphate, this basis of solidarity ceased to be of any significance. As well, the abolition brought ethnic (and linguistic) differences between Kurds, and Turks to the surface. It was these differences – when coupled by the increasingly authoritarian policies of the central government – that led part of the Kurdish population to react (Bozarslan, 2005).

In the eyes of the Republican elite, the Rebellion became a proof of the “backward”, “uncivilized” character of the Kurdish regions as well as their “religious fanaticism”. These in turn, were enough to silence any possibility of talking about a separate Kurdish identity (Keyman, 2005: 277). As will be

discussed below, Kurds quickly came to be seen as another group (in addition to the Jews) that should be assimilated into the Turkish culture.

b. Citizenship and Turkishness in Practice, and the Role of Religion

The division between nationality and citizenship continued to be an issue after the Constitution was ratified. One such instance where this particular issue came up again was during deliberations on the drafting of the “*Memurin Kanunu*” (Law on Government Employees). In 1926 an amendment to the Law was agreed upon. As a consequence, “being a Turk” was added as part of the eligibility criteria for working as a civil servant. This was also followed by article 10, which specified the information that should be included on the records of the individual civil servants. The required information was particularized as “name, alias, religious denomination, and, *lakab* [initials]”. The discussions were about whether “nationality” should also be included to this list.

In his speech Ali Suuri Bey, the deputy of Karesi, specified who a Turk was and why being a Turk was of significance:

“The word “Turk” in the first article refers to Turkish citizenship and thus is the Turk as referred to in the Constitution. *Armenians, the Greek Orthodox are included as Turks there. However, we desire the person to whom we will entrust the secrets of the state to be Turkish for sure*³⁷³. ... When this person is relocated [promoted] from one place to another more significant one, the state should make sure it knows this person’s original [real] nationality. It is on these grounds that the word “nationality” must be added to the article” (ZC, 15.3.1926, 186-87).³⁷⁴

This distinction between who a real Turk was also discussed by Rasih (Kaplan) Efendi, the deputy of Antalya. Again, in the context of the “*Memurin Kanunu*”, he pointed out that those who sought refugee status or who had acquired Turkish citizenship (as a result of forfeiting their former citizenship) should not be allowed to join state service before five years of residence.

³⁷³ My emphasis.

³⁷⁴ Going against the decision of the Committee (which did not see the amendment as necessary), the GNA agreed that “nationality” should be added to the clause.

According to him, this passage of time was necessary since there was a possibility for spies to infiltrate public institutions (ZC, 15.3.1926, 180).

The inclusion of “nationality” as a criterion for employment; and keeping a detailed personal record of each on file were ways for the elite to measure and keep track of the ethnic and religious backgrounds of civil servants (Cagaptay, 2003: 603). Differentialist treatments of non-Muslim groups and non-Turkish Muslims were thus embedded into the structure of state institutions.

When looked at who was admitted into the country during this period, divisions along religious lines become clearer. According to the 1928 Citizenship Law, acquiring Turkish citizenship was based primarily on residence. Those who had been residing in Turkey for five years or more were eligible to apply for citizenship (Dustur, Vol. 9, 995). Alternatively, if they failed to have the residence requirement, they could be granted permission by the Cabinet of Ministers. Hence, technically, the Law allowed non-Muslims to acquire citizenship. However, according to a study done by Cagaptay, for non-Muslims, converting to Islam, and/or adopting a Turkish-Muslim name, and/or marrying a Turkish-Muslim made it easier to gain admission into the country (Cagaptay, 2003: 609-12).³⁷⁵ Cagaptay thus concludes that “at least superficially, Islam was a *sine qua non* for Turkish citizenship in the minds of the Kemalists” and that “the government processed citizenship as a category exclusive to the former Muslim *millet*” (Ibid., 612; 614).

c. Discussions on Nationhood outside the GNA³⁷⁶: Alternative Bases to the Rules of Belonging, and Assimilation

Outside the GNA too, intellectuals and the political elite continued to talk about alternative constituents of nationhood, and Turkishness. As extensively discussed by Tekin Alp in his Turklestirme [Turkification] ([1928] 2001), nation

³⁷⁵ Cagaptay notes Armenians as the exception here towards whom no leniency was extended (Ibid., 612).

³⁷⁶ Here, my discussion includes arguments developed and discussed by influential scholars, intellectuals of the day, who (in some cases) were also part of the political elite, or had close links to them.

could be composed of different ethnic elements. The important thing was to make sure that through the acquisition of a common culture and education these groups, in their consciousness, felt an affinity towards each other. This affinity in turn was differentiated from the subconscious-ethnic understandings of belonging (*Ibid.*, 8-9). Nation-building, in essence, meant obliterating the “subconsciousness” and bringing forth the “consciousness”.

According to Tekin Alp nation was first and foremost a construct where individuals from different religious and ethnic backgrounds shared the same ideals. These ideals in turn were products of “environment and education”. This particular understanding of nation leaves race/ethnic definition of the nation aside – with the emphasis placed on common ideals. It is these common ideals which binds individuals together as members of a nation. Consequently, “in terms of outlook on life, spiritual characteristics, ways of thinking and acting, a French-speaking person from Lausanne is closer to a German-speaking person from Zurich more so than a French-speaking Parisian” (*Ibid.*, 42).

Alp also discusses the role of religion as an alternative basis of national identity:

“... in cases where there is no unity of language, the unity in ideals could be achieved ... through religious unity. There are hundreds of thousands of people in our country who could feel an affinity towards each other with the aid of religious unity...” (*Ibid.*, 45).

However, he quickly went on to say that the role of religion in bringing individuals together had its limits. First of all, “religion is everything for those who are devoid of modern national consciousness” (*Ibid.*, 45). In a secular age, according a central role to religion in building national unity and identity was out of the question. Second, religion might have a completely unintended effect –that is, it might weaken or even obliterate national ways of thinking: The system under the Ottoman Empire, according to Alp, was an example for that state of affairs: Islam as the all-pervading identity for different Muslim groups, including the Turkish elements had led them to forget their own (national) origins (*Ibid.*, 46-7).

Thus, religion was discussed as being the “last resort” as a potential basis of nationhood and ultimately not a feasible option. The central element that defined nation and nationhood was the unity in ideals and ways of thinking. Quoting Agaoglu, Alp emphasized that “some suggested that it is first and foremost an ideational affair to be a nation. According to us, too, this is the right and most scientific definition of a nation” (*Ibid.*, 53).

Belonging to the nation first and foremost necessitated cultural assimilation. This raised the question of whether all groups in the country could be assimilated and melded into one homogenous body as easily. In his discussion Alp touches on two main groups only and remains silent on Armenians and other Christian minorities.

According to Alp, Muslim groups (which belonged to different ethnic roots) could easily be assimilated. This was so since identification of one’s self with one’s Kurdish, Laz, Circassian etc. ethnic backgrounds was essentially a “technicality” – a matter of calling oneself and teaching each other to refer to themselves as Turkish. These groups, Alp continued “... are already Turks in terms of language, religion, interests and social environment” (*Ibid.*, 70-1).

The second group, which could easily be assimilated, was the Jewish minority. Alp emphasized that the Jewish population in Turkey was very much in alliance with their Muslim-Turkish brothers and sisters. This was so since both groups had faced much exploitation and threat of annihilation from the Christian world (*Ibid.*, 72). This natural merging of feelings was a sufficient basis for the Jewish minority to completely integrate into the Turkish culture and language, and become completely Turkish.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁷ Alp also makes reference to Anatole Leroy Beaulieu’s argument. The latter, according to Alp, had convincingly demonstrated that Sephardic Jews had a strong tendency to integrate into the larger community to which they belonged. Since the Jewish community in Turkey belonged to this particular group, it made them even likelier to be part of the majority culture (*Ibid.*, 74). Ahmet Agaoglu was another intellectual-statesman who underlined the “natural tendency of the Jewish individual to assimilate. He wrote: “There are two dominant and contrasting characteristics of the Jewish personality: While a Jew is materialistic, he also is an idealist. In fact, I would say that idealism is the main characteristic of Jews” (*Ibid.*, 95). According to Agaoglu, it is this latter characteristic that made it easier for the Jewish communities in every nation to have the willingness to be part of that nation. In addition to this natural tendency for them to assimilate, the Jewish population in Turkey was also tied closely to the Turkish elements since “... The deep dislike between the Jewish people and the Europeans – which was part of their history – never

Similar understandings of nationhood and national identity were also reiterated by other intellectuals and statesmen of the time. Necmeddin Sadak,³⁷⁸ in a letter to Tekin Alp, stated that the nation could be based neither on race nor on religion. Race had lost its significance in all countries, and had no scientific basis. Religion used to be an organizing principle for societies; but now, it had moved away from the public sphere, and closer to the hearts of individuals (*Ibid.*, 92).

“The fundamental bases of the social presence which we call a nation comprise of political territories, the unity of the state, common interests, common feelings, and culture. *Common past and a unity in ideals in relation to the future also should not be forgotten. In all these factors, the role of language, not only as a medium of communication, but also as a form of thinking, perception and rational expression is also significant*”³⁷⁹ (*Ibid.*, 92).³⁸⁰

Sadak maintained that the central mechanism for the Turkification of the non-Muslim citizens was education. Within this context, the biggest enemy facing successful Turkification policies was the presence of minority schools that would perpetuate a traditional, community-oriented understanding of belonging (*Ibid.*, 93). Rather, education should inculcate a “unity of spirit”, a sense of belonging – tying the individual to the nation.

“Could anyone argue that Durkheim is not French; Einstein not German; Bergson not English [sic]? None of them reject that they are Jewish. However, they feel proud of the nations of which they are a member” (*Ibid.*, 93).

The renowned historian Fuad Koprulu supported Alp’s arguments in relation to the possibility of an easy assimilation of certain groups as opposed to

took place between Turks and the Jewish people. Furthermore, there is also a shared [identity of] Eastern-ness between them, and a unity of spirit that stems from that” (*Ibid.*, 96).

³⁷⁸ Sadak (1860, Isparta – 1953) studied literature in France. On his return to the Ottoman Empire he started working at the Translation Office of the Ministry of Education. He also taught sociology at the Istanbul University. In 1918, with a few of his friends, he founded the newspaper *Aksam*. During the War of Independence he supported the national mobilization in his writings. In 1928 he became deputy of Sivas. Sadak’s book *Sociology* (1936) was a textbook for secondary schools for many years.

³⁷⁹ My emphasis.

³⁸⁰ 1927 Regulations of the RPP also provided a similar definition of what nationhood should and did entail. The 5th article of the Regulations stated that: “[The RPP] is convinced that among citizens the strongest bond is the unity of language, unity of sentiments, and unity of ideas; and agrees on fully disseminating and flourishing the Turkish language and culture” (*Cumhuriyet Halk Firkasi Nizamnamesi*, 1927).

others. In his book review (of Turkification) Koprulu mentioned that the Muslim-non-Turkish population could easily be “made” Turkish through the education system. On the other hand, the making of a Turk out of a non-Muslim individual was seen to be more complicated. In the case of Orthodox Greeks, Koprulu argued that it was close to impossible to Turkify them due to the rigidity of their Church and their (divisive) teachings as well as their ambitions for territorial expansion.

In relation to Armenians, Koprulu maintained that compared to Greeks, it was more likely to make them into “good citizens”: Armenians were small in number. As well, they did not entertain any ideas about building their own nation on Turkish soil. These two factors, if accompanied by willingness on their part to “forget their old memories” made them better candidates for Turkification. Finally, he agreed with Alp that among all these groups, the Jewish minority suggested optimism since they did not have any historical memory which would inhibit their Turkification and consequently promised to be easily assimilated (Ibid., 100-1).

Finally, Alp’s understanding of who belonged to the nation also paralleled the writings of Ziya Gokalp. According to the latter a Turkish nation had existed under the Ottomans. Only, under the Empire Turks were ridiculed and their presence in the empire was ignored. The construction of the nation in the present time thus entailed changing that particular state of affairs. In other words, nation-building under the Republic was all about raising to consciousness what had been forced down to the level of unconscious.

Gokalp perceived the presence of common ideals as the necessary basis of nations and nationhood:

“Nations without ideals think that they are doomed to catastrophes; nations with ideals, on the other hand, are destined for resurrection even if they are politically dead. A nation with a resurrecting and creative ideal never dies” (reprinted in Berkes (ed.) 1959: 66).³⁸¹

³⁸¹ First published in the journal *Türk Yurdu*, No. 32, 1913; later reprinted in Turklesmek, Islamlasmak, Muasirlasmak (1918).

In his discussion of different determinants of nationhood, and similar to Tekin Alp, Gokalp excluded the possibility of an ethnic/racial basis: "If racial characteristics have nothing to do with social characteristics, they have also nothing to do with nationality, which is the sum total of social characteristics. Therefore, we must look to another field to discover the meaning of nationality" (*Ibid.*, 134).³⁸² Instead, he asked:

"What kind of unifying force is there that is superior to and dominant over, racial, ethnic, geographic, political and volitional forces? Sociology teaches us that this unifying force lies in education and culture; in other words, in the community of sentiments" (*Ibid.*, 136).³⁸³

Moreover, Gokalp held that:

"Nation is a group composed of men and women who have gone through the same education, who have received the same acquisitions of language, religion, morality and aesthetics. ... Men want to live together, not with those who carry the same blood in their veins, but with those who share the same language and the same faith. ... Thus, it is absurd to base nationality on lineage. It is only shared education and ideals which are most essential to nationality" (*Ibid.*, 137).

Even though he mentions religion in the above passage,³⁸⁴ Gokalp's emphasis was consistently on culture and ideals (Heyd, 1950: 63). In sum, for Gokalp, nationality was based first and foremost on a unity of common sentiments and ideals. This unity of ideals was manifested through speaking the same language. The same emphasis on ideals, culture and language is also found

³⁸² Quoted from his article "What is a Nation" originally published in *Kucuk Mecmua* (No. 28, 1923), and rewritten and reprinted in *Turkculugun Esaslari* [Fundamentals of Turkism].

³⁸³ According to Heyd, Gokalp's rejection of race as a possible basis of the nation was partly due to political considerations: "In his [Gokalp's] opinion the Turks are racially more mixed than any European nation, belonging partly to the Mongolian and partly to the "white" race" (Heyd, 1950: 62).

³⁸⁴ Although Gokalp included the unity of faith in his discussion, this particular aspect remained in the background in his analysis of nationalism. For him, religion was important since it provided individuals with a set of morals; and thus established a certain basis for social solidarity (Parla, 1989).

in the “Civic Manual” textbook (written by Atatürk’s adopted daughter Afet Inan).³⁸⁵ Here, nation is defined as

“A social committee that is comprised of citizens who are tied together through a unity of language, culture and ideals” ([1931] 1998: 18).

The definition of the Turkish nation also strictly comprises of civic elements. Under the section “Factors Comprising Turkish Nation”, it is stated that:

- “1. Turkish nation is a state that is governed by a Republic which is under the rule of the people
2. Turkish state is secular. ...
3. The language of Turkish nation is Turkish.” (*Ibid.*, 19).

To the above was added another, a more comprehensive, definition of the Turkish nation where six different elements were brought together:

“a. unity of political life; b. unity of language; c. unity of the motherland; d. unity of ethnicity; e. unity of history; f. affinity of morals” (*Ibid.*, 22).³⁸⁶

The text also underlines the similarities of individuals which compose the Turkish nation: “Every individual of the Turkish nation, with certain differences, yet, in general are very similar to each other. Certain differences should be understood to be only natural” (*Ibid.*, 19). These differences in turn could be traced to Turkish people having lived on different territories over many centuries,

³⁸⁵ The book was first published in 1930 as a textbook for secondary schools. Later editions had minor changes to them. It should also be noted that as Afet Inan explains in detail, the main parts of the text came out of the hands of Atatürk himself. In the edition from where below quotes are taken his handwritten notes are also included. The section on “Nation” is published (with a minor omission in the end) exactly as he had written it.

³⁸⁶ Religious unity is left out of the list. In the text it is explained that Turks had been a nation before they converted to Islam. After their conversion, religion never formed a basis for them to unite with other Muslims (such as Persians and Arabs) in order to establish one Muslim nation. On the contrary, Islam led to a loosening of ties within Turkish nation: It “sedated their national sentiments, and national enthusiasm” (*Ibid.*, 21). And this state of affairs was only natural since the goal of the religion that Mohammed had founded was an *ummet* polity that was above all nations (*Ibid.*, 21).

and having mixed with different peoples. However, fundamentally, the text stressed that they did resemble each other.

Thus, what was underlined was the homogenous character of the nation and so all its constituent elements. Regarding the Muslim elements that belong to different ethnic backgrounds there is again a stress on unity, and likeness. A self-definition of individuals on the basis of their different backgrounds (such as Kurdish, Laz, Circassian, or Bosnian) is treated as being the result of “outside” propaganda, as well as something that belonged to the days of [Ottoman] repression. Moreover, these and similar ways of identification would never form a basis for these groups to form their own nations since they too “just like the Turkish community, share the same history, morals, and rights” (*Ibid.*, 23).³⁸⁷

As for the non-Muslim communities:

“After having tied their fate and fortune to Turkish nationality ... could it be expected from the civilized Turkish nation with a noble character ... to look at them with evil intentions, consider them foreigners?” (*Ibid.*, 23).

Moreover, this understanding of nationhood is complemented with a definition of motherland:

“Our motherland is our land [demarcated] as our *political*³⁸⁸ territories, where the Turkish nation lives” (*Ibid.*, 19).

In sum, the ideas put forward by some of the scholars-statesmen (outside the GNA) reveal that the conceptualizations of nationhood were predominantly along the same lines: nation as a political community; based on a common language, common ideals, and common culture. Their understanding of nationhood was voluntarist in nature. In this framework, ethnicity was seen as a “technicality” and not as an impediment of belonging to the nation. Hence, it was the strength of attachment which was the decisive element here. Yet, it should

³⁸⁷ This emphasis on homogeneity of the nation was further illustrated by the Ministry of Education’s circular (8 December 1925) which banned “the use of such divisive terms as Kurd, Circassian and Laz, Kurdistan and Lazistan” (Mango, 1999: 20).

³⁸⁸ My emphasis.

also be noted that this understanding co-existed side by side with the above mentioned differentialist practices.

d. Defining the Citizenry: Looking Western, and Living Secular

The second half of the 1920s not only marked the definition of citizenship. The period was also characterized by the outlining of the specific traits as well as the physical outlook of the citizenry. First, and foremost, it was imperative that the citizen body should look Western (i.e. civilized). The Hat Law, which passed through the Parliament in 1925 was one of the reforms that marked the Republican elite's determination to follow Western ways of life. However, according to some, such as Halide Edip, the Law was yet another and one of the most absurd manifestations of the "Kemalist dictatorship" (Edip, 1929: 30). She wrote:

"The westernization of Turkey is not and should not be a question of mere external imitation and gesture. It is a much deeper and more significant process. To tell the Turk to put on a certain headdress and "get civilized" or be hanged, or be imprisoned, is absurd to say the least" (*Ibid.*, 30).³⁸⁹

In the GNA itself the only dissenting voice, that of Bursa deputy Nurettin Pasha, was completely drowned.³⁹⁰ The justification and support of the deputies for this particular reform came from different sources. One justification was the need to join the ranks of Western, civilized world. In his *Ataturk Ihtilali* [Ataturk Revolution], Mahmut Esat Bozkurt stressed that getting rid of the fez and replacing it with the hat was tantamount to changing the minds of people. The reform also would help the nation to regain its pride and prestige:

³⁸⁹ She also pointed out that this reform was one that received the most opposition from the people themselves. For a brief outline of some of these reactions, see Gologlu (1972: 156-57).

³⁹⁰ His opposition was based on the fact that the reform, through forcing civil servants to wear hats (and expecting the rest of the citizenry to do the same), was in violation of individual rights and freedoms endorsed by the Constitution. For his address in the GNA, see (ZC, 25.11.1341/1925, 222).

“What does it mean to wear the hat? Does it mean progress? Yes, and this should not be doubted. In a way, the problem is not wearing the fez. However, the problem is the mentality which attaches the fez a sacredness; the mentality which considers it to be removed as an insult to sacred principles. ... Those who have been to Europe would know: people laugh behind the backs of the Easterners who wear the fez; the children chase them. ... [with the Hat reform] we ceased to look ridiculous” (Bozkurt, [1940] 2003: 97-8).

As well, the change was justified in reference to religion (i.e. it did not go against religious teachings). Rasih (Kaplan) started his speech in the GNA by stating that the issue should not be approached emotionally; but rather should be handled scientifically. He then emphasized that Islam, first and foremost was a religion of reason. Rasih Bey continued his speech by giving examples from Mohammed himself – suggesting that the headdress had nothing to do with religion: Mohammed did not change anything in his attire after he received the Koran. As well, he went on:

“Today, just because the Jews are wearing hats does it mean that they have become Christians? ... No. Hence, what does it have to do with religion?” (ZC, 25.11.1341, 227).

The salvaging of Islam itself was used as a basis of justification for the major laicization reforms that were undertaken. When in 1925 Muslim brotherhoods were dissolved and their meeting places closed down Rasih (Kaplan) maintained that:

“With the dissolution of these brotherhoods ... sluggishness, enmity towards science and self-exertion will be at an end in this country. ... For eleven centuries the Muslim world has been disabled with this calamity; and this calamity tore down not only Turkey but all Muslim world. ... Today, by passing this law you [GNA members] are praiseworthy since you are giving a “wake up” call ... to the whole Muslim world” (ZC, 30.11.1341/1925, 285-86).

Moreover, in the draft proposal of the law, it was pointed out that the presence of these brotherhoods was not considered as necessary institutions under Islam. To this was added that their influence on the country had always been detrimental. The 1925 (Sheik Sait) rebellion in the Eastern province of Dersim

was mentioned as a very recent manifestation of how these brotherhoods could pose a threat against peace in the nation (Addendum, ZC, 30.11.1341/1925, 3).

Another important step toward laicism came in the form of an amendment to the Constitution: the second article of the Constitution was amended in April 1928 to read “The official language of the Turkish state is Turkish, its capital is Ankara”. Thus, Islam was no longer defined as the state religion. This change was in turn defended on the grounds that:

“Fundamentally, since the state is a moral character, it is in itself an abstract idea. It cannot be imagined that it is able to execute [fulfil] the duties and obligations religion imposes on real individuals. Running after the impossible is a weakness; and like all weaknesses, there is no doubt it would constitute a harmful weakness. ... The principle of separation of religion and the state should not be understood as meaning the state encouraging irreligiosity. The separation of religious and state affairs is a guarantee that religions are free of being tools in the hands of those who hold or will hold state power” (Commission Report, ZC, 9.4.1928, 2).³⁹¹

The new Civil Law, which replaced the *Mecelle* of the Ottomans, was yet another turning point – separating the legal system from religious rules and laws. Mahmut Esat (Bozkurt), the then Minister of Justice, defended the new law on the grounds that it was in line with the needs and culture of the Turkish nation. The fact that this law was adopted from Switzerland, which comprised of three different ethnic communities, he said, proved that it was a law that would be flexible enough to accommodate the needs of the Turkish nation. With this law Turkish nation not only was ceasing to run its everyday life based on religion, but also was joining the ranks of the civilized, modern nations. His defense continued thus:

“The main basis and framework of *Mecelle* is religion.... It is imperative for religions not to change. In this respect the fundamental understanding of this

³⁹¹ A few days before the change was agreed upon, Mahmut Esat (Bozkurt) Bey wrote an article in *İkdam*. There, he defended the change as a move towards protecting religion as opposed to a shift towards building an irreligious nation. According to him, “the only way to safeguard religion against [the abuse of “Caesars”] is to separate it totally from the affairs of the state and put it in such a position as will foster a holy contact between men and God” (reprinted in Levonian (ed.) (1932): 129).

present civilization that religion is a matter of conscience is the most significant characteristic distinguishing [us] from earlier civilizations. Those laws which take their fundamental basis from religion tie those societies to primitive ages; and [these laws] are among those acts effectively blocking progress” (Commission Report, ZC, 17.2.1926, 1).

Similarly, Besim Atalay contended that the nation should follow the West when shaping its legal system just as it should, and was, following them in science and education. Otherwise, he maintained, “just like Sudan, Morocco ... there will be nothing left of our existence” (ZC, 17.2.1926, 233). Sukru Kaya also stressed that there was no reason why

“our legal system [should] be devoid of the Western ways of which our military and nationality [affairs] have learnt from? ... Just like there is one path to rational thinking, there is an evolution towards uniformity in the laws that codify the character of human interaction. ... Therefore, the surest way is – like a lot of the newly-constructed nations are doing – to take the most civilized, most modern legal system and apply it to our country” (Ibid., 232).

Thus stated, the break from the Ottoman past, and a turn towards West as the model started to be part of the discourse of the Republican elite. Consequently, the new citizen was Western in his/her outlook, who acted in complete obedience to the state, and the nation; and was laic. In addition, and ideally, these new citizens spoke the same language and shared the same ideals. The portrait of this citizenry was expansive enough but also demanding of assimilation for those who fell short of fulfilling any of these criteria.

IV. Turkishness, Minorities and Citizenship in the 1930s

The elite did not see the formation of the new nation (and an understanding of nationhood) as something that needed engineering. Turkish nation was understood (and presented) as an organic nation rather than an artificial construction. Accordingly, the elite saw their job as aiding the nation to rediscover those roots which had always been there. In Falih Rifki Atay’s words:

“We are not building a new national existence. We are only kneading it with its own essence. The salvation of the Turk means the Turk rediscovering himself” (*Ayin Tarihi*, 1934, No. 13, 80).

In the meantime, Turkish nationalism was also talked about in connection with European history. Turks were the harbingers of civilization. It was argued that the rise and triumph of Turkish nationalism contributed to European ideals.

— Hamdullah Suphi expressed this point explicitly in one of his speeches:

“[Our] nationalist generation is sincerely Western. It is possible to define all our nationalist history as a friend’s hand extended to the Western world. The independence struggle in Anatolia defended the Western ideals of the Turk as much as it defended sovereignty in this part of Asia. If we had been defeated Europeanness would have been defeated too. We won; we made the Western ideas, Western fundamentals victorious to the Europeans [themselves]” (*Ayin Tarihi*, 1930, Vol. 22, No. 74: 6208).

As for Turkish nationalism, it had a unique character —distinguishing it from its European counterparts. According to Tekinalp, this unique ingredient was the lack of mysticism in Kemalist nationalism. Since its very inception, Turkish-Kemalist nationalism had never once resorted to super-natural or artificial elements. Instead, this specific nationalism could more properly be defined as a “reactionary”³⁹² nationalism ([1936] 1998: 277; 281).

Turkish citizen was situated into this picture of a Western-looking, independently thinking, and unique nation. Citizenship, as it was defined in the Citizenship Law of 1928, was extended to every individual who had a Turkish mother or father. Furthermore, a territoriality principle was also present in the Law. However, when it came to nationality, there was still a line drawn between belonging to the nation and being a citizen. In his article “Being a Turk” Nadir Nadi addressed this particular division. After stating that Turkish citizenship was based on equality of all, and that it was extended regardless of one’s religious or ethnic background, he continued:

³⁹² It was considered reactionary in the sense that all the reforms were geared to correcting the inequalities, ignorance, and fanaticism of the old regime (*Ibid.*, 281).

“However, my dear friends, the trees, chickens and cows who live within the territories of this country are equally Turks [according to the Citizenship Law]. ... It is a difficult thing to be a Turk in spirit. ... Even though nobody wants anything from nobody one should work for this community. ... There should be no such thing as expecting something in return saying that “I did such and such services for this nation”. You should think of those things you do as duties, not as a favor. ... Every man who, with all their inner energy, feels that he is a Turk is considered to be a Turk not as a formality but in the fullest sense – regardless of his ethnicity or religion (*Cumhuriyet*, 5 July 1938, 1-6).³⁹³

Hence, it was significant that unity in feeling and spirit should be proved by actions. Once again, it was the persistent divide between nationality and citizenship which manifested itself.

a. Admitting New Immigrants and Assimilation: Religion Making a Comeback

Sukru Kaya also asserted the significance of unity in feeling as being an element of belonging. After outlining the goal of the government as trying to bring as many individuals as possible into the country (so as to boost the population),³⁹⁴ he added:

“The matter of bringing in the Turks residing outside is not only a matter of population. This is a matter which manifests itself as a matter of feeling, compassion, humanity, and justice” (ZC, 18.11.1935, 6, 77).

In other words, these groups (which were mostly coming from various Balkan countries) were talked about as deserving a piece of the wealth and happiness of the Turkish Republic. Moreover, they were also referred to as “our

³⁹³ This “inner energy” or possessing the spirit of belonging to the nation was also raised in the context of the development of a national literature. In one of his articles on literature Suut Kemal Yetkin maintained that for example, Turgenev’s novels – despite the fact that they took place in Russia – were not Russian in their essence. However, *Brothers Karamazov* was. It was not the location or the nationality of the characters that give a novel a truly national character. Rather, “the artist who carries his nationality not in his head but in his spirit, blood saves his novels (which take place in foreign countries) from cosmopolitanism, and gives them a national character” (published in *Kultur Haftasi*, 5 February 1936, No. 4, 74; and republished in Kaplan et. al (1981): 159).

³⁹⁴ In addition to this pull factor, the treatment of Muslims in various Balkan countries (e.g. Pomaks in Bulgaria) acted as a push factor for the Muslim populations in the area (Çagaptay, 2006b: 84).

brothers who belong to the same race". Differently put, it was implied that they were the natural members of the nation. With that sentiment in mind Sukru Kaya ended his speech saying that "the government is everyday involved with the individual freedoms of our brothers from the same race who live with our culture, and speak our language" (*Ibid.*, 80).

Government decrees that were issued one after another reflect the Kemalist elite's perception of who could be "tolerated" or "desirable" and so admissible into the country. Especially starting from the late 1920s and 1930s, through various decrees thousands of Muslims coming from as diverse places as Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Russia, Syria, Iran, Albania, and Greece were accepted into citizenship (Cagaptay, 2003: 612). As Cagaptay argues "in these cases, the government did not require Turkishness as a prerequisite of citizenship. Rather, it was enough for one to be an Ottoman Muslim, especially from the Balkans, in order to become a citizen" (*Ibid.*, 613).

Within this context Turkish nationalism still contained religious as well as cultural coloring as opposed to a more ethnic/racial understanding. This particular understanding of belonging and nationhood was further fortified by an emphasis on assimilation. For example, despite his stress on race, Denizli deputy Necip Ali Bey also made a point of mentioning that when it came to nationality, it was not only race but the unity of culture which should be taken into account:

"Even though we acknowledge the special features of races, we are convinced in the nobleness of all the world's nations. And we respect that. This is one of the theses that we have been defending since the earliest days of the Turkish Revolution. In addition to considering the significance of race on national character, national strength, in our education and cultural thinking we understand human beings as social creatures and nationality as the unity of culture" (*Ayin Tarihi*, 1934, No. 3, 25).

Defining nationality as "unity of culture" thus demonstrated that the main rule of belonging rested on assimilation. Moreover, and when looked at the immigrants admitted to the country, and accepted as citizens, it was also clear that this unity of culture (at least partly) referred to a unity of religion.

b. Non-Turkish Communities: Assimilationist and Differentialist Attitudes

Similarly, Tekinalp defined the Kemalist principle of nationalism as being centered on culture and not on race. In his own words: “Just like in the case of the old Turks, for the new Turks too culture constitutes the strongest national bond” (1944: 257). Yet despite this stress on culture, Tekinalp did go back to racial origins in his definition of what a national spirit meant. More specifically, he defined the national spirit as something that “meant not only a nation’s genius, core or even culture but [it was something] that was deeper” and was something that was present in “blood, or more clearly in race” (*Ibid.*, 25).

In his earlier work, *Kemalism*, too there existed a tension in relation to the bases of the new nation. In this work Tekinalp again maintained that culture was the central, constitutive element of national identity. However, he did continue to point out that

“One should not assume that Kemalism does not have any interest in [our] brothers who share the same religion and who come from the same [our] race. ... The element of race is the number one consideration in Turkish government’s policy on population and the practical precautions it took in increasing the population”³⁹⁵ ([1936] 1998: 289-90).

Accordingly, in the face of certain practical and urgent considerations (such as repopulating the new nation) it was possible for ethnicity to override religion. This tension regarding the constituent elements of nationhood was also present in the presentation of Professor Fuad Basgil.³⁹⁶ Addressing the attendees of the Second Turkish History Congress Basgil first differentiated between objective (i.e. descent, language) and subjective (i.e. feeling of attachment to

³⁹⁵ My emphasis.

³⁹⁶ (Ali) Fuad Basgil (1893, Carsamba – 1967): statesman and lawyer. He fought during the First World War. After, he studied law in France. Basgil returned to Turkey in 1930 and started working at the Directory of Higher Education. He also started teaching at the Ankara Law Faculty. Basgil worked as an advisor during the Hatay negotiations in 1937. In his later years he continued teaching at the university. Basgil was known for his criticisms towards RPP during the Kemalist regime. During the multi-party era he supported the Democrat Party.

one's kind) elements of national identity. After stating that common ancestry, language, history, culture and ideals all complemented each other he continued:

“Turkish nation is composed of citizens who speak Turkish, who have Turkish blood, or believe that they descend from Turkish origins; who had lived the good and bad times of the Turks, or who embraced the memories of those days; who are bound to Turkishness with their hearts and culture and say “I am Turkish”” (Second Turkish History Congress, 1937: 986).

When the state of minorities was discussed the above stress on race/ethnicity shifted yet again; and two different ways of talking about minorities persisted. Parallel to previous decades, the elite maintained that “all of us are Turks”. At the same time, some groups were clearly defined as outsiders.

During the 1930s the effects of anti-Semitism which was on the rise in Europe was also felt in Turkey. In 1934 the government issued a message following the complaints that there was blatant anti-Semitism in certain towns including Edirne and Kırklareli.³⁹⁷ In the report it was maintained that the Jewish community was applauded for its determination to assimilate into the Turkish culture. The recent clashes between some of the Turkish and Turkish-Jewish citizens were explained away as being the result of international (anti-Semitic) literature/propaganda (*Ayin Tarihi*, 1934, No. 13, 52). One minor ‘glitch’ with regards to relations between the Jewish community and the Turks was tied to the former’s persistence in using their own language and embracing their own culture. This ‘resistance against using Turkish language, and accepting Turkish culture’ was in turn pointed out to be something unique to Turkish-Jewry (*Ibid.*, 52).³⁹⁸

³⁹⁷ Using archival data from the British Public Office, Aktar (2000a) outlines these attacks against the Jewish community; and demonstrates a possible link between the aggressors and the government. More specifically, he argues that even though the cabinet ministers might not have been directly involved, it is hard to imagine that they did not have any information on the increasing tension. Aktar concludes that this was yet another example of the Turkification attempts by the elite. For a different explanation of the incidence, which focuses on the role of a few Turkish anti-Semite writers and their followers, see Levi (1996).

³⁹⁸ It should also be mentioned that attacks against the community did make individuals and business owners wary of these developments. As a result, and according to government figures, out of 13,000 Jewish residents in Thrace, 3,000 moved to Istanbul (*Ibid.*, 53). In different accounts, these numbers varies as well. For example, Levi writes that out of 13,000 Jewish citizens, 10,000 left for Istanbul (1996: 125).

The implication of course is that the Jewish community itself was contributing to rising tensions within society.

Despite the assimilationist approach toward the Jewish community the government made it clear that it would not initiate a policy of mass (Jewish) immigration into the country.³⁹⁹ Four years later, in 1938, the government had to face growing demand from Jews to pass through Turkey. In order to counter such demands and the possibility of these individuals applying for immigration, the government made sure that Jews were only to be allowed into the country on a strictly temporary basis - with a permission to stay only for one month. The maximum numbers of such temporary entry permits were to be limited to 200 per month as well (PMA, 030.10.110.736.5; 25.1.1938).⁴⁰⁰

In conjunction to these strict measures to block non-Muslim applicants (either as refugees or potential citizens), there was also the denial that the new nation's population included different ethnic groups. The rejection of the existence of 'minorities' in the country was a consistent theme voiced by deputies in and outside the GNA.⁴⁰¹ When the Law on Associations (*Cemiyetler Kanunu*)⁴⁰² was being debated in the Parliament a Turkish-Armenian deputy Berc Turker (Keresteciyan) complained about the language of the draft:

³⁹⁹ During the 1930s German Jews (as well as Austrian Jews) fleeing from the Nazi regime was allowed to immigrate to Turkey. Among those were professors, artists, and musicians. Around the same time, Sabri Toprak's draft law to ban Jewish immigration into the country was not ratified by the GNA. Thus, and Cagaptay (2006b) also concludes, Kemalist regime was not anti-Semitic in its actions. However, still, they did not want to enlarge the non-Christian (including Jewish) population which is already present in the country.

⁴⁰⁰ At this time the Jewish community was a fraction of the general population. In 1914 population of the country was 16,699,185. At this time, the Jewish community totaled 146,636. By 1927 their numbers were down to 81,872 (while total population declined to around 13,600,000); and in 1935 census it further declined to 78,730 (while the total population increased back to 16 million) (Bali, 1999: 561). Thus, the Jewish community always accounted for a minor fraction of the total population, and continued to decline in numbers over the years. By 1955, the community got even smaller - amounting to only 46,000 (while total population increased up to 24 million) (*Ibid.*, 561).

⁴⁰¹ Arabs, along with Albanians and Kurds, were also not to be accepted as immigrants to Turkey. For a discussion of the Statute that stipulated the inclusion/exclusion of different groups, see Cagaptay (2006a).

⁴⁰² The Law of Associations (Nr. 3512) did have a significant impact on minorities. It was designed to ban those associations which had international connections. As a result, Jewish associations (such as B'nai B'rith, which was a local branch of an international association) were closed down (Bali, 2001).

“The Law talks of minorities. The word minority reaches our ears as something ugly. To me, the word minority reminds me of the days of capitulations when there had been a group used as a political tool by foreign states. ... There are no minorities any more. I, myself was a member of a minority, my spirit and heart was not a minority, it was Turkish. ... All those who belong to a minority group are Turkish” (ZC, 28.6.1938, 26, 412).⁴⁰³

Yet, these and similar ways of conceptualizing the nation as being a homogenous whole did not stop the elite to criticize certain groups, and branding them as not belonging to the nation. Arabs were one such group. Anti-Arab attitudes were also found in the earlier decade. During the 1930s, especially with the rise of the “Hatay problem” Arabs once again came to the foreground of discussions. Within this specific context Arabs were blamed for conspiring with the French (ZC, 27.5.1938, 25, 248).⁴⁰⁴

Circassians were another group. During the debates on the budget for the Ministry of the Interior Eskisehir deputy Emin Bey addressed the problem of smuggling.

“Smuggling fundamentally takes place in certain localities. Eighty five percent of those are Circassians. ... This occupation is considered [by them] as having been extended to them from the ancien regime. ... Because of the things they did during the War of Independence they became frightened and held back. But I see that this type of activity is still mostly done by them. ... In the past they were preoccupied with selling girls to the palace. ... Now, smuggling. ... Why are we tolerating these nomads who have been horse thieves? (ZC, 15.7.1931, 3, 123).

Circassians were also considered as one of those Muslims who had failed to assimilate into the Turkish culture. More specifically, a report compiled (in 1934) by the Committee for the Resettlement Law emphasized Circassians as one of those Muslim groups which had been part of the Ottoman Empire for centuries yet “did not for one day [and to this date] entered into Turkish culture”(Addendum, Report by the Temporary Committee for the Law of Resettlement, ZC, 27.5.1934: 6).

⁴⁰³ For the same point on minorities also see İsmat Özdamar’s talk in the Parliament (ZC, 26.5.1937, 18, 248).

⁴⁰⁴ During the period under discussion the immigration of Arabs (as well as Albanians and Kurds) were denied. For a discussion of the Statute that stipulated the inclusion/exclusion of different groups, see Çağatay (2006a).

Despite the rhetoric of inclusion through assimilation, in practice, some groups were further alienated or even put in a position to leave the country. This was exactly the case for the Greeks residing in Istanbul. In 30 January 1923, it was established that those Greeks who would be exempt from the population exchange would acquire the status of “etablis”; and they were thus granted the right to work and reside in Istanbul without necessarily acquiring Turkish citizenship. In 1927 the number of Greek citizens living in Istanbul was 26,431 (Aktar, 2000c: 125). Following the 1932 Law (Nr. 2007) which restricted certain occupations to Turkish citizens only,⁴⁰⁵ there started an exodus of this etablis population. According to the 1935 population census, the number of Greek citizens in Istanbul went down to 17, 642 (*Ibid.*, 126).

In the meantime, in their writings and published works MPs continued to formulate their understanding of Turkishness. For instance, Celal Nuri (Ileri) discussed the boundaries of Turkishness in his book *Devlet ve Meclis Hakkında Muhasebeler* [Thoughts on the State and the Assembly]. In this work Ileri clearly outlined the conditions of being a “real Turk”. His list included:

- “1. Turkish must be his language
2. Must come from Muslim ancestry; or must have converted
3. Must not have blatant features of the yellow and black human species” (1932: 97-8).

Ileri continued to state that even though blood was an important element it should not be considered as the only element in being a Turk. Rather, it was the unity in ideals, language and feeling that made an individual a real Turk (*Ibid.*, 101). It is also significant that he mentions religion as one of the factors. As mentioned above, religion was also one of the elements which determined the desirability of immigrants. Hence, even during and after the laicization reforms religion did not disappear completely in the understanding of nationhood.

⁴⁰⁵ The Law on Professions and Services Allocated to Turkish Citizens in Turkey (Türkiye’de Türk Vatandaşlarına Tahsis Edilen Sanat ve Hizmetler Hakkında Kanun) (11 June 1932) allocated certain occupations (such as chemists, stockbrokers, janitors, veterinarians etc.) exclusively to Turkish Citizens. A similar law which focused on the press was ratified a year earlier. According to the Press Law (Matbuat Kanunu, Nr. 1881) only Turks could own magazines and journals. For these and similar actions taken towards Turkification also see Yildiz (2001).

c. Non-Turkish Muslim Groups and Resettlement: Seeking Unity through Assimilation

Race/ethnicity⁴⁰⁶ became a central variable in 1934 when the Cabinet started to look into the possible ways of locating the recent wave of immigrants. More specifically, the discussions took place around the formulation of the articles of the *Iskan Kanunu* (Law of Settlement). The main goal of the Law was to settle immigrants, refugees as well as the already resident nomadic groups (i.e. Kurds and the Roma)⁴⁰⁷ in such a way that they would assimilate into Turkish culture. So, the law was designed not only with the aim of settlement, but also the resettlement of existing groups.⁴⁰⁸

In its emphasis on specific groups and their assimilation, the Law first and foremost brings out to the clear the ongoing contradiction between what the elite were saying (i.e. 'we are all brothers, belonging to the same history etc.') and what they were doing. The Law was also reflective of the failure of the Republican regime in assimilating certain groups (especially Kurds).⁴⁰⁹ As Ruseni Bey stated "Just as individuals have a stomach so do nations have stomachs. They live by eating up groups and individuals" (ZC, 7.6.1934, 69).

The formation of the nation could only be complete if these groups were made part of the Turkish culture. As Sukru Kaya put it: "This Law is going to carve a country which speaks the same language, and which possess common sentiments" (ZC, 14.6.1934: 141).

⁴⁰⁶ Even though the elite used "irk" or "soy" [the literal translation of which is race], the term was used to denote ethnicity. As Cagaptay notes, "in the minds of the Kemalists, soy was an immutable category but it was about ethnicity and not about biology. By referring to race in the Resettlement Law, Kemalism took Turkish ethnicity as a central concept" (2006a: 72).

⁴⁰⁷ During the GNA session Sukru Kaya noted that "there are more than a million nomadic people in our country" (ZC, 14.6.1934: 141).

⁴⁰⁸ The Minister of Interior, Sukru Kaya, lists four main factors which were related to this Law: "This is, first and foremost, had to do with population [i.e. to repopulate the country]. Secondly, it is about immigrants. Third, it is about the nomadic tribes. Fourth ... it is about those individuals who do not own land, but work on someone else's" (ZC, 14.6.1934: 140).

⁴⁰⁹ Here, a parallel could be drawn between Bismarck's Settlement Law of 1886 which was directed against the Poles (and arguably more so against the Polish nobility) and the Turkish Settlement Law. Brubaker explains Bismarck's Law as being the result of an acknowledgement of the failure to assimilate Poles (1992: 131).

With assimilation as the central concern, three geographical zones were designated as the bases of where different groups would be (re)located: the first zone comprised of places where those who belonged to Turkish culture resided (and would reside). The second zone was “reserved for those who would be asked to assimilate into Turkish culture”. Finally, the third zone was to be kept free of settlement due to health, military/security, and economic reasons (*Ibid.*, 142).

The Law also stipulated those who would not be let into the country. Article Four laid out five such categories of individuals: “a. those who do not belong to Turkish culture, b. anarchists, c. spies, d. nomadic gypsies, e. those who were expelled from the country will not be admitted as immigrants to Turkey” (*Ibid.*, 142). The provisions in this article clearly blocked the immigration of certain groups such as the Roma, and Kurds as well as non-Muslims (Christians, and Jews).⁴¹⁰

For the Kurdish population the Law meant resettlement into areas where population was predominantly ethnically Turkish. The Resettlement Law of 1926 had the same aim. However, during that time, the extent of their resettlement had remained limited.⁴¹¹ Hence, this earlier Law had been more of a “warning” to Kurds following the 1925 Seyh Sait Rebellion. According to Sukru Kaya, who was the Minister of Interior at the time:

“For the moment [1926] the Turkish Government’s Kurdish policy consists of military occupation for the purpose of maintaining order and the complete and absolute disarmament of the population. It is possible to envisage in the future an intense colonization so that the Kurds may be drowned in the huge mass of the Turkish population” (quoted in Cagaptay, 2006a: 68).

The 1934 Law had a more detailed outlining of the parameters of such a colonization project; and there was a clear attention paid to “nomadic” (Kurds, and Roma) groups. The Law also included an article where it was stated that

⁴¹⁰ The Resettlement Law of 1926 (which was not as extensive in its reach as the 1934 one) also stipulated that “Those people who do not share the Turkish culture will not be admitted as immigrants”. See Cagaptay (2006a: 66-7) for a discussion of the 1926 Law.

⁴¹¹ Cagaptay notes that the number of all people resettled between 1926 and 1932 was 742,720. The number of Kurds who were moved to Western Turkey during the same period amounted to 2,774 only (2006a: 68).

“tribes were not recognized as legal persons”; and those individuals who were or wanted to be a tribal leader could be resettled in areas deemed suitable by the Cabinet of Ministers (ZC, 14.6.1934: 143). Similarly, those Turkish citizens who were tribal members, and who did not belong to Turkish culture were to be relocated to areas designated in Zone 2 (*Ibid.*, 144). The dispersal of these groups also came under the provisions of the Law: Those who did not speak Turkish could not establish a village or neighborhood. Nor could they found workers or artisans groups/associations. Finally, according to Article 11 those who did not belong to Turkish culture, or belonged to Turkish culture but did not speak Turkish could face relocation and denaturalization (*Ibid.*, 144).

Despite the extensive and detailed plans for resettlement which applied to a variety of groups, for Kurds the execution of the Law did not result in massive relocations. The total number of Kurds who were relocated to Western Turkey remained 25,381 (Tekeli, 1990: 49-55; cited in Cagaptay 2006a: 71). Yet, the Law still carries weight in terms of demonstrating the vision of the Turkish nation as contemplated and articulated by the political elite.

More specifically, the articles of the Law illustrate how the Republican elite thought of citizenship and belonging – on the bases of religion, ethnicity as well as language. With regards to the last dimension, whether a person could be considered Turkish depended on whether he/she could speak Turkish; and also whether the person actually uses it as a main medium of communication. In fact, the committee which had worked on the drafting of the Settlement Law outlined in detail how much significance was paid to establishing linguistic unity through this Law. In the addendum to the Law, it was stated that the Committee had considered adding provisions so as to secure that:

“No languages other than Turkish were spoken – first in public places, then ... in homes; and finally everywhere; to ban different attires, different customs, different games, different songs” (Addendum, Report by the Temporary Committee for the Law of Resettlement, ZC, 27.5.1934: 11).

The report continued to state that since such measures could potentially “distance citizens from us” and since the aim was to “warm them to us”, it was thought more appropriate to wait and see how things changed first (*Ibid.*, 11).

When we look at the overall picture, 1930s point to a growing fracture between the language the elite used, and the policies they executed – primarily for non-Muslim, but also for Muslim-non-Turkish groups: While the elite’s rhetoric was largely based on an assimilationist understanding of the nation, their policies were both assimilationist and dissimilationist in nature.

When looked at specific groups, Greeks and Armenians faced an exclusionary rhetoric *and* practice; while Jews were faced with an assimilationist rhetoric coupled with differentialist policies. Among Muslim groups, it was specifically Kurds who were picked out and picked at. Hence, in their case there was also a reversal with regards to their place in the nation. While the 1920s were marked by an emphasis on ‘Kurds are inseparable from Turks’, 1930s was characterized by a stress on their “nomadic”, “barbaric”, “rebellious” natures. This reversal in turn was due to the failure of the elite to assimilate these groups, and the Kurds’ reactionary attitudes toward the state.

V. Concluding Remarks

As Brubaker and Laitin argues, national groups are not entities fixed in time, but that membership is “fluid and context-dependent” (Brubaker and Laitin, 1998). This chapter discussed the process through which definitions of citizenship and belonging to the nation were defined, and redefined.

Different from Western European trajectory, in the Turkish case the institutionalization of citizenship was not tied to demands expressed by different classes, and the corresponding response of the state towards these demands. Moreover, and again different from the cases such as Germany and France, in the Turkish case there was not a perfect fit between the definition of citizenship and immigration laws. Differently put, the definition of citizenship (which was an

inclusive one) did not follow a similarly inclusive, expansive formulation of immigration policy.

In the Turkish case, creating citizens out of subjects meant the elimination of rival identities (e.g. tribal). Ironically, the institutionalization of citizenship was also accompanied by the creation of a hierarchy of citizens. More specifically, the creation of this hierarchy referred to a differentiation between “real” citizens, and others. Moreover, the definition of the “others” category was altered over time: Initially the category was defined on the basis of religion, while in later years, it also acquired an ethnic basis (especially in the case of Kurds) as well as a linguistic one (i.e. those who did not speak Turkish were considered not “really” belonging to the nation). Accordingly, it is also observed that –and similar to the direction the language policies took – the state resorted to increasingly aggressive measures to assimilate some of these groups (such as the Jewish community as well non-Turkish Muslim groups) while utilizing dissimilationist rhetoric and practices towards others (i.e. Armenians, Greeks and Jews).

It is evident that all throughout the period under analysis there was a clear divide between citizenship and nationality. Moreover, even though laicization reforms were undertaken so as to redefine the nature of the nation and its polity, these reforms did not mean that religion lost all its significance. As demonstrated in the above analysis, religion still had a place as a marker of belonging. More specifically, and in the 1930s, religion as an expressive component of nationhood manifested itself very clearly in the formulation (and application) of immigration laws.

Finally, one of the main factors which were at play and which shaped both rhetoric and action on citizenship and immigration was the perceived threats posed by various communities. This was also tied to the confidence of the elite in thinking whether they could assimilate certain groups or not. The sheer size of a group was not necessarily of importance here. For example, even though the size of the Armenian and Greek communities had dwindled down to an almost negligible level in the 1920s, the political elite still conceived them as a major threat to national unity. This perception, in turn, shaped their actions. Thus, it was

factors such as the communities' loyalty/disloyalty to the Ottoman Empire (as assessed by the elite), their level of economic power, and/or ambitions of building their own nation as well as the elite's discernment of their success or failure in assimilating specific groups which determined the Republican elite's outlook on the state of particular minorities.

Chapter 9 – Conclusion

I. Summary

This study examined the process of Turkish nation-building during the early Republican period (1920-1938). The substantive focus was on its three main terrains (language, education, and citizenship), and the rhetoric and actions of the political elite.

In her analysis of the French Revolution, Hunt notes that “the Revolution in politics was an explosive interaction between ideas and reality, between intention and circumstances, between collective practices and social context” (1984: 13). In a similar vein, the process of Turkish nation-building – as conceived by the political elite – also points to the significance of interactions between reality and ideas, and intentions and circumstances.

The above analysis concluded that during the Kemalist era the definitions of nationhood shifted over time. Related to this, and despite numerous works which view the Turkish nation-building process as an automatic (and smooth) transformation, it was demonstrated that a closer examination refutes such generalizations. Furthermore, the study of the three terrains of nation-building (i.e. language, education, and citizenship) revealed that the shifts in the definition of nationhood were due to the interplay of different (i.e. geopolitical, political, ideological, economic) factors. By focusing on these shifts and their underlying causes this study revealed, and emphasized the dynamic nature of Turkish nation-building.

The first terrain, language policies, illustrated that during the early period geopolitical and ideological factors shaped the way the elite conceived (the religious character of) nationhood. During the second half of 1920s, the elite put emphasis on assimilation, Westernization, and social equality. In this context language policies became tools to achieve these ends. Finally, the last decade of the Kemalist era was marked by an intensification of the assimilation efforts as well as a stress on remolding the minds of the citizenry. The former was linked to

the elite's realization that their previous (assimilationist) policies had not succeeded. Hence, they saw the solution in the further tightening of their grip over the citizenry. In this way, they were also aiming at strengthening the RPP regime, and solidifying its principles. Finally, the last decade also saw an ethnic understanding of the nation come into play. However, and as noted above, when looked at the content and direction of language policies, this specific dimension of nationhood did not predominate over the more central, assimilationist outlook.

In the sphere of education, a similar pattern emerged. More precisely, the initial years of the GNA demonstrated that the elite defined the nation along religious lines. Within this frame, they also attributed significance to religious education. During the second period (1924-29) assimilationist policies took precedence. However, the role of religion was not completely dismissed. Rather, and in the context of education, there was an institutional redefinition when the state took control over the administration and the content of education. In this way the elite was also able to define the specific, and the "desired" content of religious education. During the last decade, there was another shift: Parallel to the change reflected in the language terrain, here too, the ideological sphere gained significance. More specifically, the RPP principles (as well as an assimilationist outlook) became the pillars of the education system. Finally, there was an ethnic dimension added to the whole matrix. This latter became especially manifest in the efforts at rewriting the Turkish history.

The third dimension – citizenship – elucidates a slightly different picture. In the opening years of the GNA, and similar to the other two terrains, the discussions over the contents of Turkishness revolved around the significance of the nation's religious character.⁴¹² Yet, not all Muslims were understood to be the "true owners of the nation". This period was the beginning of the creation of a hierarchy among citizens. It was during the second half of 1920s that the ranking of citizens crystallized. Here, religion was still the main marker.⁴¹³ More specifically, an inclusive definition of citizenship remained side by side, and in

⁴¹² The centrality of religion was obvious in a variety of ways –one being the redistribution of economic and political power.

⁴¹³ The Jewish citizens were the exception here.

tension with a more differentialist outlook on Turkishness. The latter understanding was also apparent in some of the policies carried out by the elite. Moving onto the 1930s, the significance of religion – in the definition of rules of belonging, and especially in the immigration practices – remained constant. These last years were also characterized by a continuance tension between a more assimilationist, inclusive, and exclusionary (and ethnic) understandings of nationhood.

II. Directions for Future Research

Since the above analysis was based on a single-case study, asking comparative questions would be a possible, and I would suggest, a fruitful next step. More precisely, comparing and contrasting two or more cases, and with a focus on the nature of transitions from empire to nation would lead us to ask a number of significant questions: Do imperial structures endure beyond imperial decline? If so, what are the implications of this for the nature of the nascent states? How is citizenship defined and institutionalized in different cases? During the course of the transition from empire to nation, how are minorities ‘managed’ by the nation-builders? What are some of the reasons underlying the similarities and/or differences in the ways minority groups were situated during processes of nation-building?

As demonstrated by the present study, the way the Republican elite perceived their imperial past (partially) shaped the way they conceived the new nation. Similarly, and looking at the French and British cases, Kumar (2006) draws our attention to the link between different experiences of empires and the resultant differences in definitions of nationhood. His main argument which pinpoints the critical impact domestic histories (i.e. Revolutionary in the French, and evolutionary in the British case) and imperial pasts exert on national consciousness is an important relationship that could be analyzed further using other cases.

In the Turkish case, the Republican elite's conceptualization of their Ottoman past mattered. More precisely, the elite defined that this past (and especially the last century of the Empire) was characterized by the weakness of its polity. For them, the history of the Ottomans was a history of defeats and humiliations. Consequently, the Republican elite wanted to escape from this past. Ironically, and as demonstrated in the substantive chapters, the role of religion – which had been the basis of legitimacy under the Ottomans - remained significant in the conception of nationhood. In this respect, their desire to get away from the past did not take the form of a complete rejection of religion. Rather, they redefined its role and its institutional bases.

Given this general outline, a comparative research which focuses on the question of how nation-builders perceived their imperial pasts, and the possible implications and impacts of these perceptions on the ways they conceived the rules of belonging would be a fruitful endeavor. One possible comparison could be between Turkey and Austria: Both were cases where the nation was formed out of the remnants of an imperial core. However, there was an important difference between the two: While the Austrian elite looked back to their imperial past with nostalgia (Lieven, 2000: 356), the Turkish elite wanted to get away from it. Hence, analyzing the mechanisms through which these differences impacted on definitions of nationhood would enhance our understanding on the link between imperial pasts and the formation of nations.

One of the reoccurring themes of this study was religion and how it was situated within the matrix of nationhood. The shifts that religion undergoes during the process of nation-building could be another, general, starting point for further research. For example, despite some fundamental differences between the French and Turkish cases (e.g. the nature of their revolutionary pasts, the composition of the elite, and an earlier establishment of a democratic nation in the former case), these two countries ended up exhibiting a similar outlook on religion. Over time this outlook came to be characterized by a rigid form of laicism which manifests itself by an intolerance of religion and religious symbols in public arenas. Looking at the historical trajectories of these two cases during their formative

years, a comparative analysis would inform us as to how and why different initial conditions might lead to similar outcomes.

In sum, looking at transitions from empire to nation from a comparative perspective would further contribute to the existing literature through elucidating how and why differences and similarities exist in the building of nations.

III. Contemporary Politics and the Republican Past

The nature of present-day debates in Turkey remains intimately connected to the Republican past. This connection inevitably results in a series of reinterpretations of the past in the hands of “secularists” and “Islamists”, the state and civil society groups, Kurds and Turks, and the young and the old. These reinterpretations in turn inform differing understandings in relation to the challenges the country is facing as well as possible solutions to these challenges.

More specifically, ‘remembering the past’ (i.e. the Kemalist era), combined with the recent rise of political Islam, has entailed a reevaluation of the role of religion in Turkish society and polity,⁴¹⁴ the Ottoman legacy as well as a reevaluation of the rules of belonging to the nation. These redefinitions, which take different shapes and forms in the hands of different groups, are also highly politicized. In other words the constant reconstruction of the past means that the Kemalist era becomes a “political battleground” (Ozyurek, 2007). For instance, and as Ozyurek points out:

“In late-1990s Turkey [and today], both Kemalist and Islamist politicians located their utopias in the past rather than the future. As opposed to Kemalists, who yearned for the 1930s, Islamists took an alternative approach to memory-based identity and idealized the Ottoman period when Islam was the official religion of the state. Yet, when the February 28 measures against political Islam limited the legitimate boundaries of politics in Turkey in 1997, officials of the new Islamic party (Virtue Party) turned toward the republican past. By highlighting the Islamic aspects of the foundational moments, they tried to include themselves in the politically legitimate sphere” (Ozyurek, 2007: 135).

⁴¹⁴ For recent research done in this area, see Bora and Caliskan (2008) on the headscarf debate, and Turam (2006) on the relationship between religion and the Turkish state.

The interest in rediscovering the past has not been limited to politicians either. Neither is this interest reserved to issues pertaining to religion. For the past two decades, public attention has been increasingly devoted to rediscovering, and reclaiming histories which have long been largely swept aside. The attraction of these “forgotten histories and identities” manifest itself in various forms and shapes: Journals are founded –dedicated to discovering, supporting and celebrating the revitalization of Georgian, Bosnian, Circassian identities. Cookbooks are being published which solely aim at re-introducing some of the “ethnic” dishes.

Recent scholarly literature also manifests this shift, or stepping back into the past: Works analyzing how individual and social memories operate and are reinvented have started to flourish (Ozyurek, 2007; Neyzi, 2002). How do people relate to their personal and public pasts? Why is the reconciliation of these personal and public pasts a complex and complicated process? What could the recent developments in Turkey tell us about the success or failure of the ‘Kemalist nation-building project’?

The ongoing controversies over constitutional change, ways to resolve the “Kurdish problem”, and the tension between “secularists” and “Islamists” illustrate that nation-building is an ongoing process. The roots of all of these present-day debates and challenges go back to the early Republican era. A close and detailed rereading of the early nation-building process is thus highly relevant in order for us to situate the contemporary debates within their historical context.

Would present-day Turkey have been a different place if the nation-builders had chosen a different path in defining the rules of belonging? The short answer to this question is “yes”. As demonstrated in my substantive chapters, even though the Republican elite did not operate in a universe where options were unlimited,⁴¹⁵ they still had alternatives. These alternatives –in relation to the content of citizenship, education, and the definition of Turkishness etc. – were discussed both inside and outside the Parliament. Yet, in the final analysis, the

⁴¹⁵ For example, the Ottoman past, and its rejection by the elite followed from the conditions of imperial decline, and the War of Independence. The latter was significant in shaping the initial conditions of nation-building.

political elite defined themselves as the moral agents, and teachers of the nation. The content of their actions were partly shaped by their perception of that successful assimilation of minorities would be a sign of regime strength. This understanding was also accompanied by an obsessive fear towards ethnic and religious minorities. The nation they created required all citizens to 'melt into the nation and the state'. Given this framework, the possibility of institutionalizing a civic conception of citizenship was lost: Despite their claims, the course taken by the nation-builders led to the suppression of different (ethnic and religious) – coupled with the creation of a hierarchy of citizens. An inclusive definition of nationhood grounded on the supremacy of the individual, and civil rights –if it had materialized – would have prevented the “Kurdish problem” which Turkey is yet to solve.

Finally, the Republican elite's intolerance toward any form of public exhibitions of religion, and their redefinition of the political sphere so as to reduce the significance of Islam existed side by side with an understanding of Turkishness that still incorporated (and institutionalized) Islam as an identity. This duality defines one of the central dilemmas of present-day Turkey. Recent debates over the rise of political Islam, and the strong reactions against it manifest this dilemma. The solution, it seems, depends on the transcendence of Kemalism, and the highly homogenizing, and collectivist contours of nationhood drawn by the early Republican elite.

Appendix I: Selected Biographies *

Abalioglu, Yunus Nadi (1880, Fethiye -1945): Acclaimed journalist, statesman, and a radical nationalist. After studying law for some time, he started working for the newspaper *Malumat*. He was arrested and sent into exile by the Hamidian regime. When he finally returned back to Istanbul he took up writing for newspapers again – this time for *Ikdam* (Effort) and *Tasvir-i Efkar*. In 1910, Nadi also started contributing to one of the publications of the CUP. The following year he entered the Ottoman Assembly. In 1918 he founded the newspaper *Yeni Gun* (New Day). Nadi also served as a deputy in the GNA from 1923 to 1943. In 1924 he founded his newspaper *Cumhuriyet* (Republic) which is still in publication today.

Abalioglu, Nadir Nadi (1908, Mugla –1991): Journalist, statesman, son of Yunus Nadi Abalioglu. He studied political science in Vienna and Lausanne. For a while he taught sociology and civics at the Galatasary Lycee. Following his father's death in 1945 Nadir Nadi took over the newspaper *Cumhuriyet*. In addition to his career in journalism, he also entered the Parliament in 1950 after he joined the Democrat Party and worked as a deputy first from Mugla, and then Istanbul.

Adivar, Adnan (1882, Gelibolu – 1955): Statesman. Adivar was trained as a doctor, and helped organize the Red Crescent Society. He was actively involved during the National Independence Movement. He served as health minister and worked as the deputy speaker and the representative of the Ankara government in Istanbul. In 1925, he joined the (opposition) Progressive Republican Party. After the dissolution of the Party in 1926, Adivar went to Europe and only came back to

* This list of biographies is of a select group of deputies and intelligentsia who had been influential figures during the period under study. Abbreviated versions of each person's biographical notes are also presented within the text itself. Biographical information was compiled from a variety of sources including *Türk ve Dünya Unluları Ansiklopedisi* [The Encyclopedia of Famous Turkish and World Personages], *Britannica*, and *Türk Büyükleri ve Türk Adlari* [Famous Turks and Turkish Names] as well as a number of scholarly books written on some of the listed individuals. I also utilized GNA's serial publication, *Album*, which provides brief biographical information on all Members of Parliament.

Turkey in 1939. Even though he was acquitted, he was tried for the plot to assassinate Mustafa Kemal. Adivar was known for his critical stance to RPP policies.

Adivar, Halide Edip (1883, Istanbul – 1964): Novelist, supporter of women's emancipation in Turkey. Adivar belonged to a wealthy family. Her father worked at the Palace and her childhood was spent amidst some of the most influential personages of the time. After receiving private education she attended the American College for Girls in Istanbul. She contributed articles to the CUP newspaper *Tanin*. Her first husband was a renowned Turkish mathematician, Salih Zeki Bey. When he decided to take on a second wife, Halide Edip, who was strictly opposed to polygamy left her husband. In 1917 she married the statesman Adnan Adivar. Ardent opponent to the partition of the country, she actively took part in the War of Independence. Edip was also involved in the nationalist Turkish Hearth clubs. After the consolidation of the Kemalist regime she became critical to its policies, and with her husband, traveled extensively in France, the United States, England and India between 1925 and 1938. In 1939 she returned back to Istanbul and became a professor of English Literature at Istanbul University. Following the transition to a multiparty system in 1950, she also served as deputy.

Agaoglu, Ahmet (1869, Karabagh, Azerbaijan -1939): Scholar, and statesman. In his writings he embraced Turkish nationalism as well as liberal thinking. During different times of his life he was influenced by different currents of thought including Islamism, Westernism, and Turkish nationalism. He belonged to a leading tribal family. After a traditional upbringing and a brief period he spent in St. Petersburg as a student, Agaoglu studied law, and oriental languages in Paris. During these years he was very much influenced by his professor Ernest Renan. In Paris he also met Cemaledin Afghani, whose ideas shaped Agaoglu's own on Islam. After going back to his hometown he started writing for newspapers including *Surayi Ummet* (which was a publication of the CUP). When pressures on him by the Tzarist regime intensified, he came to Istanbul with his family

(1909). There, Agaoglu continued to write for various periodicals and newspapers. He also worked as inspector for the Ministry of Education as well as teaching Turko-Mongolian history at the Darulfunun. He was one of the founding members of the nationalist *Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti* (Turkish Homeland). He also was one of the four founders of the *Türk Ocakı* (Turkish Hearth). In 1912 Agaoglu joined the Central Committee of CUP, and the same year he entered the Parliament as a deputy from Karahisar. When the 1917 Russian Revolution took place, Agaoglu went back there and served as a political advisor to the Caucasus armies. On his return to Turkey he was arrested by the British and was sent to exile to Malta. Agaoglu was a deputy in the GNA during the second and third Assemblies. In 1930, he joined the Free Republican Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Serbest Fırka*), and played a significant role in the drafting of the Party's regulation and program. When the Party dissolved itself he did not rejoin the RPP and instead started teaching at Istanbul University.

Akcura, Yusuf (1876, Simbirsk (Olyonovsk), Russia -1935): Renowned writer and intellectual of Tatar origin, known for his formulation of Turkish nationalism as a possible basis for the nation. He also had an active political life during the early Republican period. Akcura attended the Military Academy in Istanbul, during which he was arrested due to his involvement with the Young Turks, and was exiled. He studied political science in France and contributed articles for the newspapers *Mesveret*, and *Surayı Ummet*. After he completed his studies he went back to Russia. He taught geography and Turkish literature in Kazan at the *Muhammediye Medrese*. Following the 1905 revolution, he made efforts to secure representation of Russian Turks in the assembly. He had close relations with many influential Russian Turks, and was instrumental in the founding of the political party of the Muslim Russians Alliance. During this time he also established connections with groups in the Ottoman Empire, which were in opposition to the Hamidian rule. After the 1908 Revolution he came back to the Ottoman Empire; worked as a teacher and became one of the founders of the *Türk Dernegi* (Turkish Society, 1908). He also was present in the founding of the *Türk*

Ocagi (Turkish Hearth, 1912). In addition to being a member of the Hearth, he also started publishing the journal *Türk Yurdu* (Turkish Homeland), the official publication of the association. He stayed as the editor of the journal until 1931 when the Turkish Hearths were closed down. Besides having an active intellectual life, Akcura also ventured into politics. In 1922 he was appointed as an advisor to the division of Eastern Countries at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1923 he became deputy from Kars, and served in the Assembly until his death. Akcura also worked as the president of the Turkish History Council.

Aras, Tevfik Rustu (1883, Canakkale –1972): Statesman. He studied medicine in Beirut; and while working as a health inspector in Salonica, he joined the CUP. He met Mustafa Kemal in 1907 and became his life-long supporter. Aras entered the GNA as a deputy from Mentese (Mugla) during the First Assembly. Between 1925 and 1939 he worked as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Aras was one of the advocates of the Independence Tribunals; and was actively involved in establishing them. Following the request of Mustafa Kemal, he also became one of the founders of the Turkish Communist Party in 1920.

Arikan, Saffet (1888, Erzincan – 1947): Military man, and statesman. Arikan graduated from the Military Academy. He fought in the National Independence War. In 1923 he entered the GNA, and served as a deputy until 1947. During this time he also worked as the General Secretary of RPP and as the Minister of Education (1935-38). He was one of the statesmen who were instrumental in the founding of Village Institutes (*Koy Enstitüleri*) which were established to achieve rural economic and cultural development.

Arikoglu, Zamir (Damar) (1889, Adana – 1969): Received private education. He was involved in trade and commerce. Arikoglu was also actively involved in the CUP. In 1918, he worked for the resistance movement in Adana, and served in the military. He was a member of the First Group. He entered the GNA as deputy from Adana in and worked from 1920 to 1950.

Arsal, Sadri Maksudi (1880, Kazan – 1957): Historian, Law professor and statesman. His father belonged to the *ulema* class. After receiving *medrese* education in Kazan, he graduated from Teacher's College in Russia. He further studied sociology, and graduated from the Law Faculty in Paris. On his return to Russia he represented the Caucasus Turks in the second and third Dumas. Following the 1917 Revolution he became the first President of the state that was formed in the Kazan province. In 1918, he went to Finland and France. Arsal came back to Turkey when he was offered a teaching position at Ankara Law Faculty. He was in the GNA during the fourth (1930-1935), fifth (1935-1939), and ninth (1950-1954) Assemblies. His published works centered on Turkish history and law. Arsal's work on the Turkish Language (*Türk Dili İçin*) is considered an important contribution to efforts at reforming the language. However, he became a center of criticism because of his opposition to some of the attempts at the Turkification of the vocabulary.

Arvas, Ibrahim (1884, Baskale - 1965): statesman. He had Kurdish origins, and belonged to a well-known family. His father was Sheikh Hamit Pasha. In his memoirs, he voiced his criticisms and opposition to the actions of Ismet Inonu. He also was opposed to translating Kuran into Turkish, and making Turkish the language for call for prayers.

Atalay, Besim (1882, Usak -1965): Statesman, known for his interest in Turkish languages, and his role in the language reforms during the Kemalist era. After he completed his primary and secondary education, he received *medrese* (religious) schooling for 11 years. He joined Istanbul *Darulmuallim* (Teachers' Training College). He worked in administrative jobs, and as a teacher at various schools. He entered the GNA in 1920 and served as deputy for the first seven Assemblies. Atalay was also a member of the Turkish Language Society where he worked until 1951. Between 1937 and 1942 he taught Persian at the Ankara Language and Geography University. He studied the Turkish languages of Kipchak and

Chagatai; and contributed to the simplification of the Turkish language. In addition to writing several books on Turkish language he also translated Kuran into Turkish.

Atay, Falih Rifki (1894, Istanbul -1971): Journalist, statesman and writer, and one of the closest companions of Atatürk. He studied literature. His career as a journalist began when he started writing for the CUP newspaper *Tanin* (The Echo). In 1918 he founded the nationalist newspaper *Aksam* (Evening) where he wrote articles in support of the National Independence Army (*Kuvayi Milliye*). Because of his writings he was taken before the Court Martial, but was acquitted later on. In 1922 Atay entered politics, and became a deputy in the GNA. He also continued writing pieces for various newspapers including *Milliyet* (Nationality), *Ulus* (Nation), and *Hakimiyeti Milliye* (National Sovereignty). Atay published a number of books on Atatürk, and on the political and military developments during his period.

Aydemir, Sevkett Sureyya (1897, Edirne – 1976): He came from a poor immigrant family. Following his education in Edirne he volunteered to fight in the First World War. After, Aydemir went to Azerbaijan. There, he moved away from Turanism and became interested in Marxism. He studied economics at the Moscow University. In 1923 he returned to Turkey and started teaching and contributing articles to *Aydinlik* journal. The journal was closed down in 1925. Following that, Aydemir was tried by the Independence Tribunal and sentenced to ten years. He worked as an economist and teacher. He was also an influential figure in the *Kadro* movement.

Aykac, Fazıl Ahmet (1884, İstanbul – 1967): Poet and statesman. Aykac worked as a teacher in various institutions teaching French, psychology and pedagogy. He also was in the GNA during 1927 and 1938.

Aykut, (Mehmet) Seref (1874, Edirne – 1939): Statesman. He graduated from Istanbul Law Faculty, and worked for a various newspapers and journals. For a while, he also practiced law. Aykut served in the last Ottoman Assembly. After the dismantling of the Parliament, he was exiled to Malta. In 1921 he was released, and went to Ankara to join the GNA. He served as a deputy only during the First Assembly, and was part of the First Group. When he could not continue his deputyship in the next Assembly, he went back to practicing law. In 1931 he once again joined the GNA from Edirne, and remained in the GNA until his death in 1939.

Basgil, (Ali) Fuat (1893, Carsamba – 1967): Statesman and lawyer. He fought during the First World War. After, he studied law in France. Basgil returned to Turkey in 1930 and started working at the Directory of Higher Education. He also started teaching at the Ankara Law Faculty. Basgil worked as an advisor during the Hatay negotiations in 1937. In his later years he continued teaching at the university. Basgil was known for his criticisms towards RPP during the Kemalist regime. During the multi-party era he supported the Democrat Party.

Bayar, Celal (Mahmut) (1884, Bursa-1987): Statesman, and third president of Turkey. He was the son of a religious leader who had emigrated from Bulgaria. Bayar was trained as a banker. He joined CUP in 1907 and served as the secretary-general for its newly founded Izmir branch. During this period he was known to have promoted Muslim business at the expense of Christians. Even though a CUP member, he opposed the Party's conduct of public affairs during World War I. Bayar served in the last Ottoman Assembly – only to leave it in 1920 to join the national resistance movement. With the opening of the GNA he entered the parliament. During the Lausanne Peace Conference he acted as one of the advisors to Inonu. He was appointed as the Minister of Economy in 1921. Bayar was one of the founders of the *Türkiye İş Bankası* (Turkish Work Bank), and worked there as the managing director until 1932. He served as the Prime Minister from 1937 until Atatürk's death. He resigned from his office in 1939

after he fell out with Inonu. Bayar was one of the founders of Democrat Party (DP), and was the third president of Turkey (1950-60). He was tried and sentenced to death after the 1960 military coup but was amnestied in 1964.

Bele, Refet (Pasha) (1881, Greece – 1963): Statesman, and military officer; he graduated from the Military Academy. He was one of the early organizers of the National Resistance Movement; and joined the GNA. Bele was an important figure in the execution of the abolition of the caliphate. In 1923 he was in the GNA representing Istanbul. Bele was also one of the founders of the *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Firkasi*. Following the assassination attempt against Mustafa Kemal in 1926, Bele was tried and acquitted. The same year he resigned from his deputyship and retired from the military. It was only in 1935 that Bele returned to political life as a deputy from Istanbul, and served in the GNA until 1950.

Beyatli, Yahya Kemal (1884, Uskup (Greece) – 1958): Renowned poet, known for his simplified use of Turkish language. He studied political science in Paris. During his nine years in France he developed an interest in the Young Turks movement. However, he was not actively involved in politics. On his return to Turkey he worked as a teacher and started writing poetry. Beyatli was an advisor during the signing of the Lausanne Treaty. Later on, in 1925 he participated in Hatay negotiations. Beyatli entered the Parliament in 1923 as an MP from Urfa, Yozgat (1933) and Tekirdag (1935-43). In 1943 he was the advisor of art for the RPP. Beyatli is known as the first poet who led the way for the introduction of everyday Turkish into poetry. During his years in Paris he was briefly interested in socialism. However, after he was influenced by French historians who helped shape his own nationalist thought. Balkan Wars and the loss of Rumelia also played a big role in shaping his nationalist thought.

Bilgen, (Haci) Suleyman (Efendi) (1856, Aydin – 1923): He received his early education in Aydin. For a while he worked as a medrese teacher. In 1908, for one

year, he served in the Ottoman Assembly. Bilgen was actively involved during the National Resistance Movement. In 1920 he became an (independent) deputy. He was not reselected in 1923.

Bozkurt, Mahmud Esat (1892, Kusadasi -1943): One of the most unswerving supporters of Kemalist reforms and an important ideologue of the regime. He was influential in shaping the new legal system of the Republic. Bozkurt was born into a family of farmers and merchants. After he studied law at the University of Istanbul, he went to Switzerland to do his doctoral studies. He came back to Turkey following the Greek occupation of Izmir and joined the national resistance movement. He served in the GNA from 1920 up until his death in 1943 during which time he held various ministerial positions. When he was working as the Ministry of Economy, he advocated the building of a national economy based on Turkish entrepreneurship as well as the establishment of a mixed economy. He also gave lectures at the Ankara Law Faculty, and wrote a number of books the most famous of which is the Ataturk Revolution (1940).

Cebesoy, Ali Fuat (1882, Istanbul –1968): Statesman and a close friend of Ataturk's. He was Mustafa Kemal's classmate when attending the Military Academy. In 1921 he entered the Assembly. Cebesoy was one of the founders of *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Firkasi* (Progressive Republican Party). In 1926 he was among those tried for the assassination attempt at Mustafa Kemal, and was acquitted. In 1933 he entered the GNA as an independent MP from Konya. He was in the Parliament until 1950. After that, Cebesoy also served as an MP from the Democrat Party between 1950 and 1954.

Cinar, Huseyin Vasif (1896, Crete –1935): Statesman. He studied law, and was actively involved in the War of Independence. In 1923 he joined the GNA as a deputy of Saruhan. He also worked as the Minister of Education in 1924 and again in 1929. Cinar was directly involved in the drafting of the law (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*) that changed the face of the education system.

Demiralay, Ibrahim (1883, Isparta – 1939): After he graduated from the Fatih Medrese in Istanbul he went back to his hometown where he worked as a tradesman. For a while he also taught religion classes. During the War of Independence Demiralay mobilized a group of militias and fought alongside them against the occupying powers. In 1920 he became a deputy (where he was listed as part of the First Group) and stayed there until his death.

Derin, Ahmet Saki (1876, Crete – 1944): Lawyer and statesman. His father was a civil servant. Derin received his early education at the Galatasary Lycee. Later on, he taught law at the same Lycee. He joined the GNA during its 2nd Assembly in 1923 – representing Antalya. Derin worked on various ministerial committees. He retired in 1935.

Dilmen, Ibrahim Necmi (1887, Gumulcine, Greece – 1945): Linguist, and a significant figure during the language reforms. He studied at the Istanbul Law Faculty. After, he taught literature and languages at various schools. In 1931 he worked as inspector at the Ministry of Education. In 1935 he entered GNA as deputy of Burdur and remained so until his death. He also was one of the founders of the Turkish Language Society, and one of its first presidents. Dilmen was known for his support for the Kemalist language reforms; and published a number of works on Turkish language, grammar, and literature.

Dinc, Raif (1874, Erzurum – 1949): Received his education in Erzurum. In 1887 he graduated from Mektebi-i Nuvvab. He was in the Ottoman Parliament. During the War of Independence he went back to Erzurum, and help with the organization of resistance. He also contributed to the assembling of the Erzurum Congress. In 1923, he became a deputy from Erzurum. He also was a deputy during the 5th, 7th and 8th Assemblies.

Diyab (Yildirim) Aga (1852, Hozat (Tunceli) – 1935): He came from a family of Kurdish tribal leaders. His father was the chief of the *Ferhat Usagi* Tribe. When his father died, Diyab Aga became the sole owner of considerable tracts of land. He and the members of his tribe supported the Nationalist Resistance Movement. Diyab Aga entered the GNA in 1920, and during this time he was a member of the First Group. In 1923, he was not reselected as a deputy and returned back to his hometown.

Dogruyol, Mustafa Taki Efendi (1873, Sivas – 1925): Worked as a civil servant in various provinces of the Empire. He joined the GNA in 1920 where he was listed as an independent deputy.

Dusunsel, Feridun Fikri (1892, Istanbul – 1958): Lawyer and statesman. His father, Mehmet Muncibey was a novelist. Dusunsel received his early education in Istanbul; and then attended Istanbul Faculty of Law. Following the completion of his degree he served in the army. In 1923 he received his Ph.D. degree from Paris Faculty of Law. Having Kurdish origins himself, in 1923 Dusunsel became a deputy of Dersim (Tunceli) which was an area populated mostly by Kurds. In the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Assemblies he represented Bitlis. Dusunsel was one of the most vocal deputies of the GNA – having given 575 speeches in the GNA, and was known as having “liberal tendencies”.

Emre, Ahmet Cevat (1876, Rhodes -1961): Renowned linguist. His father belonged to a family of farmers and merchants. In 1897 he was interned due to his support for the Mesrutiyet reforms and sent to exile in Libya. Following the 1908 Revolution he was allowed to come back to Istanbul. Emre taught Turkish and linguistics at Istanbul University. He was actively involved during the language reforms as well as working at the Turkish Language Society. Emre also was an MP between 1933 and 1939.

Galanti, Avram (Bodrumlu) (1873, Bodrum – 1961): Jewish-Turkish scholar and intellectual renowned for his studies on Turkish Jewry. He taught Ancient History and Semitic Languages at the Istanbul University. In 1933, during the University Reform he was asked to resign from his post. He contributed articles to newspapers and journals including *Yeni Mecmua* (New Journal) and *Aksam* (Evening). Galanti was a Member of Parliament between 1943 and 1946. He has a number of works on the history of the Jewish community under the Ottoman Empire. Galanti was also known for his advocacy for the Jewish community to embrace Turkish language.

Galip, Resit (1893, Rhodes – 1934): Studied medicine. While a student, he became a follower of Turkism. In 1923 he became a deputy. Galip also worked as the Minister of Education between 1932 and 1933 during which time he reformed the university system; and recruited German refugee academics to teach in Turkey. He was an active member of the Turkish Language Society, and Turkish History Society.

Germen, Mazhar (1887 Aydin – 1967): Studied medicine. He served as military doctor during the Balkan Wars and WWI. Germen entered the GNA in 1923 and served as a deputy from Aydin until 1950. He was a member of the First Group.

Geveci (Gevelioglu), Emin (1889, Samsun – 1934): Studied law at Istanbul Law Faculty. He worked as an instructor at the Baghdad Law Faculty; and as prosecutor in Kavala (Greece). Following the Balkan Wars he came back to Istanbul and worked for the Police Department. Gevelioglu also published a newspaper for a while. He was a deputy in the last Ottoman Parliament. After the dismantlement of the Parliament he joined the GNA. There, he was a member of the Second Group. He was not reselected after the First Assembly; and went back to practicing law in Samsun. He reentered the Parliament in 1931, and died while he was still serving.

Gokalp, Ziya (1876, Diyarbakir – 1924): Sociologist, renowned intellectual, and ideologue of Turkish nationalism. In his writings he discussed possible sources of national identity, to conclude that Turkish nation was first and foremost based on a common cultural foundation as opposed to being a political or ethnic community. He was born into a middle class family in Eastern Turkey. His father was a civil servant. Even though some scholars (still) suggest that he had Kurdish origins, Gokalp identified himself as Turkish. It was during his high school years when he first encountered works of Herbert Spencer, Gustave le Bon, and Ernst Haeskel. During the same period, his uncle introduced him to the ideas of famous Muslim (Sufi) mystics. In his later years his intellectual life was very much shaped by the works of Emile Durkheim, Alfred Fouillee, and Gabriel Tard. His ideas influenced many of the reforms undertaken during the early Republican period. Before the Republic, Gokalp joined the CUP and held an active role in the Party as a member of the Central Council. During this period he was in Salonica where he came into contact with European and liberal Turkish circles. Gokalp's political life was relatively brief. He believed that politics, and academic and intellectual life should be kept apart. At the end of the First World War he was accused of having taken part in the Armenian massacres. Even though he denied that there had been any massacres, he admitted that he personally had approved the expulsion of Armenians. In 1919 he was exiled to Malta. When he came back to Turkey in 1921 he did not have a warm welcome – the members of the Ankara Parliament having little sympathy for former CUP members. Despite that Gokalp joined the GNA in 1923 as deputy from his hometown. He started working as an elected member of the Education Committee, which proposed changes to school curriculum and textbooks. He was also a member of the committee during the preparation of the 1924 Constitution. The clauses on laicism as well as the clauses on the freedom of conscience and thought were shaped by him. Even though he was not politically active, he remained close to the political as well as the intellectual circles. Yahya Kemal, Halide Edip Adivar, Falih Rifki Atay, Ahmet Emin Yalman, Fuat Koprulu, and Hamdullah Suphi Tanriovert are some of the few names who were close to him, and who were inspired by his ideas and writings.

Gunduz, Aka (1886, Salonica-1958): Journalist, novelist and statesman. After he attended the Military School he went to Paris. On his return he was exiled to Salonica. Following the 1908 Revolution he began his career as a journalist. When Istanbul came under British control he was exiled to Malta. Gunduz returned back to Turkey in 1923, and was in the Parliament from 1932 until 1946.

Guneri, Suleyman Necati (1892, Bingol – 1944): He studied law at the Konya Law School. After graduation, he worked as a teacher for a while. Guneri served as a deputy in the last Ottoman Assembly. He attended the Erzurum Congress. He joined the GNA in 1920 and was left out of the Parliament the following Assembly. During the First Assembly Guneri was one of the founders of the Second Group. In 1926 he was tried for the Izmir assassination attempt and was acquitted. He rejoined the GNA in 1937 as a Zonguldak deputy and served for two years. After 1939 he returned back to teaching.

Gurpinar, Huseyin Rahmi (1864, Istanbul –1944): Renowned novelist. His father was a high level official who worked at the Imperial Palace. Before he started his career as a novelist Gurpinar worked as a civil servant. He also contributed to a number of newspapers and journals. In his novels he advocated the West-East synthesis. He joined the GNA during the 5th and 6th Assemblies as deputy from Kutahya.

Hilmi, Tunali (1871, Bulgaria -1928): Statesman. He was influential in the simplification, and Turkification of the language; extension of political and social rights to women, and the shaping of rural development policies. In 1897 he moved to Istanbul with his family. While he was a student at the Gulhane Medical School he was arrested because of the underground newspaper he was publishing. Later on he escaped to Geneva. There, he studied pedagogy. During these years Hilmi became an advocate of the ideas of Young Turks. For a while he was the secretary of the CUP. Between 1909 and 1916 he worked as a government official

in various towns. In 1920 he served as a deputy in the last Ottoman Assembly. After the occupation of Istanbul he moved to Ankara. He served in the GNA from 1923 until his death. Initially, Hilmi was a member of the Ottomanism faction of the CUP. Later on, he embraced Turkish nationalism. Hilmi has a number of published works, including *Memis Cavus Millet Meclisinde* [Memis Cavus in the National Assembly].

Irmak, Sadi (1904, Seydisehir - 1990): Professor of Medicine, and statesman. After studying law for a while he went to Berlin and completed studies in medicine and biology. On his return to Turkey he worked as a teacher. In 1939 Irmak was promoted to professorship at Istanbul University. He joined the GNA in 1943. During 1945-48 he worked as the Minister of Labor. He also was the Prime Minister between 1974 and 1975.

Ileri, Celal Nuri (1881, Gelibolu -1938): Was trained in law. During the Hamidian era he contributed articles to the newspaper *Ikdam* (Effort), and the journal *İctihad*. In 1918 he started publishing a newspaper, *Ati*, where he also wrote editorials. In 1920 Ileri entered the last Ottoman Assembly. The same year he was arrested by the British, and exiled to Malta. In 1921 he started serving as a deputy and remained in the GNA until his death in 1938. During the drafting of the 1924 Constitution Ileri worked as the head of the commission as well as a reporter. He published a number of works; and came to be known for his writings on social problems, women's rights, and the simplification of the Turkish language.

Inan, Afet (1908, Salonica – 1985): Was trained as a teacher in Bursa. After she finished her studies she was sent to Lausanne (on Atatürk's request) in order to improve her French. In 1929 she returned back, and started working as a teacher. Two years later she became a member of the Turkish Historical Society. Later on, she studied social sciences in Geneva. On her return to Turkey she taught history at various universities. Inan published many works on the history of Turks,

Turkish women, and Atatürk. One of the most important of her works is the Civic Manuals, which she co-wrote with Atatürk. During the early years of the Republic she also did research with the goal to provide scientific support for the “Turkish History Thesis”.

Inonu, Ismet (1884, Izmir-1973): Army officer, statesman, second president of Turkey. He was trained as an artilleryman and served in the Ottoman army. Inonu joined the CUP in 1909; won two battles (named after him) against the Allied powers; and in 1920 he entered the GNA. He was made the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1922, and signed the Lausanne Treaty the following year. He was Mustafa Kemal’s chief executive until 1937 when a rift between them developed. Inonu served as Prime Minister between 1923 and 1937. Following Mustafa Kemal’s death he became the second president of Turkey. Inonu gave a strong support for the transition to a multi-party system. He became the leader of opposition after 1950; retired from politics in 1972 when his party program was not ratified by the GNA.

Kansu, Mazhar Mufit (1873, Denizli –1948): Before he started his political career he worked as a teacher of history and mathematics. After 1897 he also worked as provincial administrator in various towns. He was a member of the CUP; and took part in the Ottoman Assembly as deputy from Hakkari. Following the occupation of Istanbul Kansu escaped to Beirut. On his return he entered the GNA and served as deputy from Hakkari, Denizli and Corum. In 1925 he chaired the East Independence Tribunal.

Kaplan, Rasih (1883, Akseki – 1952): Born into a religious family, he received *medrese* education. In 1906 he went to Egypt to improve his Arabic and knowledge on theology. He returned back home in 1911 and worked as a member of Konya General Assembly; and for the Ministry of Education. In 1920 he entered the GNA as a deputy from Antalya, and stayed as a Member of

Parliament until 1950. Kaplan was considered to be one of the most vocal deputies in the Assembly, and was a member of the First Group.

Karaosmanoglu, Yakup Kadri (1889, Cairo-1974): Prolific writer, statesman, and an ardent supporter of Kemalist principles. He was born into a famous feudal family from Manisa. His early childhood was spent in Egypt and Manisa. The family went back to Egypt due to their financial difficulties following his father's death. His first encounter with Young Turks was in Egypt, in 1906. Two years later he came to Istanbul where he studied law. During that time he also started writing and publishing his literary pieces. He spent three years in Switzerland due to his poor health. There, he developed an interest in the non-orthodox Bektasi sect of Islam. During the War of Independence he moved away from the stance "art for art's sake" and became closely interested in the political developments that were taking place. Following the promulgation of the Republic he joined the GNA and served as deputy of Mardin (1923-31), and Manisa (1931-34). Another important turning point in his life came in 1932 when he started publishing the journal *Kadro*. After the journal was closed down in 1934 he worked as ambassador to Turkey in a number of countries. He went back to active political life only after 1950. He resigned from the Republican People's Party in 1962 since he believed the Party was moving away from Kemalist principles. Three years later he retired from politics.

Kaya, Sukru (1883, Greek island of Kos -1959): Statesman renowned for his staunch support for laicism. He was trained as a lawyer. In 1908 he went to France where he completed his studies in law. On his return to Turkey he worked in Istanbul, Bursa, Edirne, and Baghdad holding various administrative positions. He was arrested and exiled to Malta in 1919. In 1921 Kaya came back to Anatolia, and participated in the War of Independence. He worked as an advisor on the committee formed during the signing of the Lausanne Treaty. Kaya entered the GNA during the second period, and served as an MP from 1923 until 1938. During this time he held various high level positions including ministerial jobs for

Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, and the Interior. For two years (1936-38) he also worked as the general secretary of the RPP. His political life ended in 1939 when he opposed the appointment of Ismet Inonu to Presidency.

Kocoglu, Yusuf Ziya (1882, Bitlis – 1925): Statesman. After he completed his studies at the Bitlis secondary school, he went into trade. For a while, he also worked for the Directorate of Education. In 1920 he entered the GNA. While there, Kocoglu joined the Second Group. While he was in the Parliament he worked on various commissions including commissions on the Constitution, economy and internal affairs. Kocoglu drew the attention of other deputies because of his advocacy for the sultanate. In 1923, he was left out of the Parliament, and went back to his hometown. Yusuf Ziya was one of the leaders of the “Azadi Cemiyeti” which was founded in 1923 with the main goal of achieving Kurdish independence. Following the Beytussebap rebellion in 1924, he was found guilty and was executed.

Koprulu, Fuat (1890, Istanbul -1966): Renowned historian, and statesman. He belonged to a prominent family that had worked in the palace for generations and at high positions. After studying law for a while he left his studies, and for two years (1908-10) he wrote for the periodical *Servet-i Funun* (Treasure of Sciences) and the newspaper *Tanin* (The Echo). Koprulu also taught Turkish literature at a number of high schools in Istanbul. When he was 24 years old he was appointed as professor of history of Turkish literature. In 1924 he founded the Turkology Institute. The same year he started working as the undersecretary for the Ministry of Education. Three years later, Koprulu was appointed to the presidency of the Turkish History Commission. His active political life in the GNA spanned the period from 1935 to 1943. He later was forced to resign from his party membership due to his articles, which were found to be against the fundamental principles of the RPP. In his later years he remained active in political life, and became one of the founders of the Democrat Party. Koprulu is considered to be

the first academic who built the basis for scientific studies in Turkish and Ottoman history.

Koraltan, Refik (1880 Sivas -1974): Studied law and worked as prosecutor in Gelibolu and Karaman. In 1920 he entered the GNA as deputy from Konya. He was a member of the First Group. Between 1923 and 1935 he represented Konya in the Parliament. After, he worked in Corum, Icel and Bursa Valiligi. He was one of the founders of DP.

Kunduh, Bekir Sami (1885, Ossetia -1933): Statesman. He was born into an influential family in the Northern Caucasus. His father had served as a general in the Ottoman army after he left the Russian army. Kunduh attended Galatasaray Lycee; and also studied political science in Paris. Upon his return he worked as an administrator in Baghdad. As well, he served in the last Ottoman Parliament. During the War of Independence he played an important role in the negotiations between the Istanbul (Ottoman) government and the Ankara government. Kunduh became the first Minister of Foreign Affairs in the GNA. During this time, he signed a series of treaties with the French, British and Italian governments in an attempt to get the Malta exiles freed. However, because he did not consult with the GNA regarding these negotiations he was forced to resign from his position. He remained in the GNA for the first two Assemblies and represented Tokat. Kunduh was among the founders of the Progressive Republican Party. Upon the assassination attempt against Mustafa Kemal he was interned and later acquitted. However, because of this incident he chose to retire from politics in 1927.

Kucuka, Mehmet Necip Ali (1892, Denizli – 1941): Statesman. Kucuka belonged to a family of merchants. He received his higher education at the Faculty of Law. While at school, the First World War broke out and he served on the Eastern Front. Kucuka joined the National Resistance Movement following the occupation of Izmir. He entered the GNA in 1923 as deputy from his hometown Denizli. The following year Kucuka worked as a member of the

Ankara Independence Tribunal. He remained in the GNA until the 7th Assembly. Kucuka published several works including books on women and law, children and law.

Kutlug, Yasin (1889, Sanliurfa – 1973): Belonged to a family of landowners. He joined the GNA in 1920. During this time he was a member of the First Group. He also was a member of the Independence Tribunal. Kutlug was not reselected to the GNA in 1923.

Miras (Midas) Mehmet Kamil (1875, Afyonkarahisar – 1957): Studied theology at Darulfunun (Istanbul University). He also taught at the Faculty of Theology. Miras published works on different aspects of Islam. He also served at the Ottoman Parliament. In 1923 he entered the GNA as deputy from Afyonkarahisar.

Nazif, Suleyman (1869, Diyarbakir – 1927): Poet, and journalist. He belonged to a family of high level civil servants. Nazif himself occupied various posts at different provinces of the Empire. He remained an unswerving Ottomanist and preserved a certain dislike and suspicion towards Turkism. In his writings he denounced the governance abilities of the CUP government as well as the latter's insistence in simplifying the language.

Nur, Riza (1878, Sinop -1942): Medical doctor and statesman. Initially he was a member of the CUP. However, shortly after he joined the opposition. He became the founder of the Freedom and Concord Party in 1911. In 1913, when the CUP came to power, he was exiled to Europe, to return back in 1918. Nur served in the last Ottoman Assembly. After the opening of the GNA he was a deputy for two terms (1920-27) representing his hometown Sinop. During this time he acted as the Minister of Education; and Health. He was also on the delegation that signed the Lausanne Treaty. Due to his disagreements with the government and Ataturk, Nur left politics in 1924 and went to Paris. He came back to Turkey in 1939. A

staunch (racist) nationalist, he wrote a number of books, including one on Atatürk where he made important accusations against him.

Okyar, Ali Fethi (1881, Pirlepe, former Yugoslavia – 1943): Studied at the Military Academy (*Harbiye*). After serving in the army, he joined the Ottoman Parliament in 1912. In 1917 he was the Minister of Interior. Later on, he entered the first GNA as a deputy from Istanbul. During 1924 and 1925 Okyar was the Prime Minister of Turkey. In 1925 he was appointed as the Ambassador to France –the office of which he held for five years. Okyar was also one of the founders of *Serbest Cumhuriyet Firkasi* (Free Republican Party). After the dissolution of the Party in 1934 he was appointed as the Ambassador to Britain. He returned to the GNA in 1939 and served there as a deputy until 1942.

Orbay, (Huseyin) Rauf (1881, Istanbul – 1964): Army officer, and statesman. He belonged to a poor Circassian family who had immigrated to the Ottoman Empire. He was trained in the Naval Academy. He fought in the Balkan Wars, and afterwards in the War of Independence. Orbay worked in the Ottoman Parliament as Naval Minister. After the armistice he was exiled to Malta. On his return to Turkey he entered the GNA. During the early years of the GNA, Orbay was a close ally of Atatürk. However, later he opposed the founding of the Republic as well as the abolition of the caliphate – both of which increased the tension between him and Atatürk. In 1924 Orbay joined the opposition party – *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Firkasi* (Progressive Republican Party). Following the dissolution of the PRP he moved to Europe and stayed there for some years. Orbay was also accused, tried, and acquitted of an assassination attempt against Mustafa Kemal. In the following years even though he was asked (by İnönü and Atatürk) to rejoin the RPP he never consented to it. He only reentered the GNA after Atatürk's death.

Peker, Recep (1889, Istanbul -1950): Statesman and one of the most influential ideologues of the Kemalist regime. After attending Staff College he served in the

army during the Balkan Wars, and the First World War. He was also actively involved in the War of Independence. In 1920 he worked as the general secretary of the GNA. His active political life involved him serving as the Minister of Defense, Public Works, and the Interior as well as secretary general to the RPP. He was influential in the insertion of the principles of statism and reformism as part of the Party's Six Arrows. Peker was criticized by many because of his authoritarian politics. In 1935 he advocated the unity of the Party and the state, and proposed that the Party should take over the state – a proposal, which was not ratified by Atatürk. He was also known for his support of top-down changes, statism, and his opposition to a multi-party system. In 1936 he was forced to resign because of his authoritarian stand on politics.

Sadak, Necmettin (1860, Isparta – 1953): Studied literature in France. On his return to the Ottoman Empire, he started working at the Translation Office of the Ministry of Education. He also taught sociology at the Istanbul University. In 1918 Sadak founded the newspaper *Aksam* with a few of his friends. During the War of Independence he supported the efforts with his writings. In 1928 he became deputy of Sivas. Sadak's book Sociology (1936) was a textbook for secondary schools for many years.

Safa, Peyami (1899, Istanbul –1961): Writer and journalist. His father was the renowned poet Ismail Safa. He worked as a teacher during 1914 and 1918; and as a journalist from 1918 until 1961. Safa was one of the staunch supporters of the simplification of the Turkish language. He was an active member of the Turkish Language Society and Turkish Hearths. Even though he attempted to join the GNA in 1950 he was not elected. He became a follower of the Democrat Party after 1950. In addition to his many novels and journal articles Safa also published *Türk İnkılabına Bakışlar* (Perspectives on the Turkish Revolution) in 1938 where he analyzed different currents of thought as well as Kemalism. In his early writings he tried to find a balance between Westernism, national culture and the

Kemalist reforms. His later writings shifted more towards mysticism and religion; and sought to synthesize these with Western ideals.

Saki, Ahmet (Derin) (1876, Crete – n.d) Studied at the Galatasaray Lycee, and received law education. He taught law and French at the university level. Saki was a member of the GNA during the second and third assemblies.

Samih Rifat (1874, Istanbul – 1923): While he was working as a civil servant, he started to contribute poems and articles to various journals and newspapers. After 1908 he also worked as mayor in various towns. Samih Rifat actively participated in support of the national resistance movement, and he entered the GNA during the Second Assembly as a deputy from Biga. In the 1930s he also worked at the History Society and Turkish Language Society. He was known for his advocacy for the simplification of the Turkish language.

Saracoglu, Rustu (Mehmet) (1887, Odemis – 1953): Trained in political science in Geneva, he worked as civil servant and teacher before he joined the national resistance. In 1923 he entered the GNA as Izmir deputy. Saracoglu worked as the Minister of Education, Finance, and Justice; and was influential in nationalizing the economy during the Great Depression. In 1942 he became the prime minister. During his presidency he was criticized for putting into effect the *Varlik Vergisi* (Wealth Tax) which discriminated against the non-Muslim communities in Turkey.

Saydam, Refik (Ibrahim) (1881, Istanbul –1942): Statesman, and Prime Minister between 1939 and 1942. He was trained as a doctor at the *Askeri Tibbiye* (Military Medical School). He was actively involved during the War of Independence. In 1920 he became a deputy from Beyazit. He started working as the Minister of Health during the Second Assembly period, and kept this position for fourteen years. After 1938 he also worked as the Minister of the Interior, and the General

Secretary of the RPP. While he was the Prime Minister Saydam advocated radical reforms in the state structure.

Sazak, Emin (1882, Eskisehir – 1960): He received private and *medrese* education. His family wanted him to be involved in managing the family estate. In addition to his involvement in agriculture, Sazak also worked as a tradesman, and built lumber factories. During the War of Independence, he actively worked for the defense of his hometown. Sazak entered the GNA in 1920 (deputy from Eskisehir), and stayed there until 1950.

Sevig, (Hasan) Vasfi (Rasit) (1887, Yemen – 1971): Studied law in Istanbul and Paris. On his return he fought on the Caucasus Front during the First World War. In 1917 he was sent to Germany to do his internship through the Ministry of Justice. Sevig joined the GNA during the Fourth Assembly. He also became a professor of law at Ankara Law Faculty and taught there until 1957.

Soydan, Mahmut (1883, Siirt – 1936): Writer and statesman; he came from a well-established (Kurdish) tribal family. He was educated at the Military Academy. After his graduation he started serving in the army. He also worked as a teacher to Abdulhamid's son. In 1920 he went to Anatolia and joined the National Resistance Movement. Soydan became a deputy during the Second Assembly period. He also founded the newspaper *Milliyet* in 1926.

Soysallioglu, Ismail Suphi (1884, Istanbul – nd.): He studied law. After 1908 he started to contribute articles to *Servet-i Funun*. He also wrote for and administered the publication of a newspaper (*Sura-yi Ummet*) by CUP. In 1912 Soysallioglu left *Servet-i Funun*, and worked as a teacher. During this period he was also a supporter of Turkish nationalism. Following the occupation of Istanbul he escaped to Ankara and at the recommendation of Mustafa Kemal, started to write for the newspaper *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*. He entered the First Assembly as a deputy from Burdur.

Tanpınar, Ahmet Hamdi (1901, Istanbul – 1962): Renowned novelist. He received his education in different towns of the Empire. In 1919 he entered Istanbul University and studied literature. After graduation, he started working as a teacher. At the same time he was publishing his poems in various journals. In 1933 he was appointed to teach art history at the Academy of Fine Arts. He also taught at Istanbul University. Tanpınar entered the GNA in 1943 as a deputy from Maras. After 1946 he left politics and continued teaching and publishing. In his novels he touched on a variety of social issues including the place of the individual under the Republic, the decline of the Ottoman Empire and its effects on individuals, and challenges of the modernization project during the Kemalist regime.

Tanrıöver, Hamdullah Suphi (1885, Istanbul -1966): Statesman, writer, poet, and an acclaimed orator. Tanrıöver came from a well-established family, close to the imperial center. His grandfather and father were both influential personages during Tanzimat reforms. Tanrıöver himself studied at the famous Galatasaray School, and taught at various schools including Istanbul University where he gave lectures on Turkish literature, and Turkish-Islam Art History. In 1912 he joined the Turkish Hearth in Istanbul, which was a main center of Turkish nationalist movement. Tanrıöver's literary career also had a political coloring to it. After joining the *Fer-i Ati* (a literary movement that advocated "art for art's sake") he moved away from them and became a member of *Genc Kalemler* (Young Pens), which the famous sociologist Ziya Gökalp was also a member. In addition to his literary works, Tanrıöver also served at the last Ottoman Assembly. During this time he advocated the idea that it was only Turkism, which could save the empire. In 1920 he was selected as deputy of Antalya. He served as the Minister of Education for two terms (1920-25). He also worked as the ambassador in Bucharest. In 1950 he left the RPP and joined the Democrat Party.

Tekinalp (Moiz Kohen) (1883, Serez -1961): Jewish-Turkish intellectual and lawyer, known for his works supporting the Turkification policies of the Republic. Tekinalp came from a religious family. His father was a rabbi. After he graduated from the Alliance school he studied law and began contributing articles to a number of newspapers and periodicals. He also was active in many organizations over the years – all of which had a (Turkish) nationalist coloring to their goals. In the early 1900s he was a supporter of the Ottomanist policies. Tekinalp was also a member of the CUP, and hailed the 1908 Revolution as a great victory. After the First World War he became a staunch Kemalist, and with the passing of the Surname Law changed his name to Munis Tekinalp. He wrote a number of pieces supporting the regime as well as lecturing at the *Halkevleri* (People's Houses). Even though Tekinalp never actively pursued a political career in the GNA, in the 1940s he was a member of the Istanbul Municipal Assembly. During the 1950 and 1954 elections he announced his candidacy from RPP. However, he was not able to enter the GNA. Tekinalp was very much influenced by Gokalp's works. His own writings reflected his aspiration for the minority groups in Turkey (especially the Jewish and Greek Orthodox communities) to assimilate into Turkish society and culture.

Tengirsek, Yusuf Kemal (1878 Kastamonu – 1969): Studied law in Paris; and served in the Ottoman Parliament for one year (1908). In 1920 he went to Ankara and joined the GNA. Yusuf Kemal was member of the First Group. Between 1923 and 1943 he served as deputy from Sinop.

Tigrel, Zulfu (1876, Diyarbakir – 1940): Statesman. He came from a family of local elites in Diyarbakir. After he graduated from the Military high school, Tigrel worked as a civil servant. He entered the Ottoman Assembly in 1912, and worked there until its abolition. Following the First World War, he was interned by the British (due to his involvement in the Armenian genocide), and was sent to exile in Egypt and then was sent to Malta. In 1921 he went to Ankara and joined the

GNA. He served as a deputy all throughout the first six Assemblies (with the exception of the third Assembly).

Turker (Keresteciyan), Berc (1870, Istanbul – 1949): Statesman of Armenian origin who emphasized that the Turkish nation was composed only of Turkish citizens without any ethnic or religious divisions. Studied at Galatasaray Lycee and Robert College. After his graduation he started working for the Ministry of Finance and the Ottoman Bank. His political career began when he joined the GNA (as an independent deputy) in 1935 and worked in this capacity until 1942.

Ugural, Mustafa Necati (1892, Izmir – 1929): Statesman, he studied law in Istanbul. For a time, he worked as a teacher and practiced law in his hometown. In 1919 he published a newspaper (*Dogru*), supporting the National Resistance. The following year he entered the GNA when he also became a member of the First Group. Ugural served as the Minister of Justice; and the Minister of Exchange, Construction and Resettlement during the Second Assembly; and as the Minister of Education during the Third Assembly. He stayed in the GNA until his death in 1929.

Ulas, Huseyin Avni (1887, Erzurum – 1948): Lawyer and statesman; one of the members of the opposition group (the Second Group) in the GNA. He studied law at Istanbul University. During the First World War he stopped working as a lawyer and served in the army. Ulas actively served during the War of Independence. He was present at the opening of the GNA and worked at various commissions. Ulas joined the Second Group in 1921 – voicing his opposition. In 1923 he went back to working as a lawyer. The following year he became involved in the founding of the *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Firkasi* (The Progressive Republican Party). Following the assassination attempt against Mustafa Kemal he was tried and acquitted.

Unaydin, Rusen Esref (1892, Istanbul -1959): Journalist, statesman; and a close friend of Atatürk, was a staunch defender of Kemalism. He was born into a prominent and religious family. His father was a medical doctor. After his training in education, he started teaching Turkish and French literature at various schools. Beginning in the early 1910s he contributed pieces to newspapers and journals. Esref became actively involved in the War of Independence. Following that, he also worked on the Lausanne committee as the press adviser. In 1923 he entered the GNA as deputy from Afyonkarahisar. He remained a Member of Parliament until 1933 when he became the secretary-general for the President's office. Following that post he served as ambassador in various countries.

Yalcin, Huseyin Cahit (1874, Balıkesir –1957): Journalist, statesman, and critic. After graduating from *Mulkiye* he worked as a teacher of Turkish and French. He was a member of the CUP. Yalcin started publishing *Tanin* after 1908. He also was in the last Ottoman Assembly. Following the occupation of Istanbul he was exiled to Malta. On his return, he continued publishing Tanin. He was tried (and later acquitted) because of his opposition to some of the laws that were passed during the early Republic. In 1925, and after criticizing some of the actions of the government at the time, he was tried by the Independence Tribunal. After his second trial (even though he was acquitted) he was sent to Corum on exile. In 1938 he went back to his career in journalism and politics. In 1939 he entered the GNA as a deputy from Istanbul. He was also a Kars deputy in 1950.

Yalman, Ahmet Emin (1888, Salonica – 1972): Prominent journalist and editor. He was born into a wealthy family. His father was a teacher at the military school and a civil servant. After he completed his education he started working as a journalist. He also attended Columbia University. His stay in the U.S. had significant impact in shaping his political ideas. In 1917 he founded the newspaper *Vakit* (Time). Following the British occupation of Istanbul he was exiled to Malta for two years. On his return he continued journalism, and founded

Vatan (The Fatherland) newspaper (which was closed down in 1925). All throughout his life he remained a defender of Western democratic ideals.

Yasan, Omer Lutfi (1878, Amasya – 1956): Military man and statesman. He attended the War Academy. Served during the Balkan Wars and the First World War. Yasan was a deputy from Amasya at the last Ottoman Parliament. He joined the GNA in 1920, and served there in various capacities until the end of the First Assembly. While in the Assembly Yasan was a member of the Second Group.

Yaziksiz, Necip Asim (1861, Kilis-1935): Born into a family of feudal lords, he received military education in Istanbul. Yaziksiz worked as a history teacher, and wrote a number of books on Turkish grammar, history and geography. During the Third Assembly he entered the GNA as deputy of Erzurum. He was influenced by the Turcology studies done in France and Hungary; and remained a strong supporter of PanTurkism.

Yurdakul, Mehmet Emin (1869, Istanbul -1944): Poet, and statesman. After studying at *Mulkiye* for a while, he left school and started working as a civil servant in different capacities. During this period he also joined the CUP. However, he was soon distanced from the CUP regime because of his ideas expressed in his poems. He was one of the founders of the Turkish Hearth, and *Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti* (Turkish Homeland). In 1912 he left the CUP, and resigned from his position of major to Erzurum. He became a member of the Ottoman Assembly in 1914. Four years later he founded the *Milli Türk Fırkası* (National Turkish Party) with his friends, with the aim to strengthen Turkish nationalism. Yurdakul served in the GNA as a deputy (from Sebinkarahisar, Urfa, and Istanbul) from 1923 until his death. His poetry reflected his political position against Ottomanism and Islamism, and his support for Turkish nationalism.

Appendix II: Chronology

1920

- 17 February – National Pact (*Misak-i Milli*)
- 16 March – British troops occupy Istanbul
- 23 April – GNA opens
- 10 August – Treaty of Sèvres
- 30 October – Kars captured from Armenians

1921

- 9 January – Inonu Battle I
- 20 January – Assembly votes for the first (provisional) Constitution
- 21 January – The mutiny of Cerkez (Circassian) Ethem
- 30 March – Inonu Battle II
- March/April – (Kurdish) Kocgiri Rebellion in the Eastern Dersim area
- 1 April – Armies win the Second Inonu Battle
- 23 August – Sakarya Battle

1922

- 17 June – Religious articles and publications are to go through the “Tedkiki Muellifati Seriyeye” commission
- 8 September – The name of Nif (*kazasi*) changed to Mustafa Kemal
- 9 September – Turkish troops arrive at Izmir
- 3-11 October – Mudanya Conference and armistice
- 1 November – Sultanate abolished
- 21 November – Lausanne Peace Conference commences
- 26 August – Battle at the Afyon front starts

1923

- 30 January – Turkish-Greek Population Exchange protocole and agreement signed in Lausanne
- 2 March – The motion to adopt Latin alphabet falls through
- 8 April – Law concerning compulsory elementary education
- June – Restrictions on the movement of minorities
- 24 July – Turkish peace treaty signed in Lausanne
- 23 August – GNA ratifies the Lausanne Treaty
- 9-11 September – People’s Party (later – RPP) founded
- 2 October – Allies evacuate Istanbul
- 13 October – Ankara becomes the capital

29 October – Republic proclaimed

1924

5 January – Law on Weekend Holidays (Saturdays and Sundays replace Fridays).
3 March 1924 – Caliphate abolished; religious schools closed down; the Ministry of Religion (*Seriye ve Evkaf*) abolished, and a Directorate of Religious Affairs is created in its stead; centralization of the education system (Law for the Unification of Education).

--official decree banning all Kurdish schools, organizations, publications, along with religious fraternities and seminaries.

8 April 1924 – Religious courts abolished

20 April 1924 – GNA voted for the first Republican constitution

17 November – Progressive Republican Party (*Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Firkasi*) formed

1925

11 February – (Kurdish) Seyh Sait rebellion begins

21 February – GNA agrees for the Koran to be translated into Turkish

4 March – Law for the Maintenance of Order (*Takrir-i Sukun Kanunu*)

15 April – Seyh Sait captured (executed in 29 June)

3 June – Progressive Republican Party dissolved

5 November – Ankara Law Faculty opens

25 November – Hat Law

30 November – Muslim brotherhoods were dissolved; their meeting places closed down

26 December – Adoption of international hours and calendar (“*Gunun 24 saate taksimine dair Kanun*”)

1926

17 February – New Civil Law ratified; shariat courts annulled

4 October – New Civil Code comes into effect

31 May – Resettlement Law (Nr. 885)

1 March – New Criminal Code

5 June – Mosul problem solved; southeast territories fixed

June – Assassination attempt against Mustafa Kemal unearthed

1927

28 October – First census held.

1928

- 31 January – Education Society (*Maarif Cemiyeti*) founded to help poor students and build schools
- 9/10 April – RPP votes to remove the article in the Constitution on Islam being the religion of the state
- 24 May – International numerals adopted (“*Beynelmilel erkamin kabulu Hakkında Kanun*”)
- 1 November – Adoption of the Latin Alphabet
- 1 November – New Citizenship Law
- 11 November – People’s Schools open as part of the effort to teach the new alphabet

1929

- 1 January – People’s Schools (*Millet Mektepleri*) begin classes
- 8 June – Law concerning the protection of national industry passed
- 1 September – Arabic and Persian classes dropped from the curriculum

1930

- 3 April – Women are given rights to vote in the local elections
- 12 August – Free Republican Party (*Serbest Cumhuriyet Firkasi*) formed as opposition
- 17 November – Free Republican Party (*Serbest Cumhuriyet Firkasi*) dissolves itself
- 23 December – Menemen Incident

1931

- 23 March – Law relating to Turkish children attending Turkish elementary schools
- 26 March – International weights and measures adopted
- 15 March – Turkish Historical Society founded

1932

- 19 February – People’s Houses open
- 2 July – First Turkish History Congress commenced
- 12 July – Turkish Language Society founded
- 18 July – Official announcement in Istanbul that call to prayer will be in Turkish
- 26 September – First Turkish Language Congress held
- 27 November – Call to prayers to be done in Turkish.

1933

1 February – Riots in Bursa due to the recital of prayers in Turkish
1 August 1933 – The old university (Darulfunun) is refounded as Istanbul University

1934

1 January – Courses on Turkish Revolution become part of the curriculum at universities
May – “Citizen, Speak Turkish” campaign in Izmir
14 June – Settlement Law
21 June – Surname Law (surnames made compulsory)
21 June – Riots in Thrace (against the Jewish population in the area)
23 August – Second Turkish Language Congress commenced
26 November – Addresses and titles such as efendi, bey, pasha banned (*Lakab Kanunu*)
3 December – Clerical dresses banned outside places of worship (Law on Attire, Nr. 2596)
5 December – Women given the the right to vote in national elections

1935

27 May – Weekend changed from Fridays to Sundays
3 October – Second Turkish History Congress commenced
10 October –Masonic lodges closed, their property comes under the ownership of the People’s Houses (decreed by the Ministry of Interior)

1936

1936-38 – (Kurdish) Dersim Revolts
31 August – Third Turkish Language Congress commenced

1937

5 February –The Six Arrows of the RPP are inserted into the Constitution
March –April – Kurdish, Dersim Revolt
29 May – Iskenderun (Alexandretta) becomes a “separate entity”

1938

June – Law on Associations (Nr. 3512)

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