

**Leiden Universiteit**

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# Intellectual Debates in the Early Turkish Republic

The Stance of Kemalist Elite towards Liberalism as a Competing Political  
Program

MA Thesis

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Leiden 2015

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## Introduction

In my master thesis I examine the stance of the Kemalist elite towards liberalism. I approach it as a competing political program of modernization and as one opposed to that of the RPP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi – Republican People’s Party) in the period of 1922-1945. According to the prevalent viewpoint in most of historical analyses of the early republican history of Turkey, the path to the formation of the new state and the viewpoint of the ruling elite clashed with the liberal ideal. The hybrid ideological nature of Kemalism, as the dominant trend of Turkish nationalism, and its distance from other existing paradigms is clearly captured by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk)’s phrase uttered during the debate on the abolition of the sultanate, ‘*Biz bize benzeriz*’ (We resemble ourselves). Through the study of the government’s acts and the intellectual debates of the period, I show that certain aspects of liberalism, such as constitution, rule of law, popular sovereignty and representative government, are an organic part of any modern political system, including Turkey's, and that any state has to adopt at least some of them if it is to be regarded as modern.

I decided to focus in this question after my initial research in the secondary literature about the political history of the Early Turkish republic.

First, intellectual history, in conjunction with political and social history, understood as referring to the social basis of support for competing political programs, can be an efficient perspective from which to study the creation of hegemony in a society. I believe that any meaningful historical analysis about hegemony must focus on two levels: the acts of a party, government and regime, and the ideological justification of these acts through the elites’ texts. In other words, the process of persuasion, coercion and control of the lower classes regarding a specific political program can be illuminated by the study of the public interventions by the elites. In making this assumption, and especially in the case of Turkey in the 1920s and 1930s, I do not assume that the masses followed these debates directly and, through propaganda texts, to have been persuaded for the necessity of a specific political program. Those intellectual debates

and their texts were limited to the various factions within the Turkish elite and were the main way to secure the elite's cooperation with the Kemalist political program. Their cooperation would allow them to exercise their influence on the masses and to secure their support or, at least, tolerance.

Second, I choose to focus on the concept of liberalism because of its importance in relation to modernizing policies. Until the end of the First World War and the spread of anti-liberal ideas and regimes throughout Europe in 1920s-1930s and despite those regimes' important differences, liberalism was the dominant paradigm for any political system that wanted to modernize itself. This made the various movements for constitutionalism, political representation and participation a common trend in the long 19<sup>th</sup> century. This changed the same period that the nationalistic movement founded the Turkish republic. The Kemalist regime was one of the first examples in this trend towards authoritarianism in the inter-war period. The financial crisis of 1929, which further undermined the ideal of an economically and politically society, did not cause a pro-authoritarian change in the Kemalist regime and mainly reinforced preexisting tendencies. The main change that the crisis brought about was the recognition of the need for the masses to be ideologically indoctrinated and to be mobilized in the program of radical modernization. But the restricted authoritarian political regime, with the absence of opposing voices in the press and opposition parties and the supremacy of the executive, were products of the 1920s before totalitarianism became dominant in Europe. Thus, the suspicion towards the liberal ideal can be traced back to the resistance movement after WW1. This process implemented through the regime's actions and their justification is the main aim of the present study.

A definition of liberalism is necessary for any meaningful analysis. I pursue an eclectic approach in which the political systems of France and England, the monarchist and republican liberal alternatives, are my 'indirect' guides towards a conception of a 'proper' liberal political system. In this context, the stress on individual's rights and obligations, the right of political participation in every echelon of power, the rule of law, the importance of electorate's representation by an assembly that legitimizes the actions of the executive branch, the separation of powers, the stress of individual in contrast to collective identities and a competitive political

system appear as points of reference. In the economic sphere, the support of a free market with minimum intervention from the state in the economic activities and the relatively free movement of capital and goods at an interstate level are clearly characteristics of economic liberalism. But it is impossible to carry out an analysis of any society, including the Turkish one, without allowing peculiarities to exist. In other words, a strict and rigid use of those concepts would lead us to the conclusion that only England and France can claim a proper use of Liberalism as a political program, though some cases would be excluded even in these countries.

In the last period of the Ottoman Empire, the opposition party against CUP made use of the term 'liberal'. It was known as '*Liberal Union*' or '*Liberal Entente*' in Europe although in Ottoman Turkish its name was '*Hürriyet ve İtilâf Fırkası*', Freedom and Accord Party. It advocated a program of political decentralization and support of private initiative but their alliance with the Entente since 1919 delegitimized in the eyes of important segments of Ottoman society and marked the end of their political career. The association of this party with liberalism in general damaged the term's popularity in the country since then. But this was only one of the currents of liberalism in the late Ottoman Empire, and the existence of supporters of a more inclusive, open and competitive political regime among the nationalists since 1919 indicates its greater popularity.

Another peculiarity that is extremely important in the Turkish context is the nature of Turkish elites and their growing support for centralization. The relative weakness of the Muslim bourgeoisie, political but economic as well, and the perceived opposition by religious adversaries towards radical modernization, forced the remaining pro-modernizing elites, officers, bureaucrats, intellectuals and some professional groups (e.g. doctors and lawyers,) to pursue a policy of a strong state and restricted freedom to non-state groups within civic society. Moreover, they concluded a tactical and strategic alliance with the elites in the countryside, mostly landowners, tribal leaders and local notables. This alliance was not always harmonious but it was based on the state's support for the acquisition of the properties of non-Muslims by these social strata during WW1. This growing tendency towards centralization further reinforced the distrust towards the commercial and professional classes, despite being initially friendly

towards the policy of radical and secular modernization. They also further limited the appeal of ideologies that advocated more respect to individual rights.

In this study, I follow the turns and twists in the views, actions and justifications of Kemal, his associates and some of his opponents. In the 1930s, this group of people eventually became the dominant political current in Turkey and established a regime under the auspices of Kemalism, an ideology with eclectic references to an array of political ideals including liberalism, corporatism and others.

In the first chapter, *'The preparation for the overthrow of monarchy and the dissemination of ideas of popular sovereignty'*, through the narratives of Halide's Memoirs and Kemal's Nutuk, I focus in the alliance of disparate political elements united only in their opposition against Entente and on how the supporters of a westernizing nationalist reformist movement obtained their prominent position in the nationalist movement. They had to fight against those who rejected Europe as the guide for a modern regime and advocated the formation of a state, compatible with modernity's needs, along the lines of Bolshevism, the dynastic loyalty or the religion. The 'westernizers' won by spreading ideas of popular sovereignty opposed to the idea of a monarch ruling the country and depriving the nation of its legitimizing source of power. And they avoided any radical social reforms in order to preserve the social order and so as not to undermine their alliance with the conservative strata of local landowners and notables. The instrumental approach of Kemal and others to matters of ideology allowed them to retain certain aspects of continuity with the constitutional past but it did not confine them to a course that would not allow them to pursue policies of rupture in the future. And this continuity with the imperial past is strongly related with liberalism due to its prominent influence in the institutional and social reforms implemented in the Late Ottoman Empire.

In the second chapter, *'The Authoritarian Turn, The Division of the former First Group among Radicals and Liberals'* I use published researches on the Progressive Republican Party alongside the sources of the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter to follow the last acts of this united westernizing nationalist movement and their division among liberals and radicals. In this period, from 1922 until 1929, the alliance of different currents within the westernizers dissolved, after the

establishment of a regime under the principles of national and popular sovereignty and the adoption of a constitution in 1924, alongside European liberal values and norms. The growing despotic tendencies of Kemal and his intention to launch a program of radical reforms without any concern for public sentiment sparked a reaction of other leaders from the nationalist movement. They agreed on the need these reforms to be implemented but disagreed on the speed and extent and advocated a more moderate approach given the masses' hostility to a complete westernization of the country. The effective implementation of these reforms would demand a particularly strong executive with limited control from the assembly and minimal respect of individual freedoms and rights. These tendencies in RPP forced them to found a party and to publish a political manifesto that promoted a complete adoption of liberalism as ideal. Through this statement, they demanded the masses' views for the reforms to be respected and more freedom for the dissemination of opposing views though tolerance did not extend to reactionary and religious elements. The danger in this opposing party ruling the country and its common political origins with RPP, combined with the RPP's eclectic relation with liberalism, illustrates that this ideal was not so alien in 1920s Turkey, contrary to claims in several historical studies.

In the third chapter, '*The Hybrid Nature of Kemalism in 1930s*', I focus on the transformation of the regime and the adoption of Kemalism as ideology for the country through Peker's analysis on the Turkish nationalist movement and other historical studies for 1930s Turkey. After an initial experiment with a tame opposition party in 1930, Kemal and his associates decided to expand their control beyond politics and to every other civic association. A unique ideology emerged through the party structures and the dissemination of specific ideas through these structures. This ideology, in which all the previous acts of the regime were incorporated and justified came to be known as Kemalism. Through its actions in 1930s, the analyses of Peker's ideas and Gökalp's corporatism and its comparison with other European anti-liberal movements, I stress the hybrid nature of Kemalism, which allowed certain aspects of liberalism to survive. This allowed it to continue to function as a conceptual framework in Turkish politics until today and to take different shapes and forms during each period. One prominent example here is the transition in a multi-party regime in the 1940s with minimum changes at the institutional level.

Overall, the ideological origins of the Turkish nationalist movement in 19th century post-revolutionary Europe, and despite its increasing exclusion of other competing programs that culminated in the Kemalism of the 1930s, allowed it to retain eclectic influences of the political liberalism throughout the period. The most prominent case of those influences is that the regime retained a liberal and democratic façade in all its actions and all of its decisions were justified through a parliamentary majority alongside a typical respect of individual rights.



## **1. The Preparation for the Overthrow of the Sultan and the Dissemination of Ideas of Popular Sovereignty, 1919-1922**

In the first chapter I investigate the influence of political liberalism in the national resistance movement against the Entente and, later on, the Sultan. The rise of this movement, which had a clear nationalist program from the beginning, faced several challenges from the outset. The response of Kemal and other actors to these challenges allow us to assess the influence of that period in the subsequent events that created the Turkish republic giving its distinctive character at the ideological level. The main problems were the following; to secure the support of the masses for a new state entity against the Entente and the Sultan, to block any attempts by the Sultan to use his popular appeal to undermine the popularity of the dissident nationalists and to secure the broad coalition of disparate forces that were united against the Entente but with a limited consensus in any other area of politics. These demanded of Kemal not to adopt rigid ideological positions but to approach several matters in an instrumental fashion. But this instrumentalism had limits and it is these during the war years that I attempt to delineate with reference to the ideology of political liberalism.

In the beginning, and up the move of the (or creation of a new) parliament in Ankara, the Committees for the Defense of the National Rights were transformed from non-state, civic organizations to a network from which a body of representatives emerged. They regarded themselves as representatives of the nation's will and advocated its independence from the Entente's occupation forces. This change, which occurred from the spring of 1919 to the opening proceedings of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) in Ankara, is the first significant step towards the creation of a new state entity that was autonomous from Istanbul. The pressure that the nationalists exerted on the cabinet not to pursue a conciliatory policy towards the Entente is a prominent feature of the period. The initiative, although in the official Kemalist historiography is attributed to Kemal, cannot be traced back to to a single person and a single organizational network such as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). The CUP took the initiative, but it had to ally itself with political forces that supported a considerably different political program, as it became apparent later on with the conflicts among the First and the Second group in TGNA, and to overcome their important political differences in order to

succeed in the non-dismemberment of Anatolia and Thrace. The narratives of Mustafa Kemal's *Nutuk* and Halide Edip's *Turkish Ordeal* suggest different approaches about the main questions of this complex period, such as the political legitimacy of the movement; the role of the Committee for the Defense of the National Rights in Thrace and Anatolia, and its relation with the government in Istanbul. In other words, how the dissident nationalist elites justified their disobedience to the Sultan, how they secured the masses' support or intolerance for this 'mutiny', and whether they had to create alternative political institutions to achieve those ends. Those events cannot be regarded as directly related to political liberalism, as an ideal for the formation of a modern nation-state. But this early phase set the foundation for a state that would uphold the principle of national and popular sovereignty, which is also a distinctive feature of liberal political systems as well.<sup>1</sup>

This connection between the political project of the Nationalists and political liberalism was a constant theme in Kemal's political thought, although it was not always clear from the beginning or at all times. It was expressed as the idea that sovereignty belongs unconditionally to the people, that it is indivisible and that it is expressed through people's representatives. Before the creation of the TGNA in Ankara, the Committee for the Defense of the National Rights functioned as a civic association and pressure group with the backing of important generals and governors. Kemal argued that the network of those committees and its executive board in Ankara, that followed as a political program the proceedings of the congresses in Erzurum and Sivas and had him as its president, *represented* and was nation's voice. The nation was not able to express his will and needed this network of committees due to the constant delay in the declaration of new election, which finally took place at the end of 1919. Those theoretical concepts and principles were approached through an instrumentalism that was present in the political reality since the time of the Young Turks. Kemal was one of its prominent members since the beginning, although he never attained the level of political fame and prestige of its leaders, Enver Pasha, Cemal Pasha and Talat Pasha. In a recurring pattern throughout the period of the Young Turks, the Nationalists Movement and the rule of RPP, whenever there was a choice between, on the one hand, a strong executive and the implementation of a program of

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rapid modernization and, on the other, a political system closer to a liberal democracy without the means to apply such a program, the leadership would side with the former.<sup>2</sup>

The first act in this process was the increased autonomy of Kemal and other prestigious generals, such as Kazım Karabekir, towards Istanbul. Kemal kept silent on his appointment from Istanbul as Inspector General in Central and Northern Anatolia or on his contacts with anti-Unionist politicians so as to become the minister of Defense immediately after the armistice. But, even from the first pages of Halide's memoirs, it emerges that Kemal supported the closure of the parliament by the Sultan after the October 1918 armistice. This a clear indication that Halide shared the view that a fraction of the Young Turks came close to constitutionalism, which she takes as a sign of a truly democratic regime, in a more or less instrumental fashion.<sup>3</sup> Even in Ali Kemal's circular in the summer of 1920, as minister of Interior in Damat Ferit's cabinet, where the removal of Kemal's duties from the army was announced, Kemal appears as an respected officer, with important patriotic ('*hamiyet*') activity.<sup>4</sup> This reference illustrates that the government in Istanbul did not regard Kemal as a rebel in relation to the Sultan but as a potential ally in the future and they aimed to force Kemal to obey the directives from Istanbul. Furthermore, it shows Istanbul's tactic towards pro-nationalist officers, through which it tried to tighten its control over them without considering all of their patriotic activities as actions against government policies.<sup>5</sup> Kemal's appointment as Inspector general in Anatolia and Karabekir's retention of his post as military commander of the army in the East were results of this forced alliance. Kemal's resignation from the army served a similar purpose; to minimize the conflicts with Istanbul.<sup>6</sup> Being a civilian, without any official bonds with the government allowed him to have more room to maneuvers without seeming to be an officer who defies direct orders from his superiors, although the danger of losing any legitimate claims to lead the nationalist movement was present.

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<sup>2</sup> E. J. Zürcher 'Young Turks, Ottoman Muslims and Turkish Nationalists' Pp. 172-173, 176 in K. Karpat (ed.), *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey*, Boston: Brill 2000

<sup>3</sup> Halide Edin (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 Pp. 12,14

<sup>4</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 49

<sup>5</sup> D. A. Rustow 'The Army and the Founding of the Turkish Republic' p. 171-172 in E. J. Zürcher and T. Atabaki (eds.), *Men of Order; Authoritarian Modernization under Ataturk and Reza Shah*, London: I. B. Tauris 2010

<sup>6</sup> İsmet Giritli, *Fifty Years of Turkish Political Development 1919-1969*, Istanbul: 1969 p. 7

Moreover, the consent for the future policy of the nationalist movement among its members, mainly officers in this first period, was not secure. First of all, Kemal recognized the tedious task of securing popular and, mostly, the elite's support for his policy of disobedience towards the Sultan. The people, the army and the intellectuals, who regarded the sultanate as the supreme authority in the country, were not ready for a direct confrontation with the government in Istanbul and the situation demanded a gradual unfolding of his intended policy.<sup>7</sup> Although it is not possible to know exactly when Kemal decided to pursue the foundation of a republic in the place of a dynastic empire, the need to be tactful of this plan until his position as the supreme leader of the nationalist movement was secure, forced him to be in a constant bargain towards disparate forces with a large spectrum of political plans.<sup>8</sup> This was a product of the alliance between the bureaucratic and army elite with local notables, landowners, tribal leaders and a part of the Muslim bourgeoisie, who had increased their wealth and social status through the appropriation of Christian properties and commercial activities since WW1.<sup>9</sup> All these forces were united in the resistance regarding the partition of Ottoman land, but they did not agree in the means of resistance and the appropriate form of government in the future.

Probably the most important factor in the early years was Kazım Karabekir, one of the leaders of the liberal opposition against RPP later on. He was the commander of the last relatively intact and combat-effective ottoman military force. Being in the East, the distance from Istanbul and the lack of railway connection allowed him to have a certain amount of autonomy for the implementation of his policies. The main obstacle was two British divisions in Caucasus which could force the incorporation of the six eastern Provinces in the newly founded Armenia in Caucasus. He was also a well-known, experienced, nationalist officer who was ready to use all the available, military and national, means to prevent this incorporation. Nevertheless, he did not wish to establish his personal rule in the area and advocated a policy of continuity with the previous period and moderate opposition towards the Sultan. His decision not to arrest Kemal, during the Erzurum congress and to support Kemal in his bid of the Representatives' Committee for the Committees for the Defense of the national Rights was essential.<sup>10</sup> The

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<sup>7</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 Pp. 15,17

<sup>8</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 Pp. 21,23

<sup>9</sup> Ç. Keyder, *State and in Turkey*, London: Verso 1987 and S. Mardin, *The Center Periphery Relations; A Key to Turkish Politics*, Daedalus vol. 102 n. 1, 1973, p. 40

<sup>10</sup> Halide Edin (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p. 45

lengthy telegrams of Karabekir in Kemal's *Nutuk*, besides legitimizing Kemal's decision to arrest him in 1926, illustrate clearly his political importance for the Nationalists' movement.<sup>11</sup>

Ideas about active resistance against the possible dismemberment of Anatolia, disobedience to the Sultan's conciliatory policies towards the Entente, by using the nation as the supreme source for political authority, first emerged in the statements of the new movement, the Amasya circular, and the proceedings of the Erzurum and Sivas congresses.

Among the 8 points of the Amasya circular<sup>12</sup>, the fourth point is the more interesting. By using the argument on the lack of legitimacy of the Istanbul government due to its disrespect of the nation's will which did not accept Entente's plans, it advocated the creation of a *national council* or committee, which would secure the expression of the national will, free from any foreign influences. The term used for this organ, '*heyet-i milliye*' has the same ambiguity of all the movements and institutions that used the term millet and milliyet. Although the term was using extensively in the nationalistic literature to describe the new imagined community, it still had some of its religious connotations that strengthened its appeal to the religious lower classes of Anatolia and made the new collective identity much more concrete with reference to the social reality of the people.<sup>13</sup> In any case, this national council was the first expression of a political authority in contrast with that of Istanbul, although the exact nature of this organization vis-à-vis Istanbul remained deliberately vague in the text. Refet (Bele), commander of the army in Ankara and prominent nationalist, was initially reluctant to sign a document which advocated the creation of a *temporary government* in Anatolia. Only after pressure from Ali Fuat (Cebesoy), commander of the army in Central Anatolia and important associate of Kemal in the first period of the nationalist movement, Refet withdrew his objections.<sup>14</sup> Further along, a tension between Kemal's initiative for a congress in Sivas, and Karabekir's in Erzurum, is indirectly described, due to Kemal's need to clarify that the two conferences were not antagonistic to each other and that the one in Sivas would incorporate Erzurum's decisions and executive organ.

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<sup>11</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 in general and H. Adak 'National Myths and Self-Narrations' in *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102:2/3, Spring/Summer 2003

<sup>12</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 43

<sup>13</sup> U. Uzak, *Islam and Secularism in Turkey*, London: I. B. Tauris 2010 p. 13, Ç. Keyder, *State and in Turkey*, London: Verso 1987 p. 88 and E. J. Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy*, London: I.B. Tauris 2010 Pp. 226-227

<sup>14</sup> Halide Edin (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p. 43

The proceeding of Erzurum and Sivas congresses did not change considerably the program of the nationalists. In the Erzurum<sup>15</sup>, they set forth their demand for respect of the national rights from Istanbul's government. Failing that, a temporary government ('*muvakkat hükümet*') would be formed in Anatolia. The temporariness of the new organ is been supported by Halide as well while she stressed that it would abide by the law of the Sultan. The initiative did not belong exclusively to Kemal, who advocated for a central conference in Sivas but, among others, to Karabekir as well, who needed it as a legal pretext for his actions.<sup>16</sup> The danger of incorporation of the Six Eastern provinces in the new Armenian state with the help of the two British divisions demanded of Karabekir to pursue a policy of disobedience and later on, active resistance to the Entente's demands. In the beginning, he used troops of irregulars to stop the disarmament of the Ottoman army in the East, while those weapons were being transferred to the Armenian army, and to keep these in the hands of the nationalists.

In Sivas, the nationalists further elaborated this point by including the active resistance towards the Armenian, Greek and Entente's forces in their demands from Istanbul.<sup>17</sup> The tensions between factions of the former CUP movement are described by Halide, who mentions Kemal's objection against Mehmet Cavit Bey's participation as representative of the nationalists in Istanbul to the Sivas congress.<sup>18</sup>

In the congresses proceedings, the possibility of a mandate was not ruled out completely, although it was mentioned only indirectly as technical, economic and political help that could be accepted by any power without any territorial ambitions against 'Turkey'.<sup>19</sup> This point is particularly interesting for Kemal and Halide's counter-narratives. Kemal mentioned Halide in his Speech only as one of the advocates of this solution and indirectly he also delegitimized her husband Dr. Adnan (Adivar), an important nationalist politician and member of the liberal fraction in the movement. Nevertheless in her memoirs, their importance and closeness to the leadership is clear. In Kemal's narrative, the possibility of an American mandate would violate the inviolable principle of popular sovereignty and no government with legitimacy from an elected parliament could coexist with a mandate. But Bekir Sami Bey and Halide Edip regarded

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<sup>15</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 89

<sup>16</sup> Halide Edin (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p.44

<sup>17</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 121

<sup>18</sup> Halide Edin (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p. 47

<sup>19</sup> Halide Edin (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p. 16

it as a viable alternative due to Wilson's recognition of the national rights of the Turks, the moral prestige of USA in matters of foreign policy and the belief that America would provide guidance for the necessary reforms of Turkey. Moreover, Bekir Sami argued that the Americans would respect the territorial integrity of the empire and the dynastic rights of the sultan alongside the chance the ottomans to pursue an (relatively) autonomous foreign policy.<sup>20</sup>

When it was clear that the congress in Sivas would take place, the government of Damat Ferit Pasha decided to stop the congress in Sivas and to arrest the representatives who were present. This was an important moment for the nationalist movement. They increased their criticism against the cabinet, by leaving the Sultan temporarily outside, and carried out acts of disobedience towards the government by controlling the communication between the capital and Anatolian cities.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, Kemal felt the need to reassure the public that the state had continuity, the laws and power of the Sultan ('*Padişah Hazretleri Adına*') were still valid and the life, property, honor and all of the peoples' rights would be respected because of their origins or religion. ('*Halkın canı, malı, ırzı ve her türlü hakları güven altında bulundurulacaktır*')<sup>22</sup> In Kemal's contacts with Abdül Kerim Pasha, a liaison between the opposing forces, he declared the power of the government to be arbitrary due to its function as an obstacle between the nation and the Sultan. In cases such as these the nation had the right to carry out acts of political disobedience.<sup>23</sup>

The Sultan appointed a new cabinet that was more friendly with the nationalists in Anatolia, and soon elections were declared. In the elections, the various branches of the Committee for the Defense of the national Rights made sure that their candidates would be elected, or chosen among the local elites, and that a pro-nationalist parliamentarian majority would control the government. Their participation in the elections indicated that the nationalist cadres were still saw Istanbul as the appropriate space for their political battle.<sup>24</sup> The control of the majority's from Kemal, who had made Ankara as base for his operations, was not certain. His attempts to have the parliament convened in Ankara or to get himself elected as president of

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<sup>20</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 Pp. 125, 127, 131

<sup>21</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 185, Halide Edin (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p.47

<sup>22</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 195

<sup>23</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 249

<sup>24</sup> D. A. Rustow 'The Army and the Founding of the Turkish Republic' p. 192

the parliament in order to have the right to call for the convention of the parliament in other places, were unsuccessful. Although the parliament adopted the National Pact, a document that incorporated all the nationalists' demands until then, it also gave a confidence vote to Sultan's government, by ignoring Kemal's request to withdraw its support as a protest for Entente's interference in internal politics.<sup>25</sup>

The main point of conflict with his associates in Anatolia was the future role of the Representatives' committee in Ankara, now that the nation's will was expressed through the parliament. In the beginning he had reassured them that when this would take place, he would convene a new general congress in order for its activity to adjust to the new conditions. Nevertheless, he did not keep his word and continued pressing the government and the parliament to pursue policies according to the nationalists' program. An example of this was the telegraph to the Sultan for choosing the 'right person' as Grand Vizier.<sup>26</sup> In this text, he warned the Sultan that if he did not comply with the will of the 'nation', he would be responsible for the disobedience of the nation to his orders, a profound situation in the history of the empire.<sup>27</sup>

His policy of pressure was not supported by everybody. Kazım Karabekir though it was a mistake for the Representatives committee to continue its activities and to represent the nation's will, now that a new parliament had convened and the government had to obtain a confidence vote. As the leader of the nationalists in the parliament, if Rauf (Orbay) consider it necessary, Kemal and the rest of the members in the Representatives' committee had to comply. Moreover, he assured Kemal that the front against the Greek forces in Aydin would continue to operate with the responsibility of the army and the commanders of national forces (bands of irregulars).<sup>28</sup>

The occupation of Istanbul by the Entente offered invaluable service to the more radical nationalists who advocated a rupture with the monarchy. But even in these conditions it was only much later that the ideas of a rupture gained widespread support among the elite and the deputies. Kemal's move to call the deputies, who had escaped the arrest by Entente, to join him in Ankara and a new representative body to be formed, was met with support by important

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<sup>25</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 Pp. 485, 497 and Halide Edin (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p.49 (note 16)

<sup>26</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 Pp 321, 367, 507

<sup>27</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 533

<sup>28</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 521



elements in the movement. His language in those statements referred to the violation of the national sovereignty, the need for a ‘holy war’ in order for the Caliph to be freed from the foreign control. He also accused the Western states of hypocrisy, because they did not respect the individual’s rights and liberties in Turkey as they did in their own countries. The new governmental body would have the name of ‘Council with Emergency Powers’ (*‘Salâhiyeti fevkalâdeye malik bir meclis’*), it would abide by the laws of the Ottoman Empire. The replacements of deputies that have been arrested would emerge through elections from the nationalist cadres and local elites (probably without the masses’ participation in these procedures). Halide and the parliament speaker in Istanbul Celalettin Arif Bey supported his ideas, a sign of the relatively widespread appeal of his initiative. Due to his legal background, Celalettin Arif was inclined to support this radical act through references to the constitution. Because the Ottoman constitution did not have provisions for this case he referred to the French constitution which foresaw that the French parliament if disbanded illegally or attacked, had the right to re-assemble in a safe place with the surviving members. The vacant deputyships would be replaced through elections from the municipal and regional (sancak) councils.<sup>29</sup>

The formation of a new government which would impose its control on the ottoman territory was the next subject for the newly formed assembly, the ‘Turkish Grand National Assembly’ or TGNA. In Kemal’s narration, this was a relatively simple procedure although he states that when, later on, the deputies understood the practical implications of those decisions, the opposition within the assembly increased. He achieved, without mentioning the details from the debates, the incorporation of executive and legislative branches in the TGNA, and made the president of Assembly into the president of the Governmental Committee as well. This principle, expressed as ‘Unity of Powers’, was also signified because of the name that was used for the cabinet. Instead of the ottoman Turkish term for minister, ‘nazır’, the term ‘vekil’ was used, which meant commissar, a term with strong Bolsheviks connotations. The sensitive matter of the TGNA’s relationship with the Sultan was not clarified and its solution was postponed because the deputies did not want their acts not to appear as a revolution against the sultanate, although

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<sup>29</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 Pp. 563, 565, 567, 569, Halide Edin (Adıvar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p. 122 and C. Koçak, *Parliament Membership during the Single Party Regime in Turkey (1925-1945)* p. 4

any reference to the temporary nature of the new institutions, as was the case in previous public statements, was absent.<sup>30</sup>

For Halide, and probably for the politicians that later on formed the PRP, the matter was of critical importance, and she refers to the debates extensively. It is obvious that she, among others, supported Celalettin Arif Bey's suggestion for a transition governmental body, which would resemble a Republican one, and it would have a President who would function as a regent for the absent monarch. The powers would be divided between the assembly keeping charge of the legislative and a cabinet of ministers that would exercise the executive. This was opposed strongly by Kemal. Through the motto '*power is indivisible and belongs solely to the people*' he demanded all the powers to be founded by the Assembly. Although the practical differences might appear insignificant, the election of a governmental committee by the parliament, which committee was actually exercising the executive, reduced its control from the assembly. The commissars, as they were called, were elected individually by it and no collective responsibility existed for the cabinet, its president, or the president of the assembly who presided over the cabinet as well. This hybrid model allowed Kemal to avoid responsibility for any failures of his cabinet. Moreover, he secured the support of opponents for a liberal democracy, including pro-Bolshevik and religious elements, in order to be elected president of TGNA. The adversaries of a more rational pro-western governmental body choose to support Kemal due to the need for the new assembly to gain legitimacy as a bearer of the national will as fast as possible. Moreover, the political inexperience of the new deputies in constitutional and institutional matters was another factor in the adoption of this model.<sup>31</sup>

One of the first signs of tensions between Kemal and his first collaborators in Anatolia, Refet (Bele) and Ali Fuat (Cebesoy) was their opposition to the idea of İsmet (İnönü) becoming Chief of General Staff. That this conflict manifested itself not as a constitutional or political question, but regarding the position of the highest military authority in the (new) state illustrates the main issues for which a political fight could emerge and the instrumental fashion in which more ideological matters were approached by both sides.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 591

<sup>31</sup> Halide Edin (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p. 139-140

<sup>32</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 591-593

The Judicial branch in this new scheme was exercised by the Independence Tribunals, which was formed in September of 1920, and allowed deputies to judge cases of desertion and high treason. Their incumbency was limited and for most of the war they were under the strict control of the assembly.<sup>33</sup>

From the autumn of 1920 differences among the deputies started to emerge, exacerbated by the discussions in the assembly on the ‘Law of Fundamental Organization’ (*Teşkilat-ı Esasiye Kanunu*), that would regulate important matters in the new state entity. Halide used the scheme of supporters of the Western Ideal and of the Eastern Ideal alongside the ‘Independents’. Kemal avoided this distinction, perhaps because of his instrumental approach to those differences, although he referred to the existence of opposition.

For Halide, who put herself among the supporters of the Western Ideal, Westernism was a political program which advocated policies of modernization, without the radical Jacobin overtones of the future Kemalists, in a liberal political system as a constitutional monarchy or as a republic. The respect of individual freedoms and rights combined with the conservatism of the masses made it necessary for those modernizing changes to be moderate, gradual and with a strong sense of continuity with the past but without losing the aim of creating a modern, western like, country. Those elements, which included notable members of the nationalists movement which later founder RPP, were extremely concerned to prevent Kemal from increasing his share of power, although they ultimately failed in this task. Nevertheless, the popularity of these ideas among the lower strata of the political elite, such as middle-range officers, local notables, leaders of bands of irregulars was limited due to the war that they had to undertake against western imperialism.<sup>34</sup>

The supporters of the Eastern ideal, known also as ‘Second Group’ (*İkinci Grup*) were much less homogeneous in their ranks and were relatively less experienced. The influence of the Bolshevik revolution was considerable among them, not so much due to the appeal of its socialist future and its radical social, economic and political reforms, but because of its effectiveness in defying the western powers and its ability to impose another vision in Russia. This functioned as

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<sup>33</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 593 and R. Kasaba (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, Vol. 4, Cambridge: CUP 2008 p. 131

<sup>34</sup> Halide Edin (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p. 171

a motive among the nationalists to reject Europe as a model and to look for an original, indigenous in the East, model compatible with the needs of modernity. In September 1920, the parliament's declaration '*the people in Turkey are under the oppression of capitalism and imperialism and that it would free them from this threat*' was indicative of the prevalent anti-westernism among the deputies.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, they never made explicit satisfyingly how the necessary modernization of a poor and backward country was to take place. Among their ranks were pro-socialists, leaders of irregular bands which despised any strong state authority and wanted to secure their power in areas under their control, and religious elements which saw the (civil) war as an opportunity to establish the democracy that existed in the first years of the caliphate under Mohammed. For all these reasons, they never had a concrete political program and they could not challenge Kemal's leadership.<sup>36</sup>

Kemal used these divisions to secure his dominance in the parliament. He sided with the 'Easterners' in order for a hybrid political system to be adopted, with no constitutional checks for the executive and he sided with the Westerners so that no radical, political and social reforms to be implemented that would undermine the fragile alliance between this variety of political forces. The removal of Nazım Bey from the ministry of Interior and the conflict with Erzurum for the appointment of a new governor in the area were signs of this attitude. Moreover, he used these events to increase his control in the cabinet by securing the right to propose his own candidates for the ministries in the assembly.<sup>37</sup>

Another indicative event for Kemal's role between the two fraction (always according to Halide's analysis), was the suggestion of Kazım Karabekir for the creation of a second body of deputies, with strong resemblance of a senate, which would be elected among the higher stratum of the society with adequate education and service for the state. It would secure the continuity of the governmental policies and it would provide political and technical expertise and guidance to the main body of the deputies who represented a wider spectrum of stratum. This might also include people with no strong qualifications for ruling a country. Kemal turned down his suggestion. He considered it a source of divisions and conflicts for the assembly, it was violating the principle of indivisibility of power and required a third institution which would be an

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<sup>35</sup> Umut Uzer, *Identity and Turkish Foreign Policy*, London: I.B. Tauris 2001 p. 42

<sup>36</sup> Halide Edin (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p. 171, 173-174

<sup>37</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 671

arbitrator between those two bodies. In his response to Kazım he also implied that Kazım indirectly was asking the Sultan to assume the role of the arbitrator.<sup>38</sup>

The adoption of the ‘Law of Fundamental Organization’ in 1921 and the appointment of Kemal as supreme commander of the army consolidated his position as the head of the resistance movement and contributed to the final victory against the Greek army in August of 1922. Its adoption was a major victory for Kemal because he succeeded incorporating in the text all the previous decisions of the assembly that had allowed him to control it. The lack of references in its relation with the Sultanate allowed him to keep both the pro-monarchical and republican forces in a political alliance. Moreover, he had the legal pretext not to accept any compromise with the government in Istanbul and to demand that the TGNA be the only government that could decide for the end of the war. But the sense of continuity between the previous governments in Istanbul and the one in Ankara was apparent by the last point in the text, where it declares that all the articles of the previous constitution which did not violate the new one were still in effect. (*Kanun-ı Esasinin işbu mevat ile tearuz etmiyen ahklami kemakan mer’iyülicradır*)<sup>39</sup> The new constitution further increased the conflicts in the assembly, and it had become difficult to secure a majority. This forced him to found the Defense for the National Rights in Thrace and Anatolia party, and its parliamentary group. Almost all the deputies participated in it. The opposition emerged within its parliamentary group and was named as the second group in contrast with the group of deputies which was supporting Kemal’s leadership, named as first group retrospectively.<sup>40</sup>

In those moves, Karabekir tried to persuade Kemal to adopt a more moderate stance, not to push forward his ideal for a republican political system and to keep it as the party’s political program due to the hostility of the masses to this prospect. Moreover, he demanded important political and military actors to be consulted before those changes were to take place. His last point was that Kemal had to refrain from a direct involvement in the political conflicts and not to support any of the parliamentary groups. Kemal responded to his complaints by arguing that the constitution did not define the system of government. Moreover, he rejected the idea of negotiating the reforms with other actors, apart from the deputies, as a violation of the populist

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<sup>38</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 855, 857

<sup>39</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 753,755

<sup>40</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 797

principle. Lastly, he considered essential for the president to participate in a political group because the executive power was exercised by the assembly as well, and the parliament did not function only as a constitutional check to the executive power of the government, as was the case in the past.<sup>41</sup> The populist principle, began emerging in Kemal's statements during the debates for the constitution. Its democratic connotations notwithstanding, it was a tool for mass mobilization against foreign occupation and the imperial bureaucracy. In the future, and with its further clarification, it would play the role of securing the support of the lower classes for the new regime.<sup>42</sup>

In the period between 1919 and 1922 the first characteristics of the future Turkish republic started to emerge, through the acts and decisions of a group of dissident nationalist elites who sought legitimacy as a governmental body vis-à-vis the Sultan's cabinets. The National resistance movement's first success was that it gained legitimacy as a different state entity, in direct conflict with the Entente's forces and the Sultan in Istanbul. This legitimacy secured the popularity of laicism and republicanism in the future. The masses accepted that a government should be elected from the people and decide according to the nation's interests without the people and their government having to obey a metaphysical, dynastic power. Although this was not fully implemented until 1922, the lack of opposition for the abolishment of the sultanate in 1922 was due to the success of a group of officers and politicians who dared to revolt against the Sultan and defeated the winners of WW1.

Furthermore, the nationalist leadership and Kemal kept a fragile balance among political forces with completely different programs. They prevented the establishment an anti-western pro-Bolshevik regime with a radical program of social, economic and cultural reforms although Kemal used their support in order to counter-balance the supporters of a western-like regime and to secure a policy of fierce opposition towards Istanbul.

The supporters of a more rational liberal regime, called 'Westerners' by Halide, with references to European, monarchic or republican, regimes were never strong enough to

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<sup>41</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 799, 801, 803

<sup>42</sup> K. Karpat, *Social Change and Politics in Turkey*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1973 p. 49

dominate, despite their incumbencies in important positions in the state and the army due to their political experience. Kemal used them stress the continuity of the new entity with the past through the provisions that most of the Sultan's laws, alongside the individual liberties and rights, would be respected. The role of the Sultan was not clarified and it was theoretically still possible for the Sultan to remain the head of the state, although with only nominal power in his hands. And this vagueness allowed conservative, religious elements to also support the nationalists, in the project of liberating the captive Sultan.

But the program of the westerners was never fully implemented. They wanted the new state entity to resemble the constitutional regime in Istanbul and to be shaped along the lines of liberal democracies. This was the reason they proposed the following: a) a two-chamber parliament to be established, where the second would function as a senate and secure the continuity of state policies and stop any inappropriate reforms initiating in the political inexperience of the deputies due to the universal suffrage, b) a constitutional regime with a president acting as regent until the Sultan to be free from any foreign influences c) the head of the Ankara's government should not to participate in party politics and must act as an impartial arbitrator, imitating the Sultan's stance towards party politics in the past. Their concern for the concentration of power in the hands of Kemal made them despise the ultra-democratic character of the regime such as the lack of constitutional checks for the executive and collective responsibility for the cabinet.

The heritage of Kemal's leadership during the national resistance movement allowed him to become the indisputable leader of the Turkish republic. The 'hybrid ideological nature of the regime' took shape through Kemal's skillful alliance with such disparate political forces during the war years and the need to secure their support in the non-dismemberment of Anatolia.

## 2. The Authoritarian Turn; The division of the former First Group among Radicals and Liberals, 1922-1930

After the victory against the Greek army in September of 1922 the broad alliance of various political forces against the foreign invasion, came apart. In the end of this process, after the Izmir trials in 1926, Kemal and his followers became the dominant political power in the country.

For my analysis of the period I use the scheme of radicals vis-à-vis liberals, although moderates would have also been suitable. I choose liberal to refer to the opposition of prominent nationalist generals towards Kemal's despotic tendencies, due to their decision in 1924 to form a party and to publish a liberal political manifesto as a differentiating move towards RPP. It is not possible to be known if they were sincere supporters of liberalism, but their acts and statements since the war years show a relative consistency for a more open and inclusive regime. They despised the concentration of power in the hands of Kemal and considered essential to exist political freedom among the reformist westernizing forces, a political identity they considered sharing with their former associates. So, the name 'liberal' is being applied retrospectively in this group of politicians, although until 1924 they were part of the same party with Kemal and supported most of RPP's decisions.

Their similarities with Kemal and his followers were apparent. Both of those currents had in their ranks ex-Unionists although they avoided stressing their links with CUP.<sup>43</sup> The political heritage of CUP was fundamental in their alliance and in their common elitist approach in politics. They recognized the immaturity of the masses and lack of political training in taking the right decisions for the future. This demanded a paternalist regime alongside a strong centralized state to impose the necessary reforms.<sup>44</sup> Their main point of difference was the speed with which these reforms had to be imposed and not their nature, between the Liberal's '*islahat*' (reform)

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<sup>43</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 24

<sup>44</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *How Europeans Adopted Anatolia and Created Turkey*, p. 9



and the Radicals' *'inkılap'* (revolution).<sup>45</sup> In a sense, this elitism could be part of a corporatist or a liberal ideology, due to the inherent aristocratic and oligarchic tendencies of both ideologies. Corporatism, as I analyse it in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter, emerged as an answer in the encounter of liberalism with mass politics and the destabilizing effects of industrialization regarding social order. The tendency for a more inclusive political regime from the liberals is present in Halide's thought who recognized the potential dangers of this elitism which could end up as an *'unpatriotic'* notion because not everybody had the right to influence the future of the country. It could also lead to a party dictatorship in which the particular interests of party cadres would replace the national interest.<sup>46</sup>

The term 'radical' for Kemal, his associates and most of the members of RPP is not the most accurate for a variety of reasons. First of all, there were several moderate politicians in the party, such as Fethi (Okyar), with significant similarities with the liberal opposition, and Celal (Bayar), a supporter of the authoritative regime at the political level with a much more liberal financial policy and future leader of the Democratic Party (DP) in the 1940s. Furthermore, Kemal's approach to matters of ideology allowed him to move beyond already established patterns, although certain principles were constant in his thought. But, especially in 1920s, his decision to bring about a total break with Turkey's imperial past is one reason to describe him and his associates as radical. The term Kemalism would demand an extensive analysis, something that is possible before the ideological clarification of the regime in 1930s.

So in this chapter, I focus in this division of the westernizing nationalist movement among liberals and radicals. The ways which Kemal's opponents choose to criticize him and his reaction, gave rise to a political battle that had as its central issue the amount of inclusiveness of the new political system and the speed in which the necessary reforms had to be implemented. The adoption of liberalism from Kemal's opponents allows us illuminating its contribution in 1920s Turkey in both sides of political spectrum.

In the period from 09/1922, when the total win against the Greek forces took places, until the elections of 1923, the First Group secured its complete dominance against the opposition.

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<sup>45</sup> F. Ahmad 'The Progressive Republican Party, 1924-1925' p. 71

<sup>46</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Turkey Faces West*, New York: 1973 (1930) Pp. 183, 223, E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. viii

This dominance became easier through the indirect electoral system, which allowed Kemal and his associates to hand-pick the candidates on the basis of their support of Westernization. The domination of Westernization was further facilitated through the support of notable intellectuals. Among those intellectuals the most prominent was Zıya Gökalp, famous sociologist and nationalist theoretician with strong opinions about the future of the new state in a corporatist, anti-liberal, capitalist direction.<sup>47</sup>

The end of the war against the Greeks brought to an end the exceptional powers of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) and the government under the premiership of Hüseyin Rauf (Orbay) demanded a more prominent role. Since 1921 Kemal, İsmet, as the general commander of the western front and Chief of General Staff, Fevzi (Çakmak), as the second Chief of General Staff, and Kâzım Fikri (Özalp), as minister of National Defense, had been running the country with minimum control from the TGNA and the government. Kemal's call to the prominent Generals Ali Fuat (Cebesoy), İbrahim Refet (Bele) and Musa Kâzım Karabekir, to participate in the liberation of İzmir and the celebrations for the victory against the Greeks, shows Kemal's intention to include them in the post-war new order.<sup>48</sup>

Those two groups of prominent politicians and generals would form the two blocks of radicals and liberals that dominated the political landscape until 1926. The rising tensions among them is depicted in two different events: In a meeting with Kemal, Ali Fuat attempted to discover who the new trusted associates of Kemal were, described as 'Apostles', and Halide described his followers as 'desperados', authorized to undermine the profile of his opponents in the nationalist movement by spreading false rumors and information.<sup>49</sup>

After the armistice of Mudanya, among the Entente and the government of TGNA, as Ankara's government was called, the Entente invited the governments of both Ankara and the Sultan to participate in the peace talks. This secured TGNA's support for the abolishment of the Sultanate, while the Caliphate survived for 18 more months, and sealed the fate of the last

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<sup>47</sup> Halide Edip (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p. 343, Halide Edip Adivar, *Turkey Faces West*, New York: 1973 (1930) p. 192

<sup>48</sup> Halide Edip (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p. 388

<sup>49</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 1059, Halide Edip (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p. 404-405

Ottoman cabinet under Ahmet Tevfik (Okday)'s premiership.<sup>50</sup> The support of the Liberals was not unconditional although they chose not to object. Halide regarded the last Ottoman cabinet as being sincerely pro-nationalist with considerable contribution in the win of the nationalists. Furthermore, she mentions the alternative choice of merging the two bodies and Kemal becoming the prime minister under the nominal rule of the Sultan.<sup>51</sup> After the abolition, Kemal toured western Anatolia to investigate the public's views and most of the questions concerned the relation between the new government and its principle of national sovereignty with the new Caliph in Istanbul.<sup>52</sup>

İsmet's appointment as minister of Foreign Affairs and head in the peace talks in Lausanne was another source of resentment due to Rauf's intention to head the delegation and İsmet to be in charge only for the military affairs.<sup>53</sup> İsmet's decision to handle with relative freedom the guidelines of Rauf's government and to adopt a conciliatory stance on the issue of the Greek compensations so as to secure desirable results on other fronts provoked the fierce reaction of Rauf<sup>54</sup> who attempted to delegitimize İnönü's position and to force him to resign. The use of public support for a tenacious stance would allow him to head the delegation and to maximize the gains from the looming peace treaty.<sup>55</sup> The criticism did not come only from the cabinet but also from the opposition in the Assembly because the prerogatives of the National Pact demanded western Thrace and the Aegean islands to be part of the country. Kemal engineered election in the summer of 1923 in order to secure the approval of the peace treaty by excluding the Second Group from the new Assembly.<sup>56</sup> İsmet's success in Lausanne forced the cabinet to send him a congratulatory telegraph though they stressed their contribution in the win and played down İsmet's involvement.<sup>57</sup>

Nevertheless, the Liberals supported Kemal's moves for the 1923 elections in order for the second group to be excluded from the next assembly and subscribed the Nine Principles, the program of the nationalists in the new assembly, in which a new party would be formed as

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<sup>50</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 911

<sup>51</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 913

<sup>52</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 939

<sup>53</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 1025

<sup>54</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 1027

<sup>55</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 30, Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 Pp. 1031,1033

<sup>56</sup> R. Kasaba, *Turkey in the Modern World*, Cambridge: 2008 p. 142

<sup>57</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 1053, 1055

well.<sup>58</sup> Also, the amendment of the High Treason Law, which since the spring of 1920 onwards made it illegal for anybody to advocate the return of the Sultan and to doubt the legitimacy of TGNA's decisions, excluded important political forces in the country such as the supporters of the ancient regime and the Islamists. Contrary to these acts, in one of the attempts from the Second Group to block the re-election of Kemal in the coming elections of 1923, Kemal depicted Dr. Adnan, as vice-president of the TGNA, to facilitate their moves in the parliament.<sup>59</sup>

The principles of laicism and nationalism were clarified in the text of 'Nine Principles'<sup>60</sup> as the lack of authority that a monarch has to decide for the future of the country. The assembly would be the supreme and sole representative of the national will and the form of government was considered *permanent* and *immutable*. Kemal in his Speech described the aims of the nationalist movement, in contrast with Ottomanism, as the creation of a *humanitarian state* ('insani bir devlet') where its citizens could live under complete equality and brotherhood.<sup>61</sup> The vagueness of their program and the lack of references for the future reforms was criticized by Halide and other Liberals and was considered to be one of the reasons for the minimum homogeneity among the deputies in the new assembly.<sup>62</sup> Kemal defended it as a necessary tactical move because if all the future reforms were laid down it would have provoked the reaction of its opponents.<sup>63</sup> The guide for the Liberals' support maybe was originating in the previous example of CUP where a plurality of fractions existed with disparate views in various matters.

İsmet's success and his strained relation with Rauf, forced the latter to resign and to be replaced by Ali Fethi (Okyar), an old associate of Kemal with moderate liberal views. This choice and Kemal's pressure to Ali Fuat to remain vice-president of TGNA indicate his will not to push the Liberal's out of the party although the key positions in the state machine were in the hands of the radicals.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 26

<sup>59</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 965

<sup>60</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 Pp. 118-120

<sup>61</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 585, 587

<sup>62</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Turkey Faces West*, New York: 1973 (1930) p. 214, E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 30

<sup>63</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 957, 959

<sup>64</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 30, Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 1059

The first event that almost forced them out of the newly founded RPP was the declaration of the Republic in October 1923. A year before, Kemal had clarified the motto since the years of resistance, ‘*Biz bize benzeriz*’ as a form of government which did not resemble the western republics or other systems and was created according to the needs of the Turkish nation.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, ideas for abolition of the Caliphate and declaration of the Republic had been circulated in the press since the spring.<sup>66</sup> Kemal took advantage of the Liberal’s absence from Ankara and created a governmental crisis by considering the rejection of his candidate for the vice-presidency of TGNA as a vote of no-confidence. In the party parliamentary sitting his more radical followers demanded the crisis to be resolved by entrusting the formation of a government to a powerful, capable person, implying Kemal himself. Kemal accepted their proposal, presented the necessary constitutional amendments in the assembly and the Republic was declared taking any opposition by surprise.<sup>67</sup> Their only attempt had been to stop the party sitting and the issue to be discussed extensively in the assembly.<sup>68</sup>

But, this provoked extensive criticism by Rauf and the Istanbul press which was shifting more and more in the opposition.<sup>69</sup> Rauf in his interviews in *Tanin* and *Tevhid-i Efkar* criticized fiercely Kemal for authoritarian tendencies and hints of personal rule through statements of disbelief that the political change would further strengthen the democratic credential of the national sovereignty’s regime.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, such radical and hasty changes in the form of the government were considered inappropriate without extensive talks among all the political leaders in the country. It was a sign of the irresponsibility of the country’s leadership and a violation of the national sovereignty.<sup>71</sup>

Kemal responded by casting doubts on the sincerity of their belief in the Republic and argued that they were in alliance with religious reactionaries in order to restore the ancient regime. His concerns on the subversive acts of religious reactionaries began in the winter of 1922-1923, when they had asked the creation of an Islamic constitutional monarchy in which the

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<sup>65</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Turkey Faces West*, New York: 1973 (1930) p. 203  
<sup>66</sup> , E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 24  
<sup>67</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 Pp. 1063, 1065, 1073, 1075  
<sup>68</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 1077, 1079, 1081  
<sup>69</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 1087  
<sup>70</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 1093  
<sup>71</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 33-34

national assembly would have the role of an advising body for the Caliph.<sup>72</sup> Kemal reported that in several occasions Rauf was against the abolition of the Caliphate, the responsibilities of the head of the state to be strengthened implying, according to Kemal, the Caliph to undertake this role instead of the Republic to be declared.<sup>73</sup> Rauf, moreover, argued that the governmental form of national sovereignty, as it was described in the 1921 constitution, was the most adequate for the country. According to Kemal its vagueness regarding the head of the state allowed them to advocate the Caliph to become the head of the state.<sup>74</sup> The Liberals' proposition to such a system would not permit Kemal to impose his absolute will in the country and it would have been easier to be controlled by the rest of the nationalists.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, through the declaration of the republic, a more orthodox form of government was implemented and several 'ultra-democratic' aspects, as the lack of collective ministers' responsibility, were abandoned, according to Halide.<sup>76</sup>

Because of Rauf's reaction, the Radicals asked him to participate in a sitting of the RPP's group and to defend his stance. If his explanations were considered inadequate he would face charges of high treason by the Independence Tribunals due to the amendment of the High Treason Law that forbade the act of defending the Sultanate and not recognizing as legal the decisions of the assembly.<sup>77</sup> Despite the fierce attacks from deputies such as Yunus Nadi (Abalıođlu), Recep (Peker) and *Kılıç* Ali, he confirmed his loyalty to the Republic, but to the Caliphate as well. Alongside, he put forward his concerns that the declaration of the Republic was not sufficient on its own to guarantee a system of popular sovereignty and that the constant changes in the form of the government created insecurity to the public that in the future the republic would be abolished as well.<sup>78</sup> İsmet accused the critics of hurting the unity of the reformist forces in a period where this was of paramount importance. Despite Ali Fuat's guarantee for Rauf's loyalty and request from Kemal to be an impartial arbitrator, Kemal and İsmet wanted to use this opportunity to expel Rauf from the party. But most of the deputies regarded the event as a personal conflict between Rauf and İsmet and Rauf kept his position.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 939

<sup>73</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 Pp. 1057, 1059

<sup>74</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 1097

<sup>75</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 34

<sup>76</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Turkey Faces West*, New York: 1973 (1930) p. 202

<sup>77</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 34

<sup>78</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 1117

<sup>79</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 35

The worsening relations between Ankara's and Istanbul's press led to the arrest of the prominent, nationalist and ex-unionist journalist Hüseyin Cahit, who was personal enemy of İsmet since the Lausanne talks, by the Independence Tribunals while they were investigating possible interference in the Turkish politics by Muslims abroad. The charges were dropped but it revealed increasing attempts by the government to eliminate any hearths of criticism. Thus, Kemal met with prominent journalists from Istanbul who reassured him of their loyalty in the Republic but defended their right to criticize the shortcomings of the government.<sup>80</sup> Meanwhile, complains for violations of the secrecy of correspondence were made by Rauf and İsmail Canboat.<sup>81</sup>

The existence of the Caliphate was a source of concern.<sup>82</sup> In a meeting with Kemal before the abolition, Rauf, Refet and Ali Fuat had asked him to guarantee its future, as a useful source of loyalty of the people and due to the political tradition of being beyond the scope of criticism for the governmental policies. Kemal faced considerable problems for convincing the Imams in the assembly to support a Caliphate without temporal powers but only as a spiritual religious institution when the Sultanate was abolished.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, it was used by reactionaries as an alternative to the republic in which the Caliph, who was still chosen by the Osman's family, could become the Head of the state. The Caliph's duties were to care for and secure the happiness and wellbeing of the global Muslim community and this created a huge burden for an impoverished country of 15 million with limited resources.<sup>84</sup> Its appeal was further undermined after its failure to mobilize the Muslims against the Entente in WW1. Furthermore, it could create problems in Turkey's relations with the major European powers which had colonies with Muslims. But its abolition presented a serious problem because it demanded of the TGNA, whose jurisdiction was limited in Turkey, to take a decision that concerned the whole Muslim world.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 Pp. 36-37

<sup>81</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 38

<sup>82</sup> Halide Edip (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p. 400

<sup>83</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 921

<sup>84</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 Pp. 943, 945

<sup>85</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Turkey Faces West*, New York: 1973 (1930) p. 142, Halide Edip Adivar, *Turkey Faces West*, New York: 1973 (1930) Pp. 201, 206-207, E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 38

The vagueness regarding the Caliph's duties fueled the rumors for possible abolishment. For his supporters, such as Lütfi Fikri Bey, it was absurd that the criticisms for its role, did not come from abroad but from Turkey where the Caliphate could be a potential source of power and prestige. The increased party discipline in the Assembly by the government had stopped any debates and the assembly was called to sanction for predetermined bills. This tactic secured its complacency for the abolition of the Caliphate with the exception of Halit Bey and one more deputy.<sup>86</sup>

A new constitution was adopted in April 1924 where all the previous changes were consolidated. It had adopted a detailed description of individual rights and liberties, including *'the equality of the citizens before law: freedom of conscience, of thought; of speech and of the press, the right to work and travel; the right of private property and of association; freedom from arbitrary arrest, the prohibition of torture and forced labor; the sanctity of private residence, the inviolability of mail, compulsory and free primary education; freedom from discrimination on account of religion and race.'*<sup>87</sup> The Liberals' proposals for the separation of powers, instead of the undividedness of national sovereignty in the Assembly as the Radicals advocated, and a two chamber-chamber parliament, a constant demand from Karabekir since the war years, were rejected. Nevertheless, the right of the President to dissolve the assembly and to veto its decisions was not adopted probably because it had to do with the rights of the parliament vis-à-vis the executive.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, the president's tenure was limited to 4 years, instead of 7 and the cabinet had to obtain a confidence vote from the Assembly. According to Kasaba, all these changes secured a limited separation between the legislative and the executive.<sup>89</sup> Despite the liberal influence in the constitution, in practice the assembly's role was to function as a source of legitimization for the decisions of the government without being able to supervise the executive.<sup>90</sup>

The rising trend of authoritarianism, such as the pressure upon Refet (Bele) to resign from his seat and to return to the army, led the former close associates of Kemal to pursue an autonomous course. In September, the future leaders of PRP (Progressive Republican Party) met

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<sup>86</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 Pp. 1103, 1105, 1131

<sup>87</sup> İ. Giritli, *Fifty Years of Turkish Development, 1919-1969*, İstanbul: 1969 p. 31

<sup>88</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 39

<sup>89</sup> R. Kasaba, *Turkey in the Modern World*, Cambridge: 2008 p. 145

<sup>90</sup> C. Koçak 'Some Views in the Single Party Regime during the İnönü Period (1938-1945)' p. 126



and they agreed on the main guidelines for the future, the formation of an opposition party and parliamentary group, to support the modernizing reforms, to stop any tendencies towards a dictatorial regime and to press Kemal to be an impartial arbitrator between the two parliamentary groups.<sup>91</sup>

Kemal, aware of their intentions, in a speech in Trabzon declared himself a partisan of the republic and the social and mental revolution and ruled out the possibility to be an impartial arbitrator.<sup>92</sup> In his following speech in Samsun, he did not support the idea of a multi-party system. Although he recognized that among the reformist forces might have been different views on the rate of the reforms, and that a competitive political system could function as symbol of modernity, he considered it as premature due to the important changes that had to take place, and the danger of undermining the nation's unity.<sup>93</sup>

Rumors on the formation of a new party appeared in October 1924 but Rauf refuted them in order to keep the element of surprise.<sup>94</sup> The resignations of top generals from the army, such as Kazım Karabekir and Ali Fuat, created nervousness in the regime and fears were raised that the opposition might use the army for a coup d'état. Kemal attempted to meet with Ali Fuat and to deal with the problem although the meeting never took place.<sup>95</sup> Simultaneously, he declared a conflict of interest for someone to both be in the army and the assembly and he delayed the participation of the resigned generals in the parliamentary debates until their substitutes to reach them. Karabekir brought the issue in the assembly and was supported by deputy Vehbi Bey who argued that nobody has the right to deprive a deputy from his duties.<sup>96</sup>

The opposition made its initial move in the start of the new parliamentary session, with an interrelation concerning the acts of Recep Peker, as minister for the population's exchange and settlement. Widespread rumors of corruption had created resentment even among cabinet members, such as the minister of commerce Hasan (Saka) and minister of national defense Kazım Fikri (Özalp) and it was a promising opportunity for weakening RPP's rule.<sup>97</sup> İsmet's move to

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<sup>91</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 41

<sup>92</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 Pp. 42, 135-126

<sup>93</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 Pp. 126-127

<sup>94</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 44

<sup>95</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 46

<sup>96</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 Pp. 1147, 1149, 1151

<sup>97</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 Pp. 1151, 1153, 1155

change the interpellation for the whole government and not just for a single ministry forced deputies loyal to the government to support it and minimized losses.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, the opposition was inadequately prepared and there was lack of focus in their interventions although they had sufficient time to prepare. Meanwhile Rauf's severe illness did not allow him to participate in some of the debates and the voting.<sup>99</sup> In his speeches he continued to develop themes present from the previous period, which would be the core of PRP's program. He made an acute critique of the existing Republic by declaring that a country under national sovereignty had to be called a democracy. He explained the constant use of popular sovereignty as a measure to make sure no one would take over the arbitrary rights of the Sultan, probably a veiled comment to Kemal and his growing despotism<sup>100</sup> and declared the administration of Istanbul by appointed prefects a violation of people's rights.<sup>101</sup>

Despite their limited success and the broad majority that government secured as vote of confidence, they proceed in the preparation of the new party's statutes. During the meetings the tensions that emerged among the dissident deputies and the threats to abandon the new venture shows that the level of political agreement was quite low, an event that supports the historical interpretation of personal, instead of political, differences in the emergence of the new party. Among the rejected proposals was Istanbul to be again the capital and a two-chamber parliament to be reintroduced, as was the case in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>102</sup> Rumors that the opposition would have in their name the word 'Republican' forced RPP to include it as well on Recep's initiative.

PRP's party program and manifesto<sup>103</sup> is a thorough example of a liberal 19<sup>th</sup> century text of political philosophy. Its universality is been depicted by the lack of references to the imperial and Islamic past of Turkey or to more modern ideologies such as fascism, communism and socialism. With the concept of popular sovereignty as starting point, the need for a legislative branch in the government are justified on the basis of the impracticality of direct democracy in a vast country. In a similar manner, the government is responsible for the executive because it would be impossible for 400 people to process the everyday state affairs. Tyranny, as a potential

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<sup>98</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 48

<sup>99</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 49

<sup>100</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 Pp. 1163,1165

<sup>101</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 1159

<sup>102</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 55

<sup>103</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 Pp. 97, 136-137

danger is recognized and can occur when the people's rights for self-government are been violated and exercised arbitrarily by a suzerain or a party. This danger ccountered through the 'continuous competition between the nation and the executive' with the assembly as a medium with a role to represent the interests of the 'silent' public.<sup>104</sup> This continuous competition would not allow the executive to decide for important matters without taking into account the people's views. In this process of continuous competition the parties, the parliamentarian groups, the public opinion and the press are considered important means. The need of consulting the public and to represent its actual views in the assembly had already been present in Rauf's statements since the autumn of 1923 during the debates for the declaration of the Republic.<sup>105</sup>

Furthermore, the rule of law was of paramount importance because laws were represented the people's attempt to limit the reach of the executive, according to the original role of the parliaments. This notion restricted their actions only in the limits of the law and it was their biggest weakness in the conflict against RPP. (Kemal's ruthless attitude and manipulation of TGNA, alongside the instrumental fashion in which matters as these were seen from the perspective of serving the final aim of westernization, allowed him to impose his will in the country.) The principles of *republicanism, liberalism and popular sovereignty* and the opposition against *any reactionary movement* delineate the margins for possible alliances with other political forces, as necessary concepts that had to subscribe. The interesting question in this matter is whether the RPP could abide by those principles. Although the probable answer is no the coexistence of the Liberals and Radicals since the CUP's revolution of 1908 in common ventures does not allow for an easy answer. According to the PRP, the citizens of Turkey were adequately mature and politically trained to handle a multi-party democracy without tearing apart the country.

As for any other proper liberal party, the collective and individual liberties are also important and could be an effective countermeasure against decay and degeneration through mutual criticism on issues such as education and ethics. In other words, those liberties would allow the people to express their views for those sensitive matters and through the spread of the dominant opinion, conformity could be established, which would then be the guide for the

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<sup>104</sup> E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of the Extremes; The Short 20<sup>th</sup> Century, 1914-1991*, London: 1995 p.

<sup>105</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 1101

government's initiatives. A policy of respecting individual liberties could guarantee the social security and protection him from state arbitrary use of powers. Those statements came into sharp contrast with the RPP's policies where there was less and less respect for personal liberties and the people's mandate. Its disrespect for this mandate was expressed in the fact that the public was completely unaware of its policies after the 1923 electoral victory.<sup>106</sup>

The party program was much more extensive than the RPP's which had only the 'Nine Principles' as its public statement. This extensiveness was to highlight the need the public to be aware of what a party was intending to do and this principle would be followed in important decisions such as the amendment of the constitution. This reference aimed to stress the arbitrary fashion in which the RPP had approached issues like this, changing the constitution in a hasty manner without extensive deliberation as was expected from a regime under the popular sovereignty. But while the economic matters took the most important part of the program, even in this program there were minimum references to internal affairs and a complete lack of details on issues such as foreign policy, religion and culture.<sup>107</sup>

An article that raised a lot of controversy and was used to shut down the PRP 6 months later, was §6 where the religious freedom and beliefs would be respected. Although it can be defended as a classic statement of religious liberalism, present in all the European constitutions since the French revolution, it could be interpreted as a veiled defense of Islam from the secularizing radical reforms of RPP. Nevertheless, PRP intended to discourage religious reactionaries from becoming party members. Article §8 demanded for direct elections, a measure compatible with their advocated liberalism although there were several liberal regimes, as in the USA, where two stages elections took place. Furthermore, in the framework of separation of powers the judiciary's independence, individual protection from arbitrary decisions and the separation of politics and administration are mentioned. Specifically, the independence of the judiciary became an important question in the last year, when the Independence Tribunals were sent to Istanbul to silence the opposition press, and the trial of Hüseyin Cahit.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 Pp. 98, 137

<sup>107</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 99

<sup>108</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 Pp. 56, 100

In their statements there were no criticisms for the already implemented changes and there is not substantial proof that the PRP intended to reverse them although as a possibility cannot be ruled out completely. A diplomatic report mentioned Dr. Adnan and his wife Halide's comment that 'things went too far' but this is not sufficient as an indication of any hidden intentions by PRP.<sup>109</sup> The refutation of the accusations of conservatism of the PRP comes from references of its support for all the institutional changes in Turkey until 1924. Ahmet (Ağaoğlu), a famous nationalist theoretician, correctly writes in an article in *Vatan* that the abolition of the Sultanate, the first radical move against the old regime, took place while Rauf was prime minister.<sup>110</sup>

Kemal's answers to PRP's statutes have been recorded in two versions of his interview for *Times* in November of 1924. The original one was sent in Britain but was never published and the second version was translated in Turkish and published in the *Hükmiye Millîye*.<sup>111</sup>

In the original version of the interview<sup>112</sup>, he doubts the sincerity of the opposition's program due to the *similarities* of their program with RPP's and he regards it as a sign of their covert conservatism. For him, they were conservatives because of their reluctance to support the republic and their allegiance with the Sultan. Even if they were sincere progressives, he could not understand the reason for launching an opposition party since RPP was pursuing *similar* policies. He avoided the adoption of a direct suffrage although it was considered as a possibility. Any charges of despotism could not stand because the assembly had not granted to the president the right to dissolve it or to veto its decisions. The limited support for PRP in the assembly would never allow implementing its program, making its existence meaningless. A similar remark is made in his *Speech* where the small amount of deputies joining it and its failure to overthrow the government were signs of political incompetence. Constantly consulting with the people could undermine the republic as a new institution. Any tendencies of despotism from him were based on the public's immaturity and the need to accelerate a political procedure that had taken place for centuries in other countries. If he granted those privileges and liberties directly to the public the republic could be jeopardized. The different speeds at which people embrace

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<sup>109</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 107

<sup>110</sup> F. Ahmad 'The Progressive Republican Party, 1924-1925' p. 68

<sup>111</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 61

<sup>112</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 Pp. 156-157

modernity created an ‘advanced vanguard’ which had to secure people’s compliance with the reforms *by any means available*.<sup>113</sup> For him, Rauf and his associates were a typical case of reactionaries that failed to recognize the need for radical reforms.<sup>114</sup> He had further elaborated the question of consulting the people in an interview with journalists in 1923. He believed it necessary for the government to respond to the public and to use its sentiment as a guiding force. Yet in order for this to take place properly, first a new generation of patriotic, modern, pro-secularist citizens had to be raised.<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, he could not reveal his plans in advance, because of the need to gather a broad spectrum of political support for the war. He considered false PRP’s view that the press in Istanbul represented public opinion and he thought that these statements represented only the views of the editors and nothing more.

A completely different stance appeared in the published version of the interview.<sup>116</sup> He regarded the existence of political parties and the respect of religious opinions and convictions as natural phenomena in republics. He recognized the article in the constitution that Islam is the state religion as a violation of this freedom but he defended its use as a tactical move in order to secure the support of the religious elements and suggested this provision to be removed in the next constitutional revision.<sup>117</sup> His dual capacity as president of the republic and the party was not a problem because the actual duties of RPP’s leadership were executed by the vice president and he would take over only after the end of his incumbency. He considered PRP as a *genuine* party after abiding by all the laws and regulations that were expected of a new party. Its more elaborate program was due to the effort of some specialists to answer specific questions. This comment was about PRP’s program for the economy even if RPP did not need a text like this because it was applying its policy in day to day state affairs. He rejected any insinuations of despotism because the people of Turkey had a long fight against foreign invasions and Sultan’s absolutism and the members of PRP were also part of these fights, so no one could rule the country as a dictator. But where Kemal referred to freedom as a collective notion, *the freedom of the nation*, his opponents spoke of individual freedoms.<sup>118</sup> Press’s critical stance to the

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113 E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of the Extremes; The Short 20<sup>th</sup> Century, 1914-1991*, London: 1995 Pp. 207-208

114 Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 1101

115 C. H. Dodd ‘Atatürk and Political Parties’ p. 29

116 E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 Pp. 158-160

117 Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 Pp. 953, 955, 957

118 C. H. Dodd ‘Atatürk and Political Parties’ p. 28

government was due to ulterior motives and their resentment of people in Istanbul because Ankara had become the capital.

Kemal's reconciliatory stance becomes apparent from the registration of the new party through Recep's approval as minister of Interior, and the replacement of İsmet with Fethi, in his second and last incumbency as prime minister. Apart from Fethi's reputation as a moderate, the other possible reason for this change, 12 days after the government had obtained a confidence vote, might be İsmet's intention to have a more authoritarian stance to the opposition and to declare Martial Law. But Kemal's reconciliatory stance, probably, minimized the losses of government deputies to PRP.<sup>119</sup>

Fethi and his cabinet had to face not only the opposition but also the pressure from the hard liners in RPP, that came from İsmet, Recep and other deputies. So, in the presentation of the new cabinet Fethi stressed the partisan character and guaranteed the continuation of the reforms. Ali Fuat demanded a slower rate of reforms because of the people's tiredness from the war and constant upheaval. Refik (Koraltan) reacted to this statement by mentioning that the army would support the reforms despite the people's tiredness. This led to Fuat's answer that the army was a protector of the republic in general and it should not be involved in party politics. That the army would guarantee the nation to take the right decisions is indicative of the radical's mentality towards public sentiment.<sup>120</sup>

In the end of 1924, two newspapers closed, after considerable pressure from the radicals for a stricter press control, because their articles had endangered the security of the country. *Tok Söz* had asked for the alliance of the whole opposition against the government which was described as a menace for the country. PRP defended the freedom of press as an inviolable right but the government found typical reasons for the decision. Immediately afterwards Recep resigned from the ministry of interior due to his conflict with the prime minister about the administration of big cities. Fethi shared the same belief with PRP and wanted elected mayors for these cities contrary to Peker who claimed that they should be run by appointed prefects.<sup>121</sup> In the budget talks, PRP's elaborate questions and proposals illustrates the significance of the

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<sup>119</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 Pp. 58-60

<sup>120</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 74

<sup>121</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 Pp. 75-76, 77-78

parliamentarian control to the executive for a liberal party. In this context they had proposed two commissions of experts to be created, one for the budget and one for the people's welfare. The unanimous support for the abolition of tithes showed the popularity of this measure for both parties and their concern to secure the support of the peasants with a popular economic measure.<sup>122</sup>

As an attempt RPP's to secure its majority the party discipline was strengthened and no interpellations directed at the government from the government deputies, only regular parliamentary questions. For an interpellation, the support of the majority was necessary in a closed sitting of RPP parliamentary group, which was almost impossible as long as the leadership kept its deputies under control.<sup>123</sup>

The Kurdish revolt of Sheikh Said 4 months later provided the perfect pretext for the RPP to suppress the opposition before it could make any changes to disrupt the government. In the parliamentary debates, Kazım Karabekir stressed the need for Turkish nation to be united in any internal or external dangers and the Martial Law for the eastern provinces was voted unanimously. But the same was not true for the High Treason Law due to the law's prohibition of the use of any religious symbols for political purposes. Furthermore, these symbols were not defined adequately.<sup>124</sup>

In a meeting between Fethi with Kazım Karabekir and Dr. Adnan, the former asked them to disband the party voluntarily. Fethi supported their rejection by mentioning that he would have done the same. The revolt increased the pressure from the Radicals in RPP and demanded the extension of the Martial Law in Istanbul, because of the subversive actions of the press there, the reinstatement of the Independence Tribunal and provisions for extensive powers to the executive. Meanwhile, rumors of PRP's religious propaganda in the East spread and forced it to leak two letters to the press refuting those rumors.<sup>125</sup> Kemal could not accept the use of the

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<sup>122</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 79

<sup>123</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 62

<sup>124</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 81

<sup>125</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 82



religious freedom (that PRP supported) from the reactionaries in order to destabilize the country.<sup>126</sup>

The emergency legislation notwithstanding, the moderate Fethi was considered as inadequate to deal with the insurgence and İsmet replaced him. The ‘Law for the Maintenance of Order’ was passed which gave the government a free hand over the next two years. It had the right to prosecute any political activity that would lead to subversive acts but which acts were considered subversive was left completely vague. The reshuffle and the new law provoked the fierce reaction of the PRP which regarded it as unconstitutional and as a violation of the popular sovereignty because it did not provided for any checks and balances in its implementation and it could be used for the suppression of the press and the opposition. Meanwhile, martial law for the eastern provinces was deemed sufficient on the thought that revolt's ethnic character would not allow it to spread to the rest of the country.<sup>127</sup>

Their estimation that this law would be used to suppress the opposition was accurate. When the law was passed, the revolt was almost over and its leader had been arrested and executed. Nevertheless, in the following period, all the opposition papers, except *Cumhuriyet* and *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, were closed down.<sup>128</sup> Immediately afterwards, the local branches of PRP were shut down, following a police search of their offices and the seizure of their archives, while the branch in Istanbul had started preparations for a regional congress. In the justification for the closure of PRP by the government, the main argument was that several members of the party used the §6 of their program in a treacherous way and that the article *in itself* was not a violation of the high treason law for the political use of religion. Which means that they had to prosecute some of the PRP members individually instead of closing down all of its branches. Nevertheless, those actions did not culminate in the dissolution of PRP (‘fesh’ or ‘izale’) but in the closure (‘sedd’) of its branches.<sup>129</sup>

All these measures left only the PRP parliamentary fraction as a source of criticism. They continued to oppose any laws that further increased the extensive powers of the executive and they voted against the 1925 budget law. Furthermore, they criticized the lack of sufficient

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<sup>126</sup> Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), 1981 p. 1189, 1191

<sup>127</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 Pp. 84-85, 88, 160

<sup>128</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 86

<sup>129</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 p. 91

time for preparation for new bills while being discussed extensively in the closed sittings of RPP's parliamentary group.<sup>130</sup>

The possibility of PRP emerging as a viable alternative to RPP's rule sufficiently explains the implementation of those measures by taking advantage of people's need for the revolt to be suppressed swiftly and efficiently due to their extreme war-weariness after 10 years of almost constant warfare. The liberal tendencies of PRP, its respect for the freedom of press and religious freedom were viewed as a potential danger for the spread of propaganda from the religious reactionaries. But, Halide is right when she mentions that these acts, which led to an authoritarian regime, came through the proper constitutional order with legislation in TGNA.<sup>131</sup> The support for modernizing reforms closer to the political ideal of liberalism could have been considerable. Ahmet (Ağaoğlu), although a staunch supporter of RPP in the 1920s, in an article about how he envisaged the future in Turkey, claimed that it had to enjoy the rule of law and to be national, sovereign, liberal (*hürriyetperver*) and democratic.<sup>132</sup>

The end of PRP came with the assassination plot against Kemal in 1926 and the arrest of all the eminent nationalists and politicians of Turkey who were not members of RPP or who might have challenged its rule in the future. Among them were all the PRP's deputies despite their parliamentary immunity. Rauf, alongside Dr. Adnan and Halide, managed to escape abroad and Kazım Karabekir was not convicted due to signs of unrest from the army but their political career were effectively over.<sup>133</sup>

Kemal's next reforms, now that no one could challenge him, continued to serve the same plan of a rapid, radical modernization with authoritarian measures and little concern for the public sentiment. The adoption of the Swiss civil code and the alphabet reform probably would have been supported by the liberals as well, as Halide mentions, but the case of the hat reform was different. As a measure that was clearly beyond the scope of public politics, it violated the most fundamental personal liberty and was beyond the limits of tolerance that liberals were prepared to show towards Kemal's policies. The matter of culture, which the Hat reform was part

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<sup>130</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 Pp. 88-90

<sup>131</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Turkey Faces West*, New York: 1973 (1930) p. 220

<sup>132</sup> F. Ahmad 'The Progressive Republican Party, 1924-1925' p. 74

<sup>133</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Turkey Faces West*, New York: 1973 (1930) p. 221, E. J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: 1991 Pp. 92, 93

of it, put the radicals and the conservatives along with the liberals on opposing sides of the dividing line. For the non-radicals, state's intervention and social engineering in issues of culture was unacceptable and should be left to follow their own 'natural' evolution.<sup>134</sup>

Similar concerns were expressed for the directorate of Religious Affairs. The autonomy of religion vis-à-vis the state, as a feature of civil society, was violated. Religion was used by the state as a political means for serving Kemal's political program. Halide's approach for secularization was expressed in the constitution by the clause '*Every adult Turkish citizen is free to adopt the religion he (or she) wishes to adopt*'.<sup>135</sup>

A constant theme in Halide's works on the complete dominance of the Radicals in post-independence Turkey is that it's only temporarily attributable due to the 'inherent' qualities of the Turkish people of resistance to the rule of a single person.<sup>136</sup> For her, this is embodied in the constant struggle of the people for freedom, after achieving independence, a struggle without an end, because of the inherent tension between authority and individual's liberty. In a sense, for an advocate of political liberalism, this tension is at the core of the constant change of political landscape. Independence and liberty are contrasted with tyranny, and only freedom, for which independence is a prerequisite in itself but not sufficient to guarantee the future development of the people.<sup>137</sup> Nevertheless, Hobsbawm's analysis on the retreat of Liberalism stress its inability to create the necessary consensus in a society where competing cultural and ethnolinguistic identities exist as a result of the probable association of the ruling regime with one of these communities.<sup>138</sup> The Kurdish revolt, which had strong religious and nationalist connotations, illustrates the 'exclusiveness' of the new regime and the need to prevent any centrifugal forces.<sup>139</sup> Moreover, Halide, accurately, relates the emergence of the radical Kemalist regime to the delegitimization of the old world's liberalism and its weakness in ending WW1. The political trend of the inter-war Europe was dictatorial regimes with strong executives in order to increase

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<sup>134</sup> Halide Edip (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p. 357, Halide Edip Adivar, *Turkey Faces West*, New York: 1973 (1930) p. 224, E. Özyürek, *Nostalgia for the Modern State*, Durham: 2006 p. 90, S. M. Akural 'Kemalist Views in Social Change' p. 131

<sup>135</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Turkey Faces West*, New York: 1973 (1930) Pp. 229-232

<sup>136</sup> Halide Edip (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 p. 356

<sup>137</sup> Halide Edip (Adivar), *The Turkish Ordeal*, New York: 1928 Pp. 404, 407

<sup>138</sup> E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of the Extremes; The Short 20<sup>th</sup> Century, 1914-1991*, London: 1995 Pp.

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<sup>139</sup> Erik J. Zürcher, 'Young Turks, Ottoman Muslims and Turkish Nationalists' p. 179

the necessary modernizing reforms and contain the centrifugal forces which might undermine the social order.<sup>140</sup>

Even after the trials of 1926, and the increase in the speed of the reforms that Kemal initiated, the emergence of a competing political system was not excluded and the experiment with Freedom Party (FP) took place.

In the period between 1922 and 1926, the fight between opposing fractions of the westernizing nationalist movement culminated. In the end Kemal dominated through the skillful use of the parliamentary majority and in full extent of the constitutional provisions to strengthen the executive. Despite its authoritarian practices, the regime kept several of its liberal provisions, apparent in the 1924 constitution, and legitimized all of its actions through its parliamentary majority. The opposition, that choose to adopt a liberal political profile, considered themselves as rightful heirs of the nationalist movement and could not allow Kemal and his followers to monopolize this heritage. Their choice was partially based on their instrumentalism for ideological matters and partially in their belief that a proper modern state has to abide by the principles of liberalism. The second made them more moderate in the speed and the overall implementation of the reforms in the population but without considerable differences from the radicals in their future vision of the country, with the probable exceptions of the Caliphate's survival and Istanbul's remaining as the capital. Another aspect was that their actions were confined to the 'proper' mediums of parliamentary activity and criticism through press, which was substantially different to Kemal's practice. (The economy was not one of the fields of conflict in the 1920s, although it is certain that they would have opposed 1930s etatism.) Their instrumentalism is apparent from their desire to exclude all the elements that were against westernization from the political system and for suppressing other ethnoreligious identities. It is probable that they were hoping to retain the position of a liberal fraction in an all-inclusive nationalist party, along the lines of CUP, without having to leave it and form another party. Their support for Caliph, to become the head of the new state, would have meant that no-one could

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<sup>140</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Turkey Faces West*, New York: 1973 (1930) p. 222

have such prestigious position and a more 'fair' political game would take place among the  
opposing fractions.

### 3. The Hybrid Nature of Kemalism in 1930s

In the last chapter, I study exclusively the single-party regime of RPP in the 1930s after its ideological profile had been clarified. At a first level, I focus in the acts of the government that establish the historical framework for my analysis. At a second level, by using the concept of ‘the hybrid nature of Kemalism’ I study its relation with Gökalp’s corporatism and Peker’s totalitarianism and I base this on other historical studies that have analyzed extensively the theoretical principles of Kemalism. In the last part, I attempt to incorporate Kemalism and Turkish republic in a European historical framework, by drawing some comparisons of Turkey with other authoritarian regimes and by using as a common denominator the need for answers in the problems of Liberalism’s dominance. Through these three levels of analysis, I show that, despite its authoritarian and totalitarian tendencies, Kemalism was much more influenced from liberalism than is generally believed.

My interpretation is based on the ‘hybrid’ nature of Kemalism, which did not confine it in a certain family of ideologies. On the contrary it was influenced by fascist, corporatist and liberal ideologies, without been regarded identical with any of these. It allowed the transition to the two-party regime of the 1940s and the 1950s and remains the conceptual framework of Turkish politics until today. If Kemalism had been a rigid monolithic, anti-liberal, anti-democratic regime in its core, then it would be unable to function as point of reference and it would have become obsolete in the post-war political order. I think the single most important point in an accurate ideological analysis of Kemalism is Kemal’s phrase ‘*Biz bize benzeriz*’ ‘we resemble ourselves’, and its consequent signification from different actors. This phrase, that Kemal used as a justification for the peculiar nature of TGNA’s government during the liberation war and, according to the PRP’s critique, was rejected later with the adoption of the Republic, have been dominant in Peker’s own analysis and interpretation of Kemalism.

Peker and Gökalp’s relation with the single party regime of 1930s, is different and demands some clarifications. Gökalp was no longer alive when the ideological profile of the regime was clarified and its writings and views were used retrospectively and electively without fully implementing his corporatist ideal. Peker, in contrast, was one of the most prominent members of the regime and his ‘lessons’ came immediately after his removal from the party

general secretariat. In a sense, he is defending certain pro-fascist aspects of the regime and attempts to strengthen his position by spreading his views to the newer generation of bureaucrats and party members.

### **Kemalism as Political Practice**

The first act in this period is the return of former Prime Minister Fethi (Okyar) from his post as ambassador in Paris in 1930 and the foundation of FRP (Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası - Free Republican Party). Fifteen deputies, all prominent members of the regime, joined the new party following Kemal's orders. The new party had a similar political identity to PRP and advocated a more liberal economic policy, respect of freedom of speech and direct elections. The widespread discontent boosted the appeal of FRP as an alternative to RPP and in the local elections of October it gained a small number of seats in local councils. After the electoral success, its leader Fethi, increased its criticism to the government and in a heated debate in the parliament was accused with high treason by the hard-liners of RPP. The lack of support from Kemal, who had already declared himself a member of RPP and had gone against his assurance to Fethi that he would be an impartial arbitrator above party politics, led to the dissolution of FRP in November.<sup>141</sup>

The incident in Menemen with the group of Dervishes led to further purges of supporters of the FRP and any attempts against a completely monolithic regime ceased. The newspaper

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*Yarın* (Tomorrow), published by Arif (Oruç) from 1929, was allowed to criticize İsmet's policies in the field of economy but it was closed down in 1931 and again a formal uniformity was established in all the views published.<sup>142</sup> The significance of the TGNA in this period was lost and it was limited to confirm the decisions of a powerful executive on a par with the upper echelons of state bureaucracy.

During the same period the role of the party changed considerably. Until 1929, its main contribution was to defend publicly the governmental policies but it was not involved in grassroots activism or mobilization of the masses.<sup>143</sup> But the authoritarian character of the regime was further strengthened and at its peak partially resembled other totalitarian regimes in Europe. This was signified by the establishment of an apparatus of control not confined to the sphere of 'pure' politics. Any civic organizations such as Freemason lodges, the Turkish Hearths, the Turkish Women Union, Teacher's Union, the Reserves' Officers Society and the Society of Newspaper Journalists, were eliminated and were replaced by party organizations such as the *Halk Evleri* and *Odası* (People's Houses and Rooms) and the school for the party's orators.<sup>144</sup> The people's houses were expected to function in 9 different fields; Language and Literature, Fine Arts, Theater, Sports, Welfare, Educational Courses, Libraries and Publications, Village Development and History. Due to the large numbers of illiterates, a wide reach of means were used to reach the people, but mostly speeches and lectures. The publications were numerous as well, the most important named *Ülkü* (Ideal) and based in Ankara.<sup>145</sup>

Those changes can be explained through the main principles of any authoritarian regime, as it was the case for Turkey since mid-1920s; the instrumental fashion in concepts such as liberal democracy, constitutionalism and national/ popular sovereignty that can be related to the strong influence of positivism in Turkish nationalism, their class identity as officers and state officials, and the ultimate aim of their policy, which was the survival and strengthening of the state.<sup>146</sup> The deep distrust for the masses also originated in the counter-insurgency of 1909 where the masses had been completely indifferent to protect the newly established Unionist regime. An

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<sup>142</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Turkey; A Modern History* London: 2004 Pp. 178-180

<sup>143</sup> E. Kalaycıoğlu 'Turkish Grand National Assembly' p. 127

<sup>144</sup> E. J. Zürcher *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building* London: 2010 p. 252

<sup>145</sup> E. J. Zürcher *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building* London: 2010 p. 252-253

<sup>146</sup> E. J. Zürcher, *Turkey; A Modern History* London: 2004 p. 173, E. J. Zürcher *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building* London: 2010 p. 214



army of unionist officers from Thessaloniki had to ‘invade’ Istanbul to restore the regime.<sup>147</sup> The incident of Menemen, with a similar indifference of the masses for the regimes’ reforms, was another incidence for their distrust towards people's views.

But this process was not uniform. According to Y. Arat, the granting of equal and civil rights to women had strong connotations at the symbolic level. It differentiated the regime from fascist and Nazi regimes and reflected its intention to be aligned with liberal democratic regimes.<sup>148</sup> F. Ahmad adopts a similar perspective. He considers acts such as the ‘secularization’ of public life and state policies, the introduction of universal suffrage, accountability of the cabinet to the assembly and a secular educational system as a ‘bourgeois revolution’. His eclectic references to the kemalist reforms served the purpose of maximizing Kemalism’s connection with other bourgeois revolutions. Kemal’s own personal decisions, to marry the daughter of a prominent business family from Izmir and to invest his personal savings in the newly founded Business Bank (İş Bankası), reflects the strong bourgeois tendencies in Kemal’s own behavior.<sup>149</sup> In 1936, King Edward’s unofficial visit was treated as official by the Turkish government. In order to improve relations with western democracies: Peker was removed from the general secretary after accusations that it gave the regime a fascist ‘hue’. Furthermore, Turkey supported the collective security and the League of Nations sanctions against Italian aggressiveness despite the severe impact in its depressed economy and the sympathizers for Italian Fascism in RPP’s ranks.<sup>150</sup>

In the economic field, Turkey did not pursue an interventionist policy in the beginning but the relatively open market of the 1920s did not create huge increases in foreign investments due to Turkey’s weak position as a destination for capital-exporting countries like the UK and USA.<sup>151</sup> Its policy cannot be considered, strictly speaking as ‘liberal’. The state did not confine itself to financing a police apparatus but undertook certain initiatives in order to promote private enterprise, such as the ‘Encouragement of Industry’ law.<sup>152</sup> The economic crisis of 1929 and its right to adjust the custom tariffs for imports and exports since 1930 allowed the regime to pursue

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<sup>147</sup> E. J. Zürcher *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building* London: 2010 p. 289

<sup>148</sup> Y. Arat ‘Nation Building and Feminism in Early Republican Turkey’ p. 39

<sup>149</sup> F. Ahmad, *The Quest for Identity* Oxford: 2003 p. 89

<sup>150</sup> F. Ahmad, *The Quest for Identity* Oxford: 2003 p. 92

<sup>151</sup> F. Ahmad *The Making of Modern Turkey* London: 1993 p. 59

<sup>152</sup> W. M. Hale ‘The Traditional and the Modern in the Economy of Kemalist Turkey’ p. 158

etatism, i.e. a much more interventionist economic policy. It can be interpreted as the implementation of a mixed economy, because the state invested and controlled the sectors that were not interesting to the private sector, due to its inefficient capital or to low short-term profits. In any case, it provoked an internal division in the regime between statist bureaucrats and supporters of a less rigid statist economic policy, more in line with the national economy policies of CUP in WW1, with İnönü and Celal Bayar as leaders of the respective fractions.<sup>153</sup> Kemal sided with Bayar's fraction in 1937, when İnönü was sacked and Bayar became the prime minister, a move that reflected his dissatisfaction for the course of the economic policy alongside matters of foreign policy, such as the Spanish civil war and Italy's irredentism in the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>154</sup>

### **Kemalism as Ideology**

Sat the same time, the RPP shaped its ideological identity through the publication of its program, congress' proceedings etc in both the sphere of politics and ideology. Given the lack of references in political liberalism in those texts, its unpopularity in Europe was an important factor. But in the country as well, the growing cultural differences between the elites and the masses did not favor liberalism. It would enhance electoral body's political power in an environment of political competition and restrict intervention by the state in civic sphere. The attempts to create an original ideology without references to other competing political programs from abroad was heightened with the publication of the magazine *Kadro*, and RPP's propaganda through the people's houses. The lack of popular support for the new ideological apparatus, expressed as hostility or indifference for the new republican, secular morals, forced the republic to provide to the masses minimum political options and to pursue policies of Jacobination and social engineering from above.<sup>155</sup>

Recep Peker, secretary general of RPP and minister of interior until 1936, was a staunch supporter of these policies. His 'Lessons for the Revolution' (*İnkılap Dersleri*) in the school of Political Science in Ankara, a highly prestigious department that trained future bureaucrats,

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<sup>153</sup> F. Ahmad, *The Quest for Identity* Oxford: 2003 p. 89

<sup>154</sup> Ç. Koçak 'Some Views in the Single-Party Regime during the İnönü Period (1938-1945)' p. 113-

<sup>155</sup> A. Kadioğlu 'The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Construction of Official Identity' p.

served two purposes. The first was to provide a conceptual framework for the Turkish revolution with references to European History, alongside an analysis of European politics, and the second was to strengthen the propagation of the Kemalist ideas. His teaching position in this institution was a demotion after he was sacked from the party secretariat.

He considers all the policies that Kemal and his followers instigated since 1919 as a revolution (inkılap), and include these in a general analysis of revolutions which he classifies in two types; the Freedom's Revolution (Hürriyet İnkılap) and the Class Revolution (Sınıf İnkılap) where the latter is considered a product of the former and takes place usually in liberal regimes.<sup>156</sup>

These processes were linked with the emergence of modernity which was not related only with the growth of productive means and the advanced division of labor but also with considerable changes in the field of social collective identities. These, through increasing state interference, switched their point of reference from the family, the caste and the community to abstract universal values, such as religion, equality and justice in the case of liberalism, and law and order in the case of authoritarianism.<sup>157</sup> In other words, modernity was associated with the revolution and Hobsbawm's book '*The Age of the Revolution*' is indicative of this view. In the field of politics and ideology, modernity changed the amount of mobilization by the masses and their involvement in the political sphere, a procedure that ended in the era of mass parties in the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. In a sense, in the Turkish republic, Kemalism was a transitional ideology that intended to 'educate' the masses in pro-westernized direction, and its unpopularity was due to the masses conservatism and 'anti-westernism'.

The Turkish revolution, as Peker calls it, was one of freedom's revolutions, a process that started in England, USA and France. A significant reason for the problems that occurred was the tendency to adopt the specific features of the English and French cases in every other country in Europe and Turkey, later on.<sup>158</sup> This tendency of imitation, apart from being a way in which the aristocrats, monarchists and clerics secured their previous elite status in the new order through the revolution's reduced radicalness, popularized a specific kind of ideal, named as liberalism.

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<sup>156</sup> R. Peker *İnkılap Dersleri* 1936: Ankara p. 15

<sup>157</sup> E. Özdalga 'The Transformation of the Sufi-based communities in Turkey; The Nakşibendis, the Nurcus and the Güllen community' p. 69-70

<sup>158</sup> R. Peker *İnkılap Dersleri* 1936: Ankara p. 23

But this political ideal with its consequent results of parliamentarism, individualism and economic liberalism, was unable to deal with the challenges in this new era.<sup>159</sup> The most important challenge was socialism and the idea of class struggle which could undermine the social order due to the radicalization of the impoverished workers. This was further strengthened by the state's limited power to control the public because of liberalism's emphasis on individual liberties. Individualism, as one of the foundations of liberalism, undermined the national unity and the nation's mobilization in a program of rapid and radical modernizing reforms, which was necessary for any country concerned to keep up with the more advanced countries and to secure its independence. Corporatism and Fascism, two distinctive trends, that Peker advocated, were attempts to solve these problems, without adopting liberalism or socialism.

Before the Turkish revolution, as Peker calls the national resistance movement and the Kemalist reforms, the Ottoman constitutional movement and the Young Turks' revolt were also part of the freedom's revolution.<sup>160</sup> The main difference, according to Peker, is that Kemalists did not attempt to imitate the failed liberal standards, as the Young Ottoman and Young Turks did, and adopted a unique version of it according to the needs of the Turkish society. He considers that this imitation had created several problems in the empire: the instability of the ottoman state after 1908, the counterrevolution of 1909 from religious and anti-unionist elements, that nobody could stop an Orthodox deputy in the Ottoman parliament to phrase his loyalty for both the Greek and the Ottoman states, the killings of journalists for their articles due to their ill-conceived notion of freedom of the press without any regard to the sensitivities of public opinion.<sup>161</sup>

Outside the Ottoman Empire similar problems emerged. In Germany, its ability to wage a successful war against the allies was undermined due to tense conflicts in parliament that also allowed the spread of propaganda from spies and socialists.<sup>162</sup> After the war, attempts soviets to be founded in Kiel and Munich were crushed forcefully, although Germany functioned under the auspices of liberalism. In contrast, it restricted the means that the Italian state had at its disposal to control the uprisings among the disassociated war veterans and the soldiers due to socialist

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<sup>159</sup> R. Peker *İnkılap Dersleri* 1936: Ankara p. 18, 19

<sup>160</sup> R. Peker *İnkılap Dersleri* 1936: Ankara p. 10

<sup>161</sup> R. Peker *İnkılap Dersleri* 1936: Ankara p. 26

<sup>162</sup> R. Peker *İnkılap Dersleri* 1936: Ankara p. 24

propaganda. The social unrest stopped only when Mussolini and his movement took hold of power, as an authoritative, corporatist, anti-liberal alternative against the destructive effects of socialism and the inability of liberalism to guarantee social peace.<sup>163</sup>

The problems in Germany and Italy were related to the emergence of capitalism and the almost incompatible interests between capitalists and workers. Because of this, Peker stresses the importance for each government to deal with these problems if it was to avoid a potential social destabilization or to implement a socialist program. As he listed down the alternatives, the full satisfaction of capitalist interests, due to the capitalists' support for economic liberalism, would lead to a regime with unrestricted external and internal trade and the creation of a colony of advanced industrial countries. Moreover, their 'greed' would demand lower wages for the workers without limits in their work hours, which would increase the dissatisfaction of the workers and the appeal of radical socialist ideas. On the other hand, the complete satisfaction of workers' demands would increase sharply the price of the products in the market, and hurt consumers' interests, and especially peasants' and middle classes', which were not directly involved in this conflict. The ideal way for this to be solved would be through corporatism: it advocated respect of workers' rights without increases in the prices of the goods in the market because mechanisms of control through consumers' organizations would be established and the role of the middlemen and merchants would be eliminated or reduced.<sup>164</sup> The character of the state's economic policy was hotly debated among opposing views, without broad consensus in the quest to speed up industrialization without undermining the social order. Mehmet Ağaoğlu, a staunch supporter of authoritarian reformism in 1920s but a fierce opponent of the totalitarian tendencies in 1930s, drew a distinction between democratic etatism with a beneficial regulatory role and fascist-communist etatism which had a clear monopolistic, interventionist character.<sup>165</sup>

At the political level as well, Peker's answer would be the establishment of a system that could avoid all these inefficiencies and would secure the legitimacy of this new collectivity, the nation, by introducing corporatist ideas from Europe but without going to extremes in its adaptation. His rejection of liberalism was based in the disbelief that a stable social order could be based on the principle of individualism and rational choice. In a society where individualism

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<sup>163</sup> R. Peker *İnkılap Dersleri* 1936: Ankara p. 44-45, 48

<sup>164</sup> R. Peker *İnkılap Dersleri* 1936: Ankara p. 32-33, 37,

<sup>165</sup> Z. Y. Hershlag 'Atatürk's Etatism' p. 171

is dominant, everyone, including its politicians and parties, would pursue their own interest and would be reluctant to carry out the necessary sacrifices and to show the necessary solidarity required by the reforms in every aspect of life: social, cultural, economic and political.<sup>166</sup> Moreover, the Kemalist revolution was differentiated by the previous by attempting to change people's everyday life and habits, a field out of reach for liberalism due to its respect for the inviolability of private life.<sup>167</sup>

Peker's corporatist proposals were based in the national solidarity, which would guarantee the complete support of the people for this 'lead into the future', based on the common of elements that made possible the emergence of the nations after the 'Dark Ages'. Solidarism was very influential among Turkish nationalist thinkers due to the popularity of the French radical politician, Leon Bourgeois who first introduced this concept. The role of the party, in a single-party regime under the auspices of solidarism, had to be dominant due to its ability to be the medium between the state and nation and to secure the compliance of the nation to the orders of the state and vice versa. In the past, the state served the interests of the dynasty, the aristocracy and religious adversaries. An indispensable aspect in this process is the existence of a leader who would symbolize this national unity and effort with regards to his views, moral, beliefs etc. Exactly this need, i.e. for the party to represent the whole nation, demands that its program not be an 'intellectual' activity of one person or a group of people about state affairs, but to be based on the experiences of people from different social environments, and to synthesize all these different opinions.<sup>168</sup> Another aspect of this voluntarist political philosophy was the call, for 'idealists' not to abandon the revolution and not to let its 'warmness' to go cold, events that would signify revolution's loss of impetus. But even Peker recognized the fact that after a certain amount of time fatigue sets in as the public becomes less and less eager to support the radical changes, and the regime has to impose its will from above.<sup>169</sup>

His analysis is simultaneously a justification of RPP's policies since the national liberation movement. Its success establishing the complete independence of the Turkish nation, under the wise leadership of Kemal, secured the party's legitimacy as the exponent of the

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<sup>166</sup> R. Peker *İnkılap Dersleri* 1936: Ankara p. 46, 59

<sup>167</sup> R. Peker *İnkılap Dersleri* 1936: Ankara p. 7

<sup>168</sup> R. Peker *İnkılap Dersleri* 1936: Ankara p. 62-65

<sup>169</sup> R. Peker *İnkılap Dersleri* 1936: Ankara p. 11, 17

national will and as a promoter of policies according to the national interest, instead of being a servant of specific interests.<sup>170</sup> And this *a posteriori* justification of certain acts and decisions from the Kemalist leadership can be applied in general in Kemalism, as political ideology. Instead of functioning as a guide for the future of the country, it was the creation of a coherent narrative with references to theoretical principles for the justification of the reforms that had taken place in Turkey until the 1930s.<sup>171</sup>

But even in the case of Peker, liberalism's rejection is not complete. Common elements in all the freedom revolutions, including the Turkish one, were the freedoms of speech, press, work, secrecy of letters, freedom of gathering and association, travel, profit and commercial activity, conscience, ownership and residence.<sup>172</sup> In the analysis about the meaning of Kemal's phrase 'we resemble ourselves' he also clarifies that civic liberties in the country and free economic activity were available to everybody as long the current labor laws were abided by and no exploitative tactics were pursued.<sup>173</sup>

Solidaristic Corporatism was not only an underlying factor in Peker's thought, it also had a strong influence on various decisions and policies of the Kemalists as a result of support from the most significant intellectual of Turkish nationalism, Ziya Gökalp. Its main difference with other political ideals was the way that society functions, which also defined as well the most appropriate course of action. In liberalism, the individual is the unit of analysis. There is an essentially anarchic approach to society, and conceived as the sum of individuals, while progress takes place through the '*invisibly regulatory workings of their egoistic interests*'. Corporatism considered the corporation, partially resembling the Marxist concept of class, as the unit of analysis but refrained from advocating its revolutionary prospects and preferred to use it in order to maintain the social order. Individuals can pursue their personal interests as long as it did not undermine social solidarity neither violated public interest. It was an ideology for monopoly capitalism and a solution for speeding up primary accumulation through protectionism.<sup>174</sup> Gökalp's corporatism was combined with nationalism inextricably; 'nation' had replaced

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<sup>170</sup> R. Peker *İnkılap Dersleri* 1936: Ankara p. 63

<sup>171</sup> S. M. Akural 'Kemalist Views in Social Change' p. 126

<sup>172</sup> R. Peker *İnkılap Dersleri* 1936: Ankara p. 16

<sup>173</sup> R. Peker *İnkılap Dersleri* 1936: Ankara p. 27

<sup>174</sup> T. Parla *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp* Leiden: 1985 p. 46

‘society’ as dominant concept and corporations functioned as a tool of social organization for the national body, which constituted the society.

The complete adoption of Gökalp’s corporatist ideal demanded a national confederation of all the occupational groups which would eliminate the conflicts among different occupations, employers and employees. Although this was never fully adopted, Kemal’s motto ‘These (occupational) groups are mutually necessary, and complementary to one another’, was used extensively by the regime.<sup>175</sup> Despite Gökalp’s importance, none of his books were transcribed in the Latin alphabet until 1939, perhaps because of his ideas of solidaristic corporatism that did not completely reject political liberalism, according to T. Parla’s analysis. The spread of ideas such as this might have led to demands for more political freedom in the 1930s.<sup>176</sup>

In Kemalist texts its hybrid nature and its eclectic affinity with an array of opposing ideologies, was also expressed through the concept ‘*Halk*’ (people). Since 1922 when Kemal founded the People’s Party (*Halk Fırkası*) he was quick to deny any associations of a new venture with the Left. In that era the point of reference for the nationalists was the ‘nation’ (millet) and the concept of the ‘people’ was used by forces in the left of political spectrum. The small number of big landowners, merchants, industrialists and industrial worker undermined any dangers of class struggle in the new country, in contrast to other European countries. An increase in the living standards of the peasants could take place without challenging the benefits of the other classes. In this view of class harmony instead of class struggle, the concept of ‘the people’ served as well the purpose of strengthening the anti-elitist character of the regime. The spread of nationalist and modernist messages to the masses was the main duty of the party and not a socialist agenda, despite their similarities in the relation between the vanguard and the masses. This view about the role of the elites made them instrumental in order for the program of radical modernization to succeed and the parliamentarian majority to be secure due to the elite origins of all the political personnel and deputies. The regime’s populism intended to stress that leadership’s scope served both the popular and the nation’s will and not the needs of a dynasty or imperial elite. But this argument was undermined by the need to unite all the progressive elements in this purpose, an indication of the reforms’ unpopularity with the masses. Similar

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<sup>175</sup> T. Parla *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp* Leiden: 1985 p. 63-64, 90

<sup>176</sup> T. Parla *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp* Leiden: 1985 p. 121



populist modernizing political programs that influenced Kemalism were the Russian experience of *Narodniki* and the 1916 movement towards the people (*Halka doğru*).<sup>177</sup>

The populism of the regime was combined with a theoretically strong parliament, despite its lack of real power. As T. Parla explains '*The accompanying major structure in the liberal model, through which the articulated and aggregated interests are transformed into authoritative, central political decision, is the institution of parliament. Supremacy of the parliament, elected according to the territorial principle and functioning according to the majority principle and to the principle of electoral mandate given to the government-party for the duration of its term, is axiomatic in the liberal model. This is the principle of the primacy of the legislature or the principle of 'parliamentary legitimacy.'*'<sup>178</sup>

But even in Gökalp's writings, and definitely in Kemalist practice, the role of parliament contained certain contradictions. He supported the unity of power in the assembly because of its potential as an effective medium of representation for all the different elements and organizational groups that constitute the nation, but he never objected to the lack of constitutional checks for the executive and the leader, which led eventually to its complete supremacy.<sup>179</sup>

The hybrid nature of Kemalism, that occupied a place between Corporatism and Liberalism is depicted quite clearly in Parla's analysis for Gökalp. He considers the possibility of corporatism included in a political system with liberal institutions as was the case of Turkish republic. For certain acts, the consensus of organized interest groups or informal structures would be obtained before the decisions of the government. During crises, the role of the parliament to control the executive could in practise be abolished through legal-ideological justifications or more subtle deliberations. Nevertheless, the lack of organized interest groups in Turkey, due to a partial implementation of corporatism, and the small division of labor did not allow them to function as a buffer between the state's authority and the rights of the individual as

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<sup>177</sup> E. J. Zürcher *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building* London: 2010 Pp. 150, 250-251 T. Parla *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp* Leiden: 1985 p. 80, S. M. Akural 'Kemalist Views on Social Change' p. 136-137

<sup>178</sup> T. Parla *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp* Leiden: 1985 p. 48

<sup>179</sup> T. Parla *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp* Leiden: 1985 p. 95

long as those rights did not violate the ideal of social solidarity.<sup>180</sup> Kemalism's role as a progressive bourgeoisie revolution demanded the alliance of all pro-reformist forces, including the conservative elements in the countryside that began opposing the Sultanate only after his alliance with Entente, the Liberals, which represented the entrepreneurial classes in Istanbul and Western Turkey, and the radical pro-authoritarian officers and state officials.<sup>181</sup>

Despite the more totalitarian, fascist tendencies inside the RPP, it did not develop a thorough fascist alternative to liberalism and the hybrid nature of the regime remained. In the level of state legislation, several laws in the mid-1930s further enhanced the control of the state on civil society but those measures remained partial and they never crystalized in an all-inclusive state-society sphere.<sup>182</sup>

### **Kemalism in European Context**

The Turkish republic was founded and Kemalism became its dominant ideology just after the western civilization of 19<sup>th</sup> century came to an end. This civilization was liberal in legal and constitutional terms, capitalist in its economy, had an absolute belief in the benefits from science and was bourgeoisie in the image of the class that had the hegemony.<sup>183</sup> In the ideological framework of the inter-war Europe, most of the non-liberal ideologies appeared as responses to the problems from the spread and dominance of liberalism. But this process was not completed until the 1930s, and the strength of the liberal paradigm is apparent from the amount of regimes that were established after WW1 in which a democratic assembly of representatives ruled the country. The fact that in most of them, an authoritative alternative emerged until the beginning of WW2, illustrates the retreat of liberalism and its weakness in facing the challenges of inter-war Europe.<sup>184</sup>

Socialism and Communism were among the most prominent enemies of liberal democracies in the early mid-war period although they shared the intellectual heritage of 18<sup>th</sup> century, the rationality and humanism.<sup>185</sup> This common cultural heritage differentiated them

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<sup>180</sup> T. Parla *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp* Leiden: 1985 p. 49

<sup>181</sup> T. Parla *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp* Leiden: 1985 p. 87

<sup>182</sup> T. Parla *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp* Leiden: 1985 p. 124

<sup>183</sup> E. Hobsbawm *Age of the Extremes; Short Twentieth Century* London: 1995 p. 6

<sup>184</sup> E. Hobsbawm *Age of the Extremes; Short Twentieth Century* London: 1995 p. 111

<sup>185</sup> E. Hobsbawm *Age of the Extremes; Short Twentieth Century* London: 1995 p. 11

from the conservative, traditionalist, corporatist and fascist ideologies and allowed them to unite against Nazi Germany. The main problem that socialist ideologies addressed was the inherent paradox of liberal political thought: that a social nexus of self-interested individuals could create a stable society while economic liberalism enhanced the problems of distribution of wealth among the lower classes.<sup>186</sup> Despite attempts from some intellectuals in *Kadro*, socialism had minimal appeal in Turkey, its cordial relations with Soviet Union notwithstanding, because was hindering the creation of an indigenous bourgeoisie class and due to its inherent internationalism, an important difference with the, increasingly militant and exclusive, nationalism of Turkish republic.<sup>187</sup>

Besides liberalism and communism, this period saw the emergence of an array of corporatist, conservative, totalitarian regimes but apart from their suspicion towards the liberal ideal and the overt anti-communism, they had few similarities.

The first case was the conservative, authoritarians who in the Ottoman and Turkish context were the main opponent of the Kemalists. Although hard to be defined, these ideologies had some common characteristics, according to E. J. Zürcher's definition; '*the importance of religion, the danger of inflicting injustice to individuals, the reality and desirability of distinctions of ranks and station, the inviolability of private property, the view of society as organism instead of mechanism and the value of continuity with the past*'. Authority was not contractual basis, as was the case with liberalism, but in some established patterns bearing legitimacy due to their connections with the past. With important leaders in England and Germany, such as Disraeli and Bismarck, this set of attitudes or ideology faced their opponents, liberalism and socialism which draw legitimacy from the Enlightenment and the French revolution.<sup>188</sup> Kemalism, despite its eclectic approach to these, was clearly a product of the Enlightenment and the French revolution and could not establish a regime with a traditionalist outlook. This made it different to others, for instance from Franco's regime in Spain, one of the most notable examples of this trend, which used extensively religious and traditionalist symbols, and the King as a source of loyalty.<sup>189</sup> But in both countries, the weak hegemony of a liberal

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<sup>186</sup> E. Hobsbawm *Age of the Extremes; Short Twentieth Century* London: 1995 p. 16

<sup>187</sup> F. Ahmad *The Making of Modern Turkey* London: 1993 p. 62

<sup>188</sup> E. J. Zürcher *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building* London: 2010 p. 236

<sup>189</sup> F. Ahmad, *The Quest for Identity* Oxford: 2003 p. 93

democratic ideal and the challenges of modernization pushed them to create regimes with nominal democratic institutions and a powerful executive in the hands of a former general.

Turkish nationalism since the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century had been heavily influenced by corporatist solidaristic ideologies, due to the popularity of politicians such as Leon Bourgeois. These attempted to respond the problems that emerged in the transition from aristocratic democratic regimes to mass politics with the adoption of universal suffrage and the election of deputies from lower stratum.<sup>190</sup> The aim of *solidaristic corporatism*, in Taha Parla's terminology, or *organic statism* in Eric Hobsbawm's, was to replace the liberal ideal of the individual and the socialist concept of class struggle with the notion of society as an organic community in which everybody willingly accepted his role and did not demand subversions of the social order. Although corporatism was never fully implemented in Turkey, it filled some of Hobsbawm's requisites: the electoral democracy was restricted while officers and state officials ruled from above.<sup>191</sup> The retreat of liberalism was not confined to the European continent, but was present in America as well. The phenomenon of a nationalist leader, who was educated in a liberal environment and became the head of a single-party regime with a protectionist statist economy, was also seen in 1930s Mexico.<sup>192</sup>

Fascism and Nazism were quite different from other rightist regimes in the 1930s through the mobilization of the masses from below and the rejection of traditional sources of power such as the Church or the King. Their eclectic relation to modern culture and traditional values, and their adoption of all the modern technological means and techniques of mass politics, were their main characteristics.<sup>193</sup> The Kemalists' flirtation with these trends was due to a combination of internal and external causes. The Menemen incident and the popularity of FRP reinforced the views of hard-liners that the people were not ready for a competitive political system, or that a system as this was not desirable in any case (according to the views of different fractions inside RPP). Moreover, the inability of liberal regimes to cope with the economic and social problems of recession and the apparent success and social stability of Italy and Germany were instrumental in their popularity, a trend that was expressed through Peker or *Kadro's* articles. Due to the

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<sup>190</sup> E. Hobsbawm *Age of the Extremes; Short Twentieth Century* London: 1995 p. 110

<sup>191</sup> E. Hobsbawm *Age of the Extremes; Short Twentieth Century* London: 1995 p. 113-114

<sup>192</sup> C. V. Findley *The Turks in World History* 2005: OUP p. 209

<sup>193</sup> E. Hobsbawm *Age of the Extremes; Short Twentieth Century* London: 1995 p. 118

common corporatist origins of Turkish Kemalism, Italian Fascism and German Nazism, they despised class conflict as an unnecessary division that would bring harm to the national body. Moreover, they considered the supreme role of the state legitimate, which was controlled by the only legitimate party, and its intervention in the society. The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the republic in 1933, which was celebrated with a public speech from Kemal in front of a mass audience alongside parades and gymnastics, and the institutional merging of the state and the party in 1936 through the demand that all the administrative officials be party members were prominent examples in this ‘flirtation’.<sup>194</sup>

But apparent differences were present as well; Racism and eugenics had limited appeal in Turkey, despite the spread of racist theories in the 1930s, the cult of the self-made man was almost absent, the masses did not participate in events of public admiration, and Turkey lacked any irredentist foreign policy: no lost motherlands were waiting to be incorporated in the country: although its leaders were among the defeated in the WW1 and territories such as Macedonia were lost even if they were Kemal’s and others’ fatherland. But the most prominent differentiating factor was that totalitarian Kemalism did not emerge in order to save Turkey from class struggle and socialism, as was the case with Fascism and Nazism.<sup>195</sup>

So, Kemalism in the 1930s reached its anti-liberal peak and almost established a totalitarian regime alongside the guidelines of Fascism. The complete domination of the civic sphere from the party and the dissemination of party ideology to the masses through the people’s houses were notable cases of this tendency. Moreover, parliament had lost any real power and the government, took advantage of the lack of constitutional checks and a rigid party discipline in the parliament, by imposing its will in the country without restrictions. The merging of the party and state structures and the celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the establishment of the republic imitated almost completely other totalitarian regimes.

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<sup>194</sup> E. J. Zürcher *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building* London: 2010 p. 256-257, F. Ahmad *The Making of Modern Turkey* London: 1993 p. 62, İ. Turan ‘Continuity and Change in Turkish Bureaucracy: The Kemalist Period and After’ p. 110, D. A. Rustow ‘The Modernization of Turkey in Historical and Comparative Perspective’ p. 103

<sup>195</sup> E. Hobsbawm *Age of the Extremes; Short Twentieth Century* London: 1995 p. 118, E. Hobsbawm *Age of the Extremes; Short Twentieth Century* London: 1995 p. 136, Ç. Keyder *State and Class in Turkey; A Study in Capitalist Development* London: 1987 p. 108-109

But this process was not uniform and Kemalism retained its hybrid ideological nature. First of all, in economic field, etatism was not competitive towards the private sector but supplementary. Its aim was to speed up the primary accumulation and the industrialization of the country. The argument that statism had blocked the investments of private capital cannot be accurate.<sup>196</sup> In the 1930s, in the middle of global recession, the allocation of capital in a backward, agricultural economy with low expected short term profits did not look promising due to the small internal market and the decreased income of consumers in Europe. In 1930, the regime experimented with a tame opposition party and some of the hard-liners were removed from important positions until 1938. In foreign affairs, Turkey resisted Italian irredentism and supported the sanctions from the League of Nations. The granting of political rights and legal equality to women was also a differentiating factor. Peker's analysis of the Turkish revolution, despite his extended critique of liberalism, does not manage to disassociate Kemalism from it completely. Certain liberal aspects remain desirable, precisely because they are related to the essence of any modern political regime. This relation between Kemalism and Liberalism is signified by his views that the Turkish revolution belongs in the same genealogy of French revolution. Even Gökalp's corporatism, though never fully adopted, had considerable influence in the ideology of the regime and it was a theory that did not deny completely liberalism, but intended to remove the destabilizing effects of individualism within the social order. Lastly, any totalitarian aspects of Kemalism in 1930s, did not influence the institutional and constitutional outlook of the regime. Turkey continued to function under the façade of liberal institutions which would allow a more open and competitive political system, as was the case in 1940s.

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<sup>196</sup>T. Jacoby *Social Power and the Turkish State* London: 2004 p. 100

## Conclusions

In this study of the early Turkish republic I approached the emergence of Kemalism from the bigger trend of Turkish nationalism with reference to liberalism in order to illustrate Kemalism' peculiar ideological nature, described as 'hybrid'. This allowed Kemal to draw on influences from competing and exclusive political paradigms without being wholly identified with any of these.

In the first period, during the resistance's movement against the Entente and the Sultan's authority (1919-1922), a broad collation of nationalists was considerably successful at the political level, alongside the victories in the battlefield. This movement, in which the future Kemalists were a minority, consolidated its authority as a medium for the silent nation's will vis-à-vis peoples' loyalty to the Sultan, that was the Ottoman Empire's fundamental source of legitimacy. Further along, this was achieved without excluding the Sultan from a future order though it was expected that after the win against the Greeks, the Sultan would recognize the principle of national sovereignty as supreme source of power. And this was combined with a policy of stressing the continuity of Istanbul's and Ankara's legal and institutional authority. Most of the documents, laws and statements of the nationalists' government accepted as a base the previous laws of the Sultan and amended only specific aspects. This continuity is related with Liberalism as well. I consider accurate Peker's claim that the constitutional movement of 1878 and Young Turks' revolution is the adoption of French Revolutions' principles in the ottoman context. The attempt of the nationalists in Ankara to stress the continuity between the two authorities signifies their will to accept this political heritage as well. This was not accepted by everyone. But the supporters of the Western ideal, according to Halide's conceptualization, due to their significance as politicians and officers and their political experience, made sure that the movement would not to end up in a complete rejection of those principles, or to adopt them through a Marxist framework. Kemal's instrumental approach in those matters allowed him to establish a regime, without the normal procedures and checks that the supporters of western ideal advocated. In this regime his authority was constantly strengthened and the actual control of the executive by the assembly was undermined. Nevertheless he sided with them so as to avoid a pro-Bolshevik regime that would undermine the fragile social alliance between disparate

political currents through radical social and economic reforms, as some of the supporters of the Eastern ideal advocated. The skillful call to the people to fight for their independence and freedom, included national and collective freedom alongside the respect of the individual rights (individual freedom), a freedom that was explicit in the statements of Ankara's government.

The following period, until 1926, the united movement of nationalists that advocated the westernization of the country came apart due to different approaches in the way that the country had to move on. This division was strengthened by the despotic tendencies of Kemal who wanted to monopolize the heritage of resistance against the Entente. The opponents of Kemal, who were important members of the resistance movement and with significant contribution in various key positions, saw liberalism as the most effective way to illustrate the increasing authoritarianism of Kemal and to provide an alternative for the necessary westernization of the country. They would prefer the reforms to be implemented in a more moderate fashion straining the tolerance of the masses for foreign customs and morals. And they preferred a regime with a plurality of fractions in which the head of state, the Caliph or a politician, functioned as an impartial arbitrator to the party politics, a model that resembled the Ottoman Empire. Kemal, despite his growing authoritarianism, conformed some of his demands, for instance in the constitution of 1924, in which the presence of liberalism was quite strong and a more rational political system was envisaged without the ultra-democratic aspects of the war regime. Nevertheless the proposal for a two-chamber parliament was rejected. Except from being a sign of continuity between the old and new order, it could check the parliamentary majority of the government party, because it would have a senate, as a second chamber, with strict qualifications for its appointed or elected members.

In the third chapter I focused in Kemalism's hybrid ideological nature due to its eclectic affinities to other ideological trends in Europe. In other words, although Turkey was really different to a liberal democracy according as in England or France, it was not a *per se* totalitarian regime along the lines of Italian Fascism or German Nazism and retained its uniqueness.

Among others, the most prominent reason for this interpretation was the following: Turkey functioned throughout this period on the basis of 1924 constitution in which there were no provisions for a single party regime and the respect for individual rights and freedoms was explicitly mentioned. This respect was present even in Peker's text, an adversary of a non-liberal



regime with strong influences from Italian fascism. Probably this is due to the heritage of Freedom's revolutions: any regime that was the product of this process had to show some respect to individual rights and freedoms and to retain a façade of democratic institutions. Moreover, parliament theoretically had the power to rule the country. As an institution it gained legitimacy after the 18<sup>th</sup> century rationalism, the French revolution and the dissemination of popular sovereignty as a concept. The supremacy of the executive was consolidated only through an obedient parliamentary majority. The ceremonies of Fascist and Nazis regimes in which the Leader would appear in front of mass gatherings, took place only once, in 1933. Turkey never fully supported Italian irredentism and sided with the liberal states against it. Another important differentiating factor among Fascism and Kemalism was that in Turkey the small number of workers could not challenge the social order. The corporatist ideal was never fully implemented but functioned, alongside populism, as a reference for the scope of the governmental policies, that aimed to satisfy the needs *of all the classes and strata* and not just the interests of a sovereign or the imperial bureaucracy.

In the economic field, etatism never intended to replace the activities of private sector. Rather the state took responsibility of investing in sectors of economy that were not interesting to the industrialists because of the sparsity of capital. Due to this, Celal Bayar replaced İnönü as prime minister, an advocate of a more liberal economic policy, although his liberalism was not apparent in politics. This took place after the removal of Peker from the general secretariat, due to the fascist coloring that gave to the regime and the problems that created in foreign relations with the liberal states. The political and legal equality of women was in sharp contrast with conservative and fascist views about their role in a modern nation state. And several reforms since the 1920s, such as universal education and the secularization of the public sphere were in line with 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment.

This hybrid nature of Kemalism allowed it to remain the conceptual framework of Turkish politics until today, with small changes in its core. If Kemalism was just a product of the mid-war anti-liberal trend, it would have become obsolete very quickly, as was the case of its totalitarian tendencies of 1930s that receded in 1940s. Eighteenth century rationalism, constitutionalism, respect of individual rights against arbitrary state (dynastic) power, corporatism so as to avoid the social upheaval of other modern capitalists countries, a strong

nationalism with emphasis in national unity and solidarity and the need to speed up the industrialization of the country in order to secure its independence, created a complex field of opposing influences in which a coherent ideological outlook was not possible but allowed liberalism to retain some of its influence in the Early Turkish Republic.

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