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Fikret Adanir

Turkey*

Three factors have contributed decisively to the historical culture and the teaching of history in Turkey: the ties with Islamic culture, the experience of an imperial past, and a consciousness of the scientific and technical backwardness of the country in comparison with the industrialized West. It was Turkey's protracted search for modernization, the specific conflict involved in the development of the state, the nation, and the society in the nineteenth century, which brought about the interrelationship of these three factors, an interrelationship which has lasted into our day. The Turkish concept of national history can only be understood in light of the atypical experience of modernization during the late Ottoman period. A review of the related developments seems, therefore, appropriate.

Decisive for the course of modernization of the multiethnic and multireligious Ottoman society was the fact that the confessional communities were traditionally organized into autonomous institutions known in historiography as millets.¹ These not only had legal jurisdiction in civil matters but also had to fulfill certain administrative, social, and cultural functions. Their autonomy in school matters is of particular relevance.

Since the seventeenth century the Greek Orthodox, the Armenian, and the Jewish millets maintained denominational schools, which were run by the clergy and as a rule financed by religious endowments. The Muslim communities had similar institutions, usually attached to a mosque. The instruction in all these schools served in the first place to raise the children to become devout, obedient members of the community.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the denominational schools were increasingly unable to cope with the demands of modern life. In particular, Christian commercial interests strived for the establishment of a school system that was independent of the Church. In the 1830s, against the opposition of the Greek Patriarchate of Constantinople, they succeeded in founding several

* In revising this contribution for the English translation, I have made use of my article "Zum Geschichtsbild der nationalen Erziehung in der Türkei", *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 10 (1988), pp. 7–40. For the translation and useful comments I am thankful to Jeanne R. ADANIR.

¹ On millets see the contributions in Benjamin BRAUDE and Bernard LEWIS, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The Functioning of a Plural Society*, 2 vols., New York, 1982.

schools in which a secular curriculum was taught.² In the Muslim community similar initiatives came more slowly. The orthodox Muslim clergy nurtured a profound distrust of European ideas. Initiatives toward secularization in this community could only come from above, from the state. In the absence of a liberal Muslim middle class, the state bureaucracy had to tackle the task of modernization alone.³

Westernization

The need for reforms patterned after Western models was first recognized in the Ottoman empire during the first half of the eighteenth century, at approximately the same time as the Enlightenment in Europe. Due to the military setbacks the Empire had experienced since 1683, the first institutions of learning established along Western guidelines trained officers, military doctors, and engineers. Most of the instruction was given in a European, Christian language such as French.⁴

Opposition to the Westernization process was strong in the Janissary Corps, the traditional military elite that was supported by influential Muslim groups. The liquidation of the Janissaries in 1826 finally paved the way for a period of reform, the *tanzimat*.⁵ The basis of the reform movement was concern for the

² O. ERGIN, *Türkiye maarif tarihi* (History of Education in Turkey), 2. ed., 5 vols., Istanbul 1977, pp. 737–765 (continuous pagination); St. J. PAPAĐOPOULOS, “Écoles et associations grecques dans la Macédoine du nord durant le dernier siècle de la domination turque”, *Balkan Studies* 3 (1962), pp. 397–442; Rumiana RADKOVA, “Bulgarskoto obrazovanie prez XVIII i purvata polovina na XIX v”. (Bulgarian Education during the 18th and the First Half of the 19th Century), in: *Problemi na Bulgarskoto vuzrazhdane*, Sofia 1981, pp. 248–294; I. TOĐEV, “Bulgarskoto prosvetno i tsurkovno-natsionalno dvizhenie v Odrinska Trakiia do Krimskata voina” (Bulgarian Cultural, Ecclesiastical and National Movement in Thrace until the Crimean War), *Istoricheski pregled* 38 (1982), 6, pp. 68–81; F. ADANIR, “Die Schulbildung in Griechenland (1750–1830) und in Bulgarien (1750–1878) im Spannungsfeld von Bewahrung der ethnisch-konfessionellen Identität, Entstehung der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft und Herausbildung des Nationalbewußtseins”, *Revolution des Wissens? Europa und seine Schulen im Zeitalter der Aufklärung (1750–1825)*, hg. v. W. SCHMALE and N. L. DODDE, Bochum, 1991, pp. 433–468, 927–933; S. VOURLI, *Ekpaideuse kai ethnikismos sta Balkania. E periptose tes boreiodutikes Makedonias (1870–1904)* (Education and Nationalism in the Balkans. The Case of Northwest Macedonia, 1870–1904), Athens, 1992.

³ On the problem of a weak bourgeoisie vis-à-vis a strong bureaucracy in Turkey see Çağlar KEYĐER, *State and Class in Turkey. A Study in Capitalist Development*, London-New York, 1987.

⁴ O. ERGIN, *Türkiye maarif tarihi*, pp. 315–374; Enver Ziya KARAL, “Tanzimat’dan evvel garplilasma hareketleri, 1718–1839” (Westernization Movements before the *tanzimat*, 1718–1839), in: Maarif VEKÂLETİ, *Tanzimat. Yüzüncü yıldönümü münasebetiyle*, Istanbul, 1940, pp. 13–30; Fatma Müge GÖÇEK, *East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford, 1987.

⁵ For general information on reform and westernization in the Ottoman Empire see Enver Ziya KARAL, *Osmanli tarihi*, V. Cilt: Nizam-i Cedid ve Tanzimat devirleri (1789–1856); VI. Cilt: Islahat Fermani devri, 1856–1861 (Ottoman History, Vol. V: The Reform Era of Nizam-i Cedid and Tanzimat, 1789–1856; Vol. VI: The Period of the Reform Decree, 1856–1861), Ankara 1956, 1954; Bernard LEWIS, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, London, 1961, pp. 104–125; Serif MARDİN, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought. A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas*, Princeton 1962; Roderic H. DAVISON, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876*, 2nd printing, New York 1973 (1963); Niyazi BERKES, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, Montreal, 1964, pp. 137–223; idem, *Türk düşününde Bati sorunu* (The Question of Westernization in Turkish Thought), Ankara, 1975; Carter V. FINDLEY, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire, The Sublime Porte, 1789–1892*, Princeton, 1980.

survival of the Empire. By fulfilling the basic requirements of a bourgeois society, it was hoped that the national independence movements would subside. Accordingly, Ottomanism propagated legal equality for all subjects regardless of religious allegiance.⁶ It soon became apparent, however, that it was impossible to implement the reform policy to its logical conclusion, namely the complete secularization of public life.

In the field of education this led to the development of a dual school system. State and confessional schools existed side by side, guided by educational concepts which were often antagonistic to each other. The quality of instruction, especially on the secondary level, did not prepare students adequately for higher education. To alleviate this situation, the government founded the Galatasaray Lisesi in 1868, in which French teachers instructed in French.⁷ There were also several schools founded by Christian missions, which were attended largely by the children of the commercial and bureaucratic elite.

The historical culture of the tanzimat developed under heterogeneous and partly cosmopolitan influences. In contrast to previous epochs, it was characterized by a more profound interest in world history. Non-Islamic and non-Ottoman history began to receive attention. Some popular works on European history were translated. To a large extent history textbooks consisted of translations from Western, mostly French, equivalents. The teaching of history with a national orientation, focusing on the Turkish past, was not yet in sight.

Islamism

Despite the ideology of Ottomanism, the westernizing reforms of the tanzimat were not successful in integrating the non-Muslim millets into a modern supra-national state. On the contrary, the liberation movements of Christian groups, which had strengthened their contacts with Europe during this era, experienced an upswing. The reform policy was also discredited in the eyes of Muslim groups. Once the leading power of the Islamic world, the Ottoman Empire had been degraded to a semi-colony of Europe. A return to Islamic values was promoted by Abdulhamid II (1876–1909), who reconciled Muslim groups throughout the empire.

Islamism, which became a dominant ideology under Abdulhamid II, was not categorically opposed to modernization. The adoption of European tech-

⁶ Bernard LEWIS, "Tanzimat and Social Equality", in: *Économie et sociétés dans l'Empire ottoman. Actes du colloque de Strasbourg (1er-5 juillet 1980)*, ed. by J.-L. BACQUÉ-GRAMMONT and P. DUMONT, Paris, 1983, pp. 47–54; I. L. FADEEVA, *Ofitsial'nye doktriny v ideologii i politike Osmanskoi imperii (Osmanizm-Panislamizm) [Official Doctrines in the Ideology and Politics of the Ottoman Empire (Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism)]*, Moskva, 1985; Ruben SAFRATJAN, "Ottomanism in Turkey in the Epoch of Reforms in XIX C.: Ideology and Policy, I", *Études Balkaniques* 24 (1988), 4, pp. 72–86.

⁷ M. de SALVE, "L'enseignement en Turquie: le Lycée impérial de Galata—Sérâï", *Revue des deux mondes* (Oct. 15, 1874), pp. 836–841; Ihsan SUNGU, "Galatasaray lisesinin kurulusu" (The Establishment of the Lycée of Galatasaray), *Belleten* 7 (1943), pp. 315–348.

nological accomplishments was promoted as the best defense against the expansionist tendencies of Europe. The Western way of life, however, was rejected. The sources for an Islamic renaissance were to be sought first and foremost in the golden era of the medieval caliphate.⁸ In fact, the neglect of one's own past was considered to be a major cause of decline in the Muslim world.

In accordance with this ideology, great efforts were undertaken to improve education, especially vocational training, according to European models.⁹ In the nontechnical fields, however, a strong bias toward medieval Islamic civilization was characteristic of this period. In numerous works the Arabs were praised as the actual founders of modern science, literature, and historiography. Ottoman intellectuals, whose thinking reflected some influence of Western philosophy, were often looked down upon as "materialists" by the protagonists of Islamism. In numerous refutals — the foremost examples coming from the pen of al-Afghani, the leading theoretician of the pan-Islamic movement — Western influences were attacked on ideological grounds.¹⁰ History teaching could not remain unaffected by this trend. It focused in the first place on the history of Islam, with special emphasis on the dynastic history of the Ottomans during the period of their imperial expansion. World history and, in this context, the history of Europe, played an insignificant role in the curriculum. Subjects such as the philosophy of history, world history, or even modern history were added to the curriculum only after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908.

Turkism

The development of a Turkish national consciousness was more closely connected with the Westernization of the tanzimat era and the accompanying broadening of the intellectual horizon than the pan-Islamic era that followed. Süleyman Pasha's World History of 1875 was the first Ottoman historical work to devote a separate chapter to the pre-Islamic Turks of Central Asia.¹¹ The new European science of Turcology played a decisive role in this respect. Turkism gradually acquired the function of an ideology as information about the history of pre-Islamic Turks become known. In 1870 Mustafa Celâleddin Pasha, a Polish

⁸ Tarik Zafer TUNAYA, *Islâmcilik cereyanı* (The Islamist Movement), Istanbul, 1962.

⁹ Bayram KODAMAN, *Abdulhamid devri eğitim sistemi* (The System of Education during the Rule of Abdulhamid II), Istanbul, 1980; Selçuk Aksin SOMEL, *Das Grundschulwesen in den Provinzen des Osmanischen Reiches während der Herrschaftsperiode Abdulhamids II (1876–1908)*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Bamberg, 1992.

¹⁰ On al-Afghani see the works of Nikki R. KEDDIE, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani"*, Berkeley, 1968; "Pan-Islam as Proto-Nationalism", *Journal of Modern History* 41 (1969), pp. 17–28; Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani". *A Political Biography*, Berkeley, 1972.

¹¹ *Tarih-i âlem*, Istanbul 1292/1875. For general information see Zeki ARIKAN, "Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e tarihçilik" (History Writing from the tanzimat to the Republic), in: *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, 6. cilt, Istanbul, 1985, pp. 1584–1594; Stanford J. SHAW and Ezel K. SHAW, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. II: *Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975*, Cambridge, 1977, pp. 260–263.

immigrant in the Ottoman service, had stressed the special role of the Turks in history.¹² Toward the end of the century, Léon Cahun described the Turks as a people of conquerors who had displayed their remarkable political talent throughout history. For example, Genghis Khan, the founder of one of the great empires, was a Turk. According to Cahun, the first inhabitants of Europe were also related to the Turks.¹³

Turkism first emerged as an ideology in Czarist Russia. Ismail Bey Gaspirinsky (1851–1914) established a modern school on the Crimea in 1884 in which great emphasis was placed on teaching the Turkish language. Simultaneously, he published his newspaper, *Tercüman*, that propagated Turkish nationalism with pan-Turkist features: all Turkish peoples should be united under the leadership of the Ottoman Turks, with Turkish and Islam serving as the common cultural base. Gaspirinsky's contacts with the emerging Turkist circles in Istanbul prepared the ground for the strong influence the Turks of Russia exercised on the Turkish national movement after 1908.¹⁴

The sociologist Ziya Gökalp (1875–1924) deserves credit for having shown the way out of the Ottoman-Turkish identity crisis.¹⁵ By distinguishing between the terms “civilization” and “culture”, he opened a new perspective to the question of what Turks could adopt from Western civilization, and how they could make it compatible with their own traditions. In this context civilization meant the sum of the material conditions attained through technology and science. Seen in this way, Islam was not a civilization, nor was Western civilization identical to Christianity. On the contrary, contemporary civilization was first made possible after rational thinking and empirical science had set bounds to religion. The term civilization was thus free of religious values and had a universal character.

On the other hand, culture referred, according to Gökalp, to the manners, customs, and ethical and moral norms and values of a certain nation and was thus unique. The nation, which appeared as the vehicle of culture, represented in his eyes the most developed level of society. However, as such it could only exist on the basis of a common national language; race and religion were secondary factors. Turkish society, which was undergoing a transformation from a religious community to a modern nation, was fortunate enough to already have a common language at its disposal. Islam and the Turkish nation were not antago-

¹² Mustafa DJELALEDDIN, *Les Turcs anciens et modernes*, Paris, 1870.

¹³ Léon CAHUN, *Introduction à l'histoire de l'Asie*, Paris, 1896; David KUSHNER, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism, 1876–1908*, London, 1977.

¹⁴ Edward J. LAZZERINI, *Ismail Bey Gasprinskii and Muslim Modernism in Russia, 1878–1914*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Washington, 1973.

¹⁵ For the following information see *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization. Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp*, transl. and ed. by N. BERKES, New York, 1959; Ziya GÖKALP, *The Principles of Turkism*, trans. by R. DEVEREUX, Leiden, 1968; Richard HARTMANN, “Ziya Gök Alp's Grundlagen des türkischen Nationalismus”, *Orientalische Literaturzeitung* 28 (1925), pp. 578–610; Uriel HEYD, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism*, London, 1950; Giacomo E. CARRETTO, *Hars-kültür: nascita di una cultura nazionale*, Venezia, 1979; Tahâ PARLA, *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp 1876–1924*, Leiden, 1985.

nistic concepts, for religion served as an important component of national culture. However, the origins of this culture were to be sought above all in the everyday life of the common people as well as in the pre-Islamic history of the Turks, and this was the primary task of Turkism.

Education assumed particular importance in Gökâlp's concept. It was considered the motor of social change. In accordance with his interpretation of civilization and culture as two different categories, Gökâlp distinguished in the field of teaching between instruction and education. The goal of instruction was the conveyance of the methods and findings of science and technology; the object of education, on the other hand, was the inculcation of the values of the national culture. Yet the prevalent school system in the country, which had been set up according to Western utilitarian principles, did not leave room for such conceptual differentiations. All Ottoman schools, regardless of whether they were maintained by the state, the millets, or foreign missions, merely familiarized their students with the rules and techniques of civilization. Gökâlp described this as a mechanical imitation of the West. But the crisis that the society had been experiencing was primarily a moral one. The task of the school system was therefore not so much the improvement of the methods of instruction or the training of more teachers, but rather a reorientation from instruction to education on the basis of a new ethic that was to be derived from the national culture.

Kemalism

The basic features of Kemalism, the ideology associated with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), can be traced back to the Turkism of Ziya Gökâlp.¹⁶ The events on the eve of and during the First World War – the Balkan Wars, the turmoil in Armenia with ensuing mass deportations, and the Arab revolt – prompted the Young Turks to look for a Turkist, even pan-Turkist solution to the problems of the empire.¹⁷ With the defeat of 1918, however, the last imperial goals had become null and void. Kemal Atatürk and his comrades tried after 1919 to organize the defense of Anatolia only to discover that it was not easy to motivate the population to fight another war, even if the homeland was now at stake. Thus, they had to seek the support of “semi-feudal” elements – urban notables, tribal chiefs of eastern Anatolia, and members of the Muslim establishment – whom the bureaucratic elites had evaded since the tanzimat.¹⁸ Con-

¹⁶ Mehmed AKURAL, *Ziya GÖKALP: The Influence of His Thought on Kemalist Reforms*, Ph.D. Thesis, Indiana University, 1978.

¹⁷ Tekin ALP (Moses Cohen), *Türkismus und Pantürkismus*, Weimar 1915; Gotthard JÄSCHKE, “Der Turanismus der Jungtürken: Zur osmanischen Außenpolitik im Weltkriege”, *Die Welt des Islams* 23 (1941), pp. 1–53; Jacob M. LANDAU, *Pan-Turkism in Turkey. A Study of Irredentism*, London, 1981.

¹⁸ Sabahattin SELEK, *Anadolu ihtilâli (The Anatolian Revolution)*, Istanbul, 1973; Dogan Avcioglu, *Milli kurtulus tarihi (The History of National Liberation)*, Vol. 3, Istanbul, 1974.

sequently, Kemal Atatürk and his aides were aware very early that the political mobilization of the peasant masses was a prerequisite for the success of the war of independence, and that this in turn required a special educational policy. In 1921, when the Greek army was approaching Ankara, Kemal Atatürk stressed the need for a “program of national education”.¹⁹

The establishment of an independent Turkish republic was followed by the abolition of the Caliphate and a number of secularizing reforms. In the field of education, the property of the religious foundations was nationalized, Islamic schools were closed, and all institutions of learning in the country placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. The replacement of the Islamic by the Gregorian calendar (1925), Islamic law by the Swiss Civil Code (1926), and finally, the Arabic by the Latin alphabet (1928) were carried out as complementary secularizing steps.²⁰

These reforms soon gave the young republic a modern, “European” appearance but they were introduced from above, without adequate democratic legitimation. They provoked widespread opposition that reached a climax during the Depression of the 1930s.

The negative result of a brief experiment in multiparty democracy in 1930 shocked the state leadership still further. It undertook great efforts from then on to defend the accomplishments of the Republic on ideological grounds. Thus, in the field of education, the primary task of all institutions of learning was “to educate the Turkish citizen to be a strong nationalist, republican, secularist, progressive, and populist”.²¹ History teaching acquired particular importance in this connection. All citizens should be given the opportunity of becoming familiar with “the profound history of the Turks”. Only in this way could the self-confidence of the people be strengthened, enabling it to resist ideological movements that might threaten national existence.²²

¹⁹ Hasan-Ali YÜCEL, *Türkiye’de orta öğretim (Secondary Education in Turkey)*, Istanbul, 1938, p. 19.

²⁰ The literature on Kemalist reforms is very extensive. For information on various aspects see D. E. WEBSTER, *The Turkey of Atatürk: Social Process in the Turkish Reformation*, Philadelphia, 1939; Suna KILI, *Kemalism*, Istanbul, 1969; Taner TİMUR, *Türk devrimi ve sonrası, 1919–1946 (The Turkish Revolution and Its Aftermath, 1919–1946)*, Ankara, 1971; SHAW/SHAW, *History*, II, pp. 373–395; A. KAZANCIGİL and E. ÖZBUDUN, eds., *Atatürk. Founder of a Modern State*, London, 1981; Halil İNALCIK, “The Caliphate and Atatürk’s inki-lâb”, in: *Belleten* 46 (1982), pp. 353–365; Jacob M. LANDAU, ed., *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey*, Boulder, Colo., 1984.

²¹ Quoted by İlhan BAŞGÖZ and Howard E. WILSON, *Educational Problems in Turkey 1920–1940*, Bloomington — The Hague, pp. 114–115.

²² Recep PEKER, *C. H. F. programinin izahi (Explanation of the Program of the Republican People’s Party)*, Ankara, 1931. On ideological currents of the period see Giacomo CARRETTO, “Polemiche fra kemalismo, fascismo, comunismo negli anni 30”, *Storia Contemporanea* 8 (1977), pp. 489–530; Fikret ADANIR, “Zur Etatismus-Diskussion in der Türkei in der Weltwirtschaftskrise: Die Zeitschrift Kadro, 1932–1934”, *Der Nahe Osten in der Zwischenkriegszeit. Die Interdependenz von Politik, Wirtschaft und Ideologie*, hg. v. L. SCHATKOWSKI, SCHILCHER und Claus SCHARF, Stuttgart, 1989, pp. 355–373.

In 1930, a group of historians was commissioned with the pilot project of preparing a volume called *Main Features of Turkish History*.²³ The need for such a book was seen in the fact that the role of the Turks in world history had been consciously or unconsciously underrated or described incorrectly in the available literature. As a result, people were acquiring knowledge about their past that did not correspond to historical reality. A national history of the Turks was long overdue. In order to promote the study of national history, the Society for Research in Turkish History (*Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti*) was founded in 1931; and in the same year not only were the results of the pilot project available, but also, based on them, a four-part textbook for the secondary schools entitled *History*. The first congress of Turkish historians, which met in the summer of 1932 in Ankara, could devote itself entirely to the didactics and other scholarly aspects of the new Turkish theory of history.²⁴

This theory can be summarized briefly as follows. The Turks belong to the Aryan peoples originating in Central Asia, the cradle of civilization. Due to climatic changes (desiccation), in prehistoric times these peoples began to migrate in every direction and carried their civilization to other parts of the world. The old civilizations of China, India, Egypt, and Italy came about in this way. The Sumerians and the Hittites were also distantly related to Turkic peoples. Thus, Anatolia is since time immemorial Turkish land, not just since the arrival of the Seljuk Turks in the eleventh century.

The new interpretation of national history was immediately incorporated into the school books. The four-volume textbook for secondary schools, *History*, was structured as follows:

1. First year: Prehistory and ancient history. Emphasis on the Turkic peoples and their contribution to the development of ancient civilizations.

2. Second year: Medieval history. Emphasis on the role of the Turks in the Islamic world.

3. Third year: Modern history. Emphasis on the history of the Ottoman Empire. Half of the volume is devoted to the history of the struggle for Turkish national independence, 1919–1923.

4. Fourth year: The history of the Turkish Republic. This is the most extensive volume of the series, consisting of 374 pages of text and 132 pages of illustrations.

History books for junior high schools (*ortaokul*) and elementary schools (*ilkokul*) were soon also to be modelled after this textbook.

²³ *Türk tarihinin ana hatları* (*Main Features of Turkish History*), Istanbul, 1930; Günsa Ersanli BEHAR, *İk dar ve Tarih. Türkiye’de “Resmî Tahri” Tezinin Oluşumu 1929–1937* (*Political Power and History. The Development of the “Official History” Thesis in Turkey, 1929–1937*), Istanbul, 1992.

²⁴ See (also for the following) Maarif VEKÂLETİ ve Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti, *Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi. Konferanslar, müzakere zabıtları* (*First Turkish Historical Congress. Contributions, Proceedings*), Ankara, 1933; Fahri ÇOKER, *Türk Tarih Kurumu. Kuruluş amacı ve çalışmaları* (*Turkish Historical Society. The Purpose of its Establishment and its Activities*), Ankara, 1983.

The aim of the authors and that of the government was obvious: the Islamic-Ottoman period of Turkish history, which previously had been the focal point of history teaching, should appear as a relatively unimportant epoch compared with the allegedly much more important role the Turks played in pre-Islamic times. For the authors and the government it was even more important to persuade the new generation of the special meaning of the most recent period of their history, the Republican era. For this reason, a disproportionate amount of school time was devoted to the first decade of the Republic. The inculcation of the significance of the Kemalist reforms continued even at the university level. It was obligatory for students of all departments to attend classes of the “Institute for the History of the Turkish Revolution”, founded in 1933 at the University of Istanbul.²⁵

The Turkish theory of history was supported by the Sun Theory of Language (Günes-Dil Teorisi). Research in toponymy and comparative linguistics had furnished clues that many place names in various parts of the world might be derived from Turkic origins. The explanation for this was that the Turkic peoples who migrated from Central Asia had taken along not only their civilization, but also their language. From this hypothesis it was just a small step to the next conclusion, namely that Turkish formed the basis for most of the languages of the world. In order to promote research on this question, the Turkish Society for Language (Türk Dil Kurumu) was founded in 1932. In 1936 the Department for Languages, History, and Geography was established that later formed the core of the University of Ankara. At the same time the national language, considered now one of the oldest and most important in the world, began to be cleansed systematically of foreign – Arabic and Persian – elements and to be enriched by new Turkish coinages. Young people, who learned only the Latin alphabet, were cut off linguistically from the Ottoman Turkish literature written in Arabic letters and could hardly communicate with the older generation.²⁶

In an effort to familiarize ever-larger segments of the population with the ideals of the Republic, the government also exploited the possibilities of adult education. People’s Houses (halk evleri) were founded in larger cities, followed after 1940 by People’s Halls (halk odalari) in provincial towns. These new centers of political socialization – there were already several thousand of them at the beginning of the 1940s – offered a spectacular variety of cultural activities ranging from art, music, theatre, and regional historical studies to sports. In the field of folklore and dialectological studies they achieved noteworthy success.

²⁵ Oktay BAYÜLKEN, “T. C. İstanbul Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkilâp Tarihi Enstitüsü tarihçesi” (A Short History of the Institute of the Principles of Atatürk and the History of the Turkish Revolution at the University of Istanbul), İstanbul Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkilâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Yilligi 1 (1986), pp. 181–193.

²⁶ Jean DENY, “La réforme actuelle de la langue turque”, *En Terre d’Islam* 10 (1935), pp. 223–247; Ettore ROSSI, “La riforma linguistica in Turchia”, *Oriente Moderno* 15 (1935), pp. 45–57; Uriel Heyd, *Language Reform in Modern Turkey*, Jerusalem, 1954.

The linguistic material collected by the People's Houses was passed on to the Turkish Society for Language to serve as the basis for countless neologisms.²⁷

Village Institutes (*köy enstitüleri*), a new type of teachers' training college, were established in rural areas to accelerate the process of alphabetization and political enlightenment. The graduates of these institutes, apart from teaching, were also expected to train the village youth in crafts and modern agricultural methods. However, the Village Institutes were from the start controversial, mainly because traditional Muslim sentiment felt offended by their radical program. The controversy about these institutes was one of the catalysts of political opposition that came into being after the death of Kemal Atatürk in 1938.

Transition to a Multiparty System

Until 1950 political power in Turkey was held by Atatürk's People's Republican Party, a self-confident elite of military and civilian bureaucrats that had the support of large landowners and urban notables in Anatolia as well as the commercial classes in the coastal towns. Discontent with Atatürk's successors had grown after World War II, however, leading to the election of the Democratic Party in 1950. The new party's platform emphasized liberalization of economic life, promotion of foreign investments, increase of agricultural credit, and a more tolerant attitude toward Islam.²⁸

The cultural revivalism of this period was evident in education. Religious instruction became part of the school curriculum. The People's Houses, active since the 1930s under the control of the People's Republican Party, were decried as quasi-fascist institutions and were closed down in 1951. The new regime promoted instead the growing number of Muslim Schools for Priests and Preachers (*imam-hatip okulları*), founded to train "enlightened" personnel for the thousands of new mosques in the villages. The Village Institutes, the dismantlement of which had already begun before 1950, had no chance of survival in such a milieu. In 1954 they were converted to conventional teacher' training schools.²⁹

New policies could not resolve the crisis of national identity that Turkish society had experienced since the founding of the Republic. The strengthening of

²⁷ Kemal H. KARPAT, "The People's Houses in Turkey. Establishment and Growth", *Middle East Journal* 17 (1963), pp. 55–67; idem, "The Impact of the People's Houses on the Development of Communication in Turkey 1931–1951", *Die Welt des Islams* 15 (1974), pp. 69–84; A. A. Kolesnikov, *Narodnye doma v obshchestvenno-politicheskoi i kul'turnoi zhizni Turetskoi respubliki* (The People's Houses in the Sociopolitical and Cultural Life of the Turkish Republic), Moskva, 1984.

²⁸ Kemal H. KARPAT, *Turkey's Politics. The Transition to a Multi-Party System*, Princeton, 1959; Serif A. MARDIN, "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?", *Daedalus* 102 (1973) pp. 169–90; Ergun ÖZBUDUN, *Social Change and Political Participation in Turkey*, Princeton, 1976.

²⁹ Gotthard JÄSCHKE, "Der Islam in der modernen Türkei", *Die Welt des Islams* 1 (1951), pp. 9–174; Howard A. REED, "Turkey's New Imam-Hatib Schools", *Die Welt des Islams* 4 (1955), pp. 150–163.

ties with the West conflicted with the growth of Islamic and pan-Turkish ideologies, especially regarding the fate of Muslim Turks in some socialist countries. In schools the teaching of history, religion, civics, and civil defense aimed at making young people immune to Marxist ideology by educating them according to the value standards of Islamic-Turkish culture.³⁰

The 1960s and 1970s

The coup d'état by the Kemalist military in 1960 ushered in a period of change. While some of the economic manifestations of this period, such as overwhelming urbanization and high unemployment, were detrimental, in a political sense freedom of opinion was guaranteed for the first time. All aspects of political life — from the foreign policy of the country to questions of social justice or strategies for economic development — became the subject of lively public debate. The more the new parties, unions, and clubs participated in the discussions, the less influence state institutions had on the shaping of public opinion.³¹

These developments were bound to affect education. Under their influence the role of nationalist ideology in secondary and higher institutions of learning lost much of its former importance. This is not surprising: the goals and the research perspectives of Turkish national historiography had hardly changed since the postulation of the Turkish Theory of History in 1931, as the director of the Turkish Historical Society proudly put it at the Sixth Conference of Turkish Historians in 1961. Textbooks written in the 1930s were still being used to teach history in schools.³² Obviously the perusal of such outdated — in both content and method — material was not conducive to formulating historically sound answers to current questions. It was therefore only natural that the concept of history of politically interested youth of the 1960s and 1970s was shaped by works written by nonhistorians. These books were usually general descriptions of social history with a clear reference to the current political situation. On the basis of such literature, the historical causes of Turkey's underdevelopment were discussed in numerous clubs and reading circles, especially among university students and labor union youth.³³

³⁰ Oğuz KARAGÖZ, *Der Islam im Widerstreit. Religionspolitik und Nationalismus in der Schulerziehung der Türkischen Republik 1923—1960*, Ph.D. Thesis, Freiburg i. Br., 1976; P. Xavier JACOB, *L'enseignement religieux dans la Turquie moderne*, Berlin, 1982, pp. 344—417.

³¹ The text of the new constitution in Ernst E. HIRSCH, *Die Verfassung der Türkischen Republik*, Frankfurt/M. 1966; K. H. KARPAT, "Society, Economics and Politics in Contemporary Turkey", in: *World Politics* (Oct. 1964), pp. 50—74; Feroz AHMAD, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, London-New York 1993, pp. 121—180.

³² See *Türk Tarih Kurumu*, VI. *Türk Tarih Kongresi*, Ankara, 20—26 Ekim 1961. *Kongreye sunulan bildiriler* (Sixth Congress of Turkish Historians, Ankara, 20—26 October 1961. Communications), Ankara, 1967, pp. 8—12.

³³ Frank TACHAU, "The Search for National Identity Among the Turks", *Die Welt des Islams* 8 (1963), pp. 165—76; Kemal H. KARPAT, "Ideology in Turkey after the Revolution of 1960: Nationalism and Socialism", *Turkish Yearbook of International Relations* 6 (1965), pp. 68—118.

The victory of the Justice Party in 1965 caused deep frustration among intellectuals and accelerated thereby the process of political polarization in Turkey. The leftist opposition campaigned widely for democratic reforms, but did not present a united front. The rightist front, on the other hand, represented a solid majority. The ruling Justice Party pursued a domestic policy that appealed to the religious feelings of the population. This meant, among other things, the establishment of further imam-hatip schools and the speedy construction of hundreds of new mosques. Anticomunist organisations enjoyed governmental support.

The extreme right-wing Party of National Movement (MHP) founded in 1969, called for the physical elimination of all factors opposing Turkish nationalism. Once in power within a coalition government in 1975, the party was bent on getting control of the Ministry of National Education. Key positions, especially in teachers' training schools, were occupied by members or sympathizers of the MHP. This consisted of a large-scale infiltration of Turkey's educational institutions by a nationalist and partly even racist cadre by the end of the 1970s.³⁴

The 1980s: History Teaching in the Service of Political Education

The military intervention of September 1980 was preceded by a period of civil unrest, almost civil war. The Turkish Army's third involvement in civilian politics since World War II cannot be ascribed to the mere intention of suppressing "subversive elements", nor can it be justified in reference to the need of restoring the economic and financial stability of the country. To all appearance, the officers' corps was concerned primarily with finding a solution to the ever-recurring crisis of national identity. Even after the leftist and rightist radical elements had been politically eliminated, it seems that the existence of the state depended on ending the polarization of the people between the "left-of-center" secularists and traditionalist Islamic groups.³⁵

The "neo-Kemalism" of the 1980s was primarily populist, displaying even anti-intellectual traits. Westernization was no longer regarded as a major ideological problem; the central cultural issue was how to define the "Turkish way".

³⁴ Muammer Aksoy, *Devrimci öğretmenin kiyimi ve mücadelesi* (The Persecution of Progressive Teachers and the Resistance of the Latter), 2 Vols., Ankara, 1975.

³⁵ On the military intervention of 1981 and its aftermath see Kemal H. KARPAT, "Turkish Democracy at Impasse: Ideology, Party Politics and the Third Military Intervention", *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, II/1 (1981), pp. 1–43; Feroz AHMAD, "Military Intervention and Crisis in Turkey", *MERIP Reports*, No. 93 (January 1981), pp. 5–24; *idem*, "The State and Intervention in Turkey", *Turcica* 16 (1984), pp. 51–64; Kemal H. KARPAT, "The Military and Its Relation to the State and Democracy", in: *Die Krise in der Türkei und die Perspektiven ihrer Lösung*, Bonn, 1981, pp. 107–121; Ömer SEVEN, ed., *Türkei zwischen Militärherrschaft und Demokratie*, Hamburg, 1984; Metin HEPER and Ahmet EVİN, eds., *State, Democracy, and the Military. Turkey in the 1980s*. Berlin-New York, 1988.

No doubt, secularism remained an issue for Kemalism. After the experiences of the 1970s, especially in light of the developments in neighboring Iran, the political leadership was convinced that laxity in this field could easily destabilize the regime; and, of course, no fundamental changes in the economic, social, and political structures of the country were intended.

Nevertheless, one could safely argue that neo-Kemalism treated secularism increasingly as a formal aspect of the Republic. In content it came nearer to the position of Islamic traditionalism. The religious feelings of the people were not only to be respected, they were consciously supported, as evidenced by the reintroduction of religious instruction in schools. Radio and television devoted more time to the celebration of Muslim holidays than ever before, and the president of the Republic used every occasion to emphasize that Turkey belonged to the Islamic world. The Republic regularly sent high-ranking representatives to the meetings of the Islamic Conference Organizar.³⁶

As was to be expected, neo-Kemalism placed renewed emphasis on national education. In 1981 a “mobilization program” against illiteracy was initiated, including special courses for adults all over the country. In the curricula, history acquired a new importance. “Kemalism” and “Turkism” were two major themes that all youth had to study from elementary school through university.³⁷ As in the 1930s, it was mandatory for university students to attend history courses in which the principles of Kemalism were expounded. A new law concerning higher education (YÖK) defined the duty of all institutions of higher learning as inculcating the spirit of Kemalist nationalism in the youth, committing them morally to the principle of national unity, and awakening in them a respect for and a consciousness of the values of their own culture and traditions.³⁸

Since the second half of the 1980s, a significant process of redemocratization has set in. Not only did new political parties emerge and a civilian government take office, but also a certain liberalization in the cultural field cannot be denied. There are even cautious hints that the autonomy of the universities might be restored.

Such developments notwithstanding, historical culture and the teaching of history in Turkey remain in a specific way involved in the politico-cultural ten-

³⁶ R. P. KONDARCHIAN, *Turtsiia: vnutrennaia politika i Islam* (Turkey: Domestic Policy and Islam), Erevan, 1983; Orhan TÜRKDOĞAN, *Millî kültür, modernleşme ve İslâm* (National Culture, Modernization and Islam), Istanbul, 1983.

³⁷ Saliha SCHEINHARDT, *Die religiöse Lage in der Türkei. Perspektiven des islamischen Religionsunterrichts für türkische Kinder in der Diaspora*, Berlin, 1986; Martin STROHMEIER, “Verschärfung des Kulturkonflikts – eine Analyse türkischer Geschichtsbücher”, in: *Türkisch als Muttersprache in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, ed. by K. KREISER and F. PINGEL, Braunschweig, 1987, pp. 143–150. See also “Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi dersi müfredat programı” (Semester Plan for the Course ‘The Principles of Atatürk and the History of the Turkish Revolution’), in: *Istanbul Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Yilligi II* (1987), pp. 439–476; *Anadolu Üniversitesi (Eskischir), Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi* (The Principles of Atatürk and the History of the Turkish Revolution), ed. by O. N. Zillioglu, 4 Vols., Ankara, 1986.

³⁸ See “Yükseköğretim Kanunu” of 4 November 1981, No. 2547, in: *T. C. Resmî Gazete*, No. 1756 of 6 November 1981.

sion between East and West, religion and nation, the medieval multiethnic empire and the modern nation-state. Historical culture and the teaching of history developed from a profound attachment to a religious notion of salvation in the denominational schools of the early nineteenth century, via the cosmopolitan modernization of the tanzimat and the pan-Islamic and pan-Turkist phases of the First World War, to the secular nationalism of the Republican era. The individual phases of this process do not relate to each other in such a way as to allow one to speak of unilinear progress. It can be characterized more appropriately as fluctuating between recourse to tradition and attempts at the new.

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