

What Happened to Turkish Modernization?

-A Historical Evaluation-

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Abstract

In today's Turkey there has been a comprehensive and radical transformation process. In this process where the Justice and Development Party (AKP) is the main actor, the norm and value system, which have become dominant in the state and the society, have been transformed through new conservative policies, while the principles (e.g. secularism), known to be the fundamental principles of the Turkish modernization, have lost their validities. In this paper, the dynamics of education and social change in the process extending from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey, are discussed along with the claim that the roots of the ongoing social, political and educational transformation in Turkey can be found in the policies implemented in the late Ottoman Period and the early years of the Republic roughly until 1940s. In the first part of this paper, the social change experienced throughout the articulation process of the Ottomans as a semi-colonized peripheral unit to the Western system, is outlined with its different dimension. In the second part, the Republican Period until the 1940s is discussed with its economic, social, political and educational dimensions. Finally, in the third part the results of the paper are included.

Keywords: *Modernization, Ottoman - Turkish modernization, new conservatism, education reform, education policy*

Introduction

In today's Turkey, there has been a comprehensive restructuring process and in this process, structures and dynamics forming the political system, various social structures and institutions, legitimacy sources of the dominant social system and a series of different ranks of social life have been transformed. This process, in one aspect, can be evaluated as the continuation of the restructuring process that began in the financial field and in time expanded by embracing the whole public sphere in Turkey which has integrated to the globalizing capitalism since 1980s with the choice of a new regime of accumulation. With another aspect, this is a process where a fundamental breaking point has been seen in the basic premises of Turkish modernization as new conservative policies became widespread.

According to the great historian Carr (2015), history can be seen as an unending dialogue between the past and the present. In today's Turkey, a new dialog has come into prominence; a new ideological form presented as an alternative to the founding ideology of the Republic has been tried to be built through education and (popular) cultural policies based on a new history narrative/approach. In this process, the values seen as the fundamental principles of the Republic have been isolated from the public sphere and also diminished from the social life.

Education is one of the fields where comprehensive and radical changes have been made. In Turkey, direct and indirect influences of religious sects have been increased in the field of education. For instance, in the recent years an unofficial Ottoman elementary-primary school system is becoming functional as an alternative to the official preschool and primary school education, mixed-sex education is being increasingly targeted, scientific essence of the curriculum is being eroded, the curricula are being instrumentalized on one hand, while on the

other hand they are reorganized according to religious and traditional references. From this point of view, it may be said that the exclusion of the evolution theory from the curriculum is typical.

While these are happening, a series of significant questions are raised regarding the Ottoman-Turkish modernization. For one thing, what ever happened to the Ottoman-Turkish modernization process, which can be traced back to the beginning of the Ottoman Tulip Era Reforms (1718-1730) and developed fundamentally with the Constitutional Period and Republican Period? In other words, how come the Turkish modernization process aimed at changing the reference frame of the traditional social structure; adopting rational Western values rather than religion and tradition; building a new social culture under the guidance of positive sciences; thereby secularizing the state and the society; shaping a nationalist politicization process, building a nation-state based on the co-existence of the homogeneous cultural and social elements, entered such a historical turning point characterized by the increasing social and political influences of the neo-conservative policies?

Generally, the question of “what happened to Turkish modernization” should be evaluated with another questions: What happened to the education system which –in Kant’s words- identifies as an apparatus to transforms the immature people of the pre-enlightenment era to citizens who are entitled to the right of self-determination and who can exercise rights and responsibilities before the modern state structures; which provide the actual basis for the social mobilization to eradicate the influence of the religion and tradition upon the societies?

While the Republic was shaped by the radical reforms of the Republican period with a secularist and nationalist approach, took the “contemporary civilizations”

as reference while moving with the worry of building a new heritage for itself first from the distant lands of the East and then from the long history of Anatolia by denying the traditional legacy of the past, how come the education system of this Republic through which it aimed social self-realization, began to build ties with the traditional legacy of the past and in time faced a transformation in which it became a modern extension of it?

The answers to all these questions can be sought in the westernization process of the Ottoman Empire which was modernized (and/or became capitalist by modernization) by articulating into the western-centred capitalist system, and also in the economic, social, political and educational policies of the Republican period. In this pursuit, it may also be useful to discuss the characteristics of the Ottoman-Turkish modernization process, its historical course, its elements of disengagement and continuity along with its handicaps.

As Hobsbawm (1999, 256) indicates the materialist concept of history, which was developed by Marks and Engels, essentially aims to destroy the belief that 'ideas, thoughts and concepts have produced, determined, dominated the real life of men, their material world, their actual relations'. The proposition which is critical to historical materialism, with the famous expression of Marx, is that 'it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary their social being that determines their consciousness.' Thus, when examining the historical and social development of the modernization of Turkey from a historical materialist perspective, focus should be on the analysis of the social order on which modernization reforms flourished.

The great German philosopher Nietzsche claims that reaching to the knowledge of truth is an ontological problem, not an epistemological problem. According to Nietzsche, in order to achieve the knowledge of an examination object, rather

than using methodological tools, it is vital to have an existential stance ready or proper to achieve the knowledge of that object, namely to “endure the knowledge of truth.” In this study, unknown phenomena related to different dimensions of Ottoman - Turkish modernization have not been discovered. Only, the researcher has tried to put himself beyond the popular historical and current positionings and debates and to "endure" as much as possible to the knowledge of truth.

The Ottoman Modernization and/or Peripheralization Process of the Ottoman Empire

The form of the state and social order in the Ottoman Empire have been discussed in many respects within the literature. In order to reveal the characteristics of a political organization that existed for over six hundred years, it is important to determine which historical period will be taken as basis for that structure. In this respect, when viewed on the basis of the Classical Period in which the typical characteristics of the state in the 15. and 16 centuries were crystallized, as Eroğul (2009) puts, the Ottoman Empire was an absolute monarchy governed by religious and traditional references while being a theocratic state in terms of the source of sovereignty. For, the basic references on which the state affairs were built were the sources of the shariat law such as Koran, hadith, sunna and icma (teachings of Muslim scholars) and also the customs.

With the emergence of capitalism and its development as a world system, the Ottoman rulers, being aware of their military and administrative inadequacies in particular, and political, social and economic inadequacies as a whole, against the "pioneer" and evolving West, as Avcıoğlu (2001) puts, had to engage in a series of reforms in order to survive. This process can be depicted as a shift from the trend of giving order to the universe (Nizam-ı Âlem) to the trend of

adopting itself to the universe. These reforms, which began as partial and unsubstantial improvements, would gradually transform into a comprehensive and radical reformation process.

The innovation process in the Ottoman Empire, began first in the military area, which was regarded as the most critical ring. To achieve this, military specialists were brought from the West, much stronger cannons were poured, new armies were established while new hierarchies were formed in these armies, Western-style military schools were established... However, defeats and regression could not be prevented. Over time, it was realized that the partial and unsubstantial reforms would not lead to progress and more comprehensive reforms were introduced with Tanzimat (meaning "reorganization"). In this period, first, the traditional citizenship rights of the Muslim community (1839 Tanzimat Edict - 1838) and then, the rights of the non-Muslim community (Edict of Reform - 1856) were guaranteed; administrative reforms were implemented, ministries were begun to be established (e.g. Maa'rifi Ummiye Nezareti [Ministry of National Education] - 1857); schools giving Western-style education were opened to train personnel for the new bureaucracy replacing the traditional bureaucracy. Beginning from the end of the Tanzimat Period, education was tried to be reorganized as a basic service spread throughout the country, which would be conducted by the government (Maa'rif-i Ummiye Nizamnâmesi [Regulation on General Education] - 1869). Over time, some changes were made in the curricula in conformity with the 'requirements of the era', and steps were taken to introduce new methods in education (Usul-i Cedide [New Methods]).

In the Ottomans, the recognition and definition of problem remained essentially intact since the first modernization movements. In this respect, the answers to the question of "how to restore the empire" have determined the method,

content and degree of Westernization but could not prevent the demolition (Tunaya, 1983, p.238). Yet, the reconstruction and/or strengthening of the Ottoman sovereignty system on a modern basis constituted one dimension of modernization reforms while the development of Ottoman's dependency on the West and its social consequences constituted the other. In the Tanzimat period, when the Ottoman modernization gained momentum, the commercial relations shaped by commercial privileges and 'unequal exchange' accelerated the dependency of the Ottomans on the West, the debts borrowed after the defeat in Crimea in 1854 were added to this mechanism and in the following years, the borrowing process continued, until the bankruptcy of the Ottoman budget and the establishment of the *Düyun-u Umumiye-i Osmaniye Varidat-ı Muhassasa Administration* [Public Debts Administration] (Eroğul, 2009).

The resources obtained from the labour products of the citizens and the resources provided through borrowings formed the financial basis of the reforms in the process of Ottoman modernization. The resources provided by borrowings, in the final analysis, meant confiscation of the future labour products of the people. However, such reforms were far from supporting the everyday lives of large masses of people and they essentially served the reinforcement of the political system.

Ottomans' process of peripheralization or semi-colonization consists of two stages in the history of capitalism where the beginning and end periods intertwined. One is the competitive capitalism stage which started in the first quarter of the 19th century and lost its momentum in the 1870s, and the other is the monopoly capitalism, i.e. imperialism stage, which vaguely appeared in the 1860s and became evident after the great depression of 1873 and later extended with the depression of 1900-1903 (Kurmuş, 1982). When the Western capitalism flourished as a result of industrial revolution, the economic relations

between the Ottoman Empire and the West were mainly based on trade, which can be characterized as "unequal exchange". And in the period when capitalism evolved into a monopolistic stage, capital export became prominent as well as the trade and the Ottoman social formation was economically, socially and politically adapted to the Western system as a result of the opportunities enabled by the foreign borrowing mechanism.

It can be said that the Ottoman Empire's process of peripheralization and/or transformation into an underdeveloped social formation in the form of a semi-colony, are directly related to the Ottoman modernization. In this respect, it is not two parallel processes of "semi-colonization and modernization" which is in question, but a unique, holistic and dialectical process of "modernization through semi-colonization and semi-colonization through modernization". In other words, one dimension of the reforms of modernization is the reconstruction and/or consolidation of the Ottoman sovereignty system on a modern basis, and the other dimension is the development of the Ottoman's dependency on the West and its social consequences. A close relationship was formed between the modernization reforms and the unequal articulation of the Ottoman Empire to the Western capitalist system, just like the one between the Baltalimanı Treaty of 1838 and other subsequent trade agreements, and the Edicts of Tanzimat and Reform, which have an important place in the Ottoman modernization.

To some degree, the Tanzimat Edict, declared in 1839, was about the basic rights and freedoms valid for all subjects of the Ottoman Empire without discrimination. By the Tanzimat Edict, promises were made such as to guarantee the equality of the Ottoman subjects from different religious communities, to ensure an equal tax system and to centralize the dispersed administrative structure. But from a different viewpoint, it can be said that the

Tanzimat Edict had a significant importance in terms of reorganization of the Ottoman Empire to serve the interests of big Western states. Because, new legislations and institutional regulations were required for the functioning of the market after the Ottoman market was opened to the West with the trade agreements. Export of the European public law to the Ottoman Empire meant the formation of free trade process and legal guarantee for the European and non-Muslim Ottoman traders who were influential during this process.

In the course of the unequal articulation of Ottomans into the West, an economic structure began to be shaped in the form of raw material exporter and importer of industrial products within the world economy. In the last period of the Ottoman Empire, the proportion of the foreign capital in the country's economy reached significant amounts (Boratav, 2003, p. 20). On the other hand, along with long lasting and unsuccessful wars, which could be considered as the consequences of the policies related to the articulation process of the Ottomans to the world capitalism, the Ottoman economy was drifted to a serious destruction.

Education Policy from the Ottoman Period to the Republic

In the Ottoman Empire, where the education was predominantly religious for every class, people or religious community in the classical period, there was not a widespread and mass education. The education was organized as a traditional activity which was carried out in Sibyan Schools (Primary Schools) and Madrassahs for the Muslims and in the holy places specific to the education of their religion and/or sect for the non-Muslim communities. In this period, education was primarily related to the function of reproducing traditional class positions (Tekeli and İlkin, 1999). With the first westernization movements, military institutions providing Western-style education and training were begun to be added to the traditional educational institutions. In this period, it was

thought that the military and administrative problems could be solved and the system could be restored with the help of the qualified staff trained in the new educational institutions. These Western-style schools contributed a lot to the training of some intellectuals and statesmen who would be effective in the reform process. However, military and administrative problems within the Ottoman Empire continued to increase.

In the Tanzimat period (1839 - 1876), the ideology of sovereignty was Ottomanism, which is regarded as the “first ideological approach in the Ottoman Empire that overcame the differences between the communities and nations and appealed to all Ottoman communities at the same time” (Somel, 2001). In this period, the aim was to utilize an organized education based upon a cosmopolitan approach to create the "Ottoman Nation". Instead of fighting with the clergy and religious institutions, the Ottoman reformers tried to organize a new education system apart from the ulema (community of scholars) and the Madrasah, in order to raise the military and civilian personnel that the system needed and the administrative staff that would assume an active role in the process of reorganizing the state on a modern basis (Ortaylı, 2006). Although the aim to train the administrative and reformist staff succeeded to some degree, the aim to create "Ottoman Nation" through education could not be achieved.

Beginning from the Tanzimat period, the Ottoman education reform was shaped by the direct influence of France for a long time, rather than trying to imitate France and to make similar regulations by evaluating the education system as a tool of centralization in accordance with the French model. To illustrate this, the draft regulation issued in 1869 by the Ottoman Ministry of Education, was prepared by the French Ministry of Education under the supervision of Victor Duruy, and this regulation shaped the Ottoman education system till the beginning of the 20th century (Fortna, 2005, Somel, 2010).

In the period of Abdülhamit II (1876-1908), it was aimed to make the education widespread within the boundaries of the Ottoman territory as planned in the regulation (Maarif Nizamnamesi), and to strengthen the mass and institutional basis of the education, while fortifying the power of the state over the society through education programs prepared with Islamist and partially Turkist approach. In this period, the main function of education as expected by the state was to convey the values determined by the political power to the society as well as to create a modernized society on condition of obedience.¹

II. Constitutional Period (1908-1918) can be described as the period in which a strong link between education and civic politics began to be established. In this period, education was regarded as a tool to transform the Ottoman society into a community of citizens which would end the collapse of the state, and accordingly France was taken as an example with respect to the role given to the school and in particular primary school, to build the citizen, who is the political subject of the modern central state (Üstel, 2004). In the early years of the II. Constitutional Period, while trying to achieve an educational reform in line with Ottomanism, the trauma created by the Balkan defeat in this period caused some changes both in the importance given to education and in the references of the education program of the government. The educational reform in this period intended to conduct studies to improve the institutional and mass-oriented foundations of the 1869 Regulation on Education while on the other hand to restructure the education program with Turkist references and to head towards reproduction of education in line with the policy of creating Muslim-Turkish entrepreneurship and accordingly open various technical training institutions.

Nevertheless, this period, in which all these developments took place, was a period that the Ottoman state began to collapse. Financial crisis and political instability continued along with the military failures. In terms of educational

administration, the fact that the minister was replaced 7 times since the II. Constitutional Period in 1908 until April,1909, and 15 times in total till 1914 can be considered as a sign of an instability. Therefore, no systematic educational reforms were achieved in this period.

The Political Economy and the Education Policy of the Republic

The new state was officially founded after the National Struggle, which began in Anatolia in 1919, resulted in success and the Lausanne Treaty was signed on July 24, 1923. During the establishment process of the state, the military and bureaucratic staff, who governed the National Struggle, were far from advocating the direct interests of the Ottoman business circle and capital owners while having a relatively neutral image, but in the following years they allied with the business circle and the capitalists. In fact there were a number of soldiers and bureaucrats who later became capitalists themselves (Boratav, 2006; Tezel, 1985).

With the Republic, Kemalist ideology, which relatively changed in the course of time, became the ideology of the sovereignty, while the leading principles of Kemalism were mainly secularism and nationalism. In the early years of the Republic secularism was applied as separation of the government and religion by freeing the public institutions and regulations of the public sphere from religious references. But beginning from 1930s, secularism was applied with a more radical approach, by taking religion under the control of the state and restricting its role in the social life. Nationalism, which is another fundamental principle of Kemalism connected with secularism, took three different forms in three different periods. The first period, corresponding to the years between 1919-1923, can be seen as an understanding of nationalism that has a relatively ethnic, pluralistic quality and a religious essence. The second period is the Republican nationalism corresponding to the years between 1924-1929. And the

third period is the ethnicity of nationalism from 1929 to 1938 (Yıldız, 2002; Zürcher, 2006).

In the Republic Period, education, was primarily regarded as a fundamental tool for the construction of the Turkish nation, on a nationalist basis in relation with secularism. Therefore, in this period, the basis of education reform was the removal of the traditional and religious elements, institutions and rules from the education system, establishment of a systematic and complete administrative structure and raising “good citizens” on the basis of Turkish nationalism via education programmes. Also, the intended “good citizen” had to adapt to her/his social environment and respond to the expectations of the existing political system.

In this subchapter, under two subtitles, the Turkish economy in the 1920s and 1930s was outlined in terms of economical approach/policy, dependency-relations with foreign capital, overall picture of the economy and its institutional development, and the mainstream political and ideological approaches of this period are discussed. Then the educational policies adopted in the Republic until the 1940s are examined in the context of ideological reproduction.

Economy, Politics and Ideology in Turkey in 1920s

Turkey's economy in the Republican period can be examined as two periods which are divided by the Great Depression of 1929: the liberal period and the etatist period. The economic policies of both periods remained intact in the sense of establishing industries that would support the private sector and substitute the import, yet they relatively differentiated from each other in terms of the way the economic policies were implemented and enforced (Georgeon, 2000, p.193; Boratav, 2006).

The Lausanne Treaty (July 24, 1923), which was signed at the end of the National Struggle, provided formal sovereignty on the country's economy as well as political independence of the country. The Treaty of Lausanne and the Izmir Economic Congress (February 17 - March 4, 1923), which was held before the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne, were crucial in the formation of economic and social policies in the early stages of the new state.

İzmir Economic Congress, which was important in determining the economic policies implemented by the Republic such that it became the benchmark for nearly all of the economic policies carried out until 1931 and also had a vital importance for the economic policies implemented in the 1930s, was held in a time when the negotiations in Lausanne were stalled. On one hand, it was aimed to establish a partnership among the notables of the country, primarily the bourgeoisie of İstanbul, while on the other hand, it was intended to “ensure” the imperialist countries on the future economic policies of the new state (Avcioğlu, 2001).

Before the congress convened, the traders of Istanbul, who were out of the National Struggle, tried to obtain an advantageous position within the new state without waiting the outcome of the Treaty and therefore, convened an economic congress in İstanbul (Foreign Trade Congress) to reach their own commercial goals while the government in Ankara was making the necessary arrangements to hold the İzmir Economic Congress. The traders of İstanbul agreed to participate to the congress to be held in Izmir thanks to the invitation of Mahmut Esat, the deputy of economy. According to the National Trade Association, which represented the traders of Istanbul, the current economic relationship system between imperialism and Turkey needed to be reconstructed conveniently for the benefit of the traders in this new period, and thus the intermediary activities which formed the rings of these relationships in Turkey,

should be transferred from non-Muslims to the Turkish traders. This idea was strongly approved by the administrators of the new state (Boratav, 2006, p. 37, 38).

Mustafa Kemal made the opening speech in the congress and his thoughts on the foreign capital were remarkable. On one hand, Mustafa Kemal discussed the problems caused by the dominance of foreign capital in the country in terms of the dependency relations, while on the other hand, he approved the cooperation with foreign capital owners provided that they are not contrary to the political independence of the state (Tezel, 1986, p.131):

“Do not suppose that we are against the foreign capital. No, the country of ours is large. We need a great amount of labour power and capital. Provided that they obey our laws, we are ready to provide the guarantee that the foreign capital needs.”

The financial provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne and its additional protocols can be discussed in five different chapters: the capitulations, the foreign debt of the Ottoman Empire, the war indemnity, international trade regulations or the customs and, the concessions. The capitulations were abolished by the Treaty, while the problem of the foreign debt of the Ottomans was solved by dividing the debts between the countries which seized land from the the empire.ⁱⁱ Turkey and Allies dropped their demands of indemnity, and the Commercial Convention linked to the Treaty of Lausanne included provisions that constrained Turkey from implementing an effective patronage policy for a period of five years. In addition, economic entrepreneurial rights of foreigners who complied with the Turkish law and the privileges of the foreign companies granted by the Ottoman government, were reserved thanks to the Treaty of

Lausanne and the annexed protocols (Tezel, 1986, p. 134; Baskıcı, 2003, p. 115 - 122; Boratav, 2006, p. 33, 34).

According to the administrators of the new state, who were not categorically opposed to foreign capital, it was necessary to develop rapidly and become industrialized in order to avoid dependency relationships. The development and the industrialization in question might be possible by creating an effective class of entrepreneurs among Muslim-Turkish people. The tendency of this class to cooperate with foreign capital in economic and political life was not seen as a situation that could damage the economic development and independence, in fact domestic capitalists' partnerships with foreign capital within this framework were welcomed as normal and encouraged. Further, many politicians became prominent as the active elements of the cooperation in question (Tezel, 1986, p. 134; Boratav, 2006, p. 52).

Accordingly, it would be correct to talk about a continuity rather than a disengagement between the last period of the Ottoman economy and Turkey's economy. As an element of disengagement, we can say that the most important difference between the Ottoman Empire and Turkey in the year of 1923 is the fade of the non-Muslim subjects from the scene, who had a serious role on the integration of the imperial economy to the world economy, and the transfer of the trade activities that were formerly carried out by Greeks and Armenians, to the Muslim- Turkish traders and entrepreneurs. With these policies, an inviting and integrative attitude was maintained towards the foreign capital, thus foreign-domestic capital partnerships were developed (Keyder, 1985, p.1067). As seen, in the economic policy of the Republic, the actual change was not in the economic dynamics that constitute the peripheralization of the Ottomans, in other words the conditions and means of articulation to imperialism, but rather the mediators of articulation.

To evaluate the political process of the Republic Period in terms of representative system, the people and the circle involved in administrative processes and their relative domains; it can be seen that aside from the short term multi-party system "attempts", an electoral system in which one-party state system existed throughout the Republican period and there was the domination of a small ruling class or leadership in that period. And as both the quality and functioning of the electoral system and the social class positions of the candidates were directly determined by their leader and their circle, a vast majority of the public were excluded from the representative system.

Considering the ideological orientation of the period; religion and sultanate regime had a central place in Mustafa Kemal's discourse during the National Struggle Period and the opening ceremony of the Turkish Grand National Assembly was made with a remarkable religious ceremony. The nationalist approach of the National Struggle period was related to the need to seek urgent support from the public and neutralisation of the opposing thoughts. As Yıldız (2001) points out, such nationalism was brought to the agenda "to mobilize the pecuniary and non-pecuniary resources of the religious and ethnic communities, to gain mass support and political legitimacy from the people who were still loyal to the khalif-sultan and the government in İstanbul".

In the period where ethnic pluralism was supplanted by the Republican nationalism, the article 88 of the Constitution of 1924 stated that "the people of Turkey, without distinction of race or religion, shall be called 'Turk' in terms of citizenship". During this period, Mustafa Kemal expressed his ideas stating that "the Turkish Public who founded the Republic of Turkey is called as Turkish Nation" and emphasized that the shared past, interests of all, and the desire to live together, constitute the common ground for the nation. And the article 5 of the regulation of the Republican People's Party in 1927 reads as; "The party

believes that the strongest tie between the citizens is the unity of language, the unity of soul and the unity of mind" (Çağaptay, 2007, p.89).

Nevertheless, there have always been a difference between the concept of Turkishness, which was politically-legally defined in the constitutional texts of the state, and the concept of Turkishness-citizenship in practice. According to the Article 88 of the 1924 Constitution, it can be said that the nationalism of the newly established state had a citizenship-based philosophy which had been inspired by the French Revolution. However, the definition of the citizenship also held an ethnic identity. In this respect, when the grounds of the Turkish Constitution of 1924 is examined, a distance between the citizenship-based definition of Turkishness and the nation-based definition is seen (Yeğen, 1999):

“Our state is a nation-state. It is not an international or multinational state. This state does not recognize another nation than Turks.”

Another example to this is İsmet İnönü's speech in 1925, made in the second assembly of the Turkish Hearths, in the wake of Sheikh Sait Rebellion. İnönü said (Yıldız, 2001):

“We are clearly nationalists... and the nationalism is the sole characteristic of our unity. Any other nation (the ethnic communities) has no advantages with the exception of the Turks. Our duty, in any case, is to Turkicize the ones who are not Turk in the motherland of Turkey. We will destroy whomever opposes the Turks and Turkism. The first thing, we primarily demand from the people who will serve for the country, is that she/he be a Turk.”

Economy, Politics and Ideology in Turkey in the 1930s

Any underdeveloped economy which is open to world capitalism directly experiences the effects of the economic processes in the world. Hence, in order

for this economy to develop without changing the way it is articulated to the world economy the world conjuncture needs to be determined by favourable conditions. However, in the event that the world economy holds unfavourable conditions, it is possible for this economy to face the consequences of the crisis experienced by the world economy more gravely.

In the early years of the Republic in Turkey, the increase in agricultural exports, the optimum prizes, incoming foreign capital and credits were only possible by the favourable economic processes in the central countries. Whereas, the economic growth in the Western countries, which constituted the backbone of the world economy, slowed down after 1926, and stopped in 1929. And after 1929, the world economy entered a period of crisis that would last till the World War II. Therefore, the world trade experienced regression, agricultural prices slumped, loan facility decreased and the international capital flows came to a standstill (Keyder, 1985, p. 1068).

On the other hand, the “reconstruction policies in open economic conditions”, implemented in Turkey throughout the 1920s, did not provide a significant economic development. The industrial background of the country could not be developed within this period, and so much the more, the dependency on the West through the activity of the commercial capital also continued (Avcioğlu, 2001). Accordingly, owing to the fact that the world economic crisis increased, the chronic accumulation problems of Turkey's economy and the pressure of social reactions to the existing power relation, it became obligatory to restructure the economic policies, and from the 1930s onwards, etatist economic policies began to be followed.

Several thoughts were suggested on the meaning of etatism. One thought was that etatism is a new and/or original economic approach, within this context, it

has a new economic structure different from socialism and capitalism. While the others suggested that it was a bunch of capital accumulation policies that could be evaluated in capitalism which necessarily comes up with the merging of the local unfavourable conditions with adverse economic conditions caused by the international conjuncture.

Actually, it can be said that the emergence of etatism as a bundle of economic policies could be traced back to the last period of the Ottomans. During the period of the party of Union and Progress, and especially during the First World War, the economic role of the state increased considerably and an "etatist economics" began to be referred towards the end of the war (Georgeon, 2000: 190). However, etatism, as a bundle of relatively more systematic and holistic politics, was the concept of the 1930s, specifically the years between 1933-1939 (Boratav, 2006, p.137).

Etatist politics have never been carried out contrary to the interests of private capital in spite of private individuals. When the etatist policies and the infrastructure of the country were constructed by the state using public resources, it was ensured that this would be a basic element in the development of the private sector. As a matter of fact, the generalization of production in agriculture, the development of manufacturing and service industry for the market is not possible and/or profitable without the development of infrastructure. The factories established in this period made it possible for the private capital to work with high profits due to their positions in the economy and the price policies, and these companies could benefit from the constant subsidy of the state when they suffered loss. Throughout the 1930s, on the other hand, workers' wages were fixed at a minimum rate by various measures. According to the Labour Act (1936), which was inspired by Mussolini's Italy, all kinds of workers' organizations were banned and the real wages were

decreased in this period. Income of petty producers and employees in the agricultural sector also decreased compared to the previous terms. Despite the abolition of the ashar tax, the taxes on animals and land, along with the decrease in the prices of the products, became a major burden for the peasants (Keyder, 1985, p.1068 ; Kazgan, 2006, p. 72, 73 ; Zürcher, 2006, p. 286).

In the 1930s, together with the secularism and nationalism that constituted the basis of Kemalism, etatism as well as populism, became prominent as the principles that shaped the social and political system. In this period, secularism was not implemented only by separating the state from religion, but also in a radical way by eliminating religion also from the social life, and by maintaining an absolute state control over the remaining religious institutions (Zürcher, 2006).

Again in this period, the dictatorship of the sovereignty grew, the political system was influenced by the international conjuncture and the rise of racist nationalism in Europe beginning from the 1930s, thus shifted to an ethnicist nationalism. In this period, which was characterized by historical and linguistic researches, ancient historical roots for the nation were tried to be discovered and high civilisation myths were created (Çağaptay, 2007).

Populism, which became prominent in the 1930s, was largely inspired by solidarism. While the authoritarian regimes that had strengthened during the two world wars in Europe were restructured against the liberal state and community tradition, the Republican regime came under the influence of this movement. While one-party rule was institutionalized in Turkey, the Republican regime asserted that liberal approach would destabilize the nation's unity and lead to social stratification. The one-party Republican regime claimed that it was necessary to "massify nationally". As this approach became effective,

some legal amendments were made in the Criminal Code, and the class-based associations were prohibited by the Law on Associations (Toprak, 1985, p.380).

According to the principle of populism, which also became one of the official principles of the state, there were no social class differences in the new Turkey. However, being aware of the social classes existing in the country in practice political power was uneasy about this situation. As a matter of fact, a set of regulations, such as the Labour Act and the Law on Associations, contained certain provisions to remove social risks and political influences caused by social classifications. As a result of the same uneasiness, the industrial settlements were established in unpopular cities or towns during the two World Wars. It can be said that these activities were the results of the concern to prevent the emergence of large industrial metropolises, which were believed to create workers' quarters and risks of social explosion (Georgeon, 2000, p. 190). Finally, policies aiming to keep the peasantry "in their own neighbourhood" during the 1930s may also be regarded as the product of this concern.

The Education Policy in the Republican Period

In general, it can be said that the basis of education reform in the Republican Period was the removal of the traditional and religious elements, institutions and rules from the education system, establishment of a systematic and complete administrative structure and political socialization of the society via modern education programmes. While education was utilized as an effective means of social change from the first years of the Republic, the close relationship between education and economic and social development, which could be traced back to the Second Constitutional Era, found its place in educational debates and policy texts throughout the Republican Period. In this respect, it was assumed that the creativity of the individuals could possibly be improved

and thus, the society, which was predominantly peasant, could be developed and enlightened.

While evaluating education throughout the entire Ottoman-Turkish modernization process, it is essential to recognize the distinction between what is nominal and what is de facto or what is discursive and what is fact. To make a brief evaluation of this process, it can be said that traditional educational institutions in the Ottoman Empire had never been a mass education. On the other hand, Western-style educational institutions which were opened as from the periods of Selim III and Mahmut II, could not eliminate the social significance of traditional educational institutionsⁱⁱⁱ.

The Regulations on Education dated 1869 aimed to provide a public education of western standards for all subjects of Ottomans and for all citizens in the Ottoman lands. However, in this Regulation that formed the general framework of the Ottoman education until the Republican Period, the finance of the education was left to local administrations (thereby education was left to the hands and mercy of the notables) and to those who wanted to benefit from the education services and due to financial problems, no educational structures were established outside Istanbul until the period of Abdülhamit. In this period, in which the education system was extended to the Ottoman territories to some extent, the basic education of that time could not be characterized as a mass education.

Despite of some efforts during the Second Constitutional Period, it could simply become possible to organize the basic education as mass and free public service in the Republican Period. However, in the Republican Period until 1948, basic education expenses and the teachers' salaries were paid from the budgets of the special provincial administrations, which were seriously inadequate.

Accordingly, this was one of the principle reasons why the basic education could not make a remarkable progress.

In the Republican Period, where big steps were taken in the field of education, the duration of compulsory education in the villages was determined as 3 years even though the ratio of those living in villages to the population was about %80. This also means that at least 80% of the population was disregarded for secondary schools which enabled the students to continue the education after five-year-basic education. As the figures presented as a big step in the field of education in this period were evaluated according to preliminary numbers which almost meant nothing, this gave the false impression of a major breakthrough.

The first years of the Republic were those in the pursuit of education. It can be said that after the first years of the Republic, in which the religious tone was explicit in the ideology of sovereignty and the ethnicist elements were limited, education was used as an apparatus to construct an ethnical horizon of nationalism on a social scale. For example, in the circulation dated May 1927 signed by the famous Minister Mustafa Necati^{iv} it was emphasized to concentrate on the facts of the country and the teaching of national subjects (Akyüz, 1985, p. 308):

The administrators and teachers always have to remember that young people in our country must be prepared for our society, also they are obliged to assume that Turkey and the Turkishness are the principle and central axis for the education and the educational activities... To explain the establishment of the Turkish Republic at every single opportunity and to welcome every single opportunity to make the Republic loved are the common mandate of all school administrators and teachers as well. In this respect, it is necessary to benefit from national festivals to the utmost.

As seen above, the tone of the sovereignty ideology turned in time into a "national" sensitivity rather than religious sensitivity. The nationalist tone in question, is related to the secularization and also it evolved into a nationalism that is centred on Turkish Nation rather than a "national" approach, which protects Muslim people in the country. Following the suppression of Sheikh Said Rebellion, İsmet İnönü's vi speech to the teachers at Teachers' Union in 1925 was a summary of the regimes' nationalist education policy, and he emphasized this transformation in his speech (Sakaoğlu, 1993, p. 27):

We want a national education, what do we mean by that? We may understand it clearly if we express what is the opposite of it. What is opposite of national education means the religious education or international education. You, teachers, will provide national education rather than religious or international education (...) There is a "Turk", by whom all these lands are characterized as Turk. Yet, this nation has not been the united nation as much as we desire it to be. If this generation works with the consciousness in the guidance of science and life and devotes its whole life for this purpose, the political Turkish nation may be a united and mature nation in terms of culture, intellectuality and social background (...) There cannot be other civilizations within the presence of this nation. We are openly proposing to those who see themselves connected with other civilizations: they act with the Turkish nation. But not as a way of those who act with "confederated" civilizations, but a way of those who act as a single civilization. This homeland belongs to that nation and that nationality...

As seen, on one hand, İsmet İnönü opposes the religious or international character of education, on the other hand, he refers to the role of education in building an integrated nation on the basis of the Turkish notion.

National education policies of the 1930s in Turkey, especially the size of the curriculum were shaped by the influence of the Turkish History Thesis^{vii} and studies on Turkish language^{viii}. While the authoritarian character of the regime

became evident in this period, the ideology of sovereignty was prominently Turkish nationalism. This nationalism concept was not defined by the constitutional citizenship or shaped by the specific cultural elements of the people living in the country, rather it was distinctively shaped by ethnicist elements. Again in this period, along with the political developments that revealed the importance of the necessity to focus on the villages for the continuance of the sovereignty system, the problem of the education of the peasants, who constituted the predominant part of the population, directed the national education policies.

During the 1930s, the role of the educational system in the process of ideological reproduction had been prioritized, this concluded in pursuit of new education notion for the peasants as no sufficient efforts have been made for their education^{ix}. Hence, during the Republican Period, the primary developments towards the education of the peasants occurred in the 1930s and the education of the peasants was regarded as a case of "peasantry". In this period, it was aimed to keep the villagers in harmony with their surroundings in the village, to prevent them to become a focus that would pose a threat for the sovereignty system, and to adopt them to the basic vision of the regime.

It can be said that the Great Depression of 1929 and the Liberal Republican Party were the effective elements to lead the progress of education in the villages. While the crisis shook the economy of Turkey which was mostly depended on agricultural production, the education of the villagers was considered as one solution to make them more productive, and keep them in their own social and spatial context in order to avoid a social unrest. The period of the Liberal Republican Party revealed the extent of unrest in the country. Therefore, it became significant to reorganize the societal consent while the political system was rapidly getting authoritarian.

The end of the 1930s was a downturn that the economic and social crisis, which was strengthened by the influence of World War II, threatened the sovereignty system. As a result, this fact led to strengthening of the relation between the education and sovereignty ideology and giving the moral education prominence. In this respect, the agenda of the First National Education Council held in 1939 was how to develop moral education in schools, how to improve the productivity of mother-tongue studies in all schools, how to examine the history in terms of methods and tools in education of Turkism. In the Second National Education Council held between 15-23 February, 1943, it was aimed to discuss the developments in primary education field, and to improve the moral education in schools in order to include the required measurements to the curriculum of primary schools, as well as to increase the productivity of the studies on mother tongue and to make provisions for primary school graduates in order to raise them in a way they could easily read in their mother tongue (MEB, 1973).

Discussion and Conclusion

There is a universal judgment saying that history repeats itself. When the sociological value of this judgment is discussed, at first hand, it can be said that social events and facts are production of common historical conjunctures, therefore it is not possible for the different historical conjunctures to create repeating phenomenon. However, if the historical and social development/transformation processes of a social formation are shaped by unending predictiveness of some fundamental structural conditions, then history becomes a process which generates basic similarities if not repetitions.

With the Second Constitution declared by “vigorous forces” took action in 1908 with the promise of “liberty” to the people by ending the autocratic rule of

Abdulhamit, Ottomanism which is a kind of cosmopolitan ideology became the dominant ideology of the state. This was a period where the wave of crises of capitalism crystallized which was felt since 1850s and increased after 1870s and somehow could not be solved. Capitalism was evolved to imperialism which is the highest stage of capitalism; capital export became determinant; new kind of capital called financial capital occurred; economical efficiency gathered in the hands of monopolies; and all these accelerated new sharing struggles. In this period also peripherization of the Ottoman Empire was concluded. In others words, the Ottoman Empire's process of becoming dependent on the center through borrowing, unequal exchange and capital export and and thus the process of becoming a peripheral underdeveloped social formation (these processes could date back to Tanzimat Reform Era) was completed.

So in these conditions, along with the traumatic impacts of the defeats in Balkan Wars, the party of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki) tried to become the absolute ruler of the government and save the country with an autocratic approach (1913 Ottoman coup d'état) and dictatorship of Unionists (İttihatçı) that began after 1913. In this type of administration where the quintet of Enver, Talat, Cemal, Nazım, Bahettin Şakir were the main actors, policies to Turkicize the economy, politics and society were pursued and it was aimed to rebuild the 'glorious past' of the Ottomans when German influence was more than ever before, to dominate large lands extending from Caucasus to Central Asia in the pursuit of red apple, in the meantime to build a pure/clear nation inside. In the end, the Ottoman Army, where even the chief of staff was a German, was defeated in almost every front and with 1918 Armistice of Mudros, the Ottoman rulers surrendered to Western alliance and became so helpless to sign the 1920 Treaty of Sevres. In the meantime, Unionists one by one fled the country.

The ones who tried to build a new state by coming out victorious from the National Struggle at one point repeated the process that had begun with the II. Constitution. Based on Zürcher's analysis (2006), in the first years of II. Constitution, economic policy was characterized by the principle of "sovereignty", political system was relatively 'pluralist' and citizenship policy was accepted as Ottomanism. With the aforementioned developments, economic policy of sovereignty was replaced by the approach of "national economy" while the 'plural' political system replaced by dictatorship of the Party of Union and Progress and Ottomanism was replaced by Turkism and Islamism. And in the Republican period, 'liberal' economic policy was followed in the first years, political system was relatively 'pluralist' and the citizenship policy was characterized by Islamic brotherhood and "comradeliness" embodying the elements of Turkism to a certain extent. Yet, after the 1929 Great Depression, "etatist" economic policies began to be followed. With the developments such as the success of the experience of Progressive Republican Party exhibiting the general dissatisfaction of the people, the Sheikh Said Rebellion and "İzmir assassination" the "Maintenance of Order" (Takrir-i Sükûn) begun, political system gained a single party character and the citizenship policy was shaped based on Turkish Nationalism.

The reforms that have been undertaken since the establishment of the Republic somehow furthered in a comprehensive and fundamentalist way the steps taken for the Ottoman modernization in terms of secularizing the state, education and law (Zürcher, 2006). However, the policies that came to the fore with the Republic were determined with a fundamental handicap. While various reforms were introduced in the period what has changed in the lives of the peasants comprising the 80% of the people, primarily the society, and how and to what extent that change had happened? Has the share of the large segments of people, mainly the peasants, from the national income in the Republican period

increased? In conjunction with this, has the tax burden on the large masses of people decreased? During the process, has large segments of people benefited from the public service, which is the second income distribution mechanism, in a more qualified way? To give an example, has the social base of the public education mechanism been extended; has the education been utilized as an effective mobilization tool? Most importantly, has the position of large segments of people within the traditional property relations changed? For example, could land reform been made? Could the people find a chance to defence their social demand in the level of political system, have they been involved effectively to the administrative processes through political mechanisms?

Aside from these, neither in the Ottomans nor in the Republican Period, efficient policies aimed at changing the property order and relations in favour of large segments of people mainly peasants could be followed.

In the Ottoman modernization process, against the backdrop of Ottomans' unequal integration to the world economy as a semi-colony, education which was regarded first as a functional tool to restore the system, and then to build a new Western-style system, had embodied handicaps structured by the characteristics of property order and sovereignty system along with the dependency relationships.

In the Republican period, modernization orientation through a series of reforms shaped according to the Western references in line with the aim to rise to the level of contemporary civilizations, did not result in great gains for large masses of people as policies for transforming, in an effective way, the property relations and sovereignty relations rising on these relations were not followed, thereby it

did not create a continuance in terms of modernizing approach that has been followed.

In this period, education was used as a functional tool to construct a Turkish nation on a nationalist axis, primarily connected also with laicism. While education's limited role in the reproduction of sovereignty system brought with it the restriction of educational practices emancipating the society, in the Republican era, as in the Ottomans, an accessible, mass, qualified and "emancipating" education was out of question for the peasants and other working masses who carry the burden of the economic order.

The economic and social policies of the Republic created a continuity with the regime of accumulation and property relations which dominated the last period of the Ottoman Empire. To the extent that the political staff (civil and military bureaucracies), who established the new state, embarked on implementing policies to meet the demands of the property owners and influential groups, who constitute the support for the new regime (also the means for the support of the people), to develop the existing mode of production and relations of production; and/or to the extent that they commune with the traditional property owners and influential groups and their interests, Turkish modernization has been characterized by deficiencies and fallacies in terms of transforming the social structure and social relations in favour of large masses of people. Yet it is these inadequacies and fallacies that prevented the Republican reforms to become established, in this sense, determined the quality of the Turkish modernization and shaped its boundaries. The logic of new conservative policies that are effective today should be sought here.

Globalization can be considered as the regulation policies of big capital by the world in order to solve the structural crisis of capitalism. In the globalization process, a structural transformation occurred through neo-liberal policies in

Turkey. The period of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which came to power after the crisis of 2002, was a historical period in which the structural adjustment process was carried on in a holistic manner. New conservative policies have also become widespread in the AKP era. In this period, the effect of neoliberalism on the society was tried to be balanced by the new conservative policies.

AKP, which defined a basis for relatively developed rights and liberties in the conditions of the period just like in the early years of II. Constitution and Republican Period began to reorganize its power in an increasingly centralized and intense way with the economic crises of 2007-2008. In conditions where internal and external risks increased, AKP followed polarising policies that would keep the people it involves on alert against the people it excludes while developing an expansionist style abroad. In this period, sovereignty ideology of the ruling party in the beginning was a kind of cosmopolitanism (with the words of Erdogan, President and Chairman of AKP, “to disregard all kinds of nationalism”) resembling Ottomanism and in time assumed an Islamic style where elements of Turkism were used intensely. It is inevitable for the ruling party, which totally denied the norm system in the country with the opportunities provided by the coup attempt on July 15, 2016, which is thought to be associated with the Gülen Movement and reorganized its power more intensely before the society, to reach an impasse and repeat historical fate due to a series of variables such as the increasingly burning crisis across the world, geo-strategic developments in the region, foreign dependency in the economy, structural capital accumulation problems, arbitrariness in economic policy, Kurdish problem, and hegemony problems.

In order to transform the political system and social structure in Turkey, it is necessary to establish a politics line aimed at transforming of the property

relations in the country and sovereignty relations that find existence on these relations. Through this transformation process, it is important to emphasize that, ‘it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary their social being that determines their consciousness.’

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Notes

ⁱ The education view of the Abdülhamit II period can be expressed as follows "education is to determine the future career of children and train them in order to have good manners, religious salvation, earthly felicity, social ethics" (Tekeli ve İlkin, 1999, p. 85).

ⁱⁱ According to the calculations made later, the new Turkish state acknowledged the amount of 84,597,495 gold liras which constituted about 2/3 of the Ottoman debt (Tezel, 1986).

ⁱⁱⁱFor example, the number of graduates of the Darülmuhallim (teacher training school for boys) and Darülmühallamat (teacher training schools for girls) schools in the early following years, which were opened to train teachers in the Tanzimat Period, were merely 10. Considering the number of schools in the country, the traditional educational institutions had a significant place in the education system, including the Constitutional Period and even the first years of the Republic.

^{iv} Mustafa Necati (Uğural) (1894 - 1929) is a politician and teacher. He was involved in the Kuva-yi Milliye National movement, he served as a deputy in the Grand National Assembly for the first three terms, later he served as the Ministry of Justice when the Constitution of 1924, the Law on Unity of Education as well as Letter Revolution which enabled the latin script to be adopted, were put into force, which led the standardization and unification of all educational institutions in the country.

^v It was a religious and ethnic rebellion against the central government in 1925 in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, supported by the Kurdish and Zaza tribes.

^{vi} Mustafa İsmet İnönü (1884 - 1973) served as an army officer and a statesman. He took an active role in the National Struggle. Being remembered after Atatürk in the foundation of the Republic, İnönü was the first prime minister and the second president of the Republic.

^{vii} The studies on Turkish history, which started under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, gained momentum with the establishment of Turkish History Association in 1931, and the results of these studies formed the Turkish History Thesis. Four-volume history textbooks were prepared to be taught within the framework of Turkish History Thesis in high schools between the years of 1932 and 1934. The official history textbooks prepared for high school students examined the Turkish states individually starting with the prehistoric times through the history. In these books, Turks are described with praising expressions that they are a unique nation which has built advanced civilizations and contributed to the development of humanity. It is mentioned that Turks migrated from Central Asia to the whole world and they civilized every place they went. It is also emphasized that Turkish language is one of the oldest, richest languages in the world (Eskicumalı, 2003).

^{viii} The language studies in 1930's were also important in terms of national education policies. It can be said that the language studies started with the "law no.1353 on the Adoption and Implementation of Turkish Letter" passed on November 1, 1928, which enabled the adaptation of the Latin alphabet. The Turkish Language Association was founded on July 12, 1932. The Second Turkish Language Congress was held between August 18-23, 1934 and the Sun-Language Theory was put forward in this congress. According to this theory, Turkish is one of the ancient languages of the world. In fact, the languages of all the world's societies are claimed to be derived from Turkish language.

^{ix} The census data of 1935 showed that the ratio of the literate population was 2,517,588. The ratio of this proportion to the population was 15.6%. The vast majority of the literate people were living in cities and towns at that time. 89.5% of the village population was illiterate (Gediklioğlu, 1971).