

RELIGION AND NATION-BUILDING IN THE TURKISH REPUBLIC: A  
COMPARISON OF THE HIGH SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS OF 1930-1950 AND  
1950 - 1960.

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Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunışık  
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

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Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Bağcı  
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

---

Assist. Prof. Dr. Zana Çitak Aytürk  
Supervisor

**Examining Committee Members**

Prof. Dr. Nuri Yurdusev (METU,IR)

Assist. Prof. Dr. Zana Çitak Aytürk (METU,IR)

Assist. Prof. Dr. Berrak Burçak (BİLKENT U., POLS)

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Name, Last name : Başar Arı

Signature :

## **ABSTRACT**

RELIGION AND NATION-BUILDING IN THE TURKISH REPUBLIC: A  
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Arı, Başar

M.S., Department of International Relations

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Zana Çitak Aytürk

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The period from 1930 to 1946 constitutes one of the most important episodes of the history of Turkish Republic. It is the period in which the new regime was consolidated through a series of radical secularizing reforms, which aimed at weakening the role of religion in politics and society and confining it to the private sphere. In this period, the Kemalist regime tried to replace an identity based on religion by one based on the Turkish nation. It has generally been argued that the transition to multi-party regime and the subsequent coming to power of the Democratic Party in 1950 constitutes a serious break with the previous period by opening a greater space for religion in society. This thesis will try to study the construction of Turkish national identity through a comparison of the high school textbooks of the 1930 – 1950 period and 1950 – 1960 era.

Keywords: Islam, Turkish nationalism, high school textbooks, history, early  
Republican era

## ÖZ

### TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİNDE DİN VE ULUSAL KİMLİK İNŞASI: 1930-1950 DÖNEMİ İLE 1950-1960 DÖNEMİ LİSE DERS KİTAPLARININ KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI

Arı, Başar

Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Zana Çıtak Aytürk

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1930 – 1946 dönemi Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin en önemli dönemlerinden biridir. Bu dönem, yeni rejimin dinin siyaset ve toplum üzerinde etkisini azaltıp özel alan ile sınırlandırma amacı güden pek çok radikal sekülerleştirme reformları ile güçlendirildiği dönemdir. Kemalist rejim, bu dönemde dine dayalı bir kimlik yerine Türk milletine dayalı bir kimlik yaratmayı amaçladı. Çok partili rejime geçiş ve Demokrat Parti'nin 1950 yılında iktidara gelmesiyle toplumda dinin daha geniş yer bulduğu, dolayısıyla bir önceki dönemle ciddi bir kopuş sergilediği iddia edilir. Bu tez, Türk milli kimliğinin oluşumunu 1930 – 1950 dönemi ile 1950 – 1960 döneminde okutulan lise ders kitaplarını karşılaştırarak araştırmaya çalışacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İslamiyet, Türk milliyetçiliği, lise kitapları, tarih, erken Cumhuriyet dönemi

To my brother Barış

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This thesis will study the construction of Turkish national identity through a comparison of the high school history textbooks of the 1931 – 1950 period and 1950 – 1960 era, with the aim of comparing the secularization policies of the Republican People’s Party (RPP) and the Democratic Party (DP). The reason of the selection of 1931 as the starting point is that, it is the year in which new high school history textbooks were written by the secular Republic, replacing the ones used since the last decade of the Ottoman Empire<sup>1</sup>. 1950 is the year in which the RPP lost the elections and the DP came to power, and 1960 is the one that the DP was overthrown by a coup d’état. Thus, in the 1931 – 1950 period, high school textbooks adopted by the RPP; and in the 1950 – 1960 era, that of the DP were used as official history textbooks in Turkey. Since high school textbooks are the most important tools that show how the governments would like to build the minds of young generations; the changes in the narrative of the emergence of mankind, emergence of Islam and the place of Islam in the history of the Turks in high school history textbooks would also reveal the policy differences of respective governments towards religion.

Three points of view prevail in the comparison of secularism policies of the RPP and DP. The first one holds the view that, the transition to multi-party regime

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<sup>1</sup> High school history textbooks written by Ali Reşad had been used, with slight changes, between 1911 and 1930.

and the subsequent coming to power of the Democratic Party in 1950 constitutes a serious break with the previous period. Prof. Sina Akşin, for example, points out two dates that initiated a serious change: “In 1945, not yet achieving its goal, the revolution paused. In 1950, a partial counter-revolution process began. The revolution was frozen.”<sup>2</sup> The second view claims that the process had started even before, at the moment when Mustafa Kemal died. Prof. Çetin Yetkin holds this perspective and believes that “the date and the time of the counter-revolution are 10<sup>th</sup> of December, 1938 and 9:05, respectively.”<sup>3</sup> The third view is a moderate one, stating that there is no serious difference between the secularism policies of the RPP and DP. Eric Jan Zürcher, for example, rejects the idea that the DP weakened the secular feature of the Republic (Zürcher, 2006: 338).

There are several researches on school textbooks in Turkey: Benjamin Fortna (2002) analyses the Islamisation of ethics in middle school textbooks during Hamidian era. Füsün Üstel (2004) focuses on the textbooks of citizenship between the second constitutional era and multi-party period. Büşra Ersanlı (2006) searches the formation of official history thesis in Turkey between 1929 and 1937. In the book of Etienne Copeaux (2006), the discourse of Turkish identity in history textbooks between 1931 and 1993 is analyzed. Probably due to the fact that its research area is quite long, this valuable study does not adequately focus on the changes in the high school history textbooks between 1939 and 1950. Indeed, the

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<sup>2</sup> “1945’te, daha hedefe ulaşılmeden, Devrim durakladı. 1950’de Kısmî Karşıdevrim sürecine girildi. Devrim donduruldu.” <http://turkoloji.cu.edu.tr/GENEL/31.php>

<sup>3</sup> “Türkiye’de yaşanan karşıdevrim’in başlangıç gün ve saati 10 Kasım 1938, 09:05’tir” (Yetkin, 2002: 21)

changes in the history textbooks of this period offer important clues that enable us to analyze the policy differences of the RPP and DP towards religion.

In 1931, as a result of history reform pioneered by Mustafa Kemal, new high school textbooks written by *Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti* (Research Institute of Turkish History, TTTC) began to be used. These textbooks were composed of four volumes, and used as the official textbook until 1941<sup>4</sup>. In 1942, new series of textbooks are adopted, written by the members of *Türk Tarih Kurumu*<sup>5</sup> (Turkish Historical Society, TTK) - Arif Müfid Mansel, Cavid Baysun, and Enver Ziya Karal. In 1950, the textbooks changed again; and four volume books written by two high school teachers, Niyazi Akşit and Emin Oktay, were used as official textbooks until 1990s.

Table 1. Three textbook series used as official textbooks between 1931 and 1960.

1931 - 1941	Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti
1942 - 1949	Arif Müfid Mansel, Cavid Baysun and Enver Ziya Karal
1950 - 1960	Niyazi Akşit and Emin Oktay

During the first years of the Republic, radical secularization reforms had been implemented under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal. These reforms entirely changed the political structure of the state, and to a certain extent, the social life of the people. However, for centuries, the Muslim people of Anatolia had perceived themselves solely with their religious identities. In order to make the secularization reforms accepted to a larger public, the new Republic tried to build a secular Turkish identity that excludes Islam. The history reform was the result of this aim. By 1930, the Turkish Historical Thesis (THT), which claims that most of the ancient

<sup>4</sup> The first volume of these textbooks was changed in 1939 with the one written by Şemsettin Günaltay.

<sup>5</sup> The name of the Institute was changed to Turkish Historical Society in 1935.

civilizations were founded by the pre-Islamic Turks of Central Asia, had been formed.

The textbooks of 1931, which were prepared to reach the aim of history reform, contain four radical changes. Firstly, the textbooks include a chapter related with the formation of the universe and the emergence of mankind, which states that stories narrated in the holy books are wrong and that humans emerged after a process of evolution. Secondly, the THT is explicitly narrated as a historical fact, and it is claimed that the civilizations founded in China, India, Asia Minor, North Africa, the Aegean and Europe were indeed founded by the Turks who migrated from Central Asia thousands of years ago. Thirdly, the Islamic doctrine is explicitly rejected in the narration of the emergence of Islam. For the writers, Mohammed is not a messenger of God, but a brave and brilliant tribal leader who tried to reform the ethics of his society. The term “Hazreti”, which is used to attach holiness to the Prophet, is never used in the text; the Quran is defined as “the book which contains the principles of Mohammed” (TTTC, 1931b: 90); and the narrative style sometimes became shocking for a reader who got used to traditional Islamic narrative of the Prophet. The last change is in the narrative of the adoption of Islam by the Turks. According to the book, the reasons of this adoption are all political – the Turks, who were subjected to continuous massacres by the Arabs, did not convert to Islam in order not to lower themselves to enslavement at first; but later they did so in order to govern the new Islamic Empire.

In 1939, the first volume of the textbooks is rewritten by Şemsettin Günaltay, a member of the TTTC and future Prime Minister of Turkey. Used until 1941, this first volume does not contain a chapter that narrates the emergence of mankind, and

thus, the theory of evolution. Furthermore, the THT is veiled, by hiding the assumptions of the thesis behind timid implications. In the previous textbooks, it was explicitly stated that the ancient civilizations in China, India, Asia Minor, Northern Africa and Europe were all founded by the Turks; but now, these civilizations were either founded by “Central Asians” or by a “brachycephalic race”. The term “Turk” appears only in one sentence, while describing them as the ancestors of Turks. In other words, although the main assumption of the THT is not changed, it is now “swept under the carpet”, that only a very careful reader would notice.

The last print of the textbooks of TTTC occurred in 1941, and the following year, they were superseded by three volume textbooks, written by Arif Müfid Mansel, Cavid Baysun and Enver Ziya Karal. Their approach towards the THT is exactly the same with that of Şemsettin Günaltay: Narrating the basic assumptions of the thesis, albeit in such a way that only a very careful reader could understand the meaning of timid sentences. The most important change occurred in the narrative of Islam - the narrative, which had continued for a decade, is now given up and the prophecy of Mohammed is presented as a historical fact: “Prophet Mohammed was charged with duty to inform the humanity about Islam” (Mansel et al., 1942b: 29). As a result, parallel with mainstream Islamic history writing, the term “Hazreti” is started to be used in front of the Prophet’s name, Arabs before Islam derogated, and pre-prophecy life of Mohammed is praised. Acceptance of the Islamic doctrine also shows itself while narrating the adoption of Islam by the Turks – unlike the previous textbook, the textbook of 1942 does not refer to any massacres that the Turks were subjected to or a political motive behind their conversion to Islam; and states that the



Turks converted to Islam because they found it more appropriate to their soul. These changes show that the Kemalist project of creating a secular Turkish identity that excludes Islam came to an end in 1942.

Following the coming to the power of the DP in 1950, new textbooks were adopted, written by two high school history teachers, Niyazi Akşit and Emin Oktay. The first volume of the textbook is written by both of the writers, but other volumes are written separately. The approach of the writers towards the THT is so similar to the previous writers that it is almost a re-written form of the previous textbook. The narration of Islam also shares the basic assumptions of the previous textbook; however, the rhetoric of these textbooks is more powerful and certain: “The basics of the religion of Islam are collected in the holy book called the Quran, which is revealed to the Prophet at different occasions in the course of 23 years” (Oktay, 1951: 62). The empowering of the rhetoric shows itself in the derogation of the pre-Islamic Arabs and the praise of pre-Islamic life of Mohammed. Furthermore, these textbooks moderately assume that the readers are Muslims, by narrating the five pillars of Islam, and referring to Mohammed as “our Prophet” (Akşit, 1954: 42). There is also no change in the narrative of the adoption of Islam by the Turks – while Oktay does not provide any reason for this important change, Akşit states that the Turks adopted Islam because they found it superior to other religions.

It is possible to identify four important dates, in which main assumptions or rhetorical style of a historical narrative is changed. The first key date is 1931, in which the textbooks that include the theory of evolution, narrate the THT as an explicit historical fact, openly reject the Islamic doctrine and relate the Turks’ adoption of Islam with political motives were adopted. The second date is 1939,

when a new first volume is published that did not include the theory of evolution, and blanked the THT. The third key date is 1942, in which the Islamic doctrine (i.e., the presentation of Mohammed as the messenger of God) re-emerged in the history textbooks and the Turks' conversion to Islam is associated with spiritual motives; and the last key date is 1950, when the rhetoric of the narrative of the emergence of Islam became more powerful and certain, and the readers were moderately assumed to be Muslims.

It is relatively easy to identify the reasons behind the changes of 1931, 1939 and 1950. The most important factor behind the formation of the textbooks of 1931 is, without doubt, Mustafa Kemal. The history reform and the institutions that aim to prove the THT are all formed by his orders. It is known that he was actively involved in the process of writing the textbooks, on such a level that some parts of the textbooks (including the one related with emergence of Islam) are based on his notes. The change of 1939 also shows the effect of Mustafa Kemal behind these textbooks – shortly after his death in November 1938, the THT, which was formed and entered into textbooks with his orders, veiled over with timid implications by the new writer. The change of 1950, on the other hand, is probably directly related with DP's coming to the power. A more conservative party supported by religious circles would also encourage a history writing more in conformity with mainstream Islamic beliefs.

The reason of the changes in 1942, however, is more complicated. Although the new textbook includes important differences from its successor – the Islamic doctrine re-entered high school textbooks after 10 years - there is no research focusing on the reasons behind this change. As the writer of the most important

book of the subject, Copeaux states that those books were rarely used, and jumps to the elementary school textbooks of 1945 without analyzing them (Copeaux, 2006: 115). However, the first and the third volumes of the textbook were imprinted four times, and the second volume was imprinted five times between the period 1942 – 1949, showing that the claim of Copeaux is not true and these textbooks were also widely used.

If the textbooks had been changed in 1939, then the change could be related to the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Indeed, as mentioned above, only the first volume of the textbook was changed in 1939. If they had been changed in 1945 or 1946, then it could be related with the multi party era, which also caused changes in economic, foreign and domestic policies. However, there has been no important political change in 1942. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the institutions that contribute to the adoption process of the textbooks, the Ministry of Education and the Turkish Historical Society.

Between 1938 and 1942, there have been two important high level changes in the above mentioned institutions. The first change is the appointment of Hasan Âli Yücel as the Minister of National Education in November 1938. Widely known with his enlightenist personality due to his efforts of modernization during his ministry, Hasan Âli Yücel is also a committed Muslim, who belonged to the sect of *Mevlevi*. His Muslim identity reveals itself occasionally in his columns written in 1950s, in which he refers to Islam as an important factor of Turkishness. The second and more important change occurred in the Turkish Historical Society, where Şemsettin Günaltay was appointed as the head in December 1941. Günaltay is also known with his religious tendencies, and this is why he was appointed as prime

minister in 1949, in order not to lose conservative votes completely to the DP. The change of the textbooks in 1942 with the ones that include Islamic doctrine only a couple of months after his Presidency in the Turkish Historical Society is probably not a coincidence. Indeed, the change was probably triggered by him, and supported by Hasan Âli Yücel; two leading figures of the RPP who also belonged to inner circle of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

To conclude, the most important changes in the history textbooks, which ended the Kemalist project of building a secular Turkish identity that excludes Islam, occurred in 1942 by the RPP government. Furthermore, since the textbooks of 1931 were reprinted in 1941, the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk cannot solely explain the re-Islamisation of the history textbooks. Indeed, further changes in bureaucracy and politics were needed to implement such a change. The figures behind the change were also prominent figures of the RPP, which shows that the RPP was more heterogeneous than what is known by general public. The Islamisation of the history textbooks will be furthered by the DP government in 1950, something parallel to their policy of softening secularism.

This thesis will consist of three chapters. In the first chapter, I will focus on the relationship between nationalism and religion, as discussed in important theories of nationalism. I will base the chapter on the categorization of Anthony Smith (2000), which consists of three approaches. The secular replacement perspective, which supports the view that nationalism fills the space left by a declining religion. Nationalism theories of Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson hold secular replacement perspective. The functional perspective supports the idea that nationalism itself is a type of religion, so there cannot be any trade off between two

functionally-same ideologies. The works of Emile Durkheim on religion are in this category. Pointing out the inability of the functional perspective in explaining the complex relationship between nationalism and religion, Anthony Smith builds his own perspective that nationalism has some ‘sacred’ dimensions, which has religious roots. There are also theories, which are either too complex or radical that cannot fit any of these perspectives. Liah Greenfeld holds the view that the relationship between nationalism and religion is not linear and their relationship depends on the stage at which nationalism is in. From the nationalism model of Eric Hobsbawm, it can be inferred that he also supports this view.

In the second chapter, I will focus on the relationship between religion and nationalism in Turkey. The *millet* system of the Ottoman Empire based on the superiority of Muslims, Ottomanism and secularization policies implemented during the *Tanzimat*, opposition to the mentality of *Tanzimat*, the emergence of Turkish nationalism and its relationship with religion, the secularization reforms of the Republic and the emergence of Kemalist nationalism will be analyzed. The change of secularism policies of the single-party period in multi-party (1945 – 1950) and the DP era (1950 – 1960) will also be discussed.

The evolution of the textbooks and the reasons behind the changes summarized above will be analyzed in detail in the third chapter.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATIONALISM AND RELIGION**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, I will briefly overview the approaches of some important theories of nationalism towards religion. For Anthony Smith (2000), there had been two approaches: Secular replacement perspective, which holds the view that nationalism supersedes a declining religion; and functional perspective, which supports the idea that nationalism is a type of religion. Most of the modernist theories of nationalism, such as that of Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson, hold secular replacement perspective. The works of Emile Durkheim on religion, on the other hand, takes the view that nationalism is a type of religion; making him the founding father of the functional perspective (Smith, 2000: 797). Unsatisfied with both approaches, Smith introduces a third one and claims that nationalism hosts ‘sacred’ factors, which are legacies of religions transmuted by nationalism. In addition to these three approaches, Liah Greenfeld (1996) takes the view that the relationship between nationalism and religion depends on the stage at which nationalism is in; thus their relationship is complex and not linear. It can be inferred from the nationalism theory of Eric Hobsbawm that he also holds the view of Greenfeld. The approach of Adrian Hastings (1997) towards nationalism implicitly states that Christianity and nationalism are so interconnected that the former cannot be separated from the latter.

## **2.2. The Approaches of Nationalism Theories towards Religion**

When academic research on nationalism began in the twentieth century, most of the mainstream theories had shared the assumption that nationalism was something natural, i.e., it had been on the social arena since ancient times; and nations of today are a prolongation of centuries old togetherness (Özkırmı, 2009: 89). This point of view, called “primordialism”, consisted of three approaches: *Perennialist*, *sociobiological*, and *cultural*. The perennialist approach holds the view that the nations have characteristics, a “basic essence” that does not widely change in time. The sociobiological approach claims that the root of nations stems from genetic characteristics and instincts. The cultural approach supports the idea that nations are beliefs that primordially different from the others in terms of characteristics such as religion, language or common history (Özkırmı, 2009: 93-94). In the mid twentieth century, modernist approaches became the mainstream approaches of the theories of nationalism, superseding primordialist ones. The common point of the modernist approaches is that, they assume nations and nationalisms as structures that are peculiar to modern era, emerged due to events such as capitalism, industrialization, urbanization or secularization. Since social, political and economic conditions that created nations and nationalism are absent, neither nations nor nationalisms could exist in the pre-modern era. Indeed, nations are a product of nationalism, not vice versa (Özkırmı, 2009: 105-106).

The term “secular” has two dimensions in modern usage. The first dimension is the legal level - a secular state is expected to stay neutral towards all religions, and not to base the legitimacy of its law to any religion. The second dimension is the

societal level, referred as the weight of religion in the life of a society. If the church attendance rate of Society A is less than that of B, then Society A is more secular than Society B, *ceteris paribus*. The secularization thesis, which holds the view that as social differentiation, societalization, and rationalization increase, religiousness should decrease, has an important place in the sociology of religion literature (Wallis&Bruce, 1992: 9).

Anthony Smith narrates three perspectives in analyzing the relationship between religion and nationalism. The first perspective, the ‘secular replacement’ perspective, sees nationalism as a secular ideology replacing religion. This perspective is based on the assumption that religion is totally related with supernatural issues, “a source of salvation to a supraempirical cosmos which ultimately controls our world” (Smith, 2000: 796). Nationalism, by contrast, is a secular ideology related with this world, superseding the deity. Most of the modernist theorists of nationalism, either directly or indirectly hold this point of view. The second perspective, the ‘functional perspective’, supports the idea that the transition cannot be considered as a secular replacement because both religion and nationalism are assumed to be functionally same, social or moral force. (Smith, 2000: 797). In other words, the secular perspective holds the view that there is a trade-off between secularism and religion; on the other hand, the functional approach rejects such a trade-off, and states that nationalism itself is a type of religion.

Correctly pointing out that the functional approach fails to grasp the complexity of the relations between religion and nationalism, Anthony Smith offers a third, middle way perspective, which focuses on the sacred properties of the



nation. In his perspective, they are neither substitutes of each other, nor the same; rather religion is used by nationalism, i.e., the legacies of religion are not disappeared, but transmuted by nationalism (Smith, 2000: 811). Most of the nationalism theories' approach towards religion fits one of the categories that are narrated by Smith.

Ernest Gellner's sociological model is one of the first and most important models that aims to analyze nationalism systematically. Having defined nationalism as "primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent" (Gellner, 1983: 1), Gellner states that nationalism is directly related with the concept of state - since stateless societies do not have a problem of congruency of political and nation units, they also do not have a problem of nationalism. For Gellner, the presence of a state becomes inescapable in the industrialization stage of human history, in which roles were opened to the public, societal and inter-class movements had increased, and the need for specialization emerged. Thus, communication should become widespread, and a common language must be adopted with a general education, which will also provide the necessary background for specialization. The modern state was the only political organization which would enable such a complicated education system that would satisfy the necessary conditions of developing both a common language and general knowledge (Özkırımlı, 2009: 165-166). In Gellner's words, nationalism is:

The general imposition of a high culture on society, where previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority, and in some cases of the totality, of the population. It means that generalized diffusion of a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom, codified for the requirements of reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication (Gellner, 1983: 57).

Ernest Gellner refers to the “fascinating relationship” between reformation and nationalism, first of whose stress on literacy, individualism, and its ties with the urban populations make it a harbinger of social characteristics, which produce the nationalist age (Gellner, 1983: 41). It is necessary to note that all of these characteristics, which Gellner defines as that of reformation, are secular characteristics. Combined with his modernist view that relates nationalism with industrialization, which is a factor that leads secularization; it is possible to infer that Gellner sees nationalism with glasses of “secular replacement”. Indeed, for Gellner, after the emergence of nationalism, “society no longer worships itself through religious symbols; a modern, streamlined, on-wheels high culture celebrates itself in song and dance, which it borrows from a folk culture” (Gellner, 1983: 58). In other words, there has been a transition from a religious concept, worshipping, to a secular one, celebration; last of which replaced the former.

Benedict Anderson is another scholar who sees the roots of nationalism in the events that occurred in modern times. In his renowned work, *Imagined Communities*, he defines nation as “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson, 1991: 6). It is imagined, because none of the members of the nation will know most of the other fellow-members; it is limited, because it has finite boundaries; and it is sovereign, because “the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm” (Anderson, 1991: 7). However, he points out that the emergence of nationalism in the period where religious communities and dynastic realms were at a decline does not show that they caused the emergence of nationalism. Indeed, the

most important factor lies behind a change in modes of apprehending the world, which made possible to comprehend the concept of nation. The concept of a simultaneous time, “simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present”, was evolved into “homogenous, empty time”, which made possible to differentiate the past, present and future (Anderson, 1991: 22). Furthermore, under the impact of economic change, social and scientific discoveries and the development of rapid communications, the decline of interlinked certainties lead to a search for a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together. What made the new communities imaginable was an interaction between a system of production (capitalism), a technology of communications (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity (Anderson, 1991: 43).

Anderson’s approach towards the relationship between religion and nationalism, like most of the other modernist theories of nationalism, fits to the secular replacement perspective. He claims that nationalism filled the space left open by the demolition of religion. Indeed, for Anderson, the reasons of the greatest achievements of popular religions are that they concerned with man in the cosmos, man as species being, and the contingency of life (Anderson, 1991: 10). The extraordinary survival of religions, either Abrahamic or not, can be attributed to their imaginative response to the overwhelming burden of human suffering, such as disease, mutilation and grief; and, its respond to need for immortality, by transforming fatality into continuity (Anderson, 1991: 11). However, the age of rational secularism brought its own darkness; the religious thoughts demoted, but the suffering they appeased did not disappear. Thus, what was needed was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity:

Few things were (are) better suited to this end than an idea of nation. If nation-states are widely conceded to be 'new' and 'historical', the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and, still more important, glide into a limitless future. It is the magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny (Anderson, 1991: 10-11).

The modernist theories of nationalism of Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson hold a "secular replacement" perspective towards religion, and claim that nationalism superseded religion. In the alternative, "functional" approach, nationalism is a type of religion itself, so there cannot be any supersession. The works of Emile Durkheim on religion holds this perspective, equalizing religion and nationalism in terms of their functions. For him, there is no essential difference "between an assembly of Christians celebrating the principle dates of the life of Christ and a reunion of citizens commemorating the promulgation of a new moral and legal system or some great event in the national life." (Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms*: 425, quoted in Smith, 2000: 798).

Anthony Smith develops his middle way perspective, which states that the legacies of religion is transmuted in and by nationalism (Smith, 2000: 811). His perspective is, indeed, a continuation of his theory of nationalism: Accepting the fact that nationalism is a concept that emerged in the modern era, Anthony Smith claims that nations in modern era acquire their shape under the influence of their ethnic background. Thus, focusing solely on capitalism and industrialization would not be enough, and it is not quite possible to analyze the emergence of modern nations without considering their ethnic past. The key concept of Smith is *ethnie*, that is, the ethnic community and its symbolism. Once formed, *ethnie* is exceptionally durable under normal circumstances and persists over many generations, even centuries

(Smith, 1986: 13 - 16). Even radical changes do not abolish the perception of continuity in the minds of individuals, primarily due to the mechanisms such as religious reformation, cultural borrowing, public participation and the myths of ethnic chosenness. During these processes, structures called “ethnic cores”, which are composed of individuals who are emotionally connected to each other and conscious of their similarities are formed, that will constitute the base of many states and emperors (Özkırımlı, 2009, 220 – 221).

Anthony Smith accepts the fact that in the short term the concept of the *nation* is derived from the ideology of nationalism (Smith, 2000: 803). But, in order to find out the nuclei of the nation and national identity, it is needed to seek them in the “sacred properties” of the ethnic communities (Smith, 2000: 804). Smith proposes four such sacred properties in which the main tenets of nationalist ideology can be found - ethnic election, the sense of constituting a chosen people; sacred territory, a historic and inalienable homeland; ethno-history, communal narrative traditions often merge with ethnic mythology; and national sacrifice, which turn people’s minds away from the horrors of the war and concentrate on the role of self-sacrifice in the destiny of the nation (Smith, 2000: 804-810). Indeed, religion is not buried or forgotten, but its legacies are “transmuted in and by nationalism”:

Nationalism itself, through its conception of the nation as a sacred communion, with its own doctrines, texts, liturgies, ceremonies, churches, and priests becomes a novel kind of anthropocentric, intra-historical and political ‘religion’, a (rival or allied) functional equivalent of the old, transhistorical religions, but one that like them fulfils many of the same collective functions through analogous rituals, myths, and symbols (Smith, 2000: 811).

There are other important theories of nationalism, whose approach towards religion cannot be included in the classification of Anthony Smith, either because

they are too complicated or radical. Liah Greenfeld points out the central qualities of nationalism, which replaced religion as the basis of individual and collective identity in the modern world, share with transcendental religions that make it the functional equivalent of religion – both of them are ways to interpret a reality, and order creating cultural systems that belong to the same general category of sociological phenomena (Greenfeld, 1996: 170). However, its functional equivalency does not show that nationalism emerged after the disappearance of religious spirit. In many cases, nationalism emerged in a social environment seething with religious enthusiasms (Greenfeld, 1996: 176). Indeed, the relationship between nationalism and religion is very complex and not linear – at the first stage, in which nationalism emerged, religion may be an important factor of social life; however, once nationalism is emerged, it gradually expands in expense of religion. On the other hand, it does not abolish religion; rather religion is used as a tool to promote nationalist aims:

Whatever the original character of nationalism and of the religion that it replaced, this replacement, the ascendancy of the one and the unseating of the other, was always the outcome. Even where religion was a crucial factor in the development of nationalism and a source of its initial legitimacy, (...) religion was reduced to the role of a handmaiden, an occasionally used tool, and came to exist on nationalism's sufferance (Greenfeld: 181).

The Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm uses the term nationalism in the sense defined by Gellner : “primarily a political principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent” (Hobsbawm: 9). For him, nations exist not only as functions of a territorial state or the desire to establish one, but also in the context of a particular stage and technological development. He sees nation and nationalism as a product of social engineering, and the most important concept to

focus on is “invented traditions”. In order to cope with the risks emerged with the democratic transition, the ruling elites try to create new habits to channelize the energy of the public to mass rituals. These habits, consciously created and shaped by the ruling elite, are the things that are not new, but belong to a certain era in the past. Thus, nationalism transforms already existing cultures into nations, and sometimes it invents them. The aim is to prevent the loyalty of the public to the system. Nation, and other invented traditions, would constitute a bridge between the past and the future, forestalling the collapse of the order. However, factors such as technological and economic development is also prerequisites of this transformation – for example, national languages could not develop without the invention of printing press or mass education (Özkırmı, 2009: 149-152).

The place of religion in Hobsbawm’s theory of nationalism can be evaluated in a two-fold view: On the one hand, the factor of religion is generally undermined in the model, which shows that it is not an important factor in the formation of a nation; and all the factors that caused the emergence of nationalism in his model also cause secularization. On the other hand, it is reasonable for the ruling elites to include religious factors in the traditions they invent, in order to take the support of masses in a more powerful way. Thus, it is possible to infer that, at the first stage of the emergence of nationalism, it expands in expense of religion; but once nationalism reaches a certain level, it may use religion to empower itself. Another duality can be seen in the book of Hobsbawm, in which he accepts the fact that the ties between religion and national consciousness may be very strong. According to him, this is something normal, because religion is “an ancient and well-tried method of establishing communion through common practice and a sort of brotherhood

between people who otherwise have nothing much in common” (Hobsbawm, 1990: 68). However, it is also a serious factor that could endanger the monopoly power of nationalism over the loyalty of its members. That’s why, Hobsbawm defines religion as a “paradoxical cement” for modern nationalism (Hobsbawm, 1990: 68).

Adrian Hastings holds the perspective which rejects the relationship between nationalism and modernity. Although he accepts the fact that nations emerged in the modern era, he claims that modernity accidentally became the part of the process. This makes him rather a unique thinker on nationalism, because he can neither be considered as a modernist nor primordialist:

Nation-formation and nationalism have in themselves almost nothing to do with modernity. Only when modernization was itself already in the air did they almost accidentally become part of it, particularly from the eighteenth century when the political and economic success of England made it a model to imitate. But nations could occur in states as unmodern as ancient Ethiopia or Armenia and fail to happen in Renaissance Italy or even Frederick the Great’s Prussia (Hastings, 1997: 205).

He has also a unique approach towards the relationship between nationalism and religion. For Hastings, the nation and nationalism are both Christian things; indeed, Christianity has shaped national formation in seven ways: by shaping and canonizing origins, mythologising of threats to national identity, affirming nationhood, encouraging vernacular literature, making the bible as an example in nation formation, developing autocephalous state churches, and assuring a nation’s holiness and special destiny (Hastings, 1997: 188–196). Although nations have also appeared in non-Christian world, it had happened so only after a process of westernization and as an imitation of the Christian world (Hastings, 186). In the



theory of Hastings, since Christianity gave birth to nationalism, it is possible to infer that they cannot be entirely separated.

### **2.3. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I focused on the relationship between nationalism and religion, as pointed out in the main theories of nationalism. I used the analytical background used by Smith (2000), who offers three approaches to the relationship between them. The secular replacement perspective holds the view that nationalism replaces a declining religion. Nationalism theories of some modernist theorists, such as Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson, hold this perspective. The functional perspective sees nationalism functionally equivalent of religion, thus rejects any kind of trade-off between them. The works of Emile Durkheim on religion reveal that he sees no essential difference between religion and nationalism. Smith offers a middle-way perspective claiming that nationalism hosts 'sacred' factors, which are transmuted from religions by nationalism. There are also other scholars of nationalism whose views cannot be categorized in any of these three groups. Stating that the relationship between nationalism and religion depends on the stage at which nationalism is in, Liah Greenfeld claims that their relationship is complex and not linear. It can be inferred that Eric Hobsbawm, who defines religion as a "paradoxical cement" for nationalism, also holds this view. The approach of Adrian Hastings towards nationalism implies that Christianity cannot be separated from nationalism.

## CHAPTER III

### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATIONALISM AND RELIGION IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND EARLY TURKISH REPUBLIC

#### 3.1. Introduction

In modern Turkish, the word “millet” has the exact denotation of the word “nation” in English: “Mainly living on the same land, a union of people who have linguistic, historical, emotional, ideal, traditional and cultural ties among each other.”<sup>6</sup> However, the same word had a different meaning in the middle Ottoman Turkish - Dictionary Meninski, dated 1680, defines “millet” as: “law that the people are bounded by, religion.”<sup>7</sup> Since the meaning of the word had started to change in late Ottoman Turkish, after defining it as “religion, sect, a society who shares same religion and belief”, Şemsettin Sami attached following note in his dictionary, *Kamus-ı Türki*, dated 1901:

This word has been wrongly used in our language instead of “ümme”, and vice versa. For example, there are people who use “Islam millets”, “Turkish millet”, or “Islam ümme”. Indeed, the correct usage is “Islam millet”, “Islam ümmets”, and “Turkish ümme”; because there is only one Islam millet, but there are many Islam ümmets, i.e., tribes that believe in Islam. It is essential to use the correct form.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> “Çoğunlukla aynı topraklar üzerinde yaşayan, aralarında dil, tarih, duygu, ölkü, gelenek ve görenek birliği olan insan topluluğu, ulus” (TDK, 2005: 1396).

<sup>7</sup> “lex quam quis fequitur, religio” (Nişanyan, 2009: 281).

<sup>8</sup> “Lisanımızda bu lugat sehven ümme, ve ümme lugatı millet yerine kullanılıp, mesela “millet-i islamiye” ve “türk milleti” ve bilakis “ümme-i islamiye” diyenler vardır; halbuki doğrusu “millet-i islamiye”, “ümme-i islamiye” ve “türk ümmeti” demektir; zira millet-i islamiye bir, ve ümme-i

The meaning of the term gained its contemporary form by 1945 - in the first dictionary of *Türk Dil Kurumu* (the Turkish Linguistic Society, TDK) the word is defined as synonym of “ulus”, which is defined as: “a society which differs from others in terms of language, culture and ideal” (TDK, 1945: 599). The evolution of the meaning of the word from “the religious group” to “nation” shows that, the word had been secularized in the Turkish language.

Although the relationship between religion and nationalism is linear on the etymological level, its relationship in the Ottoman Empire is much more complex. This chapter aims to analyze their relationship in the intellectual and political history of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. In this context, the *millet* system of the Ottoman Empire; the collapse of the system during the Tanzimat era and the first secularization reforms; the Young Ottomans opposition to the Tanzimat reforms and mentality; the peak of Ottomanism in the First Constitutional era; the absolute rule of Abdulhamid II and the Young Turks opposition; the emergence of materialistic thoughts, Turkish nationalism and their effects on the governance of the late Ottoman Empire and early Turkish Republic; the relationship between different variants of Turkish nationalism and religion; the process of secularization and de-secularization in the early Turkish Republic will be discussed. It will be concluded that Turkish nationalism is a modern phenomena, which hosts legacies of the ideas of the Young Ottomans and cultural Turkists; the approach of Liah Greenfeld, which supports the view that the relationship between religion and nationalism cannot be reduced to a linear sequence, holds for the case of Turkish nationalism; the Kemalist

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islamiye yani din-i islama tabi akvam ise çoktur. Tashihan istimali elzemdir” (Şemsettin Sami, 1901: 1400).

variant of Turkish nationalism is break-up from the previous types due to the fact that it aims to built up a totally secular Turkish identity omitting the factor of religion; and the softening of secularization policies of the DP government is a continuation of that of the RPP government, accelerated due to the aim of vote maximization in the multi party era.

### **3.2. The Ottoman *Millet* System**

Historical facts give the clues behind the change of the meaning of the word “millet”. The governing policy of the Ottoman Empire, founded by Mehmet II soon after his capture of Constantinople, was called the *Ottoman Millet System*. Showing the general perception and denotation of the term, the *millets* were united under religious communities; for example, Slavs and Bulgars were members of the Greek millet, and Assyrians belonged to the Armenian millet. The system was based on the superiority of Muslims, in which the Muslims constitute *millet-i hakime* (the ruling millet), while the non-Muslims constitute *millet-i mahkume* (the millet being ruled). Since non-Muslim communities were under the domination and protection of the Islamic state, both their rights and duties were less compared to that of Muslims. They were half-independent in terms of governance, and totally autonomous in terms of administrating their religious affairs (Eryilmaz, 1992: 13-18).

Since the millet system had continued approximately for four centuries, it is possible to assume that religious consciousness was more dominant than ethnic consciousness in the Ottoman Empire.

### 3.3. The *Tanzimat* Era and the Young Ottomans Opposition

The Greek Uprising in the Peloponnese in 1821, ended with the gaining of independence in 1829, was the starting point of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. For the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire, an independent Greek Kingdom had now been a tempting example (Sander, 2006: 188). These continuous revolts and incapability of the army to suppress them, encouraged the Ottoman rulers to implement a more comprehensive and systematic reforms, materialized in the *Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu* (also known as *Tanzimat Fermanı*, the Rescript of Gülhane).

The document, in which the Sultan stated that it was necessary to adopt new codes for good governance, is recognized as the beginning of a new era, called the *Tanzimat* (1839-1871), during when the superiority of Europe is officially recognized and the harmonization of Islamic principles with European ones became the prior objective of Ottoman rulers. The official reasoning, however, was quite different:

All the world knows that in the first days of the Ottoman monarchy, the glorious precepts of the Kuran and the laws of the empire were always honored. The empire in consequence increased in strength and greatness, and all its subjects, without exception, had risen in the highest degree to ease and prosperity. In the last one hundred and fifty years a succession of accidents and divers causes have arisen which have brought about a disregard for the sacred code of laws and the regulations flowing there from, and the former strength and prosperity have changed into weakness and poverty; an empire in fact loses all its stability so soon as it ceases to observe its laws.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The English translation is taken from: <http://www.anayasa.gen.tr/gulhane.htm>

In the period started with an edict that announced the real reason of the weakness and poverty of the Empire as a disregard for the sacred code of laws; a secular area of law was created in the legal system of the Empire. Indeed, the ideology of *Tanzimat* was a paradoxical ideology, trying to harmonize two mutually exclusive ideas, the Islamic norms with “European” ones. According to Niyazi Berkes, the contradiction of *Tanzimat* ideology showed itself at the very beginning, when the Criminal Code was adopted in 1840, which followed the principle that one would not be punished without a trial or court sentence, but also included the codification of *kisas* and *diyet* principles of Sharia (Berkes, 2008: 223). A new Commercial Code was adopted based on that of French in 1850. These new laws were not implemented by Sharia Courts, but by the newly founded *Nizamiye* Courts. The legal perspective of two courts was so different that one court could sentence the suspect to death penalty, who was acquitted by the other court in the same case (Cin & Akyılmaz, 2003: 473). However, as the need to clearly separate the issue areas of two mentioned courts emerged, the new decisions had to be taken that would gradually enlarge the positivist laws at the expense of religious ones.

After the formation of the *Nizamiye* Courts, a Civil Code was needed to facilitate the works of judges. The suggestion of adopting the French Civil Code received harsh reactions, because for some of the ruling elite, such an adoption would destroy the millet of Islam. A Commission was founded under the head of Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, and the Ottoman Civil Code based on Islamic principles, *Mecelle-i Ahkam-ı Adliye* was adopted in 1878 (Berkes, 2008: 224).

Parallel to the change in the legal system, the building blocks of Ottoman millet system (i.e., Muslims as the superior millet who rules over non-Muslims that were considered to be second-class subjects) vanished. The promise which the Sultan gave in the edict of *Tanzimat*, that all of his subjects would be equal by law, was later concretized in the *Islahat Fermanı* (the Rescript of Reform) announced in 1856. The Rescript “confirmed” the rights and liberties acknowledged by the *Tanzimat Fermanı*, and provided full equality among all subjects within the Ottoman Empire in all issue areas. As a result, to build an Ottoman identity, regardless of religion and ethnic groups, became the official policy of the Empire. Education was used as a tool to achieve this goal, and most of the state schools open their doors to non-Muslim subjects (Eryılmaz, 1992: 55-56).

Opposition to *Tanzimat* reforms at intellectual level goes back to the 1860s, when a newspaper called *Tercüman-ı Ahval* had started to be issued by İbrahim Şinasi. He moderately criticized the authoritative tendencies of the government and its overall dependency on European powers. Afraid of being arrested, he escaped to Paris, leaving the management of the newspaper to Namık Kemal, who made the newspaper even more radical (Zürcher, 2006: 104). He and his friends, also known as “the Young Ottomans”, had formed an organized opposition to *Tanzimat* reforms. Their main argument was that the Ottoman government was implementing a despotic policy, independent from the will of the people that increased the influence of foreign powers too much on the Empire. As pious Muslims, they had always looking from the perspective of Islam, had full confidence on Sharia law, and had a tendency to defend liberal values with Islamic arguments (Zürcher, 2006: 104). The policy of the *Tanzimat* was developing an Ottoman identity; the Young Ottomans,

on the other hand, supported a Muslim Ottoman identity (Oran, 1998: 21). Ziya Paşa, for example, criticized the Tanzimat reformers for granting equal rights to non-Muslims subjects with Muslims (Lewis, 2002: 192). Although it is not possible to define the Young Ottomans as nationalists, they had introduced two important concepts that will be used by Turkish nationalists in the future: *hürriyet* (liberty) and *vatan* (patrie), the principle which the people must enjoy and the place which they should feel loyalty to, respectively (Oran, 1998: 21-22).

The leading figure of the Young Ottomans, Namık Kemal, claimed that *Tanzimat* legislation was not a legislation of a modern state, because it was not built upon the will of people. The absolutism of the Sultan was replaced by that of the Porte, thus the new regime was even worse than the previous one. It not only worsened the economic situation of the Empire, but also opened the way of the European states for intervening in its internal affairs. For him, the reason of these failures is the lack of a regime that reflects the will of the people, and without it, the citizens of the Ottoman Empire could never live under a modern civilization. He was also a supporter of Sharia and a critic of the separation of the church and state. According to him, such a separation does accord with Islamic and Ottoman tradition, and legal reforms made during *Tanzimat* era had frayed religious roots of the Empire. The laws taken from foreign resources had disrupted the *fıkıh*, which he saw as superior to European laws. The laws of the state must have religious roots, because religion offers a moral support to them. The laws, which are made by human mind, could not be superior to and as universal as Islamic law, which are the laws of God. What forbids progress is not Islam, but the attitude of *Tanzimat* rulers vis-a-vis European economic and political power (Berkes, 2008: 208-214).



To sum up, the first secularization policies of the Ottoman Empire and the policy of building up an Ottoman identity began during the *Tanzimat* era. The identity that the Ottoman rulers trying to build can be considered as a secular identity, due to the fact that it does not require being an adherent to a specific religion. On the other hand, both the secular laws taken from Europe and secular identity trying to be built were criticized by the Young Ottomans, who believed in the superiority of Islamic principles and Muslim identity. The principles of liberty and patrie introduced by them will be later used by Turkish nationalists.

### **3.4. The First Constitutional Era**

The first Ottoman constitution, *Kanun-i Esasi*, had come into effect in 1876. The basic doctrine of the *Kanun-i Esasi* was Ottomanism, whose aim was to affiliate all subjects to the governance without any religious, ethnic or racial discrimination, in order to discourage nationalist separatist uprisings. Some articles of the constitution clearly show that traditional “citizenship” of the Empire had radically changed, and the concept such as “millet-i hakime” or “millet-i mahkume” were replaced by “Ottoman subject” without discrimination: “All subjects of the empire are called Ottomans, without distinction whatever faith they profess; the status of an Ottoman is acquired and lost according to conditions specified by law” (Article 8), “All Ottomans are equal in the eyes of the law. They have the same rights, and owe the same duties towards their country, without prejudice to religion” (Article 17), “All Ottomans are admitted to public offices, according to their fitness, merit, and ability” (Article 19)<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.worldstatesmen.org/OttomanConstitution1876.htm>

Most of the *ulema* had opposed a constitution because of two different reasons: Some of them believed that as Muslims, they were only bound by the dictates of the Sultan, who is the Caliph of the Prophet; while others were afraid of binding the Islamic state to the votes of non-Muslims. However, when the *Şeyhülislam* stated that it was legitimate to found a parliament that has both Muslim and non-Muslim members, the attitude of the *ulema* became ineffective (Eryılmaz, 1992: 90). The parliament, composed of 69 Muslim and 46 non-Muslim members, was opened on 19 March 1877. Although hassles were made after the opening speech of the Sultan, the declaration of war of Russia united Muslim and non-Muslim members of the parliament, showing that the latter also does not want to live under Russian dominance. However, when Muslim members offered to define this war as a “holy jihad”, Christian members objected and stated that it would be harmful for the Empire to define this war as a Christian-Muslim dispute. Despite this objection, the offer of the Muslim members was accepted (Berkes, 2008: 336).

These events show that even after four decades following the *Tanzimat* Edict, religion was still an important factor in governance and religious differences are still the greatest obstacle against the formation of an Ottoman identity.

### **3.5. The Hamidian Era, the Young Turks and the Emergence of Materialistic Thought**

After prorogating the parliament in 1878, Sultan Abdulhamid II governed the Empire with an iron hand until 1908. Although newspapers had now been prepared more professionally and reached a much larger public, they were emasculated by a very strict censorship in political issues, especially liberalism, nationalism and

constitutionalism. These three ideologies were perceived by Abdulhamid as disruptive forces, and he emphasized the title and symbols of Caliphate to counterbalance them, which showed the regime more Islamic compared to previous periods. Thus, conservative Muslims supported his regime, whereas liberals and non-Muslims did not (Zürcher, 2006: 120).

The group of intellectuals opposing the Hamidian regime were called the Young Turks, which was a more heterogeneous group compared with the Young Ottomans. Their central question was how to find a solution to dissolution of the state and they were organized under *İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (the Committee of Union and Progress, CUP), founded by Ahmet Rıza (Zürcher, 2006: 131). As a positivist and atheist, Ahmet Rıza had authoritarian tendencies, thus he was an advocate of a centralized system of governance. Although he did not believe in Islam, he regarded it as an important social tool and, compared with Christianity, more open to social development (Mardin, 1985: 136). The ideas of Ahmet Rıza gradually evolved from Ottomanism to nationalism, whose most important indicator was that he started to use the term “Turk” instead of “Ottoman” after 1902 (Hanioğlu, 1995: 216).

Ahmet Rıza faced two types of oppositions in the society. The first opposition was that of Mizancı Murat, a liberal who attached importance to Caliphate and Islamic character of the Empire (Zürcher, 2006: 132). He was criticizing Ahmet Rıza for not respecting Islamic emotions and not hesitating to openly declare so (Akşin, 1987: 35). Since Ahmet Rıza was not able to gain the support of the majority of the young Turks because of his radical positivist attitude, Mizancı Murat was elected as the president of the CUP in 1896. However, he and

his followers lost their prestige and credibility after they accepted the offer of the Sultan and turned back to the capital, making Ahmet Rıza the leader of the movement in abroad again. The second opposition was that of Ottomanist liberals, leaded by Prince Sabahattin, who advocated minimal government, free enterprise and decentralization. The movement was splinted between the two and Sabahattin founded another society to spread his views (Zürcher, 2006: 132 - 133).

Due to the books and teachers coming from Europe, positivism and biological materialism deeply affected the young generations in medical schools. One of the founders of the CUP and the leading figure of the Young Turk movement, Abdullah Cevdet, had entered as a devoted Muslim to the Royal Medical Academy, but graduated as a passionate advocate of materialism. In his early writings, he supported the view of promoting materialistic ideas with Islamic concepts and to use Islam as a tool to modernize the Ottoman society. By drawing paralellisms between early Muslim thinkers and modern materialists, he tried to convince the readers that Islam was a type of materialism (Hanioğlu, 1997: 135). However, in his later writings, he ceased to synthese a religious thought with an anti-religious theory; and started to criticize Islam openly. He stated that religion is the most important obstacle of modernization and social progress. His first salvo was the translation of Reinhart Dozy's hostile study critical of Islam and its prophet, *De Voornaamste Godsdiensten: Het Islamisme*, into Turkish (Hanioğlu, 1997: 138). This translation, and his approving preface, caused a wave of indignation in the Empire. As retaliation, he and his friends distributed the copies of the book at a very low price and made available in coffee houses to be read by young generation; which shows that their real motivation was not scholarly (Hanioğlu, 1997: 139).

With his writings and translations, Abdullah Cevdet became the leading figure among the Young Turks who support the idea of a secular Ottoman society. All other figures of the movement joined him in 1911, and *İctihad* became the organ of this group and the first journal in the history of the Empire that explicitly criticized Islam (Hanioğlu, 1997: 140). According to Hanioğlu, the *Garbcular* group, promoted three ideas: Firstly, creating a “scientific religion” to supersede Islam, which would facilitate their efforts to create a new society. Secondly, Islam and modern life cannot be reconciled. They openly criticized Islamic practices such as fasting, women’s veiling, and even *namaz*; and urged Muslims to substitute European good manners instead of their outdated ones (Hanioğlu, 1997: 142). Thirdly, a new ethic should be created for Muslims, similar to a Protestant ethic created in the Christian world. “The elements that cannot compete have no right to existence in this century. The real faith is not confined to believing in the next world” says Kılıçzade Hakkı in *Son Cevab*, “As for us, the main purpose is the perfection of the general wealth of the human kind.” (Hanioğlu, 1997: 144)

The Garbcılık movement was not a nationalist ideology, but a supporter of Ottomanism. *İctihad* even hosted articles strictly criticizing Turkish nationalism like that of Süleyman Nazif, who described the curiosity of Turkish nationalist on Jengis Khan as “the pestilence of Jengis” (Hanioğlu, 1997: 144).

### **3.6. The Emergence of Turkish Nationalism**

There are not many documents that would enable us to discuss how the Turkic-speaking peoples of Central Asia perceived themselves in ancient times. However, since the *Orhun* Inscriptions contain the term “Turk”, it would be fair to

assume that at least some of the tribes of Central Asia had a Turkic ethnic consciousness by the year 732. On the other hand, after they adopted Islam in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, they also identified themselves with their new Islamic identity, and seem to have forgotten their Turkic past (Lewis, 2002: 447). In the first half of 15<sup>th</sup> century, there were a number of signs of the development of an ethnic consciousness - the Ottoman Sultan assumed the old Turkish title of Khan, the brand of the Central Asian Turkic tribe of *Kayı* appeared as an emblem on Ottoman coins, and the *Oğuz* legend became the official account of the origins of the dynasty (Lewis, 2002: 14). However, the conquest of Constantinople, the rise of the Turkic but Shiite power of the Safavids in Iran, and conquest of Syria, Egypt and Iraq deflected the Empire away from a Turkic and back to an Islamic identity because, it made them more conscious of an imperial mission, cut them off from the eastern Turkic world and flung them into religious conflict with its Turkic neighbours, and conferred upon them the burden of an Islamic heritage and mission, respectively (Lewis, 2002: 449). As a result, most of the “Turks” had subordinated their identity to Islam and perceived themselves as a Muslim until the beginning of nineteenth century.

Kushner (1977) and Lewis (2002) provide facts which enable us to conclude that the term “Turk” had also a derogatory meaning in the Ottoman Empire. In 1630, *Koçu bey* speaks of “Turks, Gypsies, Tats, Lazes, muleteers and camel-drivers, porters, footpads, and cutpurses” that overrun the corps of Janissaries (Lewis, 2002: 450). In 1802, the Turkish Ambassador to Paris was shocked to find himself called the “Turkish ambassador”, which he perceived as “ignorant boor” (Lewis, 2002: 451). In 1897, British traveler Sir W. M. Ramsay, remarks that the term “Turk” has to two different meanings:

At the present day the name 'Turk' is rarely used and I have heard it employed only in two ways, either as a distinguishing term of race (for example, you ask whether a village is a 'Turk' or 'Turkmen') and as a term of contempt (for example, you mutter 'Turk Kafa' where in English you would say 'blockhead'). (Sir W. M. Ramsey, *Impressions of Turkey*: 99, quoted in Kushner, 1977: 7).

Between the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, *Turquerie*, an Orientalist fashion in Western Europe for imitating aspects of Turkish art and culture, came into vogue (Oran, 1998: 24). The discipline of Turcology also emerged in those years, during when the works focusing on pre-Islamic Turks became popular in Europe (Kushner, 1977: 9). Turkism as a cultural movement appeared in the Empire during 1860s, during when Ahmet Vefik Paşa, Süleyman Paşa, Mustafa Celaledin Paşa claimed the originality of Turkish language and ethnic roots of the Turks. Mustafa Celaledin Paşa, in his work *Les Turcs anciens et modernes* (The Turks, ancient and modern, 1870) claimed that the origins of Latin civilization were formed by the Turks. His proofs were the similarities between Latin and Turkish words, like *gigeria* and *ciğer*, *jus* and *yasa*, *curules* and *kurultay* (Copeaux, 2006: 31). In International Congress of Orientalists (1873), Leon Cahun claimed that there was a sea in Central Asia whose shore hosted Turkish people in pre-historic times. When the sea had dried out, the people migrated to different lands (Copeaux, 2006: 33). With the help of intellectuals of the Turks in Russia, who escaped to İstanbul after the fall of Turkistan to Tsarist Russia, these works became popular in the Empire in 1880's and Ottoman intellectuals comprehended the "Turkish race" in Central Asia (Copeaux, 2006: 35). The views that would become the official historical thesis of 1930's had been published in the Newspaper *İkdam* by 1896. The Turks, millenniums before adopting Islam, had conquered the Northern India, Iran, and

Mesopotamia and contributed to the civilizations of Egypt, Azury and Babylon (Copeaux, 2006: 40). In 1896, Danish Linguist Wilhelm Thomsen deciphered Orkhon inscriptions and this invention was analyzed by Leon Cahun in his work *Introduction a l'histoire de l'Asie* (Introduction to the history of Asia, 1896). *Türklerin Tarihi* (History of the Turks, 1900) written by Necip Asım was based on the work of Leon Cahun (Copeaux, 2006: 37).

The cultural Turkism gradually evolved to political Turkism, also known as panturkism, which aimed to form a Turkish Empire that unites the Turks of Ottoman Empire and Central Asia. Intellectuals such as Ismail Gasprinski, Hüseyinzade Ali Bey, Ahmet Ağaoğlu and Akçuraoğlu Yusuf were supporting panturkism, last of whom was the most influential for Turkish intellectuals and considered as the founder of Turkish nationalism. In his work *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (Three Types of Politics, 1904), Akçuraoğlu Yusuf analyzed three different policies, i.e., Ottomanism, panislamism and panturkism. For him, trying to form an Ottoman millet was “an exhaustion which has no end” (Yusuf Akçura, 2005: 54), and implied that panturkism is a more appropriate policy for the Ottoman Empire than panislamism. Since most of the Muslim societies were living under Christian states, great powers would stand as a powerful obstacle against the unity of Islam. However, most of the Turks were living under only one foreign country, Russia, which was easier to cope with. Furthermore, great powers could even support panturkism since it would weaken Russia (Yusuf Akçura, 2005: 60-61). As a supporter of panturkism, Akçuraoğlu Yusuf had a secular approach toward Islam – he accepted that Islam does not approve nations and aims to unite all Muslims under *Ummah*, but claims that Islam must change itself to adopt the values of the time.



Moreover, the Turks had served Islam for centuries; with the emergence of Turkish nationalism, now it was Islam's turn to serve Turks (Georgeon: 1986:43). His work deeply affected the Young Turks; what he suggested was a radical change – a new principle of solidarity, balance of territory and perspective for the future (Georgeon: 1986:39).

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Turkish nationalists also founded organizations in the Empire to spread their views. *Türk Derneği* (The Turkish Association) and *Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti* (The Community of Turkish Homeland) founded in 1908 and 1911, respectively; were the first associations of this kind. The journal of the *Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti* was called *Türk Yurdu* (Turkish Homeland), and it received close interest of the Turks, both in Russian and the Ottoman Empire. As a result, the journal was officially banned in the Tsarist Russia, and could only be read in back-door by the students of the Military Medical School, since the CUP was supporting the policy of Ottomanism during that time (Üstel, 1997: 43-44). The journal deeply affected the movement of Turkism with the contributions of Fuad Köprülü, Halide Edib, Ziya Gökalp, Ömer Seyfettin. These organizations laid the foundation of the *Türk Ocağı* (The Turkish Society), founded in 1911. Intellectual and artistic activities of the *Türk Ocağı* affected a much wider audience, and its founding figures actively contributed to policy making during the late Ottoman and Early Republican era (Üstel, 1997: 45-46).

Some Ottomanist and Islamist thinkers criticized Turkish nationalism stating that it was inconsistent with Islam. Ahmet Ağaoğlu rejected these statements with his articles in *Türk Yurdu* journal. According to him, there were many Muslim nations, and each nation could better contribute to Islam by their own ways. Thus,

serving a nation would also mean serving to Islam (Arai, 2008: 109). Islam was an indispensable religion for the Turks; indeed, even though the Turks had forgotten their Turkishness, Islam had become *de facto* national religion for them. Therefore, Turkish nationalism could not be separated from Islam (Arai, 2008: 110). Turkish nationalists also issued a magazine called *Islam Mecmuası* (Journal of Islam) in 1914. Their motto “A life with religion, a religion with life” shows that its aim was not secularization, but to provide a modern interpretation of Islam (Arai, 2008: 128). They supported the view that Islam could be achieved its superior position in the time of Prophet after refining it from alien beliefs (Arai, 2008: 141).

Among all Turkish nationalist thinkers in the late Ottoman Empire, Ziya Gökalp (1876 – 1924) was probably the most important one, since his policy recommendations were predominantly implemented during the early Republican era. Ziya Gökalp gradually reached an anti-thesis of a multi-national Empire, that is, the concept of *nation*, whose focal point was different from the “Ottoman Millet” of the Young Ottomans, “Islamic Ummah” of the Islamists, and the “Turkish Race” of some Turkists (Oran, 1998: 34). He defined nation as “a society, who received same education and thus, shares same language, religion, ethical norms, and aesthetic values” (Gökalp, 1972: 22).

Gökalp differentiated *hars* (culture) and *medeniyet* (civilization). For him, culture had an emotional and subjective character while civilization has intellectual, objective, practical and material character. Cultural values grew in the subconscious of society, while values of civilization were formed and develop consciously (Heyd, 1950: 64). He attached more importance to culture, claiming that nations with a mature culture defeated their enemies, even those who had reached a higher stage of

civilization. Regarding the Turks as rich in culture but poor in civilization, Gökâlþ advised that the Turks should adopt the Western civilization while protecting and developing their own culture. In order to reveal the national character, the educated elite should “go to the people”, because people are “an alive museum of national character”. While learning the secrets of national character from the public, the educated elite should also bring them civilization” (Gökâlþ, 1972: 47). In other words, the civilization could be “imported” from Europe, but the Turks should discover their own culture in Turkish origins, especially examining the popular culture which had remained faithful to its origins, and history and culture of the ancient Turks (Heyd, 1950: 112).

Nationalism of Gökâlþ has a dual approach towards Islam. On the one hand, Islam is included in *hars*: “the Turkists are the people who would like to adopt the Western civilization, with the condition to be as a Turk and a Muslim” (Gökâlþ, 1972: 45). Thus, for Gökâlþ, being a Muslim is a condition of being a Turk. Furthermore, he underlined the importance of Islam in strengthening Turkish patriotism. Rejecting the orthodoxy, which holds the view that Islam does not bind with nationalism, Gökâlþ claimed that Islam supports modern nationalism, that aims to establish States composed of single, homogenous nations by giving reference from the Qur’an, “and we have made you peoples and tribes so that you should know each other” (Heyd, 1950: 98-99). On the other hand, Gökâlþ also supported the separation of religion and state, quite radically for his time. In his poem *Meşihat*, which was censored by the Young Turk government, he stated that there could not be a strong and independent state “which does not make its law itself, but regards them as sent from heaven and as unchangeable” (Heyd, 1950: 89). Thus, Gökâlþ

demanded radical changes in the structure of the State - in a memorandum he submitted to the CUP in 1917, he advised the virtual abolition of the office of the *Şeyhülislam* in its traditional form and the Ministry of Pious Foundations. He wanted to put an end to the dualism of secular and religious education systems, and offered to merge the main religious colleges with the Theological Faculty of the İstanbul University. As a strong supporter of gender equality, he defended the abrogation of the canon law which grants man superior rights with regard to marriage, divorce and inheritance (Heyd, 1950: 90-94). He also pointed out the necessity of giving Islam a national character - the local customs that Islam absorbed from the Arabs and the Persians should be discarded as foreign elements, since they are not consistent with the Turkish nationalism. He demanded *ezan* (the call to prayer), *hutbe* (the sermons) and *dua* (general prayers) should be done in Turkish and further added that the Qur'an should be taught in schools in the Turkish translation, which would spread the love of religion among the wider public (Heyd, 1950: 103). Most of his thoughts were implemented during the early Turkish Republic by Mustafa Kemal.

To sum up, cultural Turkism emerged during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and evolved into Turkish nationalism by the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is important to note that, while the first examples of Turkish nationalism emerged in the Ottoman Empire, religion was still dominant factor in social life. The most important theorists of Turkish nationalism, Akçuraoğlu Yusuf and Ziya Gökalp have relatively secular approaches towards Islam. Akçuraoğlu Yusuf does not mention whether or not he considers a non-Muslim as a Turk, but in his most important work, he gives importance Islam as a tool that can be useful in the unification of

Turks. For Ziya Gökalp, on the other hand, being a Muslim is a precondition to be a Turk; however, he also states that the state and religion must be separated and praying should be done in Turkish. However, neither Akçuraoğlu Yusuf, nor Ziya Gökalp or any other Turkish nationalist rejected the factor of Islam.

### **3.7. The Second Constitutional Era and the Triumvirate**

Although the Ottoman Empire had entered a political turmoil between 1908 and 1913, foreign problems of the Empire foreshadowed the internal ones. The worst of them was the shock came from the Balkans, where, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro alliance defeated the Ottoman army, which resulted for the Ottoman Empire as the loss of almost all of its territories in Europe, and millions of refugees coming from the lost territory. “The Balkans Disaster” eliminated the choice of Ottomanism for future policy makers. Using the defeat as a reason, Turkish nationalist flank of the CUP organized a successful coup d’etat in Istanbul and came to power in January 1913 (Until 1918, the Empire was governed by Enver Paşa, Cemal Paşa and Talat Paşa triumvirate). In October 1915, the Empire entered the World War and by November, it was at war with Russia, France and Britain (Zürcher, 2006: 163-164 ).

The secularization process of the Empire, which had paused during the Hamidian era, restarted in the government of a Turkish nationalist party, even under the conditions of a world war. Between 1913 and 1918, the CUP organized a wide range of legal and educational reforms which contributed to secularization process of the Empire. A new inheritance law was adopted, based on German law in 1913; the *Şeyhülislam* was removed from the cabinet and his jurisdiction was limited in

1916; the religious *Şeri* courts were brought under the control of the secular Ministry of Justice in 1917; the religious colleges, *medreses*, were brought under the Ministry of Education; and a new family law was adopted which expanded the rights of divorce and increased marrying age of women. The educational possibilities that the regime created enabled girls to be educated in increasing number of schools at different levels, including University of İstanbul, which opened courses for women. By the encouragement of the Young Turk regime, the status of women gradually increased and they appeared in public with their husbands (Zürcher, 2006: 176 - 178).

### **3.8. The War of Independence**

Instead of multinational and multi-religious Ottoman ideal of *Tanzimat* era, the dominant subjects of the War of Independence (1919 – 1922) were the Muslim subjects (*anasır-ı İslamiye*). None of the major documents of the War of Independence contain the term “Turk” (Nişanyan, 2008: 320). A speech of Mustafa Kemal in the National Assembly reflects the general perception of the day and ideological background of the War of Independence: “The people who constitute [Turkish National Assembly] are not composed of solely by Turks, Circassians, Kurds or Lazes. It is a close Muslim union formed by mentioned all”<sup>11</sup>. The Constitution of 1924 is one of the first official documents which contain the word

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<sup>11</sup> “[Büyük Millet Meclisi’ni] teşkil eden zevat yalnız Türk değildir, yalnız Çerkes değildir, yalnız Kürt değildir, yalnız Laz değildir. Fakat hepsinden mürekkep anasır-ı İslamiyedir, samimi bir mecmuadır” (Arsan: 73).

“Turk”, and defines it solely by territorial terms: “Every person in Turkey, regardless of religion and race, are regarded as “Turk” in terms of citizenship.”<sup>12</sup>

The Treaty of Lausanne and its complementary treaties also differentiate the people in terms of religion. Minority rights were granted to non-Muslim citizens of Turkey, and the population exchange between Greece and Turkey was based on religious identity. Orthodox people of Karaman, who call themselves “Turk” and supported the Turkish War of Independence, were sent to Greece; while the Muslims of Crete, whose mother tongue was Greek and cannot speak Turkish, settled in Turkey (Oran, 1998: 131).

The legal documents of the War of Independence show that religion was still perceived as the most important identity in 1920’s Turkey by the policymakers.

### **3.9. The Early Republican Era**

The proclamation of the Republic on 29 October 1923 opened a new era in the secularization history of Turkey. Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, the Republican People’s Party (RPP) government undertook radical secularization reforms in a relatively short period of time. In this period, while secular laws were adopted and religious laws and courts were abolished, these changes were not legitimized with religious arguments. On the contrary, it was clearly stated that the newly-adopted laws were not based on religion, and the laws based on religion is a factor of underdevelopment. The introduction part of the Civil Code adopted in

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<sup>12</sup> “Türkiye ahâlisine din ve ırk farkı olmaksızın vatandaşlık itibâriyle (Türk) ıtlak olunur” (Article 88) <http://www.anayasa.gen.tr/1924tek.htm>

1926, written by the Minister of Justice Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, summarizes the perspective of the ruling elites of the early Republican era:

The states, whose laws are based on religion, cannot satisfy the needs of their nations; because religions state unchangeable judgments. The religious laws cannot offer a value or meaning to life, and the needs of life, which have been changing rapidly. (...) The laws, which take their principal causes from religions, bind their societies to the primitive period that those laws were once formed, and is one of the most important obstacles of progress.<sup>13</sup>

Zürcher categorizes secularization reforms into three groups, first of which is the secularization of the state, education and law: In 1924, the Caliphate and the venerable function of *Şeyhülislam* was abolished; *Şeriye ve Evkaf Vekaleti* (Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations) was replaced by *Diyanet İşleri Reisliği* (Directorate for Religious Affairs) and *Evkaf Umum Müdürlüğü* (Directorate-General for Pious Affairs). The *medreses* were replaced by *İmam Hatip Okulları* (School for Preachers) and Faculty of Theology of İstanbul University through the *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu* (Law on the Unification of Education), which ended the secular-non secular school dichotomy and completely secularized the education system. In 1926, Swiss Civil Code, which differed fundamentally from the provisions of the Sharia, was adopted. The new civil code introduced freedom to choose religion, secularization of the marriage ceremony, principle of monogamy, equal rights for both men and women to sue for divorce, parenthood on children, and inheritance (Toprak, 1981: 52-53). In the same year, Italian Penal Code was also

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<sup>13</sup> “Kanunları dine müstenid olan devletler kısa bir zaman sonra memleketin ve milletin matluplarını tatmin edemezler. Çünkü dinler layetegayyer hükümler ifade ederler. Hayat yürür; ihtiyaçlar süratle değişir, din kanunları, mutlaka ilerleyen hayatın huzurunda şekilden ve ölü kelimelerden fazla bir kıymet, bir mana ifade edemezler. (...). Esaslarını dinlerden alan kanunlar tatbik edilmekte oldukları camiaları nazil oldukları iptidai devirlere bağlarlar. Ve terakkiye mani bellibaşlı müessir ve amiller sırasında bulunurlar” (Mahmud Esad, 1926: 4).



adopted, and in 1928, the clause of constitution which made Islam the state religion of Turkey was removed (Zürcher, 2006: 272).

The second area of secularization was that of religious symbols. In 1925, fez was replaced with the hat and religious attire was restricted to prayer services in the mosques. The Western clock and calendar, Western numerals and Latin alphabet, and Western weights and measures were adopted in 1926, 1928, and 1931, respectively. In 1934, law on family names was adopted and every Turkish citizen obtained a family name; in 1935, Sunday became the official day of rest instead of Friday. Moreover, for many people, formal emancipation of women, active promotion of new women role models to society (such as professional women, women pilots, opera singers and beauty queens) and the attacks on the wearing of the veil had religious connotations (Zürcher, 2006: 273).

The most important step towards the secularization of social life, the third area of secularization, was the suppression of the *tarikats* in 1925. In 1933, the Arabic *ezan* was replaced with a Turkish one, recited to a melody composed by the state conservatory. In order to extend the reforms and instill a secular and positivist attitude to a wide range of people, *Halkevleri* (People's Houses) was constituted in 1935 (Zürcher, 2006: 279).

While the state, symbols and social life had been secularized, the government also tried to secularize the identity and build a secular one based on Turkish nationalism. In 1930, *Türk Ocağı Türk Tarih Tetkik Heyeti* (Research Committee of Turkish History of Turkish Association, TTTH) was founded. The first work of the Committee, *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* (the Outline of Turkish History) was the first complete presentation of the Turkish Historical Thesis (THT). The thesis claims

that, in pre-historic era, there was an advanced Turkish civilization in Central Asia. Climate change, occurred after the end of ice age, forced the Turks to migrate to different lands, on which they founded new civilizations. Most of the civilizations founded in China, India, Asia Minor, the North Africa and Europe, were either founded or developed by the Turks (TTTH, 1931). The textbooks based on this work explicitly rejected Islam and referred it as a political tool that was used by different nations.

In 1932, *Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti* (Research Institute of Turkish Language) was founded, in order to "reveal core beauty and richness of Turkish language"<sup>14</sup>. A theory called *Güneş Dil Teorisi* (Sun Language Theory) was formed by the Society, which claims that the first people who developed a language were the Turks in Central Asia, and they invented the first word to describe the Sun. All other languages in the world were formed after the migration of Turks and derived from Turkish. Beginning in November 1935, newspapers and journals published articles that "prove" the words known to be Latin, English, French, Greek, Persian and Arabic like were indeed derived from Turkish (TDK, 1936: 32).

The secularization reforms were carried out under the leadership and active promotion of Mustafa Kemal. The foundation of *Köy Enstitüleri* (Village Institutes) shows that the process continued even after his death. The aim of the institutes was to expand positivist and secularist ideas to conservative Anatolian villages, as expressed by Hasan Âli Yücel, the Minister of Education of the era:

We would like to train up new people who will bring the great revolutions that we made in our social life since the war of independence, to the villages. Because, the

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<sup>14</sup><http://www.tdk.gov.tr/TR/Genel/BelgeGoster.aspx?F6E10F8892433CFFAAF6AA849816B2EF2858DA18F4388CDD>

era of ummah has such a man - the imam. (...) We would like to send the man of revolutionary idea in the village instead of the imam.<sup>15</sup>

To sum up, as the state secularized and made the promotion of secularism to its citizens, the ruling elite tried to replace the supposed space blanked by Islam with Turkish nationalism during the early republican era.

### **3.10. The Multi-Party Era**

On 7 January 1946, the Democratic Party (DP) was officially registered. Under the multi-party system, the RPP Government softened its policies of secularism. In August 1946, Hasan Âli Yücel was taken from the ministry, which “actually ended the project of the Village Institutes” (Dündar, 2006: 92). With a circular issued by the new Minister, boys and girls were separated in the Institutes, ending mixed education. Free reading and discussion time was abolished, and the classics were forbidden. In 1947, the Prime Minister closed the Higher Institute, the backbone of the system (Dündar, 2006: 97). In 1949, a university professor with Islamic leanings, Şemsettin Günaltay, became the Prime Minister (Zürcher, 2006: 312). In the same year, the government opened *Imam Hatip* courses that middle school graduates could attain to become imam. Despite these changes, the RPP lost the elections and the DP came to power in 1950.

After the DP came to power, the softening process of secularism continued. Two weeks after receiving vote of confidence, the DP made the prayer call in Arabic legal on 16 June 1950, which was adopted by all Mosques across the country. Two important foundations that were crucial for the secularization of the society,

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<sup>15</sup> “Biz, istiklal mücadelesinden itibaren sosyal hayatımızda yaptığımız büyük devrimleri köylere götürecek adam yetiştirmek isteriz. Çünkü, ümmet devrinin böyle bir adamı vardır. Bu, imamdır. (...) Biz imamın yerine, köye devrimci düşüncenin adamını göndermeyi isteriz” (Dündar, 2006: 30).

*Halkevleri* and *Köy Enstitüleri*, were closed by the government in 1951 and 1953, respectively. During the DP government, religious education was expanded, the number of preacher schools was enlarged and the sale of religious literature was allowed again. They accepted the existence of autonomous religious organizations, and even legitimized them by accepting the support of the *Nurcu* movement in the elections of 1954 and 1957 (Zürcher, 2006: 339).

These changes in secularism policies have been interpreted in three different perspectives. The first perspective supports the view that the transition to multi-party regime and the subsequent coming to power of the Democratic Party in 1950 constitute a serious break with the previous period. Prof. Sina Akşin, for example, points out two dates that initiated a serious change: “In 1945, not yet achieving its goal, the revolution paused. In 1950, a partial counter-revolution process began. The revolution was frozen.”<sup>16</sup> The second perspective is a radical one, which states that the counter-revolution started at the moment Mustafa Kemal died. Prof. Çetin Yetkin holds this view and claims that “the date and the time of the counter-revolution are 10<sup>th</sup> of December, 1938 and 9:05, respectively”<sup>17</sup>. The third view is a moderate one, and holds the position that although the DP softened the secularism of Turkey, its understanding of secularism was not significantly different from that of the RPP. This view is supported by Zürcher, stating that the DP did not end the integration of the religious establishment into the bureaucracy through *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, and every *imam* remained as a civil servant (Zürcher, 2006: 244-245).

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<sup>16</sup> “1945’te, daha hedefe ulaşılmeden, Devrim durakladı. 1950’de Kısmî Karşıdevrim sürecine girildi. Devrim donduruldu.” <http://turkoloji.cu.edu.tr/GENEL/31.php>

<sup>17</sup> “Türkiye’de yaşanan karşıdevrim’in başlangıç gün ve saati 10 Kasım 1938, 09:05’tir” (Yetkin, 2002: 21)

### 3.11. Conclusion

There are several conclusions that can be derived from these facts. First of all, Turkish nationalism is a modern concept emerged in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which takes its intellectual roots from the Young Ottomans and cultural Turkists. Like most of the other nationalisms emerged in the Ottoman Empire, economic factors did not play a vital role in the emergence of Turkish nationalism. Thus, nationalism theories which focus on economic factors, such as that of Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson fail to explain its emergence. Secondly, its relationship with religion, parallel with Liah Greenfeld's approach towards the relationship between nationalism and religion, is not linear. It emerged in a highly religious environment, and gradually widened itself in expense of religion. However, until the emergence of the Kemalist variant, Turkish nationalism was not a completely secular ideology, and religion has been a factor in it. Even the variant of Ziya Gökalp, which explicitly supports the separation of religion and state, also included religion as an indicator of being a Turk. The intellectuals who rejected Islam and started an open confrontation with it, the *Garbcular*, were not nationalists but Ottomanists. Thirdly, Kemalist nationalism is a radical break with the previous forms of Turkish nationalism in terms of its approach towards religion. It aims to build a secular Turkish identity, which does not include Islam. Lastly, the softening process of secularism in Turkey was not started by the DP government, but by the RPP government accelerated soon after the beginning of the multi-party era. Therefore, it is more accurate to define the de-secularization policies of the DP as a continuation of that of the RPP, occurred due to party competition in a vote-

maximizing political environment. The last two points will also be analyzed in the evolution of the high school history textbooks in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### COMPARISON OF THE HIGH SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS OF THE 1930 -1950 PERIOD AND 1950 – 1960 ERA

#### 4.1. Introduction

Between the years 1923 and 1929, Turkey witnessed radical secularization reforms, which changed the entire structure of the state and, to a certain extent, the social life of the people. On the other hand, for centuries, the Muslim people of Anatolia had perceived themselves solely with their religious identities, regardless of their ethnic background. In order to make the secularization reforms accepted by a larger public, the new Republic tried to implement a secular identity based on Turkish nationalism. The aim was to separate Turkishness and Islam, ensure the young generation to identify themselves with the glorified, pre-Islamic Turks; and substitute the new secular Turkish identity with that of Islam. The *history reform* was the result of this aim. By the year 1930, the Turkish Historical Thesis, claiming that most of the ancient civilizations were formed by the Turks of Central Asia, had been formed.

The high school history textbooks of 1931, which were prepared to reach the goals of history reform, have four important differences from their predecessors and successors. Firstly, a distinction is made between science and religion, and it is stated that the scientific way of explanation is the accurate one; secondly, it is precisely narrated that the Turks founded most of the ancient civilizations; thirdly,

the Islamic doctrine is explicitly rejected – Mohammed is not introduced as a messenger of God, but a brilliant tribal leader who tried to reform the ethics of his society; and fourthly, it is stated that the Turks converted to Islam not for spiritual reasons, but for political reasons.

In 1939, the first volume of the textbooks was re-written, and two changes were made – firstly, it does not contain a chapter that compares the perspectives of science and religion, and superiors the former; secondly, the THT is implicitly narrated, the precise sentences of the previous textbook was replaced by veiled implications.

In 1942, a new series of textbooks were written, which contain important differences from the previous textbooks. First of all, these textbooks moderately accept the Islamic doctrine and narrate Mohammed as the messenger of God; and secondly, they state that the Turks converted to Islam for spiritual reasons. These changes show that the textbooks do not contain the most important assumptions of the Kemalist project of creating a secular Turkish identity that excludes Islam.

In 1950, soon after the DP came to the power, another series of textbooks were started to be used, with two basic differences: Firstly, the Islamic doctrine is accepted in a more powerful rhetoric; and secondly, unlike the previous textbooks, these textbooks moderately assume that the readers, who are high school students in Turkey, are Muslims.

In this chapter, the narrative style of these high school history textbooks, and possible reasons behind the changes will be analyzed in detail.



## 4.2. 1931 – 1941 Period

In 1931, new high school textbooks were adopted, which would be used as the official textbooks until 1941. The reason of the change of the textbooks is *history reform* that aimed to build a secular identity based on Turkish nationalism, instead of a religious one based on Islam. Like most of the other reforms, history reform was an idea of Mustafa Kemal. According to Afet İnan, the following conversation had taken place between her and Mustafa Kemal in 1928:

In 1928, in one of French geography books, it was written that the Turks belonged to the yellow race, which was a secondary human type for European mind. I showed this to him and asked if it were like that. He said:

- No, this can't be true. Let us focus on this issue. You can begin researching.<sup>18</sup>

According to Lord Kinross, Mustafa Kemal ordered a “history reform” after reading a book:

For forty hours at a stretch he had been reading (...) H. G. Wells's *Outline of History*. It was to become for him a book of revelation. As soon as he had finished it gave orders for its translation into Turkish, and its publication by the Turkish Government a year or so later was followed by that of an *Outline of Turkish History*, on similar lines. Wells became his principle hero, and he was soon quoting long passages from his work at the table. He was a great historian and prophet; he was Britain's ‘master thinker’. He opened Kemal's eyes to a new view of history” (Kinross: 467-468).

On 26th of April, 1930, 6th meeting of *Türk Ocağı* was made and the speeches delivered by Afet (İnan), Sadri Maksudi (Arsal) and Reşit Galip demonstrates the nature of the THT, which assumes that most of the ancient civilizations were founded by the Turks of Central Asia (Copeaux, 2006: 58). All of the speakers conclude that it was necessary to make known this bright history and

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<sup>18</sup> “1928 yılında, Fransızca coğrafya kitaplarının birinde, Türk ırkının Sarı İrk'a mensup olduğu ve Avrupa zihniyetine göre ikinci (secondaire) nevi bir insan tipi olduğu yazılı idi. Kendisine gösterdim. ‘Bu böyle midir?’ dedim. ‘Hayır, olmaz, bunun üzerinde meşgul olalım. Sen çalış’ dediler” (İğdemir, 1973: 3).

*Türk Ocağı Türk Tarih Tetkik Heyeti* (Research Committee of Turkish History of Turkish Association, TTTH) was founded. After the closure of *Türk Ocakları* in 1931, the society took the name *Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti* (Research Institute of Turkish History, TTTC), whose first duty was to write history books for high schools. In June, the society presented the first volume of the book to Mustafa Kemal. He liked and approved the books, and then, the society went to Istanbul to write the remaining three volumes in an area reserved for them in Dolmabahçe Palace (İğdemir, 1973: 8). The Commission that wrote the books was consisted of 13 members, most of whom were the members of Parliament and belonged to the inner circle of Mustafa Kemal:

Table 2. The writers of the textbooks of 1931.

Mehmet Tevfik Bey	General Secretary of the President and the Head of TTTC
Samih Rifat Bey	Çanakkale Deputy and the Deputy Head of TTTC
Akçuraoğlu Yusuf Bey	Istanbul Deputy, Professor of Political History at Ankara School of Law and the Deputy Head of TTTC
Reşit Galip Bey	Aydın Deputy and the General Secretary of TTTC
Hasan Cemil Bey	Bolu Deputy and Member of TTTC
Afet Hanımefendi	History and Civil Information Instructor and Member of TTTC
Baki Bey	Colonel in General Staff, Administrator of the Second Desk in the Department of War History
İsmail Hakkı Bey	Balıkesir Deputy and Member of TTTC
Reşit Saffet Bey	Koceli Deputy and Member of TTTC
Sadri Maksudi Bey	Şarki Karahisar Deputy and Member of TTTC
Şemseddin Bey	Sivas Deputy, Former Professor of Political History at Istanbul University and Member of TTTC
Şemsi Bey	Colonel, Administrator of Map Desk at the General Administration of Map
Yusuf Ziya Bey	Eskişehir Deputy, Former Professor of History of Law at Istanbul University and Member of TTTC

Some of the parts of the book are based on the notes written by Mustafa Kemal<sup>19</sup>. He also read the first manuscripts and made feedbacks (İğdemir, 1973: 8). The books were completed within three months, and started to be used by the fall of 1931. Archive of the Ministry of Education of Turkey has following editions of the books:

Table 3. The textbooks used between 1931 and 1941.

<b>Tarih I</b>	Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti	1931, 1932, 1938	Maarif Vekaleti
<b>Tarih II</b>	Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti	1931, 1933, 1941	Maarif Vekaleti
<b>Tarih III</b>	Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti	1931, 1933, 1941	Maarif Vekaleti
<b>Tarih IV</b>	Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti	1931, 1934	Maarif Vekaleti

There are four important aspects of the books: Firstly, it is aimed to inoculate a positivist point of view to the readers, and to ensure this, viewpoints of science and religion is compared; it is emphasized that the stories written in the holy books are wrong and the emergence of life is explained with the theory of evolution. Furthermore, with the aim of demystifying religion, the emergence of religion is explained by sociological and psychological factors. Secondly, in order to glorify the Turks before adopting Islam, the Turkish Historical Thesis is narrated as a historical fact – according to the book, almost all civilizations in history were either founded or developed by the Turks. Thirdly, while narrating the emergence of Islam, the Islamic doctrine is rejected – Mohammed is not the last Prophet or the messenger of God, but a tribal leader, military general and philosopher. Lastly, as a result of the rejection of the Islamic doctrine, Turks' conversion to Islam is

<sup>19</sup> The notes of Mustafa Kemal are published by (Perinçek, 1999).

attributed to political reasons, such as taking the control of the Abbasid Empire, or paying less taxes.

#### **4.2.1. Comparison of Science and Religion**

Unlike the reforms of the Ottoman Empire, the Republic did not legitimize its reforms with religious arguments; on the contrary, it did not hesitate to declare that they contradict with religion. This positivist mentality could also be seen in the textbooks of 1931 – the first chapter of the first textbook, titled as “An Introduction to the History of Mankind”, contains expressions that would question religion to the readers in two ways: Firstly, it is stated that religious explanations of the emergence of life on earth are wrong, and then, the emergence of religion is analyzed from a psychological and sociological perspective.

On the first page, the book compares “the primitive views of the early human beings” on the nature and “the realities of today” and relates both to human intelligence:

The whole knowledge and beliefs of humans are the products of their intelligence. (...) This means that, it is the most effective essence on understanding of the nature. However, it is also the source of all mythical concepts which are beyond and exterior to nature, created by human mind to relieve itself.<sup>20</sup>

The following pages reveal that what was referred as “mythical concepts” is religion. The authors focus on the contradictions of science and religion, and imply the former as the better approach for explaining the historical events:

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<sup>20</sup> “[İ]nsanların bütün bilgileri ve inanışları, insan zekasının eseridir. (...) [T]abiataın fevkinde ve haricindeki bütün mefhumların, insan dimağı için kendi tarafından uydurma şeylerden başka bir şey olmayacağı meydana çıkar” (TTTC, 1931a: 2).

Until 200 years earlier, it was believed that the world was created 5000 – 6000 years ago and the humans were created in heaven that is on the Euphrates River and two days away from Basra. These beliefs had always emerged from taking the stories of religious books as total truths. Now, it has been understood that the world is millions of years old, not just six thousand. This understanding has been formed after one hundred years of observation of rock layers in the Earth and the fossils between them.<sup>21</sup>

After this comparison, the most important aspect of science-religion dichotomy is narrated: the theory of evolution. Since evolutionary theory explains the emergence of living things totally different from monotheistic religions and as it is widely accepted among scientists, it is disputed among non-scientists even today. If a person accepts the theory as a scientific fact, then (s)he also has to reject at least some of the basic assumptions of monotheistic religions. The book accepts the theory as a fact, and introduces proofs in order to assure the reader:

It is necessary to accept the fact that life emerged in Earth as a result of chemical and physical events, which were natural and inescapable, and occurred without an intervention of a supernatural force. (...)

Indeed, it is widely claimed that the humans and the great apes have common ancestors (Picture 1 and 2)<sup>22</sup>. These ancestors are evolved from one of the mammals that have less sophisticated functions. Those mammals, too, are evolved form of a reptile, which is also evolved from the fishes. The *primitive cell*, which is the first form of life, is the ancestor of all those mentioned.

This genealogy of human beings is also supported by the similarities between skeletons of human beings and that of other bonny animals. If we think about very interesting phases of the human body before the birth, it will not be possible to reject the accuracy of the theory. Indeed, between the first and the third trimesters, human

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<sup>21</sup> “Bundan 200 sene eveline kadar, dünyanın 5-6 bin sene evel yaratıldığı ve insanın Basraya iki günlük yolda, Fırat nehri üzerinde bulunan cennette yaratıldığı zannolunmakta idi. Bu kanaatler hep din kitaplarındaki hikayelerin olduğu gibi hakikat sanılmasından doğuyordu. Artık, hayatın 6 bin senelik değil, milyonlarca senelik olduğu anlaşılmıştır” (TTTC, 1931a: 3).

<sup>22</sup> In the first page of the appendix part, a skeleton of a human being and an ape is attached, implying the similarity of the two.

cell develops in such a way that it would become a fish. It passes through some shapes that are similar to that of reptiles, and then that of mammals. It even has a tail for a short period of time.<sup>23</sup>

After the dichotomization of religious beliefs and scientific facts, the emergence of religion is analyzed through a psychological and sociological perspective; with the aim of ensuring the reader to perceive religion with a secular point of view. The authors make the analysis as follows: Firstly, they focus on the fear that the primitive humans had felt, and relate the emergence of first religions to the fear of primitive humans to their tribal chiefs. Primitive humans were not able to differentiate their dreams from reality, and since they saw their tribal chiefs in their dreams, they could never be sure whether or not their tribal chief was really dead. They gradually attached sacredness to their chiefs, and this is later evolved into the tribal God, which is the beginning of the concept of God. As they began to observe the sky, they attached holiness to stars; and as language developed, they began to narrate stories about themselves, holy things, the world and reasons of natural events. So, a tribal mentality and traditions developed, albeit with negative effects:

This condition dispossessed the people to hold their own ideas and views freely, and enforced them to accept some teachings without questioning. It is seen that, after this

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<sup>23</sup> “Her halde, hayatın, herhangi bir tabiat harici amilin müdahalesi olmaksızın dünya üzerinde tabii, zaruri bir kimya ve fizik seyri neticesi olduğunu kabul etmek lazımdır. (...) Filhakka umumiyetle iddia olunuyor ki, insanın ve büyük maymunların (Res. 1,2) müşterek bir cedleri vardır. Bu ced dahi, daha basit şekilleri haiz bir nesilden, ilk memeli hayvan cinslerinin birinden ayrılıyor. Bu memeli hayvan da bir nevi yerde sürünen hayvandan ve nihayet bu da balıklardan geliyor. Bunların hepsi de ilk hayat şekli olan *iptidai hücreye* dayanıyor.

İnsanın bu şeceresi, insanın teşrihile sair kemikli hayvanların teşrihi arasındaki mukayeselerle müstenittir. İnsan, doğmadan evel, vücudunun geçirdiği pek garip safhalar vardır ki, onlar bilincek olursa, bu iddianın sıhhatini kabul etmemek olmaz. Filhakika rüşeymi hayat ile cenin hayatı devirlerinde insane, evvela bir balık olacakmış gibi başlar, yerde sürünen hayvanları hatırlatan bir takım şekillerden geçer, basit memeli hayvanların bünyelerini tekrarlar, hatta bir müddet için kuyruğu da vardır” (TTTC, 1931a: 5).

stage, the people had to sacrifice a portion of their personalities. Humanity follows the same path even today.<sup>24</sup>

In the next paragraph, religion is defined as “the total of these traditions and beliefs that established mental and emotional relationships among people”. The conclusion part summarizes the previous findings and reasserts the superiority of science:

Like every issue related with human life, there is a process of evolution in religious affairs. Primitive humans did not have any idea or belief about God and religion. (...) It is observed that, just like other foundations, humans developed religious foundations after they started to live in community-level. (...) The fear and disability of humans gradually decreased as their minds enlightened by recent scientific discoveries, and they have started to understand the reality more accurately since then.<sup>25</sup>

To sum up, the first volume of the history textbooks of 1931 contain a chapter which compares science and religion, states that some of the facts presented in the holy books are wrong, and concludes that scientific explanations prevail religious ones. The aim is to build the mind of the young generations with a positivist world view, the first step to build up a secular identity.

#### **4.2.2. Turks Before Islam**

The Turkish Historical Thesis entered the textbooks of 1931, with its three main assumptions. The first assumption is the Turks in the Central Asia were the

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<sup>24</sup> “Bu hal, insanları istediği gibi serbest bir fikir ve düşünceye malik olabilmek için imkanından mahrum ve bazı fikirleri, bazı telkinleri olduğu gibi kabul etmeğe mecbur ediyordu. Görülüyor ki, insanlar bu bahsettiğimiz tarihlerden itibaren şahsiyetlerinden bir kısmını feda etmek mecburiyetinde kalmışlardır. Beşeriyet, bugün dahi aynı yolu izlemektedir” (TTTC, 1931a:23).

<sup>25</sup> “İnsanların hayatına taalluk eden her şeyde olduğu gibi dini meselelerde de bir tekamül hadisesi görünür. İptidai insanda Allah ve din hakkında hiçbir fikir ve kanaat yoktu. (...) Görülüyor ki insanlar cemaat halinde yaşamaya başladıktan sora, diğer içtimai müesseseler gibi din müessesesini de vücuda getirmişlerdir. (...) İnsanların korku ve zaaf hisleri, dimağın son ve çok yeni ilmi keşiflerle nurlanması sayesinde gittikçe azaldı. Ve insanlar hakikati bundan sora daha bariz görmeye başladılar” (TTTC, 1931a: 24).

first real humans on Earth. Thus, their civilization was more advanced than the others: “The period that actually separates animals from humans, the period of domestication of animals, has started in [the Central Asia]”<sup>26</sup>. Secondly, following the climate change occurred after the end of ice age, the Turks of Central Asia began to migrate to the different parts of the world:

The outgoing of ice and the disappearance of wide inland seas, the doors of the Central Asia to the west is fully opened. Then, the Central Asia became a sea of people, which carried its waves to China, India, Asia Minor, the North Africa and Europe for millenniums.<sup>27</sup>

Thirdly, the Turks spread their advanced civilization to the lands they have migrated to, which are China, India, Asia Minor, the North Africa, Aegean and Europe:

The Turks, who moved to find better climates, (...) spread over everywhere with the seeds of their civilization. (...) They draw the primitive tribes back to other places, or made them civilized. With their very high intelligence and superior weapons, they always won the battles they made, settled and dominated the place they emigrated to. If they found an empty place and liked, they settled there and became the autochthon community of the place.<sup>28</sup>

The ones, who were on the Eastern side of the drought Turkish lands, went to China which was close to them. (...) With their civilized knowledge, noble ethics, pure and

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<sup>26</sup> “İnsanlıkla hayvanlığı hakiki ve bariz surette ayıran devir, hayvanları ehlileştirme devri, en evel burada açılmış (...)” (TTTC, 1931a: 26).

<sup>27</sup> “Buzların çekilmesi ve geniş içdenizlerin aradan kalkmasıyla, Ortaasyanın garba kapıları, arkasına kadar açıldı. Ondan sora Ortaasya binlerce yıl zarfında Çine, Hinde, Önyasyaya, Şimali Afrikaya ve Avrupaya dalgalarını taşıyan büyük bir insan denizi oldu” (TTTC, 1931a: 27).

<sup>28</sup> “Daha iyi iklimler aramağa çıkan Türkler, ayrıldıkları sahalara nazaran en elverişli gördükleri yolları tutarak medeniyetlerinin tohumlariyle birlikte dört bucağa yayıldılar. (...) Karşılaştıkları iptidai yerlilerle çarpışarak onları ya başka yerlere sürdüler, ya da içlerine girerek temdin ettiler. Yerlilere nazaran çok yüksek zekaları ve mütakamil silahları ile galebe çalmakta, yerleşmekte ve hükümlerini yürütmekte güçlük çekmediler. Boş buldukları sahalarda ise beğendikleri yerlere yeleşerek oraların otokron ahalsi oldular” (TTTC, 1931a: 28).



plain believes, they furthered the civilization there for a very long time, which was one of the most important civilizations in the world until the last centuries.<sup>29</sup>

Another wave of migration from Central Asia was to the Indian subcontinent. (...) Like in China, the indigenous people of India did not have a civilization. In pre-historic times, the place was inhabited by black skinned tribes, who are similar to 'gang of monkeys'. The Turks, who sent these to south is called Duravit.<sup>30</sup>

Researches made in Anatolia, where the Turks settled at least 7000 years ago and made the land their sacred home, constantly predates the emergence of the Anatolian-Eti civilization, which is today is dated as 4000 BC, a few centuries back.<sup>31</sup>

The Turks who went to Egypt chose the empty basin of Nile to settle. Asian roots of the people who founded the first civilization of Egypt is a fact accepted by most of the scholars studying ancient history of Egypt.<sup>32</sup>

Some of the Turks who went to the West found Aegean basin as a suitable place to settle. (...) It is not possible to think the civilizations in the western coast of Anatolia and the Greek peninsula separately from the ancient civilizations in Mesopotamia and Central Asia.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> "Medeni bilgileri, yüksek ve asil ahlakları, saf ve sade itikatları ile Çinde yerleşen Türklerin orada devirler imtidadınca ilerlettikleri medeniyet son asırlara gelinceye kadar dünyanın en ehemmiyetli medeniyetlerinden biri olmak vasfını muhafaza etmiştir" (TTTC, 1931a: 28).

<sup>30</sup> "Diğer bir göç dalgası Ortaasyadan Hint Yarımadasına yürümüştür. (...) Çinde olduğu gibi Hintte de asıl yerlilerin medeniyeti yoktu. Tarihtenevki zamanlarda Hint "maymun sürülerine benzien" kara derili insane kabilelerle meskundu. Saydığımız iki geçitten girerek bunları cenuba doğru süren Türklere tarihte dravit adı veriliyor" (TTTC, 1931a: 29).

<sup>31</sup> "Türkün en az yedi bin yıldanberi gelip yerleşerek kendine mukaddes yurt edindiği Anadoluda yapılan taharriler, bugün milattan evel 4000 yıla çıkarılan Anadolu-Eti medeniyetinin kitemini, her an birkaç asır daha maziye götürmektedir" (TTTC, 1931a: 30).

<sup>32</sup> "Mısıra giden Türkler yerleşmek için Nilin boş buldukları deltasını seçtiler. İlk mısır medeniyetini kuranların Asyadan geldikleri, Mısırın kadim tarihi ile uğraşan alimlerin çoğu tarafından kabul edilmiş bir keyfiyettir" (TTTC, 1931a: 30).

<sup>33</sup> "Garba giden Türklerden bir kısmı yerleşmek için elverişli zeminlerden birini de Ege havzasında buldular. (...) Anadolunun garp kıyılarında ve Yunan Yarımadasında yükselmiş medeniyetleri, Anadolunun içindeki, Mezopotamyadaki ve Ortaasyadaki kadim medeniyetlerden ayrı mütalea etmek kabil değildir" (TTTC, 1931a: 31).

The ones, who passed through the shores of Caspian and the Black Sea, went inside Europe and reached Atlantic. Some of the ones at the forefront passed the sea and occupied the islands of Great Britain and Ireland.<sup>34</sup>

The claims are clear and unreserved – *the Turks* founded most of the ancient civilizations. (The term “Turks”, which appears hundreds of times throughout the book, is important; because it will be replaced by “Central Asians” or “brachycephalic race” in 1939). The aim is to glorify the ethnic (and especially, pre-Islamic) past of the Turks to ease the adoption of Turkish identity.

#### **4.2.3. The Emergence of Islam**

The narration of Islam is totally different from mainstream Islamic history writing. Although the facts narrated in the textbook are taken from Islamic sources, the values do not bind with Islamic discourse. In Islamic discourse, *the Qur'an* is a holy book which contains the principles of the holy creator, Allah. It is revealed to Mohammed by Allah, making him the messenger of Allah and the last prophet. The textbook, by contrast, takes a secular point of view and rejects all teachings of Islam - Mohammed is not narrated as the messenger of Allah or the last Prophet, but a brave and brilliant merchant, philosopher, legislator, diplomat, military general who tried to reform the ethics of his society:

When observed from a historical point of view, Mohammed did not suddenly emerge by saying ‘I am the messenger of Allah’. After reclusing himself into isolated places and thinking for years, the idea of revelation and inspiration came to his mind in order to improve the morality and traditions of the Arabs that he saw as too bad and primitive. (...) Mohammed, like other prophets, sincerely believed that the force

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<sup>34</sup> “Hazar ve Karadenizin kıyıları yolu ile geçenler Avrupa içlerine dalarak Atlas Okyanusuna kadar dayandılar; en ileride bulunanlardan bir kısmı denizi geçerek Büyük Britanya adalarını ve İrlandayı işgal etti” (TTTC, 1931a: 32).

inspiring him was the one guiding human beings to the goodness and happiness, not the one deceiving them.

At the beginning, Mohammed probably incurred a severe excitement. He sincerely worried with religious concerns and thoughts of conscience. He acted with honor and without personal interest. His aim was to improve the morality, religion and social life of his social environment.

(...)

He challenged for moral benefit of the people that he lives with and on behalf of a great reality. At last, he became the founder of a global religion. The religion that Mohammed disseminated tagged at the heartstrings of many people. Even fourteen centuries after Mohammed's death and gone, Islam still continues to do so. However, social life slowly changes and widens the first teachings of Mohammed.<sup>35</sup>

The chapter is devoted to humanize the Prophet, and demystify Islam. First of all, in Turkish tradition, the word *Hazreti* (abbreviated as "Hz.") is used in front of the names of all Prophets and the first followers of Mohammed as a sign of respect and emphasize their holiness. None of the books written by the TTTC contain the mentioned prefix. Secondly, while narrating the period, it is emphasized that the verses were written by Mohammed: "Mohammed was declaring the verses, which were the result of his long term contemplation, in line with his necessity and

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<sup>35</sup> "Tarihi noktai nazardan da mütalea edildiği zaman görülüyor ki: Muhammet birdenbire Allahın Resulüyüm diyerek ortaya çıkmamıştır. O, Arapların ahlak ve adetlerinin pek fena ve pek iptidai olduğunu anlamış, bunları ıslah için tenha yerlere çekilerek senelerce düşünmüş ve yıllarca tefekkürden sora kendisinde vahiy ve ilham fikri doğmuştur. (...) Muhammet te diğer peygamberler gibi kendisine ilham eden kuvvetin insanları iğfal eden bir kuvvet olmayıp, onları hayır ve saadete irşat eden ilahi bir kuvvet olduğuna samimi olarak inandı.

Muhammed başlangıçta herhalde şedit bir heyecana maruz oldu. Birtakım dini endişeler ve vicdani mülahazalarla samimi surette üzüldü. Muhammet namuskar ve menfaat fikrinden ari olarak ortaya atıldı. Onun gayesi, muhitinin ahlakını, dinini ve içtimai hayatını ıslah etmektir. (...) Aralarında yaşadığı insanların manevi menfaati için ve büyük bir hakikat namına mücadeleye atıldı. Sonunda cihanşümul bir dinin müessisi oldu. Muhammedin neşrettiği din, insanların kalbinde derin bir ihtizaz uyandırdı. O ölüp gittikten sora bile islamiyet, hala kalplerde ihtizaz husule getirmektedir. Bununla beraber içtimai hayat, Muhammedin ilk telkinlerini bati bir tekamül ile tadil ve tevsî etmektedir" (TTTC, 1931b: 90-91).

needs”<sup>36</sup>; the Qur’an is defined as “the book that contains the principles of Mohammed”<sup>37</sup>. Thirdly, his military operations and diplomatic movements are analyzed in detail, and his success is attributed to his bravery in military operations and diplomatic genius:

During the battle [of Bedr], the extraordinary bravery that Mohammed demonstrated terrified and astonished the Muslims; nobody were as brave as him and draw near to the enemy as close as him.<sup>38</sup>

Muslims were not satisfied with the heavy clauses in the treaty [of Hdaybiyyah]. His companions opposed to Mohammed and wanted an explanation. This is understandable, because in order to comprehend the importance of the treaty, an insight, which could develop only after a long life experience was needed. Indeed, none of the triumphs of Islam was as important as the treaty of Hdaybiyyah. After this Treaty, a close and heart-to-heart contact became possible with the Qurayshians, with which instilling of Islam became easier and more effective. (...) In Hdaybiyyah, 1500 people were with Mohammed. Two years later, he went to conquer Mecca with 10000 people.<sup>39</sup>

Lastly, Islam is not only narrated as a religious movement, but also as a political one. For example, the reason behind the rejection of Islam by people of Mecca is attributed to economic reasons: “The lives of Qurayshians were based on

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<sup>36</sup> “Muhammed uzun bir devirdeki tefekkürlerinin mahsulü olan ayetleri lüzum ve ihtiyaçlara göre takrir ediyordu” (TTTC, 1931b: 91).

<sup>37</sup> “Muhammed’in koyduğu esasların toplu olduğu kitaba Kuran denir” (TTTC, 1931b: 90).

<sup>38</sup> “Müsademe esnasında Muhammedin gösterdiği harikulade cesaret müslümanları dehşet ve hayret içinde bıraktı; hiç kimse onun kadar cesur olmadı, ve düşmana onun kadar yaklaştı” (TTTC, 1931b: 95).

<sup>39</sup> “Bu muahedenamedeki ağır şartlardan müslümanlar, hiç memnun olmadılar; en yakın sahabeler Muhammede itiraz ettiler ve ondan istizahta bulundular. Hakları vardı. Çünkü bu muahedenin inceliğini anlayabilmek için, insanlar ve hadiseler hakkında yalnız uzun bir hayat tecrübesile kazanılabilecek nüfuzu nazar sahibi olmak lazımdı. Hakikatte, islamiyetin, o zamana kadar hiçbir zaferi; Hudeybiye Muahedesi kadar mühim olmamıştır. Bu muahededen sora, Kureyşlilerle yakından ve samimi temas mümkün oldu; islam telkinatı daha kolay ve tesirli yapılabildi. (...) Hudeybiyede Muhammedin yanında 1500 kişi vardı; bundan iki sene sora, Muhammed, Mekkenin fethine 10,000 kişi ile yürüdü” (TTTC, 1931b: 105).

fair organized in Kaaba and environs of Mecca. If the former religion were abandoned, economic benefits of the people of Mecca would have lost.”<sup>40</sup> The reasons of the acceptance of Islam by the people of Medina are explained as their acquaintance to monotheistic religion of the Jews, their need for a leader to unite their people, their hostility to the people of Mecca, and most importantly, the personality of Mohammed (TTTC, 1931b: 90). Characterizing Islam as a political movement becomes more visible during the narration of the period after the death of the Prophet:

What a deterrent example is that, at the moment when Mohammed was dead, old dissensions, ambitions, passions of rank suddenly and severely reemerged, at a level that yet lukewarm body of Mohammed, who was respected and frightened of when he was alive, was forgotten and neglected in the simple room where he died.

(...)

Ebubekir and Omer were not able to attend the funeral. It is understood that, at that moment political activities were so important and compelling that nobody had time or desire to get involved in the funeral of the powerful ruler and the owner of Arabia.<sup>41</sup>

It is also important to note that, although the narrative style and some expressions do not bind with Islamic doctrine, the text does neither contain a criticism of the Prophet nor Islam. Who has been criticized are the mainstream historians of Islam and the Prophet’s successors:

In order to understand Mohammed and how a founder of religion and head of state was he, it is foremostly needed to analyze his military activities. Otherwise, it is not possible to correct the error of downgrading Mohammed into an illiterate, ignorant,

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<sup>40</sup> “Kureyşlilerin islam dinini kabul etmemelerindeki iktisadi ve mali sebepler mühimdi. Kureyşlilerin hayatı Kabe ve Mekke etrafındaki panayırda kaim idi. Eski din terkedildiği takdirde, Mekkelilerin iktisadi menfaatleri haleldar olacaktı” (TTTC, 1931b: 89).

<sup>41</sup> “Nekadar ibrete şayan bir vaziyettir ki, daha Muhammedin öldüğü anda bütün eski nifaklar, ihtiraslar, hırscıklar, zincirden boşandılar; o derecede ki hakkında korku ve hürmet beslenen Peygamberin henüz ılık cesedi, son nefesini verdiği basit odada unutulmuş ve ihmal edilmişti. (...) Ebubekir ve Ömer de cenaze merasiminde bulunamamışlardı. Anlaşıyor ki, o anda siyasi meşguliyetler o kadar mühim ve mücbir idi ki, kimse Arabistanın kudretli hakim ve sahibinin cenazesine uğraşmaya ne vakit bulmuş ve ne de arzu duymuştur” (TTTC, 1931b: 115-116).

insensitive and passive idol who takes everything from an angel and transfers them to his society. Indeed, the personality named Mohammed was an emotional, pensive and enterprising being who proved to be the best among his contemporaries.<sup>42</sup>

Mohammed did not consider himself bound with anything when it is necessary to reform in religious or social issues. He always walked in the way of perfectness. His death suddenly stopped the evolution. The reason of stagnation and decline in Islamic world after Mohammed's death is not Mohammed, but his successors who took the text of the way he chose, not the soul. This great reality is only properly understood in the era of the Republic of Turkey and the needed is done.<sup>43</sup>

The most important block of the substitution of the Islamic identity with a secular one is done on this chapter of the book – the rejection of Islamic doctrine. Islam is not narrated as the order of the holy creator, Allah; but a product of a brave and brilliant tribal leader who tried to reform the ethics of his society.

#### **4.2.4. Turks' Adoption of Islam**

The textbooks analyze Turks' adoption process of Islam in two phases. The first phase is between the reign of Uthman as the Caliph and the demise of Umayyad Caliphate, and the second phase is the era of Abbasid Caliphate. It narrates Islam not as a religion, but as a political tool that is firstly used by "the Arabs" during the era

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<sup>42</sup> "Muhammedi ve onun nasıl bir din müessisi ve dini bir devlet reisi olduğunu anlayabilmek için onun bilhassa askeri faaliyetlerini tetkik etmek lazımdır. Aksi takdirde Muhammedi, her şeyi bir melekten alan ve aynen muhitine tebliğ eden ümmi, cahil, hissiz, hareketsiz bir put derekesine indirmek hatasından kurtulmak mümkün olmaz. Halbuki Muhammet denilen şahsiyet bizatihi mütehasis, mütefekkir, müteşebbis ve muasırlarının en yükseği olduğunu yaptığı işlerle ispat etmiş bir varlıktır" (TTTC, 1931b: 93).

<sup>43</sup> "Muhammet, gerek dini meselelerde, gerek içtimai hususlarda bir ıslah yapmak lazım geldiği zaman, kendini hiçbir şeyle bağlı görmemiştir. Daima tekamüle doğru yürümüştür. Ölüm, bu tekamülü birdenbire kesti. Muhammetten sonra islam aleminde görülen durgunluk ve tedenni sebebi Muhammette değil, onun haleflerinin Muhammedin mesleğinin ruhunu değil, metnini almalarında aramalıdır. Bu büyük hakikat ancak Türkiye Cumhuriyeti devrinde hakkile idrak edilmiş ve icabatı yapılmıştır" (TTTC, 1931b: 118).

of the Umayyad Caliphate to takeover Turkish lands; and then used by the Turks in the era of Abbasid Caliphate in order to dominate the Islamic Empire.

In the first phase that is titled as “Turkish – Arab Clash”, the Turks in Central Asia were firstly harassed, and later massacred by “the Arabs”. Although the authors define the army that spread the Islam as “the army of Islam” throughout the book, they suddenly cease to do so when the army reaches Turkish borders, and uses the term “the Arabs” instead, and continues to do so until the end of Umayyad Empire:

During the era of Caliphate Omar (634 - 644), *Muslim armies* conquered Iran after they won the battle of Nahavand (642). The last Sassanid king of Persia, Yezdigerd, escaped to city of Merv and seek asylum to Turks. *The Arabs* followed Yezdigerd and reached to border of the Western Turkish State.<sup>44</sup>

The book states that, before 705, the Arab attacks to Turkish lands were small-scale, and defines them as “crummy marauder raid”. But these attacks severely increased when they noticed the wealth in the Turkish lands and the Caliph appointed *Kuteybe Qutaibah bin Muslim* to take over the lands. Due to the internal conflicts of Turkish states, he managed to takeover Baykent and Talkan, two ancient Turkish cities in Bukhara, and made “unheard calamity”:

After [the Arabs] pillaged the beautiful and prosperous city [of Baykent], they burned and destroyed it, and brutally cut the throats of all Turks whose hands could hold a rifle. The women and children were enslaved and sent to Khorasan.

Kuteybe, who had started his attacks with massacres, continued the brutality until the end of his life. After Baykent, another rich and prosperous city called Talkan is destroyed. Terrifying massacres were done here too, when Arabs get tired to

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<sup>44</sup> “Halife Osman zamanında (634 – 644) islam orduları Nihavent muharebesinde (642), muvaffak olarak bütün İrana hakim olmuşlardı. İranın son Sasani hükümdarı Yezdigert, Merv şehrine kaçarak Türklere iltica etmişti. Araplar Yezdicerdi takiben şarkta Garbi Türk Devleti hudutlarına kadar ilerlemişler ve Türklerle temasa gelmişlerdi” (TTTC, 1931b: 141, emphasis added).

slaughter the surrendered Turks, they hang those poor people in rows. The six kilometers of the way towards Talkan became a horrible grove with human bodies hanged to trees in double.<sup>45</sup>

According to the book, despite these terrifying massacres, the Turks successfully challenged, and Kuteybe could not ensure the spread of Islam in Turkish lands and Arabian takeover. The Turks who accepted Islam at his time only seemed to have done so for economic reasons:

The Turks, who had lived free for centuries, could not lose their independence to these marauders. They were the master, and could not be reduced to a slave by accepting the religion of Islam. For this reason, although Umayyads tried for over a century, they could not spread the religion of Islam in Turkish lands and could not accept its dominance over even small Turkish principalities. The Turks accepted Islam en masse only after they had decided to be the master of the Arabs, who wanted to make the Turks their slaves.<sup>46</sup>

In order to get rid of the unbearably heavy jizya tax, most of the Turks in Buhara and Samarkand declared that they have adopted the religion of Islam.<sup>47</sup>

Although the spread of Islam is used as a synonym for Arab invasion throughout the book, it is also added that the Arabs used Islam as a tool to conquer

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<sup>45</sup> “(...) Bu güzel ve mamur şehri birkaç gün yağma ettikten sora yaktılar, yıktılar. Şehirde eli silah tutabilecek nekadar Türk varsa vahşiyane boğazladılar. Kadınları ve çocukları da esir ederek Horasana gönderdiler. Katliamlar yapmak suretiyle tecavüze başlayan Kuteybe, hayatının son günlerine kadar bu vahşette devam etti. Baykentten sora Talkan mamuresi de tahrip edildi. Burada da tüyler ürperten korkunç bir katliam yapıldı; Araplar, teslim olan Türkleri kılıçla doğramaktan yorulunca zavallıları sıra sıra ağaçlara astılar. Talkana giden yolun altı kilometre uzunluğundaki kısmı iki taraflı ağaçlara asılan insane cesetlerle korkunç bir koruluk şeklini aldı” (TTTC, 1931b: 144).

<sup>46</sup> “Asırlardan beri hür yaşayan Türkler, tabiatile bu çapulcuların hükmü altına giremezlerdi. İslam dinini kabul ederek efendilikten mevaliliğe (köleliğe) inemezlerdi. Bunun içindir ki Emeviler bir asra yakın bir müddet uğraştıkları halde Türkler arasında islam dinini yayamamış ve küçük türk beyliklerini bile hakimiyeti altına alamamışlardır. Türkler ancak kendilerini mevali yapmak isteyen Arapların efendisi olma karar verdikten soradır ki kütle halinde islam dinine girmişlerdir” (TTTC, 1931b: 147).

<sup>47</sup> “Tahammül edilmeyecek kadar ağır olan cizyeden kurtulmak için Buhara ve Semerkant Türklerinden birçoğu islam dinini kabul ettiklerini söylediler” (TTTC, 1931b: 147).



other lands. By doing so, it both “clears” Islam and emphasizes its political dimension:

It is not true to relate the invasion of Arabs with a religious ideal such as the spread of Islam. Attributing such a goal, especially to Umayyad Caliphs who did not believe in, and in many instances, insult the religion of Mohammed is a huge break from reality. Their aims were to rob rich and prosperous countries, to find new sources for their constantly increasing expenses.<sup>48</sup>

The second period is the era of Abbasid Caliphate. According to the book, during the last years of Umayyad Caliphate, Central Asia became an area of competition between the Arabs and the Chinese. The Turks, as the real owner of the land, were challenging both. During the revolt against the Umayyad Caliphate, the Turks supported Abu Muslim, who overthrew the Umayyad and established Abbasid Caliphate. As a leading player in the revolt, the Turks recognized the authority of the new state. Since they had got rid of their enemy in the West, now, they could cope with their enemy in the East and rescue their historic homelands. Because of this, they allied with the Abbasids, and attacked the Chinese who were trying to settle the shores of Amu Derya. Losing the battle of Talas in 751, the Chinese Empire left the homeland of the Turks. After the battle, the Turks started to change their religion in order to dominate the Islamic Empire:

The Turks had achieved victory over the Arabs with the revolt of Abu Muslim, and over Chinese with the battle of Talas. These events had opened two different paths to them. The first one was to go to China from the North and found an Empire as they have done over centuries. The other one was to turn to the West and dominate the Islamic Empire. They chose the second way. (...) The ones who participated in the

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<sup>48</sup> “Arapların istila maksatlarını islamlığın neşri gibi dini bir mefkureye atfetmek kat’iyyen doğru değildir. Bilhassa Emevi halifelerine, inanmadıkları ve çok kere tahkir ettikleri Muhammet dininin neşri gibi bir maksat atfetmek, hakikatten çok uzaklaşmaktır. Onlar yalnız zengin ve mamur ülkeleri talan etmek, gittikçe genişliyen bütçelerine yeni yeni varidat membaraları bulmak gibi hasis emeller arkasında koşmuşlardır” (TTTC, 1931b: 146).

revolution had understood that they would dominate the new Empire due to their high capabilities.<sup>49</sup>

To sum up, the history textbooks of 1931 states that the Turks, who are the ancestors of the readers of the textbooks, were subject to massacres to adopt Islam; and they converted to Islam for political reasons, such as paying less taxes and dominating the Islamic Empire. The aim is to alienate the readers to the Islamic identity of former generations, and encourage the abdication of it.

#### **4.2.5. The Changes of 1939**

In 1939, the first volume of the books is changed with a book solely written by Şemsettin Günaltay, who was one of the members of the commission. The book, whose second (and last) imprint will be done in 1941, has two basic differences: Firstly, it contains no chapter that has statements which question religion and narrates the emergence of life with the theory of evolution. It starts with the Stone Age and does not mention anything about the earlier times. Secondly, the Turkish Historical Thesis is “hidden under the carpet” by replacing the word “Turks” either with “Central Asians” or “the brachycephalic race”. The word “Turks” is used only once, while defining the “brachycephalic race” as “the oldest ancestors of the Turks” (Günaltay, 1939: 11). However, except this replacement, the book takes all the assumptions of the previous book: Central Asia, where Neolithic and Copper age had begun, hosted a “powerful and prosperous” culture in ancient times. Drought and windstorms forced tribes to migrate to different places, and immigrants spread

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<sup>49</sup> “Türkler, Ebamüslim ihtilalile Araplara, Talas suyu meydan muharebesile de Çinlilere galebe etmişlerdi. Tarihin ceryanı kendilerine iki yol açmıştı. Bunlardan biri asırlardanberi olduğu gibi, şimalden Çine inerek orada imparatorluk kurmak, diğeri de garba dönerek İslam imparatorluğuna hakim olmağı. Türkler ikinci yolu tercih ettiler. (...) İhtilal hareketına iştirak edenler, yüksek kabiliyetleri sayesinde yeni imparatorluğa hakim olacaklarını anlamışlardı” (TTTC, 1931b: 155).

their prominent culture to the rest of the world (Günaltay, 1939: 12). Some of the civilizations founded by the immigrants of Central Asia are China, India, Elam and Mesopotamia, Egypt, Anatolia, Iran, Aegean and Italy:

The inhabitants of China consisted of two races. The first one is the indigenous people. The dominant and combatant one is the other who came from Central Asia and constituted the aristocratic class.<sup>50</sup>

The researches revealed that the prosperous culture emerged in the Northern India three thousand years ago (...) is a part of Central Asian civilization.<sup>51</sup>

The people of Elam and Mesopotamia, who are known by the history and produced work of art, came from Central Asia during the first migration.<sup>52</sup>

A thin, tall, wide-shouldered, smart and white race was born with the mixture of the dolichocephalic race, who are the first people of Egypt; and brachycephalics who came from Central Asia.<sup>53</sup>

Commodities and ceramics that belong to, and religious and societal life of that [Anatolian] culture, just like other cultures in Asia Minor, has signs of Central Asian civilization. The people who brought this culture and perpetuated are Proto Hittites and Hittites.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> “Çin’in seknesi, iki ayrı ırktan tereküp etmiştir. Bunlardan biri yerli halk, diğeri de Ortaasyadan gelerek asalet sınıfını teşkil etmiş olan hakim ve muharip zümredir” (Günaltay, 1939: 48).

<sup>51</sup> “Şimali Hindistanda milattan üç bin sene evvel zengin bir medeniyet yaşadığını (...) ve [bu medeniyetin] Ortaasya medeniyetinden bir parça olduğunu ortaya koymuştur” (Günaltay, 1939: 61).

<sup>52</sup> “Elam ve Mezopotamya’nın tarihen tanılan ve eser bırakan halkı, ilk göçler zamanında Ortaasyadan gelmişlerdir” (Günaltay, 1939: 74).

<sup>53</sup> “Ortaasyadan gelen brakisefallerle Mısırın ilk halkını teşkil eden dolikosefal insanların karışık kaynaşmalarından ince uzunboylu, geniş omuzlu, zeki ve açık simali yeni bir ırk doğdu” (Günaltay, 1939: 108).

<sup>54</sup> “Bu kültüre ait eşya ve keramiklerle dini, içtimai hayat şekli, onun Önasyanın diğeri yerlerindeki bu cins kültürler gibi; Ortaasya medeniyetine bağlı bulunduğu nişanelerini yaşatmaktadırlar. Bu kültürü getiren ve yaşatanlar Proto Hititler’le Hititler’dir” (Günaltay, 1939: 141).

The findings in Iran show that some of the people in migration waves that brought Central Asian Neolithic culture to the West after Ice Age settled some parts of the land.<sup>55</sup>

The leader of the tribes of brachycephalic people who came from Asia Minor was called Ege. This land is named after them. (...) In ancient Turkish, the words 'eke', 'ege', 'igi', 'iye' mean owner, master, god. The word 'ağa' used in Turkish today is nothing but this 'ege'.<sup>56</sup>

Etruscans had come to Italy from Anatolia. (...) With their brave and combatant character, physical appearance, dark skin, long (brachycephalics) heads, and especially different languages and traditions, they were different from their neighboring tribes.<sup>57</sup>

In this new textbook, the Turkish Historical Thesis is not rejected; on the contrary, its main assumptions are narrated. However, it is narrated in such a way that only a very careful reader could understand the meaning behind the implications. In the previous textbook, it was explicitly stated (and underlined a dozen of times) that the Turks had founded or contributed to the ancient civilizations. Thus, 15 year-old high school students could easily perceive the claim of the Turkish Historical Thesis, that is, the Turks founded or contributed to the most of the ancient civilizations, as a historical fact. After 1939, they cannot easily

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<sup>55</sup> “Bu metharler bize İran’ın glasiyelerden sonra Ortaasya neolitik kültürünü garbe götüren göç dalgalarının yer yer bırakmış oldukları halk kütleleriyle iskan edilmeğe başlanmış olduğunu göstermektedir” (Günaltay, 1939: 206).

<sup>56</sup> “Anadoludan gelen brakisefal insane kabilelerinin başbuğlarına Ege (eke) denildiğinden bunlar tarafından işgal edilen adaları sinesinde toplıyan Ege parçasına da bu isim verilmiştir. (...) Eski türkçede eke, ege, igi, iye lafızları efendi, sahip, kodat (hüda) manasına gelmektedir. Bugünkü türkçede kullanılan ağa lafızı bu ege’den başka bir şey değildir” (Günaltay, 1939: 229).

<sup>57</sup> “Etrüskler İtalyaya Anadoludan (...) gelmişlerdi. (...) Cesur ve muharip Etrüskler, cismani manzaları, tenlerinin koyu renkte, kafalarının geniş (brakisefal) olması ve bilhassa lisanları, Türe ve adetleri itibariyle komşu oldukları kavimlerden ayrılmıyorlardı” (Günaltay, 1939: 319).

grasp what had been implied by the “Central Asians” or “the brachycephalic race”; thus, they cannot perceive the main claim of the THT.

The reason of such a change can be attributed to the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The Turkish Historical Thesis was formed, and then included into the textbooks, with his orders. After his death, the hiding process of a radical and unscientific thesis is started. However, while hiding the Turkish Historical Thesis, Şemsettin Günaltay did not include a chapter which compares science and religion, and superiors the former. When he became the head of the Turkish Historical Society in December 1941, more effective changes will be made in the context of the textbooks under his presidency.

#### 4.3. 1942 – 1949 Period

In 1942, the textbooks which had been used for a decade were replaced with the ones written by Arif Müfid Mansel, Cavid Baysun and Enver Ziya Karal. Mansel and Baysun were Assistant Professors of History at the University of İstanbul, and Karal was Professor of History at Ankara University Faculty of Language, History and Geography. The textbooks have following editions:

Table 4. The textbooks used between 1942 and 1949.

<b>İlk Çağ Tarihi</b>	Arif Müfid Mansel, Cavid Baysun, Enver Ziya Karal	1942, 1943, 1948, 1949	Maarif Vekaleti
<b>Orta Çağ Tarihi</b>	Arif Müfid Mansel, Cavid Baysun, Enver Ziya Karal	1942, 1943, 1945, 1948, 1950	Maarif Vekaleti
<b>Yeni ve Yakın Çağlar Tarihi</b>	Arif Müfid Mansel, Cavid Baysun, Enver Ziya Karal	1942, 1945, 1948, 1949	Maarif Vekaleti

The approach of this textbooks towards the Turkish Historical Thesis is similar with the previous textbook – the main assumptions of the THT is narrated in the introductory part of the book in a half of a page, but in upcoming chapters, the claims either not repeated or slightly passed over with timid implications. The differences of these textbooks from the previous ones, on the other hand, are important – the rejection of the Islamic doctrine came to an end, and Islam is accepted as the order of God, albeit in a moderate tone. As a result of this acceptance, the Turkish conversion to Islam is also narrated differently, stating that the Turks converted to Islam because they found it superior to other religions; without referring to the factors which were narrated by the previous textbooks, i.e., the political motive of the Turks and the massacres that they were subjected to.

These changes are important changes, which show that the Kemalist project of substituting a secular Turkish identity to an Islamic one came to an end. However, there is no research focusing on the change of the textbooks – as the writer of the only book on this subject, Copeaux claims that these textbooks were rarely used, and jumps to the elementary school textbooks of 1945 without analyzing them (Copeaux, 2006: 115). However, since each of the textbooks was published at least four times, Copeaux's claim could not be true and these textbooks were used as widely as their predecessors. Furthermore, although some of the contributors of the textbooks of 1931 provide information about the writing and adoption process of the textbooks of 1931, they do not give any information regarding their replacement with the new ones. The only official document states that the new textbooks were

written because the previous ones were too long<sup>58</sup>. Therefore, the scarcity of resources that could provide the events and ideas behind the replacement process forestalls a detailed analysis of this replacement.

The last imprint of the previous textbooks had been done in 1941. In order to reveal the reasons behind the change, focusing on bureaucratic changes between 1941 and 1942 may be helpful. In December 1941, Şemsettin Günaltay, a scholar known with religious tendencies, became the head of the THS (Çoker, 1983: 210). He was the writer of the 1939 edition of the first volume of the textbooks of 1931, which does not include a chapter narrating the theory of evolution. Probably, as a religious person, Şemsettin Günaltay was the man behind the end of creating a secular Turkish identity that excludes Islam. Furthermore, his effort was probably supported by Hasan Âli Yücel, the Minister of Education appointed in 1939. Although he is the man behind creative modernization efforts, he is still a committed Muslim belonged to *Mevlevi* sect. In his later writings, he supported the view that Islam is an indispensable factor of Turkish identity. In other words, the change of the textbooks, and the end of the Kemalist project of developing a fully secular Turkish identity, was probably triggered by the new head of the THS, and supported by the Minister of Education.

#### **4.3.1. Turks Before Islam**

In the first pages, the first volume of the textbooks narrates the basic assumptions of the Turkish Historical Thesis – Central Asia, which is defined as the

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<sup>58</sup> (T.C. Maarif Vekilliği, 1943: 210 – 211).

motherland of the Turks, had hosted a highly developed civilization. As population grew and climate changed, the inhabitants had to migrate to different lands:

The motherland of Turks is Central Asia. (...) It has been found that, when other parts of the world were in primitive conditions, the Turks were highly civilized.

(...)

Central Asians migrated to the East (China), South (India, Afghanistan and Balochistan), West (Iran, Mesopotamia, Asia minor, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Aegean through the southern part of Caspian sea) and to the southern Russia and Danube river (through the northern part of Caspian sea). They played a vital role to carry out these lands from Stone Age to Bronze Age.<sup>59</sup>

However, while narrating the history of the mentioned lands, the effects of the “Central Asian migration” are either slightly passed over, or not mentioned at all:

The first civilizations are founded in the North of China, by people most of whom are from Central Asia. They slowly spread to the south later.<sup>60</sup>

Sumerians, who are Central Asians, went down to the Southern Mesopotamia before 4000 B.C.<sup>61</sup>

There were Proto-Hittites in the Central Anatolia, who were from Central Asia. In West, there was a relative tribe of Proto-Hittites who used geographical names with “ss” or “nd”, like Halicarnassus or Aspendos<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> “Türklerin anayurdu Ortaasya’dır. (...) Dünyanın başka bölgelerinin pek iptidai bir durumda olduğu bir zamanda Türklerin medeniyet alanında ilerlemiş oldukları meydana çıkmıştır. (...) Ortaasyalıları bir taraftan Doğuya (Çin) ve Güneye (Hindistan, Afganistan ve Bulucistan) ve diğer taraftan Hazar denizinin güneyinden Batıya (İran, Mezopotamya, Anadolu, Suriye, Filistin, Mısır, Ege Bölgesi), Hazar denizinin kuzeyinden Güney Rusyaya ve Tuna boylarına kadar yayıldılar ve bütün bu ülkelerin taş devrinden maden devrine geçmesinde büyük bir rol oynadılar” (Mansel et al., 1942a: 8-10).

<sup>60</sup> “Çinde ilk medeniyetler kuzeyde, Sarı Irmak boylarında, büyük bir kısmı Ortaasyalı olan insanlar tarafından getirilmiş ve buradan yavaş yavaş güneye yayılmıştır” (Mansel et al., 1942a: 32).

<sup>61</sup> “IV üncü binden önce Aşağı Mezopotamyanın güneyine inen Ortaasyalı Sümerler (...)” (Mansel et al., 1942a: 32).

<sup>62</sup> “Ortaanadoluda Ortaasyalı Protohititler vardı; Batıda Halikarnassos, Aspendos gibi (ss)li ve (nd)lı coğrafya adları kullanan Protohititler’le akraba bir kavim oturuyordu” (Mansel et al., 1942a: 49).



In 4000 B.C., (...) Asian people invade Egypt. After this invasion, Egypt achieved an eminent civilization.<sup>63</sup>

In 2000 B.C., Aka people invade Greece. It is believed that they came from Anatolia.<sup>64</sup>

Etruscans were once settled in Lydia, Anatolia. It is understood that with “Aegean migrations”, (...) they went to Italy.<sup>65</sup>

The only difference of this textbook from the previous one is that, this textbook does not imply that the people of India and Iran have Central Asian roots. Except this change, the narrative is same with the previous textbook – the basic assumptions of the THT are narrated, albeit in such an implicit way that only a very careful reader could understand.

#### **4.3.2. The Emergence of Islam**

Unlike the previous one, the textbook of 1942 moderately accepts the Islamic doctrine - Mohammed is portrayed as the messenger of God and the last Prophet; and in the text, its status as the Prophet prevails all the others. The authors compare Islam with other religions and indirectly praise it:

Prophet Mohammed many times pulled himself back to a cave and mused. One night he heard voices in the cave that he could not understand. In Islamic tradition, Allah was sending him verses of the Qur’an, which is called revelation. Mohammed, who did not understand anything at the beginning, excited and turned back his home. He told what had happened to Hatice. One of Hatice’s relatives told that Mohammed

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<sup>63</sup> “Milattan önce 4000 senesine doğru Mısır (...) Asyalı insanların istilasına uğradı; bu istila sonunda yüksek bir medeniyete kavuştu” (Mansel et al., 1942a: 71).

<sup>64</sup> “2000 senesine doğru, Anadolu’dan geldikleri sanılan Akalar, Yunanistanı istila ettiler” (Mansel et al., 1942a: 102).

<sup>65</sup> “Bir zamanlar Anadolu’da, Lidyada oturmuş, fakat Ege göçleri yüzünden yerlerinden oynatılıp (...) İtalyaya geçmiş oldukları anlaşılan Etrüskler...” (Mansel et al., 1942a: 163).

became the Prophet. After some time, revelation re-started and did not end until the death of the Prophet.

Prophet Mohammed was charged with duty to inform the humanity about Islam. (...) Islam abolished worshiping to idols, and rejected the trinity system of God in Christianity. Allah, which is showed by the Jews as their God only, is recognized as the God of all universe.<sup>66</sup>

Since Islamic doctrine is accepted, the narrative of the period became an Islamic one. Parallel to this narrative, the word “Hazreti” is systematically used as a prefix to his name after Mohammed became the Prophet. Arabs before Islam derogated and Mohammed’s life before his prophethood praised:

Before Islam, Arabs worshiped to idols. (...) Arabs, who had a primitive life, did not abstain from fighting with each other. They had bad traits like burying the girls.

Mohammed was known as a honest, brilliant, prestigious person and labeled as *Muhammed-ül Emin*.<sup>67</sup>

To sum up, the most important block of substituting an Islamic identity with a secular Turkish identity, i.e., the rejection of Islamic doctrine, came to an end in 1942; and Mohammed is portrayed as the messenger of God in a moderate narrative.

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<sup>66</sup> “Hazreti Muhammet, çok defa Mekke yakınında bir dağdaki mağaraya çekilir, düşünceye dalardı. Bir gece bu mağarada ne olduğunu anlamadığı sesler duydu. Müslüman inancına göre Allah, ona, Cebrail ile Kuran’ın ayetlerini gönderiyordu ki, buna vahiy denir. İlk önce bundan hiçbir şey anlamıyan ve büyük bir heyecana uğrayan Muhammet, evine döndü. İşi Haticeye söyledi. Hatice’nin akrabasından biri Muhammed’e peygamberlik geldiğini anlattı. Bir zaman arası kesildikten sonra, vahiy tekrar başladı. Artık peygamberin ölümüne kadar arkası kesilmedi. Hazreti Muhammet, insanlığa Hak dinini bildirmeğe memur olmuştu. (...) Müslümanlık puta tapıcılığı kaldırmış, hıristiyan dinindeki üçüzlü tanrı sistemini de reddetmiştir. Yahudilerin yalnız kendi tanrıları olarak gösterdikleri Allahu da bütün alemlerin Allahu olarak tanınmıştır” (Mansel et al., 1942b: 29).

<sup>67</sup> “Müslümanlıktan önce Araplar putlara taparlardı. (...) İptidai bir hayat geçiren Araplar kan gütmek ve bu yüzden birbirleriyle vuruşmaktan çekinmezlerdi. Kız çocuklarını toprağa gömmek gibi kötü adetleri de yok değildi. Muhammet, sözüne sağdık, akıllı, yüksek bir insane olarak göze çarpıyordu. Kureyşliler içinde Muhammed-ül Emin diye ün yapmıştır” (Mansel et al., 1942b: 28-29).

### 4.3.3. Turks' Adoption of Islam

The book also analyses Turks' adoption process of Islam in the two same phases, but unlike the previous textbook, it does not mention the massacres that the Turks were subjected to and prefer a softer language while narrating the first phase: "Since the Arabs pursue a cruel and selfish policy in Turkish lands, the spread of Islam was very slow"<sup>68</sup>. It also does not attach a political motivation to the spread of Islam, especially for Turkish conversion to Islam. According the book, the Turks preferred Islam because it was a more suitable religion for them:

The Turks did not accept Islam by force. Since they had contacted with Islam for a long time, they found the opportunity to understand Islam thoroughly. This religion was more suitable to their soul compared to other religions.<sup>69</sup>

To sum up, two important changes have been made with the textbooks of 1942 – firstly, the Islamic doctrine is accepted and Mohammed is portrayed as the messenger of God; and secondly, the conversion of the Turks to Islam is described as a spiritual process, in a narrative style that does not include any sentences that could alienize the reader to Islam.

### 4.4. 1950 – 1960 Period

The textbooks of the Democratic Party era were written by Niyazi Akşit and Emin Oktay. Contrary to the previous textbooks, the writers were not politicians or scholars, but high school teachers. They wrote the first volume of the textbook

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<sup>68</sup> "Araplar, Türk ellerinde zalim ve menfaatçi bir siyaset güttüklerinden müslümanlık bu ellerde adam akıllı yayılmıyordu" (Mansel et al., 1942b: 39).

<sup>69</sup> "Müslümanlık, Türkler arasında zorla yayılmış değildir. Türkler müslümanlıkla uzun zaman temas ederek onu iyiden iyiye anlamak fırsatını buldular. Bu din, bütün öteki dinlerden ziyade ruhlarına daha uygun geldi" (Mansel et al., 1942b: 44).

together, but then each of the writers wrote the remaining volumes separately. The textbooks, which will be used until 1990s, have following imprints between 1950 and 1960:

Table 5. The textbooks used between 1950 and 1960.

<b>Tarih I</b>	Niyazi Akşit & Emin Oktay	1950, 1953	Remzi Kitabevi
	Emin Oktay	1951, 1953	Atlas Yayınevi
<b>Tarih II</b>	Niyazi Akşit	1954, 1956	Remzi Kitabevi
	Emin Oktay	1951, 1952, 1954	Remzi Kitabevi
		1956, 1958	Atlas Yayınevi
<b>Tarih III</b>	Niyazi Akşit	1951, 1956	Remzi Kitabevi
	Emin Oktay	1952, 1956	Remzi Kitabevi
		1956, 1959	Atlas Yayınevi
<b>Tarih IV</b>	Niyazi Akşit & Çağatay Uluçay	1952	Remzi Kitabevi
	Emin Oktay	1952	Remzi Kitabevi

There is no difference between their approach to the Turks before Islam, with that of previous textbooks – the main assumption of the THT is narrated in the introductory part, but either does not repeated or slightly passed over in the upcoming chapters. The narrative style of the emergence of Islam, on the other hand, has some differences. Although it shares the basic assumptions of the previous textbook, the moderate tone of the previous textbook is replaced by a certain and more powerful rhetoric. Furthermore, unlike the previous textbooks, these textbooks assume that the readers are Muslims.

#### 4.4.1. Turks Before Islam

The attitude of the first volume of the textbooks of 1950 towards the Turkish Historical Thesis is almost exactly same with that of the previous one: Central Asia, which is defined as the motherland of the Turks, had hosted a highly developed civilization. As population grew and climate changed, the inhabitants had to migrate to different lands:

While people in other parts of the world were living the Stone Age, the population of the people who were living in the suitable climate conditions of western Central Asia was growing and the inhabitants of the land had reached Bronze Age. However, as temperature raised and glaciers melted, Central Asia slowly dried out. (...) As a result, the brachycephalic Turks migrated to other lands. (...)

The ones who went to the East reached China, to the South reached Afghanistan, Baluchistan and India, to the Northwest reached southern Russia and Central Europe, and to the southwest reached Iran, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt and Aegean.

These brachycephalic and Central Asian people raised the inhabitants of the lands who were living in Stone Age to the Neolithic age and Bronze Age. They taught them to plant, to domesticate animals and to use mine.<sup>70</sup>

However, the effects of the “migration from Central Asia” to the mentioned lands are either slightly passed over, or not mentioned at all:

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<sup>70</sup> “Buzullar devrinde dünyanın başka taraflarında yaşayan insanlar, Yontma Taş devrinde bulunurlarken, Orta – Asya’nın batısında çok elverişli iklim şartları içinde yaşayan Orta Asyalılar çoğalmışlar ve Maden devrine kadar yükselmişlerdi. Fakat havaların ısınması ve Buzullar devrinin sona ermesi üzerine, Orta Asya yavaş yavaş kurumaya başladı. (...) Bu yüzden, buralarda yaşayan Brakisefal Türkler, başka ülkelere göç etmeye başladılar. (...) Doğuya gidenler Çin’e, güneye gidenler Efganistan, Bülucistan ve Hindistan’a, batıya gidenlerden bir kısmı da Hazer Denizinin kuzeyinden güney Rusya ve Orta Avrupa’ya, diğer bir kısmı da Hazer Denizinin güneyinden İran, Mezopotamya, Anadolu, Suriye, Mısır ve Ege bölgesine kadar yayılmışlardır. Brakisefal ve Orta Asyalı olan bu insanlar, gittikleri yerin Taş Devrini yaşayan halkını, Cilalı Taş ve Maden devrine yükseltmişler; onlara, ekip biçmeyi, hayvanları ehlileştirmeyi ve maden kullanmayı öğretmişlerdir” (Akşit&Oktay, 1950: 21).

It has been understood that the Turks who went to the northern China from Central Asia founded the Chinese civilization.<sup>71</sup>

About 4000 B.C., some of the people who came from Central Asia with the migrations settled to Mesopotamia.<sup>72</sup>

It has been understood that the Hittites are from Central Asia.<sup>73</sup>

About 4000 B.C., Asian tribes invaded Egypt, Syria and Palestine. (...) Art work from this period show that the Asians invaded Egypt had a civilization and further developed it there.<sup>74</sup>

[In Neolithic age] the ceramics [of the Crete] were very similar to that of Asia Minor.<sup>75</sup>

To sum up, the approach towards the Turkish Historical Thesis is not changed - the THT is not abandoned, but narrated in such a way that only a very careful reader could understand. Indeed, the first volume of the textbook is so similar to that of the previous textbook is that, it is almost a re-written form of the previous textbook.

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<sup>71</sup> “Orta Asya’dan kuzey Çin’e göç eden Türklerin bu uygarlığı meydana getirdikleri (...) anlaşılmaktadır” (Akşit&Oktay, 1950: 33).

<sup>72</sup> “M.Ö. 4000 senelerine doğru Orta Asya’dan göçlerle gelenlerden bir kısmı Mezopotamya’da yerleştiler” (Akşit&Oktay, 1950: 45).

<sup>73</sup> “Orta Asya’lı kavimlerden oldukları anlaşılan Hitit’ler...” (Akşit&Oktay, 1950: 74).

<sup>74</sup> “M.Ö. 4000 senelerine doğru Mısır, Suriye ve Filistin üzerinden gelen Asyalı kavimler tarafından istila edildi. (...) Bu zamandan kalan sanat eserleri, Mısır’ı istila eden Asyalıların yüksek bir uygarlığa sahib olduklarını ve Mısır’da bu uygarlığı geliştirdiklerini göstermektedir” (Akşit&Oktay, 1950: 99).

<sup>75</sup> “[Girit’te, Cilalı Taş Devrinde] Boyalı ve nakışlı olan keramiklerle Ön-Asya keramikleri arasında çok yakın benzerlikler görüşmüştür” (Akşit&Oktay, 1950: 134).

#### 4.4.2. The Emergence of Islam

The textbook, like the previous one, narrates the Islamic doctrine as a historical fact. However, the rhetoric of this textbook is more powerful, and the facts are narrated unreservedly. For example, the status of the Qur'an is explicitly accepted as the holy book of God and Islam is directly praised:

A Muslim is a person who extricates himself / herself by surrendering his/her personality and being to God as a whole. The basics of the religion of Islam are collected in a holy book called the Quran, which is revealed to Prophet Mohammed time to time and completed in 23 years. (...) Islam is based on truthfulness, morality, cleanness, goodness, excellence, equality and justice.<sup>76</sup>

Both of the books use the suffix of "Hazreti" for the Prophet. Parallel with the empowerment of the rhetoric, derogation of pre-Islamic Arabs and praise of the Prophet's early life became stronger:

There were endless conflicts between the tribes due to feud. A tribe would raid another. Sometimes a great battle could occur because of a camel. They had bad traits like burring the girls alive. The Arabs were very dirty.<sup>77</sup>

Prophet Mohammed was not like Meccanians and had a wide range of good habits. He did not worship to idols, never lied and harmed anybody. He had a calm and thoughtful looking, and nice and polite attitude. Every Meccanians in every age liked him and called him Muhammed-ül-Emin, because he was the man of truth.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> "Müslüman; kendisini, nefsin ve bütün varlığını tanrıya teslim etmiş, tanrının birliğine inanmış, bu suretle selamete erişmiş insane demektir. İslam dininin esasları tanrı tarafından Hz. Muhammed'e zaman zaman vahyolunan ve 23 senede tamamlanan Kur'an adlı kutsal kitapta bildirilmiştir. (...) İslamlık; doğruluk, güzel ahlak, temizlik, iyilik, fazilet, eşitlik ve adalet prensiplerine dayanır" (Oktay, 1951: 62).

<sup>77</sup> "Kabileler arasında kan davalarından çıkan ve sonu gelmeyen çatışmalar olurdu. Bir kabile diğerine baskın yaparak mallarını ve sürülerini yağma ederdi. Bazan bir deve yüzünden aralarında büyük bir çarpışma çıkabilirdi. Savaşlarda kendilerine yük olan kız çocuklarını diri diri toprağa gömmek gibi kötü adetleri vardı. Araplar çok pis idiler" (Akşit, 1954: 39).

<sup>78</sup> "Hz. Muhammed'in Mekke'lilere benzemeyen birçok güzel huyları vardı. O, diğer Mekke'liler gibi putlara tapmaz, asla yalan söylemez ve hiç bir kimseyi incitmezdi. Durgun ve daima düşünceli bir

More importantly, unlike the previous textbooks, the readers are assumed as Muslims - Mohammed is referred as “our Prophet.”<sup>79</sup> Five pillars of Islam, basic duties incumbent for the Muslims, narrated in detail (Oktay, 1951: 62), (Akşit, 1954: 41). The term “şehit olmak” (to become martyr) is used for the Muslims died during the wars. As Copeaux points out: “using of the word *şehit* enables the authors to define the side which they perceive themselves in. *Şehit* is always in the side of the good, enemy cannot be *şehit*” (Copeaux, 2006: 288).

To conclude, just like the textbook of 1942, the textbook of 1950 also narrates the Islamic doctrine and Mohammed as the messenger of God. Its more powerful rhetoric and moderate assumption that the readers are Muslims are its differences from the previous textbook.

#### **4.4.3. Turks’ Adoption of Islam**

The textbooks of both share the basic principle of the previous ones: During the Umayyad Caliphate, the Arabs unsuccessfully forced Turks to be Muslim; but the Turks became Muslim in the Abbasid Caliphate with their own will. The narrative of the first period is more similar to the textbook of TTTC, since the Turkish massacres are stated in both of the books: “The Arabs made unheard calamity. [Baykent] was completely pillaged. Everyone who could hold a rifle was shot to dead.”<sup>80</sup> Oktay also has a similar narrative: “Kuteybe made unheard calamity.

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bakışı, zarif ve kibar bir hali vardı. Büyük küçük bütün Mekke’liler onu severler ve ona her işinde doğru olduğu için Muhammed-ül-Emin derlerdi” (Oktay, 1951: 60).

<sup>79</sup> “Peygamberimizin sözlerinden...” (Akşit, 1954: 42).

<sup>80</sup> “Araplar görülmedik derecede zulüm yaptılar. [Baykent] baştan aşağıya yağma edildi. Eli silah tutan ne kadar adam varsa öldürüldü” (Akşit, 1954: 55).



He wanted to terrify the people and hanged the Turks in the road towards Beykent. He also maraud the city”<sup>81</sup>.

Despite the Turkish massacres are narrated, their conversion to Islam is neither associated with those massacres, nor with political motives. On the contrary, the conversion is associated with spiritual motives by Akşit: “the Turks adopted Islam because they found it superior to other religions”<sup>82</sup>.

To sum up, the empowerment of the rhetoric of the emergence of Islam and moderately assuming the readers as Muslims are two basic differences of the textbooks of 1950. It is possible to conclude that these changes are less important changes compared to those occurred in 1942. In 1942, contrary to the previous textbooks, Islam was accepted as the order of God. In 1950, this acceptance is narrated in a more powerful rhetoric and it is moderately assumed that the readers also share this acceptance.

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<sup>81</sup> “Kuteybe burada görülmedik derecede mezalim yaptı. Beykent’e giden iki tarafı ağaçlıklı yola Türkler’i asarak herkese korku vermek istedi. Şehri baştan başa yapma ettirdi” (Oktay, 1951: 90).

<sup>82</sup> “Türkler müslümanlığı diğer dinlerden üstün buldukları için kabul etmişlerdir” (Akşit, 1954: 60). On the other hand, Oktay does not mention a reason behind Turks’ adoption of Islam.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The most important reason of the change of history textbook in 1931 is to teach the Turkish Historical Thesis to new generations. Therefore, in order to understand why the textbooks changed in 1931, it is foremostly needed to understand why Turkish Historical Thesis is developed. The most important aim of the thesis is to plant an identity of Turkishness, independent from an Islamic identity. Secularization process, which had been continuing since the Tanzimat era, had radically accelerated after the proclamation of the Republic. The laws issued during the early Republican era not only affected public administration, but also areas that are directly related with private life as well. In order to get people to accept these changes, it was aimed to separate the identity of Turkishness from the identity of Islam, and encourage people to accept the former. To ensure this, religion in general, and Islam in private are rejected – it is stated that some of the information in holy books are wrong, and Mohammed is portrayed as a military and tribal leader and philosopher. The rejected identity of Islam is replaced by Turkishness; and in order to empower the new identity, history of Turks before adopting Islam glorified – it is claimed that the Turks founded or contributed to most of the civilization in history. Islam is narrated only as a tool, which was used by the Turks in order to conquer the Islamic Empire. This radical distinction of Turkishness and Islam can be found in other textbooks of the era. In the textbook *Medeni*

*Bilgiler (Civil Information)*, published under the name of Afet Inan, but written by Mustafa Kemal, the factors that form a nation are stated as unity of political structure, unity of language, unity of homeland, unity of race and origin, historical and ethical kinship (Afet, 1931: 13). Religion is not included the factors that form a nation:

Some claim that religion is also an influential factor in the formation of a nation. However, we see just the opposite for the case of Turkish nation.

The Turks were also a great nation before accepting the religion of Islam. After accepting Islam, it did not make Arabs, Persians, or any others to unite with the Turks and constitute a nation. On the contrary, it softened the national ties of the Turkish nation, benumbed national feelings and national emotions. These were natural, because the aim of the religion that Mohammed founded was a policy of *ummah*, extending over all nations.<sup>83</sup>

To plant a Turkish identity is also crucial for assimilation of Muslim minorities. The ruling elites of the young Republic had witnessed the collapse of the Ottoman Empire with huge territorial losses. Therefore, they probably perceived ethnic differences as potential separatist movements. Furthermore, from the abolition of Caliphate in 1924 to the year of 1931, a couple of Kurdish revolts occurred in the Eastern Anatolia. By proving Turkishness of all ethnic groups in Turkey, the Turkish Historical Thesis removes all differences that could be potential threats to the state in the future. This aim also shows itself in the *Medeni Bilgiler*:

Today, in the political and social body of Turkish nation, there are nationals who were subjected to propaganda that they were indeed Kurds, Circassians, or even Laz

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<sup>83</sup> “Din birliđinin de bir millet teřkilinde müessir olduđunu söyleyenler vardır. Fakat biz, bizim gözümüzün önündeki türk milleti tablosundan bunun aksini görmekteyiz. Türkler islam dinini kabul etmeden evel de büyük bir millet idi. Bu dini kabul ettikten sora, bu din; ne Arapların; ne aynı dinde bulunan Acemlerin ve ne de sairenin Türklerle birleşip bir millet teşkil etmelerine tesir etmedi. Bilakis, türk milletinin milli bağlarını gevşetti; milli hislerini milli heyecanını uyuşturdu. Bu pek tabii idi. Çünkü Muhammedin kurduđu dinin gayesi, bütün milletlerin fevkinde şamil bir ümmet siyaseti idi” (Afet, 1931: 12).

or Bosnians. However, these wrong beliefs did not bring anything but sadness to nationals. (...) Because, these people are a part of our nation and has same common past, history, ethics and law as other people in the Turkish society.<sup>84</sup>

The separation of Islam and Turkishness also enables non-Muslim minorities to accept the identity of Turkishness. The textbooks of the era define non-Muslim Turkish nationals as “Turks” and they are also “encouraged” to do so:

Soon after our civil code was accepted by the Great General Assembly, the Turks belonged to religions or sects other than Islam, such as Jewish, Orthodox, Catholic, and Gregorian Turks applied to the government and stated that they abdicated the rights obtained from the Treaty of Lausanne, and asked to be treated like Muslim Turkish nationals. Their request is accepted and thus Turkish Civil Code served the development of national unity as well.<sup>85</sup>

There are Christian and Jewish nationals who live in our society. Can we expect from the noble ethics of civilized Turkish nation to look these people, who bind their fates and hearts to Turkish nationality with their own will, with negative feelings as if they are foreigners?<sup>86</sup>

Copeaux mentions the third reason. European scholars, who used to describe the Turks as the respected successive of the Roman Empire in Renaissance era, had reached a consensus that the Turks were only a barbaric tribe at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the Balkan Wars, at a time in which the Turks were almost entirely

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<sup>84</sup> “Bugünlü türk milleti siyasi ve içtimai camiası içinde kendilerine kürtlük fikri, çerkeslik fikri ve hatta lazlık fikri veya boşnaklık fikri propaganda edilmek istenmiş vatandaş ve milletdaşlarımız vardır. Fakat mazinin istibdat devirleri mahsulü olan bu yanlış tevsimler; (...) hiçbir millet ferdi üzerinde teellümden başka bir tesir hasıl etmemiştir. Çünkü, bu millet efradı da umum türk camiası gibi aynı müşterek maziye, tarihe, ahlaka, hukuka sahip bulunuyorlar” (Afet, 1931: 16).

<sup>85</sup> “Medeni Kanunumuz Büyük Millet Meclisince kabul edilir edilmez, Musevi Türklerden başlayarak ortodoks, katolik, gregoryen Türkler gibi islamlık haricinde muhtelif din ve mezhep mensupları ayrı ayrı mahzarlarla hükümetimize müracaat ederek Lozan Muahedesindeki haklarından vazgeçtiklerini, kendilerinin de müslüman Türk vatandaşları gibi yeni Medeni Kanunun hükümlerine tabi tutulmalarını rica etmişlerdir. Bu rica kabul olunmuş ve böylece Türk Medeni Kanunu milli vahdetin tekamülüne de hizmet eylemiştir” (TTTC, 1934: 215).

<sup>86</sup> “Bugün içimizde bulunan hıristiyan, musevi vatandaşlar, mukadderat ve talilerini türk milliyetine vicdanı arzularile raptettikten sora kendilerine yan gözle yabancı nazarıle bakılmak, medeni türk milletinin asil ahlakından beklenebilir mi?” (Afet, 1931: 16).

thrown out of Europe, their presence even in the Asia Minor had been disputed; and some claimed that the Turks should be deported to where they came from, that is, Central Asia. Therefore, it is possible to assess Turkish Historical Thesis as a reaction to these views of some Europeans. Indeed, the high school textbooks do not only addresses students, but also the ones who criticize the Turks maliciously (Copeaux, 2006: 29-30).

Like the formation of Turkish Historical Thesis, Mustafa Kemal was the driving force behind the writing of the new textbooks. While the members of the TTTC were writing the textbooks in Dolmabahce Palace, Mustafa Kemal was following their work from Yalova and making interventions. According to the secretary of the institute, Uluğ İğdemir, one of the areas that Mustafa Kemal made intervention was the history of Islam:

Atatürk had given prior importance to the history of Islam, most of which were later written by himself. He had not liked the chapter written by late Zakir Kadiri (Ugan), and offered to make that part written to Şemsettin Bey (Günaltay). In a letter he wrote to Tevfik Bey, the head of the institute, and dated 16 August 1931, was beginning as follows:

‘The notes about the Mohammedian era in the history of Islam chapter that Zakir Kadiri Bey wrote, I am sorry to say, does not seem like a work of a scholar. I think that it is not true to put completely what he wrote to the textbooks that have been prepared with great care. (...) The notes that I have been sending you, like the ones I sent you before, should be reviewed by your high institute in any case’<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> “Atatürk, “İslam Tarihi” bölümüne çok önem vermişti. Bu bölümün önemli bir dilimini de kendisi yazmıştı. İlkönce, Kurum üyelerinden rahmetli Zakir Kadiri (Ugan)’ye yazdırılan bu bölümü hiç beğenmemiş, bunun Şemsettin Bey (Günaltay) tarafından yazılmasını istemişti. 16 Ağustos 1931’de Kurum Başkanı Tevfik Bey’e Yalova’dan yazdığı mektup şöyle başlıyordu:

Zakir Kadiri Bey’e hazırlattığımız “İslam Tarihi” notlarının Muhammet devrine air olan ilk sayfasından sonraki parçalar, teessüfle söylemeye mecburum ki, hiç de bir mütehasssın kafasından, kaleminden ve tertibinden çıkmışa benzemiyor. Zakir Kadiri yazılarını olduğu gibi, büyük itina ile hazırlanmakta olan mektep kitaplarına koymakta hiç isabet olmayacağı fikrindeyim. (...) Size verdiğim ilk notlarımla beraber şimdi gönderdiğim [notlar] da yüksek cemiyetinizin behemehal tenkit nazarlarından geçmelidir” (İğdemir, 1973: 8-9).

The notes that were written by Mustafa Kemal are published in (Perinçek, 1997). It can be seen that, most of the expressions in the pages about the emergence of Islam belong to him.<sup>88</sup>

The reason of the replacement of the first volume of the textbooks with a new one written by Şemsettin Günaltay in 1939 is the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Since the THT was formed, and entered the history textbooks with his orders, it is not surprising that a radical and unscientific thesis was “hidden under the carpet” soon after his death. However, Şemsettin Günaltay not only hid the thesis behind timid implications, but also did not include a chapter that compares science and religion, superiors the former and narrates the theory of evolution as a historical fact. This is directly related with religious personality of Günaltay, who will make more important changes in the context of history textbooks when he will become the head of the Turkish Historical Society in 1941.

In 1942, new textbooks were started to be used, written by Arif Müfid Mansel, Cavid Baysun and Enver Ziya Karal. The textbooks had two important changes: Firstly, Islamic doctrine is accepted and Mohammed is narrated as the messenger of God in a moderate narrative; and secondly, the conversion of the Turks to Islam is not related with political reasons, but spiritual ones. These changes show that the Kemalist project aimed to create a secular Turkish identity omitting Islam came to an end.

The textbooks of 1931 had a wide range of originalities that differed themselves from other history textbooks used in Turkey, due to their approach towards the emergence of mankind, religions, Islam, pre-Islamic Turks and Turks’

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<sup>88</sup> (Perinçek, 1999: 115-135).

conversion to Islam. The 2<sup>nd</sup> volume of the textbooks of 1942 also includes an originality that differs itself both from its predecessors and successors, which come from its reference to Muslimization and Turkification process occurred in the Ottoman Empire.

In the textbooks of 1931, the Turks were belonged to a pure race originated from Central Asia, which had founded most of the important civilizations. The most radical part of this claim was veiled in 1939, but one factor has been strictly emphasized: Central Asian roots of Turkish people. This point is still emphasized in high school textbooks, and the concepts of Muslimization and language shift are never mentioned. This continuous emphasis on Central Asian roots made many Turks believe that they have strong genetic ties with Central Asia.

Despite the emphasis of Central Asian roots of the Turks, the textbooks of 1942 holds a reservation to purity of the race by referring to Islamification and Turkification process of the Ottoman Empire. In the narration of the history of the Empire in the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, there is a sub-section called “Turkification and Islamisation” under the section of “Ottoman Culture and Civilization”. While narrating the 14<sup>th</sup> century, it is stated that some of the Muslims were assimilated into Turkishness, but not Christians: “[The Turks] Turkified the Persian, Mongol and Arab Muslims; and taught Turkish to Greeks and Armenians. Thus, Anatolia started to be a Turkish land”<sup>89</sup>. However, in the narration of the next centuries, it is stated that non-Muslims also been Turkified:

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<sup>89</sup> “[Türkler] buldukları yerlerdeki İranlı, Moğol ve Arap müslümanları az zaman içinde Türkleştirdikleri gibi Rum ve Ermenilere de Türkçeyi öğrettiler. Böylelikle Anadolu, taşı, toprağı, suyu ve insanı ile Türk olmağa başladı” (Mansel et al., 1942c: 3).

Each year, 6000 Christian children were raised as a Janissary with the method of *devşirme*. Furthermore, among the Christian prisoners, those of who converted to Islam nestled to Turkish community. These factors increased the population of Muslim Turks.<sup>90</sup>

Many Christians, who coveted to the rightness of the Turks, converted to Islam and joined to the population of Muslim Turks.<sup>91</sup>

It is important to note that Turkification and Islamification were referred to the same process, a conversion to Islam would also mean the adoption of Turkishness. By referring to this process, both the ethnic heterogeneity of the Turkish people and the importance of Islam in the ethnic history of Turks are narrated; two points that directly contradict with the Turkish Historical Thesis.

Although the changes constitute a break up with the former textbooks, they were only attributed to pedagogical reasons in the Education Council of 1943: “Since the former books prepared by the THS were too complicated and composed of parts written by several authors, they were quite unpractical. That’s why, the Ministry thought that it was necessary to write new ones”<sup>92</sup>.

The last imprint of the textbooks of 1931 was ordered by the Publications Directorate of the Ministry of Education on 19 July 1941 (TTTC, 1941: IV). The Committee of Teaching and Development of the Ministry of Education adopted the textbooks of 1942 on 17 July 1942 (Mansel, et al., 1942a: II). The only important

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<sup>90</sup> “Her sene 6000 hıristiyan çocuğun devşirme usulü ile yeniçeri yetiştirilmesi, hıristiyanlardan alınan esirlerden İslam olanlarının Türk cemiyetine sığınması, İslam-Türk nüfusunun artmasına sebep oldu” (Mansel et al., 1942c: 29).

<sup>91</sup> “Türk doğruluğuna imrenen bir çok Hıristiyanlar da İslamı kabul ederek Türk-İslam nüfusunun arasına katılarak onlarla kaynaştılar” (Mansel et al., 1942c: 63).

<sup>92</sup> “Evvelce Tarih Kurumunun hazırlamış olduğu bugünküne nispetle çok karışık ve muhtelif müellifler tarafından yazılmış parçaların bir araya toplanması suretiyle meydana getirilmiş kitaplar olduğu için elverişsiz bir vaziyet arz ediyordu. Bu sebeple Vekalet bunların yeniden yazılmasına lüzum görmüştür” (T.C. Maarif Vekilliği, 1943: 210 – 211).



change between these two dates was the appointment of Şemsettin Günaltay as the head of the THS on 17 December 1941 (Çoker, 1983: 210). Ideological background of the new head of the Turkish Historical Society can give the clues behind the reason of the change of the textbooks.

Şemsettin Günaltay was known as an Islamist due to its writings in religious journals during the Second Constitutional Era<sup>93</sup>. However, with its critical approach towards conservative Muslims, he had a *sui generis* position among Islamist thinkers. In his book *Zulmetten Nura* (From darkness to divine light, 1915) his religious personality and his critical approach towards extreme conservatism can easily be found. First of all, he equalizes religion with ethics, and states that “since a nation deprived of ethics cannot survive, a nation without religion also cannot survive”<sup>94</sup>. He criticizes the materialist thinkers who relate ethics with conscience, and claims that the ethics they refer is, indeed, religion itself (Günaltay, 1998: 62). Secondly, he states that the aim of Islam is to promote good ethics, by referring to the sayings of the Prophet: “Islam attached such an importance to good ethics is that, our lord, the messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), stated he was dutied to complete ethical excellence.”<sup>95</sup> He adds that working and progress are two parts of good ethics, and as a religion promoting ethics, Islam targets both. Thirdly, he both attacks the thinkers who claim the Islam forestalls progress and the conservative Muslims who omits this world and concentrates on after life. In other words, for

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<sup>93</sup> (Prof. M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, 6 November 1961, Vatan; quoted in Çoker, 1983: 316).

<sup>94</sup> “Din, ahlak fazileti demek olduğundan ahlsız bir millet yaşayamayacağı gibi, dinsiz bir millet de ayakta kalmaz” (Günaltay, 1998: 60).

<sup>95</sup> “İslamiyet güzel ahlaka o derece önem vermiştir ki, Rasulullah (s.a.v.) Efendimiz bile ahlaki faziletleri tamamlamak için görevlendirildiğini söylemişlerdir” (Günaltay, 1998: 84).

him, what caused the underdevelopment of the Islamic world was not Islam, but the ignorance of Muslims:

It does not worth to respond those of who claim that Islam forestalls progress. Indeed, starting a struggle against the people who rejects Sun at the middle of the day is as meaningless as their thoughts. (...) We need to compare the progress of the Muslims in history and the deterioration of the Muslims of today, and curse to the vagrants who drag the Muslims into squalid conditions.<sup>96</sup>

After the publication of this book that promotes a progressive Islam, he focused on the history of ancient Turks, and gave lectures about them at the University of İstanbul. Following the proclamation of the Republic, he decided that in order to understand the base on which new Turkey will be build, it is foremostly needed to research the national soul and character of the Turks.<sup>97</sup> Then, he concentrated on the place of Turks in the history of Islam and concluded that if the Turks had not converted to Islam, the Islamic civilization could not emerge.<sup>98</sup> His works were appreciated by Mustafa Kemal, and was appointed as one of the founding members of the TTTC in 1931. His appointment as the Head of the Turkish Historical Society probably started the process of writing new textbooks. However, it is also important to focus on the possible political support behind these changes; whose responsible institution is the Ministry of Education.

An important change was also occurred in the Ministry of Education on 28 December 1938 - Hasan Âli Yücel was appointed as the Minister. With the support

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<sup>96</sup> “İslamiyetin ilerlemeye engel olduğu iddiasında bulunanlar cevap vermeye değmezler. Çünkü gündüzün ortasında güneşi inkar edenlerle mücadeleyle kalkışmak, anlayışsızlıkta onların seviyelerine inmek demektir. (...) O zamanki Müslümanların ilerlemesiyle bugünkü müslümanların gerilemesini birbirine kıyas ederek üzüntü gözyaşları dökmeli ve müslümanları bugünkü sefaletle sürükleyen derbederlere lanetler yağdırmalıyız” (Günaltay, 1998: 135).

<sup>97</sup> (Prof. M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, 6 November 1961, Vatan; quoted in Çoker, 1983: 316).

<sup>98</sup> (Prof. M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, 6 November 1961, Vatan; quoted in Çoker, 1983: 317).

of President İsmet İnönü, he started an important reform process: The Village Institutes (1940), The State Conservatory (1940), Ankara Faculty of Science (1943), Istanbul Technical University (1944) and Ankara Medical School (1945) were founded during his ministry.<sup>99</sup> The enlightenist and positivist part of his personality can be observed in his words while explaining the reason of the foundation of the Village Institutes:

We would like to train up new people who will bring the great revolutions that we made in our social life since the war of independence, to the villages. Because, the era of ummah has such a man - the imam. (...) We would like to send the man of revolutionary idea in the village instead of the imam.<sup>100</sup>

The later writings of Hasan Âli Yücel give clues to his role in the change of textbooks during his ministry. His writings show that Yücel is also a committed Muslim. Contrary to most of the writers in that period, he uses the prefix “hazreti” in front of the name of Mohammed, and defines him as “our prophet” (Yücel, 1955: 43). He rejects the idea that Islam forestalls progress, and criticizes the ones who has those views. He claims that national culture should be formed by mixing Islamic and Western values:

To consider Islam old-fashioned, sticky and hard, is opposing to Allah and his messenger. At the beginning of the Sura of “Taha”, Allah orders his messenger as: “we did not send you the Quran for hardship”. To pave this great religion, which is also appropriate for human nature, to the opposite side of the way which the world has been going, is a pitiful and horrible deviance.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>99</sup> <http://www.meb.gov.tr/meb/hasanali/hayati/halibiyografi.htm>

<sup>100</sup> Biz, istiklal mücadelesinden itibaren sosyal hayatımızda yaptığımız büyük devrimleri köylere götürecek adam yetiştirmek isteriz. Çünkü, ümmet devrinin böyle bir adamı vardır. Bu, imamdır. (...) Biz imamın yerine, köye devrimci düşüncenin adamını göndermeyi isteriz” (Dündar, 2006: 30).

<sup>101</sup> “Müslümanlığı güçlük, zamana uymamazlık, yerinden kıpırdamazlık saymak, Allaha ve Resulüne karşı gelmektir. Allah, Resulüne “Taha” suresine başlarken, “Biz sana Kuran’ı meşakkat olsun diye göndermedik” buyuruyor. Bu büyük ve insan fitratına uygun dini yanlış tefsirlerle bütün cihanın gidişine aykırı bir yola çekmek, ne hazin, ne korkunç bir sapıklıktır” (Yücel, 1955: 43-44).

We can constitute our national culture by developing, adopting and settling values coming from Islam and the West.<sup>102</sup>

However, although he believes in Islam, he also supports Republican reforms, and their symbol, Mustafa Kemal. He writes that to dislike Mustafa Kemal is a sin:

Claiming that the Turkish nation does not need to be grateful to him is disrespect for the divine will - the great force which emerged him as an intermediary. The book of Allah shows us the things that happen to societies which follows ungrateful ideas and teachings.<sup>103</sup>

It is possible to conclude that, the ideological infrastructure of the reemergence of Islamic doctrine in high school history textbooks is formed after a scholar with Islamic tendencies became the President of Turkish Historical Society; and supported by a politician, who justifies secularization reforms by making the Quran as a reference point, became the Minister of Education.

The textbooks used between 1950 and 1960 are written by Niyazi Akşit and Emin Oktay, high school teachers who are not members of the Turkish Historical Society. Like the previous textbooks of 1941, these textbooks also narrate the Islamic doctrine and introduce Mohammed as the messenger of God. However, they have a more powerful rhetoric and introduce the doctrine with certainty. Furthermore, unlike the previous textbooks, they moderately assume that the readers are Muslims.

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<sup>102</sup> “Müslümanlıktan ve Garblılıktan gelen kıymetleri milli varlığımızda geliştirmek, benimsemek ve yerleştirmek suretile milli kültürümüzü kurabiliriz” (Yücel, 1966: 25).

<sup>103</sup> “Türk milletinin ona borcu yoktur demek, ilahi iradeye, onu vasıta olarak çıkaran büyük kudrete hürmetsizliktir. Nankör fikirlere ve telkinlere uyan toplulukların başına gelenleri gene Allahın kitabı bize ibret olarak göstermiyor mu?” (Yücel, 1955: 44).

Compared to the changes occurred in 1942, those occurred in 1950 are less important– in 1942, the narrative which had been continued for a decade is abandoned; Islam is narrated as the order of God and the conversion of the Turks to Islam is attributed to spiritual reasons. The textbooks of 1950, on the other hand, accept that Islam is the order of God with a more powerful rhetoric and moderately assume that the readers also share this acceptance. Like the textbook of the 1942, the textbook of Akşit (1954) also associates Turkish conversion to Islam with spiritual motives. In other words, the most important changes, which ended the Kemalist project of building a secular Turkish identity that excludes Islam, occurred in 1942.

The date of 1942 forestalls to reach a conclusion attributed to changes the political system or governing parties. If the changes had occurred in 1945/1946 or 1950, then they could be associated with the transition to a multi-party system or coming to the power of the Democratic Party, respectively. If they had occurred in 1939, then they could be related with the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Indeed, only the first volume of the textbooks of 1931, which explicitly narrated the Turkish Historical Thesis as a historical fact, was replaced with a new first volume that veiled the thesis in 1939. The remaining volumes, including the one which explicitly rejected Islamic doctrine and associated the Turkish conversion to Islam with political motives, reprinted more than two and a half years after the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. This fact shows that his death was not a sufficient condition to implement the changes<sup>104</sup>.

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<sup>104</sup> It is necessary to accept the fact that if Mustafa Kemal Atatürk were alive, he would not allow the change of the textbooks which were prepared with his orders, based on the notes written by him, and the most important tool of his project to build a secular identity based on Turkish nationalism that excludes Islam. Thus, his death was a preliminary, but not a sufficient condition to implement the changes.

Needless to mention, the end of the Kemalist project to build a secular identity that excludes Islam in 1942 does not show that there is no difference between the policies of the RPP and DP towards religion, or the softening of secularization policies of the RPP between 1946 and 1949 cannot be attributed to multi-party era. What it shows that, firstly, the first de-secularization policy of the RPP did not occur in 1946, but occurred in 1942; and more importantly, the RPP was a more heterogeneous party in terms of the views of its policy makers towards religion. The key figure behind the change, Şemsettin Günaltay, was an important actor of the RPP who would become the Prime Minister of Turkey in 1949; and the possible supporter of the change, Hasan Âli Yücel, was a leading figure of the RPP and a prominent minister of the government. In other words, two prominent figures of the RPP were against an important secularization project of the RPP, and had the will to soften that policy. More importantly, soon after they reached to the necessary positions, they were able to change it, which shows that the RPP was more heterogeneous than what is known by general public.

Besides this main conclusion of this thesis, there are five others which can be derived from the related issues mentioned. Firstly, parallel to the view of the mainstream theories of nationalism, Turkish nationalism is a modern phenomena. Taking the definition of nationalism as defined by Gellner, “primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent” (Gellner, 1983: 1), the aim of founding a state based on the sovereignty of Turks emerged during the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Secondly, since there is no serious change in the economic conditions of the Ottoman Empire during the mentioned times, economic factors cannot play a vital role in the emergence of Turkish

nationalism. Therefore, nationalism theories that concentrate on economic factors, such as that of Gellner and Anderson, cannot explain the case of Turkish nationalism. Thirdly, Turkish nationalism is emerged in a time during which religion was still an important factor on the lives of the people. Probably because of this, all of the thinkers of Turkish nationalism attached importance to Islam and most of them tried to conform Islam and Turkish nationalism. Even one of the most secular of them, Yusuf Akçura, stated that Islam was an important tool to unite the Turks. Fourthly, by referring to a totally secular identity that excludes Islam, Kemalist variant of Turkish nationalism is a serious break from its former variants. Lastly, the claim of Liah Greenfeld, that is, the relationship between religion and nationalism is not linear, also holds for the case of Turkish nationalism. It emerged in a highly religious environment, and gradually widened itself in expense of religion. However, even the most secular variant of Turkish nationalism tried to do so for a decade, it never totally substituted religion.

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