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RECEP PEKER AND HIS INFLUENCE ON KEMALIST IDEOLOGY

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## TUTANAK

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## ABSTRACT

Importance of the state had improved on all parts of the society and a strong central government, nation-state, was formed. As theories reflect on practice, the foundation of the Republic of Turkey and its ideological structure will be studied. Together with the appearance of democracy, one of the important means of the modern age, the general ideology of the Turkish revolution and the problem of democracy will be taken up. On the ideological basis of Kemalism, this study will hold the view that Kemalism is not actually a genuine ideology, but is an eclectic ideology formed by selecting the suitable parts of the major ideologies of its time.

It is also useful to have a look at the actors who played a role in formation of this ideology. It is possible to consider Recep Peker as a radical revolutionary - the Turkish response to Robespierre of the French Revolution - since he had an important position in the formation of the Turkish revolution both in terms of practice and theory. His active role in the conceptualization and determination of Kemalist ideology constitutes sufficient reason to examine him within the mentioned context.

Peker was an important ideologue of the Republic. He was not a spokesman of the ideologists but one of the active participants of the new formations. The hard and authoritarian nature of Peker can also be seen in his administration. When he was the general secretary of the Republican People's Party, together with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and İsmet İnönü, they were in the center that would be enough to form a "leadership triumvir." In spite of Mustafa Kemal, he realized many of his ideas. Since he couldn't change his hard and authoritarian nature and couldn't fall in step with new formations emerged after the World War II, his activity declined and he retreated from the political scene. Consequently, to make a theoretical evaluation of the studies and to find out the behind-the-scene realities of Turkey's present problems are some of the practical purposes of this study.

## ÖZET

Türkiye Cumhuriyetinin kuruluş döneminde devletin önemi toplumun bütün katmanlarında artmış ve güçlü bir merkezi devlet yani ulus-devlet kurulmuştur. Bu bağlamda teorilerin pratiğe yansması, Türkiye Cumhuriyetinin kurulması ve ideolojik yapısı incelenecektir. Demokrasinin modern çağın en önemli sorunsallarından biri olması ile Cumhuriyetin kurulması ve ideolojik yapısı bu çerçeveden ele alınacaktır. Kemalist ideoloji ile dönemin ideolojileri arasındaki bağlantılar incelenecek ve bu ideolojinin eklektik yapısı analiz edilecektir.

Bu ideolojinin kurgulanmasında etkili kişileri incelemek daha fazla açıklayıcı olacaktır. Recep Peker'i Cumhuriyetin radikal ideoloğu, bir anlamda Fransız devriminin ortaya çıkardığı Robespierre'in Türkiye karşılığı olarak kabul etmek mümkündür. Peker hem pratik, hem de teorik anlamda Kemalist ideolojinin kurgulanmasında önemli rol oynamıştır. Peker'in bu rolü onun hayatı ve fikirlerinin incelenmesini gerekli kılmaktadır.

Peker Cumhuriyet'in önemli bir ideoloğudur. Fikirleri dile getiren bir sözcü değil, yeni oluşumların önemli mimarları arasında kurucu rol oynamıştır. Pekerin sıkı ve otoriter yapısı hem ideolojik katkılarında, hem de yöneticiliğinde gözlenmektedir. Atatürk ve İsmet İnönü ile birlikte Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi sekreterliğini yürüttüğü dönemde etkisi onu liderlik triumvirasi içine girmesine yetmiştir. Katı ve otoriter doğasını değiştiremediği için 2. dünya savaşı sonrası ortaya çıkan ortama uyum sağlayamamış ve siyaset sahnesinde daha fazla rol alamamıştır. Özetle, teorik bir çalışma yapmak ve bu yolla Türkiye'nin şu andaki problemlerine ışık tutmak bu çalışmanın pratik amaçları arasında yer alacaktır.,

## INTRODUCTION

Ideologies are defined systems of thought that create targets necessary for the improvement of society, as a whole or as single individuals. They have been used in the past to ensure and protect the power of the state. In addition, they are an instrument that provides legitimacy to nations, which are able to continue their existence in this way. Moreover they are used to change society's map of meaning and as a means of resistance against pressure groups.

If, as mentioned, ideologies are a necessary provision of a state's legitimacy, we should examine the role of ideology at the time of formation of a nation-state. The reason for this is for a new ideology to be formed, it is necessary to replace the previous map and world of meanings, and therefore it would get a new duty of surrounding.

Ideologies, a product of the modern age and Western capitalism, have also been applied to Turkish society. They have been used as an engine for criticizing the previous situation and for reformation of the society. The Westernization movement in Turkey, which started with the *Tanzimat* decree, sped up with the Republican project and was imposed on society with a great effort that Ottoman intellectuals could not previously dare.

Totalitarianism, an offspring of capitalism and technological development, was also carried out within the new Turkish state. The model of the nation-state, which had been formed consequently, has been embedded in the young republic of Turkey and many other states. Democracy came back to agenda of modern age after being discovered by Greek city-states many centuries ago. However, it gained a new status and was transformed to a great extent.

Totalitarianism also seems to get a long way till the state understanding gained a middle way between despotism and absolute freedom. Under the light of these concepts and turning points, it is necessary to examine the foundation of the Republic of Turkey and the period of the single party system. Ideological legend of the single party period gains meaning only by analyzing the other major ideologies of the time.

In order to understand all of these concepts and questions, it is helpful to determine the relation between the real knowledge and ideology, and its historical background. Later, the relations of ideologies and the states will be mentioned. Together with the appearance of universal ideologies, the state's importance in the reformation of society improved and the totalitarian structure emerged.

Importance of the state had improved on all parts of the society and a strong central government, nation-state, was formed. The above mentioned



subjects form the framework of this study. As theories reflect on practice, the foundation of the Republic of Turkey and its ideological structure will be studied. As mentioned above, together with the appearance of democracy, one of the important means of the modern age, the general ideology of the Turkish revolution and the problem of democracy will be taken up. On the ideological basis of Kemalism, this study will hold the view that Kemalism is not actually a genuine ideology, but is an eclectic ideology formed by selecting the suitable parts of the major ideologies of its time.

It is also useful to have a look at the actors who played a role in formation of this ideology. It is possible to consider Recep Peker as a radical revolutionary - the Turkish response to Robespierre of the French Revolution - since he had an important position in the formation of the Turkish revolution both in terms of practice and theory. His active role in the conceptualization and determination of Kemalist ideology constitutes sufficient reason to examine him within the mentioned context.

Peker was an important ideologue of the Republic. He was not a spokesman of the ideologists but one of the active participants of the new formations. The hard and authoritarian nature of Peker can also be seen in his administration. When he was the general secretary of the Republican People's Party, together with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and İsmet İnönü, they were in the center that would be enough to form a "leadership triumvir." In spite of Mustafa Kemal, he realized many of his ideas. Since he couldn't

change his hard and authoritarian nature and couldn't fall in step with new formations emerged after the World War II, his activity declined and he retreated from the political scene. Consequently, to make a theoretical evaluation of the studies and to find out the behind-the-scene realities of Turkey's present problems are some of the practical purposes of this study.



## Chapter 1

### NATIONALISM AND THE NATION-STATE: FROM THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE TO THE TURKISH REPUBLIC

The first samples of nation-state-like organizations appeared circa 4000 BC as city civilizations. Civilized regions during this period were the Nile Delta, Indus region and the Tigris-Euphrates Delta, i.e. Mesopotamia.<sup>1</sup> After these prehistoric societies, powerful clan states became stronger and established great political power. Later, after Egypt and the Hittite, Babylonian and Assyrian states lost their power new started to show their strength. Those countries were composed of the Cretan, Anatolian and Greek societies and were in the form of city-states.<sup>2</sup> Although they lacked military might, they were among the important states of those times. In those city-states power was in the hands of a dominant nation, except for slaves and foreigners there was a conciousness of nation. In some aspects they may be regarded as primitive versions of modern nation-states.

However, in those civilizations there was widespread migration and civil turmoil. With the end of that disorder, the Roman Empire was founded. The period in which these city-states and similar states came to an end marks the transition to feudal agricultural economy.<sup>3</sup> In city-states, there was a conciousness of nation, whereas in the feudal state there was no such conciousness of the people under the rule of feudal lords. In the

Roman Empire, three structural phenomena attracted attention. These were the concepts of scientific thought, global civilization and world politics, and the understanding of a universal God.<sup>4</sup> The acceptance of the idea of a universal single God ended paganist beliefs. During this period, Christianity appeared in the Middle East and spread towards Rome and the emperors had to accept it as time passed.

At first, Christianity's aim was not to save the people from the Romans but to save them from their sins. "At first, Romans perceived this religion as a rival against their power but later this religion gave" church's right to church, Caesar's right to Caesar. Consequently the dispute between Christianity and the dominant political authority disappeared.<sup>5</sup> However, later on the Roman Empire started to decline and Christianity therefore found new supporters. Then the church started to expand its authority. After that, the church came to a position of authority that had to be taken into consideration.

Later, there would start a fight of authority between worldly monarchs and the spiritual papacy: that is, between the church and the state. Nevertheless, when Rome fell against the barbarian invasions, it was the church that saved wide estates and classical tradition. It also took both Europe and Christianity to a new age.<sup>6</sup>

With this, the period of medieval Europe began. Two basic institutions left their marks on this period, the church and feudalism. The purpose of the church's organization was to form a universal common culture,<sup>7</sup> and the core of feudalism was to execute a kind of government at a local level where there were no organized states.<sup>8</sup> Although sometimes the church's influence on feudal lords increased, the government was in control of great landlords to a large extent. The feudal lords had no autonomous military units or judicial systems.

However, a class of merchants appeared and cities developed due to the feudal structure, development of the idea of trade and agricultural revolution and growth. The cities became places where people gained their livelihood not from agriculture, but from trade. Due to the escape of peasants from the feudal system and their settlement in cities, the population of the cities increased rapidly. Therefore, a new economic class was born in society and the tradespeople (bourgeoisie) began to gain power.<sup>9</sup> A strange development resulted from this, the atomized political structure of feudal society dissolved and consequently, power became centralized. Thereafter, the nobles, who lacked administrative power, began to join the direct government of kings.<sup>10</sup>

After this, basic features of the modern world took Europe to the beginning of a new period. With the development of trade, Europe became involved in globalization. European people, who now were able to act and think globally, succeeded in gaining their liberty from the

church. The development of the idea of nationality came about during this period. At this time, a few political authorities, especially the monarchs of Portugal, Spain, France and England, gained the strong political support of their subjects. The concept of nationality that was awakening gradually strengthened those monarchies and the devotion of their subjects increased. Meanwhile, new interpretations of the Bible by non-Catholics and the desire to translate it into languages other than Latin were among the important developments that prepared the way for the "nation state." In short, the beginning of the "nation state" can be observed in this period.

After this time, "This struggle started by cooperation of the bourgeois with the king, made the king win estates to enlarge his influence and power, denoted very radical and opportunities to the bourgeois.<sup>11</sup> The people who entered under the control of the worldly power, king got rid of management of the church and needed a new identification. Consequently, borders were drawn according to geographical criteria and the resulting land was called a country (motherland), the people who lived within these borders made up the nation, and the individuals of this nation were called citizens.<sup>12</sup>

### **1.1. Nation and Nationalism**

To be able to observe the development of nation state, it is necessary to take a glance at the concepts of nation and nationalism. In Turkish, the Arabic-root equivalent "*millet*" means a religious community.<sup>13</sup> Together with this, the current equivalent that we use is "*kavm*." The

dictionary meaning of this word is a society that comes together because of common futures. Its terminological meaning is a group of people who have unity in social traditions, culture and common interests. In Turkish, it can be said as the full equivalent of "ulus." In Western Europe the term "nation" expresses a local community who lives in a certain region.<sup>14</sup> If we group the terms with the same meanings, "nation," "ulus" and "kavm" resembles each other. By the way, a generalization, which states that in Arabic there is no equivalent term meaning "nation"(ulus),<sup>15</sup> is an invalid claim. The duality that emerges in defining "nation" can be explained by the differing ideological backgrounds of the people who define it. It is possible to come up with two different approaches: idealistic and materialist.

According to the idealistic approach, the nation is expressed by "national spirit." National spirit takes the historical background of the people, living together, into consideration. The most famous representative of this theory is Hegel. According to Hegel, every nation has its own unique and mysterious spirit, or *volksgeist*. The body of this mysterious metaphysical entity is made up of the group of human beings within the nation. The national spirits of countries may carry common characteristics and be in harmony or conflict. Conflict results in separation, antagonism and struggle, whereas harmony results in closeness, friendship and sympathy. Above the national spirits, there is universal spirit (*weltgeist*). Universal spirit takes place within history and the rise and decline of societies are related to it. A nation that represents

the universal spirit becomes the dominant nation in the world and a guide to other nations. This approach brings a historical and metaphysical explanation and displays an idealistic view. It attributes historical and idealistic values to the nations and under the light of those values it defines the nation. However, it is clear that here the nation emerges separate from ethnicity, but with a universal focus on sovereignty.

The materialistic approach tries to explain "nation" through material elements such as geography and economy. According to Marxism, the nation is a temporary situation born from the necessities of the bourgeois.<sup>16</sup> Its base is the country and it emerged due to the economic unity of a country.<sup>17</sup> He claims that values, language and religion are not enough to determine the nation; religion's claim of universality contradicts geographical borders. Therefore, the concept of religion should not be influential in determining a nation.<sup>18</sup> He states that there is no pure race that carries the same ethnic and anthropological characteristics, and culture is not an effective element since it is defined by geography and economy.<sup>19</sup>

The idea of nation first appeared in western societies as a result of the French Revolution and Napoleon wars, at the end of a period of universality of the church and monarchic kingdoms. The spread of this concept to Asia, Africa and other continents occurred at the time of liberty of colonial societies, i.e., in the midst of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> This gives an extended definition of nation as, the community of people who emerged



with the dissolve of empires, who have a common language, religion, culture, ideal destiny and who have an independent political identity.

This concept of the nation as an ethnic group that has its own history and culture on a defined land<sup>21</sup> was represented by Ziya Gökalp and Yusuf Akçura in Turkey. Ziya Gökalp defined nation as: "A group of people composed of individuals with the same training in terms of language, religion, morals and (bediiyat?)."<sup>22</sup> Yusuf Akçura defined it as: "A society of mankind in which there is an integrity due to unity of race and language."<sup>23</sup> It is interesting to note that while Ziya Gökalp points out religion as a unifying element of the nation, Yusuf Akçura points out race as a basic element but pays no attention to religion.

Nationality is a concept inseparable from that of nation. If the nation is a reality, nationality is its ideological reflection. Nationality is "a movement of ideology in which an ethnic group or community aims to establish their own state or aims to defend an existing nation state."<sup>24</sup> It is the only ideology that depends on the traditions destroyed by democracy and science, human beings and sacred values.

It has, at the same time, become the only shelter for tradition, belief and holy things. Therefore, it is called together with conservatism. Their solidaristic structure provided a mystical view to the ideology of nationality.<sup>25</sup> This ideology brought a dynamism to the nations. It may be understood that it is a reactionist ideology since it asked for economic growth and to be superior than other nations.<sup>26</sup> The biggest paradox that

nationality faces is the confusion of meaning and the definitions without limitations

Muhammed Kutup also developed two definitions of nationality in terms of metaphysical and materialistic views. He says that the materialistic view, which is related to geography and economy, corresponds with patriotism (*el-vataniye*). The metaphysical and idealistic view, independent from geography and which is formed by race, language, emotion and ideal unity, corresponds with nationalism (*el-kavmiyye*).

### **1.2. Turkish Experience of Nation State after the *Tanzimat***

Post-*Tanzimat* ideological movements, nationalism and pan-Islamism, began to appear when the Ottoman Empire had borders which could be extended no more. When the Sultanate started to decline and Europe started to rise, new discussions about this situation began in the Ottoman Empire. Koçi Bey, who wrote a treatise in the 17<sup>th</sup> century about the disorder of the state structure and the need for reform, advised the Sultan about reformations and actions to make.<sup>27</sup>

The Ottoman Empire established closer relations with the West and the Sultan tried reformations fitting with developments there, such as the decline of monarchs and scientific and cultural developments. Selim the 3<sup>rd</sup>, who reigned at the time of the French Revolution, had relations with France and was influenced by French culture.<sup>28</sup> From this time on, Western culture and civilization influenced Ottoman political and social life. Although the Ottoman Empire had the structure of a model state by

Western standards, the Sultanate was under pressure from the principles of the French Revolution, political disorder and disability due to Napoleon's invasions and the popularity of nationalism.<sup>29</sup>

Under these influences the Sultanate entered into a new period. There were two alternatives to choose between under the threatening social and economic collapse of the Ottoman state. By this time the systems of the land were out of order and an industrial revolution was impossible. There were nationalist movements and non-Muslim subjects were being controlled by foreign authorities. Therefore, either a western model had to be chosen or the empire must withdraw into its shell and isolate itself from the world. The Ottoman Empire chose the first alternative and the Sultan declared the *Tanzimat Firman* (Reformist Decree) in 1839.<sup>30</sup>

The Ottoman state approached the West step by step with the *Tanzimat Firman*, *Islahat* (Improvement) *Firman* and the declaration of a constitutional monarchy. A new group of reformists came to the forefront. This group no longer consisted of the *ulema* (scholars), but of military-civilian bureaucrats and officials who had graduated from Harbiye and Tibbiye. Tanzimat, or reformist, intellectuals themselves undertook the duty of pursuing reflecting western knowledge. Westernization of Ottoman subjects was not an improvement project driven by the government itself.<sup>31</sup>

Ottoman modernization turned into a tool of resistance against Western civilization and became a means to save the inferior order.<sup>32</sup>

Modernization and Westernization put the nationalism of the West on the agenda, too. However, nationalism gave rise to separatist movements of ethnic groups. Against those separatists, Ottoman intellectuals brought about the idea of Ottomanism. This concept attempted to realize the full equality of ethnic groups and to unify the state and the people under the Ottoman Empire. These efforts were influenced by the federal state system of the West, as in the United States of America. After the 1860s, there were some reactions against these Westernization efforts.

A group called the Neo-Ottomans (*Yeni Osmanlilar*) started to criticize extreme Westernization, with the exception of technology. They tried to find a synthesis of traditional and modern values.<sup>33</sup> Namik Kemal, a well-known forerunner of the Neo-Ottomans, defended the idea of Ottomanism against the West. He also directed future nationalist movements by introducing the subjects of nation and motherland.<sup>34</sup> However, the biggest benefit to Ottomanism policy was that non-Turkish subjects of the country had entered into nationalism movements. Therefore, Turkish intellectuals embraced Turkish nationalism even more strongly.<sup>35</sup>

During the period of reform that started with the Tanzimat Firman, certain developments in historical research also fostered the idea of nationalism. Since pre-Ottoman and Central Asian Turkish groups were not very well known before Tanzimat, new learning about them expanded

Turkish nationalism. The most important studies done on this subject were by Hungarian historians, especially Leon Cahun.<sup>36</sup>

It is clear that the supra-identity efforts of the Ottoman state were useless. Along with nationalist movements, first non-Muslim subjects, and later non-Turkish Muslims separated from the Ottoman Empire. Along with information of other Turkish groups living outside the Ottoman Empire, the Supreme Nation (*Millet-i Hakime*) started nationalist movements. However, this was not nationalism in terms of the nation state, but an effort to unify the Ottoman state. As a result of the separatist nationalist movements of non-Muslim subjects, together with Pan-Islamist ideas that aimed to unify the Islam Ummet, the idea of unifying all Turkish groups was also defended. In the nationalism of this period, emphasis was placed on the unity of blood. Later, however, the idea of cultural nationalism, led by Ziya Gökalp, was developed.

### **1.3. Nationalism and Pan-Islamists**

Pan-Islamism was firstly mentioned by the Neo-Ottomans and it became more defined with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monarchy. It was an important feature of this movement and later was expressed in various interpretations. There are no clear differences among the Neo-Ottomans who defended Pan-Islamism. Namik Kemal defended a Turkish-Islamic civilization while criticizing the Tanzimat; in defending an Islamic civilization he displays nationalist behaviors.<sup>37</sup> At first, when the differences become more clear after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monarchy (*Meşrutiyet*) and Pan-Islamists came together

around "*Sırat-ı Müstakim*" as a new school, they didn't form a group opposed to nationalism starts with Babanzade Ahmet Naim's article "The Matter of Nationalism on Islam" (*İslam'da Dava-yi Kavmiyet*) published in *sebilürreşad*.<sup>38</sup>

According to Tarik Zafer Tunaya, Pan-Turkism developed under two different movements: Pure Pan-Turkism and Islamist Pan-Turkism. Pan-Islamists were absolutely opposed to Pan-Turkism. They claimed that Pan-Turkists spoil Islam. Pan-Islamists could reach agreements more readily with Islamist Pan-Turkists. Pan-Islamists certainly denied the concept of nationalism and since was harmful to other nations they believed that extra affection also very harmful, and thus assumed an attitude of opposition to nationalism.<sup>39</sup>

Mehmet Akif stated that the communities take refuge behind a binding power called race or family (*soy*) so as to escape from attack. In addition, the communities who unite under nationalist (*asabiyet*) sentiment, save their rights against foreigners. He added that if they overstep the limits, a struggle of nations would begin. Akif stated that in Islam, nationalism is not esteemed,

...because, one who behaves according to the Islamic religion refuses the fanaticism of nationalism and racism. He approaches to the subjects that draw the attention of a whole nation (country). The relationship that connects him to others is religious belief.<sup>40</sup>

Another evident effort of Pan-Islamists was that they used the terms "Ottoman Nation" (*Osmanlı Milleti*) and "Islamic Nation" (*İslam Milleti*) to save nationalism from racial futures. Mehmet Akif used the term "Ottoman Nation" as an equivalent to nationalism<sup>41</sup> and Bediüzzaman Said Nursi used the term of "Islamic Nation" as a supplementary concept against nationalism (*asabiyet*). Here, race is the only cultural instrument.<sup>42</sup>

Among the people who harmonize Islam and Nationalism, Mehmet Akif comes to mind. However, it was a continuous dispute among Pan-Islamist intellectuals that where Pan-Turkism and Pan-Ottomanism start.<sup>43</sup>

In one of his articles, Ziya Gökalp states that the germ of nationalism that has smashed the Ottoman State to pieces for a hundred years, has now turned into an advantage of Islam and he attempted to compensate for those harms. He tried to prove through the Qu'ran and the hadith that Islam permits nationalism.<sup>44</sup> Over time, as nationalism sprang up and found great acceptance, Pan-Islamists also changed their opinions according to current conditions by stating, "In this time, it is not said to the nationalistss to give up nationalism."<sup>45</sup> Accordingly,

Bediüzzaman divides nationalism into negative or harmful nationalism (*menfi*) and positive (*müspet*) nationalism.<sup>46</sup>

Said Halim Paşa did not consider nationalism a problem and was not opposed to it. He was both a pan-Islamist and a nationalist at the same time. In the article "Our Ideological Crises" ("*Fikir Buhranlarımız*"), he writes about Ottoman nationality. He stated that the Ottoman subjects had given up their national values because of Westernization. He defended his argument that his civilization would not be so underdeveloped if the Ottomans were not addicted to reproducing the West.<sup>47</sup> In another of his articles, "Our Community's Crises" ("*Cemiyet Buhranlarımız*"), he defined nation and argued that a community of people can only be a nation when the individuals devote themselves to a common idea of unity with common feelings, traditions, ideas and beliefs.

#### 1.4. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, the transition from an empire to nation-state in Turkish case has been discussed with a particular reference to intellectual currents and shifts related to this transition. The intellectual and practical accumulation of this transition paved way for the new model of young Turkish republic. The notion of national unity and cohesion (*milîî birlik ve beraberlik*) was placed at the core of the new model; all deviations began to be seen as potential dangers to national unity. Thus, the model that had a principal goal of catching-up to the level of the contemporary developed countries at any cost will be analyzed in next chapter.



## 1.5. Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> Toktamis Ates, *Siyasal Tarih* (Istanbul: I.U. İktisat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1982), p.15
- <sup>2</sup> Ates, p.15.
- <sup>3</sup> Ates, p.15.
- <sup>4</sup> Oral Sander, *Siyasal Tarih* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1992), p.31.
- <sup>5</sup> Ates, p.18.
- <sup>6</sup> Sander, p.33.
- <sup>7</sup> Ates, p.18.
- <sup>8</sup> Ergun Yildirim, "Modern Ulus Devlet," *Bilgi ve Hikmet* (Summer 1993), p.42.
- <sup>9</sup> Ates, p.24
- <sup>10</sup> Sander, p.65.
- <sup>11</sup> Ali Bulac, *Modern Ulus Devlet* (Istanbul: İz Yayınları, 1994).
- <sup>12</sup> Ali Bulac, "Modern Devletin Totaliter ve Ulus Niteliği," *Bilgi ve Hikmet* (Summer 1993), pp.8-10.
- <sup>13</sup> Ali Engin Oba, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Doğusu* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1995), p.17.
- <sup>14</sup> M. Ali Kilicbay, "Tarihsel Bir İnşa Olarak Ulus," *Türkiye Günlugu* (Winter 1993), p.5.
- <sup>15</sup> Kilicbay, p.5.
- <sup>16</sup> Mithat Baydur, "Ulus Devlet ve Otesine Teorik Yaklaşımlar ve Türkiye üzerine Birkac Not," *Türkiye Günlugu*, (Winter 1993), p.9.
- <sup>17</sup> Kilicbay, p.6.
- <sup>18</sup> Kilicbay, p.6.
- <sup>19</sup> Kilicbay, p.7.
- <sup>20</sup> Oba, p.17
- <sup>21</sup> Baydur, p.10.
- <sup>22</sup> Ziya Gökalp, *Turkculugun Esasları* (Istanbul: Varlık Yayınları, 1963), p.16

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- <sup>23</sup> Yusuf Akcura, *Türk Yılı* (Istanbul: n.p., 1928), p.291.
- <sup>24</sup> Baydur, p.10.
- <sup>25</sup> Remzi Oğuz Arik, *İdeal ve İdeoloji* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1969), 50.
- <sup>26</sup> Arik, 53.
- <sup>27</sup> *Kocı Bey Risalesi*, translated by Zuhuri Danisman (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1993).
- <sup>28</sup> Ates, p.186
- <sup>29</sup> Sander, p.211.
- <sup>30</sup> Ates, p.344.
- <sup>31</sup> M. Ali Kilicbay, "Osmanlı Aydını," *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1986), p.56
- <sup>32</sup> Kilicbay, p.57.
- <sup>33</sup> Sukru Hanioglu, "Baticilik," *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1986), p.1383
- <sup>34</sup> Oba, p.181.
- <sup>35</sup> Sukru Hanioglu, "Osmanlıcilik," *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1986), p.1392
- <sup>36</sup> Oba, p.181.
- <sup>37</sup> Oba, p.188.
- <sup>38</sup> İsmail Kara, *Türkiye'de İslamcılık Düşüncesi* (Istanbul: Risale Yayınları, 1986), p.15
- <sup>39</sup> Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *İslamcılık Akımı* (Istanbul: Simavi Yayınları, 1991), p.82.
- <sup>40</sup> Mehmet Akif Ersoy, *Modernleşmek mi, İslamlaşmak mi?* (Istanbul: İhya Yayınları, 1983), p.317.
- <sup>41</sup> Kara, p.16.
- <sup>42</sup> Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, *Mektubat* (Istanbul: Envar Yayınları, 1986), p.430.
- <sup>43</sup> Mardin, pp.28-29
- <sup>44</sup> Ziya Gökalp, *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak* (Istanbul: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1993), pp.74-75.
- <sup>45</sup> Kara, p.17

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<sup>46</sup> Nursi, p.322.

<sup>47</sup> Said Halim Pasa, *Buhranlarimiz ve Son Eserleri*, translated by Ertugrul Duzdag (Istanbul: Iz Yayinlari, 1993), pp. 74-75



## Chapter 2

### THE IDEOLOGY OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC

All leading elites that form the structure of a nation state are committed to establishing a strong administrative structure to achieve the aim of development and modernization. The general tendency of these leaders is to provide all necessities through a single and hegemonic political party. Although these leaders claim to be temporary authoritarian governments that will later be replaced by democratic systems, governments do not easily leave their power to a more democratic system, even if political and social conditions demand it.<sup>1</sup>

Paul E. Sigmund's ideas about modernist authoritarian states are very important. "Crises of modernisation exists all over Asia, Africa and Latin America. Generally revolution against imperialism is more important than ending Western hegemony and having political independence." This is also true for social and economic revolution. The motivators of this kind of revolution are the Westernized ruling elite who want to make their countries like the West.<sup>2</sup>

The value and belief system of developing countries that paves way to aimed system can be called a modernizationist nationalist ideology. This is different from Western-style freedom and Soviet communism. The most important function of these ideologies is to modernize the traditional

society and to justify the right to will devotion from the society. During forming this ideology both Western and Eastern thoughts were used.<sup>3</sup>

There was no ideology in developing countries that effected the political life in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe. In this period we see the competition among the dominant ideologies appear as nationalism. The idea of forming a new kind of society forms a new concept of freedom. According to this, freedom is not individual freedom, but rather a nationalist concept.<sup>4</sup> According to this ideology it is believed that it is early to state individualistic freedom, but that this may be possible in the future.

The ideology of developing countries, because of a desire to shape the society and form a new one, is similar to "succession ideology." According to Köker this concept appears after naming the process of Jacobin shaping (ex post facto).<sup>5</sup>

Turkey is one of the most suitable examples to examine this situation. Kemalist ideology took nationalism ideology as its base. However, it did not form an enmity to foreign imperialist powers; the opposition was to the old system. This occurred due to the desire to save the country that was dissolving due to a lack of self-determination:

Atatürkism rose from the ideology of saving the country. It grew up by solving the domestic problems, arranging foreign relations and making total changes in lifestyles. In decision making processes

modern tools were used more than traditional ones. Nationalism and secularism are the most common characteristics of Ataturkism.<sup>6</sup>

Ataturk always insisted on following a nationalist policy to achieve modernization.

Our great problem is to raise our nation as a civilized nation... This is not an ideal just in the institutions, but for the entire Turkish nation. We should bring ideas and actions together to succeed in this ideal. Success in this aim can be achieved only by plans and rational efforts. Therefore the Ministry of Culture has a big responsibility to educate technical staff in order to support development, to make every citizen literate and to form institutions that will carry this ideal from one generation to the next... Principles that I demonstrated should be taught to the Turkish youth in Turkish universities and high schools.<sup>7</sup>

An interesting idea about Atatürk's modernisationist nation state has been expressed by Eric Hoffer: "Ideology that made Atatürk to modernise Turkey even in one night is nationalism."<sup>8</sup> He states that the base of Atatürk's ideology is modernization and nationalism and with it he aimed to

form an ideology that would not just become a historical ideology, but would also shape the nation in the future.<sup>9</sup> The reason why the ruling elite did not mention democracy was that this could negatively effect the transformationist structure of the revolution. Tarık Zafer Tunaya claims that priority was given to establishing the structure nationwide where Turks could live in a safe environment. He adds that individualist development was a secondary issue that could not be given first priority.<sup>10</sup>

### **2.1. The Rise of Kemalism**

As it is stated earlier Kemalism aims to modernize Turkish society under the nation state ideology. This idea was common in public opinion from the time of the War of Independence, but realized during the establishment of the republic. At first this was just a practical actions movement, but it later needed a theoretical base when faced with social and political opposition.

At first Gazi [Ataturk] said that Republican People's Party (CHP), the party of the state, would be the foci of the people that would unite all the strata of the society. But since the 1930s the Party has been made up of a very narrow ruling elite, with a very narrow support of the local people who aim to gain profit from this. The Party of the revolution became a group closed to any part of the society.<sup>11</sup>

Although CHP aimed to achieve modernisationist ideals, they just concentrated on historical facts of the past. The elites that established the state claimed that corruption was increasing even during Atatürk's period. Therefore, they tried to make reforms to achieve dynamism. As Aydemir stated, "CHP has become a narrow group closed to the citizens, if precautions are not taken soon the situation may grow worse."<sup>12</sup> This ruling elite presented Atatürkism, because of his strong influence over the society, as a precaution to the "dangerous" ideologies from outside.<sup>13</sup>

According to Şerif Mardin, Atatürk formed the Kemalist ideology and showed its main characteristics as Republicanism, nationalism, peopleism, statism, secularism and revolutionism. However, colleagues of Atatürk do not agree. In contrast to Şerif Mardin, Ş. Süreyya Aydemir says that :

In fact Gazi [Ataturk] was quiet about these developments. As a matter of fact, in the opening ceremony of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the party he did not say anything about the six arrows. Therefore, it is not easy to understand what Gazi thought about the six arrows, and this is a real weakness of the Party.<sup>14</sup>

The term "Kemalism" was first used in the "*Muhit*" journal by a language expert named Ahmet Cevdet. It appears in 1931 in the meeting



of CHP but supposedly was developed by the "Kadro" journal during 1930s.<sup>15</sup>

After this analysis of the formation of Atatürkism, we now examine how similar it is to an ideology. The ideology of Atatürkism is a synthesis of Western ideologies. Atatürkism presented this as a practical movement more than a theoretical ideology. As it is stated above Atatürkism aims to reach the West's rational, scientific, multi-cultural and free democratic understanding via the six arrows.<sup>16</sup> Atatürkism foresaw keeping in mind the characteristics (positive and negative) of his principles. By doing this he aimed to create a balance between the changes in society and the state and thus reach a level of modern civilization.<sup>17</sup> When we examine the ideology of Atatürkism we see that, contrary to the claims of theoreticians of the ideology, it is not an original ideology. The theoreticians of Atatürkism claim that it is second to none in the world. They think that it is in every aspect the most valuable ideology in the world.<sup>18</sup> On the other side it was a justification of CHP to show that they formed a peculiar ideology when Fascism and National Socialism in Western Europe were on the rise.<sup>19</sup> Some even claim that these ideologies were influenced by Kemalism. Fascism and National Socialism are nothing but a kind of Kemalism.<sup>20</sup>

Although there are ideas that Atatürkism is an original ideology there are some other important ideas that represent more valuable thought. One claim states that Atatürkism was also influenced by its

contemporary ideologies. According to Şerif Mardin, Kemalism developed due to the effects of Materialism and belief in new scientific cases and social Darwinism.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, Kemalism is an ideology that aimed to change some fundamental structures of the Ottoman State and replace them with Western-style institutions to form a Westernized society.<sup>22</sup> In conclusion, the ideology of Atatürkism is based on six arrows combined with (although Western) values that are suitable to Turkey. However, it is not true to say that its inspiration came from the West, although it is questionable that all the ideas of Atatürkism are original.

## 2.2. Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> Kili, p.38.
- <sup>2</sup> Cited in Kili, p.35 .
- <sup>3</sup> Kili, p.39.
- <sup>4</sup> Kili, pp.35-36.
- <sup>5</sup> Levent Koker, *Modenlesme Kemalizm ve Demokrasi* ( İstanbul: İletisim Yayınları, 1990), pp. 112-113.
- <sup>6</sup> Koker, 214.
- <sup>7</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Söylev ve Demeçler 1919-1938, Volume 1* (Ankara : Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınevi, 1961), p. 401.
- <sup>8</sup> Eric Hoffer, *Kesin İnançlar* (İstanbul: Akran Yayınları, 1993), pp. 25
- <sup>9</sup> Ahmet Mumcu, "Atatürkcu Düşünce Sisteminde Milli Birliğin Yeri," *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, Vol.3 (March 1987), p.373
- <sup>10</sup> Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye Siyasal Hayatında Batılılaşma Hareketleri* (İstanbul: Yedigün Matbaası, 1960), p. 228
- <sup>11</sup> Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Tek Adam Cilt III\_* (İstanbul, Remzi Kitabevi, 1963), pp.385-386

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- <sup>12</sup> Aydemir, p.386.
- <sup>13</sup> Şaban Sitebölükbaşı, *Türkiyede İslamın Yeniden İnkişafı* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1995), p. 51
- <sup>14</sup> Aydemir, pp.446-447.
- <sup>15</sup> İsmet Giritli, "Ataturkculuk Ideolojisinin Dogmatik Ideolojilere Ustunlugu," *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, Vol. 6 (October 1989), p.16
- <sup>16</sup> Kili, p.278
- <sup>17</sup> Kili, 281.
- <sup>18</sup> For Agaoglu Ahmet's ideas see Samet Agaoglu, *Demokrat Partinin Doğuş ve Yükseliş Sebepleri* (Istanbul: Baha Matbası, 1972), pp. 36
- <sup>19</sup> Oguz Unal, *Türkiye'de Demokrasinin Dogusu* (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları,1994), p. 61
- <sup>20</sup> Unal, p.61
- <sup>21</sup> Serif Mardin, *Türkiyede Toplum ve Siyaset* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1995), p. 186
- <sup>22</sup> Mardin, p.181

## Chapter 3

### RECEP PEKER AND HIS INFLUENCE

#### 3.1. The Issue of Democracy in the Turkish Revolution and Recep Peker

The ultimate goal of democracy after its many developments is to defend the individuals' rights and freedom. However, we face two problems here. The threats which democracy faces show a dual structure. Democracy is:

On one hand, the struggle with absolute power namely both military despotism and the power of the totalitarian party, and on the other hand, the setting of limits on extreme individualism, which might separate civilian society from political society completely and which might leave its place to the power of invading companies and management bearing irregularity.<sup>1</sup>

In the structure of the modern nation state, in which the government holds the supreme power, the chaos of individualism might be seen as possible. However, the possibility of shifting to totalitarianism is always on

the agenda. The first person who introduced to Turkey the concept of statism, which came up with industrial revolution as one of the political ideologies of an industrial community, was Recep Peker. In 1931, when Peker declared the CHF's program, he gave an important place to statism and stated that it was a temporary application. He mentioned these points in his declaration:

The concept of a simple state whose duties are maintaining security and public order, arranging the relationships with foreign countries and making preparations for defense came to an end long, long ago.

The CHF, which declared its statist feature in its program, accepted an ideology that considers both the new formation of the world and the special needs of Turkey. In the article which describes this clarifies that its philosophy is a statism that is not extreme to the extent that all the properties of the state are nationalized, no free trade and possession are allowed and no free capital is permitted to work.

Turkey gives precedence to individual businesses and investments in accordance with this. However, in order to enable its citizens to reach welfare and the country to develop as quickly as possible, one of main principles is that the government should be involved in some economic

areas, especially those in which the citizens' interests necessitate. In economical affairs it is never possible to satisfy everyone to the same degree. However, in this matter, citizens trust in their nations' valuable common sense.<sup>2</sup>

Reformism is also included in the party program as it is a working method of statism. Reformism is an indispensable ideological vehicle for the political elite, because reformism, which is defined as "replacing bad, harmful, old, and unfair things in the social structure with good, useful, new, and fair ones,"<sup>3</sup> is seen as the only way for the government to go about its work despite its citizens.

Those underdeveloped or developed countries whose democracies always struggle with crises are fairly different from Western countries. Their citizens are often very poor and uneducated. They are accustomed to being governed by an upper class group of people who are different from them in respect to their technical abilities, their wealth, unequal social priorities, their color and sometimes their religious beliefs, and their political power. Both they and previous generations have lived under the pressure of an authoritarian government during their lives in some way. Also the officers of the government do not behave honestly or fairly in the application of justice towards them. In addition to these perhaps the most essential point is that the people of these underdeveloped countries succeed in gaining freedom and changing their authoritarian regime to a so-called democratic state only by violent means. Yet this leads to

another elite society, a local one, which gains power and governs the state.<sup>4</sup>

This kind of concept of democracy is very much similar to the Turkish reforms and understanding of democracy.

There is a custom of statism belief which is nearly sanctified in Turkey. Even the belief that it necessary to perform governmental duties in a civilian way, which is a common concept of democracy, has not been developed yet.<sup>5</sup>

Turkish society is familiar with authoritarian governments. The Ottoman Empire used political centralism as a vital tool in order to organize the populace, to activate the cultural society, to prevent the centrifugal tendency of the traditional culture and to purify the unorganized structure and tribal tendencies of Turkish society. However, as a result of the Westernization process, which began with the Tanzimat period, the views of the military, politicians and Westernist intellectuals about the ordinary citizens has changed dramatically. The elite group of people, whose mission was to bring civilization to the citizens, undertook the responsibility of transforming the society. Armed with positivism, the bureaucracy of the Republic, which tried to make the ignorant people accept the "new," "good" and "right" ways, showed an authoritarian and

forceful nature in imposing these things on the people.<sup>6</sup> Recep Peker expressed his opinion on this matter as follows:

If the individuals of a nation fail to follow the same path which university has taught them, this nation would be no different from a mass of people trying to go somewhere else. Each nation should have a common path of fate. What is aimed at by the reform lectures is to make the main Turkish path of fate penetrate into your minds.<sup>7</sup>

He gives the ideological name "reform principle" to the molding of society. Peker repeated similar views in a lecture he gave on the radio in Ankara on May 8, 1937, in order to throw light on the work to be discussed by the fourth great congress:

Previous experience has shown how useful and necessary it is to provide citizens with a common education. We are not convinced that being educated in schools or vocations individually creates enough power to face crises in the nation's fate confidently and overcome them. We find it necessary that for the nation to mature so as to stand up to difficulties, apart from the classical education, public education should be continually given, for the advancement of a new Turkey. For this to come true, we are going to give



support to public houses, public chairs and institutions of public speakers. Also we are going to make use of radio, which we believe to be a valuable means of education both culturally and politically, by making it technologically updated, easy to use and cheap.<sup>8</sup>

Educational attempts and efforts in the name of readying the public for the new ideology to spread are not always moderate and educating. Ideology is sometimes established by assimilating opposing views. The statements below by Peker show the excuses he gives for applying force when necessary.

"The difficulty in establishing a reform is determined by the number, depth and age of things to be swept and replaced. The more rooted these elements are the harder it is to replace them. For this reason the Turkish reform is the most strenuous when compared to its counterparts."

"It is usually necessary to use force to establish reforms. When the changes I have mentioned are being made, the elements of opposition and reaction stand before you with guns or books in their hands, sulkiness of the past in their minds and seduction and fury in their tongues. It is impossible to establish reforms and preserve

them unless we shoot them down. On the other hand, until one gives up his past habits, though he does not want consciously, faces their resistance."

From this viewpoint too, the Turkish reform shows that it needs optimum force.<sup>9</sup> The staff that was formed to persuade the public to seriously take up reforms gave lectures in universities and on radio, in which they praised the superiority of the Republic, reforms and Western culture, and disparaged Ottoman history and its traditions. Force should be applied to save people from the old.<sup>10</sup> The "reform" mentality that Peker placed in the party's program as the "six arrows" gained a wide functioning area through the notion that the government could intervene in the public tendency. In this picture, "Peker is an example of the political elite who used positive enlightenment idea in his mission to Westernize through reform movements."<sup>11</sup> He believed he had the authority to apply force when he met with reactions and public demand during his mission to communicate the "good" and the "right." In Recep Peker's own words the Turkish reform is greater than all the others, because it is

... not only a movement that has changed the political and economic regime, but also a reform that made simultaneous impacts on national, social, political, economic and cultural life to the full extent. Even our daily habits have been altered by the

Turkish reform's effects.<sup>12</sup>

### **3.2. The Impossibility of Putting Democracy to Use**

Political participation is basic to democracy. For democratization to be realized political variables should be taken as data and processed as a sociological reality, not a political one, because people are neither equal nor the same with respect to their minds, abilities, ideas, and ideologies. Despite these differences, the citizens desire to be involved in politics and to affect one another's ideas in their daily lives determines the structure and frame of democracy. The only requirement for democracy to be realized is a ruling system that allows people from various sociological and ideological backgrounds to live under the same roof with their own understanding of happiness.<sup>13</sup> This means that a society that has a heterogeneous structure and depends on a democratic self-government should be formed.

During the one-party period in Turkey, when reforms were used as the authoritarian government's ideological means, democracy could not be applied with this understanding. Either the reforms and movements to change the public in the name of democracy had to be abandoned or the notion of democracy itself had to be given up. That the government did not mention anything about democracy in the second practice while speaking on the virtues of the republic was possibly a sign that they thought it was too early for discussions on democracy.<sup>14</sup>

At a period when the practical application of anti-democratic thought tradition became rooted, the mentality which saw that democracy was impossible to achieve lost the chance to produce it in daily life within a free discussion environment early in the establishment of the republic because of their views that the society was a mass of people to be educated by intellectuals.

The Republic history has not been the history of democracy, on the contrary, it has become the history of forcing the masses to obey Kemalist ideology, which has turned into the government's legal ideology, with the help of army and bureaucratic control.<sup>15</sup>

In this definition of antidemocratic thoughts, it is put forward that these thoughts stem from two types of interpretation. The first one is the claim that free thought is not sufficient in the foundation and functioning of the government. The second one, on the other hand, is that conflicting opinions should not have any effect on the formation and structure of the government. What is advocated is that political power should be held not by political majority government, but by a modernistic minority class.<sup>16</sup> According to this distinction the opinions of the reformist elite fall in the second way of thinking. To them, although democracy is a target to be reached it is not possible to bring democracy to life in the present circumstances and in the future it can function with democratic institutions

only after the target mass of people has been socialized by undergoing education and transformation. Peker stated that real democracy is one that gives possession top priority and, at the same time, that controls capital investments and the labor class, never allowing for a middle group that may come up with liberalism and be moderate in economy while strict in politics and administration. This is what he called "authoritarian democracy." Peker defined democracy as follows:

Comrades, the brief definition of democracy is "for the public by the public." The work done by those elected by the public should be for the public benefit; that is, a man would never say I am such and such a person he is given responsibility by the holy entity, the nation. He should give the highest importance to public benefit, and should not work for himself, his family or his ambitions. This is the core of democracy. After adopting the definition as it is, the ways, the methods and the means change according to the nation's and country's character, kind and climate. These methods have been used in varying degrees and later given up or changed in our political life. I can give a point that shows administration is performed by the public and for the public benefit: Firstly in our world the government is one in its very sense, that is, the unity of the forces is what it rules.<sup>17</sup>

Peker, after defining democracy, also gave opinions on one of its fundamental principles, election, which supported his above-mentioned theories. One-step elections were more democratic in his view and he wanted the time to come for its application. However, applying this before its time would leave the country in a difficult situation. For the sake of the country, this application should be postponed. He touched on the subject in his speech before the MP elections.

We frequently hear of disapproval of CHF programs endorsing a two-step election. I believe they are wrong for two reasons. It is either because they have not read our program or have not observed the country's present situation well enough.... First of all, the CHF program whose essence is based on the newest and the most modern ideas has favored one-step election on principle, not a two-step one. However, it is mentioned that it is essential to continue a two-step election temporarily, not only from the point of view that it is more suitable to today's situation, but also it suits democratic opinions in a better sense. Our nation's advance on its way to enlightenment and cultivation draws us closer to the period we will hold one-step elections. Until we reach that day the citizens should do the job of choosing MPs in the second step of the election and vote in this step better knowing it. This is more preferable from the point of democratic ideas.<sup>18</sup>

The centralized authority intervened in the citizens' opinions, values and choices and, as a result, an antidemocratic government was born that did not allow its citizens freedom in any area and made them "official citizens." The intellectual circles that insist on depicting the early years of the republic as an era of happiness seem unable to comprehend the problem let alone solve it.<sup>19</sup> The majority's obligation to be ruled by the minority and that it should obey the "iron rule" show that it was governed by a guardianship regime.<sup>20</sup>

### **3.3. The Individual and the State:**

Apart from the radical liberal and statist systems, the Kemalist regime, which claims to give a balanced role between the individual and the authoritative state, has a mentality that sanctifies the state and limit the individuals' liberty. "The individual and the state are not opposite to each other, but complementary,"<sup>21</sup> and "Neither the individual nor the state can be sacrificed for the other,"<sup>22</sup> are only slogans. In actuality, it feels the individual should be brainwashed with "modern" and "true" information and can be sacrificed for the societal order. The wealth of society and its common and high benefits are of the greatest importance. Moreover, the individual gains meaning only within the society. "National common sense and faith" should tie the individual.<sup>23</sup> Recep Peker's opinions on this subject are quite intriguing.

Each citizen should take responsibility to protect and strengthen the country in which the nation lives. If the nation, which is the unending source of praise for the great entity, the motherland, is composed of mere and different individuals, to my social belief, it is not worth anything. The masses of people that make up the nation should share a common idea and movement in order to win every fight, to give the greatest importance to the motherland during the nonstop life-struggle.<sup>24</sup>

Within this framework the individual is regarded as an unimportant but necessary element in societal life unless the corporation of life in the nation is strong enough no private entity is worth anything or is useful.<sup>25</sup> The nation, which could be formed by the effort to gather people whose individuals are loyal and respectful to the "soul of society," will keep the notion of "national discipline" and the habits and the obedient tendencies of individuals will be strengthened.<sup>26</sup> The value of individuals stands as long as they are a part of society. When viewed as individuals, they are worthless. Peker used his most striking expressions on the subject in his work *Inkilap Dersleri* (Lectures on Reforms):

When people are viewed one by one they have zero value. Even if



their qualifications have high standards with respect to their specialization, knowledge and energy, they cannot find the opportunity to realize their great nation claim within a mass of people who have low qualifications, but who have gathered together. That's why we Turks, who allege to go socially from the deepest darkness to the brightest light, from the worst to the best, from the furthest behind to the furthest, should keep in mind this both politically and economically important point.<sup>27</sup>

Although people should work for the sake of society the fact that he supports the then contemporary ideology of Liberalism, which caused anarchy in society qualifies as a deviation. The societies that forget the main aim and go into chaos of abuse in their intoxication of freedom do not have much chance to live together.

### **3.4. Democracy and "Disciplined Freedom"**

The main source of the problems of Turkish democracy is the existence of a sanctified, ordering, huge and clumsy state that covers - or is eager to cover - not only the private but also the public sphere with its all sanctity.<sup>28</sup> These problems doubled with the authoritarian-totalitarian formation period during the foundation of democracy. Comprehension of freedom, which has been determined by the dominant power, has grown within narrow boundaries; the concept of discipline as the leading force of freedom has become the determining factor.

Peker mentioned that excessive freedom causes confusion and anarchy. After stating that freedom is the most precious target for which people have struggled for ages,<sup>29</sup> he declared that extreme freedom brings harm rather than happiness. He divided revolutions into two: revolutions in the name of freedom and class revolutions, which were the main type of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Turkish revolution is a freedom revolution. Despite providing extreme comfort for humanity, revolutions against abuses by governments became useless as the number of the revolutionist people decreased. "Extreme freedom is likely to cause deviation," said Peker.<sup>30</sup> He put forward the striking example: "There are free seals at the pole; in Alaska there are free white bears who eat each other."<sup>31</sup> In contrast to this, he gave his conception of disciplined freedom in his words about "civilized nations who organize their work appropriately and live without bothering, spoiling or destroying the cities, villages, harbor and mountains of the country."<sup>32</sup> Will power is needed to yield to the power of rational socialization after joining to the social rules.

In freedom, disapproval against limits and rules endangers the citizen's honor and right to safety and the unity and power of the state. Pessimism and despair grow. Even the most intelligent people may begin to complain about freedom.<sup>33</sup>

Similar to the example of seals and bears, he found a disciplined

government is the only suggested method against vulgarized explanations and growing phobia of disunity and confusion of country. However, the application of ignored will power by discipline and great limitations of individual freedom is a fitting lifestyle for those who live for a society in which they mean nothing. In addition to being under the order of a demanding and growing power, adoration of a single hero is the main function of discipline for nations. Appearance in the shape of orienting to a "culture of honor" and monotonous habits corresponds to submission to a leading character and use of personal skills as an art.<sup>34</sup>

Diversity is disapproved of and mentioned as that which makes a community slave to ambition. "A nation is a dynamic, ambitious system with differences in the development of individuals, thoughts and self advantage."<sup>35</sup> Existence of different ideas is not a richness, but rather a source of anarchy for a community. Furthermore, any emerging thought different from the ideas of revolutionists is absurd and harmful. During the third congress of the CHP, Inonu said this in his declaration: "We had no hesitation about the inexactness of ideas and doctrines of people we have faced since commencement [of the Turkish Republic]."<sup>36</sup> In fact, every kind of freedom exists in Turkey, but freedom of opposition is prohibited. One is free to talk, but only against opposing ideas to preserve and defend the revolution. Peker advised Turkish youth to talk only against these kinds of ideas:

Talking is not only a means of suggestion but also the most efficient means of community defense. Talking is the most powerful gun of civilized man. According to people who rely on their personality and honor, there can be no sharper security means than words for a civilized nation that has considered the value of honor. It is necessary to be surprised at the demand of injustice where people do not use their voice to gain their rights. Each idealist citizen should use the means of words to defend the right of society and revolutions under any circumstances. An idealist lecturer who lectures to innocent people defeated by ignorant and dishonesty can soon achieve the victory of truth with the help of a dynamic and faithful speech.<sup>37</sup>

Peker believed that language is able to spread the ideas of power. In his explanation that society is not harmed by words in the example that alien and defeatist ideas cannot affect healthy bodies, he assured that a few unfairly thinking opposing people cannot be effective. However, he still has a phobia of defeatism.<sup>38</sup> He mentioned hostile ideas and defeatism while he was arranging the requirements of "*Takrir-i Sukun*" (Decisions of Tranquillity) in connection with freedom in press and publication. It was apparent that he also had hesitations on the healthy process of the state.

In Turkey today there is freedom of speech and the press.

However, people who want to earn money by selling their honor can not use this means. Despite freedom in publication, the state censors any sort of "treacherous" works. The law does not allow either enemies of the Republic and nation or people who cause confusion among the citizens. As declared by statesmen, the dimension of treachery and hostility against the Republic is the unfixed values that have already been defined by them. Attempts to preserve the state with intricate statements, which is one of the major problems of the country's democracy, has always brought misunderstandings and led to unfair applications of the law and unnecessary suffering. Valid since 1925,

*Takrir-i Sukun*, which prohibits all provocations, attitudes, publications and foundations that may cause extreme conservatism and rebellions and conclude in confusion of the public order, tranquillity and safety, is a general and obliging law.<sup>39</sup>

Peker had a great part in making this law and defended it in the parliament.<sup>40</sup> We come across many statements about this subject in his miscellaneous works. He puts forward similar ideas in his essays "Disciplined freedom" and "Lectures on revolution:"

A madman called Dervish Vahdeti publishes *Volcano*, a newspaper,

and founds a party named '*Ittihad-i Muhammedî*' in the name of freedom.<sup>41</sup> He makes comparisons while criticizing freedom during the Ottoman reign: What will be the conclusion even if we allow the publication of such a kind of newspaper? The Ottoman State allowed this in the name of freedom.<sup>42</sup>

In order to end revolutions he openheartedly remarked that democracy can be postponed and he became one of the chief architects of a suspended period of democracy in Turkey. As mentioned before, Peker's thoughts and applied ideas are not products of his personal deviation, but products of the mutual and planned goals of chief revolutionists. Nevertheless, these goals came true through radical application by Peker. It would be unfair to accuse Peker of being anti-democratic, but his efficiency and importance is indisputable.

### 3.5. Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> Tourane, 359.
  - <sup>2</sup> CHF's program was declared by the Secretary General Recep Peker on 16 Tesriniewel 1931 in a conference. TBMM (Turkish Parliamentary Assembly) decided that the minutes of the conference would be published on October 31, 1931
  - <sup>3</sup> Peker, *Inkilap Notlari*, p.18.
  - <sup>4</sup> David Spitz, *Antidemocratic Ways of Thinking* (Istanbul: Publication of the Ministry of Education, 1969), p. xii
  - <sup>5</sup> Vedat Bilgin, "On the Custom of Antidemocratic thinking in Turkey," *Turkive Gunlugu* (April 1989): 16

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- <sup>6</sup> Bilgin, 16.
- <sup>7</sup> *Peker's Lectures on Reforms* (Istanbul: Iletisim Publications, 1984), p. 14.
- <sup>8</sup> Declaration of Secretary General CHF Recep Peker, (Ankara May 8, 1935), p. 6
- <sup>9</sup> Peker, *Lectures on Reforms*, pp.18-19
- <sup>10</sup> Mete Tuncay, *The Establishment of Single Party in Turkish Republic* (Ankara: Yurt Publications, 1981), p.321. For the same subject see Kemal Karpat, *The History of Turkish Democracy*, (Istanbul: Istanbul Printing House, 1967), p.53
- <sup>11</sup> Bilgin, p.16
- <sup>12</sup> Peker, *Lectures on Reforms*, p.19
- <sup>13</sup> Erkan Akin, "Kemalism, Secularity, Populism, and Democracy," *Turkive Gunlugu* (Winter. 1990), p.72
- <sup>14</sup> On the subject, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's words confirm the present situation "Republicanism is virtue. Sultanate is based on fear and threat. Republicanism brings up virtuous and honest people. Since Sultanate is based on fear and threat it brings up timid, humble, miserable, disgraceful people. This is all the difference." Ari Inan, *Ataturk with his Thoughts*, p. 72
- <sup>15</sup> Akin, p.80
- <sup>16</sup> Spitz, pp.6-7
- <sup>17</sup> Recep Peker's speech in the fourth meeting of CHP, Ankara March 13, 1935
- <sup>18</sup> Peker, *An Election Speech* (Ankara: Hakiniyet-i Milliye Printing House, 1933), pp. 8-9
- <sup>19</sup> Erol Ozbilgen, *Turkey in the Grip of Positivism* (Istanbul: Agac Publications, 1994). 121
- <sup>20</sup> Spitz, 23
- <sup>21</sup> Cited in Orhan Turkdogan, *The Relationship between Individual and State in the Kemalist Model* (Istanbul: Istanbul Printing House, 1982). 25
- <sup>22</sup> Turkdogan, p.26
- <sup>23</sup> Peker, *The Explanation of CHF Program* (Ankara: Ulus Printing House, 1931), pp. 10-11
- <sup>24</sup> Peker, *Lectures on Reforms*, p.48
- <sup>25</sup> Peker, "A speech given in an opening of a public house," *Ulku Halkevleri Mecmuasi*, Vol. 7. No. 37 (March 1933), p.3

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- <sup>26</sup> Peker, "Disciplined Freedom," *Ulku Halkevleri Mecmuasi*, Vol.1. No. 3 (April 1933)
- <sup>27</sup> Peker, *Lectures on Reforms*, p.49
- <sup>28</sup> Lutfullah and Mithat Baydur, "Populism, and Political selectiveness against Rhetoric" *Turkive Gunlugu*, (May-June, 1994), p.41
- <sup>29</sup> Peker, *Disciplined Freedom*, p.177
- <sup>30</sup> Peker, *Lectures on Reforms*, pp.25-26
- <sup>31</sup> Peker, *Disciplined Freedom*, pp.177
- <sup>32</sup> Peker, *Disciplined Freedom*, 177.
- <sup>33</sup> Peker, *Disciplined Freedom*, 178
- <sup>34</sup> Max Weber. *Writings on Sociology* (Istanbul: Humyet Foundation Publications, 1933), pp. 222
- <sup>35</sup> Peker, *Disciplined Freedom*, 179
- <sup>36</sup> Inonu, A Speech in the Third Congress of CHP, p.5
- <sup>37</sup> Peker, "Speak and Let them Speak," *Ulku Halkevleri Mecmuasi*, Vol. 1 No. 1 (February 1933). 21
- <sup>38</sup> He stated that this fear was inept in his speech to administrative staff of Rauf Orbay's government. The relevant part of his speech was: "It is nothing but weakness in the heart to believe that such a rebellion could destroy and diminish the republic and national sovereignty. The constitution cannot be spoiled just because this youth rebellion occurred." On the Law "Takrir-i Sukun" , *TBMM. Zabıt Ceridesi*, March 2, 1925. C.5, D.2, T.2 s. 138
- <sup>39</sup> Tevfik Cavdar, "The Democracy and the Law "Takrir-i Sukun" which was Founded in the Beginning of the Republic," *Birikim*, (August-1989): 39.
- <sup>40</sup> Cavdar, 39.
- <sup>41</sup> Peker, *Lectures on Reforms*, 33.
- <sup>42</sup> Peker, *Lectures on Reforms*, 33.



## CONCLUSION

In this thesis, we attempted to demonstrate the conditions in Turkey prior to the attempt to create a new nation, at a time when other nations of the world's political platform were also forming states. Before the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish people entered a new era of modernization. However, supporters of modernization in the Ottoman Empire were unable to penetrate either the texture of society or the lifestyle of the community. This accelerated a process of discrimination between common people and the military, bureaucrats and intellectuals. Modernization in the Ottoman Empire took place apart from the common people from that time on. The structure of the new Turkish Republic facilitated the modernization of the government and modern values were imposed upon common people.

In this context, the newly founded state and its creators needed to be equipped with a certain ideology. Because of the difficulty in re-forming the structure of society and in imposing new values upon people, it became obligatory to insert movements of modernization and integration with the West into an ideology, which was developed into practical application in the early years of the Republic. Reaction of the society and the beginning of a more troublesome situation after the period of revolution compelled the formation of an ideology. In order to form a new society, all means were considered lawful and the authoritarian government defended its regime using force, prohibition, limitation and ideological cults.

"Contemporary civilization" was the aim. Since Turkey wanted to become

a member of the global community, it was obliged to accept and apply modernism and its contributions such as national state and positivism. However, the speed of that globalism may bring about particularization. Communities may invert and gradually become closed communities against active global culture. While integration of all of the nations in a single cultural map was desired, the common people receded and separated into small groups with the application of dominant methods of modernity. After the Republic, modernism as an ideology was adopted and applied with the contribution of Western modernism and positivism. It led to the drafting of artificial cooperation after the idea of the nation-state became popular. The nation-state, which is a gift of modernism, reminded us that two historical functions are impossible to carry out. The nation-state, "which was both too large to provide an identity to private districts and too small to cope with global economic powers," was neither a basic unit of autonomy nor a structure that had the feature of common identity. The community was confused not only by the political conditions in the country, but also by the attempts to be a member of a universal culture. The people who absorb universal modern values have passive and nonfunctional views apart from this universe. It will be necessary to deal with the problem of individual identity after checking the new conditions in the society.

Individual power weakened when forced to be at the disposal of rational discipline. With the envisionment of a system that abolishes classes and stratification of the law, the government aimed at creating a disciplined generation of which the individual would be objective rather than subjective and do his/her job with no objections. This new generation was charged with disseminating the

spirit of discipline and the new ideology.

As we mentioned before, it is obvious that ideology aims to manipulate a certain community in the direction of determined goals with a particular group dynamic. The newly forming semantically social maps will be drawn by universal ideologies that cover the community completely. An elite controlled group ideology that appeared strategically may in time become a universal ideology. According to Lapierre's solution, ideologies are determined by the authority. Unjust, argumentative and harsh ideologies appreciate tolerance as a luxurious attitude when there is no threat. Monopolists think that pluralism, opposition and liberties are destruction and a means of chaos while they support limited freedom. Different ideas aiming to form a nation are considered defeatist and rebellious. The principle of democracy for this goal will be suspended and an authoritarian government will become permissible.

We have tried to examine the formation process of a society which was to be created in the early years of the Turkish Republic, convenient to the economic situation of the country, homogenous, ignoring differences, disciplined and dependent on the central government as described by Recep Peker. Monopolists and revolutionists, forming a new society, generated the ideology of the revolutions' practical application. They were influenced by totalitarian fascist and socialist ideologies, and by the crisis of liberalism common during that international arena. This influence caused the generated ideology to be ecclesiastically formed by other ideologies. Recep Peker, who was the most important ideologist of the monopolist period, played a large role in shaping the

totalitarian ideology and added much to the public opinion in those years. From the foundation of the Republic to the end of the monopoly regime, he undertook important duties and had a great significance for his authoritarian and totalitarian ideas and for his efforts to shape and reorder the social structure. The ideas of that period even underlie today's tradition of state control and difficulties in securing democracy.

We tried to explain how this unclassified, composed, homogeneous and totalitarian ideology, which also resembles the fascism prevalent in other nations during that time, can exhaust itself. In accordance, it is clear that pluralism and participation within the rising democratic government system do not resemble Kemalism or the version of it expressed by Recep Peker.

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