

Chapter One

Political Discourse and Reform in Turkey

The political discourse of the period 1938–50 developed in continuity with the political discourse of the Ottoman period, which was carried forward by the National Struggle into the Turkish Republic. Four main issues remained salient from the late Ottoman Empire through this period: defining and achieving development and progress; expanding or limiting the influence of the central bureaucracy and the military; defining nation and community, and establishing beneficial relations with the Western powers, particularly Britain, Germany, and Russia, and later the United States. The longevity of the debates over these four issues reflected continuity between the Ottoman and Turkish Republican periods in terms of the makeup of the political elite and access to the forum of political debate. But this longevity also demonstrates long-running and significant disagreements, within the elite, regarding these four main issues in Turkish politics. And while the continuity between the Ottoman and Turkish periods is striking, domestic and international changes meant that political perspectives and possibilities evolved and altered according to new circumstances.

The reforms of the nineteenth century *Tanzimat* (reorganization) emerged out of the growing awareness of the West and the relative weakness of the central Ottoman government, both of which presented political and economic challenges. In this period, growing military pressure from Russia was matched by increasing economic pressure from Western Europe as the Empire confronted divisions brought by separatist-nationalist movements, including the Greek Revolution of 1820–28, insurrections in the Balkans, and the growing power of Mehmet Ali and his successors

in Egypt. During the Tanzimat period, the integration of the Ottoman Empire into the capitalist system was facilitated through the terms of the 1838 Commercial Convention redefining the Empire as a free trade zone.¹ The Tanzimat, as a means to reorganize the Empire's internal economic and political structures, including its tax and land-holding systems, emerged from the belief among prominent reformers such as Ali Pasha and Fuat Pasha, and Ahmed Cevdet Pasha and Midhat Pasha, that the restoration of old religious and military institutions, which had given strength to the Empire in the past, would no longer meet the needs of changing circumstances. The Tanzimat, as a reform movement, reflected the changing ideas of power and progress in the minds of the administrators of the Empire.² The sense of advancement that had earlier stemmed from the expansion of territories gradually left its place to the exertion of control by a stronger central government in the shrinking Empire.

The reforms of the Tanzimat, designed and enacted by palace administrators, were aimed at modernization of the Empire's military and bureaucracy, and centralization of power for more efficient administration. Ultimately, economic development, and reform of the tax and land-holding systems were also viewed in this light. As the autocracy was strengthened, a group of intellectuals, known as the Young Ottomans (Yeni Osmanlılar), who included İbrahim Şinasi, Namık Kemal, Ali Suavi, and Ziya Pasha, emerged as its critics. Using the new device of newspapers, especially *Tasvir-i Efkâr* [Description of Ideas], the Young Ottomans began to debate political ideas regarding the state, progress, nation, and relations with the West, and called for adoption of representative institutions to check the power of the Sultan.³ While there were disagreements over methods, the Young Ottoman intellectuals and the Tanzimat reformers shared similar goals: to modernize the state and protect the homeland. Their arguments centered on two focal points: redefining the nation in light of the challenge of European expansion, and the role of the bureaucracy and military in maintaining and modernizing the state.

In this context one of the central issues confronting intellectuals was the role of Islam. Part of the Young Ottoman agenda was the simplification of Ottoman Turkish by excluding Arabic and Persian words and by altering the Arabic script. Supporters of language, legal, and educational reforms argued that public expressions of religion must be in a new progressive form, which would also serve to fill the vacuum left by the replacement of traditional institutions by the Westernizing Tanzimat reforms.⁴

As the central and provincial administrations were reformed to extend the power of the state into the provinces, military reforms were carried out

to create a more clear and effective chain of command, a more efficient use of resources, and to make the military presence more obvious in cities, towns, and villages, increasing control and easing recruitment of the population. Another function of military reform was aimed at integrating Western technology and methods into Ottoman usage. Altogether, the reforms of the Tanzimat, and reforms of successive administrations aimed at expanding bureaucratic control into the military and religion, by underpinning the military, and by weakening the influence of traditional Islam and its institutions, as well as articulation of popular religion.⁵

It is important to remember that the impetus for reform came from the top of the system, from the top levels of the bureaucracy, and that their purpose was to increase the power of the state. Participation in political discourse was limited and popular participation and support, was unimportant to the point of non-existence. The Imperial War Academy (Harbiye) emerged as a center for dissemination of the political plans of the Young Ottomans and later of the Young Turks. Ottoman officers and candidates came to see themselves as the vanguard of a new Ottoman Empire, which emphasized the reformed military and central bureaucracy as alternatives to the authority of both the Sultan and the religious establishment. The War Academy thus created a space for a new generation of soldiers and administrators to connect with the ideas of the Young Ottomans and the Young Turks.

Within the Young Turk discourse three loosely defined, and often overlapping, perspectives emerged regarding progress, the role of the military and bureaucracy, defining nation and foreign relations. The first perspective reflected a discourse that was nationalist, and stressed the primary role of the state in leading and developing the nation. The second and third trends were liberal, and pan-Turkist visions of the Empire's future. Nationalists represented by the Society (later Committee) of Union and Progress (CUP), led early on by Ahmet Rıza, called for preservation of the Empire, but with curtailment of the powers of the Sultan. The CUP reform agenda included separation of religion and the state, expansion of secular public education, language reform, and greater rights for women and minorities. CUP supporters called for more representative government that would respect the needs of all communities within the Empire, thus strengthening central administrative and military powers to protect against external threats as well as the internal pressures of economic dislocation and national secession, while developing the economy and culture.

One of the CUP's most prominent supporters was Ziya Gökalp, especially after the 1908 Young Turk Revolution. Drawing on the work of Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand Tönnies, Gökalp argued that the Turks

formed a nation (*millet*), which had a distinct culture (*hars*) centered on the peasant culture of Anatolia. But Gökalp argued that Turkish culture had been submerged in Islamic/Arabian/Byzantine civilization (*medeniyet*), which had kept Turkish culture from developing to its full potential. For Gökalp, the Turkish nation must maintain its culture while joining European civilization, an idea popularized under the slogan first pronounced by Huseyinzade Ali: *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak* (Turkify, Islamicize, Modernize).⁶

At the first Congress of Ottoman Liberals, in Paris in 1902, Prince Sabahettin led a movement to develop a liberal program of reform that would reduce the powers of the central administration, and encourage individual initiative and free enterprise as the means to preserve and restore the Empire. Sabahettin differed from Ahmet Rıza both on the role the central administration should play in directing change, and on the role of foreign intervention to promote reform. Sabahettin called for the deposition of Abdulhamid II, and supported European involvement in Ottoman affairs to assure reform of the Empire along the lines of British liberalism.⁷

The third line of thought among the Young Turks, pan-Turkism, developed as a counter both to the pan-Islamist goals of Abdulhamid and to the Anatolian-centered nationalism of Gökalp. Pan-Turkism, calling for the unity of all Turks of the Ottoman Empire, the Caucasus, and central Asia, first emerged in the late nineteenth century among Tatar and Turkic intellectuals of the Russian Empire, who confronted the realities of Russian political and cultural domination. For intellectuals like Yusuf Akçura, İsmail Bey Gasprinski, and Ahmet Ağaoğlu, pan-Turkism was a means to unite diverse and dispersed Turkic populations in order to preserve political autonomy and cultural sovereignty.⁸ For the Ottomans, pan-Turkism became an ideological weapon against division and decline only after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 had delegitimized Abdulhamid II and his efforts at pan-Islamism. For the Committee of Union and Progress, and especially for Enver Pasha, pan-Turkism offered a program for expansion of Ottoman power and for the extension of the political influence of Turks of Anatolia into the Caucasus and central Asia, against Russian interests. World War I marked the high point of officially sponsored pan-Turkism during the twentieth century, but it remained a serious alternative to nationalism and liberalism.⁹

Among teachers and students at the War Academy, the most influential political group was the secret CUP.¹⁰ Harbiye students such as Mustafa Kemal, İsmet İnönü, Kâzım Karabekir, Asım Gündüz, Fuat Cebesoy, Fethi Okyar, and Kâzım Orbay had the opportunity to meet and discuss issues confronting the Empire with older graduates such as Fevzi

Çakmak and Enver Pasha. Many Harbiye graduates joined the CUP, and saw the revolution of 1908, led by the CUP as a crucial movement against rotted and oppressive rule, which by restoring the constitution would solve the Empire's domestic and foreign problems. İsmet İnönü, looking back a half century later, would recall how young and naive the revolutionaries of the CUP had been in their expectations of sudden change in the Empire, and believed that their lack of caution in carrying out reform had led to unexpected, often negative results.¹¹

While the 1908 revolution did not fulfill the expectations of the young officers and intellectuals of the Empire, it framed the four issues of progress, state, nation, and foreign relations in a new context of revolutionary transformation that remained at the center of political debate during World War I and during the War of Independence, and into the period of the Republic. As defeat in World War I appeared more and more certain, CUP leaders began to prepare for a second phase of war against Allied and Russian occupation of the Ottoman Empire, by creating an organization known as Karakol (The Guard), to accumulate arms, supplies, and personnel in eastern Anatolia. Karakol had two major aims: first to protect CUP personnel, who comprised much of the central and provincial administrations and military, from retribution for the Armenian genocide and maltreatment of minorities; and second, to prepare the ground for an independence struggle to protect the Turkish Muslim community from incursions, or claims on territory by the Allies, Greeks, Armenians, Kurds, or any other group. Working with local CUP members, religious leaders and urban and landowning elites, Karakol sponsored the formation of Societies for the Defense of Rights (Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyetleri), beginning in November 1918.¹² These societies, along with the army, created a bridge tying the Young Turk period to the formation of the Republic by bringing together military/bureaucratic, religious, and landed elites, all of whom had ties to the CUP, and by tying the institutional base of the Turkish National Struggle to the political discourse of the Young Turks.

THE TURKISH NATIONAL STRUGGLE

As the Turkish National Struggle began in the spring of 1919, political and military considerations took central importance, shaping the nature and limits of the movement for Turkish independence and revolutionary transformation, which in turn would emerge out of the war to shape the political discourse of the Republic. After returning from the Caucasian front,

General Kâzım Karabekir told other commanders in early 1919 that the only thing to do was “to go back to Anatolia, again lead the armies and work for this country’s salvation.”¹³ Indeed, Karabekir left Istanbul before Mustafa Kemal, who was then seeking a post in the Ottoman cabinet. Following Mustafa Kemal’s arrival in Samsun in May 1919, and Karabekir’s subsequent acceptance of his leadership of the resistance, the initiative began to shift from civilian forces loyal to the CUP to the military, and the National Struggle came to be defined as a military struggle against Allied, and especially Greek, occupation. Defining the struggle in military terms meant acceptance of Mustafa Kemal’s leadership, and also that the religious and landed elites in the Societies for the Defense of Rights would play a secondary role in establishing goals, and setting limits on the struggle. In June 1919, Mustafa Kemal, Rauf Orbay, Ali Fuat Cebesoy, Refet Bele, and Kâzım Karabekir, each representing military districts in Anatolia, agreed on a basic plan of action for a national movement against occupation.¹⁴

The following month, representatives of resistance organizations in eastern Anatolia also met in Erzurum to establish a plan to deal with the occupation. The result was a ten-point declaration that reflected the influence of Young Turk political discourse, but also established a new framework for a political discourse of independence and nationalism, which would coincide with military objectives that were being set at the same time. Claiming to speak for the nation while the Ottoman government was under occupation, the Erzurum declaration called for the assertion of the independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire and protection of the Ottoman Sultanate and Caliphate against all claims of Europeans and non-Muslim minorities. Article four declared: “In case the central government, under foreign pressure, is forced to abandon any part of the territory, we are taking measures and making decisions to defend our national rights as well as the Sultanate and Caliphate.” The declaration further proclaimed that “this assembly is totally free of party interests. All Muslim compatriots are the natural members of this assembly.”¹⁵ Thus the Turkish National Struggle would aim to establish the independence and territorial integrity of the Turkish Muslim population. But it was not to be a class struggle or a social revolution in the mold of the Bolshevik Revolution.

The Erzurum declaration was reaffirmed by a national congress held in Sivas in September 1919, and formed the basis for the National Pact (Misak-i Milli) of February 1920. The National Pact defined the acceptable borders of a new Turkish state, which included Anatolia and eastern Thrace, along with Istanbul. The Arabs were left to decide their own

affiliation, but the Pact called for plebiscites in Kars, Ardahan, and Batum, and in western Thrace, which were all beyond the firm control of the nationalist military forces, to determine the makeup of the new nation. The National Pact denounced all outside interference in the country's financial and political affairs, and specifically rejected intervention on behalf of minorities within the Turkish nation, promising respect for their rights in return for protection of the rights of Muslims in neighboring countries.

First and foremost, the National Pact defined the territorial boundaries of the Turkish nation, boundaries which could be controlled and defended militarily.¹⁶ Second, the National Pact offered a definition of a Turkish nation, which would be Muslim Turkish speakers of Anatolia and Thrace. This nation did not include Turkic Muslims of the Caucasus, central Asia, or the Balkans, and the National Pact made no mention at all of the Kurds or non-Muslim groups. Third, the Pact asserted a notion of national unity, making no case for class antagonisms or class interests having any place in the National Struggle.

When British forces occupied Istanbul in March 1920 in response to the National Pact, the nationalist-dominated Ottoman parliament prorogued itself and more than ninety members joined the nationalists in Ankara. The nationalists then claimed that only the Grand National Assembly, formed in Ankara in April 1920 could enact the National Pact. The emergency of the Greek invasion and advancement, followed by the British occupation of Istanbul, served the aim of Mustafa Kemal to cement a unified movement in opposition to both foreign occupation and the collaboration of the Ottoman government. For Mustafa Kemal, this unity would be forged in the nationalist military forces, and in the Grand National Assembly.

While Mustafa Kemal's control of the military struggle went uncontested, from the beginning, groups within, and outside, the National Assembly challenged his political agenda. Political opposition centered on Mustafa Kemal's personal power, and his political agenda, and the debates in the Assembly reflect both the continuing influence of the Young Turk discourse and the main debates of the subsequent republican period.

When the National Assembly began to meet in 1920, its membership reflected a diverse range of interests and beliefs. Forty percent of the members were from the military and bureaucracy, while 20% were professionals, 20% were businesspersons or landowners, and 17% were religious leaders.¹⁷ Immediately the Assembly split over several issues, including the personal power of Mustafa Kemal, the relationship of the National Assembly to the Ottoman state and Turkish nation, and the ultimate goals

of the National Struggle, in particular the need, desirability, and nature of political, economic, and social reform. Many in the Assembly, including Kâzım Karabekir and former CUP supporters, feared the growing power of Mustafa Kemal. Opposition also developed among Assembly members who favored the continuation of the Ottoman Sultanate and Caliphate, while challenges from outside the Assembly came from those who favored a revolutionary transformation on the model of the Bolshevik Revolution, or the pan-Turkist alternative of Enver Pasha.

After three years of struggle against their occupation, the British, French, Italians, and Greeks called for a conference in October 1922 to discuss an armistice. İsmet İnönü, as the commander of the Western front, represented the government of Ankara. As a result of the successful negotiations at Mudanya, İnönü, now as Foreign Minister, left in November 1922 to lead the Turkish delegation at the peace conference at Lausanne. İnönü and the Turkish delegation represented the Ankara government's goal of the complete recognition of Turkey's sovereignty, and the end of the capitulations.¹⁸ Furthermore, the aim was to force recognition of Turkey as the equal of the other nations, and as the victor in the war against European occupation. The adversarial atmosphere of Lausanne, and the knowledge that his failure could lead to further disruption and struggle, seems to have convinced İnönü that since only the Turks had Turkish interests in mind, caution and strength in foreign policy had to be complemented with unity and purpose in domestic affairs.

Through the Lausanne Treaty, the nationalists achieved recognition of the legitimacy of their government and recognition of the boundaries claimed in the National Pact of 1920. The treaty recognized the abolition of the capitulations, but imposed conditions on tariffs and trade, and the repayment of the Ottoman debt. İnönü felt that even though the treaty did not give Turkey economic independence, it provided a secure political base on which to build. But, his compromise at Lausanne created disagreement and dissension in the National Assembly.¹⁹ Some members focused on Lausanne to express their opposition to both İnönü and Atatürk, reflecting the division within the Assembly into two groups, and leading to the resignation of Prime Minister Rauf Orbay upon İnönü's return from Lausanne.²⁰

Orbay's resignation reinforced already existing opposition within the National Assembly, dividing it into groups known unofficially as the First and Second groups. These two groups represented divisions, which arose during the War of Independence, based on the "Eastern" and "Western" ideals. The "Eastern" ideal, of the First Group, stood for opposition to a

Western mandate for Anatolia, and aimed to replace the Sultanate and Caliphate with a Republic. Although impressed by the efforts of the Bolsheviks, the “Easterners” were nationalists and by following the Young Turk reformers, they set their goals to establish constitutional, secular, and republican governments. The “Western” ideal of the Second Group on the other hand, supported the Ottoman order and constitutional monarchy, and aimed to preserve the Islamic foundations of political institutions. Even with this conservative agenda, the “Westerners” supported liberal economic policies in opposition to the emphasis of the “Easterners” on central control of the economy.²¹ Kâzım Karabekir, Rauf Orbay, Refet Bele, and Ali Fuat Cebesoy led the debate of the “Westerners,” while Mustafa Kemal and İsmet İnönü represented the “Easterners.”

On the night of October 28, 1923, İnönü and Mustafa Kemal together completed the final draft of the law declaring Turkey a Republic. Even though the National Assembly accepted the declaration the next day, they were aware of the opposition that was waiting for them. When Mustafa Kemal was elected first President of the Republic, and İnönü became Prime Minister, the First Group continued supporting the leadership of Mustafa Kemal and the reform programs of the government. The Second Group’s opposition to the Republic in favor of the restoration of a constitutional monarchy continued, and in 1924, the Second Group officially separated to form the Progressive Republican Party as an alternative to the People’s Party.

For Mustafa Kemal and his supporters, efficiency was the essential aspect of any reform program. Opposition, in the form of democratic antagonism, posed a threat to the reform agenda, which stressed outcome over process. Thus, the Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1924–25, and the supposed plot against Mustafa Kemal’s life in 1926 supplied the catalysts for eliminating legitimate opposition in the National Assembly. The revolt was suppressed violently, and its leaders were subjected to summary execution or exile. The Progressive Republican Party was smeared with the taint of complicity in the rebellion, and closed down. This was followed by the uncovering of an apparent plot against Mustafa Kemal’s life, which led to the arrest and trial of several prominent military men, including Kâzım Karabekir, all of whom opposed the personal power of Mustafa Kemal in the People’s Party and in the National Assembly.²² The elimination or silencing of opposition opened the possibility, and necessity, of announcing a coherent program of reform promising development and progress, national unity, and strength based on the power of the state, military, and single party.

FROM THE YOUNG TURKS TO KEMALISM

In October 1927 Mustafa Kemal articulated his own vision of the goals of the National Struggle, and the purpose of continuing reform, in a six-day long speech to the People's Party. By outlining his views of the history of the Turkish War of Independence and the early years of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal's *Nutuk* (speech) was designed to establish his place at the center of the creation of the Turkish Republic, and to demonstrate not only the necessity of reform, but also its historical inevitability. Through the speech, he attacked heroes of the War of Independence who had become political opponents, portraying them as conservative, power-hungry, and dangerous. Thus, his speech served as the justification for establishing a single interpretation of the Turkish past, present, and future, and for suppressing alternative definitions of state, nation, and homeland.²³

The various reforms of the 1920s and 1930s, and their ideological justification, have come to be known as Kemalism. Kemalism, which promised a peaceful social revolution, was a program aimed at reforming Turkey's political institutions and at developing a national economy free of foreign domination, through statist economic policies.²⁴ The elimination of the Sultanate, abolition of the Caliphate, and declaration of the Republic were followed by alphabet reform, changes in the legal codes, dress laws, and women's suffrage. Altogether, these reforms were aimed at moving Turkish society closer to the West.²⁵ Kemalism is also significant for the changes it did not advocate, such as redistribution of land or wealth, or elimination of private property.

The Kemalist approach to defining the nation was inspired partly by solidarist notions adopted from Gökalp, partly by fascist programs of the 1920s and 1930s, and partly by pragmatic considerations of the limits of possibilities in Turkey. The Turkish Historical Society (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*), the Turkish Language Society (*Türk Dil Kurumu*), and the People's Party, especially through the People's Houses, served as the instruments for defining and disseminating the new national identity, and for carrying it into everyday discourse.

The first congress of the Turkish Historical Society, in 1932, marked the proclamation of an official version of Turkish history—and thus of the Turkish future. The Kemalist vision of Turkish history stressed the historic role of the pre-Islamic Turks in forming great civilizations and states, and in carrying knowledge and technology to regions beyond central Asia, including China, Europe, and the Middle East.²⁶ The Ottoman period was interpreted as one of backwardness and decline, in which Turks were

subjected to the corrupting influence of Arabs and Persians. The Congress also served to proclaim the “Turkishness” of all of the people of Anatolia, thus stressing national unity over ethnic or class affiliation. Likewise, the Turkish Language Society, from the time of its first meeting in 1932, was charged with the task of building on the change of scripts in 1928, to Turkify language and culture, by purging foreign, especially Persian and Arabic, words and developing a language for the masses of Anatolia. The Turkish Language Society served to proclaim the uniqueness and superiority of the Turks and Turkish culture. But more importantly, the language reform aimed at carrying the official language and culture of Kemalism into everyday discourse.²⁷

The Historical and Language Societies were meant to carry the Kemalist agenda in popular culture, while the ruling People’s Party embodied the Kemalist agenda for the state. The People’s Party grew out of the CUP and the Association for the Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia, formed at the Sivas Congress during the Turkish War of Independence. In the winter of 1922–23 Mustafa Kemal began to discuss the formation of a party as the representative of the people. In his public speeches he stressed the “organic nature” of Turkish society and the role of a party in addressing the interests of all: “[Because it] is obvious that classes help each other and their interests are not opposed to one another, to ensure our people’s common and general well-being and prosperity the formation of a party under the name ‘People’s Party’ is being considered.”²⁸ From the beginning, the People’s Party served as an instrument of control in the National Assembly, providing a forum for debate beyond the procedural limits of the Assembly, and assuring the party leaders of majority votes in the Assembly. The single-party system was legitimated with the assertion that the People’s Party represented the entire Turkish nation. Since there were no recognized class or ethnic tensions in Turkish society, the People’s Party was defined as the party of, and for, all Turks.

In 1931 the People’s Party closed the Türk Ocakları (Turkish Hearths) that had been created by the CUP, and replaced them a year later with Halk Evleri (People’s Houses). In 1939 Halk Odaları (People’s Rooms) were created to spread the movement to small towns and villages. The CUP had formed the Turkish Hearths in 1911 as cultural extensions of the Young Turks, and they had been reestablished in 1924 as autonomous organizations, under the leadership of Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver, the Minister of Education. In the 1920s the Turkish Hearths grew to more than two hundred and fifty branches, where lectures, courses, and social events were held to spread the secularist and nationalist messages of the Turkish Republic.²⁹

Possibly inspired by Fascist Italy, Atatürk decided that the time had come to create a youth organization that would be under more firm control of the People's Party. The People's Houses were envisioned as spaces for continuing education, where the masses would be educated in practical skills like literacy, hygiene, and childcare, while being indoctrinated in the fundamentals of Kemalism. In practice, most members of the People's Houses were state employees, particularly teachers, and the intellectual elite of the cities dominated the leadership. The People showed little interest in the People's Houses, viewing them rather as instruments of state control and party propaganda.³⁰ Indeed, the Kemalist stress on outcome over process meant that the People's Houses could not serve as space for the people, controlled by the people, since this could allow the emergence of particularist sentiments challenging the universalist claims of Kemalism.

STATISM IN TURKISH POLITICAL DISCOURSE

In May 1931, during its Third Congress, the People's Party adopted a program stating that the party held six main values: republican, nationalist, populist, statist, secular, and reformist. The articulation of party principles, which were incorporated into the Turkish constitution in 1937 further tying the state and the People's Party, came in part as a response to the criticisms of the Free Party (see the following section), and perceptions among the leadership that the goals and principles of Mustafa Kemal and his supporters had to be clearly spelled out for the people. Of the six principles, republicanism and nationalism were generally accepted among the politically active elite by the 1930s. Populism and reformism were diluted enough to mean little other than a stress on solidarism and avoidance of Bolshevik style revolution. Statism and secularism have proved to be the principles subject to most debate and disagreement, both within and outside the People's Party. Debate on the meaning of secularism, and the state's role in controlling the public expression of religion, remained muted in the 1930s, but emerged during the presidency of İsmet İnönü, particularly with the advent of multi-party politics. Statism, however, was the subject of serious debate throughout the 1930s, and has remained a central issue in Turkish political discourse ever since.

According to the People's Party's 1931 program: "While holding individual effort and industry as essential, it is among our important principles that the State take an interest—especially in the economic area—in the work required ... to bring the nation satisfaction and the country prosperity

in as short a period as possible".³¹ This meant that in economic policy the People's Party would stress state investment and control, and central planning and intervention in the movement of capital. But in a broader sense, statism meant not only central control of the economy but also of the political and social development of Turkey, resulting in the state becoming the primary actor in all spheres of Turkish life.³² The popular term *Devlet Baba* (Father State) reflected this patriarchal image of a state that interfered in everything and that was supposed to take care of all needs. İnönü, the prime minister and a strong advocate of statism, saw it as a pragmatic measure during the period of constant economic crisis in the early years of the Republic.³³

During the 1920s the aim of achieving economic independence was hampered by the commercial clauses of the Lausanne Treaty, which restricted Turkey's right to set tariffs until 1929. Furthermore, this treaty did not extend economic aid to Turkey, forcing it to pursue policies to encourage industrial development and to increase agricultural output on a limited budget. Even though the period 1923–26 saw marked growth, it was mainly due to recovery from the war, and 1927–29 was a period of stagnation, with a disastrous drought in 1928. The Great Depression hit Turkey hard when world agriculture prices dropped, foreign capital investment was curtailed, and foreign trade decreased.³⁴

Beginning in 1930 the İnönü cabinet began to take a more interventionist approach to the economy, leading to the adoption of statism as party policy.³⁵ In addition, the National Assembly passed legislation that brought sweeping changes in economic strategy in two main areas. First, protective measures were extended to cover local industry, restrictions were placed on foreign investment, and the state began nationalizing industries. Second, the government extended control over internal markets with price controls and controlled interest rates. The government set prices for the purchase of commodities and established a monopoly for agricultural products. Payment in kind to government employees was introduced to supplement paychecks. Moreover, state monopolies were taken away from private management and placed under state control as ambitious programs of investment in industry and mining were launched.³⁶ These policies proved moderately successful in developing the Turkish economy during the thirties. Between 1933 and 1939 the Gross Domestic Product grew an average of 8 percent per year, compared to 3.2 percent during the period 1927–29. Statism also brought a structural shift in the economy toward more industrial production. By 1939 industry made up 18 percent of the GDP as opposed to 16 percent in 1932.³⁷

While supporters of statism saw the economic development of the 1930s as evidence of its success, advocates were divided among those who saw statism as a temporary program, and those who saw statism as a permanent alternative to liberalism and Bolshevism. The first implied state support for private enterprise, the second state control, or regulation. Among supporters of permanent statism were those who leaned toward fascism and those who favored socialism. The two leading proponents of the fascist approach were Tekin Alp and Recep Peker, the party ideologue who, in 1931, visited Italy and returned favorably impressed by Fascist methods.

The leading proponents of the socialist version of statism, the Kadrocular (Cadres) wrote for the journal *Kadro* (Cadre), a monthly magazine of political and economic commentary published by Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu from 1932 to 1934. The most active of the Kadrocular was Şevket Süreyya Aydemir (1897–1976). Aydemir was a member of the Turkish Communist Party during the twenties before shifting his alliances to Kemalism. Aydemir and the Kadrocular pushed for greater state control of the economy, often criticizing the Kemalist regime for not going far enough. Their criticism eventually prompted Atatürk to order the journal closed and to exile Karaosmanoğlu to Albania as Ambassador.³⁸

İnönü pronounced his own interpretation of statism in his speech opening the rail line between Ankara and Sivas, during which he defended the government's purchase of the Anatolian Railroad in 1930.³⁹ İnönü also defined his interpretation in an article in *Kadro*, in which he interpreted the policy of statism as a defense mechanism, to build a state that could make up for centuries of economic neglect, to right injustices, and to face difficult conditions in the worldwide depression by taking over areas of the economy where private initiative was insufficient. For İnönü, statism was “not only a means of defense, but a means of development.” At the same time, he maintained that statism would not replace individual initiative, but that the state should reserve rights in matters that would affect the entire nation's welfare.⁴⁰

CRITICS OF KEMALISM

Despite claims of progress and of the success of statism and the Kemalist program in developing Turkey, discontent with Mustafa Kemal and with the People's Party's monopoly on power continued to develop during the 1920s and 1930s within and outside the National Assembly. Opposition opinion in the 1920s centered on the reform program, especially secularism,

single-party rule, and centralization of power within the government. In the 1930s the statist economic policy of the People's Party became a subject of debate. Liberal opponents continued to advocate liberal economic policies and reduction of government regulatory powers, a critical stance that developed during the Young Turk period, and continued as an integral aspect of political debate in the republican period, right through İnönü's presidency. Decrying what they called the personal autocracy of Mustafa Kemal, opponents objected to the reforms as well as the dictatorial manner in which they were being imposed. In this context, they argued that the nation, not Mustafa Kemal, should decide its own fate.⁴¹ The first open expression of opposition after the foundation of the Republic came with the formation of the Progressive Republican Party less than a year after the foundation of the Republic, which threatened the Kemalist vision of reforms by shifting the focus of political debate from outcome to process.⁴²

The Progressive Republican Party (PRP) was founded by several men who had played prominent roles in the War of Independence, including Kâzım Karabekir and Rauf Orbay, and thus had the potential of undermining the legitimacy of the People's Party, also a party created by military heroes. Moreover, the PRP called for a more representative political system and greater respect for religion, both popular causes. According to İnönü, the Progressive Republican Party was reformist, but in the context of the Ottoman Empire rather than according to the realities of the Turkish Republic.⁴³ The members' discontent with the government's policies forced the resignation of İnönü from the Prime Ministry in November 1924, and his replacement by Fethi Okyar, a member of the new party, which generated newspaper headlines like "The Entire Nation Says Whew!" and "We Have Escaped from İsmet Pasha, Whew!"⁴⁴ İnönü remained out of office until March 1925, when he was asked to return to confront the Kurdish movement led by Sheikh Said in eastern Anatolia. Facing accusations of complicity in a rebellion, the Progressive Republican Party was closed in July 1925.⁴⁵

After the Progressive Party experiment the People's Party moved to consolidate its control over the state, but another experiment with multi-party politics in 1930 coincided with growing economic problems and popular discontent, with the formation of the Free Party.⁴⁶ Fethi Okyar, who had replaced İnönü as Prime Minister for a few months during the Progressive Party period, was asked to lead the Free Party by Atatürk, who also chose the other leaders and declared that he would remain non-partisan in the new multi-party system. The Free Party announced a program calling

for relaxation of state control over the economy, reduction of taxes and encouragement of foreign investment, more liberal policies, and less coercion in the carrying out of reforms, especially dealing with religious practices. The main difference between the parties, displaying the continuity of debates from the Ottoman period, was their interpretation of state intervention in the economy and cultural matters. The People's Party leaders, in particular İnönü and Recep Peker, called for an extension of state control into new areas of the economy to deal with the crisis stemming from the global depression. Opponents of expanded state control, and of the People's Party, blamed Prime Minister İnönü for stifling development and for impeding progress through heavy-handed and unnecessary economic regulation.

The Free Party attracted considerable attention from the electorate, who hoped the new party would be a genuine alternative to the People's Party in upcoming elections.⁴⁷ When Okyar traveled to Izmir to deliver a campaign speech the whole waterfront was alive with cheering throngs. It took half an hour for him to walk twenty yards into the crowd. Every corner of the city had been hung with flags, and thousands of residents marched in the streets. When police tried to break up the demonstration, an officer was thrown into the sea. Some demonstrators attacked the offices of a pro-People's Party newspaper, leading to violence and the death of a child. The father of the dead child came to Okyar, laying the body at his feet and supposedly saying, "Here is a sacrifice! We are prepared to give others. Save us! Save us!"⁴⁸ This support and attention pushed the Free Party leaders to move beyond their designated role as "loyal opposition" to mount a real challenge to the People's Party government. The most vocal critic was Ahmet Ağaoğlu, who argued that Atatürk's presidency was different from the government of İsmet İnönü:

The head of the party was completely ignorant of the position of the party in the country. He was being deceived, deluded and exploited! How many sincere people were there around him? He could not learn the truth. He imagined that the party that had given the country so much service that had saved the country from slavery and carried out the revolution was still honored and valued by the people.⁴⁹

Declared a "deceiver, deluder, and exploiter," Prime Minister İnönü became the focus of the Free Party's attack. Atatürk was a national hero, the symbol of the Turkish Revolution and thus above direct criticism, but İnönü represented the bureaucracy, and his policies were freely debated. In Izmir, Okyar called for the resignation of İnönü, to which the excited crowd responded by ripping up pictures of the Prime Minister.⁵⁰ In response, İnönü led the

attack on the Free Party, calling their program “hazy liberalism,” claiming that the party had nothing new to offer.

Atatürk withdrew his support for the multi-party experiment eight months after its formation, and the leaders of the Free Party declared it closed in November 1930. According to İnönü’s interpretation the second multi-party experiment ended and the Free Party closed because Fethi Okyar was devastated that he had been chosen to form a party to represent such tremendous popular discontent and opposition. Furthermore, Atatürk, instead of supporting the free expression of opposition, criticized the Free Party for not controlling and managing its supporters, thus maintaining narrow limits on participation in political discourse. Overall, in the People’s Party, the feeling was that the Free Party movement had the potential to damage the reforms that were at the heart of Kemalism.⁵¹

ALTERNATIVE VISIONS OF KEMALISM: İSMET İNÖNÜ AND CELÂL BAYAR

After the closing of the Free Party, İsmet İnönü remained Prime Minister for the next seven years. Although his position remained unchallenged, the 1930s saw growing disagreement between Atatürk and İnönü over domestic as well as foreign policy. Disagreements over policy were compounded by personality clashes, Atatürk’s deteriorating health, and by conflicts over the proper role of the President in the day-to-day running of the government. As a result, opposition to İnönü simmered within the People’s Party and especially among a group close to Atatürk. Ultimately, İnönü found his position untenable, and in September 1937 he resigned his post as Prime Minister in favor of Celâl Bayar.

Mahmut Celâl Bayar (1884–1987) joined the CUP prior to the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, then worked as CUP representative in Izmir, where he organized resistance to the Greek invasion in 1919. Trained as a banker, in 1924 Bayar became Director of İş Bankası, the first major bank formed in the Republican era. He served in various cabinet positions in the 1920s, and by the 1930s Bayar had come to represent a clear alternative to İnönü, both in terms of leadership and in terms of policy.

Both Atatürk and İnönü were convinced of the dangers posed by German and Italian aggression, and by the threat of war, but were divided on how to handle potential crises. On a number of issues, from negotiations with the French over the province of Hatay, to revision of the Regime of the Straits, to meeting the challenge of Italian expansion in the Mediterranean,

İnönü consistently called for caution, while Atatürk tended to favor a more assertive stance and more cooperation with France and Britain.⁵² For instance, when Britain and France convened the Nyon Conference in September 1937 to establish a patrol against piracy in the Mediterranean, İnönü sought to limit Turkey's obligations, in order to avoid a conflict with Italy, while Atatürk favored full participation in the agreement along with Britain and France. The Foreign Minister, Tevfik Rüştü Aras, Turkey's delegate to the conference, was caught between contradictory instructions from the Prime Minister in Ankara and the President, who was in Istanbul. The conflict over the Nyon Agreement was compounded by tensions stemming from the disagreement between İnönü and Atatürk over the Hatay issue, which was resolved by prolonged negotiations under İnönü's direction in 1937, instead of by military action, which Atatürk seems to have seen as a quick and direct solution.⁵³ In terms of domestic policy, İnönü returned from a visit to the Soviet Union in 1932 convinced of the utility of central economic planning, and the need for a strong policy of statism.⁵⁴ But, after initial support for statism, during the 1930s Atatürk began to shift his views toward more liberal policies represented by Bayar.

After serving as the first Director of İş Bankası, in 1932 Bayar became Minister of Finance in the İnönü cabinet at the insistence of Atatürk. A leading proponent of the view supporting statism as a temporary measure, Bayar saw statism as an expedient, which would build up the economic infrastructure, encourage capital accumulation, and spread entrepreneurial and technical skills, then give way to private enterprise, rather than as a permanent replacement of private ownership and management. In the early 1930s Bayar expressed his views of statism to the Istanbul press: "Beside the areas of government enterprise there is a lot of industrial work to be done by private enterprises. We will help with all our might enterprises of the people and owners of capital who want to work."⁵⁵ Atatürk was impressed with Bayar's success as Director of İş Bankası, and contrasted his success with the İnönü cabinet's reluctance in engaging foreign capital, anti-inflationary policies, and commitment to a balanced budget. İnönü also was convinced that Atatürk was increasingly in favor of a liberal economy: "from the beginning Atatürk believed in private enterprise and followed that principle."⁵⁶

Even though Bayar later said, "I always respected İnönü, he was my boss ... we understood each other," he was aware of Atatürk's support and İnönü's opposition regarding his own views: "Atatürk moved away from narrow statism, [but] İsmet Paşa was stuck there."⁵⁷ Indeed, as conflict between Prime Minister İnönü and Finance Minister Bayar continued

during the 1930s, Atatürk intervened and was insistent in his support of Bayar.

Differences between Atatürk and İnönü, on economic policy as well as domestic and international affairs, left the latter increasingly isolated politically. Despite his position in the state and in the party, without Atatürk's support İnönü could not last, and by September 1937 tensions between Atatürk and İnönü had reached a breaking point. On September 17 a meeting at Atatürk's farm, followed by an anxious dinner with cabinet ministers at the Presidential Residence in Çankaya, served only to heighten the tensions, and ended with İnönü's early departure.⁵⁸ The next day, Atatürk and İnönü met again on the presidential train going to Istanbul, where Atatürk planned to preside over the Second Turkish History Conference at Dolmabahçe Palace. Having served twelve years as Prime Minister, İnönü resigned his position, and agreed with Atatürk that Bayar was the logical choice to replace him.

The replacement of İnönü by Bayar represented not simply differences of opinion between politicians, or the tensions that had developed over the years. The change of Prime Ministers illustrated the growing division of ideas among politicians and intellectuals regarding expectations and aspirations for the future of Turkey. Although many shared common views of the experience of the transition from Empire to Republic, they differed in their definitions of progress, approaches to the role of the state, and foreign and domestic policies that would carry Turkey for the next generation. The crises of the transition period let them compromise on their differences, but as the Republic was established, they became an integral part of the increasingly heated political debate during the last years of İnönü's prime ministry. Still, political debate in Turkey remained confined to a small group within the single party, and to a narrow range of political possibilities. Politically, the differences between Atatürk, İnönü, and Bayar remained quite limited, a matter of subtle differences of emphasis within general agreement on the larger assumptions regarding the nature of the Turkish nation and homeland, and the role of the state.