KEMALIST MODERNISM AND THE GENESIS OF TURKISH
TRADITIONALIST CONSERVATISM

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Department of Political Science and
Public Administration
of
Bilkent University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By
Celal Nazım İrem
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Approved by the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences.

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Assist. Prof. Nur Bilge Criss
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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the political and philosophical significance of the dialogue between Kemalism and the nouveaux traditionalist conservative circle which emerged from within the modernist Republican elites. The circle was shaped at the crossroads of İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu's traditionalism, Peyami Safa's conservatism, Ahmet Ağaoğlu's personalism, Hilmi Ziya Ülken's moralism and Mustafa Şekip Tunç's Bergsonism.

Throughout the study, Turkish traditionalist conservatism has been conceptualized as an historically unique philosophical and political movement. In this respect, the study deviated from the prevailing tendency to relate "conservatism" with the mode of socialization and/or political aspirations of the descending classes and/or groups in an all encompassing modernization process. Turkish traditionalist conservatism has provided an alternative understanding of modernism, which at the same time safeguarded and legitimized Kemalist institutions and structures. This understanding of modernism can be read through concepts formulated in the works of the circle concerned, for the explication of the Kemalist status quo. This body of literature was collected in the books of the intellectuals mentioned above and their writings on politics, philosophy, sociology, arts and literature, published in various journals, such as Kültür Haftası, Yeni Adam and İnsan.

Apart from the fact that this group of intellectuals was privileged as being a part of the Kemalist ruling cadre, the significance of Turkish traditionalist conservatism lies in the diffusion of its conceptual matrix to the legitimizing grounds for the political actors at various stages of Turkish political history. It is concluded that, by providing the conceptual matrix for legitimizing Kemalism with all its political, cultural and economic institutions within the process of nation-state building, this political and philosophical stand has marked the emergence of a state-centered conservative circle within the ranks of modernist-secular Republican intelligentsia.
ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın konusu gelenekçi-muhafazakar bir fikir çevresi olarak modernist Cumhuriyetçi süreçler arasında yer bulan bir aydın grubu ile Kemalizm arasında gelişen bir fikir diyalogunun felsefi ve siyasal içeriği ile şekildeştırılmıştır. Söz konusu çevre İsmail Hakki Baltacıoğlu'nun gelenekçiliği, Peyami Safa'nın muhafazakarlığı, Ahmet Ağaoğlu'nun şahsiyetçiliği, Hilmi Ziya Ülken'in ahlaklığı ve Mustafa Şekip Tunç'un Bergsoncu felsefesinin çatışma noktasında varlıklar bulup, gelişmiştir.


Türk gelenekçi-muhafazakarlığını önemli kılan neden söz konusu fikir çevresi içinde yer alan ayanların Kemalist yönetici süreçlerin bir parçası olmalarının yanı sıra, geliştirilen kavramsal matrisin de Türk siyasi tarihinin değişik sahalarında yönetici devlet ve/veya siyasi süreçler tarafından oluşturulan siyasalar meşruyet zemini hazırlamış olmasında yatkıtıdır. Sonuç olarak, söz konusu akım Kemalizmi tüm siyasi, kültürel ve ekonomik kurumlarıyla rasyonelleştirme ve meşrulaştırma adına sunduğu kavramsal şemayla, ulus-devletin kurulma sürecinde din temelinde şekillenmiş topluluk yaşantısından ulus yapısına geçiş yönlendiren modernist-şeküler Cumhuriyetçi süreçler arasında devlet-merkezli muhafazakar bir çevrenin doğuşuna da işaret etmektedir.
# CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ii
ABSTRACT iii
ÖZET iv
CONTENTS v

**Chapter 1**

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK 1

The Aim and Scope of the Study 1

A Terminological Clarification 19

Mainstream Approaches in Theorizing on Conservatism 23

A Note on the Methodologies Adopted in Studies on Conservatism 27

Some Portrayals of “Conservatism” in the Turkish Case 36

**Chapter 2**

THE HISTORICAL BACKDROP: OTTOMAN-TURKISH OUTLOOK TOWARDS MODERNITY 56

*Tanzimat*’s Search of Novelty in Retrospect 56

From *Tanzimat*’s Pragmatic Universalism to the Holism of Islamic Traditionalism and Particularism of Turkism 61

Turkish Revolution: Society on the Pendulum of Change and Continuity 66

Early Political Groupings within the Kemalist Political Establishment 67

Consolidation of the Republican Rule: From Revolutionary Turbulence to the “Liberal” Free Party Episode 72

The Free Republican Party Episode 69

The 1931 Congress of the RPP: From Charismatic Revolutionarism to Doctrinaire Authoritarianism 75

The 1935 Congress of the RPP 76

Theorizing on Kemalism: Revolutionary Principles 78

From Political to Cultural Revolution: Positivist Radicalism in Politics 79

Kemalist Culturalism: Politics of Future-Oriented Radicalism 80

Leitmotif of Kemalist Modernism: “Scientific Nation State” 82

The Kemalist Principles of the Revolution 84

Science: The Sword of the Revolution over the Society 84
Chapter 3
TOWARDS A TOPOGRAPHY OF TRADITIONALIST CONSERVATISM  
A New Line of Elite Fragmentation The Question of Traditionalist Conservatism in the Early Republican Era  
Early Traditionalist-Conservative Texts, Themes and Stimuli for Growing Consciousness  
Some Tentative Notes on the Shared Traditionalist-Conservative Aspirations and Ideals  
Nationalist Romanticism and the Cult of Heroism as an Instrument for Legitimation for Traditionalist Conservatism  
The Cultural Construction of the Individual  
State Paternalism and the "Papa State"  
Traditionalist Conservatism as an Alternative Reading of Kemalist Practices  
Traditionalist-Conservative and Radical Kemalist Visions of Modernity: Emergence of Capitalism-Centered World Views  
Traditionalist Conservatism, Kemalism and Radical Modernism  
Modernism and Traditionalist Conservatism  
“Conserving” in Conditions of Kemalist Modernism  
Traditionalist Conservatism on Structures of Kemalist Modernism

Chapter 4
HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HENRY BERGSON IN THE AGE OF RISING NATIONALISM  
Bergsonian Critic of Nineteenth Century Positivism and Its Implications for the Late Ottoman and Early Republican Intellectual  
Prophetic Message of Bergsonism  
Traditionalist Conservatism, Bergsonism and Modernism  
The First Traditionalist-Conservative Attempts to Achieve an Institutional Recognition as Part of Kemalist Modernism: The Turkish Philosophy Association  
Kadro’s Revolutionary Kemalism and Traditionalist Conservatives  
Towards a New Metaphysics: Kadro’s Societalism Against Traditionalist-Conservative Personalism  
Kadro’s Critique of Personalism with an Ethical Content  
Towards an Ethical Theory of Politics: Work Ethics in Traditionalist-Conservative Discourse
Bergsonian Personalism as a Philosophico-Political Shield for “Individualism” in the 1930s
Ağaoğlu’s Kemalism Against Kadro’s Interpretation
Baltacıoğlu’s Personalist Educational Philosophy in the Kadro Perspective

Chapter 5
TRADITIONALIST-CONSERVATIVE QUEST TO UNDERSTAND TURKISH EXPERIENCE OF MODERNITY AND ITS BERGSONIAN BACKGROUND
Politics of Radicalism in the Twentieth Century and its Enlightenment Origins
Bergsonism and the Basic Common Philosophical Categories of Traditionalist-Conservative Vocabulary
Political Repercussions of Bergsonisms
Traditionalist-Conservative Conception of Time, Freedom, Intuition and Life Tensions
The Vindication of Traditionalist Conservatism in the 1930s
1933 University Reform: Expulsion of Traditionalist Conservatives from the Turkish Academia

Chapter 6
TRADITIONALIST-CONSERVATIVE CONCEPTION OF ART
Literary Criticism: A New Secular Mode of Consciousness
Dissolution of Man’s Unity in Modern Society
The Crisis of Morality and Loss of Meaning: Art as a Mode of Identification
Culture and Arts: As Realms of Elan Engineering
Unity Through the Artistic Reorganization of Life
Traditionalist-Conservative Modernist Aesthetics as a Mode of Political Creation
Aesthetic Creation: A Model of Relationship Between the Charismatic Ruler and the Ruled
Conservative Philosophical Framework in Peyami Safa’s Works
Safa’s Conservatism and His Aesthetic Technique
Form versus Essence: Safa’s Conservative Dilemma
Chapter 7

BASIC TENETS OF TRADITIONALIST CONSERVATISM DURING THE PROCESS OF NATION-MAKING 269

Hybrid Organicism 278

Towards a Politics of Affection 287

Heroism and Appeal to Charisma: Politics in the Traditionalist-Conservative Agenda 291

From Religious Community to the Nation: Changing Functions of Ethics, Religion and Obligations 298

Religiosity: The Mystical-Irrational Experience of the Sacred in the World of Modernity 303

Traditionalist-Conservative Conception of Order: A Synthesis of the Forces of Rationality and Irrationality 310

Chapter 8

AGAINST THE POLITICS OF INDIVIDUALISM 314

Distaste of Market Ethics, Egoism and Pursuit of Self-Interest 314

“Hybrid Organicism” and State As a Nationalized and Re-Traditionalized Institution 323

Search for a Reconciliation Between the Legal Order of the State and the Moral Order of the Society 328

Class and Democratic Order 332

The Question of Democracy 337

Chapter 9

CONCLUSION 342

BIBLIOGRAPHY 358
CHAPTER 1
THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Aim and Scope of the Study

The nature and dynamics of the Republican People’s Party (RPP) rule from 1923 to 1946, its intellectual foundations, historical reasons for transition to multi-party politics in 1946 and the electoral victory of the “liberal-conservative” Democratic Party (DP) in 1950 have stirred up the interest of many students of Turkish politics. Concomitantly, the term, “conservatism” has indirectly been employed in social and political research vocabulary to identify the social and cultural policy choices of the rising Democrats in the 1950s and the various right wing parties that emerged at various stages of Turkish modernization. The term has most commonly been used to indicate “(conservative) commitments” in social and cultural policy orientations. As a result, it has always had the power to explain, at least, some part of the political agenda of the ‘right-wing’ politics in Turkey. The term also hints at the existence of a set of conservative ideas, ideals, practices and a style of thought which lead to these patterns of practices. Since conservative ideas have had a visible existence in Turkish political vocabulary its is legitimate to undertake a study on ‘conservatism’ as the political manifestation of certain groups who called themselves as traditionalist and conservative in the early Republican era. Indeed, the general objective of this study is to analyse the intellectual history of modern Turkish conservatism at the crossroads of diverse claims “to conserve” the novelties brought up by the Kemalist state in the early Republican era between the late 1920s and

1940s. This era can roughly be characterized by the rise of the modern nation state, development of a national capitalist market, the rise of the individual subject as a citizen, and the consolidation of a new social ethics with the rise of a romantic culturalism on which the *nouveaux* traditionalist-conservative claims had flourished.

More specifically, the focus of the study is on the *nouveaux* conservative ideals and aspirations which began to appear as an intellectual orientation by the beginning of the 1930s and distinctively articulated in the writings of a small group of intellectuals with common political ideals and philosophical inspirations. Members of this group were İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu (1886-1978), a prominent academician and a Republican politician, who became the founder of a distinct politico-philosophical perspective which he himself labeled as “traditionalism;” Peyami Safa (1899-1961), the famous conservative literary figure; Ahmed Ağaoglu (1869-1939), a prestigious Turkist politician with particular personalist philosophical orientations; Hilmi Ziya Ülken (1901-1974), a distinguished academician well-known for his moralism, culturalism and Anatolianism and Mustafa Şekip Tunç (1886-1958), the advocate of Bergsonism in early Republican era. This small group of men of letters, academicians and politicians created a corpus of writings with a distinct philosophico-political orientation which led to the emergence of a conservative milieu within the ranks of the progressive secular radical Republicans in the early Kemalist era.

These intellectuals, especially Tunç, Baltacıoğlu, and Ülken in the Republican era, worked as educators and held posts in the bureaucracy of the education. Tunç started his career in 1908 as a deputy governor of a provincial district, Kosovo. He was even named “*Hoca* (Hodja) Local Governor” because of his activities and interest in the field of education. The Ministry of Education sent him abroad in 1913 and he received his doctorate degree in psychology from the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute in Switzerland. When he returned to Turkey, he held various posts in the Ministry of Education. He became associate professor at *Darılfünum* (antecedent of the University of Istanbul). It was Baltacıoğlu who supported his appointment at *Darılfünum*. His interest in politics, as
compared to Baltacıoğlu, Ağaoğlu and Safa, was limited. He worked at Darülifānum until his death in 1958 with a short break during the 1933 purge. Besides his academic activities, he was also the chairman of the Turkish Philosophy Association in 1931. He had a deep interest in the Bergsonian philosophy. In 1937, Tunç and Ülken were sent to Paris as members of the Turkish delegation to participate in the International Philosophy Congress. He was also selected as member of the Turkish delegation to the 14th International Sociology Congress to be held in Bucharest in 1939. However, the Congress was canceled due to the Second World War. He was also an active figure in the Councils of Education and Morality which were convened in the years of 1939, 1943 and 1951, respectively. What was significant for the purposes of this dissertation was his philosophical orientation which provided a common vocabulary to the traditionalist-conservative figures to mirror their common philosophical tendencies. His statement to the Congress, named Descartes Congress, reflected this commonly shared attitude among the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals in comprehending the novelties brought about by the Kemalist Revolution. For Tunç, “Turkey is building itself according to the formula of Mr. Bergson.”

According to Ülken, it was Baltacıoğlu who provoked Tunç’s interest in the Bergsonian philosophy. Like Tunç, Baltacıoğlu also had an academic career. He had a wide range of interests in the fields of ethics, education, literature, politics, philosophy, sociology, pedagogy. He also had a striking personality. This “traditionalist” intellectual of the Republic was among the first innovators of the late Ottoman era. In Berkes’ words:

he became best known through his campaign against something that would probably occur to no one under normal conditions: the tassel attached to the fez! In innumerable lectures he ridiculed the tassel, showed it to be wasteful, unaesthetic, and above all utterly devoid of any function, yet stupidly carried about by everyone. At the climax of each talk he used to draw out a pair of scissors and cut the tassel off his own fez, for which he was known until the adoption of surnames in 1935 as Püskülsüz (Tassel-less) İsmail Hakki.

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Even though, “for year he was the only Turk without a tassel...(and) this crusade,” in Berkes’ words, “had a cultural and educational meaning ... which symbolized the revolt of the new education against the things that had no meaning or function - economic, religious, national, or social - and yet continued to exist simply through dogged adherence to custom.” This criticism of innovators, for which Baltacıoğlu’s case was an example, “signified the beginning of the process of revising values and institutions.” This crusade reached to its zenith in the Republican radicalism, which, paradoxically, gave its first signs of radicalism in the acts and ideas of the “traditionalist” Baltacıoğlu.

Berkes also noted that he was one among the first generation of orators in the late Ottoman-Turkish politics. Indeed, he became a well-known orator after his statement on pedagogy delivered at İzmir in the first years of the Second Constitutional period. He also delivered various lectures and public speeches at schools opened by the Union and Progress Party in Selonica, Adrianople and İstanbul. After his visit to France, England, Belgium and Switzerland he had a tenure from Darülüşün in 1913. Besides his academic activities he also held post in educational bureaucracy. He was appointed chairman of the Board of Inspectors of the Ministry of Education in 1918. In 1920 and 1922, he was elected as the dean of the Faculty of Literary Arts. In 1923, he became the undersecretary of the Ministry of Education. The same year, he was selected as the rector of Darülüşün. He also delivered lectures in the Faculty of Fine Arts and Faculty of Theology. In 1925, he resigned from the rectorate. In 1931, he, like Ağaoğlu, was participated in the Free Republican Party and became the chairman of the İstanbul branch of the party. Baltacıoğlu’s article, entitled Bizim Taşıtımız Mustafa Kemal (Mustafa Kemal Whom We Worship) published in the journal, Yarım in 1930 was a turning point for his academic

4 Ibid., p. 404.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., pp. 494-5
and political career. In his article Baltacıoğlu, comparing Mustafa Kemal with Michelangelo and Delacroix said that

Mustafa Kemal, whom we worship, is not that Mustafa Kemal who is the chairman of the People’s Party, but, like genius Ingles, he is the “Eternal Mustafa Kemal” who carries the heritage of the past that is the spiritual forces of the Turkish nation and creates the future of the Turkish nation. 8

Mustafa Kemal did not show any sympathy to Baltacıoğlu’s comparisons among Delacroix, Michelangelo, Ingles and himself, and initiated a campaign against Baltacıoğlu through Reşit Galip and urged Ağaoğlu strongly to apply Fethi Bey (Okyar), chairman of the Free Republican Party, to dismiss Baltacıoğlu from the ranks of the party. 9

Following, in the 1933 Purge of Darülfitimun he was unseated from his post in the academy. Then, in 1934, he started to publish the journal, Yeni Adam. Until his death in 1978, the journal was published with some periods of break. After the death of Atatürk, in 1942, İnönü encouraged him to become a republican deputy from the province of Afyon. The same year, he also had a tenure from the Faculty of Language, History and Geography. He also became the chairman of the Board of Terms at the Turkish Language Association and worked in this institution as the chairman of this board until 1957. In 1946 elections, he was elected as a republican deputy from the province of Kırşehir. His political life came to an end by the triumph of the Democratic Party in the 1950 elections. He had innumerable books and articles written in the fields of art, aesthetics, social science and philosophy. 10

Among the intellectuals concerned only Ağaoğlu had such an interest in politics which was comparable with Baltacıoğlu. As noted, they worked within the ranks of the same party until Atatürk forced Ağaoğlu to have a stand against Baltacıoğlu. As a matter of fact, Ağaoğlu’s experience in the Free Republican Party not only became the end of his involvement in politics but also his academic career which had started in 1909 after his

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9 See Ağaoğlu, ibid., pp. 86-91.
return from Azerbaijan as a prominent Turkish figure of the time. Following his return to the homeland, Ağaoğlu started to have close relations with the Turkist circles of the time and became a member of the Turkish Hearths (Türk Ocakları) founded in 1912. The same year he was elected as a member of the Central Committee of the Union and Progress Party. In 1918, he was again in Azerbaijan as the advisor of the chief of the army which was sent to help the independent Azerbaijan. In 1919, he returned to İstanbul and then was exiled to Malta Island. In 1921, he participated in the War of Independence and became the editor-in-chief of the daily, Hakimiyet-i Milliye (National Sovereignty). Then, he was elected to the parliament and served as a representative until the closure of the Free Republican Party. From then on, he was not elected to the parliament and his political life came to an end. Followingly, he started to publish the daily named Akın and published various articles in Safa’s Kültür Haftası in the early 1930s and Ulken’s İnsan in the late 1930s.¹¹

In this respect, Safa’s Kültür Haftası, was an important journal for at least two reasons; firstly, it became a common platform for the intellectuals concerned; secondly, it marked a turning-point for Safa’s individual career turning from novelist and man of letters to a conservative intellectual with a political motivation. The journal Kültür Haftası and his conferences delivered at the Turkish Philosophy Association by the beginning of the 1930s reflected his affinity to an informal group of intellectuals, including, Ağaoğlu, Tunç, Ulken and Baltacıoğlu. He became a well-known figure through his polemical discussions with the socialist poet Nazım Hikmet in the mid-1930s.

He was also the only figure among these intellectuals who did not occupy a post in the state. He earned his living through his writings. Throughout the 1940s, he became one of the best known public figures for his conservative and nationalist aspirations. In 1950 elections Safa was offered to be a Republican deputy from the province of Bursa but he

¹¹ For life of Ağaoğlu, see Hilmi Ziya Ulken, Türkiye’de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi (History of Contemporary Thought in Turkey), 3rd ed. (İstanbul: Ulken Yayınları, 1992), pp. 408-12.
could not be elected. Then he became the spokesman of the Democratic Party. By the beginning of the 1950s, he started to publish his journal Türk Düşüncesi and by the mid-1950s, he contributed to the journal Din Yolu which also became a platform for Baltacioğlu, Ülken and Tunç to provide the key terms of philosophy of religion.

It was Ülken who helped Safa to publish the journal Türk Düşüncesi. Still, he had a limited interest in politics and mostly made his career in the academy. His career as an educator started in 1921, and then he was offered a post in the newly established University in 1933 by the initiative of Atatürk. His contact with the intellectuals concerned had started by the end of 1920s through the activities of the Turkish Philosophy and Sociology Association. The Association published the journal titled Felsefe ve İctimaiyat Mecmuası. However, only two issues of the journal were published. Its activities slowed down in 1930. Then, Ülken revived it in 1931. It was renamed the Turkish Philosophy Association. The Association published the journal, Felsefe Yılığı and held various seminars. Safa, Baltacioğlu, Ülken, Tunç and Ağaoğlu were all participated in the seminars organized by the Association. Then, in 1938, he started to publish the journal İnsan. Still, he mostly engaged in academic activities. In 1949, he participated in the establishment of the Association International de Sociologie, and after his return to Turkey, he founded the Turkish Sociology Association. In the mid-1950s, he published various articles in Safa’s journal Türk Düşüncesi.

All in all, these intellectuals presented a common way of thinking and acting in the early Republican era. Thus, this dissertation will deal with the intellectual and political aspects of this common stand which, though ignored by the political scientists and historians, significantly shaped the conservative agenda in Turkish politics in the succeeding decades. For analytical purposes, this common way of thinking and acting will be characterized by the term “traditionalist conservatism.” The term, which will be elaborated in detail, refers to common philosophico-political motivations which intersects with Baltacioğlu’s “traditionalism” and Safa’s “conservatism.” Both tendencies were
deeply influenced by Tunç’s Bergsonian philosophy, and shared common ideals and aspirations with Ulken’s moralism and Ağaoğlu’s personalism. Ulken sought for an institutional basis for the circulation of the “traditionalist,” “conservative” and “personalist” aspirations of the group of intellectuals concerned. For this reason, he took the initiative for the revival of Turkish Philosophy and Sociology Association in 1931 where Safa, Baltacıoğlu, Ağaoğlu and Tunç also delivered various seminars. Ulken also encouraged Tunç to become the chairperson of the Association in 1931. It is also not surprising to see numerous articles of these figures appearing in Kültür Haftası in the mid 1930s, a journal published by İlhami Safa, Safa’s brother. Besides a corpus of books, numerous articles of these figures also appeared in the dailies and in journals, such as Çınaraltı, as in the case of Safa and Tunç, or in Baltacıoğlu’s Yeni Adam, Ulken’s İnsan and İstanbul in the 1930s and 1940s, and/or Baltacıoğlu’s Din Yolu, or Safa’s Türk Düşüncesi in the 1950s. Thus, one of the basic aims of this study is to provide a scheme of this holistic approach to moral, aesthetic, political ideas and aspirations of these intellectuals who gathered around common ideals, institutions and philosophico-political inspirations.

The chief intention in this study is to display how aesthetic, political, moral and political ideals and concerns were articulated in the main traditionalist-conservative texts of the five self-styled intellectuals of the time. Various traditionalist-conservative themes and motives, which appeared in their own journals, such as Kültür Haftası, Yeni Adam and İnsan, had important repercussions in understanding their conception of Kemalist modernism which had provided various distinct ways of thinking about Man, society and institutions. Kemalist modernism radically altered the tempo of life compared to the preceding Ottoman era. This radical change can be understood as a change in habits, attitudes and consciousness in every field, from politics to daily life. Within this framework, research on the articulation of conservative themes and motives in the early Republican era will prompt a new understanding of Kemalist modernism.
To do this, the study also aims to analyse the intellectual climate and cleavages among the secular-modernist Kemalist intelligentsia who were responsible for the emergence of traditionalist-conservative ideas. These cleavages were built around the debate on how Turkish modernism had to be conceived and manipulated. Traditionalist-conservative aspirations represented one of these cleavages within the Kemalist worldview. In other words, they developed within the confines of Kemalist modernism. Modern Turkish traditionalist conservatism, as a distinct philosophico-political vocabulary, was based on a modern-secular cosmology and emerged concomitantly with the rise of the structures of modernity, such as the nation state and capitalist market. Thus, the study will attempt to delineate and isolate the modernist themes and motives within the conservative milieu which emerged within the ranks of modernist-secularist intelligentsia during Turkish transition from religiously-framed structures of the preceding Ottoman *Millet* system to the world of nations.

The dominant Kemalist themes drew heavily upon nineteenth century scienticism, Enlightenment radicalism, Comtian positivism and societalist (*cemiyetçi*) solidarism of Ziya Gökalp. The traditionalist-conservative milieu came to challenge the dogmatic faith in science, technology and progress upheld by the Kemalist ruling elite. They also developed competing conceptions on the nature of the state, its legitimacy and its relations with the society. They offered a philosophical critique against the Kemalist vision of modernity and against its anti or a-religious posture. Yet, despite their resistance to the positivist-nominalist framework of Kemalism, these intellectuals also tended to see themselves as a faction within the Kemalist elites. It must be noted, however, that it was their differing interpretation of the newly established Kemalist *status quo* through some alternative concepts in the 1930s which set the tone of their relations with the Kemalist power center.

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Within this framework, an historical account will be provided in chapter 2 to delineate the Ottoman problematic inherited by Kemalism. Historical generalizations will be provided to characterize Kemaist's claim of historical rupture from the past and the novel traditionalist-conservative claim to conserve the Kemalist status quo. Special emphasis will be placed on Kemalist patterns of politics. A detailed account of Kemalist realpolitik will also be provided to illustrate the basic features of Kemalist modernization. The events and processes which led to the emergence and consolidation of nation state will be evaluated to portray the basic characteristics of Kemalist revolutionary philosophy which stimulated the development of traditionalist-conservative aspirations. The sources and patterns of Kemalist radicalism, with special emphasis on its obsession with science will be elaborated. This will provide a firm ground to indicate the disjunctions and parallelisms between Kemalist and traditionalist-conservative imaginations which will be assessed in the succeeding chapters in detail. Particular importance will be given to the cultural, political and economic processes that transformed the Kemalist state to, what Anthony Smith has called a “scientific bureaucratic state,” since the Kemalist ideas on the state and society relationship became the leitmotifs of traditionalist-conservative resistance to the Kemalist positivist vision of modernity.13

The analysis of nation-state building patterns is relevant to understanding the underlying political, cultural and economic processes in which the traditionalist-conservative aspirations were crystallized as modern convictions of “conservation,” among the modernist traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia located in Kemalist power circle. In chapter 2, a picture of the political and intellectual life of modern Turkey in the early Republican era will be drawn to illustrate how different trends and motives from numerous

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13 Anthony Smith defined the term as follows: “New interventionist role of the state on the grounds that it alone can raise the living standards of the population, educate them, unify them, give them a sense of pride and well being and administer the public affairs in a 'rational' and collective manner.” “Scientific state” Smith argued “is a polity which seeks to homogenize the population, within its boundaries for administrative purposes by using the latest scientific techniques and methods for the sake of efficiency.” The rulers use the bureaucratic machine and the fruits of scientific and technological application to harness resources and mobilize the people in their territory.” See Anthony Smith, Theories of Nationalism (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1983). pp. 231-2, 249-52, 254, 264,269. See also Anthony Smith, National Identity (London: Penguin, 1991), Ethnicity and Nationalism (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992).
currents, such as the traditionalism of Baltacioglu, conservatism of Safa, personalism of Agaoğlu, Bergsonism of Tunç and moralism of Ulken, interfused to form a peculiar traditionalist-conservative understanding of Kemalist modernism and politics.

In order to understand the nature of the new elite fragmentation within the Kemalist power structure and the emergence of a new consciousness among the secular-modernist intelligentsia around traditionalist-conservative themes, a textual analysis of the manifestations of these themes and motives in the writings of five self-styled intellectuals is required. Thus, in chapter 3, a preliminary analysis of the fundamental characteristics of two capitalism-centered styles of thought, namely Kemalism and traditionalist conservatism, will be provided to characterize their mode of rationalization of the consolidation of capitalism under the tutelage of the Kemalist nation-state.

At this stage of analysis, the basic aim is to hint at the formative conceptions in the main traditionalist-conservative texts which were responsible for the growing traditionalist-conservative consciousness and aspirations among the five self-styled intellectuals. These characteristic conceptions were also employed to form a traditionalist-conservative rationalization of the institutionalization of the structures of modernity, such as the nation-state and capitalism. These conceptions also paved the way for the development of new political and cultural convictions through which traditionalist-conservative intellectuals distanced their respective stands from the traditional religious reactionaries of the Revolution. Diverse themes and motives were articulated mainly in the traditionalist-conservative texts in response to the political, economic and cultural ideals of Kemalist modernism. Still, Kemalism, the state-building ideology, formed the most ubiquitous ground that framed the emerging traditionalist-conservative ideals and aspirations. The relationship between these intellectuals and Kemalism is not accidental but rather causal. Nevertheless, 'personalist,' 'anti-rationalist,' 'anti-intellectualist' and 'anti-scienticist' motives in main the traditionalist-conservative texts were articulated to form a competing
but not necessarily completely alienated position from the politico-philosophical perspective of the Kemalist positivist model of modernism.

Within this framework, basic traditionalist-conservative themes, which served as a basis of legitimization for Kemalist nation state practices will also be delineated. In this regard, special attention will be paid to culturalist convictions of traditionalist-conservative intellectuals. This appeal to culturalism was responsible for traditionalist-conservative devotion to most of the political ideals of Kemalism. The Kemalist framework was ultimately seen as the historical attempt which would free the creative spirit of the nation from the cosmopolitanism of the Ottoman state. Indeed, it is this culturalist emphasis which makes traditionalist conservatism an essentially modernist impulse, while at the same time, brings Kemalism to a stance closer to traditionalist conservatism.

In the early Republican era the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals also tried to give a full account of their own vision of modernism. Bergsonism provided the basic philosophical inspirations for the development of a kind of romanticism and/or modernism. As noted by Lestek Kolakowski, most of the prominent figures of the modernist movement by the beginning of the twentieth century were also influenced by the Bergsonian philosophy and Bergsonism ultimately paved the way for the development of a new trend of Catholic modernism.  

Bergsonism had a reformist effect on the dogmas of the Catholic Church by viewing them as "provincial and changeable forms in which Christians express their faith according to historical circumstances."  

Still, Kolakowski argued that "Bergson" did not leave behind "any school which would develop his ideas; he had admirers, propagators, defenders, but no disciples or intellectual successors in the proper sense."  

Nevertheless, Bergsonism was the most influential philosophical trend between 1900 and 1914. In the field of literature, his irrationalist philosophical orientation

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15 Ibid., p. 99.

16 Ibid. p. 101.
had an influence on Charles Péguy and Marcel Proust. Bergson’s time conception was inspired by George Bernard Shaw, particularly as reflected in his play, Back to Methuselah, published in 1921. Bergson’s intuitionist philosophy was inspired by George Sorel to combat Marxist historical determinism. Moreover, in the field of fine arts, Claude Monet, and in the field of music, Claude Achille Debussy, have provided works which were blends of Bergson’s intuitionism and impressionism. Bergson also had a significant impact on the development of the historicist philosophy of William Dilthey, Benetto Croce, and even on the pragmatist philosophy of William James.

In this respect, basic manifestations of Bergsonism revealed themselves in varying tones in the main traditionalist-conservative texts. The development of Safa’s conservative novel, Baltacıoğlu’s educational philosophy, together with Ulken’s moralism and Ağaçıoğlu’s highly qualified views on individual and historical evolution owed a lot to the Bergsonian vocabulary which had been introduced by Tunç. These common philosophical and political assumptions and aspirations, which were responsible for the development of a common approach to Kemalist modernism, have to be identified.

Still, Bergsonism was not the only source of inspiration, though it was the dominant one. In the case of Safa the influence of the German Historicist School, Dilthey, and Frederick Nietzsche revealed itself in his book Felsefi Buhran (The Philosophical Crisis) or in the case of Ulken, the influences of Max Scheler, Martin Heidegger and/or the phenomenological school were openly praised in his book, Yirminci Asır Felsefecileri (The Twentieth Century Philosophers). Even though Baltacıoğlu was a life-time devotee of Bergson in his philosophical orientations, he was also inspired by the philosophy of Jean Jacques Rousseau. The impact of different authors, which could be observed in the

18 Ibid., p. 46.
writings of these intellectuals, were not taken into consideration, when they did not lead to a qualitative difference in their respective flows of thought.

Besides the cause-effect relationship, another problematic issue is methodological vagueness in drawing the limits of "influence" among the intellectuals concerned. There is no direct means to show that certain ideas and aspirations of a thinker were internalized by another unless one of them openly revealed it. For example, in the cases of Tunç and Baltacıoğlu it is proper to think that they were the protagonists of Bergsonism since both of them declared that they had adopted the Bergsonian precepts in their philosophical orientations. However, in the case of Safa and Ağaoğlu, the question is more complicated although they also praised Bergson as the founding philosopher of metaphysics in the modern age. Ülken's case is yet the most complex one and needs further elaboration on a thematic level. A thematic analysis of Ülken's philosophical stand can reveal the diffusion of Bergsonian anxieties into his moral philosophy. But it must not be forgotten that his ideas were derived from many sources, such as Heidegger, Scheler and even from Frederick Hegel.

With these difficulties in mind, chapters 4 and 5 will show Bergson's significance for traditionalist-conservative intellectuals in their quest to understand the Kemalist vision of modernism. It will be made clear that Bergsonian philosophical inspirations of this milieu were intensely politicized in their clash with other factions of Kemalism. In this respect, special emphases will be placed on the traditionalist-conservative search for an institutional recognition of their Bergsonian philosophy and on their dispute with the Kadro circle - a group of ex-Marxist Kemalist intellectuals - who received semi-official recognition from the Kemalist ruling elites in the early 1930s. This controversy between the Kadro circle and traditionalist-conservative intellectuals in the early 1930s played an important role for the conservative intellectuals in clarifying their own political and philosophical vocabulary. For this reason, the individual reactions of these intellectuals to the Kadro circle will be elaborated with a view of observing the process by which their
Bergson inspired ideas were refined. Ağaoğlu and Baltacıoğlu's personalism, Ülken's mystic moralism will be analysed with this concern in mind. Nevertheless, it must be noted that Bergsonism will not be treated as a cause for the individual self-consciousness of the group but rather as characteristic of certain tendencies and interests commonly shared by the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, especially in formulating their reactions against the Kadro circle or radical Kemalists.

A specific emphasis will be made on the politicization of the Bergsonian philosophical background, especially in chapter 5. Traditionalist-conservative distance from what they regarded as the politics of rationalism of the Kemalist state had set the tone of their relations with the ruling elite. Within this framework, traditionalist-conservative ideas on the legitimate political rule, the nature of political power and elan engineering were based on an inner Bergsonian logic. Chapter 5 will delineate the implications of common Bergsonian terms in formulating a peculiar style of life politics which derived its basic stimuli from a "philosophy of man" and "time" that ultimately led to the critique of the politics of scienticism with an appeal to intuition. This critique of the politics of scienticism was responsible for traditionalist-conservative questioning of the modernizing policies and strategies of the Kemalist scientific state, if not its ideals as well. The inherent contradiction between the ruling elite and the conservative milieu revealed itself during the University Reform in 1933 when Kemalists abolished the old Darülffûnum. The University Reform, which will be focused on in chapter 5, is also significant since it revealed Kemalists' choice for the 'insiders' and 'outsiders' of the political game. Traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia faced the sober reality when the Kemalist ruling elite divided them into 'insiders' and 'outsiders': accordingly, Baltacıoğlu and Ağaoğlu would be the outsiders whereas Tunç would be the insider. Republican strategies adopted in University Reform may be taken as the indication of the legitimacy of Bergsonism for the ruling Kemalist cadre. Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals with "traditionalist," and "liberal"
aspirations were left outside, whereas Bergsonism was registered as a philosophy which had the potential to adapt itself to the changes brought about in society by the Kemalist Revolution.

Traditionalist-conservative challenge to scienticism mostly revealed itself in an appeal to art since members of this small circle were sensitive to the social and political function of art as a model of creation in this era of nation and state building. Moreover, Safa was a famous man of letters whereas Ülken and Baltacıoğlu were closely interested in literature. Starting in the early 1930s with Baltacıoğlu’s book entitled Demokrasi ve Sanat (Democracy and Art), and Ülken’s Resim ve Cemiyet (Painting and Society), art’s social function, which was delineated as a mirroring effect of the individual and social spirit, was always praised.19 These critics of rationalism promoted a new function of art and dynamics of artistic experience as a way of understanding the meaning of human action in a new world shaped by faith in the governing ethos of Reason.

Chapter 6 will try to establish the historical significance of traditionalist conservatives’ emphases on moral, social, and political concerns which underpinned their interest in art. The importance ascribed to art also stemmed from its function to popularize new modern tastes, cultural standards and values. Besides, art and especially literary art, also provided a more secure place for traditionalist-conservative intellectuals than a direct involvement in active politics in the Revolutionary period. Various political concerns revealed themselves in these literary works, for example in the novels of Safa or in some works of Ülken and Baltacıoğlu on the cultural and political significance of art. In this context, the traditionalist-conservative conception of art had important political consequences. For them the arts, especially of the literary arts provided a new literary vocabulary which would mirror the value crisis felt by each stratum faced with the modernist drive of Kemalism.

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19 Ismail Hakki Baltacıoğlu, Demokrasi ve Sanat (Democracy and Art) (İstanbul: Sanayi’i Nefise Basmevi, 1931); Ülken, Resim ve Cemiyet (Painting and Society) (İstanbul: Üniversite Kitabevi, 1943).
The potential of art was exploited by the traditionalist-conservative circle to illustrate the annihilative consequences of Kemalist modernism. Thus, literature became a realm for the extension of traditionalist-conservative themes and motives, as revealed in the works of Safa. Saфа’s conservative philosophy shaped his literary techniques and disclosed his latent political aspirations which were also shared by other traditionalist-conservative figures. Indeed, Saфа’s conservative literature and Tunç’s Bergsonism were representative of the general convictions of the traditionalist-conservative circle. They displayed the common aesthetic and philosophical concerns behind the traditionalist-conservative response to Kemalist modernism. Within this framework, chapter 6 will ultimately show how concepts of artistic creativity, freedom, spontaneity and imagination turned into concepts with political connotations. These concepts illustrated a model of legitimate relationship between the charismatic ruler and the people.

Competing patterns of thought in the early Republican era on legitimate rule over the society were also shaped around the political and social problems generated by the grand processes of nation and nation-state building practices. In chapters 7 and 8, attention will be paid to traditionalist-conservative attempts to secularize the terms of political theory from which the Kemalist order had derived its legitimacy. The specific point to be evaluated in chapter 7 is the traditionalist-conservative emphasis on ethics, metaphysics and religiosity as a substitute for the dissolution of the institutional structure of Islam as a system of social sanctions. Within this framework, the traditionalist-conservative conception of social obligation is related to their conceptions on the sources, nature and development of morality and the place of religion in modern societies. The traditionalist-conservative conception of new social ethics had important political repercussions since it resulted in a search for a pattern of leadership for the consolidation of this ethic. Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals advocated that Islam, which had previously functioned as the basis of social ethics, should be harnessed into a particular national development, i.e. into a kind of nationalism.
The traditionalist-conservative ambition to push every institution toward a national path of development, their conceptions of civil society, class and democracy will be elaborated in chapter 8. Kemalist modernism was derived from a model of civilization. The modernizer state and its faithful servants, be they the bureaucracy and/or devoted intelligentsia would be the carriers of this civilizing modernism. Science was assumed to characterize the universal ideals of this modernism. The traditionalist-conservative critique of rationalism, mechanism and atomist individualism paved the way for their adaptation of a "hybrid-organic" metaphor. This metaphor formed the basis for their criticism of contractual theories of society and politics of individualism. The traditionalist-conservative critiques of liberal utilitarian views on man and society was a deviation from the mainstay precepts of conventional Western liberal thought. This stance had special significance since some of the prominent figures of the traditionalist-conservative group also became the founders of the 'liberal' Free Republican Party in 1930 as in the cases of Ağaoğlu and Baltacoğlu. The latter was the chairman of the Istanbul branch of the party, likewise, Safa was acting as the spokesman of the 'liberal' Democratic Party by the mid 1950s. This may give a hint about the early history of the emergence of "conservative-liberal" anomaly in the Turkish case that which surfaced with the rise of the Democratic Party by the mid 1940s and displayed itself at various stages of Turkish politics mostly through the right wing parties. These political platforms derived their legitimacy from this anomaly in varying degrees.

The focuses in chapters 7 and 8 are on the hybrid organic approach that accounted for a unique conception of state, democracy and society by these intellectuals. This hybrid-organicism was employed to denote that structures of modernity and its political and cultural institutions could not be arbitrarily implanted from one country to another. If this was done, it would harm the uniqueness of the Kemalist institutionalization of the nation-state, its political, economic and cultural institutions. Still, this hybrid organic approach did not result in the subordination of the individual to the society, as in the case of Ziya
Gökalp’s solidarist collectivism which revealed itself in the Republican motto of “no right but obligations, no individual but society.” The inherent traditionalist-conservative ideas on personalism posed individuality in a radical fashion. Hybrid-organism, while distancing the traditionalist-conservative circle from the vague solidarist-organism of Kemalism, inherited from Gökalp, also provided the means of giving form to a holistic approach where the functioning of the whole could be grasped intuitively. In this respect, the intuitionist approach became a basis for the traditionalist-conservative characterization of the uniqueness of the institutionalization of politics. Intuitionism enabled this group to delineate rule through charisma, represented by the Kemalist power structure as the legitimate form of political power. Therefore these chapters will analyse the affinity between Kemalism and traditionalist conservatism and will show that the latter group already presented itself as a definite trend in Kemalist modernism. It is important to understand the functionality of traditionalist-conservative themes for Kemalist modernism. The relevance of traditionalist conservatism for the regime was due to the fact that its basic concepts, orientations and ideals found a niche in the Kemalist power structure, if not always at its center. Baltaciğlu’s political experience in the Free Republican Party with Ağaoğlu, or in the Republican People’s Party, where he became one of its deputies in the parliament between 1942-1950, and/or Safa’s shift from Republicans to Democrats by the mid-1950s onwards and/or the secure place granted to these intellectuals in the Kemalist power structure can be seen as evidence of the fact that traditionalist-conservative themes and motives were not alien to omnipotent Kemalism. They can be taken as symptoms of the diffusion of traditionalist-conservative themes into the dominant Republican ideology.

A Terminological Clarification

The term “traditionalist conservatism” needs further terminological clarification. The term is specifically coined in this dissertation. It is drawn from the “traditionalism” of Baltaciğlu and “conservatism” of Safa. Having been inspired from the Bergsonian
philosophy of Tunç, Baltaciğlu’s traditionalism shared common elements with Ağaoğlu’s personalism and Ülken’s moralism. Safa’s conservatism had also many moralists and personalist aspirations which stimulated the development of a literary style that manifested many of the interwoven trends. The convergent themes and motives in these texts outweighed the different emphases in their philosophical, sociological, political and literary texts. The inner logic of their reasoning makes smooth distinctions among these intellectuals synthetic because the term “traditionalist-conservative” simply denotes a will on the part of these intellectuals to think and act together on the basis of a set of shared premises and themes.

This small but qualified group of intellectuals can be considered as “traditionalist” and/or “conservative,” in a descriptive sense in terms of their respect for tradition, history and culture. But this does not mean a total consensus among the members of the group on every theme they developed in their works. Even though these five intellectuals had much in common, they were also so different in temperament that they held different views on a wide range on issues and had different central intuitions and aims. Even though Baltaciğlu and Safa had similar views on the social and cultural functions of art, they somehow held dissimilar view on the future course of the development of the nouveaux novel of the Republic. Though personalism was a common stand that shaped the philosophical and political orientations of Baltaciğlu and Ağaoğlu, their orientations towards religion differed widely. Even though Ülken and Tunç had praised Bergsonism as the modern arch-critic of vague positivism, each would hold different views on which aspects of Bergsonism would be considered worthy of incorporation into their respective

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20 In this study, I have drawn upon Karl Mannheim’s definition of intellectuals. Accordingly, “intellectual stratum,” is a group of people belonging to a certain social unit and sharing a certain ‘world postulate’ (as part of which we may mention the economic system, the philosophical system, the artistic style ‘postulated’ by them) who at a given time are ‘committed’ to a certain style of economic activity and of theoretical thought.” See Kurt H. Wolff, From Karl Mannheim (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p.111.

critiques of the Republican scienticism. Still, all of them, might have agreed that they could be grouped as a distinct movement in philosophy and politics in the early Republican era. In this respect, the term “traditionalist conservatism” implies parallelisms and overlapping concerns among their individual intellectual aspirations. The denominators they shared led them to a common pattern of reaction against materialism, mechanism, positivism, scienticism, rationalism, Islamic orthodoxy, Marxism, cosmopolitanism and formalism. The intellectuals, who gathered around the journal Kadro, were the first to realize the parallelisms between this conservative group. Critical articles on Baltacıoğlu’s “personalism,” Ağaoğlu’s “liberalism” Ülken’s “mystic-moralism” and Tunç’s “Bergsonism” appeared in various issues of the journal.

The most serious difficulty with the term “traditionalist conservatism” is related to its conservative component. In main traditionalist-conservative texts, the terms “conservatism,” or “conservative” were held synonymous with “irtica” (reaction) and “mürteci” (reactionary), respectively, which specifically referred to the religiously-framed reaction to Kemalist modernism. This is due to the political history of the period. During the heyday of the Turkish revolution, there emerged a tendency within the Republican ranks to label any opposition current of thought as ‘conservative’ and/or ‘reactionary.’ These ‘conservative reactionaries’ were seen as the followers of the former Ottoman regime who still wished to conserve the traditional religious political institutions of the preceding regime, such as the Sultanate and/or Caliphate. The Republic simply stamped them as ‘conservative.’ Thus, there was a desire in the early Republican period to stamp every kind of reactionism as ‘conservative.’ However, the new Regime also produced its own unique forms of conservatism(s) with a qualitative difference from the ‘old conservatism’ of the reactionaries. It is this insight which is the central objective of this study. Qualitative conceptual differences between the nouveaux conservatism [read traditionalist conservatism] of the Republic and old reactionism (which Kemalists originally labeled as “conservatism”) can not be analyzed through the same terms and
concepts. Thus, the term, which has been coined as “traditionalist conservatism,” in the
dissertation, firstly refers to an amalgam of these new concepts, terms, themes and motives;
secondly to a new philosophical and political vocabulary which refers to certain common
ideals and aspirations in apprehending the new realities of the Republic. Finally, it indicates
a common pattern of philosophical reasoning which motivated group action of the
intellectuals concerned.

Still, these intellectuals, with the exception of Safa in later decades, did not label
their individual political stands with the term “conservative” since in the early political
vocabulary of the regime it had been used to refer to the religiously-framed resistance to the
Revolution. They realized that organized political actions, which could be labeled as
“conservative,” would drive the ruling Kemalist intelligentsia into harsh measures.
However, as noted, this did not mean that Revolution had bulldozed all claims to conserve
because it was also in urgent need to conserve its vision of modernity. In this respect, the
term, coined as “traditionalist conservatism,” implies this novel claim for the conservation
of Kemalist structures of modernity, namely the nation-state institutions, its political,
cultural institutions and the capitalist market.

The *nouveaux* traditionalist conservatism of the Republic was in competition with
the religiously-framed claims to conserve the political and cultural institutions and values of
the preceding Ottoman Regime. In other words, there was more than one claim to conserve
as well as more than one Kemalism in the early Republican era. If this new creed to
conserve is held synonymous with “traditionalist religious reactionism,” then we may fall
into misconceptions about the nature of *nouveaux* conservatism [read traditionalist
conservatism] since there was also more than one “tradition,” namely, religious and
national, which awaited an awakening and conservation in the ambivalent world created by
Kemalist modernism.
Mainstream Approaches in Theorizing on Conservatism

Most students of Western political thought have suffered from the confusion on the meaning of the term conservatism. Various approaches have emerged to provide a comprehensive understanding of the origins and development of conservative politics and philosophy in western politics. Andrew Vincent has classified three comprehensive approaches to the study of conservatism in Western political and social theory. In Vincent’s classification the first approach is the “nation state approach,” the second, “chronological” and the third one is the “conceptual approach.” Nation state approach, essentially sees conservatism as an historical cultural reaction to the rise of modern nation state in Western European societies. In this respect, the social, political and intellectual resistance of the descending classes to the rise of modern nation state, industrialization and democratization of politics are seen as crucial processes which provoked the emergence and development of conservative politics and affiliations in Western European politics. Conservatism as a product of particular historical and cultural conditions, seeks to analyze different paths in nation-state building processes in Western European politics to understand the reasons for the emergence of different national conservative traditions. Thus, emphasis is made on differences rather than parallelisms among different conservative politics and ideals in various countries.

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originally regarded as an unique pattern in politics which represent the historical "alliance among monarchy, established church religion and aristocracy."\textsuperscript{27}

According to Vincent, other researchers on conservatism, like Robert Nisbet and Russell Kirk, also searched for the origins of conservative philosophy in the Medieval Period.\textsuperscript{28} Still, they also assured that conservatism, as a modern political movement, had emerged by the beginning of the 19th century when political revolutions of the eighteenth century and an all-embracing industrialization had drastically altered the social, political and economic hierarchies of most of the European countries.\textsuperscript{29} Conservative movements in Europe were further accelerated by the emergence of mass movements in the nineteenth century. The nation-state approach to conservatism has focused on the impacts of the eighteenth century Enlightenment thought and rationalist secularism on the development of conservative politics since these philosophical and political trends were adapted by the nation-states as policy frameworks.\textsuperscript{30} For Vincent, conservative resistance of semi-feudal agrarian classes against the rising middle classes had fully developed between 1870 and 1914.\textsuperscript{31} The nation-state approach has to a considerable degree resembles what Samuel Huntington referred to conservatism as an "aristocratic ideology." Both Vincent and Huntington have built differences among various conservative traditions on changing political and economic alliances among descending aristocratic classes.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{27} For a comparative analysis, see John Weiss, Conservatism in Europe 1770-1945: Traditionalism, Reaction and Counterrevolution (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977).


\textsuperscript{29} Nisbet, "The Conservative Renaissance in Perspective," Public Interest, 81 (1985), pp. 128-41. Also see Nisbet, "Conservatism," pp. 80-117. See also Russell Kirk, The Portable Conservative Reader.


of conservative politics has also been linked to the varying patterns of development of the nation states in various European countries.

In this respect, the nation state approach, together with Huntington’s aristocratic theory of conservatism, have conceived of conservatism as an unique historical phenomenon. This uniqueness stemmed from the particular political and economic interests of an historically unique class, namely the aristocracy which experienced a rapid decline due to the rise of modern nation states and industrialization. Thus, some students of European conservatism have argued that “general definitions of conservatism are difficult and ultimately fruitless, since conservatism is a national phenomenon in contrast to the more internationalist ideologies of liberalism and socialism.”

Indeed, conservatism is a national phenomenon. Still, as implied by Karl Mannheim, a distinguished student of conservatism, a general basis for conservative flow of thought can also be identified. Having paraphrased Mannheim’s seminal work on conservatism, Vincent implied that conservatism is “a philosophical deepening of the points Burke had posed, which are then combined with genuinely German elements.... Germany achieved for the ideology of conservatism what France did for progressive Enlightenment, - she worked it out most fully to its logical conclusions.”

Noel O’Sullivan, in his book *Conservatism*, has also pointed out that there is a common basis for various conservative traditions of thought. These common bases, which have been enriched by national traditions, are in opposition to the individualism of the Enlightenment thought and political rationalism of the French Revolution and a distrust of its political ideals such as, equality, freedom and democracy.

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36 See O’Sullivan, *Conservatism*.
The second approach, which Vincent has specified for studies on conservatism, is the chronological approach. This approach to conservatism adopts a descriptive method. Conservative political organizations and especially political parties turn out to be the primary objects of analysis for those studies based on this approach. Vincent has argued that in those studies concurrent stages of the development of conservative politics have been isolated in a chronological way. Dominant themes at each historical stage of the development of conservatism are used to provide an account of universal conservative politics. The chronological approach has suffered from definitional problems. Thus, conservatism has been held synonymous merely with the political right. Clinton Rossiter's definition of political conservatism is an example of this definitional limitation. For Rossiter, "political conservatism" apart from conservative philosophy, "is roughly synonymous with that worn but convenient label, the Right." In this sense, for Rossiter, "the Tories of Great Britain, the Republicans in the United States, the Gaullists of France and the Christian Democrats of Europe are conservative in the most meaningful sense." This approach does not give a whole picture of conservatism since the political right does not include only the conservatives but also the "reactionaries," with radical aims towards the establishment, who may still label themselves as "conservative."

Huntington and some of the other prominent students of conservatism, such as Rossiter and Robert Michels, together with some well-known contemporary conservative writers such as Kirk and Nisbet have attempted to overcome the definitional problems by adopting a more abstract conceptual operationalization of the concept. This they have


41 Idem.
done by deriving certain “core and universal conservative principles and values” from the corpus of conservative texts produced by classical writers, such as Edmund Burke in England, Joseph de Maistre, Louis de Bonald in France and Adam Müller in Germany. Huntington and Rossiter, with other conservative writers and/or students of conservatism have tended to think that some core principles, derived from the writings of Edmund Burke, Joseph de Maistre, Louis de Bonald or to some extend David Hume could have an heuristic value to understanding the universal conservative temperament. These core principles, which are drawn from the writings of historical reactionaries of the French Revolution, became analytical tools in any research paradigm on conservative politics. Conservative politics everywhere in the world has been studied in reference to this a priori typology derived from the founding figures of Western European conservative thought. Closeness and/or distance from these core principals turn out to be criteria so as to determine how “conservative” the organization, and/or current of thought or political ideology in question is. These core principals, which were provided by Huntington to form a typology of “conservativeness” and “non-conservativeness” include the following:

- support for universal moral order sanctioned by the organized religion; belief in the imperfect nature of man, belief in inequality of man in most qualities of mind, body and character; the necessity of social classes, groups and orders and a resistance to the leveling effect of law; the

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primacy granted to private property of pursuit of liberty and defense of the social order; uncertainty about progress and rejection of any prescriptive method for progress; belief in the need for ruling and serving aristocracy; distrust of the human reason; importance attached to traditions and institutions; resistance to majority rule and desirability of balancing political power.\textsuperscript{45}

The third approach to conservatism, according to Vincent's classification, is the conceptual approach.\textsuperscript{46} The conceptual approach to conservatism has been derived from highly qualified classifications and definitions of conservatism(s). In Huntington's classification, the conceptual approach to conservatism has corresponded to autonomous and situational theories of conservatism.\textsuperscript{47} In contrast to the nation state approach, which tended to see conservatism as an historical temporal concept representing the articulation of the descending classes' interests in nation-state building processes, autonomous theories of conservatism have not linked it to any particular class or group.

Huntington's "autonomous theory of conservatism" resembles what Rossiter defined as "temperamental conservatism," and Michels as "technical-political definition of conservatism."\textsuperscript{48} In Rossiter's characterization of "temperamental conservatism," conservatism has referred to a set of psychological attitudes and behavior, to a psychological trait shown against a disturbance caused by economic, social or even psychological change.\textsuperscript{49} Nevertheless, Rossiter was aware of the explanatory weakness of abandoning the historical temporality of the concept. Thus, even though he referred to conservatism as "a cluster of traits that are on daily display by most men in all societies,"\textsuperscript{50} he also tended to see particular milieus, such as township and rural areas, as the lacuna where conservative sentiments have often displayed themselves as signs of disturbance.


\textsuperscript{46} Vincent, "Conservatism," p. 62.


\textsuperscript{48} Rossiter, "Conservatism" pp. 290-4; Michels, "Conservatism" pp. 230-2.

\textsuperscript{49} Rossiter, idem.

\textsuperscript{50} Rossiter, ibid., p. 290.
against any claim for change. Still, Rossiter has reduced conservatism to the defense of traditional values and aspirations since the traditional sectors of the modern society, namely, traditional peasantry, by definition, were assumed to adhere to the traditional values and norms.  

Traditional segments of the modern society were supposed to display traits very close to what Rossiter had referred to by "temperamental conservatism." This usage of the term implied that conservatism was a response of individuals and groups to sudden alterations of habits and traditions. This search to lay down the values and norms through which the universal conservative attitude had revealed itself was adopted by psychological studies on conservatism which associated it with negative concepts, such as authoritarianism, reaction, superstition against more positive-sounding concepts, such as liberalism, progressivism and flexibility.

In Rossiter's and Michels' definitions, conservatism ultimately implied a mentality, set of attitudes and behavior ultimately sought to defend the status quo regardless of what it might be. Vincent commented on these definitional inadequacies as follows:

> It is revealed in commentators and journalists who, quite unwittingly, speak of conservative factions, within, say a socialist party. Conservatism in this reading is not tied to any particular class, historical events, pragmatism or even to a specific disposition.... The situational perspective does not possess any definite substance. It has no ideal or utopia to strive for. Conversely, it reflects the self-conscious defensive posture of any institutionalized political doctrine.... In this reading it becomes possible of a "Conservative Left." There is therefore no content to conservative ideology. Any institutional order (communism or liberalism) can be conservative.

Michels also provided another definition of conservatism, which he called "philosophical conservatism," which formed another example of how the historical temporality of the concept has been abandoned to attribute universal validity to it. Instead, Rossiter and Michels have ultimately tended to see conservatism as the display of some traits, such as

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love of authority and tradition. Only on these grounds the specific conservative patterns of activism, values of the political conservatism and theoretical conceptions in conservative philosophy have been analyzed.

When these definitions have been adapted in political party studies, all ruling parties, albeit Atatürk’s Revolutionary Republican People’s Party of the 1920s and the Republican revolutionary intelligentsia or the Russian Communist Party in the same period, may be considered “conservative,” no matter what their original inspiration and purpose were. When conservatism has been held synonymous merely with a mentality and attitude willing to defend the existing order then those who politically and/or intellectually defend the existing order are considered to be “conservatives,” by definition. Thus, Huntington has rejected Rossiter and Michels’ technical-political and temperamental definitions of conservatism which reduced it to merely an ahistorical defense of the status quo. He asserted that in order to preserve the fundamental elements in society, the founding figures of conservatism had found it necessary to have a sense of change. Indeed, this sentiment derived from Burke who was not opposed to change and argued that “a state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation.”

Huntington has argued that most autonomous theories of conservatism, which abandoned the historical temporality of the concept and viewed it as an universally valid autonomous system of ideas, with an ultimate manifestation of the desire to keep up the status quo, could not provide a comprehensive understanding of modern conservatism. Still, he has pointed out that the essential characteristic of conservatism was the defense of the existing institutions. Having rejected Rossiter and Michels' definitions of conservatism, Huntington, exposing his situational definition of conservatism, has argued that essential values and core principles of conservatism can be grasped if the defensive

position of the existing set of institutions against any radical claim of change are taken into account. For Huntington, conservative values and aspirations were articulated as a recognizable ideology when a distinct challenge was directed at the established institutions and when the defenders of these institutions had used conservative themes and values in its defense. Conservatism as a recognizable ideology could be conceptualized as an articulation of systematic and theoretical resistance to change. Huntington’s attempt can be considered as a middle way. On the one hand, he tended to isolate basic universal conservative core principles, and on the other he asserted that conservatism as a recognizable strand emerges only when these principles are employed by the defenders of the existing institutions against radical and transcendental claims of change.

Huntington’s attempt can be considered as a willingness to reach a methodological and definitional consensus by articulating various themes from divergent definitions and approaches. There is one advantage of the conceptual approach to conservatism. Though Huntington rejects Rossiter’s various definitions of conservatism, he still argues like Rossiter and Michels that there are some recognizable conservative core principles and values which shape conservative politics in different countries. Thus, a certain degree of consensus on the shared values and ideas among different conservatism has been achieved. This formal unity on shared values and practices appears to leave some space for radical interpretations of these conservative manners and values, which has been shaped under the historical cultural constrains of particular countries. The conceptual approach to conservatism has also empowered the researcher to make classifications within conservative politics itself by incorporating the forces of change into the scope of the studies on conservatism.

Still, conceptual approaches to conservatism led students of conservatism to adopt two mutually exclusive stands. On the one hand, the concept refers to historically unique

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58 Ibid.
conservative patterns derived from genuine conservative thinkers and, on the other, it serves as a convenient term embracing all artificial similarities between historical phenomena read through the corpus of writings of these conservative writers. It was this “semantic shift” which H.G. Schuman has referred to as the cause of methodological shortcomings in studies on conservatism since the concepts and categories derived from concrete social and political formations were formalized in an artificial theory of conservatism.

A Note On the Methodologies Adopted in Studies on Conservatism

The term conservatism has widely been employed to denote a set of ideas and aspirations of particular groups and/or to identify a particular form of political action. The common point in all these diverse usages was that the term referred to some groups and/or individuals’ Will to preserve and/or defend the traditional modes of behavior, values, norms and institutions which were considered to be ‘traditional’ for them. Thus, the term “conservatism” covers all diverse patterns of behavior willing to defend the “tradition.” The term seemed to achieve an analytical value when seen as the manifestation of an universal human motivation to keep up the traditional modes of behavior. However, its heuristic value has been obscured since the economic, political and social factors behind these diverse creeds to keep up the status quo were underestimated.

In this respect, most of the theoretical stands on conservatism, for which Huntington’s “aristocratic theory,” and “nation-state approach” can be taken as examples, tended to see the Enlightenment, French Revolution and nationalism as those currents against which self-conscious conservative intellectual and political reactions were born. In


these studies, conservatism has been understood as a temporal concept. It meant that its dynamics, nature and ideals, which shaped it as a unique political and intellectual movement against the ideals of the Enlightenment thought and French Revolution, strictly depended upon the dynamics of particular social formations in which it had been born as a unique resistance.

However, in Rossiter and Michels’ conceptions of conservatism, where it has been identified with a specific thought and behavior, as in the case of Huntington’s “autonomous theory,” and to some extent in his “situational definition,” the temporality of the term was abandoned to deduce some core values from this historically unique phenomenon.61 These students of conservatism were aware of the fact that conservatism had emerged as a political and intellectual movement after the French Revolution. Still, in order to provide an universal validity, and therefore an analytical value for it, they have substituted the “core political and philosophical core values,” deduced from an historically unique event as the universal dispositions of “conservatism temperament.” Schuman pointed out that in order to reach an analytical and theoretical validity, political, economic and social determinants of a particular temporal movement had been abandoned and emphasis was placed on the so-called universal conservative traits of human nature.62

This looseness of the meaning of the term, which Schuman implied, has been more apparent in conceptual approaches than in the nation state approach and/or Huntington’s aristocratic theory. In most of the studies based on this approach, the temporal aspect of the term has been neglected. Research has been directed to discovering a universal pattern of conservativeness, which was relevant in every historical formation at any time.63 As a

61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
result, conservatism was ultimately conceived as a psychological mood. This conception of conservativeness has stimulated other studies on the topic where it has been treated as a description of inherent personality traits. Schuman has noted that this usage of the concept was also employed in Theodore Adorno and his collaborator’s in *The Authoritarian Personality*. These kinds of typologies of conservativeness have been adapted in psychological research to draw up a picture of the conservative personality, which Schuman sees W. McClosky’s study to be another example. In these studies, conservatism has been used to denote a structure of personality. Then, a relationship between this personality structure and social, political and economic location was sought. Schuman has asserted that most of these studies were based on the assumption that there existed a “conservative” or “liberal” personality as an “anthropological reality” without any reference to its political and social determinants. In Rossiter’s “temperamental conservatism,” or McClosky’s typology of “conservativeness” this peculiar psychological mood was assumed to clearly express itself within the ranks of

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socially deprived ones. This tendency to describe conservatism as a mode of socialization of the deprived groups, which lost power and status in the modernization process, leads to some misconceptions. For Schuman, J. Ray and A. Furnam, in contemporary social science research these "socialization patterns" were seen as the natural psychological constituents of 'conservative politics with authoritarian ideals.'

In line with D. Allen, Schuman has argued that terminological vagueness in the studies of conservatism was due to methodological shortcomings. Schuman has further assured that "historical temporality" of the concept was ignored to provide an 'analytical value' to the term. Thus, only the "ordinary usage" of the term has been incorporated into social and political research since the relationship between historically determined social and political "interests," and "institutional action," which corresponded to "conservative patterns of thought," have been rejected. Schuman added that the contemporary political and social science research on conservatism was developed around the corpus of writing and the discussions around the ideas of Burke, or debates on

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72 Schuman, ibid., pp. 803-17.


leading conservative personalities. Consequences of social and political interests, constituents of conservative thought in shaping of the political claims and philosophical justifications of conservatism as an historical movement have been underestimated.

Schuman strenuously argued that the concept of conservatism can have an heuristic value in social and political analysis if it is taken as a particular political philosophical movement upholding the institutions and structures which safeguard and legitimize the social and political dominance of the groups concerned. This dissertation will analyse the intellectual and political aspirations of a group of thinkers, who called themselves “traditionalist” and/or “conservative,” along the lines suggested by the nation state-approach. In doing this the merits or the lack thereof in approaches to conservatism as analysed in this section, will be borne in mind.

Some Portrayals of “Conservatism” in the Turkish Case

Despite the lack of similar historical conditions with western experience of modernization, even the prominent students of Turkish politics and history, like, Niyazi Berkes and Kemal Karpat, who were particularly interested in the nature of traditionalism and/or conservatism in the Ottoman-Turkish polity, adopted biased and ordinary conceptions. Niyazi Berkes in his seminal work Development of Secularism in Turkey has employed the terms “conservatism” and “traditionalism,” interchangeably to classify religiously-oriented “anti-westernist” reactions, which aimed to keep up the status quo defined by the “the structure of prevailing “din” (religion) and “devlet” (state). He added that at various

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78 Berkes, The Development of Secularism in Turkey, pp. 31, 52.
stages of the Turkish transformation, “the more reforms were attempted, the more the reaction was established as a distinct tradition.” “Conservatism” or “traditionalism” was conceived to be the claim to keep up the religiously framed social, political and economic organizations and traditions which were challenged by the “westernizer/modernizer” forces. In other words, for Berkes, both “Ottoman conservatism,” and “Republican conservatism” meant a religious resistance to change and innovation. The lengthy quotation from Berkes below makes clear how Berkes elucidates the envisioned relationship between the “religious tradition,” “change and innovation,” and “conservatism/traditionalism.” For him, these terms stood for the “embryonic form of the whole eighteenth-century debate on reform” and conservation. In Berkes’ words:

The earliest document clue to the realization that something new should be done comes from the years of the Treaty of Passaravitz, 1718. It was clear reaction to the tested and proven inadequacy of the traditional military institution in the face of the modern European military techniques already used by the Russians. The document is a record of a real or imaginary conservation between a Muslim and an unnamed “Christian officers.” The question put to the Christian was simple and direct: What is the reason for our defeats? The Christian’s immediate response: First of all, your failure to observe the prescriptions of the Šeriat, and secondly, your ignorance of your traditional laws. He continued, however, to describe the decline of the old military organization and the use of the outdated methods of warfare and concluded that it was mandatory for the army to be reformed and for new officers to be trained. Since the training of the officers in modern sciences and techniques was a time consuming, it would be permissible temporarily to employ Christian officers.

The Muslim conversant stopped agreeing with the Christian after the latter’s introductory remark. The Muslim continually defended the traditional institutions against criticism. He frequently reaffirmed his conviction that “perfection and truth are on the side of the Muslims,” an opinion which the Christian critic did not contradict.

This document contained in embryonic form the whole eighteenth-century debate on reform. The two conversant symbolized the eighteenth century reformer and the conservative or traditionalist. As the discussion indicates, the reformer had no doubt that there as anything amiss in the basic Islamic-Turkish economic, political, social, religious and cultural institutions. He recognized only that new techniques of military art needed to be introduced. He perceived this to be a simple matter and not one implying widespread consequences. ... The conservative, on the other hand, seem to have realized intuitively as traditionalists everywhere and at all times apparently do, that even a seemingly insignificant innovation

79 Ibid., p. 52.
80 Ibid., pp. 52-3. For Berkes, conservative forces in the first National Assembly in the early 1920s, like conservative reactionaries of the eighteenth century, were mostly represented by the ulema, see, ibid., 448. Berkes also referred to “conservative-Westemists” but he did not elaborate on the topic. See ibid., p. 450.
81 Ibid., p. 31.
would destroy the harmony of the whole. Hence, he only conceded the desirability of polishing up the traditional system.\textsuperscript{82} (Emphases are mine).

For Berkes, the early claims of conservatism, as well as the late Republican conservatism, were restricted to the claims to conserve the religious status quo against every kind of innovation and change, including the Kemalist one. The main concern of the early claims to conserve was to maintain the harmony in “nizam” (traditional Order). The early conservative agenda was shaped by the concern to maintain traditional laws and Sharia against “criticism” backed by the “scientifically oriented-practical mind” claiming the adaptation of new techniques in the organization of the state to prevent further breakdown.

The two “strongholders of conservatism” in the early reformation era, for Berkes, were the Janissaries in the traditional army and the ulema.\textsuperscript{83} Berkes pointed out that the “traditional order” had been supported by these “two orders” even though they deviated from the “medieval order” as a result of modernizing attempts.\textsuperscript{84} The Janissaries were the most important conservative force in the military since they had lost status and power through the breakdown of the traditional Ottoman warfare system. Besides the Janissaries, transformation had also drastically altered the “structure and role” of the ulema. For example:

They too had undergone a change in social composition and role; an increase in quantity and a decrease in quality, stratification into higher and lower ranks, with the lower more and more parasitical, were the features of transformation. The higher Ulema was engaged in extra-curriculum activities such as selling offices, degrees, ranks, and favors, usurious dealings, even in tax-farming and expropriation, odds estates (malikhane) and above all controlling the pious foundations. At the lower levels too numerous clerical had to maintain in the same parasitical relationship to society as the Yeniçeri corps did.\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., pp. 30-1.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., p. 62.
\textsuperscript{84} Idem.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., pp. 61-2. For a similar evaluation see Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kuran Shaw’s History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. Janissaries and ulema were conceived to be major conservative forces. See Stanford J. Shaw & Ezel Kuran Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol.II, Reform, Revolution and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 21, 69.
Besides these two orders, the third conservative force, which lost power and status by the innovation of new techniques and the dissolution of the traditional Ottoman system, was the "esnaf" (artisan).\textsuperscript{86} The basic criterion in Berkes' conception of the conservativeness of these strata was their "loss of status and power" in the Turkish transformation. This criterion, which was adapted by Berkes, more apparently revealed itself in the below quotation:

In other words, the impoverished social classes and estates were in common opposition to reform, irrespective of their original differences and antipathies, in order to maintain their parasitical status. Their primary opponents were the men who stood for reform, above all the rulers and secular minded statesmen who aimed at creating an effective, scientifically trained officer corps. Their dread of such a corps was justified - even until today - as it was the new class of the military and the intellectuals who invariably saved the cause of progress against conservative reactions.\textsuperscript{87}

Conservatism and/or traditionalism in Berkes' seminal work literally denoted the claims of "impoverished social classes and groups" to uphold the religious cosmology which set up the traditional political, social and economic relations between the ruler and the ruled. The conservative themes of keeping up of the status quo, moral order and support of religion have been employed to denote the "religiously-supported arguments," claiming to conserve the great umma tradition.\textsuperscript{88}

Against the claims of reformation and modernization, conservatives, for Berkes, had found a strong support among the "corrupted orders," such as the "economic orders in decline."\textsuperscript{89} There were two main groups, the modernizers-reformists and traditionalist conservatives. The latter groups' interests had been undermined by the rising reform claims of the "reformists."\textsuperscript{90} These reformists, for Berkes, "represented no group or class interest, nor even their own."\textsuperscript{91} Though conservatism became an ideology of the descending classes and groups, "the reformers were not reliant upon or indebted to the

\textsuperscript{86} Berkes, The Development of Secularism in Turkey, p. 62.
\textsuperscript{87} Idem.
\textsuperscript{88} Idem.
\textsuperscript{89} Idem.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., p. 63.
\textsuperscript{91} Idem.
economic classes in the manner of their European counterparts. They did not encourage the development of a new entrepreneurial class." 92 The conservative reaction was initially stimulated by the introduction of new techniques especially in the military field. In reaction to these reforms, conservatives, namely the great coalition of *ulema*, military and the craftsmen, came to claim that these reform acts had deteriorated the "Sharia" and "traditions." The "well-being" of these groups was strictly related to the traditional hierarchy, and the new methods introduced would undermine the "traditional knowledge and techniques of industry." 93 By the deepening of the reform movements, Berkes argued, the characteristic of the *ulema* namely its increasing conservatism, had surfaced. 94

For Berkes, the gap between the "traditionalist conservatives," and "westernist, reformists," was further widened in the nineteenth century. Various attempts were made to reconcile the claims to conserve and to change. 95 The pathologies of the idea of progress and Westernization had widely been discussed among the Ottoman intellectuals and even the reformers, such as Namik Kemal, searched "for those elements of the culture that were obstacles to progress and for those for those aspects of Western civilization that should not be taken out." 96 By further elite fragmentation in the ruling center in the nineteenth century, Berkes came to employ the term "conservatism" to denote merely "Muslim conservatives" who claimed to modify the traditional religious institutions and acted against constitutionalists of the time. 97 It was in the nineteenth century that there emerged a structural transformation of the former "claims to preserve" which had been mainly articulated by the conservative forces among the military, *ulema* and artisans. For Berkes,

92 Idem.
93 Idem.
94 Ibid., p. 124.
95 Berkes used the term "traditionalist conservative" to characterize the political, social and economic demands of the great coalition, comprising of *ulema* and craftsmen, which was formed to uphold the religious *status quo*. See ibid., p. 215.
96 Idem.
97 Ibid., p. 231.
former reactionary conservative claims for the preservation of the traditional religiously structured "din" (religion) and "Devlet" (state) had been transformed by the mid-nineteenth century to the "revival" of traditional and religiously-framed social, cultural and political institutions of the "Orient and the medieval Islamic past." 98 It was this revivalist current of Islamic conservatism which had been inherited by Republican Turkey.

In the nineteenth century, the social composition of the forces of reform had also been radically transformed. Berkes points out that the former free-floating reformers, which had no affiliation to social groups, found a basis among "esnafs" (artisans) and "tüccar" (merchants) in the urban areas for their claims to reformation. 99 By this time, the gap and distance among conservative and westernist intellectuals were further widened. 100 Meanwhile, the conservative Muslim groups were organized under the leadership of Mizancı Murad and were still the relevant actors of the political game by the beginning of the twentieth century. This Muslim conservatism, which the Republic inherited from its Ottoman past, was based on an amalgam of "traditionalism, anti-westernism, pan-islamism." 101 For Berkes, the basic features of conservatism in the late Ottoman period and early Republican eras were its anti-westernism and its desire to revive the medieval Islamic past 102 which had been voiced by religiously-oriented clergy in the first Turkish Grand National Assembly in the early 1920s. 103

What was missing in this picture of conservatism was that the reformist westernist classes and groups were not considered as part of the conservative milieu with their own claims to conserve. New claims of conservation were developing especially among the Turkish nationalists, who were mostly organized under the Union and Progress Party in

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98 Ibid., p. 261.
99 Ibid., p. 329.
100 Idem.
101 Ibid., p. 261.
102 Idem.
103 Ibid., p. 451
the late Ottoman period and then in the Republican People’s Party during the Republican era, in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Still, Berkes disregarded this early nationalist conservatism and regarded Islamic traditionalist conservatism [read Muslim conservatism] as the only form of conservatism inherited by the early Republic. He did not make distinctions between the conservative urge within the nouveaux traditionalist groups among secular reformers, and the Islamic perceptions among the ulema. This point has important repercussions for the purposes of this study since the nature of things worthy of conserving for the nouveaux traditionalist conservatism, such as the Kemalist state, its cultural and political institutions, cultural ideals, were in opposition to religious “conservatism(s).” Unlike the French case, the nature of modern conservatism in the Turkish case can not be understood solely with reference to the descending classes’ reaction to the claims of change. Even Berkes, one of the most innovative scholars of Turkish politics, has adopted this normative ideal-typical conception of conservatism. This approach to conservatism was based on a set of axiomatic precepts which characterized conservatism as the descending classes’ creed to defend the social, political and economic status quo. This ordinary usage of the term tended to see it as a human disposition. Still, it has limited heuristic value since it failed to elucidate the distinctiveness of the nouveaux conservatism which had penetrated into the rising middle classes, to the ranks of state bureaucracy and to the intelligentsia that emerged as the nation-state builder elites in the Republican period.

Contrary to Berkes, Kemal Karpat, a prominent writer on Turkish politics, has deemed possible the penetration of conservatism into the ranks of the middle classes and bureaucracy, in his article Modern Turkey, published in the first volume of Cambridge History of Islam. In Karpat’s scheme of Turkish transformation, however, conservatism does not correspond to a well-structured current of thought through which new elite fragmentation within the modernist-secular bureaucratic elite could be delineated. What

Karpat seemed to be interested in the manifestations of potential conservativeness of various social and political groups at various stages of modernization. Conservatism and modernism have been illustrated in his *Social Change and Politics in Turkey* as antipodal forces which shaped the nature and direction of political, social and economic modernization. For him, social differentiation of the economic, political and social structures increased the tension among the upper social groups. This struggle within the upper strata "may appear as a struggle between conservatism and modernism." He pertinently pointed out that "the terms of reference of both groups have become so drastically altered as to make both conservatism and modernism appear in a modern context rather than a struggle between the old and the new." Indeed, the so-called controversy between modernism and conservatism in a modernizing environment is a more complicated issue than a political struggle between the forces of new and old.

Karpat in his *Ideology in Turkey After the Revolution of 1960* tended to link conservativeness of various social and political groups to their response to the social and political "change" which became an "imperative" in social, political and economic modernization of Turkey. At various stages of the political and social transformation, Karpat argued, the "modern" may turn out to be a conservative force, whereas the "traditional" may acquire a dynamic forward-looking aspect. It meant that the "traditional," which originally implies the "backward looking, reactionary" groups that resist change may articulate progressive and "forward-looking aspects" under changing political, social and economic conditions. Karpat has further elaborated this point as follows:

The *ulema* may be a conservative force in the initial phase of change. But if it presses for political rights and turns into entrepreneurial group interested in industrialization it may well become "modern" whereas the reformist intelligentsia looking at the problem from the formal

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106 Idem.
107 Idem
108 Idem.
viewpoint of authority may resist this economic-minded group and appear itself as a "conservative" force. During this process the ulema outwardly may preserve their garb, attachment to religion and habits, but their thinking about society, man and government may be so drastically changed as to make their formal attachment to tradition motivated by economic reasons. This in itself a fundamental change, since economic motivation is likely to create a chain of reaction among social groups and call for new roles completely different from the past when the ulema's role was mainly religious. 109

Still, Karpat's above quoted passage on the conservatism and modernism of social groups was based on normative assumptions about conservatism and modernism. "Pressing of political rights," "acting on economic motivations," "to have an attachment to relations motivated by economic reasons," "to be interested in industrialization," "turning into entrepreneurial group" were posed as criteria for modernism. In this line of analysis, conservatism was regarded as the rejection of normative assumptions and principles of modernism. Indeed, this conception of conservatism mostly revealed itself in his characterization of the nationalist bureaucratic middle class, "which derived its social and political outlook mainly from its association with the state rather than from affiliation of any particular social group." 110 From this perspective, his characterization of the conservativeness of the bureaucratic intelligentsia is the most problematic and biased one since their conservativeness has strictly been used to denote "the social philosophy" of the ruling bureaucracy which supports the "primacy of the state... rejection of social classes, political parties, the class struggle and trade unions," to "foster unity." 111 For Karpat

The nationalism of this class eventually acquired strong conservative tendencies. These manifested themselves in the form of opposition to the upward mobility of lower social groups and rejection of class differences and conflict of economic interests. They emphasized the utmost superiority of the nation and state over the individual and drew considerable strength from the glories of Turkish history. 112 (Emphases are mine)

These manifestations of the conservativeness of the ruling bureaucratic elite were isolated through an ideal-typical model recognized through some "universally valid conservative core values." What Karpat conceived as "conservative tendencies" which appeared within

109 Idem.
110 Ibid., p. 319.
112 Idem.
the ranks of the bureaucratic middle class, was a kind of romanticism serving radical aims of establishing a nation-state, which, he, in the next page, also delineated as the "main goal of this ruling group." These "conservative tendencies," as underlined by Karpat himself, "gradually created a way of life in addition of being a form of political rule." However, his definition of conservatism did not include "conservative tendencies," which could pave the way to a "way of life."

The expansion of the meaning of the term conservatism, which Schuman had referred to revealed itself in Karpat's utilization of the concept. Accordingly, conservatism referred to religiously oriented social groups which were opposed to forced-modernism and Western practices; the cultural policy preferences of the rising new middle classes in the Republican era, and the social habits, life style of secularist groups which were in alignment with nationalist-secularist bureaucratic intelligentsia during the War of Independence. The usage extended into the political outlook of landowners and industrialists; the social policy orientations of rural middle class and upper urban class; and anti-reformist and anti-modernist groups "who saw their salvation in clinging to the old traditions both in the Ottoman and Republican period. Similarly, conservatism covered the political approach of the "religious leaders" in the First National Assembly; any political and/or cultural demand willing to uphold the traditional relations shaped by religion both in the Ottoman and the Republican eras; and the landed social groups'
desire to keep up the patriarchal relations in the countryside in the Republican era.\(^{123}\) In addition, Karpat associated conservatism with “respect for law and order prevailing in Turkish society as a whole,”\(^{124}\) with sets of “middle-of-road” concepts, approaches of all major political parties of Turkey;\(^{125}\) with state policies which especially during the war years resulted in “a tortuous economic and social policy that went from one extreme to another and usually ended in a rigid, middle-of-road-conservatism.”\(^ {126}\) and lastly, with a defensive psychological mood which revealed itself mainly through nationalism among the “pious conservatives who had lived in the past for and through religion.”\(^ {127}\)

Despite the confusion involved in these varying usages of the concept, Karpat’s characterization of conservatism in *Social Themes in Contemporary Turkish Literature*, can be seen as an attempt to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of Turkish conservatism. In it, he sees conservatism as the main component of small town politics and culture. According to Karpat,

> At a place in our essay, we have tried to deal with how the small town and local notable, who domnates here, are elaborated in literature and their place in our modernization attempt. While doing this, we have approached to our small towns from a certain historical-social perspective. According to our thinking, the community, which we call small town in Islamic countries, is a human society which has imbibed the madrasah (*medrese*) culture and created an order according to the logical rules of sheer Reason by detaching man from nature. Small town is a social order which have established on village and developed through exploiting it. It is individualist as much as it is and even rebellious. It is extremely conservative to protect the economic and social superiority it gained over the village.\(^ {128}\)

In this characterization, conservatism has been held synonymous with the traditional life style in the countryside that had been mostly shaped by religion, which ultimately provided an ethical framework for economic, political and social life. Individualism in economics,
traditionalism and conservatism in the cultural field and social policy were seen as the basic features of this milieu.\textsuperscript{129}

If, for a moment, we neglect other conflicting usages of the term, this characterization of conservatism is illuminating since this emphasis on conservatism also hints at the small town notables trying to protect their political and economic privileges over the village community. In many ways, it resembles Rossiter's conception of conservatism. Still, there is one important nuance. The theme of conservation, contrary to Rossiter, has not been seen as the creed of descending social and political groups, but those ascending ones in an all-embracing modernization process. Thus, Karpat has portrayed the conservatism of middle classes in the 1950s as follows:

Class differences are sharpened because of the unbalanced distribution of income and because those befitting from this imbalance favor the strengthening of government control. Members of the middle classes, in particular the landed ones, while benefiting most from these changes continue their conservatism in the belief that it would be possible to continue the socio-economic and political relations among various social groups on the same patriarchal foundations on which they had previously existed.\textsuperscript{130} (emphases are mine)

The rise of conservative sentiments in Turkish politics has been linked to the increasing activism of the big landowners and upper middle classes in Turkish politics.\textsuperscript{131} For him, "all the major parties of Turkey, consequently, are the middle of the road parties, representing the conservative, traditionalist conceptions," in the Republican era.\textsuperscript{132} This point can provide new horizons for any research on conservatism in Turkish politics and can lead to novel conceptions of Kemalism, modernization, and conservatism given the fact that within three decades after the proclamation of the Republic this process of radical modernism has resulted in the emergence of a conservative milieu in Turkish politics.

A closer analysis of his evaluations on conservatism will display that Karpat has generally approached conservatism as the social philosophy of the upper middle classes

\textsuperscript{130} Karpat, \textit{Turkey's Politics}, p. 322.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., p. 114.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., p. 390.
which had strong roots in the countryside in the Republican period. The conservative social philosophy of the upper middle classes was supposed to be an amalgam of traditionalism and modernism. This traditionalism mostly revealed itself as the defense of religious institutions and values. Yet, religion also has an instrumental value for the “arch-conservative groups” of small towns since

the political hold on the masses through Islam is possible only by preserving Islam in its omnipresent primitive form so as to dominate the masses and to give political leadership to a small arch-conservative group.\(^\text{134}\)

Besides their conservative social policy orientations, landowners and upper middle classes were also politically conservative.\(^\text{135}\) Though Karpat has not detailed basic characteristics of the middle class political conservatism, for him, political conservatism of “the upper rural middle classes ... has favored religious freedom, while the upper urban classes, partly because of their cosmopolitan nature, favors secularism.”\(^\text{136}\) However, he added that “in matter of social philosophy they are equally conservative.”\(^\text{137}\) Another important feature of his characterization of political conservatism of the upper middle classes was his conception of conservatism as a search of respect for law and order. In his words

The respect for law and order prevailing in Turkish society as a whole was also observed by the Democratic and Republican Parties alike. While this is true that this respect for law and order was in some part the by-product of conservatism, it was largely to an inherent respect for procedure and orderly change.\(^\text{138}\)

Besides the increasing prevalence of upper middle classes in politics, increasing obsession with “hidden communism” by the end of 1940s has been held responsible for further solidification of political conservatism.\(^\text{139}\) Karpat held “the one-party regime” and the “increasing tendency to control and channel thought into an excessive rightist

\(^{133}\) Ibid., p. 50.
\(^{134}\) Ibid., 385n.93.
\(^{135}\) Ibid., p. 113.
\(^{136}\) Ibid., p. 114.
\(^{137}\) Idem.
\(^{138}\) Ibid., pp. 334-5.
\(^{139}\) Ibid., p. 385.
direction," responsible for the development of political conservatism in Turkish politics.\textsuperscript{140} He argued that "conservatism and religion are now defended by all political parties in Turkey as a means of opposing communism..."\textsuperscript{141} He concluded that it is this "political and social conservatism, regardless of whether it is motivated by interest or mentality, is the greatest danger for the general development of Turkey."\textsuperscript{142}

The common denominator for political conservatism of the upper urban and rural classes was their conservative traditionalist social philosophy in which religion has been privileged as the "spiritual need of the individual," and as "a part of the individual rights."\textsuperscript{143} Despite differences among the economic and social patterns through which the conservative groups maintained their domination, social conservatism of the upper middle classes has been characterized as a mistrust towards excessive secular modernism which was thought by them to have undermined the ethical basis of society. Indeed, religion has always been the demarcation line in Karpat's characterization of the conservative-modernist dilemma.\textsuperscript{144} Conservatives and/or conservatism has been isolated through the reverent attitude towards political and cultural traditions shaped by religion.

Turkish transformation, for Karpat, has been shaped by tension-ridden relations between modernist-secular and conservative-religious groups. The first group had always "demanded reforms" whereas the "conservatives saw their salvation in clinging to old traditions."\textsuperscript{145} For him "the gap between them continued to grow as developments strengthened the modernist position," which ultimately resulted in the establishment of the Republic.\textsuperscript{146} For Karpat, the modernist-secular and conservative-religious dilemma has

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{140} Idem.
  \item \textsuperscript{141} Idem
  \item \textsuperscript{142} Idem
  \item \textsuperscript{143} Ibid p. 273.
  \item \textsuperscript{144} Ibid., pp. 7, 9, 18-9, 37-8.
  \item \textsuperscript{145} Ibid., p. 7
  \item \textsuperscript{146} Idem. For conservative-modernist dilemma in the Ottoman period, see Karpat, ibid., pp. 9, 18-9.
\end{itemize}
also persisted in the Republican era. This has been supplemented with another original theme which linked the defense of religion and tradition with the economic and political interests and/or with the mentality of arch-conservative groups within upper social milieu.

In Karpat’s conception of conservatism, the criteria set for the conservativeness of the bureaucratic elite were different from those which had been employed to isolate the conservativeness of the upper middle classes. Karpat ultimately grounded the conservativeness of the bureaucratic elite, first, in their search for law and order; second in their nationalism. As already mentioned, this search of law and order, which has also been employed by Michels in his technical definition of conservatism, does not provide much insight about the nature of conservatism since the “revolutionary” Republican People’s Party and “liberal” Democratic Party were both in search for order and law despite their different ideological claims. In this respect, related subthemes, which have been elaborated by Karpat to delineate the conservativeness of the bureaucratic elite, were “timidness towards upward mobility of social groups, rejection of class differences and conflict of economic interests.” 147 The conservativeness of the bureaucratic elite was bound to the nature of the “one-party regime and its restrictive monolithic philosophy, in time appeared utterly inadequate to meet the diversified socio-political needs of the society.” 148

Conservatism was seen as the by-product of the nationalist ideology of the bureaucratic elites through which “modernist-nationalist indoctrination” had relentlessly been carried out. 149 The conservative aspect of nationalism, for Karpat, was due to an emphasis on “the utmost superiority of the nation and state over the individual,” and it also “drew considerable strength from the glories of Turkish history.” 150 For Karpat, nationalism had completed its historical mission by giving way to the establishment of the

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148 Karpat, Turkey’s Politics p. 445.
149 Idem.
Republic and to the revival of national consciousness. Because of this emphasis on the past and primacy of the nation before the individual, "extreme" nationalism, for Karpat, was "conservative," and tended "to become an obstacle to the individual's cultural and political development and to modernization as a whole."

Karpat held Ziya Gökalp (1875-1924) responsible for the shaping of a "traditionalist conservative brand of nationalism," which he characterized as an "autocratic, totalitarian, leader-worshipping nationalism, which takes its sap from Islam and is based on the rejection of individual, opposes all that democracy and freedom stand for." The traditionalist-conservative brand of nationalism, which characterized the conservativeness of the social and political philosophy of the ruling bureaucratic elite, had its roots in the Durkheimian sociology of Gökalp. Traditionalist-conservative nationalism, for Karpat, "looked upon nation as a collectivity... and assigned to it absolute supremacy over the individual who could not have a life or identity outside his community." This traditionalist-conservative nationalism had also asserted "a theory of internal cohesion in the nation by combining the family attachments prevailing in the kinship groups and the feeling of brotherhood in the Muslim community." This nationalism had reasserted an "Islamic conservative traditionalist content," and provided a new opening to the deeply-rooted crisis of identity experienced during the Turkish transformation towards the current modernity. Even though "there was an official denunciation of the excessive forms of nationalism as practiced during the early periods of the Republic," for Karpat, the multiparty struggle can also be characterized as a return to traditionalist conservatism to

151 Karpat, Turkey's Politics, p. 455.
152 Idem.
154 Karpat, Turkey's Politics, p. 455.
156 Idem.
157 Idem
appease the conservative-religious groups whose views have played an important part in the politics of Turkey since 1946."  

There are at least two significant points in Karpat’s evaluations on the “traditionalist conservative brand of nationalism.” First, he has creatively used the term “traditionalist-conservative” to delineate a certain type of “nationalism,” serving conservative aims but still bound to the religious problematic. The ideal of this brand of traditionalist-conservative nationalism has ultimately manifested itself as three irreconcilable claims between Turkification, Islamization, Modernization which revealed themselves in the title of Gökalp’s one of most well-known books. Still, the crucial issue for the present purpose is to show that Karpat has isolated a “traditionalist-conservative” strand in Turkish political and intellectual life. Second, the “traditionalist-conservative” stand in Karpat’s scheme of the transformation of the Turkish society towards modernity is still conceptualized in reference to an “Islamic traditionalist-conservative content.” This “Islamic traditionalist-conservative content” was assumed to be shaped by the “traditionalist spirit of Islam.” The problematic issue is that the “Islamic content” which has been isolated to characterize traditionalist conservatism was neither a straightforward factor nor perhaps was it relevant for the intellectuals that are studied in this dissertation.

Karpat’s other usages of the term have ultimately denoted an inherent reaction of the descending bureaucratic elites against ascending upper middle classes which had begun to challenge the monopoly of power of the old modernist bureaucratic groups through their economic power in the 1950s. Karpat ultimately perceived the inability of the descending bureaucratic groups to cope with the political, social and economic

158 Karpat, *Turkey’s Politics*, p. 455.
159 Ziya Gökalp, *Türkleşmek, İslamlasmak, Muasırlaşmak*, (Turkification, Islamization, Modernization) (İstanbul: Kültür Yayınları, 1976 [1918]).
160 Karpat, *Turkey’s Politics*, p. 50.
161 Ibid., p. 385.
transformation as the *sine quo non* condition for the increasing conservativeness of these groups which was manifested in their claim for law and order.

There is a methodological question here: if it can be shown that traditionalist conservatism has been articulated by the power-sharing ascending group(s) within the intelligentsia rather than the descending group(s) during the nation-state building process, then we might have to abandon the theoretical definitions of conservatism in the Turkish case as but both by Karpat and others. The misconceptions lie in the fact that these prominent students of Turkish politics have ignored the cultural and political consequences of modernism in different countries in an effort to generalize.\(^{162}\) They have normatively classified all political and cultural reactions against modernization as conservative reaction(s). This conceptualization has ultimately ignored the modernizing effect of the Turkish traditionalist conservatism which was a modernist-secular claim to consolidate a peculiar vision of modernism.

It is of crucial importance to note that Turkish traditionalist conservatism, as a modernist drive based on a modern-secular cosmology, has emerged concomitantly with the consolidation of nation-state structures. If its intellectual origins and modernist social and political vision are not fully analyzed, neither the peculiarity and the uniqueness of the consolidation of nation-state structures in the Turkish case, nor the consequences of the influx of traditionalist-conservative ideals into Kemalist modernism can be understood better. Traditionalist conservatism provided new conceptions of nation, state, religion and national identity through which traditional groups found new means to identify themselves with the ideals of Kemalist modernism. The traditionalist-conservative vision of modern society and state have far-reaching repercussions on the transformation of Islamic *Weltanschauung* towards a modern secular one. This philosophico-political stand was

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\(^{162}\) Conservatism, as pointed out by Mannheim, has to be treated as a "social and historical phenomenon." See Paul Kecskemeti eds, *Karl Mannheim, Essays on Sociology and Social Sociology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953), p. 95.
combined with Kemalist modernism to address the question as to how the structures of modernity, such as the capitalist system and nation-state, would be rooted in the bosom of the traditional Islamic society. The intellectuals under study formulated a grand strategy for modernization, which was exploited first by the bureaucratic elites and then the political elites who, by the end of the 1940s, based the Turkish economic, social, and political modernization on an alternative vision of development.

The philosophico-political vocabulary of the traditionalist-conservative imagination came to the fore in numerous works of these intellectuals. In these literary works, among which Safa’s *Fatih Harbiye* stood as the most exemplary case. The dichotomies and dilemmas that emerged in daily life during the long and gradual process of westernization were illustrated and their effects on individuals were elaborated. Karpat, referring to Safa’s nationalist conviction has illustrated this as follows:

> In reality this extremist nationalism was a social and psychological crisis caused by the breakdown of ancient concepts of organization and loyalty. Indeed a series of reforms in language, the legal system and the economy, undertaken by the state, had undermined the old system and caused a crisis of identity. Peyami Safa’s confused nationalist writings of the period clearly indicate the extent of this crisis, as well as the attempts to fit old loyalties and concepts into a new fold.\(^{163}\)

Safa’s conception of this crisis and other traditionalist-conservative figures’ attempts to “fit the old loyalties and concepts into a new fold,” in Karpat’s words, will provide fruitful insights about the emergence and development of traditionalist conservatism. This is also of crucial importance in understanding the uniqueness of Kemalist modernism since, in Karpat’s words:

> the influx of a variety of religious and conservative ideas into Turkish nationalism between 1933 and 1945 helped to identify various groups in the countryside with the nation and the state. The population began to think itself as being Turkish, and although it was still loyal to Islam as a faith, its thoughts and aspirations were confined to the territorial boundaries of Turkey.\(^{164}\)

Thus, based on Karpat’s above mentioned passage, it is also possible to raise the question of how Kemalist modernism was shaped by the traditionalist-conservative ideas.


\(^{164}\) *Idem.*
Although there are studies on the political history of the early Republican era or on the organized political platforms, such as political parties or interest groups, there is none which aims to provide a holistic approach to the *nouveaux* traditionalist-conservative orientations that found a comfortable niche in Kemalist modernism. Conservatism conceived as the inherent disposition of the descending social groups to conserve their privileges in a rapidly changing political, social and economic environment can not provide a comprehensive understanding of the nature of elite fragmentation within the modernist-secular intelligentsia. Neither does this outlook can account for the emergence of competing claims to conserve the structures of modernity within the Republican ruling stratum. Thus, this work intends to shed light on the nature and reasons for the emergence of a traditionalist-conservative strand in Kemalism as an alternative vision of modernism that has been exploited by the ruling elites at various stages of Turkish modernization.
CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: OTTOMAN-TURKISH OUTLOOK TOWARDS MODERNITY

Tanzimat's Search for Novelty in Retrospect

The Ottoman State was in existence at the beginning of the twentieth century. Yet, following the World War I, the Ottoman political institutions began to collapse. After four years of the War of Independence (1919-1923), Republican institutions were established. The nineteenth century ended with various attempts at reform and restoration of the Ottoman system. Yet, long before the nineteenth century, Ottoman rulers had also begun to think about the reasons of the retreat of the Ottoman state against the West.\(^1\) Besides some novelties introduced in the field of military, Ottoman rulers also made some changes for the establishment of a centralized modern administration. By the nineteenth century, reformist policies were implemented in the fields of economy, politics and education to modernize the Ottoman State.\(^2\)

The idea of reform, which had been limited to the objective to rehabilitate the state's military organization in the seventeenth century gained a new impetus after the proclamation of the Imperial Edict in 1839. A new period known as Tanzimat- the Restoration- began. By the formal statement of the Sultan, the Ottoman state publicly disclosed the necessity to adopt modern state institutions and principles of administration. Thus, the Ottoman state promised to initiate many reforms in the legal, social, political and economic fields.\(^3\) Historians and students of Turkish politics generally tend to record the Tanzimat period as the beginning of the reorganization of

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\(^2\) Shaw and Shaw, History of The Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, pp. 55-72.

the legislative and executive functions of the Ottoman administration according to western rules and practices. It was the time of establishing the superiority of law; a time of confirming the necessity to introduce a new public ethics and a new public philosophy of rights and duties originating from the notion of Ottomanism.

The political cleavages that emerged around the questions of westernization during the Tanzimat period (1839-1876) were deepened and further intensified by the transformation of the sociological and intellectual configuration of the intellectuals in the succeeding Constitutional periods (1876-1878, 1908-1920). Ottoman intellectuals were confused by the questioning of the legitimacy and of the effectiveness of the traditional political and social institutions. Thus, the reorganization of state administration was the only reform objective before and during the Tanzimat era. The basic theme of the preceding reform acts was to imitate the end-products of Western countries to protect and to strengthen the existence and the efficiency of the Ottoman state. During the Tanzimat period, the deeply felt 'change' in socio-political life gained a sense of direction and purpose among the Westernist intellectuals of the time. From the Tanzimat onwards, 'change' essentially implied the transformation of the traditional religious cosmology to a modern secular one. It was concluded that the encouragement of a new mentality; a new life style; and a new conception on Man and society were necessary for the achievement of the promised reforms.

During the Tanzimat period, a new stratum of intellectuals, who were seen as the bearer of the new westernized life style, began to emerge. In the literary works of

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the **Tanzimat**, this new stratum of intellectuals and the westernized life style, which they stood for, were sarcastically caricatured in the personality of ‘**Tanzimat Man**.’

He was illustrated as having ‘new’ but ‘alien’ values to the Ottoman - Islamic community. The values and life principles of ‘**Tanzimat Man**,’ the first exemplar of the ‘westernized character,’ were indeed in great conflict with those values and principles that constituted the public identity of the common and traditional Ottoman Man. He was a hybrid identity who was neither totally westernized nor belonged to his original cultural geography. Yet, the ‘**Tanzimat Man**’ symbolized the private and individual expression of a new state of consciousness about the direction and purpose of ‘change.’ This was a generation who deliberately manifested its distinctiveness both from the traditional Ottoman man and his ancestors. In short, the ‘**Tanzimat Man**’ was the symbol of a state of ‘consciousness about change’ and a ‘state of being conscious about change.’

Beginning by the renaissance, Western humanistic thought tried to understand and to explain the origins and reasons for differences of life-styles among generations. There emerged a firm belief about a value hidden in ‘change.’ Accordingly, ‘change’ meant ‘progress,’ i.e., to move from a less developed stage to a more developed and complex one. Consequently, Western thought asserted itself as the only systematized conception of ‘change.’ It exalted the Western experience of ‘change’ as the genuine form of social, economic and political dynamism and creativity. However, the rest of the world i.e., the East was delineated as the soil of obscurantism and stagnation.

The Ottoman state met with the modernizing West long the before the **Tanzimat** era. However, the **Tanzimat**, with all its political, administrative interests and

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social concerns registered the emergence of a state of consciousness in Ottoman geography which sought to find out the origin of the ‘new and modern.’ Indeed, the ‘Tanzimat Man’ was the representative of this renovating mind which questioned his own history, culture and geography according to a new conception of ‘change.’ The constitutive values of this new life style and/or new political principles of the Tanzimat - such as the theory of natural rights and duties, a constitutional government or theory of representation - provoked a widespread curiosity among the Ottoman intellectuals about the nature of ‘new and modern.’ Consequently, the Tanzimat became an era in which all that were assumed to be ‘new or modern’ and ‘traditional’ were put under close scrutiny.11

Relatedly, the term alafranga (that of belonging to the West) began to be used to refer to the new life style of the ‘Tanzimat Man’ who had customarily been a member of the secular wing of the Ottoman bureaucracy. Yet, the two worlds - religious and secular, western or eastern, traditional or modern- and the people, who experienced the practices of those different worlds, continued to live together in the same sphere. Despite all its intellectual cultural brilliance, the political goal set by the reformist Tanzimat intellectuals, some of whom were known as the Young Ottomans,12 was the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. Intellectuals of the time, without exception, shared the same political concern and tried to answer the same question: ‘How to save the state from breakdown?’

Hence, all controversial currents of thought, being constituted by ‘liberal,’ ‘Islamic,’ ‘Turkist’ aspirations, were interfused and constituted the conceptual framework of the same intellectual without any thought to being in contradiction with each other. The most complicated intellectual questions of the time were raised about

11 Mardin, "Tanzimattan Sonra Aşırı Batılılaşma," (Excessive Westernization After the Tanzimat) in Türk Modernleşmesi (The Turkish Modernization), vol. 4, Mümtaz'ur Türköne, Tuncay Önder, eds. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıner, 1992), pp. 21-81.
the cultural dichotomies emerging by the diffusion of ‘modern-western’ values to the traditional strata of the society. Thus, the dilemmas emerged from the diffusion of worldly ethics, such as the new individual morality and its materialistic aspirations, constituted the most complicated intellectual and practical issues among the Ottoman intellectuals\(^\text{13}\) which would be inherited by the following Republican regime as part of the Ottoman problematic.

During the *Tanzimat*, the major dispute, which was on the nature of change and on legitimate forms of social and political practices, was between the Westernist reformers and Islamic reactionaries. Another dispute was on the true essence of the western civilization and the future of the Ottoman institutions. As compared to the following Young Turk era,\(^\text{14}\) the *Tanzimat* intellectuals still perceived western civilization essentially as Christian but not the same ‘Christian world’ traditionally known by the Ottomans. The historical conflict between the Christian and Islamic civilizations was not placed on the agenda of the *Tanzimat* intellectuals because of a lack of an alternative ideology at the time. It was solely a search for the differences between two civilizations; namely the Eastern and the Western. Despite all the controversial views on the nature and essential values of the Western and Eastern civilizations, the *Tanzimat* intellectuals did not conceive them as deeply-rooted, conflict-generating cultural differences. During the *Tanzimat*, interest of Ottoman intellectuals was limited only to the distinct nature of the new and modern. For that reason alone, they began to search for the principles and values which secured the unique characteristics of the ‘modern and new’ on the Ottoman soil. Simultaneously, curiosity among the intellectuals of the time on Eastern civilizations was also intensified.


Despite its novelties, the Tanzimat was an era of controversies. Western-Eastern, good-bad, advanced-undeveloped, all lived together. Social, political and cultural changes were observed but a systematic political program, which aimed at intervening in society according to a comprehensive social and political project did not emerge. During this period, tradition [commonly understood as umma tradition], its administrative principles, norms and values contended in the daily life of the Ottoman subject, and were all began to be challenged. Still, all values and administrative principles, including modern and traditional, that were thought to be functional for the restoration of the state power, were articulated in a pragmatic political strategy.

From Tanzimat's Pragmatic Universalism to the Holism of Islamic Traditionalism and Particularism of Turkism

Within three decades after the proclamation of the Imperial Edict in 1839, systematic political ideologies had begun to flourish. By that time, small intellectual circles also began to emerge by the further segmentation of the Ottoman intelligentsia. This was due to the fragmentation which emerged in the traditional power structure of the political center. Political power was fragmented between the Ottoman Palace and the newly emerged secular civil and military bureaucracy. Concomitantly, by the 1860s, there were three identifiable currents of thought. A secular-nationalist intellectual circle, headed by Şinasi, was countered by a modernist-Islamic circle, inspired from the writings of Namık Kemal. The last and the most hybrid current of thought, namely Turkist Ottomanism, was developed around thoughts of Ali Suavi. However, there still did not emerge a coherent, severe nationalist-secular and Islamist rivalry in the political agenda which would become the locus of politics within the succeeding eighty years.

Restoration of the distorted political and social tradition by creating a harmony among modern methods of administration and traditional rules and values of daily life became the primary objective of constitutional reformism after 1870. During the Constitutional reform period, Islamism gained a new impetus by enriching itself through new answers provided on the questions of participation, representation, rights

and duties, sources of legitimacy of the political authority, and public and private law. The quest to develop an Islamic framework for political and social practices responsive to the \textit{umma} traditionalism, which emerged under the tutelage of autocratic rule of Abdulhamid II (1876-1908), aimed to shed light on the modernizing essence in Islam that would prevent the further decline of traditional religious order.

With the rise of Islamism, 'liberal' attempts of 'freeing from the restrictive context of orthodox Islamic tradition,' which had begun by the emergence of a new secular intellectual stratum during the \textit{Tanzimat} period, were intensified. Concomitantly, new political manifestations such as Westernism, Turkism and Islamism appeared under the rule of Abdulhamid II. The focal point of the debate among the Young Turks of the twentieth century, was around the question of western norms to be adopted and on the limits of political liberty. The main tenets of Young Turk thought were nationalism, centralism and protectionism against laissez-faire in the economy, decentralization and Ottomanism. Islamic traditionalism, being protected by and developed during the reign of Abdulhamid II, retreated in politics after the Young Turk revolution in 1908.

It is during the Second Constitutional Period (1908-1920) that Islamic traditionalism entered upon an extensive critique because of secularization of daily life. For the traditional Ottoman subject, secularization meant the diffusion of materialist worldly ethics that eventually destroyed the symbolic political and cultural signs of Islam through which the individual constituted himself as a member of a religious collectivity. In the period concerned, there emerged a clear cut disjunction

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16 "Religious tradition" in Islamic civilization and "Christian Western Civilization" were those concepts firstly refined by the missionary orientalists and later employed by Arab nationalists in their search for an identity and origin for the emerging Arab nations. Thus, Christian Western Civilization and Islamic Eastern civilization were invented by missionary orientalists of the nineteenth century. For a further elaboration, see Maxim Robinson "Western Image and Western studies of Islam," in \textit{The Legacy of Islam}, J. Schact, C.E Bosworth, eds. (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1979), pp. 9-39.


between Islamic traditionalists and the 'others' including, Turkists, Ottomanist, and Liberals. The debate between Islamic traditionalism and the 'others' was basically on the different meanings attributed to the norm and value content of the Islamic tradition.

Beginning by the middle of the First Constitutional Era, the proto-typical Islamic references which later were articulated as Islamic traditionalism, by converting 'Tradition' to a value in itself, which awaited for re-consolidation in daily life, was structurally differentiated from other currents of thought and the religiously-inspired Ottomanism of the Tanzimat which limited its 'Islamic problematic' to the quest of finding out the 'living and creative essence' in the traditions. The Tanzimat thought and Islamic traditionalism, which developed during the Second Constitutional Era, were in severe conflict on the values to be reapprpreciated and to be thrown away in the course of saving the state from total breakdown. Unlike the traditionalism of Islamism of the Second Constitutional Era, tradition was not a 'value in itself' in the Tanzimat thought. For the Islamic traditionalism of the Second Constitutional Era, 'Islamic tradition' was more than a level of exposition of the 'social and individual experience' and was a value and aim in itself. For this reason, degeneration of the umma tradition and moral decadence in the Islamic community, according to Islamic traditionalism, were due to the excessive secularization of the political and social life of the Islamic community which had been fostered by westernists and/or those, like Turkists, who reduced Islam to one of the many traditions that constituted the Ottoman identity.

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21 For the development of Islamic traditionalism in the Islamic world, see Abdullah Laroui, Tarihselcilik ve Gelenek (The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual - Traditionalism or Historicism?), trans. by Hasan Bacanlı (Ankara: Vadi Yayınlari, 1993).

What constituted the most complex issue for Islamic traditionalism was the disjunction between the ‘past experience of the universal community transmitted through tradition’ and ‘existing practices construed as the legitimate manifestations of the tradition.’ Although the already experienced norm and value structure of the society was religious i.e. Islamic, according to the thesis of Islamic traditionalism, the existing ‘Islamic tradition’ was also in great conflict with the ‘past experiences’ of the Islamic community. Transition from the Islam-inspired thought of the Tanzimat, which aimed to shed light on the origin of the ‘living tradition,’ to Islamic traditionalism(s) of the Constitutional period, which strived to revive a series of abstract norms and a hierarchy of values from the Islamic Past, marked the structural change in Ottoman intellectual world. This structural transformation was inherited by the succeeding Republican Regime as part of the “Ottoman problematic.” The attitude towards Islam and tradition also drew the demarcation line between the nouveaux conservative ideas of the early Republic and Islamic traditionalists from which the legitimacy of traditionalist-conservative ideas in the political game were drawn.

During the Second Constitutional period, the origin of the political conflict among the actors of the political game, be them Turkists, Islamic traditionalists, Ottomanists or Westernists, was on the question of identity. They focused on the question of ‘Why did Islam, Turkism and Ottomanism remained backward against the development of Western civilization?’ By the transformation of tradition to a norm structure in Islamic traditionalism, the question of identity, that had formerly resolved in living tradition, became a conflict generating issue. The Westernists discarded Islamic practices and the Islamists rejected Western practices. Ottomanist and Turkists attempted to formulate middle ways on opposing to employ solely religious factors as constituents of the Ottoman identity. Islamic reference in the Tanzimat period was a search to find out those which ‘belonged to them’ and those which ‘belonged to us.’ By the rise of nationalism(s) in the beginning of the twentieth century, mistrust among the ruling Young Turk intelligentsia towards the universalism of Westernism and Islam

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had reached to a point of rejecting all ‘universality’ claims of both ‘Westernism and Islamic traditionalism.’

This mistrust manifested itself through the emphasis made on the uniqueness of *hars*, namely culture. In the works of Ziya Gökalp, the prominent ideologist of the Union and Progress Party, it was discussed that though nations had common traits at the level of civilization, at the level of *hars* they were unique entities. The great emphasis made on *hars* was a symptom of suspicion towards the universal models of civilization, including the modern component of nationalism as a universal model to emulate. Accordingly, cultural authenticity had to be secured against the diffusion of the forms of identity of the universal civilization. The dichotomy created between ‘civilization’ and ‘*hars*’ secured the legitimacy of the political practices of the Union and Progress Party. These political and cultural practices aimed to provide answers to questions of ‘Which particular identity will be protected?’ and ‘Who are we?’ At that instance, there were two obstacles on the road of formulating ‘national’ policies: the first one was the cosmopolitanism of the Ottoman state tradition and the second one was Islamic traditionalism with its heavy emphasis on the universality of the *umma*. However, under the socio-political restraints during the Young Turk era, the universality claims of Ottomanism and Islam, around which the most complicated problems were formulated till the *Tanzimat* era, lost most of their influence in politics.

The fertility of the nineteenth century Ottoman political and intellectual thought stemmed from the attempts to find out the components of the ‘living tradition.’ Such a search increased the awareness of the Ottoman intellectual on the existing institutions, values and norms of the society. Beginning with *Tanzimat*, it was realized that the imperative was to know the origins of the tradition before changing it. During this period, all currents of thought, except those fed from the Islamic theology and

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cosmology, had shown deliberate attempts to extract the national constituents of the
tradition as such from its universal religious content. Furthermore, everything, from the
method of westernization, to the origins of tradition or attitudes, values and norms of
daily life, was put under examination. In this respect, the structural transformation that
took place in the conceptual constellation of those currents of thought, from
Abdülmecid’s Young Ottomans to Abdülhamid’s Young Turks, and to Islamic
traditionalists’ pan-Islamism, marked the peculiarity of the Ottoman problematic for
the succeeding Republican era.

Turkish Revolution: Society on the Pendulum of Change and Continuity

The war in Anatolia among the Rebellion Forces (Kuvay-ı Bagiye) - a term employed
by some anti-nationalist Istanbul governments to identify the nationalist forces led by
Mustafa Kemal in Anatolia in the 1920s - Forces of Order (Kuvay-ı İnzibatiye) of the
İstanbul government, Western powers including, France, Italy, Great Britain, and their
allies, like Greece, ended by the end of 1922. The Lausanne Treaty was signed with the
Allied countries in 1923. This treaty registered the national borders of the newly
founded Turkish state. Beginning by the middle of the 1920s, the Republic initiated a
radical modernization [read westernization] program. From politics to the economy,
all spheres of life were re-organized along new rules and values that had been drawn in
reference to a new secular-ethical cosmology expected to function as a legitimacy
framework for Republican radicalism in politics.

Radical Westernism of the Republic, which aimed to institutionalize a secular
cosmology in politics and in daily life, also structured the new political allegiances and
conflicts. On March 3, 1924, caliphate was abolished. The Ministry for Religious
Affairs was abrogated; the ecclesiastical courts were abolished in 1924. This opened up
the way to the complete secularization of the administration of justice and education.
Religious tombs and dervish meeting places were closed down in 1925. Subsequently,
new regulations were issued concerning the official attire and duties of the clergy and
the Christian calendar replaced the Islamic one in 1925. In 1926, a new civil code,
penal and commercial codes were adopted. The first was the translation of the Swiss civil code, the second of the Italian Penal Code and the third was the mixture of the German and Italian codes. Then, on April 10, 1928, Islam ceased to be the established religion of the state. The adaptation of the Latin alphabet in 1928, like the introduction of European dress, had far-reaching effects in the daily life of the citizen. Other reforms of this kind followed, including the adoption of the metric system on March 26, 1931, and of Sunday as the day of rest on May 27, 1935. Those were the most consequential steps for Kemalists’ objective of modernizing [read westernizing] the Turkish daily life. Thus, all political and intellectual groupings in the early Republican era were shaped under new political and social constraints manipulated by Kemalist modernizer state. Either the supporters of the former regime, i.e., those willing to preserve the Sultanate and/or caliphate in a constitutional monarchical system, or religious reactionaries, had to deal with the new political and philosophical challenge posed by Kemalism which was characterized by a radical secularist outlook in comprehending the nature of political power and the ‘legitimate social and political actions’ in this new era.

Early Political Groupings within the Kemalist Political Establishment

Kemalism as a nation and state-building ideology did constitute the political and intellectual framework, which ultimately defined the legitimate terms of the intellectual and political agenda of the time. Nonetheless, following the War of Independence and the establishment of the Republic in 1923, new political and intellectual groupings and/or old political alliances in new forms emerged both within the newly founded political and cultural institutions, namely, the parliament, universities and/or other related institutions, such as the Turkish Language Association (1932), the Turkish History Association (1930).

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Indeed, early political groupings were rooted on historical cleavages which were clearly brought to light during the War of Independence. The first National Assembly, which conducted the War of Independence, had a heterogeneous structure. It comprised of reactionary Islamists, Turkists, the Unionist (former members of the Union and Progress Party), supporters of the Sultanate and Caliphate, and even the ‘liberals,’ but not the traditionalist(s) or yet the nouveaux conservative figures of the Republic. Conflicts and cleavages among competing political groupings in the first National Assembly became visible by the establishment of the First Group on May 10, 1921. The First Group mostly consisted of the members of the high-ranked Ottoman bureaucracy who gathered around the nationalist ideals of Mustafa Kemal. It later became the first political party of the Republic namely, the Republican People’s Party.

Opposition to Mustafa Kemal in the First Assembly was three-sided. First, it included the personal enemies of Mustafa Kemal and his supporters; second, the ulema and traditionalist Islamists, who saw the Kemalists as the enemy of the Islamic tradition; third, former members of the Union and Progress Party with whom Mustafa Kemal’s hostility dated back to his former membership in the Union and Progress Party. The first quasi-organized political opposition in the first Assembly was known as the Second Group and emerged after the establishment of the First Group in 1921. The Second Group had also supporters in Istanbul press. The daily Tan became the speaker of Second Group in the press. Besides the two major groups, there were also some other minor political groups in the First Assembly, as the Society for Solidarity (Tesanîl Grubu), Society for Independence (İstiklal Grubu), Society for Reform

28 Only, Ağaoğlu, the ‘liberal’ politician of the 1930s, was in the Parliament as a Republican deputy. Baltacıoğlu was the chairman of the Istanbul branch of the short-lived Free Republican Party in 1931. ‘Traditionalist’ Baltacıoğlu, or “conservative” Safa were not deputies in the 1930s. Baltacıoğlu was elected to the Assembly as a Republican deputy in 1942 and 1946 elections. See Ahmed Ağaoğlu, Serbest Fırka Hâlâtaları (Free Party Memoirs), 3rd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994) p. 86. Safa, was also nominated as a Republican deputy from the province of Bursa in 1950 elections but he was not elected. Then, he became the spokesman of the Democratic Party in the 1954 election. Other members of the group, such as Tung and Uiten, did not directly involve in politics but served in the cultural institutions of the Republic.


There were numerous other local groupings, like Society for Preservation of the Sacred Object (Muhafaza-i Mukaddesat Cemiyeti), which aimed to organize the local resistance against an enemy occupation.

Society to Defense Rights of Anatolia and Thrace (Anadolu ve Rumeli Miadfaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti) was the only broad-based movement where the nationalists were organized before the establishment of People’s Party in 1923. The establishment of a new political party under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal and his domination of the Party created discontent among the opponents in the Assembly mostly affiliated to the Second Group. The opposition began to question the legitimacy of the leadership of Mustafa Kemal since, in their view, the regime was moving towards a dictatorship. Still, the People’s Party leadership could not exercise a strict control over the opposition which showed stiff resistance to the abolishment of caliphate and to the other anti-religious reforms in 1924. The power of the opponents in the Assembly mostly rested on their supporters in the army, and in their supporters in the Istanbul press. Parliamentary opposition was figuratively headed by General Kazım Karabekir, a prestigious army member, who first backed Mustafa Kemal when he moved to Anatolia to set up the War of Independence, and Rauf Bey (Orbay), a former high-ranked distinguished Ottoman naval officer of the War of Dardanelles in 1915. Yet, there was not a strict group coherence among the opponents because of the heterogeneous structure of the group. For instance, some of the leading figures, including Kazım Karabekir was a supporter of the Republican rule but was opposed Mustafa Kemal’s personal rule, whereas, some others, like Şükrü Hoca, the spokesman of mostly reactionary Islamists, had opposed the idea of a Republic completely. Although most of the opponents of Mustafa Kemal and their supporters in the Istanbul

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32 Ahmed Emin Yalman, Yakın Tarihte Göründüklerrim Ve Geçirdiklerim (1922-1924) (Things I Have Witnessed and Experienced in the Recent History), vol. 3 (Istanbul: Rey, 1970), p. 74
press were reconciled with the idea of abolishing the Sultanate, they were still willing to preserve the Caliph Abdülmecit, as head of state, in a constitutional monarchist system. By the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, they had realized that the last chance to keep the Caliphate was also lost. Consequently, the Kemalists abolished the Caliphate on March 3, 1924.

In order to neutralize the opposition politicians-commanders in the army, the Kemalist Constitution, which had been enforced in 1924, prohibited the civil servants to become members of the Assembly without resigning from their respective posts. This article in the Constitution had further intensified the tensions between the Republican ruling elites and the rival politicians in the army. The Kemalists’ harsh measures against the old religious hierarchy and the opposition leaders in the army had resulted in the first elite fragmentation of the Republican power structure. His former supporters became the new political rivals of Mustafa Kemal. Rauf Bey, Ali Fuat Paşa, Refet Paşa and Kazım Karabekir Paşa, all high-ranking members of the army, resigned from the RPP and formed the first opposition party, namely the Progressive Republican Party (PRP) on November 17, 1924.34

The founders of the Party had played crucial roles during the War of Independence. Kazım Karabekir- former inspector-general, became the party chairman, Adnan Adivar and Rauf Orbay acted as deputy-presidents. Ali Fuat Cebesoy, the former inspector-general was appointed as general secretary of the party. A number of former members of the Union and Progress Party also participated in the newly founded PRP.35 The new party had also had considerable support from the ranks of the army which prompted the ruling Kemalists to withdraw the military establishment from politics to break off the relations among ex-generals, PRP deputies and the army.

Within a few days, 29 Republican members had joined in the newly established opposition party. The progressives came to articulate the former three-sided opposition

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to the Kemalist rule. The most distinctive characteristic of the party, according to its program, was its “liberalism” [the Turkish word is Hürriyetperverlik which means love of freedom] both in politics and economy. The centralization of power and administration was rejected and local initiative was proposed. The party adopted a reformist rather than a revolutionary program and this was the first symptom of elite fragmentation in the Republican era where the radical revolutionaries were countered by reformist-revisionists. As noted by Frederick Frey, the party supported “a constitutional monarchy with a strong legislature” and “a state in which religion maintained a position not much different from that which it had possessed before the war” and “a society in which the government granted a relatively important role to the localities.”

The impact of the establishment of an opposition party in the Assembly with so-called “liberal” aims was the resignation of İsmet İnönü and appointment of Fethi Bey, who was known for his moderate liberal stand, as the new Prime Minister.

The Sheik Sait insurrection, which broke out in 1925, marked the end of the first experiment with an opposition party. Hard-line Republicans forced the government to impose harsh measures against the rebels. In their view, it was essentially a religious insurrection and had further been stimulated by the establishment of the Republican Progressive Party. The new party was accused of showing tolerance to the diffusion of reactionary Islamists to its ranks and of tolerating religious propaganda to gain support in society. Subsequently, the “liberal” government of Fethi Bey resigned as a result of growing opposition within the ranks of the ruling RPP and İsmet İnönü formed a new government.

İnönü’s new government imposed the Law of Maintenance of Order. This was the last round of political confrontation between the Republicans and Progressives. Although the Progressives did not reject the government’s willingness to impose martial law, they opposed the powers given to the Independence Tribunals. The new

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38 Zürcher, Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic, pp. 80-93.
law enforced the Tribunals to carry out death sentences without the consent of the Assembly. The government, referring the new law, closed down the spokesmen of the opposition in the Istanbul press and started to exert pressure on the opposition party, accusing it of being involved in some reactionary incidents. Most branches of the party were closed down by the Independence Tribunals and the government on June 3, 1925 enforced a decree ordering the closure of PRP.40

Closure of the PRP marked the end of the first organized opposition against the Kemalist Republic. The Law on Maintenance of Order became a means of dissolving all kinds of opposition to the Kemalist Republic. The İzmir Assasination - attempt on Mustafa Kemal - planned by Hurşit Bey, a member of Second Group and his supporters in 1926, raised the possibility of further smashing the opposition mainly by the former members the Union and Progress Party, Progressives, supported by reactionary Islamists. It was a turning-point for the Kemalist ruling elites since a more homogeneous elite structure was maintained and further steps were taken to establish the one-party rule of the RPP.

Consolidation of the Republican Rule: From Revolutionary Turbulence to the “Liberal” Free Party Episode

Between 1923 and 1935, the RPP initiated its radical political, cultural, legal reforms and consolidated its single party rule in the country. By 1927, Kemalists gained a complete control of the Assembly and the government. The radical modernization [read westernization] program of the RPP that had begun subsequent to the elimination of organized oppositions was further been deepened and changed the tempo of daily life. The new radicalism symbolized the direct rule of modernist-secularists who viewed the nation-state as the motor of social change and the core of the polity.

The party held its first convention on October 15, 1927. In this convention Mustafa Kemal had his famous speech, which was the first original Kemalist interpretation of the War of Independence, Ottoman Period and the politics of the early Republican period. Basic ideals, concepts and principles, which had been shaped and in

turn enabled the Kemalists to manipulate the War of Independence, were elucidated in his speech. However, it is too early to talk about a well-structured Kemalist stand of politics in the 1920s. Still, the Republican People's Party in its Congress held in 1927 incorporated these concepts and ideals into its Regulations. Those concepts that had been adopted in Regulations to characterize the RPP as a republican, populist and nationalist political association also hinted about the nature of the new regime which would be consolidated. 41

Until the 1930s, politics was dominated by the RPP, which further identified itself with the state. The party, as we noted beforehand, had enforced a series of radical reforms to ensure its westernization program. Yet, politically speaking, up until the early 1930s, neither the party nor its devoted intellectuals attempted to formulate a coherent systematic Republican ideology of social and political modernization. Although, the Kemalist objectives were designed to ensure reform and progress in the 1927 Congress, a coherent program to achieve this end had not been formulated yet. Nevertheless, the will of the Mustafa Kemal and his charismatic authority shaped the objectives and means of revolutionary change. 42

The Free Republican Party Episode

On August 12, 1930, by the encouragement of Mustafa Kemal, the Free Republican Party (FRP) was founded by close friends, including Fethi Okyar, Nuri Conker and a Turkist ‘liberal’ figure, Ahmet Açaoğlu. Açaoğlu had also close relations with the "traditionalist" Baltacıoğlu, who acted as the chairman of the Istanbul branch of the party. The newly founded party’s function has been delineated as to act as "... an organization for securing the necessary government and societal integration...", 43 and as a check system of the implementation of governmental policies. 44 The party’s basic


44 Trimberger, idem. Also see Frey, ibid, p. 304.
difference from the statist orientations of RPP in the 1930s was its liberal stand in
economic policies. Private initiative was assumed to be the motor of national
development and the state’s economic interests were limited to undertake those
economic activities which would not be realized by private initiative. The new party’s
so-called liberalism was within the confines of the principles set in the Izmir Economic
Congress in 1923.\textsuperscript{45} Kemal Karpat has characterized the politics in the early
Republican era as "... piecemeal combination of statism, liberalism and nationalism..."\textsuperscript{46}
The state would promote industrialization and social prosperity, and thus would
drastically challenge the traditional social, political and economic hierarchies of the
society and would ultimately turn it to a self-sufficient unit.\textsuperscript{47}

Municipal elections in the 1930s became a turning point in the history of the
party. Swift opposition was raised against the party within the ranks of the RPP since
the FRP was perceived to be a group of reactionaries, supported by Islamist opponents
of the Regime who were willing to turn the Revolutionary order to a state of
anarchy.\textsuperscript{48} Consequently, the party dissolved itself on November 17, 1930.\textsuperscript{49} Yet, the
party has a special place in Turkish political life, because of its political and
philosophical orientations, which were essentially provided by Turkist-oriented
Ağaoğlu, the prominent “individualist” of the Republican era, who, as already
mentioned, had close relations with “traditionalist” Baltacıoğlu, and “conservative”
Safa, as well as other members of the traditionalist-conservative circle, with whom he
shared common political and philosophical aspirations by the mid-1930s which were
first publicized by the appearance of Safa-initiated journal, \textit{Kültür Haftası}.\textsuperscript{50}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[47] Ibid., pp. 85, 86-7. Çetin Yetkin, \textit{Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırraskı Olayı} (The Case of Free Republican Party) (İstanbul: Karacan Yayınları, 1982).
\end{footnotes}
The 1931 Congress of the RPP: From Charismatic Revolutionarism to Doctrinaire Authoritarianism

The 1931 Convention, which had been held a year later after the foundation of the FRP in 1930, was a turning point for the development of Kemalist ideology. The revolutionary era ended by the beginning of the 1930s. The party aimed to consolidate its radical reforms. In order to safeguard the support of the populace, it tended to recruit a new stratum of intellectuals to popularize its revolutionary program. Starting by 1930s, new intellectual sources were mobilized to formulate new vistas for its revolutionary program and to diffuse it among the larger segments of society. It was not accidental that the “traditionalist” journal of İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, Yeni Adam, together with Kültür Haftası, where the traditionalist-conservative figures who gathered around to counter the revolutionary Kemalism of the Kadro circle, were appeared in this period. The 1931 Congress registered that the Party was in search of a new doctrine of history, language and revolution and various intellectual groupings, including the traditionalist conservatives, started to respond to this. Seen from this perspective, the establishment of Turkish Language Association, Turkish History Association and People’s Houses was not accidental. Moreover, the University Reform in 1933 also showed Kemalist willingness to use the universities as institutions which would contribute to the formulation of a new Kemalism. As we will elaborate later, these first attempts of systemization of Kemalism through intellectuals, which resulted in the emergence of the Kadro movement, became a stimulus for the refinement of the nouveaux “traditionalist,” and “conservative” ideals.

In the 1931 Congress, the Party adopted a program where Kemalist principles had further been elaborated. The Party adopted the Six arrows as its emblem and these six principles were incorporated into the party program and into the constitution of the Republic. After the dissolution of the “liberal” FRP, adaptation of etatism was one of the important outcomes of the 1931 Congress since it publicly announced state

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dominance in economics as well as in social affairs.\textsuperscript{53} It meant that state would promote industrial development and economic policies would be implemented through these lines.\textsuperscript{54} This principle and the role attributed to the state in regulating the economy were one of the legitimate conflict-generating issues between the statists of the RPP and the so-called liberals of the FRP in the early 1930s. Yet, it was a question of political strategy more than a model of a new economic organization since both of them, i.e. bureaucratic cadres and the so-called liberals shared a capitalism-centered world view where the private property and individual initiative were the pillars of economic organization. There was only a varying emphasis on state’s role in the economy but not of the questioning of the right to private property.\textsuperscript{55}

\textit{The 1935 Congress of the RPP}

“Kemalism” as a prescriptive policy framework of the Party was adopted in the 1935 Congress. It was in this Congress that Kemalism, as a corpus of the principles, concepts and ideals, was incorporated into the Party Program and gained an official recognition. The RPP was seeking to maintain an ideological coherence through well-defined principles and appreciated norms and values that would also serve to identify the legitimate and/or illegitimate actors of the political game in the succeeding decades. Insiders and outsiders of the political game in the 1930s and 1940s were delineated in reference to their closeness or distance from these principles, ideals and concepts. The Kemalist rulers seemed to be confident that they were the builders of a “new country” and a “new society.”\textsuperscript{56} They tended to see the RPP and its official Kemalist principles as the guidelines which would shape the future of this new society. The Kemalist rulers

\textsuperscript{53} By the mid-1920s, a series of laws were passed to encourage the private enterprise. \textit{İş Bankası and Sanayi ve Maden Bankası} were established to support the newly emerging entrepreneurs of the regime. However, by 1930 onwards the government abondoned its former ‘liberal’ policies which aimed to raise direct support to private enterprise.

\textsuperscript{54} A Five Year Plan aiming at increasing the production of consumer goods was launched in 1932. In 1937 a Three Years Plan was also launched to support heavy industries. See İlhan tekeli, Selim Ilkin, \textit{Uygulamaya Geçerken Türkiye’de Devletçiliğin Olusumu} (Formation of Etatism in Turkey During its Implementational Stage), vol. 3 (Ankara: Ortadoğu Teknik Üniversitesi, 1982), pp. 97-106, 134-208. For 1931 For the newly emerging liberal cleavage within the ranks of the Republican People’s Party, see Bila, \textit{Sosyal Demokrat Sürecİlemele CHP ve Sonrasi}, pp. 75-90.


\textsuperscript{56} \textit{CHP Dördüncü Büyük Kurultayında Genel Başkan Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’ün Söylevi} (Chairman Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s Speech Delivered at the 4th Grand Congress of the RPP) (Ankara: Ulus Basmevi, 1935), p. 3.
were now willing to further deepen the Revolution and to turn it to be a cause of a cultural reformation. In order to turn the political revolution to a cultural revolution, Kemalists had already established new social institutions, such as the People’s Houses, *(Halk Evleri)* in 1932.⁵⁷ As noted by Karpat, Kemalists tended to use these social institutions” to broaden the base of support to the Regime and to mobilize the masses for the realization of the political and cultural ideals of the Revolution.”⁵⁸ Recep Peker, the head of hard-liner Republicans, who were responsible for the formulation of a bureaucratic and authoritarian conception of Kemalism, had started to enjoy further authority in the Party.⁵⁹ Besides those ideological shifts, new measures were also taken to further consolidate party’s control over the state.⁶⁰

From 1936 onwards, until his death in 1938, Atatürk tried to neutralize the tough-liners in the Party. İnönü, who was not affiliated to the authoritarian Republican clique, but known for his bureaucratic patterns of government that had been identified with etatism, was replaced by Celal Bayar, an economist committed to ‘liberal’ economic policies.⁶¹ Despite his two years of political isolation, following the death of Atatürk in 1938, İsmet İnönü was elected as the President of the Republic. In the extraordinary Congress of the Party held in 1938 he was nominated as the life-long Chairman of the RPP and the National Chief era started in Turkish politics.

The Turkish revolution was an amalgam of ideas historically inherited from the Ottoman past and concurrently developed in the Revolutionary era. One of the basic aims of the Revolution was to create a new civic order based on the idea of citizenship of the nation state. What the early Republican Regime sought was to institutionalize a kind of disciplined freedom. This demanded the establishment and consolidation of new institutions and values that would generate new bonds of loyalties to the new

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⁵⁹ See Recep Peker, *İnkılap Dersleri* (Lessons on the Revolution) (İstanbul İletişim Yayınevi, 1984 [1935]).


secular symbols of the nation state. With the reign of İnönü in 1938, after the death of Atatürk, the RPP tried to implement reforms and to further consolidate a Republican system through a vision of modernization imposed from above and supplemented with an optimism for the future of the newly founded state.

Theorizing on Kemalism: Revolutionary Principles

Republican governments initiated many great changes in the political, cultural and economic fields. A modern nation-state with its secular political and cultural institutions was established on the basis of a capitalist economy. The modern state stimulated industrialization and put its basic policy objective as the maintenance of social prosperity. A new political system was initiated and modern political institutions, secular symbols, values and norms were consolidated. In social and cultural spheres, the former religious-community structure of the Ottoman system was further transformed from religious Weltanschauung to a secular cosmology shaped by the cultural traditions of the new self-sufficient unit, namely the nation. Secularism and nationalism were the two principles which reflected its revolutionary spirit. Thus, after the National War of Independence, Turks, as late comers in nationalism, rejected the legacy of Ottoman-Islamic state, and founded a new modern secular national state. Though radical revolutionaries may favour a rupture in history, at least at the level of social and cultural practices and traditions there is a continuity in history. Thus, despite these radical Kemalist claims of rupture from a corrupted past, the Ottoman heritage shaped the political and cultural assets of its Republican heir.


63 Between 1923-1933, changes in the political sphere were also accompanied with changes in habits, customs and traditions. For the first time, artists of the new Republic began to sing jazz music in public places. Turkey participated in the world beauty contest in 1932. Throughout the 1930s, most favorable dance musics were charleston, tango and rumba. The term asrî, (modern), had widely been used for naming the public and private places. Names of shops, patisseries and butchers were like this: "Asrî Bakkalıve" (Modern Grocery), "Asrî Kasap" (Modern Butchery), and "Asrî Pastahane" (Modern Patisserie). Public toilets and baths were also named "Asrî Heda" (Modern WC) and "Asrî Hamam" (Modern Turkish Bath).

Still, the Kemalist claim of historical rupture from the past was symbolically represented by the rationale behind the Kemalist practices. Thus, the term Kemalism was denoted the revolutionary radical rationale which characterized the Republican state’s modernization policies. With the consolidation of the Revolution by the mid of 1930s, Kemalism came to refer to a pattern of thought and action based on positivist aspirations presented itself as the remedy for cultural and political maladies caused by superstitions which were supposed to emanate from Islamic cosmology. Kemalist Weltanschauung presented itself as a counter-reaction to Islamic traditionalism and to the obscurantism of the religious tradition. It was thought to be a symbolic expression of the national culture that had to be implanted into the soil of the Ottoman-Islamic tradition. It stood for the progressive forces which would eliminate the backwardness of Turkish society.

*From Political to Cultural Revolution: Positivist Radicalism in Politics*

With the aim of describing the scope and specificities of societal change, many students of Turkish politics have pointed out the Kemalist objective to shape the traditional cultural practices so as to create a modern Turkey. Accordingly, the Kemalists aimed at complementing an administrative revolution with a cultural revolution. A new spirit being armored by the iron sword of positive sciences would transform the life and mentality of the people. The Kemalist Revolution aimed at encouraging the diffusion of modern life and rationale to the traditional religious-bound Turkish society. It was expected that legal revolutions would create a political and cultural framework necessary for practicing modern experience. Besides the radical changes in the fields of production, law, administration, a new social ethics would be fostered as the behavioral framework to secure the ‘existence’ of a new republican ‘citizen.’ Republican laws would be a shield for the modern daily practices. It was the beginning of a process in which the modern nation-state’s autonomy was guaranteed through new secular practices. The new Republican state could only

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acquire its livelihood if and only if the citizens would have an existence in daily experience. The state had to protect its citizens, to armor them with a secular and rational outlook to find a solid realm for the realization of their rights and obligations.

Şerif Mardin noted that transition from the ‘present society’ to a ‘future society’ necessitated a ‘social project’ which ultimately viewed the society as a human artifice subject to conscious political control and manipulation. The Kemalists’ utilization of the term ‘modernization’ synonymously with ‘westernization’ referred to the aim of achieving a society to be established in the future. The idea of ‘progress’ designated a purpose in the process of ‘change’ experienced by the society. Legitimacy and the relevance of cultural, social and political demands of the society were defined through their conformity and congruity with the objectives of progressive rationale of the revolutionary ideal. In the Kemalist revolutionary program, social progress ultimately implied the separation of religion from politics. Only then, the society would be modeled after a vision of modern scientific civilization.

Kemalist Culturalism: Politics of Future-Oriented Radicalism

Reactionaries to the Kemalists’ design of political and social development found fertile ground to develop their counter arguments about the ‘moral decadence’ in society. The cause of ‘decadence’ for every political opposition and/or resistance was the intervention of extra-societal forces on the social, political and economic structure of the society. Indeed, the Kemalist westernization project involved the penetration of the state into political, cultural and economic fields. The objective of the state’s extended tutelage over society was to convert the Ottoman-Turkish community, shaped by collective Islamic and institutional values, to a Turkish nation. Positivist scienticism

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68 Mardin, “Yenileme Dinamiğinin Temelleri ve Atatürk.” p. 36.
69 M. Saffet Engin, Kemalist İnkılapın Prensipleri (The Principles of the Kemalist Revolution), three volumes (Istanbul: Cumhuriyet B., 1938), Sadri Ethem (Erdem), Türk İnkılapının Karakteri (The Nature of the Turkish Revolution) (Istanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1933); Recep Peker, İnkılap Dersleri; Richard D. Robinson, The First Turkish Republic in National Development (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1965).
became the means for the institutionalization of the national political, cultural and economic structures and for the dissolution of the heterogeneous community structure, historically shaped by religion.\textsuperscript{70}

S.N. Eisenstadt pointed out that the institutionalization of new national political, cultural and economic structures took place in a uniquely characteristic way.\textsuperscript{71} Revolutionary state policies and strategies, which caused drastic changes in the organizational structure of the intelligentsia and the symbolic world of the society have rested on three principles; namely nationalism, secularism and industrialism. Attempts to foster the development of a modern capitalist economy resulted in the emergence of a new structural differentiation and division of labour in society. The traditional hierarchy of the community was weakened and replaced by the hierarchies of the capitalist system which functioned to structure the modern social and political hierarchies.\textsuperscript{72} Moreover, religious symbols of legitimation for state power had totally been rejected. This shift, to which Eisenstadt referred, was coupled with the removal of the old ruling elites -especially of the ulema - by the members of bureaucratic and cultural elites, including the prominent traditionalist-conservative figures.\textsuperscript{73}

Eisenstadt had further maintained that "shifts in the principles of legitimation, the symbols and the boundaries of traditional community, together with a change in the ruling elites class, were connected with the ideological restructuring of the new center-periphery relations towards modernity."\textsuperscript{74} Kemalism, the new scientific Weltanschauung of the Republic, fixed the nation-state as the cardinal component of the Ottoman-Turkish polity. The Kemalist state’s mission to transform the religious-based community structure to a nation was in severe contradiction with the traditional

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{70} For an assessment on positivist scienticism of the Republic, see Levent Koker, Modernlesme Kemalizm ve Demokrasi (Modernization, Kemalism and Democracy) (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1990), pp. 114-5.
\textsuperscript{71} S.N. Eisenstadt, “The Kemalist Revolution in Comparative Perspective,” in Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State, Kazancıgil and Özbudun eds., p. 135.
\textsuperscript{73} For the changing structure of the ruling elites see Frey, The Turkish Political Elite.
\textsuperscript{74} Eisenstadt, “The Kemalist Revolution in Comparative Perspective,” pp.135-6.
\end{footnotesize}
Ottoman state’s mission of keeping up the status quo. Against the traditional Ottoman conception of power resting solely in the Palace, Kemalism institutionalized, homogenized and unified the power through the representative institutions of the new nation-state. In this respect, traditionalist-conservative ideals flourished and were conditioned by the imperatives for institutionalization of the nation state. Thus, Kemalism and the modern opposition [read traditionalist conservatism] took their inspirations from the same intellectual source, namely the nation-state.

*Leitmotif of Kemalist Modernism: “Scientific Nation-State”*

Some students of nationalism⁷⁵ have asserted that in the Dutch, English, French, Scottish, Portuguese, Danish, Polish cases, nations emerged before the establishment of the nation-state. In those countries national identity set itself apart from the formation of the nation-state. The nation-state was not established concurrently with the nation as a definite cultural and political entity. Thus, the specificity of the Turkish Revolution stemmed from the fact that the nation-state and the nation were established concomitantly. Nation, its tradition and its state were all designed to secure the institutional basis of Kemalist modernism.

During the first decade of the Republic, the Kemalist state’s ‘subject’ was only a legally defined subject but not a socially existent one. Thus, the task set for the Kemalist administration was to prevent the social alienation of its citizen in a Muslim community still bounded to the religious cosmology.⁷⁶ The legally defined subject in society was expected to secure the acceptance of state norms and values which were alien to the Muslim community. The nation-state could penetrate the institutional fabric of the society and could assure itself of a ‘people’s state’ only through the existence of its citizens experiencing the national symbols in their daily practices.⁷⁷ Thus, the state, which belonged to the nation, had to manipulate the secluded creative essence of the society. It had to remove all obstacles in its evolutionary path of development. The State had to promote the creation of

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a civic ideology, a prescribed set of common understanding and aspirations, sentiments and ideas that would re-traditionalize the society as a homogeneous nation.

Politically, the mission to inspirit national identity functioned as the means of legitimation of the state fostered values. Kemalism created a disjunction between the hypothetical nation and the actual ‘society.’ The objective was to invent a ‘nation’ from a Muslim community.⁷⁸ Within this framework, the objective of creating the nation laid down the necessity for the state to dictate the terms of a new social contract between the citizen and itself. The new terms of the contract, a certified will to modernization, would naturally represent ‘modern’ political and economic cleavages and would seek to find a balance among the newly emerging social groups.

Ali Kazancıgil has pointed out that the ideas of progress, laicism, nationalism, solidarism and Comtian positivism, Enlightenment radicalism, French revolutionary ideals, revolutionary political thoughts of J.J. Rousseau and the nineteenth century scienticism had influenced the Kemalist rulers and, to a considerable extent, shaped their vision of modernity.⁷⁹ In this respect, Kemalist westernist-modernist elites fostered the institutionalization of a number of alien norms and values in a Muslim society. And for the first time in history, a ‘westernizing elite’ had found the possibility of direct and unlimited rule to institutionalize its own vision of modernism.

As noted, the beginning of the ‘modernization’ attempts of the Ottoman state could be traced back to the eighteenth century. Throughout Tanzimat and the following Young Turk periods of constitutional reformism, structural dichotomies and dualities emerged in the institutional structure of the state and in the daily experiences of the Muslim community. New values and institutions began to live together with the old ones. The nouveau conservatifs of the Republic characterized the pre-Kemalist reformation period as “the half-steps of half men” since the dualities were further intensified by deepening the

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structures of modernity without eliminating the old and dead traditions and customs.\textsuperscript{80} Thus, the Kemalist objective of abolishing the dualities in daily life and in the institutional structure of the state found strong support within the ranks of the modernist intelligentsia, including the traditionalist conservatives. Despite the reactions raised from the traditional religious stratum in society, reforms were firmly implemented. Yet, the Republican regime fell into the dilemma of ‘repression and reaction.’ by way of explanation, all opposing and resisting forces were called as ‘reactionary forces or conservative.’

\textit{The Kemalist Principles of the Revolution}

Kemalism defined the patterns of social change with an emphasis on secularism and nationalism which were grounded in a rationalist outlook.\textsuperscript{81} Among the six principles of Kemalism, only secularism and nationalism had a consolidating effect during the institutionalization of the values and norms of the modern nation state.\textsuperscript{82} Once the nation state was regarded as the highest form of social and political organization, then religion was deprived of its former influence on public and private life. For the ruling institutions of the state, faithful citizens of the Republic had priority over the devoted Muslims. Though secularism implied far-reaching restrictions on religion in public life, it did not mean the banishment of Islam from the private life as rationalism and enlightenment implied for Christianity in the West.\textsuperscript{83} According to the Kemalists, Islam was essentially a ‘rational religion’ demanding no intermediary clergy but only faith, reason, and the exercise of virtue.\textsuperscript{84} Yet, Islam as a normative system could not satisfy the ethical-normative dimension of the new citizen ethos of humanistic-rationalist premises of modernity. However, the Kemalists’ rationalist interpretation of Islam felt short of appealing to the traditional Islamic


\textsuperscript{81} See Kili, Kemalism.

\textsuperscript{82} For an account of Six Arrows, see Taha Parla, \textit{Türkiye’de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları, Kemalist Tek Parti Ideolojisi ve CHP’nin Altı Oku} (Official Sources of the Political Culture in Turkey, Kemalist Single Party Ideology and RPP’s Six Arrows), vol 3 (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1992). See also Tuncay, \textit{Türkiye’de Tek Parti Yönetimi’nin Kurulması}, 1923-1931.


\textsuperscript{84} Berkes, \textit{The Development of Secularism in Turkey}, pp. 483-503.
Despite this, the tasks of emancipating and secularizing the organization of the state, administration and education -previously subordinated to religious authority- were fully achieved.

Secularization and nationalization of religion went hand in hand. The religious culture which was considered to rest on Arabian and Persian foundations, was abandoned in favour of the humanistic essence of the national culture. In 1929, instruction in Arabic and Persian languages were abolished in higher schools. At the same time, the Turkish Linguistic Council was established for the sake of purifying the Turkish language. On January 22, 1932, suras from Koran, the Holy Book of Muslims, that was originally written in Arabic and had already been translated into Turkish, were for the first time recited from a Turkish translation in public prayers. All those changes, which aimed to challenge all the Ottoman past, were the manifestation of a great social transformation experienced in a relatively short time.

Kemalism envisaged the nation as a political and cultural community with a secluded quality. Quoting from Atatürk, Afet İnan defined the nation as “a social and political formation comprising citizens linked by the communality of language, culture and ideal.” Nationalism and the populist themes of organic society were twin brothers which were exploited to broaden the support raised for the new state. The objective of Turkish

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85 Reform and change in Islamic thought is not an issue specific to the Republican era. For reformation attempts in Islam, see Mardin "XIX. Yüzyılda Düşünce Akımlarını ve Osmanlı Devleti Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Türkiye Anıksiklopedisi," vol. 1 (1985), pp. 342-51. For question of reformism and Islamic philosophy, see Hilma Ziya Ulken, İslam Felsefesi Kaynakları ve Etkileri (Origins and Impacts of the Islamic Philosophy), 4th ed. (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1993).

86 See Saña, Türk İnkılabına Baktılar, pp. 90-7.

87 For Atatürk’s criticism of Ottoman Past, see Atatürk’ün Söyleve ve Demeçleri (The Speeches and Statements of Atatürk), vol. 2 (Ankara: Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1959), p. 163.


nationalism was formulated as to put the national interest [read public interest] before the interests of the individuals, and/or classes [read particular]. The new Republican regime aimed to provide secular bonds and solidarity within the enlightened citizen.

Kemalist nationalism, which manifested itself as the Turkification of religion and language, aimed to dissolve communal religious loyalties. In this respect, there was a close relationship between nationalism and secularism. Besides these, populism which meant that the strength and sovereignty of the state were derived from the people, defined as an undifferentiated entity, served as a new kind of legitimation for the Kemalist state. However, populist legitimation, which was based on the notion of the nation, posed that there was not a unity and/or equivalence between ‘nation,’ and ‘society.’ ‘Society’ represented an archaic form. Then, nation emerged only when a particular human society realized its own authenticity and its common symbolic cultural forms. Republicanism was necessary if the political institutional manifestations of secularism were to be maintained on the political arena, like new political parties and representative institutions that derived their legitimacy from the nation. Etatism was originally invented as a means of state’s control of the economic resources. Revolutionism, referred to the Kemalists’ methods of implementing their vision of modernity.

The Kemalist reforms were directed at creating a westernized man as a model of Republican citizen. Thus, Mustafa Kemal stated that “the goal of the revolution was to attain a civilized, western type social life, with all its meanings and forms. This is the main principle of our reforms.” According to the Kemalists’ civilizing mission, ‘progress’ would be achieved only through the secularization of the daily life and by

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91 See Uriel Heyd, Türk Ulusculuguunun Temelleri (Foundations of Turkish Nationalism), trans. by K Günday (Ankara: Kultur Bakanligi Yayını, 1979). See also Ziya Gökalp, Türkçülüğün Esasları (The Principles of Turkism), 10th. ed. (Istanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1973), Türkçülük, İslamiyatsın, Muasiriza (Turkification, Islamization and Modernization), I. Kuthuk, ed. (Ankara: Devlet Kitapları, 1976); Ercümen Kurum, "The Impact of Nationalism on the Turkish Elite in the Nineteenth Century" in Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East the Nineteenth Century, pp. 354-89. See also Mardin, Jon Türklerin Siyasî Fikirleri 1895-1908 (Political Ideas of the Young Turks 1895-1908) (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1983); Ahmad, İttihatçılıktan Kemalizme. (From Unionism to Kemalism), trans. by Fatmagül Berkay (İstanbul Kaynak Yayınları, 1985).


the replacement of the God-centered perspective of Islam with a secular view of Man and society. The state and nation attained a mystical character before the society which, at that moment, was separated from the modern institutions by the barrier of religion. Because of their self dictated mission of safeguarding the secular foundations of the Republic, secularism became an axis for defining dichotomies i.e. progressive against conservative, modern against traditional, enlightened against obscurantist and revolutionary against reactionary.

Though secularism was the symbol of the Kemalist revolutionary spirit, Islam, especially its folk variant, remained as a significant framework of meaning in the social and political life of the citizen. Furthermore, as pointed out by Mardin, it had always been an important agent in the formation of primary group norms and values in Turkish society.94 As such, it especially served as an integrating agent for the individual in his primary relations. Therefore, Islam functioned much like any other religion in terms of proving meaning to human existence.

Bernard Lewis maintained that the Kemalist ruling elites answered the question of “On what grounds the new national ideology would be built?” in order to restructure the ethical-normative system of the nation. The answer, as depicted by Lewis, was on science, history, and the customs of the nation. Throughout the 1930s, the Turkish History Thesis and Sun-Language Theory were formulated to shed light on the historical origins of the nation.95 As displayed by Lewis, the Turkish political leadership was searching for a sense of belonging for the nation and they used the

95 Historians of the early Republic devoted themselves to shed light on the past experiences of the nation, see Afet İnan, M. Tevfik, S. Rifat, Y. Akçura, et. al., Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları, Methal Kusm (Basic Contours of Turkish History: Introduction) (İstanbul: Maarif Vekaleti Yayıng, 1931). For debates in the First History Congress see, Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi (The First Turkish History Congress) (Istanbul: Maarif Vekaleti Yayıng, 1932); Also see İnan, Tarih Üzerine İncelemeler ve Makaleler (Research and Articles on History) (Ankara: Akin Matbaası, 1960); Türk Halkının Antropolojik Karakteri ve Türkiye Tarihi (The Anthropological Characteristic of the Turkish People and Turkey's History) (Ankara: TTK Basmevi, 1947); Atatürk ve Tarih Tezi," (Atatürk and the History Thesis) Belleten, III, 10 (1939), pp. 243-46; Ahmed Cevad Emre, Atatürk'ün İnkılap Hedefi ve Türk Tarih Tezi (Revolutionary Goal of Atatürk and the Turkish History Thesis) (İstanbul: Ekin Basmevi, 1956); Semseddin Gönaltay, H. Reşit Tankut, Dil ve Tarih Tezerimiz Üzerine Gerekli Bazı İzahlar (Some Necessary Explanations on Our Language and History Theses) (İstanbul: Devlet Basmevi, 1938). See also J.R. Perry, "Language Reform in Turkey and Iran," International Journal Of Middle East Studies, 17 (1985), pp. 295-311.
historians and their craft as an instrument of the national government. A detailed analysis of those history studies would show that the Turkish nation was established at four levels of action: first, through the creation of a historic territory; second, of common myths and a common past for maintaining the tradition of the newly established nation; third, a common citizen ethics; fourth, the common economy on the territorial mobility of the nation. Then, history became the most correct guide to understand the talents and capabilities of the nation. It served as a hypothetical criterion for delineating the dead tradition from the living national tradition. History laid down the premises of a historical synthesis between a rational, modern and scientific approach and the national tradition.

*Science: The Sword of the Revolution over Society*

The terms science and scientific spirit were employed by Kemalism to refer to ultimate policy criteria of the administrative practices. Accordingly, science with its ultimate values employed for the revolutionary spirit, would bring an end to the dichotomies still surviving in society and in the minds of the people. Science had to be in the service of the revolutionary spirit in its search for the particular qualities of the nation. Science also laid down the ultimate truths about man and society.

In Kemalist perspective, reason and science were the only means of bringing the nation to the level of contemporary civilization. As revealed by Mustafa Kemal in stating the famous motto of the Revolution,

> the surest guide is science. To use the reason in all matters without being chained to old-fashioned ways...To subject everything to close and critical scrutiny, carried out rationally and consciously in the light of the positive sciences.

The Turkish revolution marked the state’s deliberate attempts to achieve a rich synthesis between the authentic Turkish culture and western civilization. Contrary to the preceding reform movements, Kemalists were convinced that the true essence of the western civilization was science and the scientific spirit. The universality of scientific rationale could save the revolution from becoming a static model. Thus, the
The universality of revolutionary principles would be secured by the universality of the scientific rationale.

The distinguishing social characteristic of contemporary civilization was not adherence to one religion or another; but it was the freedom of thought, the importance given to the individual and to human reason, scientific and technological progress and the rule of law. For the Ottoman rulers and for the Republican elite ‘modern’ signified the West. The West meant ‘technology’, ‘science’ and ‘progress’ for the Republicans. In his speech to the teachers of Bursa on 27 October 1922 Atatürk stated that

we shall live as an advanced and civilized nation in the midst of contemporary civilization. And this can only be achieved through knowledge and technology. We shall take technology and knowledge from wherever they may be, and shall place them into the heads of each individual in this nation. For knowledge and technology, there is no solution. 99

Kemalism gave a new understanding and meaning to the emergence of modern institutions; to new technology, to education, to ethics as well as to the new faith and work-life. It gave a new public meaning to the unique cultural products of the nation. The rationale of the modern scientific civilization was an absolute model, and as such, had to be implanted to the traditional Islamic society.

Kemalist consciousness corresponded to a new society which had to be planned systematically on scientific premises which guided the general lines of evolution and societal change. ‘Change’ would, first of all, be secured by selection and by curing the ‘pathologies’ in society which formed obstacles to the goal of ‘catching up with contemporary civilization.’ Mustafa Kemal stated this point as such

Do you know the secret of our victory against the enemies who despoiled the most well-tended, pleasant and beautiful parts of our country for three and one-half years? The secret lay in the fact that our armies were led by scientific principles...Yes, in the political and social life as well as in the intellectual development of our people science and learning shall be our leader..... The point we have reached today is not the real liberation... Real liberation will be achieved through the diagnosis and cure of the disease which afflicts society. If the treatment is carried out scientifically, the patient will survive. Otherwise the disease will become chronic and treatment rendered impossible. If ideas are permeated with meaningless, illogical nonsense, those ideas are sick ideas. Similarly, if social life is permeated with a mass of irrational, illogical, dangerous beliefs and customs, a society will be paralyzed. Virtuousness, good intentions and self-sacrifice are unquestionable characteristics of the utmost necessity to those who want to save our land and its people. However, these qualities are not sufficient to enable one to diagnose

Kemalism referred to a new understanding of the organizing power of reason over the traditional society. Moreover, Kemalism introduced a national conception of ethics in building up a new society consciously and deliberately. Secularization and nationalization of tradition and Islam and the institutionalization of the ‘modern’ introduced a new conception of ethics, which was closely related to the questions of ‘autonomy of the individual’ and ‘liberation from’ the social restrictions of the Islamic tradition. As stated by Mustafa Kemal,

Just as our people are obliged to fight with their weapons, so must they fight with their minds. I have no doubt whatsoever that they will show the same strength in the latter struggle that they have shown in the former. Our people have a pure moral character and great ability.¹⁰¹

Accordingly, ethics belonged to the nation and the state would act as the sole creator of the nation. This national conception of ethics was employed to safeguard the belief in the superiority of the state over the individual, since individuality was conceived to be determined by national culture which would be revived by the modernizer state. The newly fostered national citizen ethics fulfilled an intrinsic integrative function for the ‘individual’ in his relations with modern political institutions. When the state was organized along scientific-technical lines, then the mind and conscience of the people could be cleared of old-fashioned convictions.¹⁰²

The most manifest form of homogenization of the society was the socialization of the members as ‘citizens.’ The Kemalists tried to realize this deal through compulsory, standardized public education.¹⁰³ The state, armored with scientific rationale, aimed to inject a peculiar homogeneous national culture through reforms in the educational sphere. Cultural authenticity and unity were the basic themes of national homogenization. The development of the new societal ethics in accordance

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¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 18
¹⁰² Ibid., p. 181.
with the development of a humanist perspective was another feature of the Turkish revolution.

In this respect, the Kemalist state fulfilled the functions of what Anthony Smith called a "scientific state." The Kemalist "scientific state" as the sole carrier of the scientific rationale represented a new kind of relationship between the state and society. The tendency to employ the bureaucratic instrument of the state to homogenize the population at the same time implied the diffusion of the state's technical instrumentality to society. Besides the objective of eradicating ignorance and superstition, the state made efforts to educate the people and to unify them around the modern national terms of identity.

Based on a modern-secular law, unified under a centralized government, tying the diverse religious groups into a firm solidarity unit called the nation, and having absolute sovereignty over the territory through its representative institutions, the Kemalist state represented the rational mode of conducting public affairs. The intervention of the scientific state on society had profound effects on the legitimacy of the Islamic Weltanschauung. The society experienced a 'problem of meaning' which was firstly and mostly felt by the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals. The religious idea of a divine cosmos over Man that explained and justified the experiences in daily existence was undermined by the Kemalist revolutionary practices. During the revolutionary era, a new vision of the total Order of universe was re-built. In this process the Kemalist ruling elites had mobilized a variety of groups, including the traditionalist conservatives. At the first instance, the nouveaux traditionalist conservatism was a response to the identity crisis felt at the historical moment of the consolidation of the nation state, its political and cultural institutions. In this respect, the nouveaux traditionalist conservatives of the Republic set themselves the goal of being the moral innovators of the nation in the age of modernity.105

CHAPTER 3

TOWARDS A TOPOGRAPHY OF TRADITIONALIST CONSERVATISM

A New Line of Elite Fragmentation: The Question of Traditionalist Conservatism in the Early Republican Era

Widening of the gap among traditionalist conservatism, liberalism(s), Kemalism(s), Islamic reactionism(s) and/or Islamic modernism in the late 1920s and early 1930s and conservatism’s subsequent course of intellectual development as a recognizable political and philosophical stand were due to its modernist impetus which paradoxically derived from its pre-Republican Bergsonian convictions. In the heyday of the revolutionary era, traditionalist-conservative ideals and perspective were articulated through loose intellectual groupings formed on a temporary basis against Islamic reactionism/modernism, liberalism(s) and positivist Kemalism of the 1930s. Yet, intellectual groupings among the traditionalist, conservative and Bergsonian intellectuals in the 1930s were not always clear and definite. Politically speaking, there were ‘liberals,’ ‘Islamists,’ ‘racist-nationalists,’ ‘socialists’, ‘Marxists,’ and those who were accused of being “the servants of the former Ottoman regime,” but not definitely a well organized ‘traditionalist-conservative circle.’ Still, ‘traditionalist’ and/or ‘conservative’ ideals and aspirations essentially appeared in the works of İsmail Hakki Baltacıoğlu and Peyami Safa. These appeared in reference to the Bergsonian philosophical philosophy advocated by Mustafa Şekip Tunç. Tunç was also responsible for grounding the common philosophical aspirations of Ahmet Ağaoğlu’s so-called “liberalism,” Baltacıoğlu’s “traditionalism,” Safa’s “conservatism.”¹ Ulken’s “Anatolism,” which revealed itself as a culturalist perspective, shared the same anti-

¹ Mustafa Şekip Tunç made positive comments on Peyami Safa’s well-known book Türk Devrimine Bakışlar. (Glances at the Turkish Revolution). İsmail Hakki Baltacıoğlu and Safa were well-known nationalist figures. Despite nuances, various articles of Safa appeared in Baltacıoğlu’s journal, Yeni Adam. For Baltacıoğlu’s positive remarks on Safa’s return to the journal, Kültür Haflası see, “Peyami Safa” Yeni Adam, 108 (January 23, 1936), p.3. For Baltacıoğlu’s favorable comments on Safa’s conception of novel, see Baltacıoğlu, “Mürtəcci Romanı” (Reactionary Novel) Yeni Adam, 175 (May 6, 1937), p.3. For Safa’s point on the mission set for Baltacıoğlu’s Yeni Adam, see Safa, “İsmail Hakki Baltacıoğlu ve Gazetesi,” (İsmail Hakki Baltacıoğlu and His Daily) Yeni Adam, 315 (January 9, 1941), p. 6.
scientist, anti-intellectualist philosophical aspirations with the above mentioned group of intellectuals with an heavy emphasis on the necessity to formulate a new secular metaphysics which would be derived from the Turkish experience of mysticism. The realist political philosophy was also a common point of orientation. Loose intellectual groupings gained a visible political aspect on issue-based politics in the Reform period especially on the questions of Turkification of language and religion, and on the new functions attributed to the new cultural and political institutions of the Republic.

Bernard Lewis argued that historiography of Kemalism since the 1930s has generally reflected changing emphasis in the research and writing of Turkish history. In this respect, historians of the Republic emphasized Kemalism's nation-state building features and its contribution to the emergence of the Turkish nation as a cultural entity. By the 1930s, reactionary Islamists and/or any other intellectual -political groupings, which anyhow referred to the old religious cosmology as a legitimacy framework for political and social action, had been neutralized, if not totally routed. New elite cleavages within the ruling Kemalist coalition have also begun to emerge. Tough-liner authoritarian Republicanism, which stood for radicalism and centralism in politics, was countered by soft-liner Republicanism which emphasized de-centralization, private initiative and evolutionism. Still and all, conflict and tensions in politics mainly originated from and were characterized by elite competition between tough and soft liner Republicans.

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Deepening elite fragmentation within the Kemalist coalition stimulated the circulation of various interpretations of Kemalism. In the 1920s, consequences of transition from the religious *Weltanshauung* to the secular one and dissolution of the traditional political and social institutions of the Ottoman regime had occupied a central place in the political and intellectual agenda of the intellectual. However, the 1930s was a decade of competition among intellectuals to formulate a legitimate understanding of Kemalism. Within this context, the years 1932 and 1933, - the publication of the journal *Kadro*, by a group of ex-Marxist intellectuals in 1932, and the University Reform of 1933 - continued to be turning points for the rise of a traditionalist-conservative resistance against the materialist, positivist outlook of the Republic and its imitative westernization models. The first signs of this resistance can be traced to traditionalist-conservative activities in the Turkish Philosophy and Sociology Association in 1927, which had been revived and renamed the Turkish Philosophy Association by Ülküen in 1931.

The rise of a traditionalist-conservative challenge against the materialist-scientificist basis of the Kemalist state was associated, first, with the changing functions of the Kemalist state in society's transformation from the Islamic-framed *Weltanshauung* to a secular modern one. Secondly, it was associated with the changes in elite composition within the ruling Kemalist coalition. Still, the “traditionalism” of Baltacoğlu or “conservatism” of Safa or “Bergsonism” of Tunç, as well as the “culturalism” of Ülküen or “personalism” of Ağaoğlu, had never modeled their opposition on an intensive critique of the Kemalist paradigm. However, they had

always been inflexible towards materialism, communism, and Islamic reactionism and even to Islamic modernism. Tunç’s Bergsonian philosophical aspirations that had been exploited by Safa and Baltacıoğlu prevented them from sticking to the politics of nostalgia to revive the ideals and values of the past since they were heavily influenced by the Bergsonian idea of the irreversibility of time. Yet, they had always been critical about the deterioration of the national tradition as a result of the diffusion of the universalistic-abstractionist ideals of ‘cosmopolitanism,’ ‘liberalism’ or ‘Islamism.’ The idea of moral regeneration of the nation invoked the spirit of creative evolution and provoked traditionalist-conservative attacks on the ‘extremists’ among the secular-modernists and religious-reactionaries who in their view modeled the revolution on a positivist vision of the ‘West’ or who stood against the historical movement of the nation and tried to reverse its course of creative evolution.

Except for Safa and Tunç, some traditionalist conservatives, like Baltacıoğlu, Ağaoğlu and Ülken, were reluctant to label themselves ‘conservative’ but tended to see their particular stands as alternative interpretations of Kemalism. As noted beforehand, the rise and development of traditionalist-conservative ideals and aspirations were strictly related to the nature of the institutionalization of the political power in the nation-state. It would not be so misleading to assert that traditionalist conservatism had originated as a unique intellectual resistance to a radical experience of modernity in a Muslim setting. Thus, it had had political tones highly sensitive to the changing balance of power between the ruling secular-modernist Republican elites. Even though traditionalist conservatism was based on alternative conceptions on the nature of the

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modern state’s legitimacy and its relations to the society, it always remained within the confines Kemalist practices. Emphasis made upon the primacy of national revival and on the new cultural history of the nation, its linguistic authenticity and the role of the culture in the constitution of social and political reality determined the privileged position of the traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia in the Kemalist power structure.

*Early Traditionalist-Conservative Texts, Themes and Stimuli for Growing Consciousness*

Apart from Kemalism, well-structured currents of thoughts, which would create a sense of self-consciousness and loyalty among the Republican intellectuals, were not fully articulated in the early 1930s. It was a more complicated issue if compared to the preceding decades since Kemalism claimed to manipulate the radical rupture from the Ottoman intellectual and political heritage. Besides those state manipulated attempts to establish ‘legal political opposition(s),’ political life did not involve self-motivated and organized political parties and powerful interest groups. Thus, in arriving at generalizations about the rise of traditionalist conservatism, political interactions among organized groups can not be taken as an indication of a well-grounded position.

Moreover, even though they were responsible for the formulation of an alternative vision of modernity that had been exploited by the relevant actors of the political game in the 1930s and by the mid-1940s, traditionalist-conservative thinkers of the 1930s, such as Tunç, Baltacıoğlu, Safa and Ulken, except Ağaoğlu, did not have a significant political role.

They were mostly well-known and influential academicians and men of letters. Tunç, by the 1920s onwards became well-known for his Bergsonian philosophy, particularly for his Bergson translations. Ağaoğlu, the Turkist writer of the Second Constitutional period of the Ottoman era, was a well-known “Turkist-liberal” politician of the Republican period. Baltacıoğlu was famous of his ‘personalist educational philosophy’ through which he aimed to lay down the new educational standards of the Republic. Ulken was a young scholar in the 1930s, and grounded his political

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commitments on an Anatolistan-nationalist stand. Following the publication of his *Umumi Ictimaiyat* (General Sociology) in 1931 and two volumes of *Türk Tefekkür Tarihi* (History of Turkish Thought) in 1932 and 1933, he was sent to Germany to do research on behalf of the Ministry of Education.⁹ When he returned, he was appointed to *Darulfünun* to teach the history of Turkish intellectual thought. He became a well-known scholar of Turkish thought and wrote numerous books in the fields of philosophy, Islamic philosophy, sociology, and ethics, as well as some novels, such as *Posta Yolu* (Postal Road) and *Yarım Adam* (The Half Man).¹⁰ His monist philosophical aspirations slowly moved to a pluralist stand, and he adopted a humanist-moralist approach, which ultimately served to enrich unique conservative political and cultural aims. Ağaoğlu and Baltacioglu also worked in the *Darulfünun* until 1933. In that year both of them were dismissed from their posts in *Darulfünun* when it was abolished and replaced by the Istanbul University.¹¹

Among these figures only Safa did not occupy a state post. He was a famous man of letters. In the 1930s, he wrote numerous articles in the journals *Yedi Gün*, *Yarmay*, *Yirmicin Asr*, Çinaraltı but the journal *Kültür Haftası* (1933-1937) became a symbol of resistance and common platform for Tunç, Ülken and other members of the traditionalist-conservative circle.¹² He actively participated in the seminars held by the Turkish Philosophy Association in the early 1930s. He provided the first pieces of psychological and personalist novels through which his conservative convictions were articulated as a distinct style in literature. He adopted a Bergsonian-personalist

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approach, where the grand cultural dualities which had been experienced by society in transition to modernity, were literally illustrated to answer the question of ‘what to conserve’ in the age of modernity. Moreover, Safa’s polemic with Nazım Hikmet, the famous Marxist poet of the time, also strengthened his public popularity among non-Marxist nationalist circles.

Besides the re-establishment of the Turkish Philosophy Association in 1931, which served to popularize Bergsonian conservative ideals, publication of the journal Kadro (1932-1935), as noted, and its severe attacks to the individual thinkers of the traditionalist-conservative group was also a stimuli for the emergence of a sense of self consciousness among the intellectuals concerned. The journal, Kültür Haftası, and various other journals, which had been published by individual members of the traditionalist-conservative circle, such as Baltacıoğlu’s Yeni Adam, also served as common platforms to counter Kadro’s interpretation of Kemalism as a revolutionary ideology. The significance of these journals for the development of traditionalist-conservative aspirations was due to the fact that they had served as common platforms to formulate distinct approaches to Kemalist reality, since competing interpretations of Kemalism had claimed to be the valid interpretation of Revolutionary practices. In this respect, the consequences of the revolution, its future course of development and legitimacy of the revolutionary methods employed by the Kemalist state elites were placed on the agenda of these journals and intellectual life in the 1930s. Traditionalist-conservative figures also wrote numerous books and articles on the issue throughout the 1930s which had a major importance in understanding traditionalist-conservative characterization of the Revolutionary period. Baltacıoğlu’s Demokrasi ve Sanat, (Democracy and Art), İctimai Mektep Nazariyesi ve Prensipleri (The Theory and Principles of Social School), Terbiye’nin Kiyimetleri ve Vasıtalari (The Means and Values of Education) İctimai Mektep Prensipleri, (The Principles of Social School), Tarih ve Terbiye (History and Education), Toplu Tedris (Mass Education), Sosyoloji (Sociology), Ülken’s Aşk Ahlaki (Piety Ethics), Insani Vatanperverlik, (Humanist Patriotism), Türk Feylozofları Antolojisi (The Anthology of Turkish Philosophers),
Through a thematic reading of this traditionalist-conservative corpus of writings, we can arrive at some conclusions about their “conservative” “traditionalist” “personalist” and Bergsonian” convictions without assuming any relationship between the individual ideas and formulations of the intellectuals concerned. Some of these figures, such as Baltacıoğlu, though he labeled his position as “traditionalism,” may be considered ‘conservative’ in the purely descriptive sense of term ‘conservative’ because of his deference of ‘tradition’ and ‘Kemalist status quo’ against any radical claims, be them either Kadro’s interpretation of Kemalism in the 1930s or Islamic traditionalists and/or other socialist/Marxists groups who aimed to break down the ‘Kemalist political and economic status quo.’

conservative discourse became part of the Kemalist resistance to any claims of change to the *status quo*. However, the question needs further elaboration since these individual figures, in fact, sought to lay down a new kind of "traditionalism" as in the case of Baltacioglu, with radical political and cultural aims of breaking down the Islamic tradition, or a kind of "Bergsonian conservatism," as in the case of Safa and Tunç, which had resulted in the glorification of the new and present that moves to an undefined future.

Bergsonism was on the agenda of the late Ottoman intellectuals before the Kemalist revolution. However, radical Kemalist modernism forced the Republican traditionalist conservatives to answer new political and cultural questions emerging after the institutionalization of the political institutions of Kemalist modernism. As already noted beforehand, during this revolutionary period the term 'conservative' was essentially used to denote 'Islamic reactionaries' and/or the 'savants of the old Ottoman Regime.' Those who aimed to preserve the old Ottoman political institutions, such as the Sultanate or Caliphate, were labeled 'conservatives.' Thus, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals had employed some alternative concepts to define and distinguish their relatively modern creed to conserve. In this respect, Baltacioglu's case is an example. He defined his intellectual stand as 'traditionalist,' and employed the term 'conservative' in the above mentioned sense. Interestingly, it is sufficient to quote from Baltacioglu to show their timidness towards the concept of 'conservatism.' Accordingly,

conservatism and traditionalism are not those ordinary, simple words that can be used by everyone else. These are sociological concepts which correspond to varying social realities... Traditionalism and conservatism name distinct realities which have no relationship with each other.... Traditionalism and Conservatism: It is a must to isolate these two realities. Otherwise, we can not understand nation and nationality.... It is impossible not to be "traditionalist." in the sense I have attributed to the word. In this understanding, nation without a tradition is not a nation at all. In this understanding "traditionalism." has no relationship with "conservatism." Because "tradition," means to know the permanent, adaptive customs that stay vivid and vigorous in all times. Whereas conservatism means devotion to the apathetic customs which have been destined to change. We have introduced many changes in language. However, we have not attempted to change the structure and rationale of our language. Such an attempt would be nothing more than degeneration.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{14}\) Baltacioglu, "Anancilik ve Muhafazakarlik," (Traditionalism and Conservatism) *Yeni Adam*, 370 (December 1942), p.2. For traditionalism, conservatism and reactionarism, see Baltacioglu, "Müretteci Kimdir?" p.3.
Baltacıoğlu put much emphasis on national tradition as a new vivid value system through which the universally sanctioned political institutions of modernity, such as the nation-state and/or other political institutions, such as the parliament, or the political parties, would be re-traditionalized to consolidate a unique Turkish vision of modernity whose ideals would be derived from the history and culture of the nation. Thus, scientific research in general, and sociological research in particular, provided safety and protection to the traditionalist-conservative academician who sought to re-assert Tradition as a value framework to identify those aspects worth conserving in the age of Kemalist modernism. Nevertheless, the Kemalists’ harsh measures against any creed to conserve, deterred them from labeling themselves ‘conservative.’ However, within two decades, Safa illustrated this complex temperament, as follows:

Even during those times when I was skeptic, I was still a nationalist and a humanist. Even in those times when I had doubts about the existence of God, I did not deny the possibility of its existence. Within my limits of thought I am a kind of socialist without being a Marxist. Almost in all my books there are my thoughts. I have not changed in essence. I have always tried to improve myself and still I do. Change of the human being on the condition of still being himself is a necessity comprising to Object. Because of this I am a conservative besides being a revolutionist. (emphases are mine)

Conservatism and/or traditionalism was a complex of confused ideas in the early Republican era. It was because of the fact that these intellectuals were not fully self-conscious and organized in the early 1930s. Even though some of them, like Ağaoğlu and Baltacıoğlu, were active within the Republican ranks, party affiliation can not be taken as a reliable criterion for understanding the motivations behind collective political attempts during a single party rule. After all the lack of durable institutional basis for the circulation of traditional-conservative ideals did not mean that there were

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15 For an emphasis on tradition, see Ağaoğlu, İngiltere ve Hindistan (Britain and India) (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Basmevi, 1929). See also Ulken, Veraset ve Cemivet (Inheritance and Society) (İstanbul: Kutulmuş Matbaası, 1957 [1924]).

16 Ağaoğlu also used the term ‘conservative’ for religious reactionaries willing to preserve the old Ottoman political institutions such as the Caliphate and Sultanate. See Ağaoğlu, “Şarp ve Garp,” (East and West) Vatan, 158, (September 1923) in Atatürk Dönemi Fıkır Hayatu, vol 1, pp. 83-5. In his book İngiltere ve Hindistan (1929), Ağaoğlu argued that traditions are responsible for maintaining social order. In İhtilal mi? İnkslap mi? (Is it Rebellion or Revolution?), published in 1939, this stand became more apparent. For Tunç’s evaluations on conservatism in later decades, see Tunç, “Muhafazakarlık ve Liberallık,” (Conservatism and Liberalism) Türk Düşüncesi, 2 (January 1,1954) pp. 88-9. See also Tunç, "Liberallik ve Şurulu Muhafazakarlık," (Liberalism and Conscious Conservatism) Türk Yurdu, 258 (July, 1956), pp.1-4. It was not accidental that by the beginning of 1950s various articles of Ulken, Baltacıoğlu and Tunç were appeared in Safa’s conservative journal, Türk Düşüncesi.

not significant parallelisms and contrasts between individual perspectives of the intellectuals concerned, which can be characterized as a distinct approach towards the novelties brought up by the Revolution. These traditionalist-conservative ideals and sentiments revealed themselves through a common critical stand against common objects of reaction. These common objects of reaction, such as materialism, positivism, scienticism, rationalism, reactionary Islamism, Marxism, cosmopolitanism, formalism were responsible for the emergence of common philosophico-political grounds among traditionalist-conservative intellectuals.

Traditionalist-conservative groupings in the early Republican era were largely based on loose intellectual groupings formed on shared ideals and through the writings in the same journals. As in the case of the re-establishment of the Turkish Philosophy and Sociology Association, they worked in the same associations and/or published articles in the same journals, like Safa’s Kültür Haftası, Baltacıoğlu’s Yeni Adam and Ülken’s İnsan. Various seminars on language, religion and culture were also held in the Turkish Philosophy Association in the early 1930s, where Safa and Baltacıoğlu had regularly participated in the discussions and delivered seminars on many topics, including language and history policies of the Republic, the place of religion in the Turkish society and the new functions and nature of Republican metaphysics.

After all the traditionalist-conservative ideals widely started to circulate in Turkish political life by the mid-of 1930s. In 1935 the government closed down the Kadro journal. In opposition to the growing authoritarianism of the RPP, by the mid-1930s, the ideals of freedom, individualism, self-realization and order, responsibility and self-devotion were articulated in a unique traditionalist-conservative rationale. Thus, when the main actor of the political game, namely the RPP, had decided to shift from a revolutionary-authoritarian political line to an evolutionary-democratic one by the mid-1940s, unique traditionalist-conservative ideals were already elaborated and awaited for adoption.
Some Tentative Notes on the Shared Traditionalist-Conservative Aspirations and Ideals

Whatever the differences which characterized divergencies among ‘traditionalist,’ ‘conservative’ and ‘personalist-individualist’ ideas of traditional conservative intellectuals, a distinct approach to Kemalist reality created a common stand. Accordingly, society, contrary to the dominant positivist-materialist reading of the Kemalists, could not be manipulated through rational lines. Society was the solid realm where the normative order of the nation could be built upon. Parallel to the search for timeless and permanent social institutions, which constitute the nation as a unique cultural order, history also gained its likely importance in traditionalist-conservative vocabulary. As maintained by Baltacıoğlu in Tarih ve Terbiye, history provided the refined and permanent forms of values and norms that shaped unique national conceptions of art, ethics, politics, customs and education. In a similar vein, for Safa and Ulken, history had a legacy as the realm of authentic values and customs, which would strengthen the modern sense of belonging to a nation. Safa stressed this point with clarity, in that even though everything was destined to change, the question was not to stimulate the forces of change, but to prevent the breakdown of historical structures, such as language and religion which were the constituents of the national tradition. It is not so misleading to say that Tunç’s Bergsonian conception of time had a profound influence on especially Safa’s conception of history and the past as the nation’s subjective experience. In a similar vein, history, for Baltacıoğlu, remained as a realm where society derived its authentic values and norms to maintain its continuity.

20 Baltacıoğlu, Tarih ve Terbiye pp. 53-7. See also Baltacıoğlu, Demokrasi ve Sanat, pp.139-45.
22 Safa, “Üç İddiannın Kimet,”
23 Quoting from Tunç’s article Yine Tarih Karşısında, Baltacıoğlu, in line with Tunç, asserted that the consciousness of history hinted at individual’s need to maintain his social existence in Present. See Tunç, “Yine Tarih Karşısında,” (Once Again Before the History) Hayat, 11 (February 10, 1927) quoted in Baltacıoğlu, Tarih ve Terbiye, pp. 50-1.
Despite their emphasis on history, culture and society, resistance to Gökalp’s societalist political philosophy, which could be dated back to the publication of the journal *Dergah* by the beginning of the 1920s, was also responsible for traditionalist-conservative distance from Kemalist ideals on nation, individual and social order which derived from Gökalp’s societalist themes. Tunç, the prominent figure of Bergsonism, interpreted Gökalp’s conception of freedom as a philosophy of subordination that deteriorates individual creativity. Against the determinist-societalist political philosophy, which revealed itself in Gökalp’s motto of “no individual but society, no right but duty,” Tunç, with other traditionalist conservatives, such as Baltacoğlu, or Ağaoğlu, advocated a personalist perspective. This personalist approach to individual displayed itself as a literary occupation in Safa’s conservative literature and as an underlying theme of Ülken’s moral humanism in *Aşk Ahlaki*. It is also noteworthy that ‘liberal ideals,’ which carved out a niche in politics through the Free Republican Party (FRP) experience in 1931 and by the rise of ‘liberal’ Democratic challenge in the mid-1940s, were based on this ‘personalist,’ but not necessarily on “rationalist individualist” emphasis on freedom, society, state, religion and ethics. In this respect, the Bergsonian substratum of ‘liberal thinking’ formed the general philosophico-political orientations both of the so-called ‘liberalism’ of Ağaoğlu, one of the founding figures FRP, and ‘traditionalism’ of Baltacoğlu, the chairman of the Istanbul branch of the party.

The concept of individual, which gained its likely emphasis in the political vocabulary of traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, did not correspond to the fundamental “rational man assumption” in the Western liberal tradition. The individual, which had been envisioned in traditionalist-conservative vocabulary, was a totality of

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irrationality, passions and will which could not be employed to derive a model for the recreation of a rational world. From Ulken's call for 'humanist moralism' in *Aşık Ahlaki*, to Ağaoğlu and Baltacıoğlu's respective 'individualisms' [read personalisms], traditionalist conservatism could be considered 'individualist,' if individualism was interpreted as a concern with concrete man, existential Man, historical Man that actually exists in definite space and time. Against the universally sanctioned rational-man model of classical liberalism, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals emphasized the authenticity of Turkish man in Turkish society. This search for the authenticity of Turkish Man and society, uniqueness of the Turkish state, Kemalism and Revolution was also responsible for their privileged stand in the Kemalist power structure.

Standing on the edge of the Kemalist power structure, critical remarks were also made of the new cultural policies, educational standards and on the dominant rationalist-nominalist reading of Kemalist principles. The debate, as displayed by Baltacıoğlu in *Cumhuriyetin Kültür Siyaseti* (The Cultural Policy of the Republic), was on the question on which values and institutions the Republican cultural policies would lean. The passage quoted below from Ulken illustrated the temper of traditionalist-conservative intellectuals in the early 1930s. In Ulken's words:

> Is it necessary to eradicate the old to establish the new? Would it be reached to the progress of humanity only through revolutions and turmoil? Is it necessary to clean out everything, every idea and every memory that remain from the past?... Revolutionary will answers: 'Yes, it should be in this way!' to all these questions. Because (for the revolutionary) to wait is to stay aloof forever. Society is at most a totality; to conserve the dead elements is to leave it in inertia. Because the (revolutionary) principle is: Either all or nothing.... There is no third way between these two. ... Revolution is to overthrow an

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25 For further elaboration on this conception of individual, as a synthesis of rational and irrational, see Baltacıoğlu, *Umumi Pedagoji* (General Pedagogy) (İstanbul: Milliyet Basmevi, 1930). Also, Ulken, *İnsan Vatanperverlik* (Humanist Patriotism) (İstanbul: Güneş Basmevi, 1933).


era, to eradicate a structure which would be a foundation for future structure. Revolution is to cut the root of the tree and then to wait for its blooming. 29 (emphases are mine)

Despite their timidness towards positivist radicalism, they were devoted to the idea of ‘progress’. 30 For Tunç, the question was more than the existence of progress in nature and human world, but was on the nature of the social progress. For the members of the traditionalist-conservative circle, institutionalization of the modern nation-state structures; expansion of the capitalist market and corresponding new division of labour in society were responsible for “the great historical progress,” and were responsible for the emergence of new political, social and economic convictions in modern ages. 31

Another characteristic of traditionalist-conservative circle, which mostly revealed itself in the works of Safa, and Baltacıoğlu was their statist orientations. 32 Even Ağaoğlu, the so-called liberal figure of the group, in his Devlet ve Ferd revealed that he was a “Kemalist,” “revolutionist” and “statist” in a different sense from than conceived by Kadro intellectuals. 33 The idea of state as the guarantor of the national

32 Safa argued that after the Great Depression in 1929 Western liberal societies adapted etatist policies and state’s control over political and economic life was expanded. See Safa, “Statikten Dinamige.” See also Ağaoğlu, Devlet ve Ferd, pp. 41-68.
33 Ağaoğlu, ibid. pp. 56-7.
order had appealed to traditionalist-conservative intellectuals. Despite their ‘individualist and ‘hiirriyetperver [read liberal] aspirations,’ the state was the only sacred entity which would maintain the necessary conditions for the free expression of the individual will and the social order.34

Various themes and motives in differing emphases were articulated by traditionalist-conservative intellectuals in response to the varying political, economic and cultural concerns of the ruling statist elites in the early Republican era. Kemalism, the state-building ideology, was eventually the omnipresent perspective. Kemalist ideals of political citizenship, political sovereignty of the nation, national liberation emerged as the historical certainties for surrounding political philosophies, including traditionalist conservatism. Therefore, emerging traditionalist-conservative ideals and aspirations came to claim adherence to Kemalism. Still, those ‘personalist,’ ‘anti-rationalist,’ ‘anti-intellectualist’ and ‘anti-scientific’ motives, peculiar to traditionalist-conservative vocabulary, were articulated to form an alternative, but not necessarily a challenging politico-philosophical perspective to that of Kemalist modernism.

**Nationalist Romanticism and the Cult of Heroism as an Instrument for Legitimation for Traditionalist Conservatism**

At times, traditionalist conservatives sounded as if they had paradoxically given up the idea of the historical continuity of social structures in order to distinguish themselves from the so-called “conservatives,” namely Islamic reactionaries of their time who, for them, resisted Kemalist attempts to break the traditional Ottoman system. They were strictly committed to the modification of the social structures in order to preserve them in the age of modernity. This was a kind of nationalist romanticism, which manifested itself as varying tones of culturalism, and served as a means of legitimation for the Kemalist state elites’ rule over society which ultimately was supposed to stimulate the revival of the national tradition that had been discarded by the cosmopolitan and universalist religious supporters of the umma tradition. What they tried to do was not

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34 “Hiirriyetperver” (freedom lover) is a term employed by some members of the traditionalist-conservative circle to draw a demarcation line with the “liberals” of their time. See Safa, “Statikten Dinamiğe.”
to revive the ideals of religious tradition, but the living tradition in Anatolia. Traditionalist conservatives of the young Republic defended not re-discovering the old religious truths of past times and institutions, but reviving the living tradition and culture which would serve as legitimation for the institutionalization of the Kemalist politics and economic structure.\(^{35}\)

Legitimacy, in this sense, was the traditionalist-conservative tendency to defend the uniqueness of the national Republican institutions. In this context, the defense of the Republic ultimately came to mean the defense of worldly politics against reactionary Islamism, which resisted secularization of politics and daily life since the First Constitutional period (1876-1877). For Baltacıoğlu, modern society was essentially democratic. The fundamental principles and processes of a democratic order, Baltacıoğlu argued, were rationalization, industrialization, homogenization, secularization and the establishment of modern state (devletleşme). Thus, the highest good of modern society differed from the highest “good” of the traditional religious society. The highest good in the modern world was drawn by the secularization of the Weltanschauung which came to mean the demystification of daily life. In a similar vein, the reasons for the mobility and dynamism of the Western culture, for Ağaoğlu, was the grand attempt to demystify culture. Islamic and Brahmanian cultures were static and immobile since the highest good in culture was drawn from holy eternal sources.\(^{36}\)

In this respect, Republican politics, to which the traditionalist conservatives were devoted, was in severe contradiction with the Islamic principle which transfers all worldly powers to God, in theory, and to his sword on earth, namely the Caliph/Sultan,


in practice. The new Republic, whose national uniqueness was praised, represented the ideal of the new political order which was in need of protection and conservation.

In the 1930s, it was very difficult to differentiate traditionalist-conservative romantic nationalism from Republican nationalism. Traditionalist-conservative theme of political uniqueness had been praised by the ruling intelligentsia during the revolutionary period. This revolutionary era was also characterized as an age of heroism, politically relying on the charismatic power structure established by Mustafa Kemal, the national hero and the founder of the Republic. Following Atatürk’s death in 1938, the rule of Republican People’s Party, based on charisma, moved towards the rule of bureaucracy in an attempt to create a National Chief as a new cult of heroism and to maintain continuity in power structure. The transformation of the charisma to the bureaucratic rule of the Party in the 1940s did not lessen traditionalist-conservative support raised to the Kemalist power circle, but created a distance from one-party authoritarianism. Traditionalist-conservative support was raised to strong leadership and power based on charisma during Atatürk’s rule. Charismatic power structure, was praised as a model of self-sacrifice and heroism in the age of collective creationism. In this sense, there was a straight relationship between traditionalist conservatism and Revolutionary rationale. Traditionalist conservatives openly praised Kemalism as a form of new humanism and heroism which relied on the charismatic rule of the founder of the Republic. Thus, both movements could be placed in the same political and philosophical context that showed an exceedingly high esteem for the newly founded Republic. Likewise, the power of the nation-state was praised and Islamic theology was sharply criticized. Faith in the representative institutions of the parliamentary democracy was also coupled


38 See Baltacıoğlu, “İnkılâb Mektebi,” p. 5. Ülken’s moralist perspective, which revealed itself in his *Aşk Ahlak*, aimed to reflect man’s desire to become part of a spiritual design in a total devotion to the cult of self-sacrifice. Traditionalist-conservative criticism of egoism and selfishness of the civil society paved way to the development of an ethics of heroism and self-sacrifice.
with deep belief in the homogenizing effect of the national culture which would eliminate traditional parochialism. However, the rule of bureaucracy, which had gradually developed after the death of Atatürk in 1938, was more intensively challenged since it was suspected to hinder the creative evolution of the society.

Turkish traditionalist conservatism with its heavy emphasis on nationalist-romantic sentiments envisioned a new “national community” and a new state, typically Turkish, with special historical roots in the living culture of the “Turkish society.” The questions foremost in mind for the traditionalist conservatives of the 1930s were political independence, cultural uniqueness, and respect for the living national tradition. The Kemalist political victory resulted in the emergence of a modern nation state and later attempts to substitute modern secular cosmology in place of the old religious one could only be possible with the support of the traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia who were strictly devoted to a vision of modernity.39

As noted by a prominent student of Turkish politics, the nation state-builder Republican People's Party represented a broad coalition of intelligentsia, civilian and military bureaucracy and local land owners.40 Therefore the traditionalist-conservative political eclecticism was shaped by a set of polarities between state protection against individual initiative, individualism against societalism, liberty against order, traditionalism against modernism which served as a cement to hold this broad coalition on the side of the revolutionary ideals. In this respect, traditionalist-conservative ideals stood for a harmony between liberty and order, equality and hierarchy, individualism and societalism, secularism and religion, mobility and stability, authenticity and universalism.

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39 For a short note on reactionarism, see Baltacıoğlu, “İrtica,” (Reaction) Yeni Adam, 5 (January 29, 1934), p. 1, “İnkalabın Mektibi,” p. 5, “Cumhuriyetin Kültür Siyaseti,” p.9, “Müftüce Kımdır?” p.3. See also Safa, Türk İnkılabına Bakışlar, pp. 208-12, 85-97. Ulken argued that Ağaoğlu had shown that it was language but not religion which carried the historical legacy of the national culture. See Ulken, Türkiye’de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi (History of Contemporary Thought in Turkey), 3rd ed. (Istanbul: Ulken Yayınları, 1992), pp. 410-1. Ağaoğlu’s emphasis on language served to counter the claims of Islamic reactionaries. He asserted that it was not the religious tradition but language through which values and the norm structure of the society were transmitted in history. In this context, Ulken’s books, Aşk Ahlaki ve Insani Vatamperverlik, were examples of his search for a value system which would neither lay aside subjective experience of religion, as a set of moral sentiments, nor would transform religious sentiments to social and political imperatives.

Although there emerged divergencies in policy prescriptions, traditionalist conservatism was not politically distinct from Kemalism in the 1930s. Turkish traditionalist conservatism supported the consolidation of the Kemalist revolutionary order and modern secular cosmology. Turkish traditionalist conservatism, as opposed to its continental counterparts, was not the political voice of descending classes and social groups, which lost status and power during the course of a grand bourgeois revolution, as in the case of France. On the contrary, it stood for the ascending Republican intelligentsia’s creed to conserve the structures of modernity, namely the nations state, its political institutions and acculturation patterns together with support for the new secular ethics ultimately to replace Islamic theology. For that reason, disjunction between reactionary Islam and the *nouveaux* traditionalist conservatism of the Republic became more apparent when the Kemalist nation state had smashed the former. Traditionalist conservatism did not suffer from total political defeat and its ideals continued to circulate within the Republican intelligentsia through the activities of its founding figures mostly employed in the most prestigious cultural institutions of the Republic. Meanwhile, Islamic reactionism and its protagonists were dismissed from political life.

**The Cultural Construction of the Individual**

From the proclamation of the Republic to the mid-1940s, nationalist romantic themes dominated the traditionalist-conservative vocabulary. In this era, the Kemalist “scientific state” ultimately sought to create the nation as a cultural-political entity. This romantic search of a nation was also a symptom of Kemalist culturalism, which had been refined in the Turkish History Thesis and Sun-Language Theory in the early

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41 Baltacıoğlu’s political stand was more statist, as compared to Ağaoğlu’s liberalism. Safa stood with a distance both to the liberalism of the latter and the etatism of the former. Safa did not have a faith both on etatism and liberalism, since the former, for him, curbed down the individual freedom and the latter caused anarchy. See Safa, “Dünyanın Muhtaç Olduğu Nizam,” (The Order Which the World is in Need of) Cumhuriyet, (October 11, 1939). Tunç, in his articles published in the daily Cumhuriyet, saw the state as the pillar of the social order and attributed the role of an arbitrator of conflicting political and economic interests. What was common to all, even to Ağaoğlu’s liberalism as revealed in his book *Devlet ve Ferd*, was their criticism of the self-pursuit egoism of the civil society. For Tunç’s criticism of egoism, see Tunç, “Zamane Adamı,” (Contemporary Man) Cumhuriyet, (November, 13, 1940). For elaborations on state, see Tunç, “Devlet ve Millet,” (State and Nation) Cumhuriyet, (October 8, 1942), “Devlet ve Terbiye,” (State and Education) Cumhuriyet, (November 11, 1942).
1930s. Kemalist rulers and traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia were aiming to provide a historical dimension to the already existing cultural practices. Culturalism of the ruling center ultimately aimed to revive cultural and historical research to reconstitute the Turkish past and Turkish personality. Thus, cultural reforms of the Kemalist state provoked the development of a culturalist nationalist awakening among the Kemalist intelligentsia. Culturalism was further intensified by Turkification of the language and Islam. Yet, Kemalist culturalism was further supplemented with the romantic traditionalist-conservative creed, which aimed to find out the creative essence in national tradition which would further be employed to re-traditionalize the universally sanctioned institutions of Kemalist modernism. Those attempts to revive the historical awareness of tradition and culture, and the ardent traditionalist-conservative support for it, aimed to show that an authentic nation, a sense of Turkishness, and personality were historically determined.

There was a fundamental political theme behind this emphasis on culture as a qualifying component of the collective and individual subconscious. The creation of a more secure and balanced individual as an authentic personality would, in the final analysis, strengthen the fabric of the new nation. This conception of culture, which disclosed itself as a realm of irrationality, overlapped with traditionalist-conservative conception of the individual, as a product of peculiar culture and as a unique self which was a yield of rational and irrational sides of his authentic personality. Culture was the lacuna where the irrational essence of the individual derived his basic inspirations and realized himself as a living, acting and concrete agent. This irrational essence of

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42 Ulken’s Anatolianism was an example of his romantic nationalism which aimed to give an answer to the question on the historical origin of the national culture. Culture occupied a central place in the traditionalist-conservative agenda. For an emphasis on the significance of culture and cultural issues, see “Kültür Nedir?” (What is Culture?) Kültür Haftası, 1 (December 15, 1936), p. 1.

43 See Baltacıoğlu, Tarih ve Terbiye, pp. 53-61.

44 See Baltacıoğlu, ibid., For a later assessment, see Baltacıoğlu, “Ahlakta Türke Doğru,” pp. 57-61.

45 See Ulken, “İnsani Vatancılık,” pp. 4-13. Same themes were elaborated in Ulken’s book Aşk Ahlaki. Baltacıoğlu revealed that it was impossible to create a man in the laboratory. See Baltacıoğlu, “En Büyük Devlet Siyaseti Neder? (What is the Greatest State Policy?) Yeni Adam, 17 (April 23, 1934), p. 8. In his İctimai Mektep Prensipleri, Baltacıoğlu pointed out that the task of the Revolution was not to create a model of revolutionary man but to educate the citizen as such. See also Baltacıoğlu, İctimai Mektep Prensipleri, p.7.
culture and personality were unique and could not be grasped through logic, reason and science. This irrational cultural core, which was also responsible for the uniqueness and authenticity of the Turkish culture and personality, had to be protected from the manipulative policies of the bureaucratic scientific state. The solidarist ethics of Gökalp was also challenged on this peculiar conception of the personality.\footnote{For Baltagoglu, education was an empirical process of learning, see Baltagoglu, \textit{Demokrasi ve Sanat}, p. 51, \textit{İctimai Mektep Prensipleri}, pp. 5-11. Ülken “Ziya Gökalp’in Eleştirisi,” (Critique of Ziya Gökalp) \textit{Cümr Mecmuası} 7, 81, (1939), pp. 141-2. See also Ülken, \textit{Ziya Gökalp}, pp. 21-30.}

Dichotomies between individual and society; matter and soul were seen as the artifacts of the mechanist-positivist views on society which were inspired by a rationalist philosophy.\footnote{See Baltagoglu, “Kadro’ya Göre Yeni Adam, Yeni Adam’a Göre Kadro,” p. 11. For criticism of individualism and societalism, see Ülken, \textit{Ask Ahlaki}, pp. V-VII. Also Ülken, “Zit Kuvvetlerin Yaradısı,” pp. 1-7.}

For the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, the Kemalist revolution symbolized the liberation of culture [read irrationality], where the creative individual will would further free itself from the constraints of liberal cosmopolitanism and religious universalism.\footnote{See Baltagoglu, “Kadro’ya Göre Yeni Adam, Yeni Adam’a Göre Kadro,” p. 11. For criticism of individualism and societalism, see Ülken, \textit{Ask Ahlaki}, pp. V-VII. Also Ülken, “Zit Kuvvetlerin Yaradısı,” pp. 1-7.}

As revealed by Safa in \textit{Türk Devrimine Bakışlar} it was also an attempt to abolish the cultural dualities that manifested themselves as a schizophrenic individual attitude towards life since the Ottoman Reformist era of the nineteenth century.\footnote{See Baltagoglu, “Kadro’ya Göre Yeni Adam, Yeni Adam’a Göre Kadro,” p. 11. For criticism of individualism and societalism, see Ülken, \textit{Ask Ahlaki}, pp. V-VII. Also Ülken, “Zit Kuvvetlerin Yaradısı,” pp. 1-7.}

This schizophrenic individual attitude towards life implies the degenerative effects of the former modernization [read westernization] attempts on authentic national culture since the individual, for traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, was the product of a particular history and tradition, and gained his value as a member of a particular nation.\footnote{See Safa, “İstenilen Bir Edebiyat;” (A Desirable Literature) \textit{Cumhuriyet}, (June 19, 1933). Safa argued that the real revolutionary aim was to smash the universalist Islamic scholastics which reduced Man merely to a category of subject before the God.}

This conception of the individual, as the carrier of an irrationality, when coupled with the critics of mimetic westernization models has revealed two things. First, their rejection of liberal rational man assumption to which classical liberalism adhered; second, the rejection of the idea of unilinear progress in history which implies that all societies will at the end of a gradual evolution will be modernized.
and/or westernized. As noted by Baltacioglu, in reference to the function of art in modern society in his *Inkilap Edebiyat Nasil Olabilir?* (How Can the Literature of the Revolution Be?) liberal society was the source of all individual isolation and alienation in modern times.\(^5^1\) The sense of belonging to the Turkish nation, the safety and immunity stemming from this sense of belonging and the concreteness of the national tradition would counterbalance the isolation, selfishness and abstractionism of the ideal of liberal rational individual premise. While Kemalists set the new principles of the rules of political game, traditional traditionalist conservatives presented themselves as the moral innovators of the new Turkish personality.

*State Paternalism and the “Papa State”*

Traditionalist-conservative personalism and culturalism were in conformity both with their vision of the Kemalist nation state as a paternalist and *Papa state* over society. In their view, devotion to the liberal individualism would turn the new national order to an anarchy.\(^5^2\) Nation-state, as noted by Ağaoğlu, was an indispensable part of the national order,\(^5^3\) since according to Ağaoğlu “state is statist in essence.”\(^5^4\) Thus, it was natural that the state, as the constituent of the national order, would promote the welfare of its citizens. Still, traditionalist conservatives tried to specify the legitimate limits of state interference in society. And, as revealed in Ağaoğlu’s *Devlet ve Ferd*, this had been maintained by a smooth distinction made between government and the state. This distinction provided a secure position to traditionalist-conservative intellectuals since opposition to governmental policies did not come to mean an opposition to the Kemalist state.

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\(^5^1\) Baltacioglu, “Inkilap Edebiyat Nasil Olabilir?” p. 7.

\(^5^2\) See Ülken, *Aşk Ahlaki*, p. VII. For Safa liberal political philosophy never lost its emphasis on freedom (*hürriyet*) in the twentieth century but it gave up its original anti-statist mission. See Safa “Demokrasi ve Liberalizm,” (Democracy and Liberalism) *Cumhuriyet*, (July 23, 1933). The task set by Safa for the Republican ruler was to find a middle way between freedom and order, individual will and social obligations. Baltacioglu also argued that he arrived at a conception of evolution which recognized both social determination and individual freedom. See Baltacioglu, “Kadro ya Göre Yeni Adam, Yeni Adam’a Göre Kadro,” p. 11.

\(^5^3\) Ağaoğlu *Devlet ve Ferd*, pp. 60, 40-1.

\(^5^4\) Ibid., p. 61.
The functions of nation-state structures were different from that of the old Ottoman state. Indeed, the modern nation state was the real form of the Papa state which assumed responsibility to promote the welfare and morality of its subjects. The Ottoman state did not have such a mission. On the contrary, Ottoman public philosophy was based on keeping up the societal order (nizam) and status quo. Traditionalist conservatives were cautious about the revolutionary transcendentalism of the Kemalist state. However, it was supported in as much as it put its mission to liberate the national culture and tradition from cosmopolitanism and abstract formalism of Islamism and former Ottomanism. Therefore, traditionalist conservatives supported the development of an authentic Turkish personality in its concreteness, which became the basic contention of Baltaciğlu’s educational philosophy. New paternalism was welcomed as the symptom of the awakening of the national forces. This paternalism did not contradict the traditionalist-conservative emphasis on the society and individual. On the contrary, through its natural and historical paternalism over the society, the state was held responsible for creating the political network necessary for the free expression of the creative essence of the individual and society. The state, for Baltaciğlu, was also responsible to maintain the necessary social, political and cultural conditions for the self-realization of its citizens.  

Nationalist romanticism, which manifested itself as the adaptation of Kemalist culturalism in varying tones, was also responsible for the ardent traditionalist-conservative support for state paternalism. The foremost feature of their understanding of cultural romanticism as complementing state paternalism was originally based on a positive meaning attributed to romanticism in constituting a national public order. For Baltaciğlu the task of the revolution was to maintain industrialization, consolidation of democracy and demystification of daily life. In a similar vein, for Safa modernization was based on two interacting processes, namely, urbanization (sitelesmek) and rationalization (riyazilesmek). New public realm would be the design of the ruling

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55 For public education, see Baltaciğlu, Toplu Tedris.
Kemalist state elites and would be based on the principles of the equality of the citizens and sovereignty of the people. On the traditionalist-conservative side, there was no creed for withering away of the state from the communal life of the nation. On the contrary, by creating an amalgam of national tradition, nation state, nation and History, guarding the self realization of individuals and the free manifestation of culture became the new functions of the Kemalist state. Romantic nationalism, when coupled with state paternalism, had resulted in a devotion to the public power which had be to protected from the degenerative effects of individualism. The ideal of nation as a cultural entity limited the meaning of liberalism to the specific boundaries of the individual will. ‘Liberal’ as in the cases of Safa and Baltacıoğlu, solely came to denote an emphasis made on the free choice of the individual.57

In this new age of the re-traditionalization of the society towards national forms, traditional conservative reaction to liberalism in the 1930s, as a philosophy of anarchy, had overwhelming consequences in setting the tone of their relations with the ruling Kemalist state elites, and for shaping basic liberal aspirations since the dominant figures of traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia had played crucial roles in the formation of “liberal parties” of their time. When lack of trust to liberalism was coupled with a praise for national tradition, traditionalist conservatives took a further step in finding a place in the Kemalist power structure. In this respect, traditionalist-conservative amalgam of culture, nation, tradition and individual was never a coherent articulation of resistance to Kemalism. On the contrary, traditionalist-conservative ideals and aspirations served as power valves for manipulating group politics for the ruling Kemalists state elites: traditionalist conservatism *sui generis* secured the diffusion of the ‘modernizing ethos’ of Kemalism to the competing intellectual and/or political groups which emerged by further fragmentation of the Kemalist power structure in the course expanding capitalist market relations.

57 See Baltacıoğlu, *Demokrasi ve Sanat*, p. 125; Safa, “Hayat Karşıında Sistemlerimiz.” Also Safa, “Demokrasi ve Liberalizm.”
Traditionalist Conservatism as an Alternative Political Reading of Kemalist Practices

Traditionalist-conservative strategies and ideas became part of the process of modernization manipulated by the Kemalist state. Traditionalist conservatives together with Kemalists were the defenders of formal political liberties brought about to the nation by the establishment of the Republican regime. Their agenda included equality before the law, freedom of property, freedom of press, tolerance to religious beliefs. Nevertheless, the development and circulation of traditionalist-conservative ideals and aspiration in the early Republican era, which developed in contrast to the positivist scientistic spirit of Kemalism, in fact, registered the existence of not a coherent comprehensive Kemalism, but rivaling Kemalisms, all of which claimed to have the legacy of Kemalist modernism.

In practice, this traditionalist-conservative reading of Kemalism of the 1930s was not about the constitutive principles of the Kemalist state. It was mostly focused on the objectives and boundaries of government. Republicanism of the new state, which implied that there should be popular participation of the people through its elected representatives, was not questioned. A limited role was granted to the government in managing the economic life of the nation. Traditionalist conservatives in the 1930s did not persistently adhere to a specific economic program or doctrine. They did not attempt to elaborate a specific economic policy for the Republican governments different from those declared in the Izmir Economic Congress, convened by the encouragement of Gazi Mustafa Kemal in 1923. As revealed in Baltacıoğlu’s Sosyoloji, Ulken’s Aşk Ahlaka, Sosyolojiye Giriş (Introduction to Sociology) or Sosyoloji, the new society would be based on a new division of labour that emerged under the constraints of modern capitalist economy. Still, liberalism with an ethical content, was an alien concept to the traditionalist-conservative circle. In this respect, it is difficult to see them as the spokespersons of particular interests of specific classes and/or groups.

Following the Great Depression in 1929, not only the limits of government regulation over economic matters but also state’s functions in the economy had expanded

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58 Ağaoglu in his discussion with the Kadro intellectuals tried to draw the limits of government interference in society. See Ağaoglu, Devlet ve Ferd, pp. 41-68.

59 See Şafa “Statikten Dinamiğe.” Those themes elaborated by Ağaoglu in his Devlet ve Ferd were also based on this contention. Ulken’s conception of work as a means of self-realization was responsible for his distance to the idea of excessive state control over the society. See Ulken, “Zıt Kuvvetlerin Yaradığı,” pp. 3-4.

all over the world. It expanded in the form of public ownership or share-holding in some sectors of the economy. Safa, in his *Milli Idealimiz Apartman Yaptırmak Mıdır?* (Is Our National Ideal to Build Apartments?), saw investments made on private civil works as examples of unfair rent income and waste of national resources. Baltacoğlu in his *Demokrasi ve Sanat* also held similar views. For Safa and Baltacoğlu, these were the symptoms of implicit egoism and selfishness. In his literary works, Safa characterized the westernized rational ego as a case for the corrupted personality who selfishly defends its particular interests against common interests. In sum, liberal individualist ethics and its demands for creating and accumulating wealth against the national public good were rejected as the main causes of the deterioration of the new national moral order. In this respect, the personalist ideals of the early traditionalist conservatives were at odds with any kind of middle class ideology.

**Traditionalist-Conservative and Radical Kemalist Visions of Modernity: Emergence of Capitalism-Centered World Views**

Kemalism, for the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals marked the radical transformation of the Ottoman-Islamic religious cosmology.\(^62\) Traditionalist-

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62 Ulken, “Maksad,” p.1 See also Ulken, “*Türkiye’de Ideализm Temayülleri,*” (The Trend of Idealism in Turkey) *Insan*, 2, 12 (May 8, 1942), pp. 929-38, “*Sanat ve Cemiyet,*” (Art and Society) *Insan*, 3, 1-13 (April 1, 1941), pp. 26-9. Also Baltacoğlu, *Demokrasi ve Sanat*, pp. 54-5. Baltacoğlu pointed out that the basic contention of the late Ottoman intellectuals was to show that Islam was not a religion which hindered the social development. Thus, they tried to find out new means to conserve the religious tradition. This era, for Baltacoğlu, was characterized by eccentrism and dualisms. See Baltacoğlu, *Hayatım, * (My Life) *Yeni Adam*, 188 (August 5, 1937), p. 18. Baltac10glu in his article *Vicdan Hürriyeti ve Laiklik* commented on secularization policies of the Republic era and emphasized on the new place granted to religion in the Republican era. Accordingly, “each Turkish citizen can choose the religion of whatever he likes or may even commit to atheism. It is his fundamental right of citizenship and Turkishness.” See Baltacoğlu, “*Vicdan Hürriyeti ve Laiklik,*” (Freedom of Conscience and Laicism) *Yeni Adam*, 109, (January 30, 1936), p. 3. For the illustration of Eastern personality, see also Baltacoğlu, “*Şarkı*” (The Oriental Man) *Yeni Adam*, 236 (July 6, 1939), p.3. For Baltacoğlu, Republic represented more than a policy shift. In a short note appeared in his editorial column, Baltacoğlu stated as follows: “Is Republic a political regime? Yes. But is it all? No. We have to understand that Republic is not simply an insipid shift in politics but it was a moral will which emerged from the crisis of humanity. *Turkish Republic is not only a shift in the form of the state but is itself an emerging culture and creative evolution*.” (Emphases are mine) See Baltacoğlu, “*Cumhuriyetin XVinci Yılı,*” (15th Year of the Republic) 201 *Yeni Adam*, (October, 17, 1937), p.3. In his article entitled *Eski ve Yeni Dünya Görüşlerimiz,* Tunç compared the God-centric cosmology with the world-centric secular cosmology and characterized the basic difference between them and their different senses of cosmic Order. According to him, God-centric cosmology saw the world order as an epiphenomenon of the divine order whereas the latter was characterized by a new kind of materialism. Tunç, “*Eski ve Yeni Dünya Görüşlerimiz,*” (Our Old and New Worldviews) *Cumhuriyet*, (October 11, 1942). For characterization of modern society, see Tunç, “*İstikbal için Aranan Yeni Utiklar,*” (New Horizons for the Future) *Cumhuriyet*, (June 6, 1943). Also Tunç, “*Milliyet İdealı ve Topyekun Teribeve,*” (The Ideal of Nationality and National Education in All) *Cumhuriyet*, (April 5, 1943). Tunç, “*Ancakla Milli ve Ruhlu Haletler,*” (Today’s Nations and Their Spiritual States) *Cumhuriyet*, (July 27, 1941). See also Tunç, “*Bugünkü Hayatımızın Aksınları,*” (The Flows of Our Life Today) in *Atatürk Devri Fikir Hayatı II* (Intellectual Life in Atatürk’s Era II), Mehmet Kaplan, Icici Engin, et al., eds. (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yay., 1992), pp. 331-4; Ulken, “*Mesruyetin Tereddüdü Devri,*” (The Period of Hesitation in the Constitutional Era) *Insan*, 1,10 (March 10, 1939), pp. 769-78.
conservative circle of the early Republic witnessed the emergence of modern social and civil practices, and consolidation of new political relations between state and society. They were aware of the fact that the religious Weltanschauung was dissolving and modern political forms were emerging. Baltacıoğlu characterized the transition to the world of Kemalist modernism as follows:

For us, the origins of new culture is (our) new life. The vital questions of the Turkish Revolution reflect the essential values of Turkish culture. Let me give some examples. Science, technique and experience can hold sway over war, economy, law and education. God, Prophet, Islam or Christianity have nothing to do with these things. The enemy of (our) new life is not only religious beliefs but also the mystique mentality.

Ülken in *Sanat ve Cemiyet* (Art and Society) and *Meşruyetin Tereddiıt Devri* (The Period of Hesitation in the Constitutional Era) pointed out the emergence of a new political, social and economic system through the breakdown of the preceding theocratic system. The history of Turkish modernization, for Ülken could be dated back to two hundred years ago. Yet, it was the Turkish Revolution which had carried the previous modernization efforts to their logical consequences. The Kemalist Revolution represented the beginning of new Turkish renaissance. This modern society was characterized by the expansion of capitalism and emergence of a new humanism. Thus, Tunç, in *Kader ve Kanun* (Faith and Law), illustrated the collapsing order as follows:

In the Middle Ages the term "adetullah", meant that all incidents in the world depended on God's Will. These were the times when it was believed that without the notice of the God nothing would happen. Thus, people believed in an established and indestructible order encompassing all beings. They were ready to respect and obey the customs and traditions and the decisions and will of the governments with whose legitimacy they were content.

Baltacıoğlu also reinstated the basic features of the traditional religious system and noted that the rupture of the social and political dualisms of the religious order was due to the emergence of a secular Order. The Kemalist era, for him, also represented the

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63 Baltacıoğlu, “Kültürüümüzü Kurtarmak Lazım,” (It is Necessary to Save Our Culture) *Yeni Adam*, 137 (August 13, 1939), p. 2.
beginning of a new epoch which was based on new conceptions of nature, man and society. Accordingly,

There are three momentous periods of development in our history of culture and school.
1. Theocratic Period
2. Restoration Period
3. Period of Realism...

Each one of these periods portrays a respective social structure, social ideal, and a social conception of life. Each period reflects an idealized social mentality. Scientifically, each period is contextually normal. What is abnormal is to try to revitalize the old... In the theocratic period, social life was grounded on a celestial religion. A holy book provided the basis for law, ethics and even art. The social ideal of this period was heaven, the holy realm. The school model of this period was madrasah. The only theme of education was reading and writing of the holy book. The only method of education was inculcation. The only disciplinary instrument was pressure and beating. Like the European renaissance

Tanzimat Period was an advance of secularism and renovation. In this period antagonistic institutions coexisted: World and the other world, law and fetwa, school and madrasah. science and faith. One can observe the same antagonisms also in the Constitutional Period: Religion and science, scholasticism and experience, school and madrasah. (Emphases are mine)

It was the social, moral, and political ambivalence which was held responsible for the emergence of a traditionalist-conservative search of a new Order. Indeed, for Baltacılıoğlu, those who experienced rapid modernization had to handle the dualities and ambivalence in cultural, political and economic structures. He pointed out that they were a generation of adaptation who were squeezed between the new and the old. Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals were sensitive to the all-embracing crises of transition to modernity.

Traditionalist Conservatism, Kemalism and Radical Modernism

Traditionalist-conservative circle stood for the consolidation of a new sense of belonging and Order since religious conceptions of society and politics could not carry the nation to the future. Safa in his Anahtar Arayan Dünya (The World in Search for

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68 Baltacılıoğlu, "Köy, Eğitmen ve Öğretmenleri," p. 16. See Baltacılıoğlu, "Din Zorbalığı," (Religious Despotism) Yeni Adam, 627 (December 3, 1949), p. 1. For a similar point of view, see Tunç, "Eski Ve Yeni Dünya Görüşlerimiz." See also Ulken, "Türkiye Değinda Türkçülük -Realist ve İlim Türkçülük," (Turkish Outside Turkey - Realist and Scientific Turkism) İstanbul, (March 1, 1946), pp. 6-7, "Hayali-Siyasi ve Hakiki Türkçülük," (Imaginary-Political and Genuine Turkism) İstanbul, (March 15, 1946), pp. 2-3. According to Ulken, distinctive characteristic of genuine Turkish philosophers, such as Ibn Hesra (Alhazen) and Ibn Sina (Avicenna) was their realist philosophies. See Ulken, "Türkiye'de Idealizm Temayüllü," p. 930.

69 Ulken, Ask Ahlaki, p. 164.


71 Tunç, "Gençlık Nereye Gidiyor?" (Where is the Youth Heading?) Cumhuriyet, (June 7, 1942).

72 Tunç, "Milliyet Idealı ve Topyekun Terbiye." Also see Ulken, "Millet Nedir, Ne Değildir?" (What is or is not Nation?) Millet ve Tarih Sınırları, p. 178.
a Guide) affirmed that the contemporary world was in a crisis and it revealed itself as an existential ambivalence. According to Safa, a new sense of order had to be consolidated.73 Comparing the tempo of life in the Ottoman era with the Republican one, Baltacıoğlu also bespok of the modern crisis:

We were all educated in the period of Abdulhamid II. This period had many shortcomings. Nevertheless there was not a disorder in the schools of this period. The reason for that was not absolute rule, but the absence of "value crisis" in the society. The Republican regime introduced a grand revolution. For ages we were trying to Europeanize through ages. The Republican regime fulfilled this task at once. However, the tremor was tremendous since we experienced a two-sided change: On the one hand, we broke out the ties with the Islamic civilization, and on the other, we faced with the threat of assimilating into the national cultures of the Western countries.74

Although the social, economic and political crises in Ottoman-Turkish polity emerged due to the confrontation between the modern and traditional and became salient by the beginning of the Tanzimat era, they had not been resolved until the establishment of the Republican regime in 1923.75 For the traditionalist-conservative circle, those political and social crises were modern phenomena. Indeed, the Turkish vision of modernity and the main social and political forces which shaped, it had begun to weigh in politics by the beginning of the twentieth century in the turbulent atmosphere of the Second Constitutional era (1908-1920).

In contemporary social and political theory, the term modernity has widely been used to imply a new state of consciousness in rupture from the religiously-oriented Weltanschauung of the traditional society.76 In the Turkish case, Kemalism signifies this modern scientific and philosophical consciousness which broke with

74 Baltacıoğlu, "Değer Buhram," (The Value Crisis) Yeni Adam, 373 (February 19, 1942), p.2. See Baltacıoğlu, "Tezat," (The Contradiction) Yeni Adam, 3 (January 15, 1934), p.1, "Demokraside Terbiye," (Education in Democracy) Yeni Adam, 4 (January 15, 1934), p.2, “İnklab Edebiyatı Ne Olabilir?” p.7. For Baltacıoğlu one of the impacts of modernity on intellectual stratum was alienation. See Baltacıoğlu, “Halk ve Aydınlar,” (People and Intellectuals) Yeni Adam, 582 (February 21, 46), pp. 2, 11. For a similar point of view, see Safa, "Türk Münevverlerini Türkleşirmek." For the alienation of intellectuals, see Ulken, Ask Ahlaki, p. V. See also Tunç, "Devlet ve Millet,” “Eski ve Yeni Dünyadır Görüşlerimiz,” “Milliyet İdealı ve Topyekun Milli Teribe.”
the older religious tradition. As depicted by one of the founding figures of the traditionalist conservatism,

if we try to explain Kemalism insofar as to its original sources, we will find an original life conception absent in any other political and social regimes: more than that we will *sui generis* find a conception of universe. We can characterize this conception as 'creativity' but not as 'novelty' as understood by some others.\(^77\)

For the traditionalist-conservative circle, Kemalism, as illustrated by Baltacıoğlu and detailed by Safa in *Türk Devrimine Baktılar*, represented a new cosmology which was based on *creativity* rather than symbolizing a *novelty*. In a similar vein, Ulken, in *Medeniyetin Yürüyüşü* (The March of Civilization) characterized revolutions as historical moments that linked the past utopia of a civilization to a future hope. In his words:

> Most parts of the old are assimilated into the New, while most are eliminated. These transformations in the evolution of the civilization should be viewed not as destruction, but as revolution. It is not like that an organ dies and gives birth to the other. But, everything progresses through revolutions.\(^78\)

Traditionalist conservatives were looking for some reason to believe that Kemalism, which represented creativity rather than novelty, had a history behind it. They were trying to show that Kemalist radicalism emerged due to the deepening of the cultural dualities caused by the previous reform acts. What they had tried to maintain was that Kemalist creationist modernism was an historical attempt to make a synthesis between vivid and living cultural and historical constants with a vision of a future modern society.

**Modernism and Traditionalist Conservatism**

Though the first modernist drives in Ottoman-Turkish polity emerged by the beginning of the seventeenth century, their unwholesome influence on the cultural and political system did not appear until the beginning of the nineteenth century. As we have already depicted in the previous chapters, modern [read westernized] social and political forms gradually penetrated into the fabric of the traditional

\(^77\) Baltacıoğlu, “Halkevleri,” (People’s Houses) *Yeni Adam*, 218 (March 9, 1938), p.2.

\(^78\) Ulken, “Medeniyetin Yürüyüşü,” p. 90.
Ottoman society and by the nineteenth century, they were revealed by the intelligentsia located especially in cosmopolitan urban areas of the Ottoman Empire, in various forms. It was first within the ranks of civil and military bureaucracy and in the most urbanized, non-Muslim populated regions of the former Empire that the revisionist demands for grand Islamic tradition had emerged. Various currents of thought had tended to provide answers for the reasons of the emergence of new social relations and political relations. New answers on the nature of universe, society, and on the function of positive sciences in daily life were formulated and all had displayed the impacts of modernity on traditional Ottoman-Turkish polity. According to Ulken, new political ideologies, such as Neo-Ottomanism, Turkism or even Islamism, had emerged with the claim to provide novel answers to the problems of social and political instability.\(^\text{79}\)

These social and political constraints had resulted in the emergence of a new vision of the world among the Ottoman intelligentsia which appraised the role of human subject in creating a new world. Seen from this perspective, the movement of constitutionalism, which started by the end of nineteenth century, and which undermined the authority structure of the Ottoman Empire, can be regarded as civil and/or military bureaucracy’s demand for a rational transformation of the traditional political system. Indeed, whether revolutionary or reformist, such political demands had undermined the traditional Ottoman political system which was based on hierarchy, military power and absolutism of the Sultanate and divine powers of Caliphate. For Ulken, modernization [read westernization], which has been characterized by deepening crises in politics and social life, also implied society’s evolution from a closed to an open system.\(^\text{80}\) Moreover, one of the most significant features of modernization was the transformation of relations in the


economic realm. In sum, in line with what Ülken had illustrated, it can be said that diffusion of the capitalist system and the creation of new demands for the revision of the traditional system had imposed certain social, economic and political constraints on the Ottoman-Turkish polity.

For Anthony Giddens, who strictly emphasizes the question of discontinuity in transition to modernity, the basic characteristics of this rupture from the traditional system are shaped by the dynamics of capitalism, industrialism, and the nation state. For Giddens, modern society emerged in the bosom of the traditional society through an interaction among these structures. The main characteristic of this transition to modernity, has been delineated by Giddens, as the experience of a generalized sense of discontinuity, which were manifested in the literary, philosophical and political domains.

In this respect, Kemalism was the political manifestation of this historical consciousness of discontinuity. It also provided a refined ideological terminology on the nature and functions of the nation state structures, and the transformation of the traditional society to a modern capitalist one. Disjunctions and discontinuities of modernity, on which Kemalism built up its political and social vocabulary, also paved way to the emergence of new political discourses, such as traditional conservatism, new social groupings, new hopes and fears within the framework drawn by the modernizing state.

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82 Ülken, “Meşruyetin Tereddüt Devri,” pp. 769-78.


A radical transformation in the social, political and economic organization of the parochial traditional religiously-framed society took place in the first decade of the Republic when the Kemalists fostered industrialism to promote the welfare of the citizens. Baltacıoğlu, like Giddens, maintained that the modern state of consciousness on new social, political and economic practices developed by the emergence of modern nation state, capitalism and industrialism. For Baltacıoğlu, nation and national consciousness implied the historical disjunction between the religious and secular cosmologies. In his definition of a nation, it was a society which was based on a new functional and professional division of labour among the groups who, with a sense of solidarity, come together around common tastes, religion, language and morality.

For Baltacıoğlu a nation was not only a religious or political unit. A nation was an economic organization based on specialized economic groups and characterized by secularism, rationalism and industrialism. The dynamism of the nation-system was grounded in urban centers since these centers were not territorial but economic units. In urban centers citizens were organized along a professional-associational basis. As revealed by Tunç, new sources of wealth and power were also created in urban centers. Thus, focusing on the changing functions of the state in maintaining stability and order in modern society, Thus stated:

Like all the beings the state and nation have been subjected to organizational and functional changes. We have to free ourselves from the weakness of imagining absolute and never-changing state and nation. It is only in this way that we can be realistic about the facts in their contexts... Today, liberalism and socialism are on the agenda with respect to the state and nation... In our time, states are accorded with such significant responsibilities as providing the division of labour and harmonization of the clashing interests of classes and different social segments.

Changing political, economic and social relations in modern society had also altered the place of intelligentsia, especially of its westernist stratum in the power

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88 For economic constraints on modern state, see Tunç, “Para Hırıslarında Millet ve Devlet.”
structure and provided new roles for them.\textsuperscript{90} Traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia was placed on this new political, economic and social cleavages in modern society and formulated a philosophico-political perspective with reference to the structuration of the “modern” nation-state over society. Those gradual processes of change manipulated by the modern state became stimuli for the emergence, development and circulation of traditionalist ideals and aspirations, seeking to provide new answers for the nature of the social order and new means of maintaining stability, order and continuity. Traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia aimed at providing a novel philosophico-political position which would foster both the potentials of change and would deal with its disruptions, without abandoning the creative spirit of modernity. In this respect, nation state and capitalism were central to Kemalist and traditionalist-conservative visions of modernity which meant that both shared capitalist world-views.

Ulken tried to show that prior to the Kemalist Revolution, social groups were faced with the pathologies of transition to a modern society.\textsuperscript{91} Former political visions of modernism, which were articulated by the Turkish middle classes, aimed to ensure ‘freedom’ in philosophy, ‘liberalism’ in economy and ‘constitutionalism’ in politics.\textsuperscript{92} Yet, those former political visions of modernism were squeezed between conflicting philosophico-political claims. They were both “modern,” in essence, since they aimed to overthrow the traditional political institutions; nationalist, due to the claim to revive policies that would protect newly emerging middle classes; Islamist, since their objective was to consolidate the powers of caliphate; and lastly, constitutionalist and liberal under western influence.\textsuperscript{93} For Safa, the pre-revolutionary era was also characterized by the crises and dualities that emerged due to the co-existence of the modern and traditional.\textsuperscript{94} The prevailing pre-capitalist and parochial structure of the

\textsuperscript{90} For an elaboration on changing roles of intellectuals, see Zygmund Baumann, \textit{Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Postmodernity and Intellectuals} (Ithaca, N.Y.:Cornell University Press, 1987).

\textsuperscript{91} Ulken, “\textit{Meşruyetin Tereddüd Devri},” pp. 769-78; Safa, \textit{Türk İnkilabına Bakişlar}, pp. 27-74.

\textsuperscript{92} Ulken, ibid., p 770.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., p. 771.

\textsuperscript{94} See Safa, \textit{Türk İnkilabına Bakişlar}, pp. 27-97.
Ottoman Empire were held responsible for the philosophico-political dualisms and contradictory political claims articulated by prior rhetorics of modernization (muasırlaşma) and westernization.

Even though Kemalism was not the only political formulation of modernism, it was the only one which seized state power to consolidate its peculiar vision of modernism. Ulken had placed anarchism, disorder and alienation as the dangerous possibilities at the center of transition to a new sense of modern morality. Thus, the Kemalist vision of modernism which transmuted the isolated Ottoman subject to a citizen with a new autonomy and sense of public belonging to the newly created secular national identity, had been praised for avoiding these dangers. Institutionalization and circulation of traditionalist-conservative ideas during the Kemalist era ironically characterized Kemalism as the unique revolutionary attempt in a Muslim world which successfully secularized politics and daily life. Traditionalist conservatism together with Kemalism tended to postulate the most distinctive features of “modern” political and economic life, namely the modern-nation state, capitalist market, and citizenship. Kemalism and traditionalist conservatism fostered the growth of wealth, expansion of a new division of labour under the constraints of capitalist economy and tutelage of the modern nation state and the invention of a Republican government based on the principle of popular sovereignty.

95 Baltacıoğlu, “Altı Ümdeye Göre Terbiye, Cumhuriyet Terbiyesi” (Education According to the Six Principles, Republican Education) Yeni Adam, 222 (March 30, 1938), p.14
96 Ulken Aşk Ahlaki, pp. V-VIII.
“Conserving” in Conditions of Kemalist Modernism

Traditionalist-conservative ideas flourished in the Kemalist power structure. The Kemalist and traditionalist-conservative body of thought, both of which emphasized the uniqueness of the political institutionalization of the Kemalist state and authenticity of national culture, developed fully only after the dissolution of the traditional religious cosmology.98 Having favorably commented on Safa’s emphasis on the uniqueness of nations, Tunç argued that it was the nation but not religion which was essential for modern ages. In his words

Safa says "In this path of progress, that there is no other way.... but nationality to reach the ideals of nation human and God." In fact, even the great religions which aimed at human unity -consensus among them set a side- could not stay aloof from centuries-long wars.... Humanity is just a spiritual consideration. It does not exist either in physical and spiritual sphere. In this scheme there are only humans who are visible through their bonds with national collectives.99

In line with Tunç’s evaluations, Baltacoğlu argued that every political regime in the world was national and unique. Thus, like every cultural institution, the state’s uniqueness would be shaped by the national tradition.100 This emphasis on culture as a realm in which the universal structures of modernity, such as the nation-state and capitalism would be re-traditionalized was characteristic for Baltacoğlu’s traditionalism.

Although claims to conserve had existed long before the Kemalist revolution, those creeds to conserve also experienced a radical rupture after the institutionalization of Kemalist modernism. Former claims to conserve had limited themselves to the defense of the religious order and tradition. However, as revealed by Tunç, the modern creed to conserve was different from the previous ones. This creed to conserve had to find new means to foster the creative evolution of the society. Accordingly,

the majority of humanity is composed of mediocrats. Their ethics is constructed by tradition and custom. Insisting on tradition eventually requires being conservative and avoiding new ethical formations. Habits weaken conscience.... Under ordinary conditions this kind of mediocratic ethics can be counted as perfect, with respect to the daily life and

98 See Tunç, “Milliyet Ídeali ve Topyekun Milli Terbiye,” “Devlet ve Terbiye,” “Devlet ve Millet.”
100 See Baltacoğlu “Soysuzlar,” p. 2. See also Ülken, Askl Ahlaki, p. 167.
preservation of the existing ethical order. However, today’s societies’ experience is not limited to conservatism. They are also subject to a dynamic technical and cultural pressure which require progress. In this respect, the ethics of the order is in need of the accompaniment of a new ethics which would lead the way to progress... In our time almost all the nations have to create and organize the ethics of the new conditions, in a world of on-going revolutions.  

For the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, like Baltacoğlu, Tunç and Safa, the modern creed to conserve was ultimately a search for overlapping forces of “change” and “order” which formed the constitutive categories and institutional structure of modernity. In this respect, Tunç maintained that Safa rightly focused on the realities of the nation as the constitutive category of order in the modern world. In his words:

we know that in each period, every particular society has its own set of usage and customs, accepted common rules according to their own life conditions and a “form” and “order” determined by the relationship with each other. There is no organism and society without a form and order.

In this respect, emergent national forms demanded to find new means of order which were different from the forces and forms of order of the preceding society. As revealed by Tunç and Safa, modern times were characterized by transition to pure national order; from cosmopolitanism to the omnipotent nationalism in which history and culture were responsible for differing senses of “highest social and political good,” responsible for differing national orders in varying societies. Thus, Tunç pointed out that what Kemalism had tried to do in Turkey was to formulate the new meaning of the highest social and political good that revealed itself as a search for finding out a national style and form. Kemalism, for Tunç, as in the case of Safa’s Türk Devrimine Bakışlar, represented the historical attempt to find this national style and form. In this respect, Kemalist politics, which had been praised for its emphasis on culture and Turkishness, was a legitimate frame of orientation for traditionalist-conservative intellectuals aiming to understand the new parameters of national Order. The foremost

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103 Tunç, “Ahlaklılığın Çeşitleri ve Zamanımızın Ahlakı.”
105 See also Tunç, “Milliyetçilik,” “Devlet ve Millet,” “Milliyet İdealı ve Topyekun Milli Terbiye.”
question before the traditionalist-conservative intellectual, as revealed in Safa’s *Türk Devrimine Baksılar*, was to re-traditionalize, to contextualize and to historicise Kemalist modernism without abandoning its creative spirit and to reconcile it with national tradition.

Contrary to the political objective of the old claims to conserve, which Ülken depicted as maintaining the unity of the Islamic religious community, it was the values of the nation that were politically defined by Kemalism and which the traditionalist conservatism wished to conserve or reform. Thus, Ülken claimed that the pathology of those former religious claims to conserve had been inherent in their distance to the culture of their own society. The question of culture and the need to conserve the culture had been incorporated into the political agenda by the rise of nations and nationalism. Based on this, Ülken claimed that the new need to conserve at the same implied a new consciousness to conserve the national heritage. Thus, Ülken set the traditionalist-conservative task for the intelligentsia to find out the essential cultural values and norms which constituted the nation as a unique political unit.

In fact, traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia of the early Republican era was squeezed between the future and the past. The future-oriented utopian mentality of the radical positivist “westernists,” who sought an ideal society, was countered by the anti-westernist Islamic reaction which aimed to revive the Great Golden Age of the Prophet. Until the enforcement of Kemalist modernism, nobody seemed to be the “owner” of the “present.” Thus, Tunç stated:

> It should not be misunderstood that we are destined to live with the legacy of our history. The issue of legacy is complicated and ambiguous in both organic and spiritual spheres.... In this respect there is less that we (can) inherit from the past. We have to create almost everything for the present. Nations are not static but dynamic essences. They are subject to continuous change in relation to time, environment, work and understanding. We have

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107 Ülken, “Tanzimat Devrinde Türkçülük,” p. 3.
acquired all that we could from the past. Our main task is to construct the present and to prepare the future.¹¹⁰

A striking difference between Islamic traditionalism and traditionalist conservatism in the Republican era was the latter’s world view which searched for those things worthy of preserving at the moment of this discontinuity characterized by the consolidation of the structures of modernity.¹¹¹ In this respect, traditionalist conservatism also represents a rupture from ahistorical religious creeds to conserve since things which were praised as worth preserving were the nation state and capitalist order, but not the universal religious tradition. Thus, though traditionalism could find common grounds with conservatism, as stated by Baltacıoğlu, or could share a lot with revolutionism, as in the case of Safa, Baltacıoğlu further assured that his traditionalism was not the kind of “conservatism” represented by religious reactionaries.¹¹²

Traditional conservative opinions, having been stimulated by the new culturalism, were developed to formulate new terms of legitimacy for the nation state and to promote the development of new Turkish personality. Thus, Baltacıoğlu argued as follows:

> When obliged men might submit unwillingly. The nuance is that if this submission is due to an intrinsic conformity, it does not connote force or threat, but freedom and pleasure. As a subject of Turkish Republic I ask myself: whether my compliance is a result of force or will ? My answer confirms that this compliance is a result of freedom. Because there is an absolute congruity between the principles of the Turkish regime and my personality.¹¹³

It is noteworthy that traditionalist-conservative ideals and opinions had also had a catalyzing effect for the legitimacy of post-revolutionary Kemalism. Traditionalist conservative’s attempts to reconcile positivist radicalism with tradition, customs and religion and to place religion, custom and tradition in their proper place in the world of

¹¹⁰ Tunç, “Devlet ve Millet.”
¹¹¹ See Baltacıoğlu, “Mürteci İmişim?” p. 2.
modernity had provided a history to the Kemalist vision of modernity. Thus, Safa assured that

in history, no civilization went under total destruction. Instead, there had been an evolutionary process of the replacement by an emerging order of values... Revolution takes place, not as an all-out destruction of a system of values, but as the construction of the connection between the old and the new. In the history of Revolutions, there are no dead civilizations, but ties which link the old to the new.  

Meanwhile, Kemalism was indebted to traditionalist-conservative ideals in formulating the legitimate theoretical framework of the revolutionary practices. Traditionalist conservatism had formulated a view of dynamic national tradition in reference to which the legitimate terms of order in modern society could be restored. Baltacıoğlu’s “traditionalism” was an example of how Kemalist radicalism was reconciled with living tradition and history.  

In his reply to Safa’s article, Esasta Anlaşmak Şartır (It is Essential to Agree in Principle), Baltacıoğlu noted that there was a strict relationship between his traditionalism and nationalism where the former is the outcome of his nationalism. Baltacıoğlu further maintained that there were beliefs, myths, tales, proverbs, customs, prejudices that linked the present society to its original ancestors. He added that it was neither in our hands to utterly eradicate the past nor was it a beneficial act. The original essence of national entity, which transcended the realms of reason and technique was embedded in this deep and dark mentality. For him, the idea of nation, when seen from this perspective, in fact, denoted a sense of continuity in history and authentic cultural experience. The idea of nation meant statis, stability, and uniformity. For Baltacıoğlu, “it is easy to establish a state, it is very difficult to make a nation, but it is impossible to create a tradition.” The below quoted passage from his, Millet Nedir, Ne Değildir? (What is or is not Nation?) will get us closer to this particular conception of culture and tradition. In his words:

115 For typical examples, see Tunç, “Devlet ve Millet.” See also Baltacıoğlu, Tarih ve Terbiye.
117 Baltacıoğlu, “Milliyetçiliğim,” p. 2
I observe the Turkish nation. Its religion, language, ethics, law, arts are changing. However, there are such aspects as the linguistic mentality and perception of which are immune to change. These are cited as legacy, tradition, custom. Traditions are those ties which do not and cannot change and thus which form the link between the past and present and between present and past. We should be confident that there is no nation without tradition. (Emphases are mine)

Baltacoğlu made a distinction between living and decayed/dead tradition, which, for him, was essential to draw the distinction between his traditionalism and others’ reactionarism. The defense of dead tradition, for Baltacoğlu, was the basic conviction of religious reaction against modernism. Rising awareness of the creativity of the living culture, which had been praised as a modern phenomenon, was regarded as an attempt to shed light on the authenticity of the nation. Thus, genuine modernism came to mean a return to the natural traits of the nation where religion and ethics would be re-valued as dispositions of the autonomous individuality and as a part of the national tradition, like customs and folklore. Baltacoğlu’s traditionalism, Peyami Safa’s conservatism which had been framed by Tunç’s Bergsonism, Ulken’s moralism and culturalism provided a set of ideas and aspirations to the Kemalist state elites and elicited an awareness that living tradition was an amalgam of religion, ethics, language and customs that were ultimately responsible for the uniqueness of culture and politics in modern societies. In the 1940s, subsequent to the consolidation of the Kemalist regime, Baltacoğlu further emphasized the place and function of religion in modern society. According to him, religion, unlike science, was not a logical construct. Religion was a logical construct as much as ethics, law and art. Like ethics, law and art, religion had a unique rationale in itself. Unlike science which derived its legitimacy from logical reasoning, or ethics which derived its legitimacy from customs, or law which

119 See Baltacoğlu, "Millet Nedir, Ne Değildir?" (What is or is not Nation?) Yeni Adam, 416 (December 17, 1942), p.2. Also see Baltacoğlu, "Türk Nedir," p. 2, "Türke Öğüt," (Adviso to the Turk) Yeni Adam, 346 (August 14, 1941), pp. 2, 10, "Milliyetçiliğim," p. 2. For Baltacoğlu’s traditionalism, see Bedi Ziya Eşemen, "Türke Doğru," (Towards the Turk) Yeni Adam, 430 (March 25, 1943), pp. 8-9, 11. For Safa’s short note on the same topic, see Safa "Milli Olmak Zorluğu," Tasvir-i Etkar quoted in Yeni Adam, p. 11. Also Safa, "Psikoloji ve Milliyetçilik," (Psychology and Nationalism) Cumartesi, 40 (June 27, 1942), p.5. For Ülken’s views on the question of inheritance, see Ülken, Veraset ve Cemiyet. For Ülken, nationalism was a consciousness on the unique history and living culture. The growth of an awareness on the national history signified the triumph of concrete over the abstract and formal. See Ülken, "Bize Türkçülüğü Geçikiren Sebepler - Doğuşu - Büyüyor," p.3.

derived from rules, or art which derived from beauty, religion derived its legitimacy directly from the so-called "illegitimate" mysterious experience.\textsuperscript{121} This emphasis on the place of religion and ethics in modern societies and tradition as the backbone of historical nation always occupied a central place in the development of a unique traditionalist-conservative vocabulary.\textsuperscript{122}

**Traditionalist Conservatism on the Structures of Kemalist Modernism**

Traditionalist conservatism, with its emphasis on culture and history, juxtaposed tradition to the Kemalist vision of modernity. What it sought was to develop a conceptual structure which would grasp the dynamics of unique institutionalization of the structures of modernity, namely, the nation-state and capitalist market. Baltacıoğlu elaborated this point as follows:

There is not "Republic" but "Replicas" like the Turkish Republic, American Republic, French Republic.... Republic is the common name of the regime based on people's sovereignty and is realized by nations in conformity with their varying national traditions in terms of language and culture and like all concepts it is nothing more than an abstract word. What gives the value of Republic are events: real life events lived in the past, experienced today and worth of living in the future!\textsuperscript{123}

For Baltacıoğlu, as well as for Safa, language, geography, customs, religion, tradition and history were responsible for the uniqueness of the national identity. Paraphrasing from Joseph de Maistre, one of the founding figures of the French conservative thought, in his *Dünyada İnsan Var Mi?* (Is There Man in the World?) Safa backed this stand:

> Our Assemblies have wanted to make rule for Man. But, a single man in the world is an utterly nonsensical dream.... I have seen ... Italians, Russians... etc.; but I have not met with the creature called Man in all my life time. A rule made for all nations is meant not to be made for any of the nations. This is a pure abstraction, it is a scholastic work where the intellect operates according to an ideal hypothesis that addresses the man within an imaginary space.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{121} See Baltacıoğlu, "Din Zorbalığı," p.1.

\textsuperscript{122} For, Ulken's point on Tunç's emphasis on religiosity, see Ulken "Türkiye'ye de İdealizm Temayülü," p. 930. See also Safa, "Allaha Doğru Yöneliş," (Turning Towards God) *Tasvir*, (October 13, 1945).

\textsuperscript{123} Baltacıoğlu, "Bizim Cumhuriyetümüz," p.2. See also Safa, "Dünya'da İnsan Var Mı?" p. 4.

These criticisms of rationalism were prominently shaped by the Bergsonisms of Tunç and Baltacıoğlu.

In his, *İnkılap Edebiyatı Ne Olabilir?* and *Topluluk Terbiyesi Niçin Veremiyoruz?* (Why Can Not We Provide Communal Education?) Baltacıoğlu characterized the distinguishing features of the new modern society. For him, the new society would rise on the principles of republicanism, democracy, science, equality and industry and on the development of groups which would conduct their daily life on these multiple processes. A similar stand had been developed by Ülken. For him, the citizen had to be taken as a model for modern man. The creation of citizen in modern society was based on the recognition of autonomy, individuality and individual freedom. Yet, for Ülken, as for Safa in *Eski ve Yeni Hüriyet* (Old and New Freedom), freedom was not an absolute category. Limits of freedom were drawn by the duties and obligations of citizenship shaped by the unique institutionalization of the political regime. In a similar vein, Baltacıoğlu maintained that

We have shown in our essay entitled *Devlette Türk går Doğru*, (Towards the Turk in the State) that there is not a single common state regime which would fit the political structure of all nations in the world. In fact, there is not a single regime but regimes. And every state’s regime is strictly bound to the political traditions of the nation of which it is a unique depiction. One of the cases that proves the correctness of this understanding is the Turkish political regime. Regarding the followings, 1) Turkish political regime is a regime of its own. 2) Turkish regime is neither a continuation nor a mimicry of any other regime. 3) The rationale of the Turkish regime is not at the outside but is in itself. 4) Six Principles, which characterize the Turkish state regime, are nothing more than Turkish political traditions. The practical conclusion to be deduced from these assumptions is this: Try to understand the Turkish regime by approximating it to liberalism, fascism nazism and communism is not to understand it at all.

This point had also been elaborated by Safa as follows:

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Those who aspire for a regime as a total replica of Western democracy are in a vicious circle. Because there is no such model of democracy. We cannot observe a democracy which is born out of abstract legal formulae and which is not subject to national conditions.  

In this respect, Ülken has further assured that "nationality is not a construct but consciousness of a kind of society which has unity in an existing life style, language, thought and labour...." Meanwhile Safa assured that political regimes were based on unique institutionalization of cultural and traditional values. In this line of thinking, Tunç affirmed that the ultimate goal of the revolutions in Turkey, Russia, Germany and Italy was to define a unique national style. According to Tunç, style and man, style and nation were the same things, and, in fact, the nation was nothing more than a unique style. Tunç reinstated that nations were unique cultural entities from which the revolutionary practices, which freed the creative folk spirit, would derive their political legitimacy. Baltacıoğlu, in similar lines, reaffirmed that democracy is a political regime, and like all other political regimes it adapts to the social body in which it functions. There is not one democracy, but there are democracies. Unity and/or compliance set aside, there is even contrast between the main principles among democracies. One should comprehend the term democracy in solitude, but with respect to the nation under consideration.

The historical uniqueness of the Kemalist Revolution was elaborated in detail by the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals of the young Republic. The creationist progressive approach, inspired from a Bergsonian philosophy and eminently elaborated by Tunç, was adopted by the traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia, in varying tones, and paved way to an emphasis on the realness of the nation state, its political institutions and capitalist market.

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133 Safa, "Milliyetiğin Birkaç Hakikati," (Some Truths about Nationalism) Çınaraltı, 32 (March 14, 1942), p. 5.
134 Tunç, "Milliyetiğilik."
136 For Baltacıoğlu’s stand on creationism, see Baltacıoğlu, "Metodlu Şüheye Doğru," (Towards Methodical Skepticism) Yeni Adam, 528 (February 8, 1945), p.2. For an appraisal of voluntarist creativism, see Tunç, "Milliyet İdeali ve Topyekun Milli Terbiye."
Traditionalist-conservative quest to “make” the history of modernity in order to sustain the legitimacy of the Kemalist revolutionary practices also had profound political implications. Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals and the Kemalist statist elites shared a common sense of irritation against the enemies of the new modern Order i.e., those who resisted the nation’s free expression of itself. Expectedly, reactionary religious fanatics, cosmopolitans, and the defenders of the old Ottoman political and social institutions were identified as those who obstructed the development of the national culture.\(^{137}\)

The peculiarity of Turkish traditionalist conservatism lied in the fact that it did not derive its discursive frame of reference from pre-modern traditional religious forms. On the contrary, it operated within the structures of modernity. Yet, as it had already been sketched by Ülken, in his *Ilım Bitaraf Mıdır?* (Is Science Objective?), there was a vital philosophico-political question posed by the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals in an age when blind trust was placed on rationalism associated with scientific reasoning.\(^{138}\) Unshakable belief on evolution, progress and on the transformative capacity of science, according to Ülken and Tunç, were characteristics of the new times and modern society. In Tunç’s words:

> In our time, there is a constant search for improvement, which arises out of an evolutionary and progressive perception. Thus, three different life styles can be observed in these civilizations (the old and the new): In antique Greece faith was in beauty, in the Middle Ages it was in virtue, and in our time it is in progress.\(^{139}\)

Then he asked the vital question, which shaped the traditionalist-conservative philosophico-political concerns in the post-revolutionary era,

> There is no doubt that modern civilization is more powerful and progressive than the others. But where and why do we progress and who are the beneficiaries of this progress? However we do not know these. But these questions contain crucial issues. The


questioning of the direction and the beneficiaries of the continuous progress in science and technical sphere. can also be applied to virtue and beauty.\textsuperscript{140}

Within this context, traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia aimed to differentiate the standards of ethics, science and aesthetics within the confines of Kemalist modernism. As expected, this contention aroused a lively controversy between the Kemalist scientistic positivist spirit and this traditional conservative occupation. The importance of Bergsonism for traditionalist-conservative circle, as noted by Ulken, in \textit{Bergson'a Dair Yeni Bir Kitap} (A New Book on Bergson) arouse at this point. The main issue, for the traditionalist-conservative intellectual, “is to differentiate the domains of reason and sensation; and thus art, which is the concern of sensation, and science and philosophy.”\textsuperscript{141}

The Kemalist project of modernization was also a struggle for the self-constitution of the nation. Kemalist attempts to make the cultural history of the nation was further supported by traditionalist-conservative belief in the political uniqueness and independence since only the autonomous agents could make their unique history. However, Metin Heper has pointed out that the dominant Kemalist project of modernism was a transcendentalist project of constructing modern Turkey that required the continuous calculation of the nation’s future.\textsuperscript{142} The Kemalist vision of modernity, which was shaped by the politics of bureaucratic scientific state, had placed great emphasis on the scientific ethos not only in the field of technology but also in cultural issues and in secularization of the daily life.\textsuperscript{143} The principle of self-constitution, politically speaking, Kemalist culturalism, based on a metaphysical idea of “consciousness,” which the traditionalist conservatives attempted to give a concrete political and cultural content. This normative content was derived from the Turkish

\textsuperscript{140} Idem.


\textsuperscript{143} For criticism of the diffusion of scientistic rationale to the fields of ethics and politics, see Ulken, “İnsani Vatancılık,” pp. 4-13.
people’s national tradition as it manifested itself in existing living customs. Further, beliefs had to be institutionalized in the new political, cultural and legal space created and protected by the Kemalist nation-state. The caustic clash between Islamism, which had been identified by traditionalist conservatives as retrospective universalism, and Kemalism, as future-oriented utopianism, stimulated the emergence of a traditionalist-conservative philosophy. Still, traditionalist-conservative distance to the bureaucratic scientific state had decisive impacts on the evolution of democratic politics and a vision of modernity in Turkey in the following decades.

Traditionalist-conservative agenda emerged from the day to day experience of Kemalist modernism. Traditionalist-conservative outlook, traditionalist-conservative conception of authority and of legitimacy became visible in the political arena because of the deepening social differentiation, elite fragmentation and segmentation of the ruling Kemalist intelligentsia. In this context, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals offered highly sophisticated analyses of the historical impact of the revolution on Turkish society, politics and its future prospects.
CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HENRY BERGSON IN THE AGE OF RISING NATIONALISM

Bergsonian Critic of the Nineteenth Century Positivism and Its Implications for the Late Ottoman and Early Republican Intellectuals

Diffusion of the nineteenth century European philosophy to the Ottoman intellectual life manifested itself as the development of positivist philosophies which ultimately resulted in an obsession with the idea of progress. Basic mechanist assumptions of this mainstream philosophy had also been developed before the nineteenth century, but, its critique, reached its apex in the nineteenth century. Henry Bergson was among the foremost figures of this anti-positivist and anti-intellectualist philosophy in the twentieth century.¹

Indeed, the privileged stand granted to sciences and scientific knowledge in the rationalist schema had long ago been challenged by the European conservative and empiricist philosophers like Edmund Burke and David Hume.² However, the influence of this strong anti-rationalist intellectual tradition in western philosophical tradition did not have a significant influence on the Ottomans. Yet, the Bergsonian critique of rationalism of the early twentieth century found a significant resonance outside the Continent, especially among the Ottoman intellectuals, as compared to the empiricist conservative philosophies of the preceding centuries.³


³ In 1914, G. Jacobi, a German professor in philosophy, who was employed in Darülşifa, published an article on Bergsonism in the journal of the Faculty of Literature, namely Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi. He aimed to bring the German influence, especially that of Schopenhauer, on the development of Bergsonian philosophy. It was the first article on Bergson appeared in the Ottoman press. According to Ziyaeddin Fahri, Gokalp was also heavily inspired by Bergson but then Durkheim in his sociological studies in 1909-1912 period. See Ziyaeddin Fahri, “Türkiye’de Bergsonizm 1,” (Bergsonism in Turkey 1) Cumhuriyet, (January, 13, 1941).
By the 1920s, there emerged a Bergson-inspired group of intellectuals who started to publish a journal named *Dergah*. Bergsonian critique of materialism was adopted by the late Ottoman and early Republican intellectuals and provoked an interest in a new vision of the West. This new vision of the West, as noted by Ülken was motivated by Bergsonian philosophy which was critical of the Western ideals of progress, humanity and rationalism.\(^4\) Bergsonism, and its overwhelming emphasis on creative evolution, life force, spiritualism provided new insights to the late Ottoman and early Republican intellectuals, who aimed to understand the reasons for destructive/creative processes of modernization. Bergsonism and the new metaphysics, which privileged the spiritual force of religion and morality, served as a new stand to understand the nation and state building dynamics that had been conceived as the nation’s will to survive. In fact, Bergsonism, with its heavy emphasis on change and reality of the past, also provided a secure stand for the Republican traditionalist-conservative intellectuals who were squeezed between the necessity to change and the need to conserve. Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals have found a new message in Bergsonism - the “philosophy of Becoming,” in the age of re-traditionalization of the Turkish society towards modernity.

**Prophetic Message of Bergsonism**

Bergsonism is an highly abstract metaphoric system and resistant to sketching and the intellectuals concerned tended to provide their own particular interpretations of this system depending upon their own area of interest. Safa’s conception of Bergsonism as a philosophy of insight has some critical differences from Baltacıoğlu’s attempts to reconcile it with Durkheimian sociology. Ülken’s interest in Bergson is limited to his celebration of Bergson as the archcritic of vague positivism in the twentieth century. Ağaoğlu’s inspirations from Bergson in his discussions on the dynamics of social evolution, nature of social conflict and the place of individual in the modern world can

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\(^4\) For Hilmi Ziya Ülken’s evaluations on different aspects of Western civilization, see Ülken, “Hangi Batı?” (Which West?) *İnsan*, 1, 3 (June 15, 1938), pp. 185-6. For Safa’s critical note on materialism, see Peyami Safa, “Havaya Ucan Ideolojiler,” (Ideologies Scattering Around) *Tasvir*, (August 14, 1945). See also Safa, *Türk İnkılabına Bakışlar* (Glances at the Turkish Revolution) (İstanbul: Ötüken Yayınları, 1993 [1938]), pp. 111-31.
not be compared with Tunç’s preoccupation aiming at adopting Bergsonism as a philosophy of revival for the first Republican generation.

Bergson’s attempts, as pointed out by Ulken in Yirminci Asır Filozofları (The Twentieth Century Philosophers), could best be understood as a quest to elaborate on an alternative metaphysics of life and nature.\(^5\) In a similar vein, Tom Quirk maintained that Bergson was trying to replace mechanical evolutionary theories with an all-encompassing evolutionism which was based on the notion of “creative evolution.”\(^6\) Bergson’s basic preoccupation, for Quirk, was to show that the dynamics of evolution in social life could not be explained by materialistic mechanism.\(^7\) Bergson, for Quirk, as well as Kolakowski and Ulken, also distanced himself from conventional vitalist assumptions by rejecting finalism.\(^8\) This point has been referred by Kolakowski in his book entitled Bergson as follows:

> Life then is a continuous process in which the original drive divides itself into a growing variety of forms, but retains a basic direction. It has no goal, Bergson says, in the sense that human actions have goals, in other words, no one can anticipate its future course, which is similar to an artistic creation than to the operation of a machine.\(^9\)

Change, he noted, was conceived by Bergson, to be a quality of life which evolves not in an uniform rate but in periods of rest and dynamic rush forwards.\(^10\) Everything in life, Kolakowski stated, emerges from an original “life-drive.”\(^11\)

In this respect, A. R. Lacey stated that in this new life metaphysics, science was not granted the privileged position to explain all aspects of human life.\(^12\) The source of new life metaphysics would be intuitive knowledge.\(^13\) Science, morality and aesthetics

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\(^6\) Tom Quirk, Bergson and American Culture (Chapel Hill, London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p. 27. Ulken, ibid., p. 61. See also Ulken, Veraset ve Cemiyet (Inheritance and Society) (Istanbul: Kutulmuş Matbaası, 1957 [1924]), p. 84. See also Lacey, Bergson, pp. 88-110.
\(^7\) Quirk, Bergson and American Culture, p. 42.
\(^8\) Quirk, ibid., p. 43. See also Ulken, Veraset ve Cemiyet, pp. 66-7, 85, 101.
\(^9\) Kolakowski, Bergson, p. 58.
\(^11\) Kolakowski, ibid, pp. 57-8 Quirk, Bergsonism and American Culture, p. 44. Ulken, Yirminci Asır Filozofları, pp. 59, 62.
\(^12\) Lacey, Bergson, p. 47.
\(^13\) Ibid., pp. 26, 152.
were assumed to be based on different standards of judgment and the growing influence of science in the realms of morality and aesthetics was considered to turn life into a mechanical totality.\(^{14}\) Harmony and creativity in life, for Bergson, Lacey pointed out, exist behind the artificial constructs of Reason.\(^{15}\)

Quirk further maintained that Bergson and his followers reaffirmed a kind of “romanticism”\(^{16}\) whose basic feature was the “autonomy of life.”\(^{17}\) This point had also been put by Ülken in his *Veraset ve Cemiyet* (Inheritance and Society). Besides this, the question of inheritance, which Quirk referred in his discussion on Bergson’s influence on the biologism of Hans Driesch, was also brought up by Ülken to assure that there are also some permanents in life.\(^{18}\) According to Lacey, Bergsonism asserted a kind of pluralism in philosophy where ‘evolution’ appeared in multiple, spontaneous states of creation.\(^{19}\) Indeed, Tunç in his lengthy introductory chapter written for the Turkish translation of Bergson’s well known book *Creative Evolution* assured that this new life philosophy had introduced the concepts of possibility and freedom for modern philosophies of change.\(^{20}\) Still, for Quirk “Bergsonian philosophy was difficult to label and to characterize.”\(^{21}\) He added that Bergsonism “variously referred to as temporalism, evolutionism, neoromanticism and modernism” between 1918 and 1939.\(^{22}\)

Kolakowski and Quirk have suggested that Bergsonism could be understood as a kind of protomodernism.\(^{23}\) This emphasis can be seen as peculiarly appropriate to an investigation of traditionalist-conservative modernism. Bergsonism was the synthesis of all Western philosophies. Using this framework in the Republican era meant the denial

\(^{14}\) Ülken, *Yirminci Asır Filozoflar*, p. 58. For criticism of mechanism, see Lacey, ibid., pp. 103, 177-9.

\(^{15}\) Lacey, ibid., pp. 37-8, 41-2. See also Tunç, “Onsöz,” pp. XVLI-XLIX.

\(^{16}\) Quirk, *Bergson and American Culture*, pp. 44.

\(^{17}\) Quirk, ibid, pp. 39, 41. See Tunç, *Bergson ve Manevi Kudrede Dair Birkaç Konferans* (Several Conferences on Bergson and the Spiritual Will), 2nd ed. (İstanbul: A Halit Kitabevi, 1933). For an assessment on elan vital and life force, see Lacey, *Bergson*, pp. 139, 187.

\(^{18}\) Ülken in *Veraset ve Cemiyet* addressed to the question concerned. See also Quirk, ibid., pp. 38-41.

\(^{19}\) Lacey, *Bergson*, pp. 67-83. Also see Quirk, ibid., p. 41.

\(^{20}\) Tunç, “Onsöz,” pp. IV, XVII-XXII.

\(^{21}\) Quirk, *Bergson and American Culture*, p. 42.

\(^{22}\) Idem.

\(^{23}\) Kolakowski, *Bergson*, p. 9-10. For similar evaluations, see Quirk, ibid., p. 44.
of not only the traditional Islamic orthodoxy, but of all institutionalized religion plus radical modernism based on rationalism. Inspired from Bergsonian premises in varying tones, traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia tried to reduce the absolutism of the religious dogma to symbols subject to creative evolutionary change. The modern mind, as revealed in the literary works of Safa, was a mass of contradictions. Irreconcilable tastes and aspirations were to await reconciliation, and philosophy would ultimately reconcile those contradictory tastes and aspirations in a holistic perspective.

Bergson had this stimulating effect on the traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia because the world offered by Bergson in an age of nation-state building was alive with possibilities of creation, freedom and plurality. As opposed to the future-oriented positivist revolutionaryism of the Kemalist state elites, Bergson represented for the traditionalist-conservative circle, not an advance into future possibility and not a return to an earlier Golden Age resorted to by Islamic reactionaries.

**Traditionalist Conservatism, Bergsonism and Modernism**

Among the intellectuals who gathered around the journal *Dergah*, Mustafa Şekip Tunç became the foremost advocate of Bergsonism during the Republican era.24 Traditionalist conservatives, who in varying degrees were inspired from Bergsonian philosophy, established the Turkish Philosophy and Sociology Association in 1927 and published the journal, *Felsefe Yıllığı*, between 1931-1935.25 Articles and comments on Bergsonism appeared in the journal during this period.26 Various articles were also

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appeared in Baltacioglu’s journal, Yeni Adam between 1930 and 1940. Tunç translated various books from Bergson and Ulken hailed Tunç as the protagonist of Bergsonism in Turkey. In his Hayatım Kylimeti ve Geçirdiği Buhran (The Value of Life and its Crisis Undergoing) Tunç revealed the reasons for his devotion to Bergsonism. Accordingly, the new vision of modernity, which was embedded in an unshakable belief on progress and evolution, was also responsible for the emergence of new questions on the nature of this progressive process. For him, there also emerged pathologies of progress, particularly when this progressive positivist spirit was applied to the questions of ethics, aesthetics and justice. Thus, Bergsonism had provided a fresh answer to these pathologies of scienticism.

Bergsonian concepts of ‘creativity’, ‘intuition’ and ‘elan vital’ had been politicized in Safa’s well-known book, Türk İnkılabına Bakaşlar (Glances at the Turkish Revolution). Bergsonian themes also shaped his basic literary concerns and laid down the basic characteristics of his personalist style in literary works. Bergson’s influence on Safa’s personalist literary perspective was responsible for the introduction of the time dimension as a part of his literary style. The divided self between the East and West; between past and present; dilemma of determinism and freedom were important Bergsonian themes to understand the general conservative convictions that

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revealed themselves in Safa’s novels in the 1930s. Bergsonian philosophical vocabulary also provided basic themes for Safa in developing a literature of insight and intuition. Bergson’s peculiar irrationalism, which at the same time was substituted for his reliance on progress and change, led the traditionalist conservatives, especially Tunç and Baltacıoğlu, to develop a vision of social change which could be labeled as creative evolutionism. Bergson’s attempts to mediate between science, philosophy and aesthetics had an impelling stimulus on traditionalist-conservative intellectuals in developing an alternative holistic vision of modernity and a vying approach to Kemalist positivist-scienticism.

Ülken affirmed that Bergsonism, with its emphases on vitality, optimism and progress, disclosed the national mood among this group of the Turkish intelligentsia especially after the War of Independence. Ulken depicted this Bergsonian mood among the early Republican intelligentsia as follows:

A new generation of journalists, writers, novelists, etc. have been acquainted with such terms as the "power of the soul," "elan vital of life," intuition, etc., - which have replaced "culture (hars)," "national conscience, "duty,"- by press in the last ten years. These terms have also formed the basis of philosophy which has almost ensured popularity.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Bergsonism found its substantiating philosophy in the aspirations and ideals of the traditionalist-conservative circle. Bergson was among the most celebrated figures of the decades concerned since he was equated with the grand critique of materialist philosophy of positivism which was held responsible for the degeneration of the moral purpose of the Turkish Revolution and the deterioration of its transcendental moral purpose. Bergsonism came to represent a future hope and source of optimism for the traditionalist-conservative circle on the road of realizing the.

32 Tunç, “Hayatın Kıyımeti ve Geçerdiği Buhran.” Also Baltacıoğlu, Tarih ve Terbiye (History and Education) (İstanbul: Suhulet Matbaası, 1933), pp.43, 65-6, 68-9. See also Baltacıoğlu, “Tekamül, Tekemmel,” (Evolution and Perfection) Yeni Adam, 281 (May 16, 1940), p. 3. Also Ülken, Veraset ve Cemiyet, p.56.
ideal of establishing a new modern open society. As noted before, the Turkish Revolution had been celebrated as the manifestation of the national creative will towards the establishment of an open society, as an industrial, urbanized society based on a new division of labour among functional social groups. For Safa, the Turkish society was on the road of industrialization and urbanization. Besides the ultimate goals of industrialization, urbanization and rationalization, there was an urgent need to cease the development of materialism, dogmatism and nominalism. This was the historical chance and meaning of the Turkish Revolution which aimed to revolutionarize the mystical Eastern mentality that had been shaped by a peculiar intuitive capability towards the realization of an ideal of open society. 36 This new society had been characterized, first, by its capacity to transcend group loyalties; 37 second, by its leaning on free individuals; third by the consolidation of aspirations based on feelings and emotions (emphasis made on nationalist sentiments) and brotherhood of the members of the nation; 38 fourth, by the development of a “individualist” morality which would not function as a social imperative compared to the religious Weltanshauung of the traditional society. Indeed for Ulken, as revealed in Doğu ve Bati (The East and West), this new modern spirit could be understood through a holistic philosophical approach. Thus, philosophy would be in search of this modernist truth and this philosophical truth would lead to the development of a new ethics and politics. Enforcement of freedom would stimulate individual awareness of the necessity to maintain social order, and individuality would become the basis of the society. The individual, who becomes an autonomous free acting agent, would gain the capability to voluntarily adhere to a national order. 39 In this sense, the Revolution also signified the transition from


37 Safa, Türk İnkılabına Baksılar, pp. 90-7.

38 Ibid., p. 89.

closed/static religion and morality of the scholastic to the open/dynamic, religion and morality, which Bergson affirmed in his *The Two Sources of Religion and Morality*, in which freedom and the individual gained new emphases as personal dispositions.  

Traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia backed revolutionary engineers of creative force for their harsh stand towards any kind of religious formalism and dogmatism seen as the manifestations of philosophical determinism and fatalism.

A second and more immediately significant reason for an emphasis on Bergson was his critical philosophy of the dominant positivist scientistic spirit which was the cultural inheritance of 19th century. To that extent, his authority and popularity had been determined by the modernist intellectual context that was utilized to redefine philosophical dilemmas and challenging hypotheses inherited from Gokalp’s positivism. Traditionalist-conservative modernism was not devoted to a superficial positivist modernism by declaring that the past was dead. Traditionalist-conservative modernism was a search for the nature and dynamics of things in transition and was stimulated with an interest in dynamism and mobility of societies characterized by discontinuity, ruptures and dualities in social, political and economic structures. This contention, as revealed by Tunç in his *Zaman Fatihi ler* (Conquerors of Time), displayed itself as a devotion to the philosophies of change and becoming. In his words:

> All philosophies are constituted on the perception of "standing," which reflects space, and "being," which reflects "time." While Bergson provided the ultimate philosophy of becoming, which had been originated by Heraclitus, "evolutionary theories" in biology have represented one of the most significant steps in the conquest of time, since they have aspired to express and explain the conspicuous variations in the sphere of time.

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41 According to Safa, one can not doubt that religious sentiments were intertwine with nationalist ideals and aspirations during the War of Independence. For him, these religious sentiments did not stem from a "clerical" mentality. It was only created a sense of affection which strengthened the nationalist sentiments and bonds among the individuals. See Safa, *Türk İnkılabına Bakışlar*, p. 86.


Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals openly advocated Bergsonism as a new philosophy of change and as a new kind of philosophy of experienced and real time, which aroused interest in the reasons of tensions and conflicts that characterized the present ambivalent world created by Kemalist modernism. As disclosed by Tunç

Bergson, who has perceived the world in a continuous process of creative evolution referred to substance as a product of intelligence, and to the lifeless as a residue of the living. For Bergson, life and society expect us to possess a constant consciousness of our existence and a spiritual readiness to adopt to the changing circumstances. "Tension" and "Readiness" are the two indispensable powers of life.45

In this respect, in an article published in Yeni Adam, it has been pointed out that

From the time of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Malbranche and even Auguste Comte philosophy had been concerned with the object and thought. The essence was immobility, constancy, eternity, inactivity. For Bergson the essence has been neither the constant nor eternity, but change and longevity.46

Furthermore questions of rationality and irrationality, human freedom, autonomy, responsibility, ethics and experience were incorporated into traditionalist-conservative vocabulary to develop a peculiar understanding of the place of beliefs, conventions and especially that of religion in a new traditionalist-conservative vision of modernity.

Ülken in Türkiye'de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi (History of Contemporary Thought in Turkey) acclaimed that Bergson and his critique of positivism, rationalism, intellectualism, scienticism, evolutionary progressivism had decisive impacts on framing the intellectual and political interests of the traditionalist-conservative circle in the revolutionary era.47 For traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, especially for Tunç, Baltacıoğlu and Safa, as displayed by Ülken in Bergson'a Dair Yeni Bir Kitap, (A New Book on Bergson) Bergson represented the emergence of a new West with an alternative philosophy to the nineteenth century positivist-rationalist understanding of

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the man, society, and universe. Indeed, Baltacıoğlu, in a commentary note on Bergson, translated from Albert Thibaudet’s book entitled Bergson’s Philosophy, affirmed that after Platon, philosophy mainly was concerned with a restricted being disregarding continuity and sustenance through time as mere speculation. On the contrary, for Bergson what the philosopher considers as a being has continuity, sustenance, and even it is itself time. He has replaced the statement of Descartes - “I am a thinking being” - by “je suis une chose qui dure.” He has replaced the eternal values by continuity and sustenance, and static values by the values of motion and change. In fact by this standing, which can be linked to the peculiarities of nineteenth century German and English history and evolutionary philosophy. Bergson initiated a revolution. All works of Bergson are concerned with continuity and sustenance. He does not start with general speculation. Each one of his works are directed to the examination of one specific problem. And this makes up the second aspect of his peculiarity. According to Bergson, philosophy - in contrast to science - does not dwell upon general speculations and universal systems, but upon specific issues. ... In his work... the aim... is to analyze and explain the philosophy of continuity and change. For him the essence of the existence can only be comprehended by intuition. However, those who believe that those incidents which can only be comprehended via reason, claim that Bergson synthesizes intuition with mystic values while neglecting intelligence totally.

Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals welcomed the Bergsonian philosophy as a new philosophy of time and becoming which was ultimately critical of the positivist unilinear evolutionary scheme of nature and society. Bergsonism was celebrated as the new philosophy of creativity, vitality and time and as a modern reply to the positivist scientistic philosophy. Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals exploited Bergsonian philosophy of time, in varying tones, to formulate a peculiar philosophical stand against the future-utopian mentality of the Revolutionaries and retrospective universalism of Islamic orthodoxy.

Bergsonism also served to develop a mystical individualist stance against the positivist solidarism of the statist Kemalist elites, heavily inspired from the societalism of Ziya Gökalp. In Türkiye’de Idealizm Temayülü (The Trend of Idealism in Turkey), Ulken affirmed that the idealist philosophers, who had been inspired from the pragmatism of William James and Bergson, developed a kind of voluntarism with a


heavy emphasis on individual will in history to counter the social deterministic philosophy of Gökalp.\textsuperscript{52} Ulken held Gökalp responsible for being the protagonist of "\textit{mufrit cemiyetçilik}" (fanatic societalism).\textsuperscript{53} In his words:

Liberals in democratic societies aspire to derive the responsibilities of the citizen from his freedom. On the contrary, collectivists aim at deriving his freedom from his responsibility, even to the extent of contending that the state of freedom -i.e., if the citizen has rights- is a result of his duties and responsibilities with respect to the state... Hence, in Turkey collectivists have believed that they could reduce freedom to responsibility and right to duty.\textsuperscript{54}

Safa also pointed out that Gökalp was a political ideologist rather than a social scientist. His sociology, according to Safa, was nothing more than an elementary translation of Durkheim's sociology. The significance of Gökalp lied not in his sociological studies but in his political stand. Gökalp, for Safa, was a second class social scientist, but a first class ideologue of emerging nationalism, who first realized that the future world would be shaped by nations.\textsuperscript{55} Personalist criticism of societalism, which had been heavily inspired from Bergson, was employed to keep a distance from the scienticist-solidarist obsession of the Kemalist state elites and other competing "ideologues" of the Revolution in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{56} Bergsonism contributed to the development of a creationist evolutionary approach within traditionalist-conservative intellectuals against the unilinear positivist evolutionism of the positivist revolutionaries. In this respect, the Bergsonian terms, "creative evolution" and "creative will" were successfully adopted to welcome the Revolutionary practices as an outcome of a dynamic creationist-progressive process, and this adaptation secured a safe place for traditionalist-conservative intellectuals on the outskirts Kemalist power structure, as part of the new elan engineers.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{52} Ulken "Türkiye'de Idealizm Temayılı," p. 933.
\textsuperscript{53} For further criticism of societalism, see Ulken, \textit{Ziya Gökalp} (Istanbul, Ahmet Said Matbaas, 1942).
\textsuperscript{56} For criticisms of Comtian positivism, see Safa, "Psikoloji ve Milliyetçilik," p. 5. For criticisms of rationalism Safa, "Yeni Bir Dünyaya Hasret." For criticism of Gökalp's societalism, Ulken, "Hürrik ve Mesullülük," pp. 2-4. Also see Ulken, "Ferd ve Cemiyet," pp. 57- 65. For further elaborations, see Ulken, \textit{Ziya Gökalp}.
Adaptation of Bergsonian themes and motives shaped traditionalist-conservative vision of modernity which revealed itself in a particular conception of society, politics, modernity, art, aesthetics, West, “Westernization”, religion, metaphysics, individual, freedom and free will. This peculiar Bergsonian vocabulary was articulated in the literary works and/or philosophical and political essays of the prominent traditionalist-conservative figures. Indeed, Bergsonian philosophical framework, which had been developed in Europe during the 1900s, influenced the refinement of traditionalist-conservative political ends among the cultural elites of the young Republic.  

Bergsonism, as the common philosophical perspective, hitherto shared by the prominent traditionalist-conservative figures of the 1930s served to typify a ‘traditionalist-conservative perspective’ towards the questions of life, man, eternity, and spirituality. Bergsonian vocabulary was incorporated, as a complementary if not necessarily contradictory philosophy of metaphysics, to the dominant radical-positivist Kemalist vision of modernity. Baltacıoğlu, comparing Bergson with Descartes - the founding figure of Cartesian rationalist philosophy - openly labeled the philosophical orientation of his own towards the questions of metaphysics as Bergsonian. The influence of Bergsonism could not be limited to the philosophical orientations of Baltacıoğlu and Tunç, or Safa, but, as noted by Ulken, it had a significant influence on Darülşifâm scholars in İstanbul, which after the University Reform of 1933 became the İstanbul University.

Bergson played conceivably a decisive role in the development of various orientations among traditionalist-conservative intellectuals. In the case of Tunç and Baltacıoğlu, he was responsible for the development of a philosophical and political perspective ultimately serving traditionalist-conservative aims. Ulken’s relation with

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61 Ulken, “Bergson’a Dair Yeni Bir Kitap,” p.1004.
Bergsonism was determined by his distance to the vague positivist spirit of the Revolution and by his appeal to Bergson’s emphasis on the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the human world, plus his criticism of scientism. In the case of Safa, the underlying Bergsonian philosophical framework revealed itself as a modernist personalist style in literary works. Tunç disclosed that this new traditionalist-conservative philosophical challenge of the unilinear positivist model of development also had decisive political consequences in terms of comprehending the Kemalist state’s positivist model of “progress.” Adopting a novel conception of time, traditionalist-conservative circle focused on the social and political pathologies of the positivist scienticism and its progressive ideals. This traditionalist-conservative conception of time was best illustrated by Tunç as follows:

All beings are circumscribed by time and space. We cannot think of anything outside time and space. By asking "where" and "when" we want to learn time and space. When we are lost in respective answers we also see that we have lost our capacity of thinking. Just as we do not know the beginning and the end of space, we have no idea of where and when time begins. But we live in the cradle of time and space. Hence, we are incapable of getting into their essence. Nonetheless, we aspire to surmount surface of time and space. Space, to which we have acquaintance through life, has three dimensions of length, width and depth. With respect to our perception it has front, back, right and left sides. Since motion through these sides is possible -though limited- we assume that we have surmounted the space. Have we progressed through time that far? At first sight, time resembles a river, coming from the past, posing in the present and moving to future, of which direction is unknown. However, this river does not only flow, but changes everything through its motion, at least we perceive as such. In this respect, time is essentially different from space. Time which is measured in calendars and clocks is abstract. The real, experienced time is a power sphere affecting all beings by destroying and reconstructing simultaneously. It is this time which has to be surmounted. It is this time which does not repeat itself, which does not revert. It is this time through which nature and human history have evolved. And it is this time that we aspire to comprehend.

For the Republican traditionalist conservatives, Bergson stood between the nineteenth century scienticism [read universalism] and the twentieth century romanticism [read particularistic nationalism] between which the late Ottoman and early Republican generations were squeezed. He represented the rebirth of the spiritual and contemporary attempt to reconcile sciences with metaphysics and religion,

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63 Tunç, “Zaman Fatihleri,”
scientific knowledge with life, order with liberty, the ideals of West with the ideals of
East, the present with the past and future.

**The First Traditionalist-Conservative Attempts to Achieve an Institutional
Recognition as Part of Kemalist Modernism: The Turkish Philosophy Association**

The controversy between materialist-progressives and traditionalist conservatives was
intensified after the establishment of the Turkish Philosophy and Sociology Association
in 1927. The establishment of the Association, where Tunç and Baltacioglu became
prominent figures, marked a turning point for the development and circulation of
traditionalist-conservative ideals and aspirations during the Republican period. The
establishment of the Association can be considered as a cornerstone for the early history of
Turkish traditionalist conservatism. The Association provided a legitimate institutional
framework for the development of traditional conservative ideas and its journal, *Felsefe ve
Ictimaiyat Dergisi*, popularized these ideals and aspirations. The Association signified the
traditionalist-conservative attempt to introduce Philosophy as a secular mode of thinking on
man’s new conditions of existence in the modern world manipulated by Republican
modernism. In the manifesto of the Association the objective was set as follows:

Nations, which aim at internalizing real civilization, have to adopt scientific and
economic institutions of the civilized societies. Our nation has experienced two stages
throughout history. The first stage of the Empire was too far to this aim and level. On the
other hand, the Republican phase has carried the faith in the most desirable life and
maturity... Republican regimes opt for the protection and enhancement of freedom of
thought, scientific autonomy and all those institutions which serve to this end. In fact,
science and freedom mean Republic, and Republic can only be constructed through
science and freedom... For self-sustenance, any regime aspires to educate the citizens in
line with its own ideal.  

As already noted, philosophy would be a new holistic mode of thinking on Man and
society. Moreover, philosophy, the secular mode of thought on Man’s existence,
would be an antidote of Islamic orthodoxy which historically discarded philosophy as a
human endeavor to replace the God-given meaning of the universe.

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65 "Türk Felsefe Cemiyeti," (The Turkish Philosophy Association) *Milli Meemua*, IX, 104 (February 15, 1928),
p. 1669, in *Ataturk Dönemi Fikir Hayati II* (Intellectual Life in Ataturk’s Era II), Mehmet Kaplan, Inci Engin et
al., eds. (Ankara: Kultur Bakanligi Yayınlari, 1992), p. 329. See also Baltacioglu, “Felsefe Nedir?” (What is
Philosophy?) *Yeni Adam*, 152 (November 26, 1936), p. 14, “Felsefenin Mevzu Nedir?” (What is the Subject

66 Tunç, “Felsefe,” pp. 131-6. Philosophy, for Baltacioglu, is a form of knowledge on existential conditions in
the universe, see Baltacioglu, “Yeni Adam,” *Yeni Adam*, 6 (February 5, 1934), p.8.
The Association soon became an institutional platform for a political and philosophical discussion group which included Ülken, Tunç, Baltacıoğlu, Ağaoğlu and Safa. Particularly religious issues, the place and function of philosophy as a new secular mode of thought on Man's relation with Nature, society and God, the nature of the new regime and the future prospects of the Revolution was placed on the agenda of the Association. In various public seminars held by the Association, the traditionalist-conservative problematic was formulated as understanding the reasons of value and norm crises felt at the social and individual levels in the course of further consolidation of the structures of modernity. A series of public and semi-public seminars and discussions on these topics marked the emergence of a group consciousness among the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals.

Yet, the activities of the Association terminated in 1930. Then, Ülken, having encouraged Tunç to become the chairman of the Association, had revived the Turkish Philosophy and Sociology Association and re-named it the Turkish Philosophy Association. Tunç was a well-known figure for his Bergsonism and personalism. After its revival in 1931, besides a series of discussions on the importance of philosophy and religion, seminars were held on the limits of state intervention in society, the philosophy of individualism, basic characteristics of the western civilization and the authenticity of national culture.

After the revival of the Association in 1931, Safa delivered the first seminar on the characteristics of modern philosophical thought with a special emphasis on Hegelian dialectics. He argued that the aesthetic conception of the world through the works of art would be a new synthesis between the thesis and the anti-thesis, namely materiality and spirituality, which was seen as the grand philosophico-political dilemma of the modern ages leading to ambivalence and crisis. Tunç defended that the centrality of human experience in the modern world could only be grasped if the philosophical truths that constituted the individual experience as a unique category of modernity had fully been elucidated. Baltacıoğlu claimed that it was the intuitive method through which the new philosophical truth could be grasped. Traditionalist-conservative
opinions and ideals, which had been developed through the activities of the
Association, pointed out the centrality of the individual in the modern world.\(^{67}\)

In 1931, again Ulken took the initiative and Association started to publish a
journal, *Felsefe Yıllığı*. In the article entitled *Maksat* (The Objective) Ulken hinted at the
common objects of reaction of the intellectuals gathered around the Association as follows:

> We should not be surprised by the rise of alienation as a natural outcome of excessive
> popularity of the standardization of man in Turkey. Standardization perceives man as
> compiled of particulars which enable external control and opts to mold man as chessmen
> and pawns. Thus, it is incompetent to reflect...rich reality. Alienation is another
> theoretical default which disregards reality and the factual evolution of being. Two other
> such standings are religious and anti-religious mysticism which absorb human and
> spiritual reality into meaningless matrice and schedules. These are lost in the universe of
> the conscious and are prone to perceive the conscious only within the artificial boundaries
> of abstractionism and totality. Examples are Eckhardt who has claimed to have been filled
> with God, and A. Comte who has claimed to have been a mortal in the society.\(^{68}\)

Elucidating the common grounds for the intellectuals affiliated to the Association, he
added that

> In both of these philosophical standings it is impossible to achieve a total reconciliation of
> humanity and reality. We believe that such a reconciliation can only be achieved in
> "personalism". Total merge between "ego" and the "universe", substantial connection
> between humanity and reality, and the actual place of man in the universe can only be
> achieved in "personalism."\(^{69}\) (Emphases are mine)

The revival of the Association served to strengthen the group cohesion among the
traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia. It was an initial attempt to formulate a
common philosophico-political platform for diverse interests and orientations of the
traditionalist-conservative intellectuals.\(^{70}\)

Throughout the thirties positivist/scienticism of the dominant ruling elites and
Bergsonism of traditionalist conservatism remained as controversial positions in the
political life of modern Turkey. Both sides conceived themselves as the valid
interpreters of the Kemalist Revolution. Distinctively, traditionalist conservatism, with
its emphasis on national tradition, as the carrier of the national heritage, rejected

\(^{68}\) Ibid., p. 2.
\(^{69}\) Ibid., p. 3.
\(^{70}\) Ulken pointed out that they derived basic concerns of their personalist approach from Henry Bergson, William
James's criticisms of organic determinism, Simmels and M. Scheller's criticisms of social organicism. See Ulken
"Maksat," p. 4.
Reason as a standard of truth and as a method of re-traditionalization of society towards the vision of modernity. Thus, group cohesion of traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia was further strengthened on a common opposition developed against nominalist-rationalist readings of Kemalist practices. Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals were in fact devoted to the general axioms of the Revolution, such as the sovereignty of the people, citizenship rights and duties. Yet, in their views, these were not absolute categories and could only be realized in a concrete society as the rights and obligations of the concrete, living individuals.

As already mentioned, traditionalist-conservative commitment to the nationalist ideals granted them the privilege to be a legitimate player in the Kemalist power structure. Moreover, traditionalist-conservative emphasis on philosophy had radical consequences on the dissolution of the religious tradition. The Kemalist Revolution, as revealed in Safa’s Türk Devrimine Baksılar, was conceived to be a grand cultural movement which aimed to ground the future of the nation in its genuine history and past. Accordingly, the emerging nation state would liberate the national tradition from its muteness of centuries. It meant that the new modern nation state was organically developed from different ways of life, customs and the interests of the nation.71 Besides, traditionalist-conservative ‘philosophers’ of the thirties proposed a new hierarchy of secular moral values to prevent the further breakdown of society by the grand process of the deterioration of the religious values. As revealed by Ülken after a decade later, philosophy would lay down the standards of truth, and truth would give way to a new ethics which would be the basis of modern politics.72

In the conferences held by the Association until 1933, Tunç, Safa, Ağaoğlu, Ülken and Baltacıoğlu, with all their varying interests, aimed to develop an alternative understanding of Kemalism and the ongoing crisis of politics and morals. The question of religious reform was one of the most provocative issues that the intellectuals

71 See Safa, Türk Devrimine Baksılar, pp. 97-102. Baltacıoğlu in his Demokrasi ve Sanat, and Tarih ve Terbiye tried to show that “modern” has its own history which could be understood through the study of national tradition.
gathered around the Association tried to solve. Tunç proposed a new set of values of humanity for the society. The new humanist civic religion would be the synthesis of all the Semitic religions including Islam, Judaism and Christianity. For Baltacioglu, the question was not to formulate a new set of values, which would be the synthesis of all Semitic religions, but to find a genuine and modern essence in Turkish folk Islam which served as a means of integration for various strata in society. The future possibilities of the reformation in Islam and a new faith placed on individual will shaped the traditionalist-conservative agenda of the time. In this respect, Turkification of Islam was one of the topics placed on the agenda of the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals. This question was important since it became one of the means to define the authentic Turkish way of life, where the individual would assume significance as a member of a particular nationality shaped by culture. It is this fundamental choice of “culture” in place of civilization that underpins the traditionalist-conservative understanding of Islam, as opposed to the Islamic trend which upheld it as a framework of a glorious civilization in retreat.

Emphasis on culture did not come to mean denial of the individual. On the contrary, traditionalist conservatives wanted to recast the value hidden in individual will as the constitutive category of religion, morals, politics and economy. Thus, creative individual will was privileged either against the rationalism of Islamic scholastics patterned by the Kelam school and/or positivist and/or materialist social determinism. This emphasis on individual will always served as a framework for individualist ideals in the Republican period. Furthermore, Bergsonism, through its articulation in traditionalist-conservative discourse, always remained as a philosophical contour for the “individualism(s)” absorbed by the so-called ‘liberal revolts’ raised against the societallism of bureaucratic Kemalism by the mid-1940s.

73 For similar assessments, see Ulken, Ask Ahlaki, p. VI. Also Ulken, Turk Mistisizmi’ni Tetkike Giris (Introduction to the Study of Turkish Mysticism) (Istanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1935).
Since the late-Ottoman era, Bergsonian philosophy in Ottoman-Turkish intellectual milieu signified a new and modern philosophical perspective. Historically, Bergsonian philosophy was a crossroads between Westernism, modernist Islamism and Turkism.\(^{75}\) Resurgence of Bergsonism in the early Republican era and the circulation of traditionalist-conservative ideals through the activities of the Turkish Philosophy Association reflected that there were competing intellectual groupings seeking to formulate a legitimate understanding of Kemalist practices. During the early thirties, Kadro's materialist philosophy and its historical-materialist perspective provoked and thus united diverse critics of the materialist-positivist and mechanist philosophies around the ideal of formulating an alternative conception of Kemalism.

**Kadro's Revolutionary Kemalism and Traditionalist Conservatives**

The Kemalist Revolution had profound effects on the social, economic and political structure of the society. Within a decade after the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, the ruling Republican intelligentsia came to complete their radical westernization project under the tutelage of the newly established nation-state. Cultural, political and economic reforms were implemented under the surveillance of the charismatic leadership of Gazi Mustafa Kemal. In a decade various intellectual groupings emerged with the aim of formulating the valid interpretation of the Revolution. Between 1932 and 1935 a group of Republican intellectuals began to publish the journal Kadro to formulate a theory of the Turkish revolution. The core circle of the intellectuals comprised Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, Seçkin Yazman, Vedat Nedim Tör, İsmail Hüsrev Tökin, Burhan Asaf Belge, and Şevki Yazman.\(^{76}\) Aydemir, was the prominent figure of the journal.\(^{77}\)

\(^{75}\) During the late Ottoman and early Republican periods, Islamic traditionalist were organized around the journals Sebilürresat and Ceride-i İlimye, Westernists, who published other journals such as Servet-i Fıınun, İctihat and Yeni Mecmua, in the same period were heavily inspired by a vague positivist philosophy. See Selahattin Hilâv, “Düşünce Tarihi,” in Tarih Türkiye, Çağdaş Türkiye 1908 - 1980 (History of Turkey - Contemporary Turkey 1908 - 1980), vol. 4, Sina Akşin, ed. (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1990), p. 385.

\(^{76}\) Hilâv, idem.

Kadro's conceptualization of the Kemalist Revolution had profound effects on Turkish intellectual life in the 1930s. More important than its self-dictated historical mission of formulating an ideology of Kemalism, Kadro's revolutionary Kemalism provoked the strengthening of the traditionalist-conservative resistance. Kadro's attempt to formulate a valid interpretation of the historical meaning of the Kemalist state and the ideal of nation brought about early rivalries i.e. revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries, vanguard intellectuals and cadres of the Revolution and the savant of the Old regime and/or the spokesmen of liberalism and/or individualism.

Kadro's historical materialistic perspective, which was employed to understand the underlying economic and political reasons of the Turkish Revolution, was countered by traditionalist-conservative intellectuals who were inspired by the common philosophico-political aspirations against materialism after the Bergsonian reaction to the development of historical materialism and positivist-mechanism in the Ottoman Turkish polity in the 1918-1920 period. The journal, Kültür Haftası, (1933-1937) became a common platform for the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals who had been severely criticized by Kadro because of their inherent moralism, individualism and Bergsonism. Articles by Ağaoğlu, Tunç, Ülken and Baltacıoğlu appeared in the journal. Moreover, individual figures also published various pamphlets, books and series of articles in the dailies and in their own journals which enriched the resistance among the Republican intelligentsia against Kadro's revolutionary Kemalism. Despite their varying orientations, Hüseyin Cahit's journal, Fikir Hareketleri, Baltacıoğlu's Yeni Adam and Ülken's journal, İnsan were also published to counter the materialist-positivist Weltanschauung. The materialist philosophy circulated through Kadro publications had a stimulating effect on the resurgence of the deeply-rooted historical materialist-Bergsonian controversy in the Republican era. In response to the Kadro

79 Şevket Süreyya Aydemir accused of Ağaoğlu of being a protagonist of a colonialist liberal thought represented by Cavit Bey, the last Ottoman Finance Minister. See Aydemir, “Darülfiyanın İnkulap Hassasiyeti ve Cavit Bey İktisatçılığı,” (Darülfiyanın’s Sensibility to the Revolution and Cavit Bey’s Economism) Kadro, 14 (February 1933), pp. 5-11.
circle, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals exploited various themes and key concepts of a Bergsonian reaction to the positivist mechanism of the early 1920s more clearly.

In the new age of national awakening, Kadro aimed to safeguard the uniqueness of the Turkish revolution by neutralizing the "idealist-pessimist" philosophical aspirations of the defenders of the old Ottoman regime. In Kadro's perspective, Kemalism was a state-building ideology and a new theory of anti-imperialism. It also symbolized a new materialist-scientific Weltanshauung which awaited for systematization in the cultural scientific institutions for the people. It signified the march of Reason over passions and emotions, science over religion, superstitions and mysticism and finally absolute Revolutionary truth over particular interests of the society. The objectives set by Kadro for the ruling cadre of the Revolution were to sustain the legitimacy of the revolutionary institutions and to consolidate the revolutionary practices by inferring some general principles from the 'historical conditions' in which the revolution was born. The historical significance of Kadro's attempts to systematize the Revolutionary practices stemmed from its net effect of uniting even contradictory philosophico-political stand-points on a common traditionalist-conservative continuum. Ultimately, both perspectives presented themselves as the legitimate interpretations of the Kemalist Revolution.

Yet, one question still waited for an answer: who would be the carrier of the rationalist discourse of the scientific nation-state? Kadro gave the answer: The enlightened intelligentsia who devoted themselves to the future ideals of the nation and who had the wisdom to act as a legislators. The revolutionary theory of Kemalism was expected to shed light on the future prospects of the Revolution aiming to create

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80 Aydemir, "İnkılap Bitti Mi?" (Did the Revolution Come to an End?) Kadro, 3 (March, 1932), pp. 5-10.
an industrial society and a rational state. Consequently, it was the enlightened intelligentsia, which would play a crucial role in formulating the new scientific Weltanschauung for the state of its nation.

During those stormy years of the debate with Kadro, traditionalist-conservative resistance gained a new impetus among the Republican intelligentsia. For the traditionalist-conservative circle Kemalism was a multi-dimensional phenomenon. This new approach to Kemalism, contrary to Kadro intellectuals, aimed to free Kemalism from being merely a rationalist dogma. For Ülken, it was an era when the intelligentsia put its rationalism before the so-called mystic irrationalism of the masses. 85 In this new age, intellectuals did not act only as men of contemplation but they also came to be the devoted and enlightened vanguards of the nation. As argued by Ülken, “Thought and Will” marched over society to secure its rational administration as if the society was an artifact subjected to the rational control of the intelligentsia. 86 As will be elaborated on in the succeeding chapters, the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals were aware of the fact that Kemalism had a strict emphasis on science as the ultimate policy criterion of the new administration. However, for about three decades later, Baltacioglu, as already revealed in his series of articles on philosophy published in Yeni Adam in the 1930s, more openly illustrated that a unique synthesis of philosophical and scientific reasoning would free both from turning into merely hard ideologies over life. In his words:

Philosophy cannot exist without science. Although it is not science, it has to depend on science, internalize scientific data, and reconcile itself with science. Or else it is not philosophy, but ideology. Science, which is contained by philosophy, is rational. However, here, reason is not mathematical and static, but alive. 87

Kemalism, in traditionalist-conservative vocabulary, was a modern form of elan engineering. The War of Independence, as maintained by Ağaoğlu in his Devlet ve Ferd (The State and Individual) and by Safa in Türk Devrimine Bakıslar, was an

85 Ülken Ask Ahlaki, p. VI.
86 Ibid., pp. 76-7.
outcome of life-tension in the society which at the end turned into a total war for survival. The reasons of the Turkish victory could not be found on the level of development of the material sources of the nation. On the contrary, it was *élan vital* of the society derived from the vital impulse to survive which was responsible for the Turkish victory. 88 Kemalism signified the triumph of quality and creative life forces over quantity and mechanism but not the other way around. It was the manifestation of the creative essence of the society. In this respect, Kemalism was a grand cultural movement which aimed to constitute the unique national forms since it impelled the nation to return to itself for survival and to follow its own path of development. 89 In this respect, Kemalism represented authenticity and particularity but not cosmopolitanism and formalism. This cultural authenticity, which Kemalism sought to bring to the fore, for the traditionalist-conservative circle, could be grasped as a synthesis of the images of folk spirit and folk religion. 90

*Towards a New Metaphysics: Kadro's Societalism Against Traditionalist-Conservative Personalism*

In this new era of nation-state building, individualist and old-minded scholars in *Darülşifınum* were accused by Kadro of being responsible for the resurrection of Bergsonian pessimism and individualism. 91 Accordingly, the old scholars in *Darülşifınum*, before its dissolution in 1933, were accused of being engaged in regenerating a new individualist metaphysics to degenerate the Revolutionary principles and values. Indeed, Baltacıoğlu revealed that new secular personalist

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metaphysics would provide the moral principles and values from which the ultimate

92 good in Kemalist practices would be deduced. This civic conception of metaphysics

would provide new answers for the purpose of human existence in modern society.93

In his reply to Aydemir's criticisms, he revealed that he was neither an individualist, as

Kadro acclaimed him, nor a societalist but was a personalist.94 Traditionalist-

conservative emphasis on the individual will in a personalist perspective had important

repercussions in consolidating a new secular metaphysics, since religion lost its

essential function to render a meaning to human existence within the universe of

Kemalist modernism. Traditionalist-conservative circle, devoted to personalism,

ultimately aimed to replace the religious dogma with a new life metaphysics.95

This traditionalist-conservative emphasis on the new life metaphysics was also

an attempt to provide an ethical content to the political construction of the Republican

citizen and had far-reaching repercussions in politics. Traditionalist-conservative

attempts to formulate a new metaphysics of man provided substantive views to the

ruling Kemalist intelligentsia to delineate the just and moral action of the citizen in a

hierarchical and stratified society. Within this framework, the conflict-hidden dualities,

such as individual against society and rights against obligations, became political issues

which revealed the deeply-rooted controversy between the rationalist-societalist and

empiricist-personalist ethics of the revolutionaries and the traditionalist conservatives,

respectively.96

92 Baltacoğlu, “Laik Terbiyenin Kendisini İstiyoruz,” (We Demand the Secular Education Itself) Yeni Adam, 68

(April 18, 1935), p. 2. Ülken tried to formulate a moralist-personalist ethics which would serve as a means of

integration for various strata in new modern hierarchical society (meratip cemiyeti). See Ülken, Ask Ablaksi

pp.120-31, 162-3, 165, 271, 379-80, İnsanı Vatanperverlik, p. 73. See also Ülken, Sosyolojiye Giriş (Introduction

to Sociology) (İstanbul: Üçler Basmevi, 1947), pp. 19-25.


94 Baltacoğlu, “Kadro'ya Göre Yeni Adam, Yeni Adam'a Göre Kadro,” (Yeni Adam for Kadro, Kadro for Yeni

Adam) Yeni Adam, (April 23, 1934), p.11.

95 See Aydemir, “Bir Ruh Fantazisi Yahut Yerli Peygamberi,” (A Spiritual Fantasy or Native Prophet) Kadro, 1

(January 1932), pp. 31-7.

96 See Ülken, Ask Ablaksi, pp. 71, 77, 87, 89-90, 192, 346.
Kadro’s Critique of Personalism with an Ethical Content

It was not accidental that the debate between Kadro and traditionalist-conservative intellectuals began by Kadro’s severe criticisms of Bergsonism and individualism of [read personalism like Ulken and Baltacioglu chose to label it] the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals. This debate started three years after the Republican ruling elites had ended the short lived ‘liberal’ Free Party episode. Because of the rising statist tendencies in the 1930s, intellectual and political agenda of the time was shaped by the limits and evils of individualism.

The leitmotifs of Kadro’s criticisms were “individualism,” and “liberalism” in economics, “Bergsonism,” and “idealism” in politics. Kadro’s challenge began for about a year before the Republican government had launched a university reform program. The old Darulfitun was dissolved and the İstanbul University, which had been planned to be in the service of the Revolution, was established. The Kadro intellectuals welcomed the university reform program. Besides the self-dictated mission of formulating a revolutionary ideology, Kadro tried to demonstrate that individualism and moralist mysticism that revealed themselves in Ulken’s Ask Ahlaki

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97 In his article revealing the objectives of the Turkish Philosophy Association, Ulken characterized the common philosophical orientation of the intellectuals gathered around the Association as şahsiyetçilik (personalism). See Ulken, “Maksat,” pp. 1-7. Baltacioglu emphasized on the differences between individualism and personalism and set the mission as to maintain the uniqueness and unity of personality. He added that following the Renaissance period, a trend toward personalism was emerged in the Western world. For his distiction between personalism and individualism, see Baltacioglu “Halk Universitiesesi Dersleri, Terbiye” (Lectures of People’s University, Education) Yeni Adam, 28 (July 9, 1934), p.2. For an emphasis on the realness and unity of personality and the demystification of religious world and changing conceptions of individual towards personalism, see Baltacioglu, “Halk Universitiesesi Dersleri, Terbiye,” (Lectures of People’s University, Education) Yeni Adam, 29 (July 16, 1934), p.2. Baltacioglu, in his reply to Kadro, also typified his philosophical orientation as realism, see Baltacioglu, “Kadro’ya Göre Yeni Adam Yeni Adam’a Göre Kadro,” p. 11. Also Baltacioglu, “Kadro’ya Cevap,” (Reply to Kadro) Yeni Adam, 29 (July 16, 1934), p.8. For his personalist conception of educational philosophy, see Baltacioglu, İttifai Mektep Prensipleri (The Principles of Social School) (İstanbul: Tecelli Matbaası, 1935). Safa also pointed out the changing conceptions of individual in modern societies. See Safa, “Sözde Münverler Cesaretini Nereden Alırlar?” (From Where Does the Pseudointellectual Take His Courage?) Cumhuriyet, (August 15, 1933).

98 Ulken made a distinction between excessive societalism and individualism, which either resulted in slavery of the individual or anarchy in society. Ulken’s distinction reflected a common stand shared by the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals. See Ulken, Ask Ahlaki, p. VII. Also Safa, “Dünya’nın Muhtaç Olduğu Nizam,” (The Order Which the World is in Need of) Cumhuriyet, (October 11, 1939). Ağaoğlu’s polemics with Kadro were compiled in his book entitled Devlet ve Ferd. Ağaoğlu tried to show how particular interests could be reconciled with general interest without deteriorating two principles, namely public order and individual freedom.

(Piety Ethics) and Tunç’s Bergsonian philosophy were the bearers of an intellectual reactionism against revolutionary Kemalism. Burhan Asaf Beige accused Ağaoğlu and the scholars in old Darülfunun of being “opportunists,” “reactionaries” who were inspired from “liberalism and constitutionalism.” Kadro’s attack on traditionalist-conservative figures was motivated by the fact that there was an alternative philosophico-political framework to their own materialist revolutionary Kemalist ideology. Moreover, they were aware of the fact that this competing conception of Kemalism was not an outsider of Kemalist politics since it also had a radical project of emancipation from Islamic scholastics. Traditionalist conservative legitimacy in politics was due to its personalism, willing to free the Republican citizen from the restrictive formalist Islamic scholastics. Even though the theme of freeing from Islamic scholastics granted traditionalist-conservative discourse a recognition in politics, the extension of the idea of freeing the individual and society from the state’s excessive tutelage made traditionalist-conservative ideas unacceptable to Kadro. Still in the articles which appeared in Kadro in 1932, the attacks were not directed at Islamic scholasticism but to those ‘liberal’, ‘individualist,’ ‘moralist,’ ‘mysticist,’ ‘Bergsonian’ ‘idealist’ intellectuals, namely, Ağaoğlu, Ülken, Tunç and Baltacıoğlu, whom in Kadro’s perspective were fed by the nineteenth century nihilism against modernism and rationalism. In this way, Kadro aimed to secure the uniqueness of its own revolutionary Kemalism by neutralizing the traditional conservative intellectual milieu.

In 1931, a booklet of Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, entitled Cihan Ekonomisinde Türkiye (Turkey in the World Economy) was published. Then, his provocative book İnkılap ve Kadro (Revolution and the Cadre) appeared in 1932. The sacred mission Kadro set for itself was stated by Aydemir as follows:

100 Belge, idem.
102 Aydemir, Cihan Ekonomisinde Türkiye (Turkey in the World Economy) (Ankara: Hakimiyeti Milliye Basımevi, 1931).
103 Aydemir, İnkılap ve Kadro (Revolution and the Cadre) (İstanbul: Milliyet Basımevi, 1932).
During Atatürk's period there were the attempts of formulating doctrines all over Europe. In Russia revolutionary socialism (Marxism), in Italy Fascism, in Germany Nazism and in democratic countries reformist socialist ideology and socialism were all active doctrines. In Turkey, we faced the reality of the Revolution, however we did not have a theory and philosophy of Revolution. If there is a revolution, then there must be an interpretation of the revolution. The theory of revolution had to be based on the objective conditions which were responsible for its emergence in history and the scientific study of context of the original principles.

The dispute between the 'ideologues of the Revolution' and Bergson-inspired reaction was intensified when Aydemir severely criticized Ulken's "moralist mysticism" in his article entitled Bir Ruh Fantazisi Yahut Yerli Peygamber (A Spiritual Fantasy or Native Prophet) in Kadro's first issue. The focus of the article was one of Ulken's books entitled Aşk Ahlaki, published in 1931. In Aydemir's words, "it was indeed a book written for the people in spite of people." He, as in his criticism of Baltacıoğlu, opposed Ulken's eclecticism, which for Aydemir, had resulted from Ulken's "vitalist, pan-naturalist, effectualist, monist and realist perspective." According to him, Ulken was the protagonist of a new mystic religion which could be characterized as a "state of indolent slavery of soul."

For Aydemir, Turkey was in a state of permanent Revolution. Thus, Kadro would theorize on the current state of society and would try to develop a theory of permanent revolution. For Aydemir and the emergent Kadro perspective, any kind of pessimist mystic individualism could not be a legitimate philosophical perspective on which the future ideals and principles of the Revolution could be built. For Kadro, neither the individual nor the individual will could be taken as the basic categories of a revolutionary theory of Kemalism. The essential determinant for individual action was society and social cognizance. The direction, purpose and the value hidden in social development could only be grasped through a revolutionary theory which granted priority to the society.

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105 Aydemir, “Bir Ruh Fantazisi Yahut Yerli Peygamber,” pp.31-7
106 Ibid., p. 31.
107 Ibid., p. 32.
108 Ibid., p. 35.
The legitimate ideology of Revolution had to explain the underlying economic reasons of the political and social changes experienced in society. For Aydemir, Ülken’s moralism, as revealed in his book, like Ağaoğlu’s liberalism and/or Baltacıoğlu’s idealism, was an archetype of an “outdated individualism” and a “mystic view on Man and society” in which the essential category was the “subject” [the ego] but not the “object” [society]. However, in revolutionary times, the essential category of philosophico-political analysis was society [read the object] but not the individual [read the subject]. The achievements of the revolution could only be safeguarded through the concurrent revolutionary changes fostered in society. For Kadro, deference to any kind of “individualism,” be it either “mystical-religious” or “philosophical,” was an attack on Kemalism. Thus, Kadro’s etatist-rationalist stand dictated that “individualist/mysticist philosophies” would hinder the consolidation of the political and social ideals of the Revolution.

In 1933, Ülken published several books which showed that society was in a deep moral crisis after the dissolution of the traditional religious order. Alienation of the intelligentsia and the distance between the ideals of the rulers and the ruled had further been deepened and widened by growing rationalism and radicalism in politics. Neither materiality nor spirituality could be sacrificed to each other. Increasing standardization and dehumanization of social relations turned the society to a set of mechanical relations through which a power-driven solidarity among the citizens was sought. For him, the foremost problem was to counter the rationalist revolutionary philosophies which saw the society as a rational artifact. Thus, Ülken, in Tunç’s sense, argued that the new “truth” philosophically manifested itself in the mysticism of the people which sociologically corresponded to what Baltacıoğlu

111 Aydemir, “İnkişap Heyecanı,” pp. 5-8.
112 These themes were elaborated in various books. See Ülken, Türk Tefekkür Tarihi II, İnsanı Vatanperverlik, Telifliği tüm Tenakuzları (The Contradictions of Compromising) (İstanbul: Hamidbey Matbaası, 1933).
referred as tradition. He tried to reconcile Turkish mystic thought [read a unique life of contemplation] with modern rationality which was seen as a means of domination of the material but not the human world. 115

Ülken stressed that the antagonism between rationalism and mysticism became visible in the life experiences of different strata of the society. Intellectuals had started to conceive themselves as the representatives of a mode of rational conduct of daily experience whereas the rest of the populace was degraded as the holders of a mystic irrational experience. However, there was an urgent need to reconcile these competing truths in the society. For Ülken, the task of Republican intelligentsia was not to disregard the hidden truths which manifested themselves in the traditions of the society. 116 Only through getting closer to the world of irrationality, that is, culture, a unique conception of Kemalism could be formulated. 117

Towards an Ethical Theory of Politics: Work Ethics in Traditionalist-Conservative Discourse

The basic traditionalist-conservative contention was to show that every epoch had created its own highest truth in the fields of politics, aesthetics and ethics, and had its own typical model of man. 118 In this respect, Ülken argued that the higher truth of the Ancient Greek polis civilization was represented by a typical personality, namely the judge. This old civilization also had its own conception of the universe. The cosmos meant the order of universe and society. 119 From the democracy of the polis, an age of tyranny and its corresponding hedonistic morality, which had been represented by the rise of Stoicism and Epicureanism emerged. 120 Subsequent to the emergence of Semitic religions, the highest truth of the universe was represented by the saint (veli).

115 Ülken, ibid., pp. 8-11. See also Ülken, Ask Ablakı, p. VI.
116 Ülken, Ask Ablakı, pp. III-VIII.
117 See Ülken, Türk Kozmolojisi, Türk Mitolojisi, Türk Hikmeti, Teknik Tefekkür (Turkish Cosmology, Turkish Mythology, Turkish Wisdom, Technical Thinking) (Ankara: Bayvekalet Mudevvanat Basmevi, 1933), İnsanı Vatanperverlik, (1933), Türk Filozofları Antolojisi (The Anthology of Turkish Philosophers) (İstanbul, Şirket-i Mürettibye Matbaası, 1935).
120 Ulken, ibid., pp. 59-60.
The clergy, the privileged group of the religious order, was seen as the carrier of an ascetic ethics until the age of Renaissance which had been characterized by the rise of modern state and monarchy. In the modern world shaped by the rise of modern state, an ethics of honesty developed. The model of honest man in the New Age was a synthesis of the saints ethics of the Middle Ages and the judge, ideal-typical personality of the Ancient polis civilization. The ethics of honesty became an imperative of the rationalist-individualist ethics, which had been represented in the writings of Voltaire and had further been consolidated by the deepening of the political structures of the modern state. Then, Jean Jacques Rousseau’s model of virtuous man, which celebrated the emergence of citizenship ideal and national ideals, triumphed over the ethics of honesty shaped by a belief on the governing ethos of Reason and an apriori symmetry between Reason and universe. Traditionalist-conservative conception of politics, with an ethical content, was primarily engaged in delineating an ethics of spontaneous and “voluntary self-sacrifice” of the free citizens, for deepening of the political and cultural institutions of the modern-nation state.

In search of an ethical basis for individual action in modern society, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals recognized work as an empirical process of self-realization for the individual. Traditionalist-conservative approach to work process, which had been praised both by Baltacoğlu and Ülken as a means of self-recognition and realization, was a challenging alternative to the dominant Republican understanding where the legitimate public identity was constituted through a rationalist citizenship ethics. Work and profession became the ultimate sources of individual ethics which drew the limits of his rights and obligations. Moreover, as pointed out by

121 Ülken, ibid., pp. 62-4. Also see Baltacoğlu, “Halk Üniversitesi Dersleri, İctimaiyat,” (Lectures of People’s University, Sociology) Yeni Adam, 41 (October 11, 1934), p. 5; Baltacoğlu, İzmit Konferansları: Terbivenin Kıymetleri ve Vaatüllari, p. 6.

122 Ülken, ibid., pp. 64-65. See also Baltacoğlu, Tarih ve Terbive, p.175.

123 See Baltacoğlu, İctimai Mektep Nazariyesi. Also Ülken, Ask Ahlaki, pp. 34-5. See also Ülken, “İctimai Teşekkülün Temeli, İş,” (The Basis of Social Organization, Work) İnsan, 2,8 (January 1, 1939), pp. 671-6, “İş Hakkında,” (On Work) İnsan, 2,10 (March 1,1939), pp. 822-31, “İş’e Dair,” (About Work) İnsan, 2,12 (May 8, 1939), pp. 997-1002. Ağaoğlu used the term “work” as a criterion to denote the basic cleavage system of the capitalist societies, See Ağaoğlu, Devlet ve Ferd, p. 49.
Baltacıoğlu, it was only through work Man constituted himself as a member of a society, as a functional part of a totality.¹²⁴ This conception of work, as the basis of a stratified society (*meratipler cemiyeti*), was characterized in detail by Ulken in his *Aşk Ahlakı*. Accordingly, work was the basis of a modern, differentiated and hierarchical society. The growing functional division of labour resulted in the emergence of a modern stratified society which was composed of various groups and classes that were mutually dependent on each other.¹²⁵ Yet, transition to the modern stratified society, at the same time, implied the deterioration of the religious *Weltanshauung*; replacement of it by saint ethics with a new personalist work ethics.¹²⁶

When work was regarded as the basis of moral personality, then, there emerged a distance from religious ethics and/or the rationalist Republican citizenship ethics. The ideal typical model of the individual of the religious order was the saint. In a similar vein, it was the revolutionary citizen armored with science and rational thought who stood as an ideal-typical model of the individual for Kemalism.¹²⁷ Having provided an ethical theory through their work conception, traditionalist conservatives advocated the view of a personality which realized itself in concrete work process as an ideal to secure the autonomy and the real existence of the ‘hypothetical Revolutionary citizen,’ without being entrapped by individualism and societalism. The organization of work, which had been praised as a process which would bring into being productive agents, had been severely criticized by Gökalp as incorporating an utilitarian end to the educational philosophies. Though these intellectuals did not try to impose a utilitarian basis for either work or education, Gökalp had maintained that education could not be provided on a utilitarian basis although utility could be a legitimate end of education.¹²⁸

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¹²⁴ See Baltacıoğlu, *İzmit Konferansları: Terbiyenin Kıymetleri ve Vasıtları*.
¹²⁶ Ulken, *Aşk Ahlakı*, p. VI.
In this sense, Ulken, like others who belonged to this circle, aimed to find out a way out of the dilemma of social determinism against individual freedom. The old question concerning the limits of individual freedom and individual will was resolved through a new conception of work as an empirical process of self-realization where the individual felt both his autonomy and responsibilities towards the society. The critical traditionalist-conservative questions were as follows: If the "individual" was always framed by a particular social order, then what would be the status of the 'individual will' and his creative capacity with respect to the social determinants? If the individual was free and because of his freedom and autonomy, there emerged responsibility, then what was the meaning of social determinism? Ulken and Baltacioglu’s conception of personality, which realized itself in concrete work process, aimed to reach a balanced approach which neither sacrificed the individual’s creative capacity to realize himself as part of the moral order of the society nor reduced the moral order of the society to an artifact of individual’s reason, passions and will to realize himself.\textsuperscript{129}

Ulken’s conception of personality presumed that personality was neither a pure individual construction nor solely shaped by the moral values of the society.\textsuperscript{130} Personality had been constituted as a harmonious totality of individual passions and social norms. Personality was not the conscious individual reflection of the moral values of society nor was the individual the creator of morality, as suggested by classical individualism. Against classical liberal individualism, Ulken also held that personality was not the reason of a unique and private moral life against commonly shared social ethics. Personality was the manifestation of both the autonomy and independence of Man and his dependence on the society. Yet, more than these, it was the work process in which a mutual-dependence between individuals and with society were constituted.\textsuperscript{131}


\textsuperscript{130} Ulken, "Cemiyet ve Marazi Suur," (Society and Pathological Conscious) \textit{Felsefe Yiligi}, 1 (Istanbul: 1932), pp. 23, 130.

\textsuperscript{131} Ulken, \textit{Insani Vatanperverlik}, pp. 167-71. See also Ulken, \textit{Ask Ablaki}, p. 69.
Work, according to Ülken, was not simply an economic phenomenon which paved way to the rise of the legitimate category of classical economy, namely the *homo economicus*. Work, [read labour] was the quantitative and effective equivalent of all values that made up of the mores of a particular society. The ethical content of human activity found materiality in the work process which constitutes the society as a dynamic totality. Organization of labour was the basis of society. It was also a realm for the unique objectivization of values and norms which shaped a particular conception of religion, ethics, law and art. Yet, personality was a totality which had been shaped in an interactive relationship between the mores of the society and the role attributions in the work process, where the values and norms of a particular society found a concrete form. For Ülken, the ideal-typical personality in modern society, could be modeled on the principles of work organization which was ultimately shaped by the traditions, customs and history of individual societies. Yet, differences between various societies were due to the changing functions of mores and nature of work organization in constituting the personality as a moral authentic totality. The new the occupational groups, which emerged on the basis of the changing work structure of modern society, also reflected the shifts in the cleavage system of the modern society. Both for Ülken and Baltacıoğlu, occupational structure and social hierarchy were responsible for the constitution of the personality as a form of moral existence.

Ülken, together with Baltacıoğlu, was aware of the fact that the new regime was in search of a new set of principles and values which would provide legitimate answers to the questions of “how to behave in modern society?,” and “on the nature of legitimate limits of moral and political actions of the members of the moral community, namely the nation.” For the traditionalist-conservative circle, fulfillment of individual personality and maintenance of individual freedom were ultimately realized in the work

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133 Ülken, “İçtimai Teşebbûlun Temeli (İş),” p. 671.
process. Yet, it did not come to mean that particular interests of groups and/or individuals in the work process could easily be substituted for the communal good and interests. Emphasis on work aimed to denote that society was in transition to a new organizational form which was based on a new division of labour among the newly emerging occupational groups. Yet, there was still an hierarchical structuration among the newly emerging groups, which Ülken characterized as a basic tenet of modern stratified society. Although the traditionalist-conservative intellectual praised the individual as a productive creative agent in the work process, emphasis was more on the mutual-dependence among the individuals and groups than on the isolated individual, since mutual-dependence was seen as the basic tenet of the modern stratified society.

The focus of analysis of traditionalist-conservative intellectual was the new functional division of labour which was held responsible for the emergence of a new sense of order, unity and dependence within and among the new occupational groups. The responsibility principle was derived from the interdependence of individuals and groups with each other. For the traditionalist-conservative intellectual, the responsible individual was an “active” citizen, who by internalizing the national ethics and bringing his individual capacities into the service of the nation contributed to the life of his nation. Thus, Baltacıoğlu revealed that

Republic, independence, state and nation are all moral ideals. These are not ordinary concepts. The power of the ideal depends on our competency of sensation. All these are national, emotional and spiritual issues depending on the degree of our unconscious sensation. The ideal cannot coexist with interest and reason. It can be sensed only if it is spread throughout life. 136

Traditionalist-conservative emphasis on unity within multiplicity to be emerged in the work process enriched their conception of social obligations. The exercise of free choice was both natural and a right but it also implied that feelings, views, interests and welfare of other members of the nation must also be taken into account because social life was more than a selfish satisfaction of individual interests. The individual, as a productive and acting agent, had moral, social, economic and political obligations towards the community to which he belonged, namely the nation.

The question of ethics had a special importance for the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals since the resolution of ethical questions would shed light on conditions of free obedience to the newly established national state.\(^{137}\) Traditionalist conservatives tried to maintain that free obedience to the restraints and imperatives set by the new state should stem from the spontaneously possessed moral values through the self-devotion of the citizens to the national political institutions and living authentic traditions. Traditionalist-conservative contention with ethics aimed to close the distance between the order of the nation state and the order of the culture. Order of the new state, which was represented by Kemalism, would not be imposed from above but would have to emerge spontaneously from an inner sense of responsibility of the social groups and individuals who voluntarily felt a sense of belonging. In this respect Baltacıoğlu affirmed that there was a correspondence between the ethical basis of Kemalist regime and his moral personality.\(^{138}\) Furthermore, in his *Cumhuriyete İnanıyorum* (I Believe in Republic) he characterized this contention as follows:

I believe in the Republic, because I know that it belongs to us. I know that the Republic does not arise from the book, conceptualization, reason. But it is an outcome of our own living, of our own blood and flesh. I know that our Republic belongs only to us. I know that it is the actual reflection of our zeal for life, struggle and independence.\(^{139}\)

Kemalism, in the broader sense, as it had been illustrated by Safa in *Türk Devrimine Baksılar*, was the manifestation of the ideals of the War of Independence as the nation’s will to return itself. Thus, the new political order of the society was more than a political experiment, and it had to be a moral and spiritual enterprise for the members of the new political community. Thus politics, with a moral purpose, as delineated by Ülken, had to deal with the problems of concrete man and society in the process of self-formation through their own unique way of development. Politics in search of a deeply rooted order had to aim for the perfection of man and society in

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\(^{138}\) Baltacıoğlu, “Türk Rejimini Niçin Severim?” (Why I Like the Turkish Regime?) *Yeni Adam*, 247 (September, 21, 1939), p.2.

their own path of development and not transform them to some other things alien to themselves. Ulken remarked on this point as follows:

Stability and the progress of the society to the perfect form of its structure should be distinguished from the transformation of a society into a totally different structure. Morality in a definite structure is the zeal for perfection.\textsuperscript{140}

Politics was expected to deal with things in transition, those which are in self-formation, be it, personality or nationality. Thus, political institutions needed to be responsive more to the demands of the new age, without sticking to a model of positivist civilization which had been abandoned by the rise of a new West, critical of the positivist-rationalist West. As it will be elaborated in the succeeding chapters, an empiricist-realist method in politics and education was adopted and substituted for a rationalist-utopian one since the basic contention was to counter any kind of transcendentalism which could be derived from Kemalism. Baltacıoğlu’s educational philosophy stood for the most significant example of this traditionalist-conservative contention.

As depicted by Ağaoğlu, societies moved from simple to complex forms through the intensification of functional division of labour and deepening property relations.\textsuperscript{141} In comparing Western, Islamic and Brahmanian civilizations in his book \textit{Üç Medeniyet} (Three Civilizations), Ağaoğlu also tried to show that it was lack of individuality and freedom in Islamic and Brahmanian civilizations which were responsible for the underdevelopment of a sense of public order at the individual level.\textsuperscript{142} It was the development of the sense of individuality and individual activity which inevitably gave way to the necessity of establishing a new social harmony. New social harmony and order, which were brought up by secularization and maintained through the consolidation of citizenship ethics, would be maintained by a state responsive to its changing functions towards ensuring of individuality.\textsuperscript{143} Ağaoğlu pointed out that social ethics had to be strengthened by public sanctions. The lack of a

\textsuperscript{140} Ulken, \textit{Veraset ve Cemiyet}, p. 56.
\textsuperscript{141} Ağaoğlu, \textit{Devlet ve Ferd}, pp. 30-1.
\textsuperscript{142} See Ağaoğlu, \textit{Üç Medeniyet} (Three Civilizations) (Istanbul, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1972 [1927]).
\textsuperscript{143} Ağaoğlu, \textit{Devlet ve Ferd}, pp. 40-2.
modern public sphere in Eastern civilizations was held responsible for the absence of a
social ethics empowered with public sanctions. The lack of a social ethics also manifested
itself, according to Ağaoğlu, in the emergence of a sole ethics of obedience which
contradicted modern citizenship ethics seeking for an active, productive individual in
affiliation with the symbols of modern public sphere, conditioned by social ethics and
framed by the politics of the nation state. What was lacking in the Eastern civilization was
individuality and freedom which were the sources of social Order in modern societies.

*Bergsonian Personalism As a Philosophico-Political Shield for “Individualism” in the 1930s*

Ağaoğlu, who, then, was a scholar at Darülüşûn, celebrated the emergence of the
Kemalist order. Kadro’s severe critics of Ağaoğlu’s “individualism” and “liberalism”
popularized the debate between the personalist-liberals and rationalist-statist
intelligentsia. In his article, *Darülüşûn’un İnkılap Hassasiyeti ve Cavit Bey İktisadçılığı* (Darülüşûn’s Sensibility to the Revolution and Cavit Bey’s Economism) Aydemir openly criticized Ağaoğlu for keeping a distance from Revolutionary ethics,
politics and philosophy and for hiding his reaction against the revolution behind the
iron walls of silence and science.144

According to Aydemir, Ağaoğlu and his adherents in Darülüşûn were not
equipped with those concepts and approaches to tackle the novelties brought by the
Turkish Revolution.145 For Kadro, cultural institutions, especially universities had to
serve the realization of the revolutionary ideals. They had to be more responsive to the
needs of the Revolution. For Kadro, Darülüşûn’s elitist distance from the
Revolutionary ideal mostly revealed itself in its motto of “science for the sake of
science.” It was a search of a metaphysics which aimed to promote the alienation of
state institutions from society. Science had to be in the service of the Revolution,
because it was the only source of knowledge. Revolutionary politics had to be based on
a scientific approach in maintaining technical and economic development.146 However,

144 Aydemir, “Darülüşûnun İnkılap Hassasiyeti ve Cavit Bey İktisadçılığı,” pp. 6, 8.
145 Ibid., p. 9.
146 Ibid., p. 7.
for Aydemir, neither Ağaoğlu nor his disciples in DarülFünun had produced works which analyzed the historical conditions responsible for the establishment of a new revolutionary state in Anatolia. Thus, Aydemir criticized Ağaoğlu for his indifference to the fundamental principles of the Revolution.

For Kadro, Ağaoğlu held a conscious distance from the state’s principles of revolutionism and etatism. Kadro charged that the “liberal-minded scholars” of the old DarülFünun were in opposition to the new revolutionary state. For Kadro, Ağaoğlu, like Baltacıoğlu, Tunç, and Ülken, was the protagonist of an outdated liberalism and individualism which would cause anarchy, disorder and chaos in society. In Kadro’s perspective, these intellectuals were destined to live as strangers to the national economic, social realities and national problems because of their conscious distance from the Revolutionary state’s problematic of creating a modern society.147 For Kadro, Ağaoğlu’s “liberalism,” and “individualism” would ultimately serve the establishment of a “colonial economy,”148 but definitely not a national one.

Individualism, which had been severely criticized by the Kadro circle, was not an alien notion to the Republican intelligentsia. Since the appearance of the journal Servet-i Fünun in the 1890s as a literary movement, individualism and the centrality of individual will was propagated under the influence of eighteenth century French philosophers.149 Since the rise of Servet-i Fünun as a literary movement, ‘individualism’ was conceived to be a kind of humanism which referred to Man’s potentiality of freeing himself from social restrictions, especially religion. This conception of individualism was limited in the sense that it did not imply an underlying rational man axiom of liberalism which referred to that individual as a freely acting constituent agent of the universe. Emphases made on national will and general interests, as the new categories of politics, further hindered the development of a

148 Idem.
149 See Ahmet Ö. Evin, Origins and Development of the Turkish Novel (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1983), p.179fn.
theory of liberal individualism among the Republican traditionalist conservatives. Though the Kemalists would likely tolerate to any creed ‘freeing from the Islamic dogma,’ as state and nation builders, they could hardly tolerate any kind of negative conception of liberty implying the ideal of freeing the individual and society from the state’s transcendentalism.

Ağaoglu's individualism denoted to a shift in the conception of ‘individual and individual freedom.’ For Ağaoglu, ‘individualism’ was a question fundamentally related to the existence or lack of the ‘notion of individual’ as the source of social ethics which, at the moment, denoted emergence of a worldly-ethics and particularly of citizenship ethics. As stated by Ağaoglu:

Islamic thought does not consider ethics as a separate branch of knowledge, but as eventually contained in religion. For Islamists the sharia is the ultimate authority in the determination of the values of the good and the bad. According to them ethical norms which had been marked out by sharia are surpassing and eternal. Due to their disregard of time, space and social conditions, Islamists do not consider ethics as a distinct realm outside religion.150

Individualism that had been propagated by Ağaoglu aimed to replace Sharia with an individualist social ethics. This was definitely what the Kemalists ultimately sought to do in their grand modernization project. Yet, the Kemalists still kept a distance from the negative conception of ‘freedom’, which ultimately provides a legitimacy for the individual to resist the demands of the transcendentalist nation-state. Ağaoglu, with other traditionalists conservatives, who was committed to personalism, rejected all kinds of rational state intervention which would hinder the individual’s self realization as a productive and active member of the society.151

Ağaoglu was trying to replace the classical individualist humanism with the kind of Bergsonian personalism as the authoritative philosophy of economic liberalism. For Ağaoglu, economic liberalism, like the economism of Marxism, reduced the collective existence of the individual to one of its components i.e., ‘the nature of economic initiative.’ For him, all kinds of economisms would result in various types of determinist and cosmopolitan approaches. Moreover, like the economism of liberalism,

150 Ağaoglu Üç Medeniyet, pp. 67-8
151 Ağaoglu, Devlet ve Ferid, p. 79.
Kadro’s economistic determinist understanding of Kemalism could not grasp the true evolution of the nation. The true meaning of individual in modern society could not be understood through reductionist economic approaches which views the complex issue through one of its components. Ağaoğlu’s distance to all kinds of economisms led him to see individuality as an issue which could only be understood through its cultural components.152

For Ağaoğlu, the modern world had created new forces of integration and disintegration with deepening functional division of labour.153 Though economic liberalism could result in anarchy, still, ‘freedom’ was the only source of order and responsibility in society.154 Order could not be maintained in a mechanical sense but through conscious self-sacrifice of free individuals in the political and cultural premises of the new regime. The new national order would be based on interdependence and solidarity among free individuals who deeply felt the sense of belonging to an authentic culture. The motto of “my homeland is world and nationality is humanity” was a slogan of all kinds of economisms, be it liberal economism and/or Kadro’s Marxism.155

For Ağaoğlu, the real question faced by the Revolutionaries was to ensure the development of an authentic Turkish personality. Spontaneous formation of this new authentic personality could be restricted neither by the religious dogma nor through arbitrary state interventions. Islamic theology, namely sharia, was conceived to be a factor which was restricted to the development of the new Republican personality whereas living religion, besides language, customs, common beliefs and convictions, were regarded as modern ‘cohesive factors in society.’156

153 Ağaoğlu, Devlet ve Ferdi, pp. 91-4. For Ağaoğlu’s creative evolutionist perspective on nationality, see Ağaoğlu, “Tarih Devirler Arasında Milliyet,” (Nationality Between Historical Epochs) Türk Yurdu III, 17 (March, 1926), pp. 534 -37 in Atatürk Devri Fikir Hayatı I, Kaplan, Enginön, et. al., ed., pp.154 -60. In Devlet ve Ferdi, Ağaoğlu tried to show that the universe was in a state of continuous becoming which could be characterized by clashes among tension-laden forces. Social evolution was seen as the outcome of these clashes. See Ağaoğlu, Devlet ve Ferdi, pp. 36-41.
154 Ağaoğlu, ibid., p.87.
155 Ibid., p. 95.
Ağaoğlu's Kemalism Against Kadro's Interpretation

Ağaoğlu's stand against criticism raised by Kadro set the tone of his political distance from the rationalist-nominalist interpretations of Kemalism in the 1930. Ağaoğlu announced himself as a revolutionist, etatist and Kemalist, as much as the Kadro intellectuals were. Still he delineated that his understanding of these concepts was at odds with the Kadro circle. For him, Kemalism was not a guiding book for the oppressed nations of the world. The Kemalist mission was to emancipate the individual from the restrictive effects of all kinds of Islamic mystic - absolutism and from those ideologies, such as Marxism and/or fascism. The Kemalist historical mission could be deduced from its emancipatory effect on the individual Will. In short, Kemalism, for Ağaoğlu, had signified the strive to liberate the 'individual' and to create a new harmony and order in society. For Ağaoğlu, "life" itself was the reply to Kadro's rationalism, because artificial models could not resist the necessities of life.

For Ağaoğlu, Kadro's Kemalism was one-sided and derived from an abstract and absolute model of political and social institutions which inherently had the tendency to intervene, manipulate and organize the society along a predetermined ideal. It was a form of "fascism," which aimed to rationalize and standardize all spheres of individual action, be it political, cultural and economic, in order to ensure the state's absolute dominance and control over society. For Ağaoğlu, the aim of fascism could not be understood only as the abolishment of private property or national representative government. Fascism aimed to establish excessive state regulation over the economic, political and moral life of the nation. In this respect, for Ağaoğlu, fascism could defend absolutist monarchy in Poland and republican institutions in Italy. It did not have a definite political form and objective, but an unerring

157 Ağaoğlu, Devlet ve Ferd, p. 58.
158 Ibid., p. 57.
159 Ibid., p. 41.
160 Ibid., p. 128
161 Ibid., p. 8
162 Ibid., pp. 52-4.
163 Ibid., p. 52.
Weltanshauung formed through ‘absolutism and rationalism.’ For Ağaoğlu, despite its devotion to historical materialism, Kadro advocated a fascist model of relationship between the state and nation.

In Kadro’s ideal state-society relations, no place was left to the nation before the omnipotent state. For Ağaoğlu, nation, as a political and economic category, was always an essential component of the emerging nation-state. \(^{164}\) Kadro’s envisioned revolutionary state took all responsibility for the survival of the nation. Yet, in Kadro’s perspective, the rationalist scientific state would represent the national will; would create and maintain the existence of the national institutions; [state] would rule, manipulate and control the national institutions; would take the economic initiative; would create wealth and welfare and would invent and implant the technique; and ultimately [state would] swallow the nation. \(^{165}\)

Ağaoğlu claimed that Kadro mixed up and interfused the functions to be performed by the state, government and the nation. Accordingly, all the functions, which had to be performed by the society [read nation] were transferred to the State. \(^{166}\) Historically, the State had never been an all-embracing ruling institution, which embraced both the nation and government. Thus, for Ağaoğlu, Kadro’s rationalist conceptualization of the State was an obstacle to understanding the nature of the newly established state in Anatolia.

The meaning attached to the terms, namely nation, government and state, had to be evaluated in reference to the level of social development. At various stages of development, different functions were performed by the state, government and national institutions, respectively. \(^{167}\) There were no pre-determined functions which could be derived from the genetic explanations and definitions of the terms nation, government and state. Only institutional structures could be derived from genetic explanations, but not their functions. The State was only responsible to maintain "Order" constituted in


\(^{165}\) Ağaoğlu, Devlet ve Ferd, p. 60.

\(^{166}\) Idem.

\(^{167}\) Ibid., p. 61.
society since it “was statist by nature.”\textsuperscript{168} Its primary objective was “conflict management” but not the elimination of all conflicts in society.\textsuperscript{169}

Contrary to the Kadro perspective, which viewed the abolishment of social conflicts as the primary objective of the revolutionary rationalist state, Ağaoğlu, asserted that social conflicts were not pathologies of modern societies but were natural tenets of all modern societies.\textsuperscript{170} In this respect, expansion of state activities was closely related to the restrictions imposed upon the functions supposedly to be performed by the society. Tensions in the society emerged as a result of social conflicts and antagonisms. “Tensions,” and their historically determined nature, for Ağaoğlu, were essential characteristics of modern societies. Moreover, they were also responsible for the unique path of the development of countries. In England, tensions between the feudal aristocracy, people and monarchy had resulted in the emergence of parliamentarism. Thus, the functions of the state had gradually changed. In France, deepening tensions between the monarchy, people and feudal aristocracy had resulted in the emergence of absolutism and absolutist state. At various stages of social development, functions to be performed by the state changed in respect to the nature of tensions in different countries.\textsuperscript{171}

Ağaoğlu came to conclude that the emergence of social conflicts was not the sign of social decadence or resurgence of anarchy in the society. On the contrary, social conflicts were the reasons for social development. Functions of the state could only be expanded with the deepening of those social, political and economic conflicts. Besides its primary responsibility to defend the polity, other economic and cultural functions of the state could only be derived from the nature of social, political and economic tensions which were originally generated from the conflicts and contradictions among various groups in society.\textsuperscript{172} Ağaoğlu saw the origin of the state in congruity with the society’s formation. In a continuous state of formation, new needs and correspondingly

\textsuperscript{168} Idem.
\textsuperscript{169} Idem.
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., p.35.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., pp. 36-40.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., p. 40.
new functions for the satisfaction of those needs were generated by the state. Expansion of state functions, at the same time, implied a search for a new harmony, because the state, by its very nature, meant society’s essential need of Order. 173

Ağaoğlu aimed to show the destructive effects of state policies which imposed some abstract models on the society and restrictions on individual will. As emphasized, the Kemalist objective to emancipate the citizen from all kinds of absolutism could not relinquish the absolutism of ideologies in modern times. Ağaoğlu’s challenge of ideologies, such as Marxism and Fascism, were mostly supported by Tunç’s Bergsonian philosophy. This view was later elaborated by Safa in his book, Türk Devrimine Baksıl. For Safa, like Ağaoğlu and Tunç, there was no absolute principle or a book of revolution from which the nature and the ideals of the Kemalist revolution could be derived. 174 Only through freeing of the components of the collective unconscious i.e. language, myths, and traditions of the nation, from every kinds of absolutism, a new order would be maintained and the revolutionary ideal of creating a modern society could be realized.

Baltacoğlu’s Personalist Educational Philosophy in the Kadro Perspective

In 1933, Aydemir’s article, İsmail Hakki Beyin Meşkureciliği (The Idealism of Ismail Hakki Bey), appeared in Kadro. 175 This critical article was about the “idealist” “individualist” educational philosophy of Baltacoğlu, a distinguished academician of the Republic, who was well-known for his studies in the fields of psychology and sociology of education. Baltacoğlu’s replies to Aydemir were published in his journal Yeni Adam. 176 The Kadro intelligentsia condemned Baltacoğlu harshly of being the protagonist of an “outdated nineteenth century individualism and democracy.” 177

According to Aydemir, Baltacoğlu’s politics was a kind of opportunism which would hinder the realization of the revolutionary ideal of creating a modern society. This opportunism revealed itself in Baltacoğlu’s overemphasis on society as such. Aydemir

173 ibid., p. 41.
174 Safa, Türk Iniklabına Baksıl, pp. 190-2.
177 Aydemir, "İsmail Hakki Beyin Meşkureciliği" p. 39
pointed out that even though Baltacıoğlu had stressed the society’s influence in shaping the basic features of a concrete and real personality, he, at the last instance, failed to associate his political goals and ideals with the ideals of Revolution.\textsuperscript{178}

For \textit{Kadro}, if Baltacıoğlu’s new social man, with all its ideals and traits, was rooted in society, he would be a sample of a lost personality and generation since his conception of nation was mystical. This mysticism was due to his subjectivist societalism.\textsuperscript{179} In Aydemir’s words:

\begin{quote}
What are the criteria that you utilize in your educational program? In other words, on which model of society and social prerequisites that you employ in the process of molding out social man? If your model is the Turkish society, what is your scheme of the Turkish ideals? Because, how can you put targets to this man if you have not formed your vision of progress or if your standing is not in conformity with social reality?\textsuperscript{180}
\end{quote}

Aydemir criticisms were directed at the purposes and means of Baltacıoğlu’s educational philosophy and sought for an answer to the following questions: How would it serve the realization of a future perfect society? To which demands would the education be responsive? Would it serve the needs of society as such, or would it create a revolutionary citizen which would respond to the needs of a future society?

For Baltacıoğlu, the “ideal” was different from the “utopia.”\textsuperscript{181} He defined the task of the educator as not inventing new ideals for the society, but to adapt the already existing life conceptions in society and to transmit them to the educational sphere.\textsuperscript{182} The answer provided by Baltacıoğlu on the tasks of the new educator and ruling institutions were similar to those provided by Ağaoğulu and Safa. For Baltacıoğlu, only in the last instance, the ideal of education could be understood to create revolutionary personalities. Thus,

\begin{quote}
we cannot claim that social forces are realized via education. Turkish Revolution did not arouse out of education. It was accomplished by the revolutionary... The mission of the schools is not to educate revolutionaries. Schools educate the new man, who has emerged from within the society, in accordance with the social model. Thus, the duty of the schools is not to search for a totally new man, but to educate man in accordance with the already existing model. In other words, to free itself from abstractions, and to mold out the real man.\textsuperscript{183}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[178] Idem.
\item[179] Idem.
\item[180] Idem.
\item[181] Baltacıoğlu \textit{Tarih ve Terbiye}, p.9.
\item[182] Idem.
\item[183] Baltacıoğlu, \textit{İctimai Mektep Prensipleri}, pp. 6-7.
\end{footnotes}
The economic ideal of the Turkish revolution was the machination of the economy and to move towards industrial capitalism from manufacture economy; the political ideal was the consolidation of democracy based on justice, tolerance and freedom; and the ultimate ideals of the Turkish nation was democracy in politics, tolerance in law, industrialism and solidarism in the economy, and development of personalism in ethics. Thus, the ideal of Republican education had to be the formation of real men who defined their respective roles for the consolidation of these ideals in real and concrete work processes which could be learned through an empiricist educational philosophy.

Still, if public recognition had to be sought for individual personality, it would not be attained through the formation of the revolutionary citizen but rather through the conscious realization of Turkishness shaped and transmitted by living tradition. Man and personality had to be understood in their concreteness but not through an abstract rationalist model. Thus, the man of the Turkish pedagogy will be Turkish. He will not be English, Russian or American. All nations have their distinct models of man. The utmost responsibility of the national pedagogue is to draw the portrait of national man. What is the peculiarity of this portrait? Language, ethics and taste are the three specificities of nationality. In Turkey studies on pedagogy had started in 1908. Educators of that period were Westernists. Thus, they searched not for national but for European pedagogy. However, there is not one European pedagogy, but pedagogies of European nations. There are French, English and German pedagogies, but not an abstract and universal pedagogy. One has to comprehend the cultural tradition to find the nationality of each and every cultural branch.

For Baltacıoğlu personality was a question of totality. Individual identity constituted a micro-cosmos for national identity. Collective identity was not an independent universe constituted without any interaction with the microcosmos of the individual.

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189 Baltacıoğlu, "Bu İşte İnsan Yetiştiricilerine Düşen Yükümlülük Nedir?" (Responsibilities of the Human Educators in This Work) Yeni Adam, 73 (May 23, 1935), p. 2.
Totality and harmony which would first be secured in individual personality, was also a precondition to maintain social order and harmony.\textsuperscript{190}

As already maintained, the distinguishing features of the new public personality could not be deduced from abstract and predetermined rational models of public identity unless the society was reduced to a mechanical totality. For Baltacıoğlu, if a model had to be formulated for education, this model, unlike a philosopher’s aspirations from metaphysics, or a physicians’ deductions from logic, had to be based on reality, and not on an abstract model.\textsuperscript{191} Education, for Baltacıoğlu, had to free the individual personality from the constraints of rootless utopias in real life.\textsuperscript{192} Since in real life, “we see Turkish sailors, carpenters and artists”, then, the aim of education was to educate these unique men of profession.”\textsuperscript{193} Education had to contribute to the individual by achieving a role and function in professional groups in real life. In Baltacıoğlu’s words:

Educated man acts in conformity with the social life. What does "man in conformity with social life" mean?... Hence, in contrast to what Durkheim has claimed, the aim of education is not to prepare man for life... The aim of education is to bring forth those educators, soldiers, engineers, etc., who already exist in real life. The aim of education is not abstract. There is no ... volition or heart to be educated. There is a real man, who compiles all these in himself, and thus who is the subject of education. It can be asked whether the aim of education is an ideal. ... There has been no incident of the education of such an abstract man since the creation of the universe ... Thus, the aim of education is to effectuate the real man.\textsuperscript{194}

The aim of education was to institutionalize particular modes of behavior, thought and sensitivity that constitute a unique national identity in its concreteness. In other words, education meant “institutionalization” of the values and norms of a culture which would be transmitted to the new generations. In this respect, education had to stimulate an awareness of the living tradition in order to be national and authentic. The subject of education was not to impose an abstract model of ‘individuality,’ as Kadro accused him, but to model the abstract public personality according to the multidimensional

\textsuperscript{190} Baltacıoğlu, “Yeni Nesle Yeni Dil,” (New Language to the New Generation) \textit{Yeni Adam}, 91 (September 26, 1935), pp. 4-5.
\textsuperscript{191} As cited in Aydemir, “Ismail Hakkı Beyin Mefkureciliği,” p.40.
\textsuperscript{192} Baltacıoğlu, “Maarifte Türk Doğru,” (Towards the Turk in Education) \textit{Yeni Adam}, 382 (April 23, 1942), p.2.
\textsuperscript{193} Baltacıoğlu, \textit{Ictimai Mektep Prensipleri}, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., pp. 5, 8.
process of the self-constitution of the personality in real life processes. Baltacioglu associated the development of authentic personality with man's participation in real life processes which would stimulate the ideas of autonomy and creativity. He adopted a critical stand against intellectualism and rationalism in educational philosophy and this educational philosophy became the leitmotif of his unique "traditionalism" in politics.

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196 Baltacioglu, “Kadro’ya GÖre Yeni Adam Yeni Adam’a GÖre Kadro,” p.11.
CHAPTER 5

TRADITIONALIST-CONSERVATIVE QUEST TO UNDERSTAND TURKISH EXPERIENCE OF MODERNITY AND ITS BERGSONIAN BACKGROUND

Henry Bergson was born in 1859. Less than fifty years, Bergsonian concepts of vitality, creative will, creationism, elan vital, tension and creative evolution appeared in his disciples’ works in the fields of politics, ethics, philosophy and aesthetics. To understand the Bergsonian background behind the traditionalist-conservative philosophical political aspirations a short review of the basic tenets of rationalist philosophy, its Enlightenment origins and basic policy implications are in order.

Politics of Rationalism in the Twentieth Century and Its Enlightenment Origins

The common denominator in the writings of various writers of the Enlightenment thinkers, Voltaire, d’Alembert, Diderot, Condorcet, Hume, Adam Smith, was that the world could be controlled and ordered rationally if it is represented rightly. Reason was praised as a means of representing the universal order and became the governing ethos of the rationally operating universe. To most of the students of political thought and philosophy, Enlightenment thought symbolizes Man’s ambition to regulate the human world on the principles laid down by reason and through the norms justified on the same base. Historically, Enlightenment, which has its roots in the renaissance and Reformation thoughts, is the culmination of a reaction against the God-centric scholastic conceptions of the universe. Everything, from traditions to the religious beliefs and conventions, was put under the critical judgment of reason. Concomitantly, new theories on state, religion, society, and universe developed. The rationalist spirit of the Enlightenment demanded liberty of conscience, worship, equal opportunity,
economic freedom and the equality of all men. The respect for universal human reason and universal values of humanity, natural rights, liberty and equality have characterized almost all modern political ideologies based on Enlightenment thought. Seventeenth and eighteenth century social and political revolutions in England and France were the historical symptoms of an all-embracing move of the Western societies towards modern forms of political, economic and social organizations.

The eighteenth century Enlightenment thought reached its most radical political point in France. Its influence both on the European and in non-European countries, including the Ottoman Empire was enormous in the following century. Nineteenth century political radicalism, which was ultimately based on positivistic, technocentric and rationalistic ideals of progress, was imposed by a group of intellectuals, bureaucrats or by those who assumed themselves as the guardians of the universal truth. This mood was revealed in the Ottoman cultural geography first among the intellectuals - as - bureaucrats who demanded reforms in traditional religious institutions in the face of a vision of modernity represented by Western civilization.

This vision of progress was seen in the language of modern social and political theory through the works of Marquis de Condorcet, Auguste Comte and Karl Marx. Rationalist obsession with the idea of unilinear progress, rational organization of society and rational action became the governing ideas of the modern ages. Enlightenment thought served as a framework to legitimize the modern state’s intervention in the society to create and maintain the socio-political conditions for the realization of ‘good action’ and to eliminate the harmful ones. State legislation, armored with rational argumentation and scientific rationale stood against tradition.

which had been held synonymous with superstition and irrationality. The emergence of nation-states by the eighteenth century onwards was coupled with citizenization processes, in France, in the Germanies and/or England, through which the nation-state found new means to “make” the modern society.  

A rational centralized government, as illustrated in Jeanne François Arouet Voltaire’s appraisal of the enlightened despot, was also coupled with the rise of the ideology of rational individualism. The idea of rational man were detailed in the works of prominent Enlightenment thinkers. It was a vision of man whose thoughts and practices were objects of practice and redirection. It was ultimately based on the seventeenth century Cartesian rationalism which envisioned the universe as a rational machine. Enlightenment, which derived its legitimacy from seventeenth century Cartesianism, was an era when an ‘ideal-type of rational Man’ and a new form of state power emerged with the claim to be the center of the universe. The society could be shaped and administered according to the universally valid principles and norms. New world-views, which granted new status to the worldly institutions and to the rational subject, envisioned the universe as an ordered totality. Control and progress came to express Man’s increasing capacity of rational control, plan and design of the society. Effective control depended upon knowledge about the rational order of the universe and society and adequate knowledge could only be attained through the natural sciences.

The presumed rational order of the universe had practically resulted in the exclusion of any kind of metaphysics from the social, political and philosophical vocabulary that sought any form of life principle other than Reason. Strictly speaking, the historical philosophico-political answer provided for the question of the evolution of the universe was mechanism. By the end of the nineteenth century, scienticism and intolerant rationalism also

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10 Server Tanilli, Voltaire ve Avdulanma (Voltaire and the Enlightenment) (Istanbul: Cem Yayinevi, 1994).
turned subjectivity into a metaphysics. Safa, appraising Paul Valery as a poet who had revolted against a self-creating reason, applauded Bergsonism as a modern revolt against rationalist philosophies and the cult of reason in the twentieth century.

After all, as revealed by Safa in his *Felsefi Buhran* (The Philosophical Crisis) new life philosophies highly critical of mechanist-materialistic theories were also developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These modern criticisms of rationalism and scienticism, as revealed by Ülken, had adopted a dynamic conception of society. The search for the reasons of historical dynamism and essence of life had resulted in alternative approaches to life. Meanwhile, Ülken noted that a widespread skepticism on the determinacy principle in natural sciences was also formulated in the philosophical works of Emile Boutreaux. Moreover, Bergson had already laid down the shortcomings of mechanistic theories in understanding of the dynamics of human experience and the dynamism of the human world. A philosophy of irrationalism, which had its roots in the eighteenth century reaction to Enlightenment, was developed and incorporated into the Bergsonian philosophical language in the twentieth century.

Bergsonism had also granted a new status for intuition and imagination. In this respect, Ülken emphasized the irrational layers of Man’s inner world which was an indispensible part of his total personality. Moreover, Safa, in his novels, expressed the

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17 Ibid., 19-24. For Bergson’s criticism of mechanical theories, see Bozkurt, 20. *Yüzyıl Düşünce Akımları, Yorumlar ve Eleştiriler*, pp. 32-3, 38, 42.


anxiety of a consciousness caught up between the rational and irrational, i.e., to accept the stress and failure of being an Eastern character or to move towards universal civilization for rejuvenation. These philosophical and literary stands were traditionalist-conservative attempts to register man’s attempts to generate alternatively legitimate knowledge about his worldly existence. The significance of art, which will be elaborated in the succeeding chapter, as a source of knowledge was determined at this conjuncture. The significance of Bergsonism lies in the fact that it raised a critical threat to the legitimacy of reason in fully comprehending human experience.

Bergsonism and the Basic Common Philosophical Categories of Traditionalist-Conservative Vocabulary

As depicted by Ülken the influence of the nineteenth century positivist philosophies reached their apex during the stormy years of the Second Constitutional Period. He traced it back to the appearance of the journal Servet-i Funun in 1894. The influence of this “positivist milieu” could be felt from literature to politics. Soon these intellectuals, civil and military servants, who adopted this ‘positivist milieu,’ turned their political organization to a political party in 1913 and named it the Party for Union and Progress. Meanwhile, Bergson, who would be a source of inspiration for Ottoman intellectuals within a decade, was enjoying a widespread reputation in Europe.

Having been inspired from the writings of E. Boutroux, French spiritualists including Maine, Byran and Ravaisson and pragmatism of William James, Bergson had developed a historically significant anti-rationalist philosophy. Especially after the First World War, Bergsonism had represented the mood of a new West, critical of old Western ideals of progress which was based on evolutionary optimism. It was this

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25 Ulken, Yirminci Asr Filozofları, pp.57-69. For Bergsonism in the Ottoman-Turkish thought, see Ulken, Türkiye’de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi, pp. 375-82. Also see Ulken, “Bergson’a Dair Bir Kitap,” (A New Book On Bergson) İnsan, 2, 12 (May, 8, 1930), pp. 1004-7.
mood that profoundly influenced the post war early Bergsonians in the Ottoman geography who suffered from the defeats of the War in all spheres of life.

Kolakowski noted that Bergson’s radical criticisms were directed against “mechanism and determinism in philosophy and utilitarianism in ethics,” yet still his philosophy has been characterized by “an optimistic confidence in progress.” 26 Having stated that “life” became the catchword of the age, Kolakowski added that Bergson developed a “philosophy of life” to counter the privileged place granted to “apathetic reason.” 27 In this respect, Bergson’s new life philosophy provoked a widespread interest among the late Ottoman and early Republican intelligentsia, mostly known for their Turkist-nationalist stand, who sought to formulate an harmonious approach between the ‘need to change’ and ‘the need to conserve.’ The optimistic mood after the War of Independence had revived Bergsonian themes and aspirations. A group of intellectuals, including literary figures, artists, politicians, and academicians, who were mostly among the prominent figures of the emergent traditionalist-conservative circle, revealed their Bergsonian aspirations and commitments in formulating their political objectives. 28 Tunç, Ağaoğlu, Safa and Baltacıoğlu’s commitment to the ideals of the War of Independence politicized their Bergsonian background of philosophical aspirations. In the Republican era, Bergsonism was further developed in the higher education institutions since prominent Bergsonian figures, like Tunç and Baltacıoğlu, were employed in the Turkish academia or in other newly established cultural institutions. It also had significant impacts on the intellectual life of the young Republic since the key Bergsonian terms, - creativity, dynamism, elan, vitality - and the Bergsonian conception of self, which was seen as a totality of rational faculties and irrational impulses, were employed by the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals to

illustrate the reasons for the new dynamism in society, to characterize modern life, and to affirm their optimism in the age of nation-building.

Bergsonian influence on the Republican intelligentsia found new grounds of manifestation especially in the political essays, cultural and literary studies of the traditionalist-conservative circle. As pointed out by Tunç, the foremost issue of the day was to formulate a holistic philosophical perspective which would both confirm the legitimacy of the Kemalist revolutionary practices, and protect the culture from the degenerative impacts of the politics of scienticism and from the philosophy of rationalism. Bergsonian inspirations enabled the traditionalist-conservative figures to formulate a middle way between politics of rationalism, fostering the need to change, and the necessity to conserve in a rapidly changing political and social environment.

Bergson’s significance for the traditionalist-conservative Republican intellectuals lay in his quest to elaborate a critical philosophy of positivism. The notion of “creative evolution,” which he had tried to substitute for mechanical evolutionism, tended to reflect the optimism of traditionalist conservatives for the future of the Republic, its creativity, and ambition to stimulate the national culture to create a new Turkey. As pointed in the preceding chapter, the fundamental principle of Bergsonism which was the autonomy of life and as in the case of Safa’s Felsefe ve Milliyetçilik (Philosophy and Nationalism), was utilized to employ an “hybrid organic metaphor” denoting the question of how society could change and always remain the same. This argument, as noted, was revealed in Ülken’s Veraset ve Cemiyet (Inheritance and Society), and in Baltacıoğlu’s Tarih ve Terbiye (History and

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30 For a typical traditionalist-conservative assessment, see Safa, “Yeni Bir Dünyaya Hasret,” (Longing for a New World) Cumhuriyet, (January 12, 1938).


32 For Bergson’s organicism, see Bozkurt, 20. Yüzyıl Düşünce Akımları, Yorumlar ve Eleştiriler, pp. 36, 39.

Education) and was further incorporated into their conception of inheritance. A new kind of romanticism captivated the traditionalist-conservative nationalists who hoped to utilize Bergsonism to neutralize materialism and mechanism.

In this respect, Bergsonism had a crucial importance for the traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia who sought to develop a philosophy of reconciliation and an alternative vision of modernity. Bergson’s time awareness had also created a sense of consciousness among traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia on actuality and concreteness. Bergson’s emphasis on “real time”, and his peculiar perspective on the ‘past’, and ‘present,’ which characterized life as a product of metamorphosis rather than the product of rational construction, provided new grounds to challenge scienticist policies of interventionist-transcendentalist state without losing faith on a future perfect society. Bergson’s appraisal of “intuition” as a source of genuine knowledge resulted in the emergence of an inward-looking perspective, which made it possible to focus on authenticity, particularity and uniqueness.

Traditionalist-conservative discourse had converted Bergsonism to a philosophy of renewal. New institutions and values introduced by the Republic were regarded as the simultaneous moments of manifestation of the creative will of the society to move towards higher forms of social organization. The new always appeared in retrospect; it was neither inevitable nor unpredictable; thus Safa’s Şimdi,

34 Uşken, Veraset ve Cemiyet (Inheritance and Society) (İstanbul: Kutuluş Matbaası, 1957 [1924]). For further elaboration on the question of inheritance, see Uşken, İlîyet Meselesi ve Divalektik (The Question of Causality and Dialectics) (Ankara: n.p., 1938). Also Baltacoğlu, Tarih ve Terbiye (History and Education) (İstanbul: Suhulet Kütüphanesi, 1933).
37 Bozkurt., ibid., pp. 33-4.
38 Ibid., pp. 35-6.
39 For a typical Bergsonian conception time, see Safa, “Şimdi,” p.4.
(The Present) claimed that the past could not fully explain the present, and the direction of progressive evolution could be grasped through intuition. Baltacioglu illustrated this as follows:

The approaches of mysticism and rationalism are in total contrast to each other. For an intellectual the value of the intellect is only as much as that is a pragmatist gives to pragma. On the other hand, an intuitionist considers both, but approaches the universe via intuition.

In a similar vein Tunç argued that the basic characteristic of reality and life, as a spontaneous mobility, could only be grasped through intuition.

In line with Bergson, the traditionalist-conservative intellectual suggested that the experienced and real time was different from abstract time. This conception of "subjectively experienced real time" was incorporated into the traditionalist-conservative vocabulary to develop a challenging view to the unilinear evolutionary schema of progress which had been resorted to by the statist/positivist-modernizing intelligentsia. Real time, as revealed by Tunç, was an irreversible sequences of subjective experience. However, abstract time, as revealed in future-oriented consciousness of the radical revolutionaries, was static and prohibited creativity and spontaneity. Change manipulated towards an historical end to be attained in the future was merely an attempt of arbitrary ordering of the real time. Thus, unilinear progressivism which gave rise to determinism left little room for freedom. The foremost application of the method of structuration of the concepts of vital impulse and

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42 Safa, "Şimdi," p. 4.
46 Bozkurt, ibid., p. 41.
creative Will was traditionalist-conservative conception of liberty. The underlying stimuli was to develop a conception of individual, rights, obligations and freedom which would counter Ziya Gökalp’s societalist-determinist approach to the issue.

For the traditionalist conservative, like Safa, ‘freedom,’ was a fact. The question of freedom in traditionalist-conservative discourse, as in the Bergsonian stand, was linked to their intuitionist philosophical position. For Tunç and Safa, like Baltacioglu, intuition gave us life’s fluidity, so we could grasp human freedom and novelty in life. According to Safa “freedom ... is a flux state of spiritual mood. ... (It) is itself life and spirit.” The intellect, as revealed in Tunç’s Akıl ve Hayat (Reason and Life) could not provide this since it is interested in sameness and generalities. However, the traditionalist conservative was looking for uniqueness and experience.

For the traditionalist conservative, intuition sought to understand the reasons for uniqueness in the universe. Indeed, traditionalist-conservative endeavor to formulate a philosophical stand to neutralize religious orthodoxy further led them to see intuition as a kind of introspectionism which would advance the Republican motto of getting back into nationhood [read ourselves] by forgetting the Islamic past. Intuition, as a source of inspiration in traditionalist-conservative philosophical framework further supported the claim to give freedom to the ignored sense of nationhood against all kinds of formalisms imposed by Islamic theology. Moreover, the philosophy of intuition would

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further counterbalance the universalistic claims of Islamic scholastics since it searched for the authenticity and uniqueness of all kinds of experience, including the religious one. In an age of nation-building, where a nationalist challenge was raised against the universalistic religious tradition, traditionalist-conservative philosophy, with its ultimate aim of self-discovery found strong support among the ruling Kemalist cadres. Strong emphasis was made on the constituents of the inner self of the nation, such as language, national religious experience and national tradition that would be posited for the emerging sense of nationhood.

Traditionalist-conservative understanding of intuition was also inseparable from their conception of life as a dynamism of multiple tensions.\(^{56}\) As revealed in Ülken’s *Insani Vatancılık* (Humanist Patriotism) and *Zit Kuvvetlerin Yaratışı* (The Creation of Antipodal Forces), the living and concrete society and self, in multiple tensions, were always striving to abandon standardization and rationalization in the name of survival and dynamism.\(^{57}\) Bergson had also pointed out that the “self renewed itself by an effluence of primal experience” in which “succeeding selves melt into an other” and “formed an organic whole.”\(^{58}\) For Baltacoğlu, this organic whole was constituted in tradition and his conception of tradition was also based on the idea of Bergsonian conception “duree” (real and experienced time).\(^{59}\) As revealed by Ağaoğlu in *Devlet ve Ferd* (The State and Individual), life was an endlessly continuous creation and pure mobility in which everything was shaped by conflicting forces emerging from life tensions.\(^{60}\) Correspondingly, Safa, in

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his novel *Fatih Harbiye*, illustrated how people were always caught between two worlds, i.e., Eastern and Western, spiritual and material, and confronted each other on the dilemma of creation and destruction. The reality, for the traditionalist conservatives, like Bergson, which was presented us in creative evolution. It was an ordered totality in confusion which carried the potentials for disorder in creation. Yet, traditionalist-conservative discourse promised progress in struggle since the creativity of evolution, as illustrated by Tunç and Ağaoğlu or in Ülken’s *Zit Kuvvetlerin Yaradışı*, lay in the tensions among competing forces.⁶¹

Traditionalist conservatism posed “subjectivism,” into the philosophical and political agenda of the Republican intellectual life.⁶² In a similar vein, it provided new venues for the early Republican intelligentsia who experienced disturbances of the secularization of daily life in the form of increasing demystification of the former religious *Weltanshauung* and materialization of daily life by further expansion of the capitalist market. Referring to Bertrand Russell, who stated that Bergsonism was a reaction to “the scientific optimism which made men believe that the kingdom of heaven was about to break out on earth,”⁶³ it can be said that traditionalist conservatism tended to prevent the mediated between science and religion, as well as between rationalist universalism and cultural relativism, and promised progress without sacrificing those things that were also responsible for authentic experience.

In this respect, Bergson’s highly qualified views on intuition, time and experience were responsible for the development of Safa’s traditionalist-conservative modernist literature, Tunç’s psychology and Baltacıoğlu’s educational philosophy. An analysis of the writings of traditionalist-conservative figures of the 1930s and 1940s

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⁶² One of the leitmotif of Safa’s novels was the disturbance of values which appeared as antithetical life experiences of novel characters. For personalist aspects of Bergsonian philosophy, see Bozkurt, *20. Yüzyıl Düşünce Akımları, Yorumlar ve Eleştiriler*, pp. 32, 44-5.

would reveal that the adaptation of Bergson’s concepts of tension and conflict was responsible for the development of a peculiar traditionalist-conservative conception of society and politics. Bergson’s emphasis on tension and creation was adopted by the traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia first to show that there is not a universally valid formula to establish a modern democratic society. Further, modern democracies were unique modes of political reconciliation among the conflicting interests of social classes and groups. Second, the limits of state-society relations were drawn upon the acceptance that tension and conflict were natural tenets of the modern dynamic society. Thus, state should not intervene into society to abolish conflicts and tensions. On the contrary, the state had to protect the natural spontaneous order and status quo constituted on the new functional division of society. Third, the dynamism of the historical evolution was bound to the nature of tensions and conflicts among social classes and groups. Moreover, having been inspired from Bergson’s criticism of utilitarian-rationalism, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals developed a comprehensive challenge of utilitarian moral assumptions and proposed an alternative conception of social ethics based on a personalist conception. Bergson-inspired conceptions of individualism, irrationality, freedom and religiosity were developed in the traditionalist-conservative corpus of writings and were regarded by the Kadro circle in the 1930s as the prototype Turkish ‘liberalism.’

Republican traditionalist-conservative intellectuals were also responsible for creating of a new vision of West, which, became a source of inspiration for the development of a new competing vision of modernization. Republican traditionalist conservatives realized that there was another West critical of the so-called basic progressive principles and values of the old West which was based on and shaped itself through its devolution of positivist philosophy. the other West, as revealed in Safa’s

64 For a typical stand, see Ağaoğlu, Devlet ve Ferdi. Also Baltacıoğlu, Sosyoloji (Sociology) (Istanbul: Sebat Basmevi, 1939), pp. 199-232, 343-54. Tunç, “Devlet ve Millet,” (State and Nation) Cumhuriyet, (October 8, 1942). Ulken, in his Türkiye de Çağdaş Dü günces Tarihi, stated that his primary concern in his book Camiye ve Marazi Şurur (Society and the Pathological Conscious), published in 1928, was to shed light on the nature of conflict. See Ulken, Türkiye de Çağdaş Dü günces Tarihi, p. 314ff. See also Ulken, Umumi İstimasat (General Sociology) (Istanbul: Ebi’z Ziya Matbaası, 1931), İnsanı Vatumpverthik (Humanist Patriotism) (Istanbul: Gineş Matbaası, 1932).
Felsefi Buhran, was basically critical of the Western ideals of progress, humanity and rationalism. Traditionalist conservatism and its overwhelming emphasis on spontaneous creative evolution promised that there could be more than one road to modernization. Furthermore, what was also striking in traditionalist conservatism was that it granted a new place to religion and morality in modern societies. Traditionalist-conservative philosophy of revival aimed to shape the new secular spiritual life of the young nation. In fact, with their emphases on change and reality of the past, traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia provided the new intellectual and political venues to the Republican ruling elites.

Nonetheless, there was not a unique Bergsonism common to all traditionalist conservatives. For Tunç, Bergson was ultimately the ‘philosopher of modern times,’ whereas for Baltacıoğlu, Bergson was ‘a philosophical source of inspiration.’ Bergson’s criticism of materialism, scienticism and positivism were fascinating for Ulken. In his Yirminci Asır Filozofları (The Twentieth Century Philosophers), Ulken referred to Bergson as the founding figure of irrationalism in the twentieth century. Likewise, for Safa, Bergson was a source of philosophical inspiration for artistic creation and was one of the archcritics of the positivist model of evolutionism. It has

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67 Ulken, Yirminci Asır Filozofları, p. 11.

to be noted that among the traditionalist-conservative figures, Baltacıoğlu and Tunç were ultimately responsible for the adaptation of Bergsonism into a peculiar traditionalist and conservative context in the Republican period. 69

**Political Repercussions of Bergsonisms**

The world, which Bergson offered to traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia, was characterized by creation as well as destruction since, in Tunç's words, it was not a world "created by Reason devoid of tensions, fears and hopes." 70 It was a universe spirited by a creative power. 71 Traditionalist-conservative detour of Bergsonian philosophy resulted in shaping their politico-philosophical concerns. Traditionalist-conservative conceptions of the limits of legitimate political rule over society; the nature of political power and characteristics of Republican elan engineering were all shaped by Bergsonian terms. Direct influence of Bergsonism manifested itself in emphases made on the present over future and/or past; actuality over possibility; intuition as the legitimate source of knowledge in human world; the privileged place granted to religion and ethics, and most importantly, in their understanding of historical time and progress. 72

Bergson's well known premise of "time is real" became a means for traditionalist-conservative attack on any kind of reactionism(s), especially that of Islamism since its logical conclusion was the irreversibility of the historical course of events which ultimately nullified the reactionary Utopia to return to the Golden Ages of the Prophet. Tunç referred to the Bergsonian distinction between abstract and real time (duree) and stated that the real -i.e., experienced life- is perceived as sphere of power which destroys and reconstructs simultaneously... It is this Time which is difficult to be discovered. It is this Time through which nature and human history evolve. It is this Time which we aspire to discover. 73

69 Tunç, "Bergson’a Göre Sanat ve Sanat Adamı," For Ulken's evaluations on Tunç's Bergsonism, see Ulken, "Yeni Felsefe Tercümanları," (New Philosophy Translations) İnsan, 1,1 (April 15, 1938), p.75.
70 Tunç, "Akl Romantizmi."
71 Tunç, idem. See also Tunç, "Akl ve Hayat."
73 Tunç, "Zaman Fatihleri." See also Ulken, "Existentializm'in Kökenleri I," pp. 2-4.
Traditionalist-conservative philosophical concern with the concrete and subjective experience (of time) and the denial of purely conceptual construct (of time) had important political connotations for consolidation of Kemalist modernism since the novel traditionalist-conservative modernism, in Baltacioğlu’s words, aimed at “turning to the reality, existence and being in life. Like the renaissance men, Romantics and modernists to turn to the essence, the source, nature... New man... can only be created by this progress.” For Baltacioğlu, the demarcation line between actuality and possibility, which would be drawn by the educators of the young Republic, had important political repercussions in terms of formulating radical-rationalist and/or empiricist educational policies.

In this respect, Tunç linked this rationalism to its historical roots. Accordingly, the modern ideal of man and freedom emerged after the French Revolution. This rationalist conception of freedom, for him, was fed from the Enlightenment thought which granted a new status to Reason where the world was assumed to be controlled, manipulated and dominated by Reason. Enlightenment thought, laid aside historical realities. History was supposed to be constructed through reason. Religious, ethical, legal and economic institutions and language were regarded as those things which could be rationally reconstructed and tradition, the source of irrationality and prejudices would disappear by the adaptation of rational thought. Thus, Baltacioğlu concluded that folk philosophy, like folk tradition, had to be one of the sources of national philosophy. National renaissance that would be fostered by Kemalism had to shed light on the essence of national tradition. The new Republican metaphysics, [read philosophy] for Baltacioğlu, had to be based on the creative essence of the folk spirit.

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74 For Tunç’s typical criticism of Enlightenment radicalism and universalism, see Tunç, “Gençlik Nereye Gidiyor?” (Where is the Youth Heading?) Çinaraltı, 38 (June 13, 1942), p. 3. See also Baltacioğlu, “Durma, Yarat!” (Do not Stop, Create!) Yeni Adam, 348 (August 28, 1941), p.11, “Halk ve Biz,” (People and Us) Yeni Adam, 307 (November 14, 1940), p.3.
Traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia, like Bergson, believed that philosophy had a practical importance to understand the constitutive practices and principles of Republican modernism. Philosophy also gained its likely importance in Tunç and Ulken's critical vocabulary of positivist-scienticism. Philosophy, besides Islamic theology and Republican scienticism, would serve as a new means of comprehending the new national reality. For Safa "there is a depression of touchstone throughout the world. Philosophy, knowledge of substance and meaning, aesthetics, ideologies and policies are employed in the worldwide search for a limit of stability and harmony." In traditionalist-conservative vocabulary new aesthetic, political and philosophical convictions implied the spirituality of the individual and it was the new spiritual world of the individual which was seen as the carrier of the folk spirit and as subject of the philosophy itself.

Intuitionist philosophy was seen as the principal intellectual endeavor to understand the spiritual life of the nation as revealed itself through the hidden rationale of the folk. Thus, Baltacıoğlu stated that

there is the philosophy of the philosopher and the people. These are different things. Philosopher has his philosophical system, people has a philosophical rationale. These are separate things. Philosopher constructs his philosophy through abstract reason and consciousness whereas people with instincts, intuition and feelings. Philosophy of the philosopher is a systemic complicated body of thought whereas people's philosophy is all in folk products. There are nations without philosophers but there is no nation without a philosophy. Every nation has its own philosophical tradition. This tradition is sequestered in the folk art and truth which live as tradition. Ethics, law, art, language, religion is part of a greater thing. This is the spirit of people. It is urgent to find this creative spirit.

As noted beforehand, traditionalist-conservative politics could best be understood as the promotion of a kind of life politics. Baltacıoğlu brought up the aim of politics and philosophy as to create the means which would translate the hidden creative will of the nation into concrete policies. Traditionalist-conservative anti-collectivism manifested

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81 Baltacıoğlu, "Durma Yarat," p. 11.
itself, in the case of Baltacıoğlu, as the defense of self-government and model of education for the formulation of a realist culturalist perspective.82

Direct influence of Bergsonism on traditionalist-conservative conceptions of past, present, future, personality, and liberty could best be detected in their philosophical argumentations. Inspired from Bergsonian philosophy, Tunç's intuitionist critique of scientific reason, belief on the 'reality of time' and his explorations of the inner depth of psychic life had decisive effects among traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia. Baltacıoğlu incorporated the Bergsonian philosophy into his philosophical studies. On that account, Ulken, portraying Baltacıoğlu's attempts to reconcile Bergsonian philosophy and Durkheimian sociology in his remarks on Baltacıoğlu's İctimai Mektep (Social School) added that "on the one hand, there is Durkheim's social duty, perception of the universe and language, and on the other hand there is Bergson's durée. These are in contrast to each other. However in the work of İsmail Hakki their dynamism and unity are observed."83 Traditionalist-conservative reading of politics through the Bergsonian precepts was responsible for the emergence of a peculiar traditionalist-conservative stand. Bergsonian philosophical insights constituted a vantage point for traditionalist-conservative politics. Traditionalist-conservative modernism and progressive optimism no doubt stimulated a sympathy towards traditionalist-conservative ideals among the Republican intelligentsia.84

Traditionalist-Conservative Conception of Time, Freedom, Intuition and Life Tensions

Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals felt awkward about future-oriented revolutionism because they, like Bergson, tended to see the future as an artifact without an existence at all.85 The present, as revealed by Safa, was capable of creating

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82 Baltacıoğlu, “Köy Enstitülerleri,” (Village Institutes) Yeni Adam, 279 (May 2, 1940), p. 2.
a new future in unpredictable ways. If the present was able to give rise to an unpredictable future, then, as assured by Bergson, it had to be able to declare its independence from the past. It, as pointed out by Ulken in his Veraset ve Cemiyet in reference to Bergson, meant that there is not a deterministic relationship between the past, present and future. In Tunç's words:

We are face to face with a progressive evolution. The natural tendency of the conscious is always towards the future and new. Thus, it is impossible to turn back. According to this approach, the past resembles an ever-growing hill which prevents turning back. Although it is a beneficial reference, it also becomes a burden. Thus, we can neither know what we will think and do in the future nor see the present by taking the past as the only reference point. Because for an ever-growing past it is impossible to mirror the present and to reflect the future. The impossibility of prediction also outlaws determinism.

Thus, freedom in fact, meant a rupture from the past. Thus, the Kemalist Revolution, which aimed at a rupture from the traditional political and inert cultural practices of the religious past, could free the nation and individual from past determinations towards the constitution of an authentic modern society.

Freedom, for Tunç, as well as Bergson, had a dual characteristic. In Fikir Sohbetleri, (Intellectual Conversations) he treated freedom, as the creative capacity of the inner irrational layer of the self which was restricted, limited and adopted by the outer layer. Freedom was born as a result of inherent tensions between the outer and inner selves. It was part of the irreducible conflict between the self and the world.

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88 For Bergson's criticism of mechanical determinism, see Ulken, Veraset ve Cemiyet, p. 84.
89 For Tunç’s criticism of mechanical determinism, see Ulken, Veraset ve Cemiyet, p. 84.
Even though such a world is useful to human freedom, it can also lead to restrictions to
that freedom. At a philosophical stand Tunç, in line with his general Bergsonian
convictions, asserted that it was the tension between life and death, perfection and
imperfection, order and disorder, truth and lack of truth that were responsible for freedom,
vitality and dynamism. Dynamism and its creative flow of life would be hindered when
we disregard between antipodal forces. Ülken also argued that Bergsonism could be
characterized by its rejection of finalism. However, unilinear evolutionism, for Tunç and
Ülken, tended to assert that there was an inherent aim in the creative evolution of life.

Moreover, Tunç’s Bergsonian attitude towards sciences as necessary, but as a
set of metaphysically imprecise claim of truth, found strong resonance. A definite
realm had been drawn for scientific-rational explanation. In Baltacıoğlu’s words:

In a normal society all these different mentalities are distinguished from each other and
have their own authorities. "Religion is not in the sphere of reason, but it belongs to the
sphere of conscience" is among those common statements. This conception can be
adopted to all issues concerning culture: language, ethics, taste do not belong to the
sphere of reason, but conscience. To evaluate those values, whose sphere falls within the
boundaries of conscience, in accordance with reason means to render them impotent.

This attempt to draw the legitimate sphere for the sciences and to draw a demarcation
line among sciences, aesthetics and ethics took definite political forms in traditionalist-
conservative texts.

In this respect, Ağaoğlu’s understanding of history and evolution of societies
was an illustrative example for delineating how the Bergsonian terminology was
adopted as a framework for unique political aims. For Ağaoğlu, organic contradictions
were the basic tenets of every modern society. History, the dynamic process of
multiplication of tensions in society, was also a search of harmony among these

94 Tunç, ibid. Also Tunç, “Neden Yanlışyorum,” “Akl ve Sezgi.” See also Safa “Hürriyet ve Hürriyetçilik,” p.7.
95 Ülken, Veraset ve Cemiyet, p. 66-7.
96 Tunç, “Akl Romantizimi.” For criticism of Darwinism, Tunç, “Eski ve Yeni Dünya Görüşlerimiz,” (Our Old
and New Worldviews) Cumhuriyet, (October 11, 1942). See also Baltacıoğlu, “Bilgi Teorisi IX,” (Epistemology
IX) Yeni Adam, 162 (February 4, 1937), pp 14-5, “Bilgi Teorisi X,” (Epistemology X) Yeni Adam, 163
Also see, Ülken, “Tarihte Hürriyet ve Determinizm,” pp. 46 - 59.
97 Tunç, “Akl ve İlim.” For Bergsonian criticism of modern sciences and metaphysics, see Bozkurt, 20. Yüzyıl
Düşünce Akımları, Yorumlar ve Eleştirişler, pp. 32-3.
98 Baltacıoğlu, “Milli Mantığa Doğru,” (Towards the National Rationale) Yeni Adam, 447 (July 22, 1943) p.2.
See also Tunç, “Akl ve Sezgi,” “Akl Romantizimi.” Also Safa, “Seziş, Tahliî ve Riyazîye” pp. 247, 258.
conflict-ridden tensions. Societies evolve from simple to complex forms in subsequent stages of “becoming,” which signified further levels of progress that arose out of the tensions in the societies. History was a continuous state of “creative evolution,” where each stage contains its own peculiar forces of order and tension. Creative evolution in history, which revealed itself as the society’s move towards complex forms of order, was ultimately due to the tensions among “rising” and “descending” social groups in the course of evolution. As noted beforehand, tensions manifested themselves as social, political and economic conflicts and clashes which at the same time were the main stimuli for societies’ search for Order in different historical epochs.

For Ağaoglu, the state and individual gained their likely importance in this framework. The state and individual emerged as the main constituents of modern society from the clash between the forces of order and tension. The modern world was constituted on the dynamics of individual action. The state, on the other hand, was the manifestation of the search for order. Tensions between state and individual in various societies were historically and culturally determined. Ağaoglu’s personalist-individualist ideals were based on this conception of history, state and individual. Moreover, it provided a justification for his Kemalist stand, which in most aspects differed from the statist intellectuals of the era. Between the state and individual there was a sub-stratum namely, the nation which was responsible for unique determinants of collective action and individual personality. The nation was constituted by those institutions and values responsible for the emergence of an affiliation among individuals who felt the sense of belonging and sameness through language, customs,
religion and culture. \textsuperscript{108} History and culture laid down the material basis for the sense of sameness and belonging which revealed itself as national consciousness in modern times. This affiliation with common cultural institutions and values historically formed a spontaneous national order which the state was entitled to protect and support. \textsuperscript{109} Thus, for Ağaoğlu, like Safa, Ülken, Baltacıoğlu and Tunç, the individual was not an absolute category, but a culturally and historically determined one. \textsuperscript{110} The individual was part of a particular society, history and nation. \textsuperscript{111} The state was expected to support the sense of belonging by taking necessary measures to raise the sense of responsibility brought out by the affection among individuals. \textsuperscript{112} This would lead to the further consolidation of the spontaneous order of society.

Ağaoğlu's contention with the forces of order did not mean that he sacrificed freedom to the need for order. On the contrary, freedom, was an essential trait to understand human creativity and social dynamism. \textsuperscript{113} Freedom was essential for the formation of personality and its self-realization. \textsuperscript{114} Freedom would never lead to anarchy and disorder. \textsuperscript{115} Practice of freedom would lead to the emergence of a sense of responsibility which would ultimately stimulate order, harmony and unity in society. \textsuperscript{116} This emphasis on individual and individual freedom became a means to show the novelty of Kemalist modernism and its thesis of rupture from the Ottoman past since for Ağaoğlu, the Ottoman era could be characterized by the lack of the concept of individual in the philosophical and political vocabulary. For Ağaoğlu, the peculiarity of Kemalism depended upon its historical mission to develop a unique


\textsuperscript{109} Ağaoğlu, Serbest Insanlar Ülkesinde (In the Land of the Free Men) (İstanbul: Sanayi-i Nefise Matbaası, 1930) p. 69.

\textsuperscript{110} Idem., Also see Ağaoğlu, Ben Neyim (Who Am I?) (İstanbul, Güven Basmevi, 1939) p. 10.

\textsuperscript{111} Ağaoğlu, "Milliyetçilik," (Nationalism) Akın, (July 10, 1933).

\textsuperscript{112} Ağaoğlu, Serbest Insanlar Ülkesinde, p. 105

\textsuperscript{113} Ağaoğlu, Ibid., p. 121.

\textsuperscript{114} Idem, Ağaoğlu, Devlet ve Fert, pp. 22, 106.

\textsuperscript{115} Ağaoğlu, Devlet ve Fert, pp. 22, 87. Also Ağaoğlu, "Nizami Hürriyet," (Disciplined Freedom) Akın, (June 5, 1933).

\textsuperscript{116} Ağaoğlu, Devlet ve Ferdi, pp. 22, 87.
Turkish individuality. The new state would promote self-realization of the individual, which would ultimately promote the emergence of free people. In this way achievements of the Revolution, which had been secured at the political level, could be turned into cultural values for spontaneous voluntary internalization by the citizens. As noted before, Ağaoğlu held a distance from the universal conception of freedom, based on a rational man assumption of classical liberalism. For him, a free man would achieve liberty in a particular society. This conception of freedom further distanced him from cosmopolitanism and universalism. Thus, he tended to see the people’s state as a natural institution which promotes individual freedom.

The twentieth-century personalist reaction against the “...subjectivism of liberal individualism,” of which Bergson was a part, shaped the basic tenets of Ağaoğlu’s conception of the individual. Individual as a totality was described, as in the case of Tunç, in terms of two opposing layers of the self, namely “the outer self” and “the inner self.” Materiality and external constraints were the basic stimuli for the outer self, which also referred to the ego-centered individuality that poses itself as an end for the world in experience. It implied the fundamental “rational man” principle of classical liberalism. The inner self, on the other hand, was characterized by “prudence,” and “insight.” Unlike the outer self, the inner self was not bound to materiality and external constraints which was reason for the outer self. It was a break from the rational man conception of classical liberalism. Like Safa, Tunç, Baltacıoğlu and Ulken’s interpretations of the Turkish Revolution, as the manifestation of the

117 Ibid, pp. 29ff.
118 Ibid., pp. 80, 74-75, 122.
119 Ibid., p. 35. Ağaoğlu, “Nizamlı Hürriyet.”
120 Ağaoğlu, “Nizamlı Hürriyet.”
121 Idem., “Ana Kanunlar ve Nazım Kanunlar” (Fundamental Laws and Regulating Laws) Akın, (June 27, 1933).
123 See Ağaoğlu, Ben Neyim.
124 Ağaoğlu, Serbest İnsanlar Ulkesinde, p. 61.
125 Ibid., pp.112-113, Ağaoğlu, “Maarifimizin İslahı,” See also Ağaoğlu, Ben Neyim, p.40.
126 Ağaoğlu, “Yaraticı Tekamül.”
immateriality, unconsciousness of the nation, Ağaoğlu’s understanding of Kemalism as a grand movement, which freed the people from the collectivist static Eastern civilization, remained within the confines of his personalism where spontaneous bursts of the inner self leads to “creative evolution”. The new society, citizen and state would be constituted by freeing the inner self of the nation from external constraints and materiality.

When Ağaoğlu’s personalism, which was based on an image of a divided self, and his conception of state were associated with his “hybrid-organic metaphor” which perceived “...the individual as an integral part of the society...” who can realize his “...value and dignity...” only through integration with the society, then a common stand, which will be elaborated in the succeeding chapters, among the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals could be delineated on the questions of state, individual and society.

As it has been shown in the case of Ağaoğlu, the influence of Bergsonism in shaping the early Republican traditionalist-conservative agenda has been underestimated by the students of Turkish politics. Nonetheless, Baltacıoğlu had already assured that Bergson, with Descartes and Rousseau, was among the modern revolutionaries in philosophy. For him, the significance of Bergson lay in the fact that he freed the subject matter and methodology of philosophy from the hegemony of science and religious mysticism, and that was what the traditionalist conservatives of the early Republic were willing to do: to formulate a new life philosophy at a mid-way between science and religion. Nevertheless, ‘individualist,’ ‘traditionalist’ and/or ‘conservative’ ideas were searched in refined forms as they had appeared in the Western context. However, these themes and ideas did appear in different ways in the process of nation-state building and were articulated by the modernist secularist intellectuals of the Republic. Still, traditionalist and/or conservative ideals had not fully

127 Ibid. This point has been analyzed in Simten Coşar, State and Intellectual in the Turkish Republic: From Liberal Ethos to the Myth of Democracy, Ph.D. in progress, (Ankara: Bilkent University).
128 Dyson, The State Tradition in Western Europe, pp.143-50
129 Ibid., p.165.
been transformed into concrete policy preferences. A hybrid body of ideas were developed by the interfusion of diverse philosophico-political perspectives, such as romantic-culturalism, Turkism, personalism, traditionalism, Bergsonism. Despite various orientation among them, Bergsonism provided common aspirations that have been adopted by Safa, Ağaoğlu, Baltacıoğlu and Tunç, if not by Ulken to that extent, in varying tones and degrees in formulating a peculiar traditionalist-conservative vision of modernity.

A novel criticism of rationalism in politics, which ultimately distanced traditionalist-conservative intellectuals from the modernizing policies and strategies of the Kemalist scientific state, had been elaborated. Traditionalist conservatives strongly reacted to the reduction of life to a moment of control and manipulation in the road of attaining a higher level of social, political and economic organization towards Westernization. Accordingly, "the evolution of the society" was not "a rational evolution but an empirical one," therefore, "Reason," noted Baltacıoğlu, "was not entitled to create life." In a similar vein, Safa stated that "none of the statesmen, economists, or reformist can rationally re-create even the most primitive kind of society." Intellectualism, as referred in Baltacıoğlu's Efsaneye Kyına (Do not Sacrifice the Myth), was meant the spiritualization of human reason which implied that there was an equivalence between 'life' and 'Reason.' However, Tunç, in line with Baltacıoğlu, had affirmed that "Reason was the product of

131 For Ulken's evaluations on lack of coherent political ideologies, see Ulken, "Fikir Ananesi," p. 282.
134 Safa, "Yeni Bir Dünyaya Hasret."
135 Baltacıoğlu, "Efsaneye Kyına," (Do not Sacrifice the Myth) Yeni Adam, 360 (November 20, 1941), p. 2. See also Tunç, "Zeka Nasıl İşler?" (How Does the Intellect Operate?) Cumhuriyet, (April 16, 1943). For Safa's criticism of materialism and other modern ideologies, such as liberalism and socialism, see Safa, "Bu Dünyanın Derdi Nedir?" (What is the Problem of This World?) Cumhuriyet, (August 31, 1939). See also Safa "Yarını Dünyanın Ahlaki."
life” but not its creator. Moreover, Ülken maintained that intellectualism became a natural shield of the “alienated intellectual” and distanced him from the indigenous culture. In fact, nationalism for Ülken, was a reaction to the Enlightenment and its rationalism which paved way to intellectualism in the twentieth century. What the traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia had introduced through the criticism of intellectualism and formalism were relativism, pluralism and pragmatism.

Relativism occupied a central place in traditionalist-conservative challenge raised to scientism and positivism. According to Tunç, inherent monocentricism of scienticism deteriorated the plurality of values in the human world. No place was left for subjectivism and introspection. Based on Bergsonian criticism of materialism and scientism, Tunç tried to maintain a secure realm for the uniqueness of introspection in modern world. For Tunç, the question was not only a matter of philosophical speculation, but was directly related to the tendency to reduce human spirituality to the satisfaction of selfish material interests which would ultimately result in loss of autonomy and freedom. In Tunç’s words:

In this respect, neither the concept of life nor that of substance has been comprehended in the way Descartes had presumed to be achieved via modern science. Thus, the ever-increasing tendency towards materialism in the last century is not a result of the scientific victory, but of the dominance of the economic life over the faith of the human-beings.

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138 See Ülken, Ask Ahlakı, pp. VI.
143 Tunç, “Hakikatte Herşeyin Madde Olduğu İddiası.” Also see Tunç, Fikir Sohbetleri, pp. 161-6.
His distance from materialism was coupled with his criticisms of rationalism. Then, life, became a realm of possibilities for the self-realization of the individual. The human will to realize itself, as stated by Bergson, was revealed as a totality of the inner and outer selves. This totality was of the individual will, as revealed by Baltacioglu, was praised as the manifestation of individual’s search of freedom and autonomy, since, in Safa’s words, ‘freedom’ was “the manifestation of personality in the domain of will,” a point already implied by Agaoglu.

Unilinear determinism, which gives way to monocentricism, discarded multiplicity in life in favour of unity. Tunç, who was also critical of the idea of ‘progress for the sake of progress,’ attacked scientistic materialism on these grounds. In his words:

There is no doubt that the new civilization is much more powerful and progressive than the preceding one. But, what is the direction of this progress? Who are the beneficiaries? We do not know. However, these questions contain essential issues: We can adopt to these questions on the power that has been provided by the day-to-day progress of science and technique to the progress in virtue, beauty and justice.... This forms the weakest point of new civilization.

For Tunç, as well as for Ulken, as it had been detailed in his Yirminci Asr Filozoflar and later in Tarihi Maddecilige Reddiye (Refutation of Dialectical Materialism) materialist determinism was also an obstacle to the realization of human autonomy and freedom. Materialist rejection of the spirit, as revealed in Baltacioglu’s Milli Mantiga Dogru (Towards the National Rationale) or Tunç’s Ruya ve Mistik Dunya (Dream and the Mystical World) resulted in a limited conception of freedom where freedom had been linked to some external limitations. For Tunç, as

148 See Tunç, “Hayatın Kıyimet ve Geçirdiği Buhran.”
well as for Ulken as expressed in his *Ferd ve Cemiyet* (Individual and Society), individual freedom and autonomy could not be determined by external limitations. Even though autonomy and liberty were not values in themselves, for Agaoglu and Safa as expressed in his *Eski ve Yeni Hürriyet* (Old and New) external restraints had to be substituted to internal possibilities. For Safa, moral external constraints which have been internalized by the members of the society would serve to maintain stability and order in society. Only through such a conception of freedom, social responsibility and obligation could be understood as inner moral dispositions of the individual and not as external restraints imposed by the state over the individual.

The positivist revolutionary perspective, traditionalist conservatives strongly believed, had created an obsession with achieving a historically defined mission. This critical position was elaborated by in Safa his *Türk Devrimine Bakışlar* (Glances at the Turkish Revolution). He argued that determinist-reductionist conceptions of history could not provide those means to understand the true essence of the Revolutionary spirit and the possibilities it offered. Polycentic existence could not be substituted for by Revolutionary monocentricism, since, in Ulken’s words:

> Societies are both similar to each other and distinct in themselves. Religion, civilization and humanity do not change. When conceived as realities they lose all their values. However, one can talk about a religion practiced by a particular society, a civilization embraced and practiced by a society; and also about a new race within a particular society.

In many ways, there were emphases on the concreteness of the society, actuality of the individual, uniqueness of human creativity, and richness of human experience which had been all employed to show the uniqueness of various national cultures that implied a polycentric existence in the world of modernity. In Baltacıoğlu’s words:

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154 Tunç, “Akl ve Hayat.”
They perceive humanity as a real social being which contains an authentic spirit and substance. Thus, they conceive it as possessing not only ethical, but also material sanctions. The concrete societies that we can observe in the realm of reality are as follows: tribe, feudalism, city state and nation. Apart from these basic social types, there is no real society as "humanity."

Cultural and historical differences among nations could not be eliminated in homogeneous ‘community of Man,’ even though similar life experiences in economics, politics and in social life in different countries might emerge under a capitalist economy. In traditionalist-conservative vocabulary, ‘progress’ and ‘change’ did not come to mean the rational construction of the future and modern society. In Baltacıoğlu’s words “unity in civilization does not eliminate cultural differences, on the contrary it deepens them.”

Traditionalist-conservative polycentric culturalism placed equal emphasis on the living continuity of national forms in the tradition, since the idea of nation, at the same time, referred to the ideals of “purity, durability and uniformity.” Durability and uniformity of the nation could be maintained by the historicization and contextualization of the universal procedures and structures of modernity which had been brought about by the Turkish Revolution.

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156 Baltacıoğlu, “İnsaniyet Var mıdır?” (Is There Humanity?) Yeni Adam, 248 (September 28, 1939), p.2. See also Safa, “İnsan Yok, Millet Var,” (There is no Man but Nation) Çınaraltı, 4 (August 30, 1941), p. 5, “Dişnya da İnsan Var mı” (Is There Man in the World?) Yeni Mecmuası, (July 18, 1941), p. 4.


The Vindication of Traditionalist Conservatism in the 1930s

This alternative understanding of the Revolution can be seen as the symptom of an elite fragmentation in the Kemalist ruling center which registers the existence of competing conceptions of Kemalism in the 1930s. The clash within Kemalist center, which first revealed itself as a dispute between the Kadro circle and traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, was shaped around competing conceptions of the nature of revolutionism and Kemalist revolution: its future course of development and legitimacy of individualism [read personalism] through which the traditionalist-conservative themes of free will, freedom, irrationality, spirituality and spontaneity, pluralism, etc. had been incorporated into the political discourse of Republic.

As noted earlier, the debate between the positivist Kadro and traditionalist-conservative intellectuals manifested itself in various forms. Ülken’s debate with the Kadro circle had begun after Kadro’s severe criticism of his book, Aşk Ahlaki (Piety Ethics). Vitalism, monism, spiritualism, and individualist-mysticism were those critical terms used by Kadro in its criticism of Ülken’s moralism. Aydemir had accused Ülken of being a mystic-individualist who tries to instill mysticism into the Revolutionary-scientific rationale.\(^\text{160}\) In addition, vitalism, monism and individualist-mysticism, anti-intellectualism, irrationalism, and pessimism were terms employed in Kadro’s criticisms of Tunç.\(^\text{161}\) For Aydemir, Tunç, the protagonist of Bergsonism, was also a defender of a trend of anti-intellectualist irrationalism. Baltacıoğlu also took his share of Kadro’s criticisms.\(^\text{162}\) For Kadro, Baltacıoğlu, like Ağaoğlu, was the protagonist of an outdated nineteenth-century conception of individualism.\(^\text{163}\)

At its initial phases, Kadro’s preference for revolutionary Kemalism was not discouraged by the ruling Kemalist elites. On the contrary, Kadro had received semi-

\(^{160}\) Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, “Bir Ruh Fantazisi Yahut Yerli Peygamber,” (A Spiritual Fantasy or Native Prophet) Kadro, 1 (January, 1932), pp. 31-7


\(^{162}\) Aydemir, “İsmail Hakki Baltacıoğlu’nun Metkurecılığı,” (The Idealism of Ismail Hakki Bey) Kadro, 29 (May, 1934), pp. 37-41

\(^{163}\) Aydemir, “Darülfütnun Inkılap Hassasiyeti ve Cavit Bey İktisatçılığı,” (Dartülfitün’s Sensibility to the Revolution and Cavit Bey’s Economism) Kadro, 14, (February 1933), pp.5-11.
approval from the ruling state elites. Their statist, collectivist and nationalist stand had found support within the ruling statist elites and even Prime Minister İnönü published an article entitled *Partimizin Devletçi Vasfı* (Our Party’s Etatist Nature) in the journal.\textsuperscript{164} This semi-official approval had further been strengthened by Kadro intellectuals’ faith in the revolutionary nature of the regime and they started to act as the semi-ideologues of the Republic.\textsuperscript{165}

In attempting to strike a balance among the Republican intelligentsia, Kadro countered the position of the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals by placing emphasis on the state’s capacity to transform the social, political and economic life of the nation. Indeed, Kadro’s emphasis on the role of the Kemalist state, as an active agent in all spheres of life, provided a secure place for the Kadro intellectuals within Kemalist power structure. Thus, Kadro attempted to discredit the traditionalist-conservative individualism, [which refers to personalism, spiritualism, freedom, and individual will and initiative] by claiming that it constituted an obstacle in the way of realizing the revolutionary ideals of the state.

Kadro’s criticism of individualism, which had been equated with the personalism of the traditionalist-conservative circle, was also in conformity with the worldwide trend that marked the end of the classical age of liberalism in the Western World. End of the 1920s and beginning of the 1930s witnessed a challenge to economic liberalism and classical liberal conception of the state. Thus, Kadro’s state fetishism had found strong support among the Republican intelligentsia during those years when economic and political liberalism and individualism were generally discredited. Concurrently, state’s role in managing Turkey’s economic life had started to expand. Growing influence of the state over the society was not only limited to the sphere of economy. State’s political tutelage over society, which further strengthened the elitist approach among the modernizing elites, further consolidated Kemalists’ revolutionary claims to modernize and to westernize the traditional Islamic community.

\textsuperscript{164} İsmet İnönü, “Furkamızın Devletçilik Vasfı,” (Our Party’s Etatist Nature) Kadro, 22 (October, 1933), pp. 4-6.
Kadro’s elitist approach to politics, which grants monopoly of knowledge and political wisdom to a limited number of ‘enlightened intellectuals,’ hinted at the nature of the power game. The progressive impetus attributed to the rationalist scientistic Weltanschauung of the intelligentsia; revolution from above; strict separation of the enlightened intelligentsia from the rest of the population; and the ideal of ‘one nation without class conflicts’ had separated the outlook of Kadro and from that of the traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia. In Ağaoğlu’s words:

Kadro envisioned a new type of economic state, which would lead the advanced social classes of the society to accumulate the surplus economic values on behalf of the society, and direct, establish, and operate in a well-planned way all the economic activities.

The Turkish revolution, for Kadro, was the first and unique example of the liberation movements of the oppressed countries from the imperialist Western capitalist countries. However, growing socialist sentiments and Kadro’s attempts to formulate a ‘more revolutionary Kemalism’ than the revolutionarism of the Kemalist ruling center had also created a distance between the ruling intelligentsia and this group of semi-official ideologists of the Revolution. Ruling Kemalist intelligentsia was also suspicious of Kadro’s Marxist tendencies. Then, there emerged a widespread understanding that Kadro aimed to articulate Marxist ideals with Kemalist revolutionary ideals. This ultimately became one of the main reasons for its disappearance.

Kadro’s view of society and revolution had a deep impact on the intellectuals of the time. What it gave rise to a new cleavage among the modernist-westernist intelligentsia of the Republic. The Kadro group succeeded formulating a comprehensive views on politics, revolutionary state and revolution but it also helped to unify its traditionalist, conservative and Bergsonian opponents. Thus, the rise and fall of Kadro, and its debate with the intellectuals concerned have crucial importance for gaining an understanding of ideological climate and cleavages in the early 1930s. It is apparent that the intellectual life of the young Republic was shaped by deeply-rooted controversies among the ‘competing modernist ideologists’ of the Revolution.

166 Aydemir, ibid., pp. 117-8.
167 Ağaoğlu, Devlet ve Ferd., p.13.
Growing distrust among the ruling Kemalist-statist elites towards the Kadro version of Kemalism resulted in increasing opposition against Kadro, both within the ranks of the government and traditionalist-conservative circle. Besides the traditionalist-conservative opposition, a new group of liberal politicians, headed by Celal Bayar, had also started to exert pressure on government to close down the journal. At this junction, liberal opponents of Kadro within the ranks of the Republican intelligentsia started to exploit the individualist themes elaborated by the traditionalist-conservative circle, such as individual initiative, free will, individual creativity and self-governments, which later became responsible for increasing popularity of traditionalist-conservative ideals and sentiments in the ruling center.

The politics of 1930s was characterized by a power game between the soft-line and hard-line Republicans. For example, Recep Peker, the RPP secretary-general in the 1930s who came to represent the hard-liners, described the Revolution in his lectures at Istanbul University, as a means “to tear away the backward, the bad, the unjust and harmful from the social structure, and to replace them with the advancing, the good, the just and the useful elements... and to see that the old would not come back.”

Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals of the time, who stayed distanced from ruling center, could not be considered as devoted supporters of the Republican factions. They were not supporters of RPP’s dirigiste political and economic policies. Still, against the societalist ideal of ‘one nation without class conflict,’ traditionalist conservatives asserted that classes and social groups were natural elements of division of labour in society; against the revolutionism of the Peker clique, a kind of creationist evolutionary perspective was adopted; against the elitism of Kadro and of the revolutionary intelligentsia, a kind of life politics responsive to authentic culture was elaborated.

1930s were those years, when the RPP had begun to identify itself more with the institutional structure of the state and set out to include in its program all the economic, social and political needs of the social groups. The national leader, Mustafa

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Kemal Atatürk, represented the basic views, the Will and the creative power of the party and faith laid not in individualism, but in solidarism. A new kind of authoritarianism was injected into politics. The revolutionary scientific state had attempted to mobilize political, economic and, especially, educational institutions to realize the revolutionary ideal of creating a scientific culture and marshalling it into the service of the revolution. The question at stake had vital implications for the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, since it had been interwoven with the declared and tacit aims of the 1933 University Reform.

1933 University Reform: Expulsion of Traditionalist Conservatives from the Turkish Academia

The Minister of Education, Reşit Galip, who was responsible for the reformation of Darülfünun in 1933 said that “Darülfünun showed a strong detachment towards Kemalist Revolutions... There appeared to be radical transformations.....but it just stayed uninterested and indifferent, never trying to adopt itself to these changes.”¹⁶⁹

The aim of the university reform had been formulated so as to establish a new university which would be the symbol of the scientific rationality of the Revolution and contribute to the creation of Republican type citizen.¹⁷⁰ For some of the Republican intelligentsia, including those around Kadro, Darülfünun scholars’ indifference to the revolution was a reflection of their anti-Kemalist and conservative world view. The distance, specifically of Ağaoğlu and Baltacıoğlu, as well as Tunç, to Kemalism was regarded as a resistance to the Revolution.¹⁷¹ Thus, for Ali Galip “the education of the future generations could no longer be undertaken by such an institution that closed all


¹⁷⁰ For further evaluation on University Reform, see Mete Tuncay and Haldun Özen, “1933 Darülfunun Tasviyesi veya Bir Tek Parti Politikacılığının Önelemesı Yüksekliği ve Düşüşü,” (The 1933 Purge of Darülfunun or an Unavoidable Rise and Fall of a Single Party Politician) Tarih ve Toplum, (October 1984), pp. 222-36. See also E. Hır ş, Dünüa Üniversiteleri ve Türkiye'de Üniversitelerin Gelişmesi (Universities in the World and the Development of Turkish Universities), two volumes (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, 1950).

its doors to the revolutionary developments.” Consequently, *Darülüşûnun* was abolished by the law dated July 31, 1933 and left its place to Istanbul University. Most of the academic staff were dismissed and radical changes in the curriculum were introduced.

What was the significance of the 1933 University Reform for the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals? The answer has vital importance to shed light on the relations between the state and the traditionalist conservatives in the 1930s. After the abolishment of *Darülüşûnun*, Baltacioglu, who was the protagonist of ‘traditionalist-individualist ideas,’ and Agaoğlu, the ‘liberal politician’ of the late 1920s, were dismissed from their posts. In 1933, Baltacioglu started to publish the journal called *Yeni Adam*. In 1939, İnönü, the National Chief, took the initiative and Baltacioglu was offered a post in academia in Ankara. Then in 1942, he was elected to the National Assembly as a Republican representative. Tunç, the Bergsonian philosopher of the Republic and ‘the representative of Bergsonism and the philosophy of pessimism,’ in *Kadro*’s vocabulary, was first dismissed and then appointed as professor to the Faculty of Literature in 1933. In fact, state’s aim to establish an academia which would be in service of the Revolutionary spirit drew the demarcation line with Baltacioglu’s traditionalism, Agaoğlu’s liberalism and Tunç’s Bergsonism.

Turkish academic life had long been dominated by the French philosophy. Ahmet Suayip had been a follower of Taine, whereas Gokalp and Baltacioglu were influenced by the works of Durkheim and Bergson. Tunç was a follower of Bergsonian philosophy and Freudian psychology. During the First World War, in line with increasing political relations with Germany, new interest on German politics and philosophy arose among the late Ottoman intellectuals. This appeal in German philosophy had revealed itself as an interest in the writings of great German Enlightenment thinker, Immanuel Kant. Mehmet Izzet had begun to emphasize the

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172 The statement made by Reşit Galip, the Minister of National Education in Hirş, *Dünya Üniversiteleri ve Türkiye’de Üniversitelerin Gelişmesi*, p. 312.
173 For full list of academicians dismissed from the University, see Tuncay and Özen, “1933 Darülüşûnun Tasviyesi,” (*The 1933 Purge of Darülüşûn*) *Yeni Gündem*, (October 1984), pp. 16-9.
importance of Kant and his rationalism for Western political and intellectual life. German influence on Turkish academia peaked subsequent to the emigration of German scholars to Turkey after 1933.

By the rise of Nazism to power in Germany in 1933, German scholars, who were mostly Jewish in ethnic origin and social democrat in their political commitments had migrated to Turkey from Germany. The ruling Kemalist intelligentsia employed the newcomer German academicians in its newly founded university to contribute to the reformations in the Turkish academia. It must be noted that the prominent German figures like, Hans Reichenbach, the author of *Logic and Scientific Philosophy*, E. von Aster, historian of philosophy, W.A Rustow, social philosopher, G. Kessler, an expert on ancient philosophy, E Hirst, Heimsoth and Ritter, philosophers of law, were mostly well-known for their positivist aspirations which became a widespread phenomenon in Europe by the rise of Vienna School in the 1920s. They were prominent representatives of the positivist philosophy, in the fields of philosophy, history and ethics and were expected to transplant this scientific *Weltanshauung* to the newly established university of the Republic.

Subsequent to the enactment of the University Law, dismissal of the “old-minded” scholars, such as liberal Ağaoğlu and traditionalist Baltacıoğlu, and employment of positivist-oriented German scholars was a symptom of widenning of the distance between Kemalist ruling elites and the traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia. Baltacıoğlu’s interest in Islam, as part of the living tradition, and his personalism were responsible for his expulsion from the university, whereas it was the ‘personalist-liberal’ stand responsible for this in Ağaoğlu’s case.

Both Ağaoğlu and Baltacıoğlu were also politically motivated intellectuals, if not the protagonists of any specific political program. They became prominent figures of the Free Republican Party which was established on August 12, 1930 and abolished on November 17, 1930. As noted, Ağaoğlu was among the founders of the party and Baltacıoğlu served as the chairman of party’s İstanbul branch. Among them, only Tunç did not display active interest in politics. Therefore, he was offered a post, as a
professor, in the newly founded university after a period of short break. Though the ruling state elites had chosen to distance themselves from the traditionalism of Baltacıoğlu and liberalism of Ağaoğlu, Tunç’s Bergsonism was neither repudiated nor acknowledged. Yet, Kemalist ruling center, by drawing some limits, had also registered the legitimacy of Bergsonism in apprehending the new reality created by the Revolutionary rationale. Even though key figures were dismissed from the University in 1933, it can be said that Kemalists did not totally expel them from the political and intellectual arena. Indeed, Tunç’s Bergsonism, which had been adopted by Baltacıoğlu, Ağaoğlu and Safa, in varying degrees, was the underlying reason for traditionalist-conservative alliance with the ruling center if not always with the stratum of ruling statist intelligentsia where its consequences could be observed in the University Reform.

Bergsonism adopted by traditionalist conservatives, which emphasized on creative evolution, élan vital, intuition and charisma, made contributions to the Kemalist search for legitimate rule over society. However, scientist-positivist intelligentsia and socialist intellectuals, as reflected in Kadro’s criticisms and/or in the debate between Safa and Nazım Hikmet in the mid-1930s, took the same Bergsonian vocabulary as the polar opposite of their envisioned revolutionary Kemalism. Thus, even though the scientist-radical tough-liners attempted to neutralize the traditionalist conservatives, the latter continued to employ the terms of heroism, charisma, intuition and creative will to reflect the nature of the new political regime - very words that partly reflected the charismatic Kemalist power structure manipulated by Mustafa Kemal but gradually dissolved by the dominance of bureaucracy in politics after his death in 1938.
CHAPTER 6

TRADITIONALIST-CONSERVATIVE CONCEPTION OF ARTS

Traditionalist-conservative themes and motives mostly appeared in refined forms in the literary works in the early Republican period. At an early stage, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals ascribed enormous importance to art, especially to literary arts, since art in general, and the "novel" in particular, was assumed to be "the mirror of society as much as the individual spirit." In this respect, Baltacıoğlu confirmed that aesthetics was necessary for the human beings as much as economy and industry. He claimed that with the dissolution of the traditional religious order and consolidation of a secular one, the old concept of religion was being replaced with new sciences, secular ethics, and folk art. Thus, the sublimation function provided by religion in traditional society, would now be performed by the arts in modern society. The political and social functions of art, for Baltacıoğlu, stemmed from the fact that modern sense of aesthetics, which made artistic experience meaningful, could only flourish in a democratic environment. In a similar vein, Safa delineated the new function of arts and literature as follows:

Novel, which has both adopted the peculiar aesthetic of the art of story and incorporated philosophy and psychology within the system of its observation and explanation throughout its progress in the last century and a half, is the mirror of the spirit of individual and the society. Art and novel are not isolated from the society. On the contrary, if art, and especially the novel, reflect the dissolution of the societies into individual interests, they display examples of utmost concern for all sociologists. The reasons of this dissolution should be searched in the novel, which is the mirror of social evolution and thus in social organs and the evolution that they experience.

Art, especially literary arts, had a crucial importance for social and political regeneration in Turkey, since "politics," as revealed in Safa's Sanat Eseri Birşey İfade Eder mi? (Does Work of Art Mean Anything?) was "life, and literature was one of its reflections in art."

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The expanding influence of Cartesian analytical thinking into the realms of art and ethics stimulated further the traditionalist-conservative challenge to scienticism and resistance to an all-encompassing rationality. As a result, the traditionalist conservatives came to view art as a source of legitimate knowledge as compared to that generated by analytical reasoning. Unlike scientific activity, the aim of which was to gain an understanding of master the material world, “the task of the artist,” for Baltacıoğlu “is to drag us to the depths of our inner selves but not to the material world.” In this respect, Baltacıoğlu posited that “there may be scientific and ethical truths in a work of art, but its task is not to provide them. Works of arts do not depend on practical needs such as technical activity.” In Safa’s words:

The philosophical conscious, which arises out of the juncture of artistic intuition and scientific control, is neither art nor science. We have to distinguish the specific characteristics and methods of art and science: The means of artistic intuition, comprehension and collection constitute the unity of spiritual sense and intelligence; the means of scientific research, conclusion, experimentation, and standardization analytical thought. But both of them have one common goal: understanding. There is no scientific discovery which excludes intuition, no novel which excludes analysis, and even no poem which has not been prone to analytical experience, despite its all combinatory characteristics. The failure of Émile Zola, who tried to adopt the methods of natural science to art, should be sought in his aspiration to carry the similarity of artistic and scientific goals to the extent of methodological unity. Traditionalist conservatives overemphasized the new function of art and centrality of artistic experience in understanding individuality in modern world.

Artistic experience was seen as an unique mode of human experience which could not be grasped by analytical reason alone. Safa, in his Sanatta Malum ve Meçhul, (The Known and the Unknown in Art), posited that the distinguishing features of art were its creativity, indeterminacy, and unpredictability. In this respect, art also

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6 See Baltacıoğlu, “Artist Kimdir?” (Who is an Artist?) Yeni Adam, 173 (April 22, 1937), p.13
7 See Baltacıoğlu, “Roman Nedir?” (What is Novel?) Yeni Adam, 449 (August 5, 1943), p.2
stood for a model of creativity and novelty. This contention, in fact, represented a
commonly held viewpoint among the Republican intelligentsia. For about a decade
later, Safa further elaborated this point to conclude that the basic characteristics of
twentieth century art was its creative potential resulting from its irrationalism and its
reaction to the cult of Reason that had once been viewed as the sole judge over life.
Art and artistic creativity should play a central role in understanding the dynamics of
the new cultural and political creationism practiced in Turkey. It also provided fertile
grounds for questioning scienticism of the young Republic because
the power of artistic creation against and in-between reason and insanity, the fact that it
does not fall out of control though it exceeds rational schemes (its consistency despite its
transcendence over rational schemes), the fact that it does not end up in nonsense though
it stays over and aloof from reason, the fact that it does not get lost in disorder though it
surpasses order, hence its victory against the mediocre in its attempts between extremes,
lies in the strength of its base and starting point.
Relationship between the artist and his work of art could provide a model of
relationship between the state and society; between the charismatic ruler and the ruled.
In this model, like the creation of a novel, neither spontaneity nor order would be
sacrificed to each other. As best illustrated by Safa,
the life of novel is in a state of becoming, from its very beginning onwards. Its creation
depends on unpredictable events which fall into the category of coincidence as well as on
time, as in the case of life itself. A work of architecture had already consumed all its
possessions as early as in its draft form. A novel gives the opportunity of drafting only
those main points of the theme among the numerous events that lead to its existence,
before it is written down. During the phase of writing, novelist reserves the freedom to
choose among the numerous events that belong to the life of novel. The prerequisite of
creation is this freedom. A plan which freezes all the events and chances of the novel (the
life in the novel) destroys this freedom. It puts the life of the novel into a geometric model
and makes it artificial.

11 Baltacıoğlu, ibid., p. 28.
An examination of the traditionalist-conservative reaction, first, to the Republican rationalism and its policy implications; second, the Westernization policies and their implications in daily life; and third, to the consequences of Kemalist modernism, which ultimately rested on science as a policy framework, would help to gain a better understanding of the traditionalist-conservative importance given to art. Literature, as argued by Safa in *Memleket ve Edebiyat* (Homeland and Literature) was ultimately expected to contribute to the consolidation of the new Republican *Weltanshauung* through its dependence on aesthetics, spiritual sciences, and philosophy. In *Yeni Sanatlar Üzerine Bir Konuşma* (A Discourse on New Arts) written by the mid-1950s, he summarized the basic problematique on which traditionalist conservatives had based their resistance to excessive rationalism during the preceding two decades. In his words:

Where does this revolt against reason, the enmity against rationalism, that has been continuing for 80 years, originate from? In the history of human thought this points to a phase of ultimate importance to the extent of requiring the questioning of all ideas and values that belong to antiquity, Middle Ages and modern times. We should not go deep into this. This revolt against reason is the reaction against the preceding adoration towards natural sciences, materialism and human reason in Europe. In 1859 Darwin wrote *The Origins of Species* and opened the way for the nineteenth century zoological and materialist anthropology which place man among the category of animals. Claude Bernard wrote in the same century *The Introduction to Experimental Medicine*, which published in 1865. In the mean time a series of practical and technical inventions: the invention of the telephone in 1876; again of the dynamo in 1876; the opening of the exhibition of electricity in 1881; Pasteur's inventions; anthrax; and the cure for the rabies after 1870. All these developments enhanced public trust not only of scientists but also of natural and positive sciences. Thenceforth, there was faith in reason as a means of organizing social life, eliminating wars, and thus leading society to the Golden Age. However, this dream did not last long. The incident called "Collapse of Science" followed it. Newer and sounder forms of philosophical research elaborated the fact that scientific rules were not trustworthy, and that instead of considering the mystery of nature, life and society, they only made up a functional harmony between reason and object. There occurred an enormous reaction on the part of the philosophers and artists against narrow-minded and short-sighted scientific approach which circumscribes man inbetween reason and substance.

Indeed for Baltaciglu, renaissance humanism had replaced form with content, rationality with mysticism, concreteness with abstractionism, natural order with God’s rational order. For him, absoluteness, formalism, and indifference, which dominated

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seventeenth-century art, could also be observed in the scientific and administrative rationale of the century.¹⁹

The crucial political question common to traditionalist conservatives was to exploit the potential of art, in general, and literature, in particular, as a means for steering the Turkish people away from the dry formalism and rationalism resulting from positivist spirit of the Revolution and for fostering among them vivid sensibilities and tastes.²⁰ Art could be mobilized for such an end because of its capacity to project essential forms behind appearances and thus to serve as a model for directing cultural transformation. Safa argued that the Turkish revolution symbolized the revival of the national unconscious and thus aimed to focus the nation to recognize its language, history, land,²¹ arts of the new Republic would do the same.

Nation, as a cultural entity, was defined by various essential characteristics and deeply rooted in its historical experience which survived in living folk traditions. These characteristics could be captured by means of studying literary forms. Moreover, the very development of literary forms themselves curtained the clues for gaining an insight into cultural authenticity. Early Turkist literature had tried to do this. However, philosophical and idealist Turkism, which was the prototype of modern revivalisms, though emphasizing the importance of cultural permanents, had ignored the material conditions of nationality. The Republic raised the historical possibility of highlighting the historical synthesis experienced in daily life and transmitted through the folk tradition.²² Thus, for the traditionalist-conservative circle, one of the chief aims of Turkish modernist art was to uncover the unique relations among the elements of the cultural synthesis responsible for national authenticity. In this respect, language, religion, and tradition were those elements which carried this essence and placed this accumulation of the past before the present.

²¹ Safa, idem.
The self-defined task of traditionalist-conservative intellectuals was to define new standards of taste in order to bring into public awareness ideal aspects of authentic Turkish culture. They were aware of the fact that these standards of aesthetics and taste could not be transferred across cultures. Safa assured this as follows:

While even the Amasya apple, Jaffa orange, Brazilian coffee have a fatherland -- a fatherland with specific soil, climate and national characteristic, to grow, can we claim that the artist who stems out from a hundred percent nationalist conditions as language, history and tradition is a rootless and landless ghost without any responsibility to his environment, and that art is an adventure which has lost its fatherland? 23

Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, who had been squeezed in the 1930s between the radical revolutionism of the Kemalist state elites and the reactionism of the Islamic circles, adopted a reformist strategy without rejecting the radical consequence of creationist politics symbolized by the Republic. Placing an emphasis on the cultural components of the nation, they indeed politicized these cultural symbols and values. This reformism, with radical culturalist implications, manifested itself in traditionalist-conservative vision of creative arts, ethics, and their culturalist and nationalist perspective. This potential of art, for traditionalist-conservative circles, could be exploited for social and political reformism. 24 As already referred, social and political significance of literary arts had been repeated by Safa, Baltacioglu and Tunç in various contexts. They attempted to establish a new enriched secular vocabulary which would mirror the values and norms of the new Republican order. Art could function as an alternative mode of knowledge which define the norms and values a new Republican model of virtue and explain historical cultural reasons for the maladies of individual isolation, alienation and bifurcation that emerged by the deterioration of the value system of Republican model of virtue. 25

Traditionalist-conservative criticism of rationalism as explained earlier did not deny the relevance of reason to gain an understanding of the material world. For the

25 Safa, “Almak ve Çalmak,” p. 4; “Sanatın Vatam.” Artist was a man of sensations. The sensuality of the artist covers everything which can not be grasped by reason. See Ulken, “Artist ve Filozof Tipleri,” pp. 165, 172
traditionalist-conservative, reason could not serve alone as a basis for understanding aesthetics and ethics, and the utilitarian bias of rationalism could not stimulate people to create harmony among “goodness,” “utility” and “beauty.” This distinction implied that there was a difference between the realm of deductive reasoning and that of the arts. The former referred to predictability and manipulation whereas the latter referred to spontaneity, creativity and originality. In Baltacioglu’s words:

The basis of artistic work is imagination. We should distinguish imagination from scientific conception. The characteristic of scientific conception is its conformity with the material world, i.e., its objectivity. Scientific conceptions teach us about the nature observed, their aim is to inform us about the reality. On the contrary, artistic works do not have such conformity with the world observed... Perfect compliance with nature turns art into science.

The human experience in life was similar to that of artistic experience. As revealed by Baltacioglu, it could neither fully be grasped nor manipulated through reason alone. Thus, traditionalist-conservative emphasis on the arts functioned as a means of consolidating and deepening of the new secular values and norms of the Republic. It laid down the basic philosophical and literary aspirations of traditionalist-conservative intellectuals for social and political change.

**Literary Criticism: A New Secular Mode of Consciousness**

Traditionalist conservatives’ conception of arts was developed in reaction to the scienticism of the Revolution. It was also a response to the diffusion of the rationalist spirit of the age to the fields aesthetics and ethics. This traditionalist-conservative involvement in art reflected an ambivalence on the part of these intellectuals about the rationalist ethos of the Revolution and its future course of development. The Bergsonian and twentieth century criticisms of rationalism, referred to in Safa’s *Felsefi Buhran* (The Philosophical Crisis) found strong resonance among them. Still, Safa, Tunç, Baltacioglu, and Ulken never lost their faith in secular criticism, which they

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27. For elaborations on romantic revolt against Cartesian rationalism, see Baltacioglu, Demokrasi ve Sanat, pp. 39-40.
29. See Ulken, “Insani Vatancılık,” pp. 4-13
regarded as a necessity for the creation of a new world through philosophical, artistic and scientific principles.30

The traditionalist-conservative circle, as best illustrated in Baltacıoğlu’s Demokrasi ve Sanat (Democracy and Art), was aware of the fact that the concept of good life, beauty and taste had radically changed in modern ages and a new hierarchy of ethical, aesthetic, and political values had to be defined accordingly.31 Safa, Tunç and Ülken with Süüt Kemal Yetkin, Mümtdaz Turhan, Sebahattin Rahmi Eyüpoğlu, Münir Serim, and Sabri Esad Ander also held a seminar on this topic whose notes were later published in the journal, Kültür Haftası.32 Participants had discussed the reasons for the value crisis in Turkish society in detail. Pointing to the inability of the Republican regime to consolidate new and modern values, Tunç, in line with Safa and Ülken, claimed that there was an urgent need to develop a moral and aesthetic philosophy which would replace the medieval outlook.33 If this new hierarchy of values and norms failed to be consolidated, then a state of anarchy would result and would degenerate the nationalist-culturalist ideals of the Revolution.34 Traditionalist conservatives were aware of the fact that the experience of modernity meant experience of new systems of morality and aesthetic tastes which could be flourished and consolidated if the society was re-traditionalized towards modernity.35 Based on this argument, literature and literary criticism were conceived as a means for accelerating the diffusion of “modern” values and norms to the traditional value system.

It was a Revolutionary era and various intellectual and political questions manifested themselves in literary works. Safa pointed this out as follows:

30 Ibid., See also Ulken, “Fikir Ananesi,” (Tradition of Thought) İnsan, 1, 4 (July 15, 1938), p.282.
31 Baltacıoğlu, Demokrasi ve Sanat, pp.11, 54-69.
33 Ibid.
34 See Baltacıoğlu, “Değer Buhranı,” (The Value Crisis) Yeni Adam, 372, (February 19, 1942), p.2. For Ulken, Tunç and Safa’s short assessments on the issue, see “Edebiyattın Fikirsızlığı.”
35 See Ulken, “Sanat ve Cemiyet.” pp. 27-9; Baltacıoğlu, Demokrasi ve Sanat, p. 140.
This spirit (literature) had no philosophical and metaphysical difficulty arising from such basic problems as genesis, life, death, being, God, interaction between inner being and outer being, mystery of substance, nullity and non-existence, epistemology, individual and society, memory and conscious... It did not give birth to an ideological understanding and political trend other than common religiosity, patriotism or nationalism.  

The latent aim of the traditionalist-conservative intellectual was delineated as to create a literature with political concerns. The potentials of arts, in general, and of literature, in particular, could be exploited since modern tastes, common national cultural standards and values could be popularized through them. Practically, they wanted the literature to illustrate the effects of the so-called modernization process on people’s daily life. As noted by Safa, literature would provide a new vocabulary without falling into the trap of primitive religiosity and nationalism. The new “political tendency” in literature would pave way to a “metaphysical, philosophical understanding” of Kemalist modernism.

The traditionalist-conservative understanding of the function of criticism as a means for consolidating new cultural standards of beauty and taste was clearly reflected in their own critical stand regarding excessive rationalism and de-humanization in the world and, in particular, in art. For the traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia, as it was elaborated by Baltacıoğlu in his discussion on the development of modern architecture, moral, social and political crisis of modern society, which was generated by excessive rationalism in the fields of ethics and aesthetics, had created new burdens on art [read criticism]. Uncompromising rationalism [read Revolutionary Weltanshauung] would alienate the Revolution from its genuine culture, history and tradition. Thus, tradition and culture were regarded as new sources from where literary, as well as political criticism would derive their respective standards of truths. Literary criticism was recognized as one of the fields where those values, such as creativity, spontaneity, and irrationality, could be adopted to foster social and political creativity. Literary vocabulary had to mirror the spirit of the people whose basic characteristics were creativity and spontaneity.

37 Ibid.
38 Baltacıoğlu, Demokrasi ve Sanat, pp. 88.-9.
The intuitive sources of literary creativity could also be employed to challenge the social and political models constructed by pure rationalist ideologies. As pointed out in Safa’s *Sanat Eseri Birşey İfade Eder Mi?*, or in Baltacıoğlu’s *Demokrasi ve Sanat*, art and literature would foster the ideal of organic totality against any kind of annihilative rationalism which would bring about social crisis and individual breakdowns that had been both characterized by detachment and non-belongingness. Thus, Safa posited that, in its search for the reasons of non-belongingness and isolation, literary criticism faced the conventional dilemma of order (of any kind, either enforced by Reason or maintained by tradition) and freedom. In his words: “criticism suffered from this crisis. What can it do? Does it have to defend tradition? (Or) allow freedom? Does it have to defend the principles of order and security or freedom?”

Provoking an interest in the creative essence of the living tradition, literature could free human creativity from the formalism of dead traditions. Radical political consequence of arts was due to its ability to turn itself to the vocabulary of the forces of creativity which could transform society to a new mode of consciousness on non-material conditions of its material existence. Traditionalist-conservative concern with art, literature, and literary criticism was based on this new function attributed to the art.

Criticism based on history, culture and authenticity of a particular society had political repercussions since, for Safa, it led to the growth of self-consciousness of the individual, as well as of the society, concerned with respect to the cultural conditions and resources of non-material [read spiritual] existence. This kind of criticism, by illustrating the ambivalence experienced in social and individual levels and by

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39 Safa, "Sanat Eseri Birşey İfade Eder Mi?" Also Baltacıoğlu, *Demokrasi ve Sanat*, pp.18-20.
40 Safa, "Roman Nedir?" See also Nur ettin Şazi Kosemihal, "İki Görüş," (Two Outlooks) *Kültür Haftası*, 10 (March 18, 1936), p. 189. Kosemihal pointed out that there were two competing ways of thinking in history and two approaches to the “reality.” First approach placed emphasis on “continuity,” whereas the latter on “discontinuity.” Cartesian rationalism was an example of the second approach. The philosophy of discontinuity, for Kosemihal, bifurcated the reality into different essences. Two essences, namely matter and soul, were seen as the creative essences of the reality. Those philosophies of history, which based on this premise, ultimately beheld that social evolution was a sequential process. Meanwhile, the first approach argued that continuity was the basic characteristic of the historical evolution.
characterizing the tensions between traditional and novel forms, would contribute to
the development of an individual consciousness regarding the reasons of the
ambivalence experienced in his daily life. By the same token, this type of criticism
would not be derived from a rationalist spirit. On the contrary, only the type of
criticism which was based on creativity and intuition could provide the means for being
critical about the great rationalist design of any society towards an historical end.

Therefore, traditionalist conservatives were also deterred from turning criticism
to a man-made standard over traditions and culture, which would lead to skepticism,
and could also result in individual alienation and non-belongingness, since it could
weaken beliefs and convictions. Thus, Tunç revealed that they “should neither be
turned aside from skepticism nor circumscribed by it. We should trust reason to a
certain extent. But we should not seek all answers in it.” Excessive skepticism might
turn into a strategy of rationalist radicalism which could undermine all moral and
religious beliefs, as in the case of scienticism of the Republic. Yet, as pointed out by
Safa and Baltacıoğlu, it was necessary to live by some beliefs. In a similar vein, Tunç in
pictured the basic tenets of tension between competing claims of comprehending the
human and material world as follows:

Science...grew out of the tendency to possess immortal values, as the offsprings of the
tendency to possess magnificent and immortal values which arose out of the consideration
of the universe of sensations and experiences, the universe of ethics, as well as religion,
mystery and infinity: spiritual concepts as conscience, soul, justice, freedom and right
were ascribed to the spiritual characteristic of man as the offsprings of this tendency...
Materialists, by linking the faith of man to the faith of nature, accept only one faith and
believe that this faith has dominance over everything with a constant exigency and a
sense of determination. Science also depended on materialist principles; however since it
did not pursue any factionalism and avoided reaching ultimate conclusions due to the
complexity of humanity, it was forced to ensure a more positivistic disposition. But, since
the contrariety between the spiritualist conception in religion, ethics, and law, on the one
hand, and materialistic tendency dominant in the scientific understanding on the other
hand, are irreconcilable....

Dangers of excessive skepticism, when fed by rationalism, seem to become more acute
if religious issues are considered. Thus, Baltacıoğlu admitted that he adopted a

42 Tunç, “Kendilerine En Çok İnananlar.”
43 Tunç, “Madde ve Ruh Arasında Sallanan Dünyamız,” (Our World That Sways Between Matter and Spirit)
“methodical skeptics” approach. Moreover, Tunç, and Ülken, together with Safa, attempted to rescue beliefs and former prejudices by adopting a philosophy of mystical individualism based on intuitionists skepticism for which Ülken’s *Aşk Ahlaki* (Piety Ethics) stood as an example.

For Baltaciğolu, an equally damaging consequence of an excessive rationalist skepticism was that the modern man could lose his sense of identification with society. Literature, as an artistic form, had to restore this sense of lost identification with the supra-individual entity, namely society. In a similar vein, Safa argued that society only continued to exist when there was unanimity among its members. Losing the sense of unity meant dissolution which revealed itself as detachment and isolation. It was dissolution of the sense of unity which Safa aimed to avoid. Thus, Tunç, with the aim to point out the political significance of literature, argued that society was the source of individual’s aesthetic and ethical choices. A “work of art” as noted by Baltaciğolu, was “born not from individual consciousness but from the aesthetic consciousness of man living in society.”

Baltaciğolu, in line with Tunç, implied that the individual acquired a sense of aesthetics and moral personality only in society. Indeed, for Tunç, there was a strong relationship between morality, aesthetics, and law which accounted for a unity between the individual and society. Values and principles of ethics, aesthetics, and law also had to

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46 Baltaciğolu, *Demokrasi ve Sanat*, pp. 139-45.
48 Safa, idem.
51 Idem. Also see Baltaciğolu, *Demokrasi ve Sanat*, pp. 20-3.
be in congruity with one another to ensure the coherence of new modern Weltanschauung through which the individual could identify itself with a supra-individual entity, namely, the nation.\textsuperscript{52}

Each historical epoch, from Middle Ages to the renaissance, had resembled different but internally coherent visions of art, religion, and law to maintain the unity of individual and society. However, modern society carried the seeds of isolation and dissolution.\textsuperscript{53} The traditionalist-conservative intellectual aimed to prevent literature from being an aim in itself. Thus, an emphasis was placed upon the social and political significance of the arts, in general, and literature, in particular. They had not been treated as a fetish devoid of an ideological content. Thus, in Sanatta Ahlak Davasi (Moral Question in Art), Tunç asserted that the rise of nationalism became a stimulus for the revival of a moralist perspective in the arts and politics and that this new type of moralism in art could develop through the literary criticism based on rationalist utilitarian ethics.\textsuperscript{54}

\textit{Dissolution of Man’s Unity in Modern Society}

The loss of meaning, psychological disorder and the resultant egoism constituted manifest forms of the dissolution of individual’s sense of moral and aesthetic unity with society. This phenomenon had stimulated the emergence of a purely individualist literature. In Bugünkü Sanat (Art Today), a speech delivered at Istanbul People’s House, Ülken portrayed the social and political changes that shaped contemporary conceptions of art and aesthetics. The development of modern art, he maintained, was strictly bound to the consolidation of social and political power of the bourgeoisie rose by the seventeenth century onwards. New humanist, individualist bourgeois culture carried, for Ülken, the danger of

\textsuperscript{52} Tunç, “Ahlaklığın Çeşitleri ve Zamanımızın Ahlakı,” (Types of Virtue and Ethics of Our Age) Cumhuriyet, (March 23, 1943).
\textsuperscript{54} Tunç, “Sanatta Ahlak Davası.” Also see Şafia, “Milliyetçiliğin Birkaç Hakikati,” (Some Truths About Nationalism) Çınaraltı, 32 (March 14, 1942), p.5.
facilitating the development of a literature of alienation; it had flourished a century after the bourgeoisie’s coming to power by the French Revolution.\(^{55}\)

For Baltacıoğlu, as well as Ulken, twentieth century art, which reacted to the reign of reason, was the logical outcome of a historical reaction to Cartesian rationalism.\(^{56}\) Differing conceptions of art, for Ulken as well as Baltacıoğlu, symbolically referred to man’s quest to restore his psychological unity which had been lost in the modern times.\(^{57}\) From the rise of the bourgeoisie in the seventeenth century to the insurrection of masses, armoured with socialist ideals, in the twentieth century, different conceptions of art had always been an epitome of conflicting conceptions of individual in bourgeois society.\(^{58}\)

Consequently, the nineteenth-century conceptions of nouveau art had been inspired by the eighteenth century romanticism.\(^{59}\) Ulken, like Baltacıoğlu, had pointed out that the romantic reaction was followed by a new mystical individualistic current, in which expressionist works of art came to reflect an excessive subjectivism. Ulken argued that Matisse and Picasso were representatives of this excessive individualism in which reality was reduced to peculiar moments of the unconscious. Realist reaction in art, for Ulken, fed from the resurgence of the masses in liberal-bourgeois societies. Emerging masses of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries had represented the rise of objectivist-realistic philosophy against annihilative individualism of bourgeoisie particularism. Still, the primary objective of contemporary art had not been delineated as to abandon individualism and subjectivism, but to illustrate that both the individual and the individual’s isolation were a reflection of the temperament of the masses.\(^{60}\) For Ulken, Marcel Proust’s realist-objectivist literature and Gladkov’s cubic style in

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\(^{56}\) Baltacıoğlu, Demokrasi ve Sanat, pp. 39-40.

\(^{57}\) Ulken, “Bugünkü Sanat,” pp. 92-3; Baltacıoğlu, ibid., pp.30-6, 82-4, 118-20, 125-6.

\(^{58}\) Ulken, idem.

\(^{59}\) Baltacıoğlu, Demokrasi ve Sanat, pp. 39, 48, 83-4.

\(^{60}\) Ulken, “Bugünkü Sanat,” p. 93.
architecture, which placed emphasis on 'function' rather than useless details and luxury, represented a new opening against individualistic bourgeois art. Ulken in *Bugünkü Sanat*, or Tunç in *Sanatta Ahlak Davası* and *Sanatta Ferd ve Cemiyet* (Individual and Society in Art), revealed that nineteenth-century art was based on an unshakable belief on individual capacity to dominate nature and society. However, twentieth-century art was enriched by the emergence of a new perspective that questioned this classical convention of individualism and rationalism.

This belief on the categorical, rootless, universal Man, besides creating an inhuman and senseless art and literature, also shaped the political ideals of its time. Political liberties and the spiritual emancipation of the individual were bound to some ideal, abstract principles more than the perfection of existing human experience and social practices. For Ulken, philosophical abstractionism and rationalism historically served the bourgeoisie to transcend the existing aristocratic privileges of the absolutist-feudal order and led to the establishment of a new society where the newly-emerged bourgeoisie could find means to develop its own vision of life through his conception of art. Works of Rousseau, Kant, Goethe, and Beethoven, for Ulken, in the final analysis, defined the new principles of ethics, politics and aesthetics. Yet, increasing monopolization of wealth, destruction of petit bourgeoisie, and the emergence of big cartels, had resulted in questioning the classical individualism in economics, politics and ethics. In a seminar held in *Kültür Haftası* Safa, Ulken and Tunç discussed the reasons for these crises of modern societies. All participants agreed that humanist individualist philosophy had lost most of its influence in the twentieth century as compared to its dominance of the western intellectual life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The idea of abstract humanism was replaced with the idea of nation. In other words, the "abstract" was replaced with the "concrete." For the participants of the

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64 Ulken, idem. For the relationship between literature and social development, see Safa, "Roman Cemiyetin Aynasıdır."
seminar abstractionist humanism could not provide the necessary means to understand the crises experienced by the newly-emerged nations since solidarity was replaced with individual egoism; concrete with the ideal; and life with a rational plan. Importance of Bergson, for Ülken, also lay at this conjunction, since contemporary challenges of individualism in literary arts was also fed from Bergsonism of the twentieth century.

The Crisis of Morality and Loss of Meaning: Art As a Mode of Identification

The changing tempo of life in modern society manifested itself as crises in social, political and cultural fields. Crises of morality in modern societies had occupied a central place in shaping the functions attributed to art in traditionalist-conservative vocabulary. Any kind of literary form, indifferent to the crises of modern society, was discarded as an example of art without any ethical content. The general crisis of Order in modern society also had reflections in works of art. Still, this modern crisis, for Baltacıoğlu, as revealed in Ahlak Buhranı (The Moral Crisis) was characteristic of the cultural transformation of societies towards modernity since "there emerges value crisis when society moves from one social type to another. This crisis... is necessary." Safa, in his Roman Cemiyetin Aynasıdır (Novel is the Mirror of Society), also pointed out that this was a global crisis which had find an echo in literature. He noted that when you analyze any kind of novel of any country, written for any class, you can observe a covert or overt resistance against either social injustice, or family, or state oppression, or incompetency of laws, or tradition and custom, or economic or ethical order.

Having characterized the crisis of modern society basically as a value crisis, Tunç, in a similar vein, added that if values of ethics, justice, freedom, and right are so special and humane to the extent that they cannot be reduced to the mechanical and aimless motives of nature, then trade, industry and economic life and all private and social interests and profits should gather around and be

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65 See "Nazım Fikirler," p. 201.
68 Safa, "Roman Cemiyeti'nin Aynasıdır." See also Ülken, "Bugünkün Sanat."
69 Safa, idem.
enlightened by these basic values of humanity. Spiritual uniqueness can only be achieved this way.\textsuperscript{70}

As already emphasized, they were aware of the fact that this loss of meaning was not a phenomenon specific to the Turkish case. Loss of meaning and the value crisis was a global issue of the transformation of traditional societies to more differentiated modern societies. And this new crisis of meaning, Safa concluded, which manifested itself as a reaction to the cult of reason in twentieth-century literature, was, at the same time, the crisis of liberal, individualist Western societies. He argued that before upgrading sociology to the level of positive sciences, it should be ascertained if the reason for this dissolution did not lie in individual ferocity arising out of a liberal outlook which sees the basis of human society solely as the mechanical interactions among individuals.\textsuperscript{71}

Nonetheless, different societies experienced this crisis in different ways, and as pointed by Tunç, various cultures produced different aesthetic and moral conceptions of this global crisis.\textsuperscript{72} The potential risk of alienation was a problematic issue when linked to Republican Westernism. Revolution created new political and cultural symbols to reinforce the individuals devotion to the nation and to prevent social disintegration. Still, at the initial stages of this process, the ‘essence,’ which gives authenticity to culture, was displaced with designed social and political ‘forms,’ in the model of Republican Westernism. \textit{Kültür Haftası} published the notes of a workshop held by Tunç, Safa, and Ülken. All of the participants had argued that Turkish society was experiencing a crisis of adaptation and this crisis had manifested itself in every facet of the intellectual life, from literature to painting and poetry. The reason for the deepening of this crisis was depicted as the inability of the Republican rule to consolidate a unique vision of modernism after the dissolution of the religious \textit{Weltanshauung} of the former Ottoman regime. In the Turkish case, the revolutionary ideal of creating a ‘scientific culture,’ and the imitative rationale behind this ‘civilizing ethos,’ were held responsible for the deepening of the value crisis which had also weakened the bonds between the individual and society. Symptoms of this crisis in

\textsuperscript{70} Tunç, “Madde ve Ruh Arasında Sallanan Dünyamız.”

\textsuperscript{71} Safa, “Roman Cemiyetin Aynasıdır.” Also see Tunç, “Sanatta Ahlak Davası,” “Sanatta Ferd ve Cemiyet”

literature had manifested themselves as the immaturity of a new literature which would be sensitive to the alienation-effect of the value crisis felt both in individual and communal life.\textsuperscript{73} Literature had to provide a history to this modernist spirit of the Revolution since severe distinctions could not be drawn between the old and the new and/or the traditional and the modern. Thus, Safa in \textit{Eski ve Yeni} (The Old and the New) posited that “any pure essence, eternal substance, heartfelt work of art, is old as much as new and new as much as old.”\textsuperscript{74} Traditionalist-conservative literature would shed light on the cultural permanents which could be exploited by the Republican politics to maintain stability, continuity, and durability of the society.

At the center of this traditionalist-conservative interest in art and aesthetics lay the objective to illustrate the collective and individual ambivalence shaped by irreconcilable dualities, such as civilization against culture, emotional against rational, material against spiritual and order against spontaneity. Literature in general, and literary criticisms in particular, would ultimately dealt with the pathologies of these dualities as revealed in communal and individual life. This conception of the arts, to be discussed later, manifested itself in a traditionalist-conservative literary style that strictly relied on the use of symbols. It is adequate to note for the moment that the use of symbols had a dual function. On the one hand, they were employed to challenge the rationalist philosophies and policies insensitive to the irrational essence of life, and on the other, to show the inadequacy of rationalist philosophy in grasping the organic nature of totality which binds the individual parts to each other. Moreover, meaning constituted through symbols could be only be intuitively grasped. This implied that the hidden dynamics of ‘reality’ could not be grasped by reason alone. Use of symbols hinted at the traditionalist-conservative commitment to the irrational dynamics of both life and thought which, which they felt, could be grasped better through one’s intuition.

\textsuperscript{73} See “Edebiyatımızın Fikirszizliği,” p.121.
\textsuperscript{74} Safa, “Eski ve Yeni,” (The Old and the New) \textit{Cumhuriyet}, (February 27, 1938).
New functions ascribed to arts as a means of re-identification for the individual in the modern world were also related to the traditionalist-conservative re-design of the role of religion in the Republican era. Republican willingness to replace the religious Weltanshauung with a modern scientific cosmology led the traditionalist-conservative circle to develop a conception of art with an ethical content. For that circle, religious myths, symbols and customs were about to dissolve. Thus, literature in particular, and art in general, had to adopt modern myths and symbols for the nation to stimulate new affections and sensitivities to maintain loyalty of the citizen and the continuity and authenticity of culture. These modern literary myths and symbol, which could also include religious motives, were expected to hinder the total disappearance of religion in modern society.

In this respect, literature and arts would provide a novel synthesis of religiosity and secularity in the modern world. Literature would illustrate, mirror, and popularize the rules, principles and values of the new Republican order, on the one hand, and would provide a new understanding of the experience of the sacred by the individual in modern world, on the other. Literature and arts could provide new openings to the souls of the citizens and could support Kemalist state’s culturalist project. Thus, arts could ultimately be used to refine and popularize Kemalist state’s willingness to shed light on the authentic origin of the nation. Heroes and myths of the old could be revived and illustrated in works of art. Arts and literature could also promote the feelings of self-sacrifice and heroism among the citizens who were in urgent need of a living history which would be a part of the political culture.

**Culture and Arts: As Realms for Elan Engineering**

The underlying theme of traditionalist-conservative concern with arts and literature was formulated in *Kültür Haftası* as to promote the development of a holistic aesthetic, and ethical approach to cultural questions. Traditionalist-conservative vocabulary aimed to formulate a philosophy of culture in which freedom and responsibility, nature and limits of which defined moral qualities, would acquire novel meanings. According

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to the contributors of *Kültür Haftası*, culture, where the problem of loss of meaning in the world of modernity would be solved, occupied a central place in political and philosophical thought since Johann Gottfried von Herder’s studies on the topic. 76 Culture, for the traditionalist-conservative circle implied harmony and development of life forces willing to find a unity between life and beauty. 77 The question of harmony was linked to the question of freedom that had been praised as the basic quality of personality. Freedom was the basis of culture and culture implied man’s attempts to free himself from the God-given natural order. 78 Based on this connection, Safa argued that the objectives set by the journal and the ultimate purpose of modernist - traditionalist-conservative literary arts constituted a perfect fit, and the journal, *Kültür Haftası*, was born out of pointing to the idea that culture was a new level of re-identification. Accordingly,

knowledge is a lifeless content which solely belongs to the memory; culture is a living knowledge which comes into being within the thinking experience of mind. Literature brings culture out of the lifeless mass of knowledge and links it to the most sacred and vital deeds of personality and selfhood. Ideas of a scientist, who lacks literary experience, are deprived of the passion which is requisite for their living and pursue a mechanical move in the darkness of the tunnel from memory to conscious. The emergence of a sound cultural movement in Turkey can only be realized by the cooperation of science and literature. I am among those who are certain that pure Turkish culture and Turkish literature will emerge ... when spiritless essence of culture without literature unites with the fervor of a literature which lacks the essence of culture. *Kültür Haftası* gave rise to this mutual assurance. 79

Nevertheless, traditionalist-conservative literature was based on the premise that society needed of order and Republican rationalism could alienate the citizen from the new national symbols. 80 The question of order and institutional formalism, the primary concerns of Kemalist Revolutionary cadres, had to be supported with a complementary perspective which would exploit such cultural essentials as religion, tradition, and folklore, to further consolidate the new order. Order, which had been understood in a mechanical sense, for Tunç, might also result in seeing the society as a
mere mechanical collectivity. In this respect, indifference to the existing cultural practices and traditions, for the traditionalist-conservative circle, carried the danger of alienation of the individual from its genuine culture. Thus, national literature and arts had to mirror society’s authentic values and tastes. Intuitive-creationist literature would also provide the bedrock for understanding the authentic means of cultural creativity essential for maintaining the historical continuity of nation as a cultural community.

The legitimacy of the new Republican order could not merely be guaranteed by the consolidation of the formal institutional administrative structures of the state. Thus, Safa said,

any culture has two fronts: the institutions of that culture which form its forefront. Second, its inner side, which is not visible, but is more significant, valuable, and forms which its essence and in fact the culture itself. Emphasizing one and disregarding the other leads to the destruction of culture.

Potentials of art could also be exploited to contribute to the re-establishment of the bond between the individual and society. Authentic cultural personality, disintegrated by revolutionary rationalism, could be totally rebuilt through the new sensibilities represented in art. The new world that had been illustrated through work of art would be an organic totality of the general and the particular [read national spirit and individuality, respectively], the rational [technique] and the irrational [read culture], since “the essential and original existence of a work of art is not in its components but in this state of synthesis.” The task of art was to restore a sense of cultural unity so that the individual [read citizen] could break his isolation and alienation.

The definitions of art among traditional conservatives reflected their aspirations about the cultural and political consequences of Kemalist revolution. In the case of Safa, for example, thought the aim of the art was to salvage modern man from isolation and alienation and to reinstate national identity and belongingness. Tunç, defining art in terms of poetry, characterized its basic feature as displaying a spiritual

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81 Tunç, idem.
82 Tunç, idem. See also Safa, “Milliyetçiligin Birkac Hakikati,” p. 5.
84 Idem. See also Baltacıoğlu, “Sanattan Anlamak,” (To Know Art) Yeni Adam, 474 (January 27, 1944), p. 2.
essence in a “fantastic” form. He insisted that human beings grasped the spiritual not through Reason but through intuition as a will to discover the essence of piety of the human soul.  

Baltacıoğlu did not take a different stand on the issue. In Sanat Eseri Nedir? (What is A Work of Art?) he asserted that

artistic work is imagination. Artistic work is different from practical ritual and ethics. Artistic work provides no benefits. It resembles neither science nor technique... It does not have any responsibility of searching for outer truth. Unlike technical activity it does not depend on practice. Artistic work is inciting. Artistic work is the organized work of the social man. who is called artist. and who gathers the values of a certain social group and restructures them with respect to a genuine technique and reflects them to the same social group and thus generates a sui generis incitement which is called humane incitement.  

The basic claim of traditionalist-conservative literature was to replace the former religious Weltanshauung with a new sense of piety and religiosity shaped by strict moralism. The new traditionalist-conservative moralism did not necessarily disregard religion as an ethical system, but placed it in living national tradition as an authentic national experience of the sacred. In this respect, for Safa and Ülken, as well as Baltacıoğlu and Tunç, art would contribute to the development of a sense of mutual affection and piety which would give way to a sense of belongingness and nationality. For example, Ülken in his Aşk Ahlaki tried to show that it was piety and the sense of affection which held the individuals together. In a similar vein, Baltacıoğlu’s definition of art revealed that both the sense of affection and unity of man with society could be restored in art. Thus and so, Ülken strongly reacted to the loss of a sense of piety in modern life for which he ultimately blamed egoism and materialism in modern society and the diffusion of technical-scientific mentality to the spheres of ethics and aesthetics. Nationality, as illustrated in Aşk Ahlaki, made piety a common value among the citizens. For Ülken, art had to restore modern man’s sense of belongingness to a nation. Tunç, in a similar line, claimed that this tendency was coupled with the re-moralization of

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87 Ülken, Aşk Ahlaki, pp. 64-5.
the society towards a national identity which ultimately aimed to restore man's cultural affinity with his fellows.\textsuperscript{88}

\textit{Unity Through the Artistic Reorganization of Life}

Tunç assured that the unity between psychologically particular and sociologically universal could be reconstructed in art.\textsuperscript{89} Like the human world, art has its own dynamics and forces of creativity which can not be grasped through reason alone. In this respect, Safa, and Tunç, claimed that art, particularly poetry, signified the triumph of soul over the matter, irrational over the rational.\textsuperscript{90} Safa, In \textit{Rüya, Şiir, Cınnet} (Dream, Poetry, Insanity) had affirmed this as follows:

In my book published three months ago I wrote that every man becomes insane while dreaming and his consciousness reverts to its discipline after he wakes up. ...Keyserling uses "poet" instead of "insane." Since the new conceptions of poetry eliminate the difference between the fantasies of the poet and the delirium of the insane, the distinction can only be observed in the words. The fact that every person becomes insane or a poet while dreaming or becomes a poet is due to the rationalization of the daily life or the tendency to escape from shallow truth. If we do not experience these escapes to the undisciplined universe of intensity and delirium every night our obedience to the rules and oppression of reason during daytime becomes harder.\textsuperscript{91}

Thus, for Safa "the difficulty faced by those who had tried to understand poetry through reason lies here," since "there is not another key in their hands rather than intuition peculiar to poetry."\textsuperscript{92} About two decades later, Safa, paraphrasing Tunç, said that "poetry does not expound, but (lets us) inspire..."\textsuperscript{93} In \textit{Gençlik ve İdeolojiler} (The Youth and Ideologies) he had already mentioned that

what is fascinating in any philosophical, economic or political theory as well as in artistic works is the original aspect which complements our own viewpoint and experience with


\textsuperscript{90} Safa, "Şiir Çağımı Değiştirdi," "Şiirde Mana." See Baltacıoğlu, "Roman Nedir?" p.2.

\textsuperscript{91} Safa, "Rüya, Şiir, Cınnet," (Dream, Poetry, Insanity) \textit{Tan}, (February 20, 1936).

\textsuperscript{92} Safa, "Şiirde Mana." The aim of novel was to characterize and illustrate the man as such. See Baltacıoğlu, "Roman Nedir?" p.2, "Romana Doğru," p.2.

respect to another standpoint. We live in a universe of truth with numerous aspects which is perceived by the individual in particulars and by the society as a whole. For the comprehension of this whole, perception of the existing society is not enough: but perceptions of preceding and future societies are also needed. 94

Modern art, with its unique intuitionist method, would provide a holistic perspective to mirror the dynamics also responsible for unity and continuity between past, present and future of the society.

Tunç, Safa and Baltacıoğlu maintained that scienticism manifested itself as an obsession with naturalist literary forms that tended to calculate the value of art on the basis of its utility in understanding the human world. 95 Utility and rationality could not be captured as the basic aims of art. Baltacıoğlu assured this as follows:

The worst sin it has committed from sixteenth century, from the renaissance, onward was that it has been engaged with non-artistic works. From renaissance onward, painting has been tending towards perspective and anatomy! Oratory was confused with rhetoric! Drama became an art of decoration! Novel shifted towards stylism! Architecture turned from being an art of construction into decoration. Renaissance aimed to serve reason. Reason of the Middle Ages was mystical; Renaissance reason was Cartesian. Renaissance also aimed to serve art: it made art scientific. This was not required. Art should have stood outside science and within sentiments. To explain the outer universe which is observable and calculable is the work of science; not of art. To explain the inner universe, which is rationalist, which is neither observable nor calculable, which is the universe of being, time and spirit, is the work of art; not of science. Art exists because science filters this universe through reason and can never comprehend it. Art exists on its own since it pursues with a different logic and method. 96

The task of the artist was to display the rational and irrational sides of life and culture so that the people could find themselves in unity again. 97 For Baltacıoğlu, the artist would inform the individuals about their communal national identity. 98 In later decades, Safa further elaborated this view and concluded that "poetry is the complete expression of all spiritual states," including the spirituality of a nation. Tunç affirmed, in his discussions on the current state of mechanic and organic theories, in line with Safa, that artistic reorganization of life

97 See Baltacıoğlu, "Sanat ve Sosyete, " p. 8.
98 Idem.
99 See Safa, "Şiirin Mahiyeti."
could maintain the unity of man with society and its cultural world. As noted earlier, in his *Sanatta Ahlak Davasi*, Tunç, had further depicted that the march of nations was responsible for this new aesthetic conception of life which granted privilege to artistic creation again rationalist radicalism. Artistic reorganization, for Safa, also meant transcendence of simply rationalist conceptions of reality into a new metaphysics. Thus, the artist would create a metaphysics of his own which would transcend the conventional subject-object dualism and would grasp the unity of opposites behind their various appearances. For him, “poet has a divine mission: the work of visionary who comes closer to understand the universe in its great structure by transcending the level of worldly antinomies and conflicts.” In a similar vein, Ulken maintained that artist was the one who deeply felt the social and cultural tensions in his individual life and reflected the resultant tragedy the work of art. Artist and/or philosopher would formulate a homogeneous Weltanshauung in this age of moral and social disintegration. Thus, a literary approach, which would lead to the metaphysical, philosophical, and social understanding of the individual, could serve the artistic reorganization of life in modern times.

Literature would mobilize all forces in society to ensure its creative evolution since, for Safa, society could not merely be dominated by the forces of total destruction and/or total renewal. The concept of society itself implied a process of “regeneration in the same direction of Becoming.” Safa’s discussion on the novel revealed the fact that, for him, the novel, just like the real life, embodied an unlimited number of possibilities. It was the world of the unknown which had been characterized and shaped by tension-ridden possibilities. Novel was itself a state of becoming from the

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100 Tunç, “Sanatta Ahlak Davasi.”
102 Safa, ibid.
104 Ibid., pp. 165, 172.
106 Safa, “Şiir Çağımı Değiştiriyor.”
beginning to the end. The flow of events depended upon the occurrence of a number of possibilities, whose appearance depended upon uncertainty, unpredictability, and indeterminacy. Relationship between the author and novel also implied the idea of freedom. Freedom was the basic category of creation in the novel, as well as literature in general. A rational plan, as in the case of architectural design, which would been imposed on the series of events and possibilities before they occurred, would restrict the real freedom literature offered. Thus, in order to understand the dynamics of the creative progress, it was necessary, in Safa’s words, “to shake off all the principles inherited from the past in order to understand their durability and life capability, if not to overthrow them all.” Only in this way, the original dynamics of political and social organization could be understood.

Literature in particular, and art in general, Safa maintained, would promote a new romantic political understanding of culture which was different from primitive religiosities, patriotism, and nationalism. Literature implied the act of grasping a higher meaning and celebration of the unknown as it had been manifested as an authentic dynamics of creation of the folk spirit. In a similar vein, Tunç argued that the extension of this idea to the state, law, etc., have provided a purer, richer and broader possibility on the totality, and established a closer, more sober relationship between man and existence. Based upon the need more for subjective experience than objective domination of an issue, the idea considering the law as an outgrowth of national spirit was, therefore, replaced with the one that preaches it.

Society, like a work of art, could not be treated as a finished and completed thing in-itself but as a continuous and adventurous state of development in its unique spontaneous path of growth. This conception of arts and aesthetics, in the context of literature, was extended to state-society relations to ground the social and political function of art.

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107 See Safa, "Roman Teknigi."
110 See Safa, "Roman - Buhrani ve Meseleleri."
Traditionalist-Conservative Modernist Aesthetics as a Mode of Political Creation

Aesthetic Creation: A Model of Relationship Between the Charismatic Ruler and the Ruled

The key to understand traditionalist-conservative conception of power as a means for creating a national culture and a new society was to draw some parallelisms between their anticipated conception of the relationships between the work of art and the artist and the intuitive ruler and the ruled. Indeed, it was this anticipated relationship between the work of art and artist that was responsible for the emergence of a unique traditionalist-conservative vocabulary, where peculiarly Bergsonian concepts, like artistic creation, will, creativity, freedom, spontaneity, and imagination, were employed to form a model of power relationship for charismatic leadership exploited in its élan engineering politics which was considered by the traditionalist-conservative circle as a function of charismatic power.

Traditionalist-conservative vocabulary handed over to the Turkish intellectual tradition an alternative vision of modernity, essentially traditionalist, romantic, anti-positivist where the concepts intuition, creativity, and concreteness were the most important terms. In this preoccupation, the artist would contact a reality that transcended the rational. The great statesman, like the artist, also faced with a world of unknowns. He had to order the spontaneously appearing life in precise forms. In Ülken’s words, he had to “systematize emotions in the form of images.”

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113 For Ülken’s critical evaluations on positivism, see Ülken, “Medeniyette İlerleme ve Gerileme,” (Progress and Retreat in Civilization) İstanbul, (December 31, 1946), pp. 2-4.


The artist, as portrayed in Safa’s *Almak ve Çalmak* (Paraphrasing and Plagiarism) was a mediator who inspired and displayed commonsense forms and made them new. Basic characteristics of both the artist’s and the statesman’s acts was secular creation. Secluded dynamics of life were grasped and displayed in this secular creation. The statesman, like the artist, had to free the creative dynamics, namely tensions. Paraphrasing from Baudelaire, Tunç wrote that “pure art is to create a magic which covers the outer world as well as the inner world of the artist.” The artist, like the statesman, had no purpose other than to eliminate the utilitarian symbols, the conventional and socially accepted generalities, in short, everything that distanced the reality from us. Hasan Cemil Çambel in his *Türk Kültür Davası* (The Turkish Cultural Struggle), which he had been examined by Baltacıoğlu as an exemplary case in his Towards the Turk problem, illustrated this mood as follows:

"Today, the Turkish nation is struggling to lay roots in its history and myth, and put on its life the stamp of its literature. Death of history and myth means the death of life... And Ankara introduced a new culture era. Ankara is a revolution in depth... And a turning point of our national spiritual life... As such, everyone, like an artist, lives this new creation, while he, himself, creates a new man." Baltacıoğlu in *Pedagoji* (Pedagogy) argued that the aim of this creation was self-discovery and self-realization. Traditionalist-conservative vocabulary suggested to adopt the intuitionist method as a technique for surfacing of the reality and dynamism behind the appearances. Aesthetic theory and artist, as pointed out in Ulken’s *Sanat ve Sosyete* (Art and Society), would secure the very unity of life. The artistic intuition that help us to move behind appearances would also make it easier for us to locate novelty and vitality brought about by the secular creator. The image and picture of reality, brought through intuition, might keep the artist, as well as the ruler, in contact

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121 Tunç, “Kendi Kendine Olan Sanat,” p. 89.
with the concrete. Thus, modernist aesthetics advocated by the traditionalist-conservative writer helped the modernizing statesmen to see his creative will as intuitive formulations of latent will, tastes, and commitments of the people.

*Conservative Philosophical Framework in Peyami Safa’s Works*

Literary artists of the early Republican era, who were inspired by traditionalist-conservative ideas, ultimately aimed to characterize the unique processes of political, economic, social change. Throughout the 1930s, Kemalist ruling intelligentsia tended to consolidate the political and cultural processes which would stimulate their Westernization project and institutionalize the Kemalist revolutionary practices. The idea of progress was the theoretical object of Kemalism. The rationalist revolutionary ideology of Kemalism espoused an image of modern society which was actively constituted on the desacralization of social and political organization. Emphasis on the perfection of the social organization, secularization of daily life and appeal to the revolutionary project aroused a sense of discontinuity and insecurity within the first generation of the Republic. It also evoked an awareness among some segments of the intelligentsia on the necessity to conserve, to which the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals have responded.

Safa was one of the prominent literary figures of the early Republican period. Safa’s conservative literature found fertile grounds to explore the questions of moral crisis and degeneration. The philosophical concerns behind his literary style, as reflected in *Felsefi Buhran*, were shaped by his distaste of a Western image. As a literary figure, his reputation reached its zenith when he published *Fatih-Harbiye, Bir Tereddütün Romanı* (Novel of a Hesitation) and *Biz İnsanlar* (We, the Human Beings). Matmazel

125 For a similar role attributed to the artist, see Ülken, “Filozof ve Artist Tipleri,” p. 172.
Noraliya‘n Koltuğu (Mademoiselle Noraliya’s Chair) and Yalnızız (We are Alone) were among his literary works in which the early traditionalist-conservative themes of psychological disorder, ambivalence, and cultural duality were articulated.129

Safa’s basic literary and politico-philosophical concerns were shaped by the social, political, and economic problems of his era. He and his generation witnessed the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, occupation years and the War of Independence. They were the last generation of the Ottoman Empire whose sense of belongingness had largely been depressed by the collapse of the Empire. They experienced the collapse, decadence and rebirth, creativity and self-reliance. Still, the War of Independence and Kemalist order could not overshadow the disturbing effects of the sense of non-belongingness and despair. Ambivalence in the psychological order of individuals, who experience the rapid process of collapse and regeneration, conflict among generations, tensions among social and political groups and competing ideologies, collapse of the religious Weltanshauung and its institutional structure which shaped the life of individuals and groups for centuries, and regeneration of a new secular cosmology and its pathologies became the cardinal themes of his work.

Another important theme of Safa’s novels was his attempt to depict the irrational inner layers of the self. This philosophical emphasis on irrationality had already been incorporated through Tunç’s works on Bergson, which privileged the irrational against the rational side of life.130 The hybrid dualist cultural forms, which manifested themselves as the emergence of a bifurcated self led Safa to scrutinize the manifestations of dualism experienced by the individuals. The collapse of moral values, increasing materialization of daily life, and dualities emerged in the psycho-sociological

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world of the individuals and groups provoked him to produce works which aimed to illustrate the catastrophic social and psychological consequences of the mimetic models of Westernization [read modernization].

As noted, Safa and his contemporaries witnessed not only the dissolution of Ottoman system, but also the regeneration of new secular values by the growth of capitalism under the tutelage of Kemalist state and secularization of the daily life. In Safa’s vision of Revolution, increasing material concerns of daily life meant the decay and collapse of tradition which was equated with the spiritual heritage of the Eastern civilization but not necessarily with Islam. Breaking of the traditional social bonds and traditions were responsible for the development and deepening of a schizophrenic approach in the daily life of the citizens. Relative stability maintained by the Republic could not transform this schizophrenic temper to an all-embracing holism, though it created the necessity for literature and art to formulate such a holistic perspective.

Schizophrenic attitude, which had been characterized by a mass of conflicting symbols and images, as illustrated in Safa’s literary works, displayed the mood of the laymen and was symbolically illustrated in his novels. This schizophrenic mood stood for dualities between Eastern-Western rationales in his Fatih-Harbiye. Use of symbols, such as the lamp, electricity, lute-player, violin and jazz, hinted at Safa’s willingness to illustrate the invasion of individual world by tension-ridden images and dualities which stood for clashing civilizations, each representing a separate way of life experienced in different cultural spaces like Fatih [read East] and Harbiye [read West]. Safa’s Fatih-Harbiye, and especially Bir Tereddütün Romani, were also based on these themes of individual ambivalence, decadence and dissolution of moral values.

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132 Safa argued that Kemalism radicalism was a rupture from the Turkist and Islamist currents of the Second Constitutional Period. Yet, its radicalism could not be based on its hostility towards tradition. Safa, Türk İnkılapına Baksılara (Glances at the Turkish Revolution) (İstanbul: Ötkın Neşriyat A.Ş., 1990 [1938]), pp. 107-10.

133 For a similar view see, Ülken, “Zit Kuvvetlerin Yaradışı,” (The Creation of Antipodal Forces) Mülkiye, 12 (May, 1931), pp.1-7
Safa adopted a kind of subjectivism, which revealed itself as a perspectivist-personalist style in his literary works.\textsuperscript{134} Yet, his concern with the flux of life also made Safa more sensitive towards the social question since the “novel is a mirror of society as much as the soul of individual.”\textsuperscript{135} The social question in its political context together with a peculiar emphasis on human question, to which Ulken referred in \textit{Demokratik Cemiyetlerde İleri ve Geri} (Back and Forth in Democratic Societies) had always been an overriding concern for Safa.\textsuperscript{136} Safa adopted a radical but not necessarily a revolutionary perspective towards the social question. This radicalism was strictly bound to his personalist-subjectivism which made him take, in his literary work, the inner life of the individual as the subject. Personalist subjectivism, which shaped his literary technique, served to counter the ‘one-truth’ obsession of positivism.\textsuperscript{137} The Revolutionary vision of progressivism was historicized by multiplicity of subjectively constituted images of social world and real experiences of the progressive unilinear time.\textsuperscript{138}

The personalist-subjectivist perspective reached its maturity in \textit{Matmazel Noraliya’nın Koltuğu} and \textit{Yalnızız}. Safa pictured Turkish society during the stormy years of the World War II and under the single party rule. He illustrated how multiple tensions had been created by one-truth obsession of positivist vision of modernization and were coupled with loss of individuality. For Günyol, Safa, especially, in his \textit{Matmazel Noraliya’nın Koltuğu}, was captured by a mystic and anti-rationalist current of thought surged after the First World War.\textsuperscript{139} Günyol tended to view Safa as the protagonist of a new kind of mysticism and anti-rationalism. Devoid of all pejorative connotations of the terms, mysticism and anti-rationalism were indeed those philosophical stands which could be used to label Safa’s philosophical orientation, as

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{135} Safa, “Sanat ve Sürat,” (Art and Speed) \textit{Cumhuriyet}, (July 28, 1932).
\item \textsuperscript{136} Ulken, “Demokrasilerde İleri ve Geri,” (Forth and Back in Democratic Societies) \textit{Istanbul}, (July 15, 1946), pp. 3-5.
\item \textsuperscript{137} See Safa, “Gençlik ve İdeolojiler,” p.162.
\item \textsuperscript{139} Vedat Günyol, \textit{Dile Gelseler}, (If They Talk...) (Istanbul: Çan Yayınları, 1966), p. 11.
\end{itemize}
well as other traditionalist conservatives in varying degrees. Thus, it was not accidental
that Aydemir had also employed same terms to criticize Tunç and Ülken’s
philosophico-political stands in the early 1930s. It was also Safa himself who
maintained that “every literary work, revealed or concealed, embodies a philosophical
viewpoint,” and anti-rationalism could be a proper starting point for any search of
the philosophical perspective behind his literary works.

How did this partly revealed and partly concealed philosophical viewpoint,
namely Bergsonism, found a niche in Safa’s literary works, especially those works
appeared in 1930s and 1940s? Bergsonism was internalized as a set of precepts, first,
on the nature of intuition; second, as a peculiar understanding of action; third, as a
particular vision of time and space; fourth, as a vision of life where a set of multiple
tensions were responsible for its dynamism and spontaneity; and fifth, as a distinct antirationalist and anti-positivist standpoint.

Metin Heper pointed that revolutionary transcendentalism which derived from
an Aristotelian conception of society led the Kemalist state elites to see the existent
forms of social organization as transitory. Emphasis had been made on ‘essence’
rather than ‘form’ and the political power was employed to display the secluded
‘essence of society’ rather than perfecting the existing institutions. It is exactly from
this kind of political perspective that the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals were
concerned about aesthetics in radical politics as a powerful political criterion which
would further strengthen the emphasis made on ‘essence’ rather than ‘form.’

Safa’s Conservatism and his Aesthetic Technique

The relationship between Safa’s conservative position and his conception of art,
especially of literary art needs further elaboration. Safa occupies a unique position in
the history of Republican literature as the first initiator of the psychological novel. Yet,

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141 Safa, “Edebiyat ve Kültür,” “Roman Nedir?”

in *Soysuzlaşmış Sanat* (The Corrupted Art) and *Eski ve Yeni*, he explicitly stated that his views on art were modern and traditional, at the same time. He did not, for example, view art as an end in itself. As a Bergsonian artist he was committed to an optimistic faith in art as much as it got closer to real life since the “rules of novel are the rules of life.” In *Okuyucu ve Romançı* (The Reader and the Novelist) and *Şiir Üzerine Düşünceler* (Views on Poetry) he also attributed a missionary role to the poet to transcend the worldly structures. He ultimately adopted a positive and affirmative attitude towards the role of the artist in displaying this correspondence between art and life.

What made Safa to adopt a positive attitude towards artistic creative capacity was his belief that art could promote cultural authenticity and sensitivity among citizens as members of a cultural community. It was this solidarity, which bound lonely isolated individuals to one another, that the artist would seek to evoke. His commitment to art involved a commitment to multiple truths and sincerity. Safa repeatedly emphasized the importance of intuitive truth in literary arts. In his words:

> Every artistic work certainly has its own conviction that it wants to reaffirm and inculcate... However, literature expresses itself by means of language, and language is, above all, a logical means of expression. It is logical that a literary work resorts to logic to confirm its own conviction. But, literature is not solely a logical product as a mathematical calculation; it not only confirms but also inculcates.

Artist’s capacity to transcend worldly structures was linked to his capacity to highlight the co-existence of multiple truths in life.

Safa, as a mode of artistic presentation, had adopted symbolism, time shifts, multiple narrators, and a new kind of subjectivist impressionism as characteristics of his conservative literary style. In his conservative style characters, scenes, or actions were presented not from the point of view of objective reality but as they appeared to the

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146 Safa, “Roman Cemiyetin Aynasıdır.”
147 Safa, “Sanat Eseri Birşey İfade Eder Mi?”
characters in his fiction at a particular moment. Safa used language to describe the transient and subjective interpretation of the world. In his words:

...When you step into a grocer's shop the goods vary with respect to the aims, professions and characters of each and every character of the novel that enters there... Novel is living and apt when it expresses these variations. Novel which eliminates these differences and presents the viewpoint of the novelist in each and every observation and description is artificial and dead. 148

In line with his personalist subjectivist disposition, Safa, in *Roman Nedir?* and in *Sanatta Malum ve Meçhul* revealed the idea that reality was not an end product but a state of becoming. It was a process in which everything that had been assumed to be stable and coherent was dissolved and became unfinished and fragmentary. 149

Safa adopted subjectivism as a technique because, like his conservatism, personalist subjectivism also saw reality as complex and flux. 150 Reality, for Safa, could not be understood as a solid form since it was always in a state of flux. 151 The complexity and fluidity of reality could not be understood through the ideologies of the modern world which all tended to adopt a dogmatic approach towards questions of life. In his words:

In fact, we live in an age of hatred towards dogmatism; and descriptions, restrictions, rules cause rough and rude troubles as pontoons in the incited and free flow of new literature. 152

There was an overlapping between his conservative criticism of rationalism and personalist subjectivist literary style.

Safa’s symbolism was also related to his traditionalist-conservative commitment to complexity of life and the limitations of human reason to grasp it. As mentioned earlier, his symbolism implied that there were some permanents in life which could not be grasped by reason but through intuitionism. Safa’s intensive use of symbols in his novels also revealed his traditionalist convictions. Past traditions, which were symbolically referred to in his novels, sometimes with religious connotations, implied

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149 Safa, “Roman Nedir?” “Sanatta Malum ve Meçhul,” “Şair Çağımı Değiştiriyor.” For a later assessment see Safa, “Roman Tekniği.”
150 Safa, “Roman -Buhrana ve Meseleleri 1.”
152 “Peyami Safa Diyor ki...,” pp. 119- 23, Also see Safa, “Sanatta Malum ve Meçhul.”
that they were also part of the society's cultural products which had been regarded as old-fashioned and antiquated in the world created by Republican modernism.

Safâ was dissatisfied with ever-expanding materialist conception of life which renders it mechanical in order to satisfy merely the material needs of individuals. Thus, symbolism provided new means to re-assert spiritualism into the modern world. When Safâ called for the establishment and reassertion of symbolic realism in Turkish literature, as best illustrated in *Dokuzuncu Hariciye Koğusu* (External Ward Number Nine) and *Matmazel Noraliya'ın Koltuğu*, he was ultimately searching for an art with an ethical content. The self, which had been depicted as a divided whole, created by dualites of modernism, could not be reduced to a mechanical totality or could not be identified as a set interactions among mechanical psychological states. Thus, Safâ's symbolism, which implied the existence of a layer of truth that could be conceived spiritually, could be seen as an attempt to create a literature that ultimately sought to stimulate the inner self with a view to grasping these multiple truths intuitively.

There are multiple narrators in Safâ's novels which symbolically referred to these multiple truths. In *Roman Cemiyetin Aynasıdır*, he pointed out that he had used multiple narrators to illustrate the difficulty of reflecting reality. Fatih-Harbiye was also a typical work of Safâ which he used the method of multiple narrators. Narrator's subjective experience of multiple truths in life framed the themes and various experiences of life illustrated in the novel for which Safâ's *Fatih-Harbiye* stood for an example. In fact, Safâ tended to hide behind the narrators. He explained,

perhaps the characters of each and every novel are the novelist himself, who moves in the manner of a liar and a fictitious personality to differing extents; but the novelist has to a great extent tended a complete creation so long as he skillfully put the mask of reality on them and made them live as if they possess real features.

This method of multiple narrators also revealed his traditionalist-conservative convictions. Safâ tended to show that reality was a many-sided state of fluidity which contained multiple truths experienced by the individuals. This line of analysis displayed

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153 Safâ, “Roman Cemiyetin Aynasıdır.”

his skepticism about the one-truth obsession of Kemalist modernism framed by a positivist unilinearism.

Safa also adopted time-shifts to further strengthen the effect that reality was a multi-faceted phenomenon where multiple truths of the past co-existed with those of the present to shape the future. These time shifts can be found in most of his works but Fatih-Harbiye, Dokuzuncu Hariciye Koğuşu and Matmazel Noraliya'nın Koltuğu deserve special attention. Reality was depicted though multiple narrators by means of flashbacks and time dislocations and values and principles derived from these different moments characterized the present reality as a complex of multiple truths. Safa changed the order of time sequences because “novel is a preference and a synthesis of choices of life it has a different structure. It should not follow a chronology.”

Safa maintained in his Eski ve Yeni that a sense of continuity with the past had to be constituted. By the use of time-shifts, Safa tried to show that past and future co-existed in the present. Nevertheless, he was dissatisfied with the chronological mode of narration, which could be regarded as an example of unilinearism that tended to see the passing of time as a sequential and determined process. In his words,

If we try to write down the mysteries and order of events directly, novel becomes dead, though it resembles life... Hence, we will not insist on writing down the events in their natural order... We will change the chronological order of the events... Hence, we will first engender a preference and then apprehension and postponement.

Even though Safa had intervened in the time sequence in the chronological sense, still, he did not aim to completely ignore it since he did not place his works in a timeless spatial context. On the contrary, real and experienced time, in the Bergsonian sense, was incorporated as a structural constituent of his novel to stimulate the reader to recognize the history and continuity as personal experiences. The literary techniques employed by Safa served his traditionalist-conservative purposes and they became aesthetic manifestations of his traditionalist conservatism. His aesthetic conservatism is

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155 Ibid.
156 Ibid., See also Safa, “Şimdi,” (The Present) Yedigün, (May 13, 1936), p. 4.
representative and unique in the context of early Republican literature, as much as his traditionalist conservatism of being traditional and modern at the same time.

**Form versus Essence: Safa’s Conservative Dilemma**

“Form - and - essence” dilemma, which was incorporated into Safa’s perspectivist-subjectivist conservative literary technique also displayed his political concerns. Perspectivism, which was employed to illustrate multiple images, served to give an account of the co-existence of various political-cultural images and symbols at a particular moment. In *Fatih-Harbiye, Matmazel Noraliya’s Koltuğu* and *Yalnıziz*, the form - and - essence dilemma provided hints of author’s willingness to show how disjunctions between form and essence manifested themselves as individual and collective alienation, loneliness and rootlessness. In *Fatih-Harbiye*, perspectivism served to reflect how different worlds still survived despite the Republican Westernization.\(^{157}\) In *Matmazel Noraliya’s Koltuğu* and *Yalnıziz*, he further emphasized the form and essence dilemma to illustrate the tensions in outer and inner selves of characters and cultural dualities of Westernization that revealed themselves as tensions between appearance and substance which he held responsible for the creation of the “half-men” of the Republic, partly Westernized and partly Eastern but has nothing on his own.\(^{158}\) His cardinal motive was to display the social-psychological pathologies of cultural dualities and ideological cleavages, like materialism vs. spiritualism, Marxism vs. idealism, hedonism-egoism vs. self-sacrifice, etc., after the consolidation of the structures of modernity.

*Fatih-Harbiye*, which covers a time-span of ten years between 1920 and 1930, was written in 1931. In the novel he tried to illustrate the cultural pathologies brought into being by the shift of the center of civilization to the West from the East. Though the cultural pathologies illustrated by Safa were not specific to the Republican era, as

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noted by Ahmet Oktay, Safa’s position was representative of the traditionalist-conservative stand on the questions of modernization [read westernization].\textsuperscript{159} The traditionalist-conservative task, set by Safa, was to develop a balanced literary style between form and essence in terms of their respective significance in shaping the ethical-thematic structure of the novel. The question could not be limited to a literary concern since the relinquishing of form in favour of essence would lead to cosmopolitanism, namely the loss of authenticity and meaning, and essence in favour of form to a kind of reactionism which would hinder the creative evolution of society. The proper understanding of the question of form and essence, as illustrated in *Fatih-Harbiye*, could be possible only through the grounding of the questions of style and content in a philosophy of reconciliation.

The new traditionalist-conservative philosophy of reconciliation, which derived its time conception from Tunç’s Bergsonism, ultimately questioned the unilinear abstract conception of time envisioned by positivist radicals, a point which made earlier.\textsuperscript{160} Thus, Safa adopted a kind of retrospectivism which revealed his peculiar conception of time. He tried to show that reality was continuously reconstructed in human experience. Adaptation of retrospectivism and commitment to subjectivist personalism and of the incorporation of a non-chronological conception of time, as one of the basic structural elements of the form of the novel, prevented the form to become veil over the content. Consequently, determinism, which was assumed to be an attribute of form, was abandoned in favour of dynamism, indeterminacy, and unpredictability.

This dynamic, non-chronological conception of time, which had been incorporated as a structural element of his literary form, could also be detected in his emphasis on the co-occurrence of multiple of events. Retrospective time was also a designative element in constituting the past-present-future dimension of the sequences of events in novel. In *Fatih-Harbiye*, for example, the novel was developed in

\textsuperscript{159} Oktay, “Türk Edebiyatında Aydın,” p. 270.

flashbacks and time disjunctions between three different time spans. The first time span was between the years 1909-1930, the second covered events between 1920 and 1930, and the third, events between the years of 1923 and 1930 when Kemalists’ westernization from above was enforced by radicalism in means. Flashbacks, which imply time disjunctions, were used to support the idea that it was duree, the real and experienced time that maintained the continuity and dynamism of life [read novel] but not an abstract homogeneous time.

Time was incorporated as a structural element of the novel through his retrospective subjectivist style. Safa attempted to show that human experience was, in fact, an articulation of real, dynamic and subjective time which Bergson called as duree. Safa’s conception of time, as illustrated in his novels, referred to the Bergsonian “concrete time” or “concrete duration.” In this conception time, duration is not something that is difficult to comprehend but something that one may or may not experience. Whatever special about conceptualizing duration in this way was that it rejected homogeneity, immobility, indivisibility and determinism. Instead, it promoted heterogeneity, mobility, indeterminacy, creativity, and free will.

It was not accidental that the Bergsonian argument implying “the reality of time,” found literary manifestations through Safa’s retrospective subjectivism, since only through this devotion, ‘past’ could be treated as a constitutive factor of the ‘Present’ and the questions of ‘freedom,’ ‘spontaneity,’ ‘experience,’ could be incorporated into literature. Politically speaking, retrospective subjectivism historicized the present day events and claims of Westernization and provided a fertile framework to show the plurality of images which shaped the present and probably the future course of events.

Novel was the world of illustration of the essential opposing life forces and tensions responsible for dynamism and flux of life - those were the opposing forces, which Bergson elaborated in Creative Evaluation: the spirit and matter. The first

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refers, in most of Safa’s novels, to the Eastern life-style whereas the latter to the Western. The human element in Safa’s novels was like the Bergsonian hero who sometimes grasped the problems of society intuitively. The human element was a complex whole of tensions and conflicts between the outer self, namely the intellect, the rational part of the human element, and the inner self, the unknown world of passions and emotions. As noted, Safa illustrated the cultural dualities in society through the subjective experience of his characters. The social, political, and cultural tensions between the rational-scientific Western civilization and the mystic Eastern Civilization displayed themselves through their reflections in the lives of novel characters. Each individual personality, which is expected to form a coherent whole, also acted and thought under the peculiar tensions between the rational and irrational layers of his self. The novels moved from particularity to universality, from the illustration of dualities at a psychological level to the identification of dualities at the socio-cultural level as historical conflict between civilizations. Safa’s creationist-evolutionary approach revealed itself as the evolution of the soul in novel, from tensions and conflicts towards a stasis characterized by a synthesis of materiality and spirituality, civilization and culture, Western and Eastern values.

One of the most important tenets of Safa’s novels in the early Republican era was his attempt to incorporate Bergsonian concepts of time, freedom, becoming and Will, as the philosophical framework behind the themes elaborated in his novels. Safa used this relativized [read as subjective] conception of time to picture the plurality of experience and images at a certain moment of abstract time. The reason behind this emphasis made on plurality of experience and images was to dissociate the abstract progress of time from ‘subjectively experienced time.’ Safa’s primary literary concern was to show the subjective experience of time and the existence of the plurality of the images to illustrate the cultural, social and political pathologies caused by the Revolutionary progressive scientific rationale.

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Plurality of images of space and multiple experience of time were employed to illustrate tensions experienced by the individual subjects. For him, tensions, both at the collective and individual level were also the dynamics of creative evolution of the societies and the development of spiritual powers of the individuals. Creation could only be possible through the reconciliation of multiple images but not through their homogenization in rational organization disassociated from history, tradition and culture.

There are two basic functions attributed to the time dimension in Safa’s novels. First, a retrospective view was incorporated to show the historicity of the individual images of multiple narrators in the novels; second, subjective experience of time denoted that there were many alternative symbolic worlds which co-existed at a particular moment in history and these alternative worlds were awaiting there for re-awakening.

Philosophizing on time as a literary question had also had political connotations in the conservative texts of Safa. The political, social, and cultural processes of modernization were challenged through the adaptation of this new philosophy of time. Thus, in Fatih-Harbiye, he used some metaphors to show that varying experiences of time and space were significant in constituting human identity. Co-existence of different conceptions of time and space was utilized as an evidence to challenge the triumph of abstract progressivism fed from an abstract conception of time over subjective time and experience. At least, it provided a fresh and critical stand about the Republican obsession that progress was a natural course of the history. It was shown that unilinear progress was also a value-laden concept, based on an arbitrary ranking of co-existing images of social and individual experience. By the 1940s, early perspectivism was subordinated to a missionary role attributed to the writer, as a third - person character in the novel. Besides the missionary role, a didactic style was also adopted. In Matmazel Noraliya‘nun Koltuğu and Yalmizz, essential themes and motives were conditioned by great conflicts between hedonism and self-sacrifice, materialism and spiritualism, Westernism and culturalism, revolutionism and conservatism. In this
respect, the ultimate aim of the conservative literary texts of Safa was to find out new openings for the development of an alternative vision of modernity by utilizing the marginalized images and daily social experiences manipulated by the state during process of modernization. As noted earlier, incorporation of real and experienced time as a structural element of novel opened up the way to Safa to adopt a novel criticism of republican progressiveness.
CHAPTER 7

BASIC TENETS OF TRADITIONALIST CONSERVATISM DURING THE PROCESS OF NATION-MAKING

Turkish politics in Revolutionary era of the late 1920s and 1930s was manipulated by a Republican politico-philosophical rationale which found its expression in the motto, “the truest way in life is science.” In this period, the grand project of secularization was coupled with that of building a nation-state and nation. New emphases placed on national history and tradition with a view to forming new national ethics on the basis of which the citizen’s rights and obligations before the nation-state would be defined. Nation-state structures in the Turkish case were consolidated in a unique way. Former administrative apparatus, controlled by the military-civilian elites during the War of Independence, was transformed into a people’s nation state. Consolidation of the nation-state and capitalist market were accompanied by the consolidation of a parliamentary regime, emergence of a political party system and new bureaucratic structure, together with a new sense of legitimacy all of which was designed to create a new means for social control and social engineering to achieve a more ‘civilized modern society.’ In short, the State, in a process of metamorphosing itself to nation state-structures was also in urgent need to define the legitimate political subject, namely the citizen, to secure its own legitimate political power, since it needed citizens for taxing them and asking them to make economic and political sacrifices.

Early Republican intellectual life was revolved around these problems of the nation-state building project. Once modernizing elites had consolidated their own vision of modernity, then there emerged the need to conserve the new Kemalist political, social, and economic order. In this respect, the new creed to conserve, mainly articulated by the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, had a dual function. First, it attacked Republican rationalism by adopting a creationist-Bergsonian vocabulary in politics and arts; second, it neutralized Orthodox Islamism by formulating a mystic individualist vision of religion answers a philosophico-political approach that still granted a legitimate sphere to the religion in modern society. Furthermore, this new
creed to conserve also contributed to the secularization of the legitimacy of the new Kemalist order. Though religiosity never lost its privileged stance in this new creed to conserve, it was embodied in a general theory of mankind. Tunç in Kader ve Kanun (Faith and Law) illustrated this rupture from the traditional religious Weltanschauung.¹

New creed to conserve aimed to further legitimize the reasons for secularization of daily life that revealed itself as the dissolution of rule of God, or what Tunç called as “adetullah.”

As revealed in Tunç’s Eski ve Yeni Dünya Görüşlerimiz (Our Old and New Worldviews) Kemalist modernizers and traditionalist conservatives both looked with sympathy upon the transformation of the religious community structures of the preceding Ottoman system to a political society, namely the nation.² Yet as noted before, traditionalist conservatives also maintained that the rationalist-scientist radical politics of the Republic had further created a distance among “society,” “state” and “intellectuals” and ultimately between “Reality” and “Utopia.”³

By the end of the revolutionary era in the early 1930s, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals were caught between revolutionism and religious fanaticism.⁴ The ruling Republican intelligentsia posed itself as the innovators of the nation. As pointed out by Büşra Ersanlı Behar, devoted historians, anthropologists and ethnologists of the Republic were committed to a materialist-determinist conception of history to derive rational laws of historical development.⁵ It was this rationale behind the cultural, economic, and political policies of the ruling state elites which became a

⁴ Safa, Türk İnkâlabına Bâksûlar, pp. 85-98.
⁵ Büşra Ersanlı Behar, İktidar ve Tarih (Power and History) (İstanbul: Afa Yayûnlâr, 1992), p. 196.
stimulus for the development of the traditionalist-conservative criticism. Tunç adopted this typically traditionalist-conservative critical stand towards rationalism and added that all these state of beings cause reason to tend to eliminate the dark and grim aspect of our place in the world, to turn what is unique into general and content into form: and thus lead to the emergence of bald, weak and lifeless reality. Thought and life become totally abstract, artificial and ghostly. This weakness becomes even more apparent when a history is comprehended by totally speculative concepts. The tendency to believe that historical evolution exists primarily in reason puts more strain on reality. Because rational character is accrued to the historical character later and in different ways... For the rationalist all struggles in history are just instruments to strengthen reason. And irrational things are believed to be easily handled later by harmony and rational organization. History is not a gathering of experiences which complement each other. If this was the case there would be no need to search for new basis of liberation in each period. 6

For the traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia, politics of rationalism had annihilative consequences on the creative and spontaneous manifestation of cultural politics. 7 Baltaciğlu affirmed that

revolutions ... actually happens. A revolution which contradicts with its basic principles and aspires to defend them via reason, suspects itself, and is weak. All stages of the Turkish Revolution are not stages of dull, logical disputes, but of constructivism and creationism. Social reforms are not the results of the abstract functioning of our reason, but series of fait accompli. Evolution of the society is not rational, but empirical. The responsibility of reason is not to create, but to direct life which is self-creative. Reason is not the creator of evolution but it is itself a work of art created by evolution. 8

Baltaciğlu's traditionalist-conservative criticism was focused on the Kemalist scientific state's attempts to shed light on the rational laws of history and society. In a similar vein, Safa, who adopted a critical stand against rationalist philosophies, also suggested that rationalism detracted from comprehending the essential nature of society. According to him, philosophical rationalism would ultimately give way to contractual theories of society. Contractual theories of society tended to view it as an artifact of human mind and he rejected this:

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8 İsmail Hakki Baltaciğlu, "Erkek ve Kadın" (Man and Woman) Yeni Adam, 322 (May 9, 1941), p. 2. See also Baltaciğlu, "Pedagojinin Dünyi, Bugünü, Yarını 2," (The Past, Present and Future of Pedagogy 2) Yeni Adam, 233 (June 8, 1939), pp. 18-9.
Contrary to what the mechanists assume, society is not the mechanical and mathematical totality of individuals. ... The well-known social contract of Rousseau, freedom, equality, electoral majority, parliamentary regime arise out of this conception. This mechanical conception of society which was counted in sociology and which has been experiencing its last periods in European political history is being replaced by this conception... Society is an independent and living whole. It had been arisen not out of a voluntary contract among individuals, as in the case of a commercial company, but an old, long-lasting historical evolution the roots of which go back to the origin of the humanity. Although it is composed of individuals, it is an independent synthesis, and possesses different characteristics from the characteristics of its parts. 9

Ülken linked the criticisms of mechanistic-rationalism to the atomistic conception of society and added that contractual theories had reduced society to an artificial collectivity assumed to be constituted by means of a rational agreement among its members. 10 In a similar vein, Baltacıoğlu concluded that rationalism and mechanism would hinder the emergence and development of a new genuine cultural synthesis, since they rejected viewing society as a living totality of the “real and concrete states of becoming.” 11 Moreover, it tended to substitute reality with the utopia it created. Tunç, in his Akıl Romantizmi (Reason Romanticism) flatly stated that “what is critical about reason is that it leads men to errors by convincing them that the worlds it has created are more realistic than the real world.” 12

For Baltacıoğlu, radical rationalism of the Kemalist state towards the establishment of a westernized society not only alienated people from their culture, history, and tradition but also hindered the free manifestation of individual and social creativity in the name of moral transcendentalism and rational manipulation. He saw Kemalist emphasis on revolutionary legitimacy as a symptom of radical transcendentalism. It was because of the fact that for him “laws are not the ideal words, like the words of God, (they are) man-made, human and will absolutely be defective.” 13

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12 Tunç, “Akpı Romantizm.”
Indeed, state’s authority over society, even coercion, was preferable if the alternative was anarchy and chaos, since “nation aims independence abroad, and order at home.” However, there is an element of opportunist reformism at this point. For Tunç, worst “Order,” was better than anarchy and chaos. In his words:

Although laws are not perfect and absolutely virtuous, since they are man-made, they are more preferable when compared to lawlessness which leaves extreme forces free and invites anarchy.

Politics of Reason, which was seen as an antidote of the state of disorder and anarchy, was supported by the revolutionary lawyers, bureaucrats, and scientists of the new Republican orthodoxy. Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals were aware of the fact that the philosophy of rationalism led some selected members of the intelligentsia, be they in the revolutionary political party or bureaucracy, to adopt the mission to create a future perfect society on “arbitrary” historical constructs according to which the spontaneously evolving history of society would be adopted. For them, rationalism was an illusion, therefore, Tunç, in his Şecaat (Bravery) and in Yaratıcı İrde Meselesi (The Question of Creative Will), maintained that

Life is an abstract concept, an empty mould. However, nations have custom and usage and common ethics which had been traditionalized in accordance with their historical traditions and geographical locations. Thus, we are not free to conceptualize life personally on our will. In this respect it can be claimed that the value we ascribe to life is not an aim but an imperative means for our common life and ideal.

Even though, Revolutions have some political and economic ideals, they should not be transformed to “rationalist utopias” because, as already maintained by Baltacıoğlu,

Ideal is realized under appropriate conditions... When ideal is realized it complies with the requisites of the sphere of exigency. Lose its absoluteness: from then on we call it not as ideal but institution. Ideal is the very self of social being which originates from past and proceeds into future. We should not confuse ideal with imagination and utopia. Ideal is realized under appropriate conditions, but imagination never becomes real. Fiction or utopia is what we call "raw imagination". Ideal emerges in the periods of development and progress of the societies and idealists arise in those periods.

17 Baltacıoğlu, “Ideal Nedir?” (What is Ideal?) Yeni Adam, 233 (June, 15 1939), p. 2.
Thus, contrary to the dominant Kemalist view, the state - rational apparatus established to realize the civilizing mission - was not seen as an instrument of rational perfection, on the contrary, in Baltacioglu’s words:

the state is... an institution... to pursue what is possible. Reason, logic, ideal wait; but the executive power does not wait. In contrast to the God’s word, laws are not ideal sayings, but human constructs: they are social and thus eventually imperfect. 18

Then, Safa set the limits for revolutionary rationalism as an utopia in reference to some a priori absolute truths. In his words:

Freedom is absolute. But, there is no revolution which is absolute even if it based freedom. When we accept the absoluteness of a revolution, then we reject its abstract meaning. Real revolution is that which has comprehended the faith of change. 19

A State, which was not nationalized [read, re-traditionalized] as an unique cultural structure, might have legality, but it did not come to mean that it also had legitimacy until its alienation from authentic culture was eliminated. It was only when a complete correspondence was established between the values on which the institutional structure of the state was based and the value content of culture, the state could further consolidate its legitimacy. On the side of the citizens this would lead to a voluntarily acceptance of the obligations imposed by the Kemalist state since it would derive its legitimacy from culture and tradition. 20 Yet, no extra-societal institution, including the state, was entitled to impose rational models on the spontaneous creative cultural evolution of the society. Moreover, it was not the intellectual, in traditionalist-conservative vocabulary, “who would bestow the power of progress to the nation,” but on the contrary, it was the intellectual “who would lean upon this power.” 21

Communal identity of citizenship had to represent a national personality whose characteristics could be derived from national tradition and culture. In Baltacioglu’s words:

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18 Baltacioglu, “Toprak Kanunu,” p. 2. See also Agaoglu, Devlet ve Ferd (The State and Individual) (Istanbul: Sanayi-i Nefise Matbaas1, 1933), pp. 59-60. See also Tunç, “Devlet ve Millet.”
21 Baltacioglu, “Maarifte Siyaset,” (Politics in Education) Yeni Adam, 322 (February 27, 1941), p. 16.
Training man, creating a body of reason, creating an emotional universe, creating a basis of will, creating an entire national personality... However, this is not the same either with a material work or a surgical operation; it is a work of evolution containing measures which require a great period of time.22

Still, in their criticism of rationalism, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, followed a conciliatory strategy. They drew examples from the leading figures of Western political and social theory, as in the case of Safa’s Felsefi Buhran (The Philosophical Crisis), to support the argument that the age of radical positivist “revolutionism,” which had adopted abstract rationalism, had also come to an end in the West.23 Safa, in Avrupa’daki Haklarımız ve Vazifelerimiz, (Our Rights and Duties in Europe) had pointed out that Turkish state elites faced two alternatives in the heyday of the Revolutionary era: either to westernize or to become history. They judiciously chose the former since they felt that they had no other choice. After all, they modeled the Revolution to a positivist-rationalist vision of West. However, this model civilization had already started to collapse in its heartland. Severe challenges were raised against the rationalist ideals of Western civilization within the Western world which was deeply shaken by economic and political crises and revolutions. Though the faith of the Turkish revolution, for Safa, was linked to the future of West, there was no unique West to be taken as a model of modernization.24

In a similar vein, Ulken in his Fikir Ananesi (The Tradition of Thought) and Descartes and Skolastik (Descartes and Scholastics), had argued that even though mechanistic rationalism, which was later associated with Descartes’ philosophy, had important consequences earlier, such as the elimination of medieval scholasticism, it had long been challenged by rising relativist and historicist philosophers. This new

22 Ibid., p. 2. Also Baltacoğlu, “Halk ve Biz,” (People and Us) Yeni Adam, 307 (November 14, 1940), p.3.
tradition of thought, for Ulken, was based on Vico’s philosophy of history. Moreover, in his Fransız İhtilali ve Eski Rejim (French Revolution and the Ancient Regime) by referring to book L’Ancien Régime et la Révolution, by a prominent conservative Alexis de Tocqueville, Ulken further deepened his criticism of rationalist universalism and abstractionism because of their inherent transcendentalism in politics as well as ethics. Consequently, in İslamiyette Eski Dînlerin İzleri (The Traces of Old Religions in Islam), Ulken, as Safa pointed out in his Dünya’da İnsan Var Mı? (Is There Man in The World?) laid down his doubts about the radicalism of world revolutions. In his words:

I will dwell upon the extent of the disadvantages that the preceding institutions caused to the French revolution, despite the new era it brought forth, and that it was also nourished by the remnants of the civilizations that it destroyed. All these comparative analysis confirm the enormity of the difficulty in destroying the consolidated institution and actualizing revolutions, and that it was never fully successful in this.

Safa also held a characteristic stand in his traditionalist-conservative criticism of rationalism. In Yeni Bir Dünyaya Hasret (Longing for a New World) he declared the end of rationalist revolutions and added that

new world means a new society, new civilization and new man. Can we claim that the term "new" in this respect possess the same meaning as in new shoe, new shirt, new jacket, new curtain? Is a new civilization the same with a new shoe which can split man from the preceding one immediately, and of which all parts are so lifeless and non resistant and solid? In other words, is it possible to create a new world, a new society, a new civilization by getting ridding of the preceding ones?

Safa concluded that rationalism, which resulted in vague positivism, was responsible for the alienation of mankind to his conditions of existence because of its disqualification of human creativity and initiative. Tunç, in a series of articles tried to show that intellect [read reason], which was based on the concepts of uniformity, quantity, unity, immobility, existence, absoluteness, causality and

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26 Ulken,”Fransız İhtilali ve Eski Rejim,” pp 3-5.


28 Safa, “Yeni Bir Dünyaya Hasret.”

necessity, time, space, and essence, could be not infused to the deep layers of becoming. 30

Traditionalist conservative circles attempted to show that a new consciousness on the dynamics of Western civilization was also emerging in the Western countries from the criticisms of positivism and rationalism. In this respect, Ülken argued that the old rationalist conception of science, which was developed by the nineteenth-century positivist and later came to be considered as part of the governing human ethos by acquiring greater authority through discoveries in natural sciences, had come to an end in the West. 31 There was a new West emerging from criticisms of rationalism and scienticism which also promised for rebirth and renewal. The old West, which had been characterized by scienticism was challenged because it reduced human reality to an epiphenomenon and a creature of Reason. 32

Focusing on the concepts of plurality, quality, change, dynamism, mobility, becoming, real and experienced time, possibility, freedom, latent potentiality, power, and self, as constitutive-terms of a philosophico-political perspective, traditionalist- conservative intellectuals aimed to provide a genuine radical "nationalist-culturalist" stand in Kemalist modernism. Nationalist-culturalist approach, as reflected by Safa in his Türk Inşlabına Bakıslar (Glances at the Turkish Revolution) would save Kemalist modernism from being a pure model of Westernization. 33 According to the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, none of the models of modern society, be they based on economic industrial organization,


32 Safa, Türk Inşlabına Bakıslar, pp. 90-103
political structures, and artistic values, could be derived or imitated from Western prototypes.\textsuperscript{34} Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals wished to free Kemalism from being merely an "ideology of the new." Kemalist modernism had to be re-evaluated in the light of a coherent philosophical system. Thus, in order to prevent alienation, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals tried to formulate a holistic approach to the questions of religion, morality, civic education, politics, economy, law and science.

Nevertheless, without any exception, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals had already accepted the Kemalist nation-state rather than a state based on the universal brotherhood of the Muslim communities. They also embraced most of the cultural policies of the Kemalist state, at least those which showed the willingness of the ruling elites to find historical roots for their vision of modernity. In this sense, traditionalist-conservative creed to conserve aimed to preserve the existing institutions shaped in the structures of modernity, namely the nation state and capitalism. Reactionary Islamism, liberal cosmopolitanism and socialism were perceived to be the explicit threats to the existing Kemalist nation-state.

\textit{Hybrid Organicism}

In order to ground varying responses of the traditionalist conservatives against the politics of rationalism of the Kemalist scientific state, we must consider the impact of vitalist-organic metaphor within Bergsonian framework on their thinking.\textsuperscript{35} Ülken in his \textit{Varlık ve Oluş} (Being and Becoming) pointed out that in his books \textit{Aşk Ahlaka} (Piety Ethics) and \textit{İnsani Vatanperverlik} (Humanist Patriotism) he

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., pp. 185-231, Also Baltacoğlu, \textit{Türke Doğru} (Towards the Turk), 3rd ed. (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, 1994 [1942]). The book was compiled from various articles published by the beginning of the 1940s. See also Tunç, "Yeni Medeniyetle Tarih Arasında," (Between New Civilization and History) \textit{Ekir Sohbetleri} (Intellectual Conversations) (İstanbul: Ülkü Basmevi, 1948), pp. 167-203. Also Ülken, "Tanzimata Karşı," (Against the Tanzimat) \textit{İnsan}, 1,1 (April 15, 1938), pp. 20-8, "Tanzimat ve Hımanizma," (The Tanzimat and Humanism) \textit{İnsan}, 1, 9 (February 1, 1939), pp. 689-94.

was interested in epistemology to provide a pluralist conception of universe. In these works he reflected a kind of psychologism and took passions as the basis of knowledge and truth. By the mid-1930s, he realized the shortcomings of psychologism in philosophy and started to turn to phenomenology and theories of probability. The effects of the former could be seen in his *Insani Vatanperverlik*. By the mid-1940s, he held a closer stand to the philosophies of Schelling and Husserl. Although, Ulken was heavily inspired by phenomenology, Baltacioglu was inspired by Durkheimian sociology while controversially remaining Bergsonian in his philosophical commitments. Among the traditionalist conservatives, as noted before, only Tunç was an adherent of a pure Bergsonian framework while Safa adopted it as a philosophical horizon for his conservative literature.

Tunç’s Bergsonian contention was imported into traditionalist-conservative vocabulary to depict the vital creative forces responsible for changes in society. Organic analogy, for which Tunç’s *Yaratıcı İrade Meselesi* stands as an example, was linked to questions of vitality, dynamism, creativity and to the role of folk spirit in maintaining this creativity and dynamism. Tunç illustrated the distinctiveness of his organism from the pure organic theories as follows:

*Nature, which is conceptualized as an organism is not the same with what the precedents conceptualized as an already constructed being; it is a living being which progresses with its own means. The sphere of history benefited from such a change in the conceptualization of nature, more than the sphere of nature. In this respect, history takes place not by shakes but by a calm march, not by artificial thinking but by unconscious compulsions, and not by the actions of individuals but by the force of a whole. The* 

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37 Idem. He stated that he adopted a kind of psychologism in *Umumi Ruhiyat* (General Psychology) and *Cemiyet ve Marazi Şur* (Society and the Pathological Consciousness) which were published in 1928 and 1930, respectively.


extension of this approach to state, law, language, etc., provided a purer, more prolific and wider positivity about the totality, and formed a tighter and calmer contact between man and existents. Hence, due to the need to internalize the thing rather than to dominate it the tendency to perceive law as a product of national spirit rather than to inculcate law has gained credence. 43

Tunç also pointed out parallels between mechanist conception of nature and atomistic-rationalist individualist conception of society and added that

...struggle against organicist theory comprises the principal factor of leaps towards freedom and lucidity. Because the imperative of the life of new times is to give freedom to the individual in economic and political spheres. England leads the way in this movement. It seems that England, which has thus conceptualized life directly on the basis of individual, is certain of her future progress, with respect to power, reason and truth. Here, all interactions among man are perceived as the works of individuals and the legitimacy of this action is assumed to be based on individual consent. This means that we really departed from organicist theory. Mechanical explanation of nature in the new times is in this way. The importance of the preceding artistic worldviews became incomprehensible... This mechanical perception is in both conscious and direct contrast to the preceding style of thinking. Because it takes parts as the essence and aims to construct everything on them; it distinguishes the continuity provided by space, time and movement in clear amounts and only by this way gives a clear understanding of events. 44

In these quotations a typical traditionalist-conservative reasoning reveals itself: models deduced from positive sciences, which govern the material world, could not be employed to understand the organic nature of society. 45

Traditionalist-conservative and progressive/rationalist controversy in the early Republican era was mostly observed in newly developing fields of philosophy and human sciences. This controversy had also had severe political repercussions. Philosophy, as compared to positive sciences, gained a privileged stand, in traditionalist-conservative vocabulary. It was celebrated as the "knowledge of knowledge." 46 In Baltacıoğlu's words:

Philosophy emerges when we ask "what is?" instead of "how it happens?" The aim of philosophy is not to find the laws of reality but to find the absolute being of reality. Science utilizes mathematical logic, here in philosophy, artistic logic works. Work of

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45 For an account of the organic relations in society, see Baltacıoğlu, "Yönetim Korum," (Administrative Theory) Yeni Adam, 441 (June 10, 1943), p. 2; Tunç, "Mekanik ve Organik Davaların Yeni Zamanla Geçirildiği Sathalar," Mekanik ve Organik Davalarının Kiymetleri ve Bunlardan Almacak Dersler," (The Value of the Questions of Mechanics and Organic and the Lessons to be Drawn From These) Cumhuriyet, (September 27, 1942), "Hakikatte Hayatın Madde Olduğu İddiası," (The Claim that Everything is Matter in Reality) Cumhuriyet, (December 10, 1944); Safa, "Felsefe ve Milliyetçilik," p. 5. Ulken claimed that society was not a rational artifact, see Ulken "Hürriyet ve Mesulluk," (Freedom and Responsibility) İstanbul, (October 1, 1946), pp. 2-4.

abstractionism which is pursued by the mathematical intelligence of the scientist, is named as "law". Work of synthesis which is pursued by the philosopher is called as system. Science is the knowledge of laws which are derived from reality: philosophy is a system of knowledge founded on laws. It was through philosophical inquiry that the Republican secular metaphysics of life would be drawn up. Thus, Baltacoğlu pointed out that the objectives of philosophy were to understand the whole; to harmonize the tensions; to view reality as an organism, and to provide answers to "what" questions. The relevant method for modern philosophical inquiry, for Baltacoğlu, as well as Tunç and other traditionalist-conservative figures, would be intuition in the Bergsonian sense. Tunç referred the same point in his Fikir Sohbetleri (Intellectual Conversations) and in Akıl ve Sezgi (Reason and Intuition).

Philosophy, as a new form of Republican metaphysics, gained much of its importance in traditionalist-conservative vocabulary since it represented Man's free attempt to reconstruct and to understand the human world without referring to an eternal holy source. Indeed, Baltacoğlu in his Felsefenin Mevzu Nedir? (What is the Subject Matter of Philosophy?) pointed out that the subject matter of philosophy was Man's place in the universe. Accordingly, human being was a synthesis of material, spiritual, psychological and social phenomena. To understand human being was also to understand the organic whole, the universe. In other words, ontology, as detailed in Ülken's Varlık ve Olus, which stands for mankind's distinctive existence in universe, was the legitimate subject of Republican philosophy. Baltacoğlu and Ülken tried to demonstrate that the development of philosophical analysis- as a secular mode of thought - also strictly depended upon human being's capacity to free himself from

52 See Ülken, Varlık ve Olus, pp. 94-111.
scholasticism,\textsuperscript{53} for which the new Republic stood as its monument. In Baltacioglu’s words:

Like Koran, religious books provided assumptions on the quality of life, its beginning, its end, nature of man. Are Mohammed, Christ, Moses not philosophers? Answer: No, because their thoughts are not the work of thinking but of religious faith.\textsuperscript{54}

In this respect, philosophy meant human capacity to grasp the universe and its organic totality, dynamism, mobility and creativity.\textsuperscript{55} Originality, irrationality, and intuition, for Baltacioglu, were the characteristics of the organic totality implied by culture, or what the German romantics called as \textit{Volksgeist}, on which the worldly perspective of Republican philosophy would be grounded. Then, in his words,

...National renaissance will start by the time this essence of national philosophy is found... Philosophy of life of the people is among the inexhaustible sources national philosophy as traditions.\textsuperscript{56}

In a similar vein, Tun\c{c} praised philosophy as a means of finding out the creative essence of culture, namely the folk spirit.\textsuperscript{57} Folk spirit implied quality against quantity, creativity and spontaneity against durability, and freedom against enslavement.

Baltacioglu had further elaborated this point of view in \textit{Halledilecek En Büyük Problemler} (Major Problems to be Solved) Accordingly,

for centuries we accumulated fragments of philosophy from Greece, Arabia and Europe. This philosophy of intellectuals has never extended into the people... Again, when this people lived, won, created, it utilized not the literary philosophy of intellectuals, but the living, collective philosophy of the congregatists and gained victory. When will we begin to search for this philosophy of people of which origin is as old and eternal as nation? Is not the fact that our mythologies, fairy tales, epical heroes are sufficiently alive to provide our national philosophy enough to comprehend evolution?\textsuperscript{58}


\textsuperscript{56} Baltacioglu, “Felsefede Türke Doğru,” (Towards the Philosophy in Turkey) \textit{Yeni Adam}, 367 (December 8, 1942), p.2.

\textsuperscript{57} Tun\c{c}, “Türkiyede Felsefe,” pp. 25-34.

\textsuperscript{58} Baltacioglu, “Halledilecek En Büyük Problemler,” (Major Problems to be Solved) \textit{Yeni Adam}, 379 (April 2, 1942), p. 2.
Safa, Tunç, Baltacıoğlu and Ulken all adopted in varying degrees, what can be called as a ‘hybrid organic metaphor’ to serve conservative aims against positivist scientism which penetrated many fields of inquiry, such as history and sociology, as well as philosophy studies in the early Republican era. As noted beforehand, early organic themes in traditionalist-conservative works had been inspired from Bergson’s life philosophy and developed in opposition to the triumph of radical positivist scientist Kemalist Weltanschauung. Tunç, in line with Ulken, and Safa, had pointed out the logical consequences of Kemalist rationalism. Accordingly, modern liberal democracies were ultimately based on atomistic philosophies which saw society as an aggregate of free rational agents. It meant that society would be reduced to an artifact constituted on a rational social contract between the free rational individuals. Safa backed Tunç’s criticism of individualism and explained vitalist organism. In his words:

We witness the victories of this approach (vitalist) also in social revolutions. Mechanical approach of individualistic liberalism, which perceives societies to be comprised of mathematical collectivity of individuals and which is based on a principle of quantity is being destroyed; and the comprehension of societies not as artificial constructs of parts formed by human will which is the case for machinery, but as natural beings of which parts come into being simultaneously as organs and progress under the command in the direction of the whole.

Thus, Kemalist Revolution, for the traditionalist-conservative intellectual, had to be based on different precepts on society than that of liberal-individualist Western societies. For Tunç, organic metaphor had a significance to understand Kemalism since it referred to the “totality,” in contrast to the “particularity,” Thus, Tunç illustrated the distinctiveness of Kemalism as follows:


60 Tunç, “Milliyet İdealı ve Topyekun Milli Terbiye,” (The Ideal of Nationality and National Education in All) Cumhuriyet, (April 5. 1943).


After revolutions of Communism, Kemalism. National Socialism and Fascism had paved the way for perceiving democratic societies not as "compiles of atoms" but as "indivisible totality", "unique organ" and for realizing regime and ideals accordingly. It was natural to observe differences in the educational system. Because a world which was divided into "particularistic" and "holistic" parts had come into being and at the same time in the face of a materialistic humanism. a series of sizable collectivities which had not yet found their national personalities tended first to realize maturity and then to participate in the international cooperation securely. 63

Yet, Tunç like Safa did in Gazete, Halk ve Hükümet (Daily, People and the Government) also pointed out the pathologies of pure and vulgar organicism which could result in the enslavement of men and loss of their liberties as follows:

However, we pointed at the fact that organicist theory which is perceived to be more appropriate in our time, especially for society, has also some parts which should be considered in detail. This theory aims to inculcate an ethical character into social life; however while pursuing this aim it is prone to the risk of comprehending ethical character as something static which may lead to the tendency to perceive free and original activities as unnatural. Hence, it should be repeated that new organicist worldview should be conscious, intelligent and creative and consider social justice with special care. 64

In a similar vein, Safa added that

For the writer who perceives national unity as a social organism, while avoiding vulgar organicism (i.e., not identifying human society with human body)... there is no recognition of clash of principles between the people and the government... By metaphorical thinking they can be perceived as bound by the laws of the functional unity between the body and head of the social structure. 65

Safa has further questioned individualist ethos behind liberalism, which, for him, turned society "into a mechanical mass but not to an organic totality. A mass solely behind the ideals of earning money and living in luxury..." 66 Tunç affirmed that economic and political freedoms and rights were the pillars of the modern life. However, classical organism, which grants priority to the totality before its parts, had to be reevaluated while retaining its solidarist and communal spirit. 67 Moreover, Safa, in line with Tunç and Ulken, as it had been revealed in Yirminci Asır Filozofları (The Twentieth Century Philosophers) pointed out that vulgar organicism tended to see the society as an entity

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65 Safa “Gazete, Halk ve Hükümet,” p. 9 Also Safa, “İnsan Yok, Millet Var,” p.5.
67 Tunç, “Mekanik ve Organik Davaların Kıyımetleri ve Bunlardan Almacak Dersler.”
subject to "laws of nature."\textsuperscript{68} He added that he was not among those who tended to think that the laws of biology, which became a source of inspiration for the classics of the organic school, could absolutely be applied to understand social dynamics.\textsuperscript{69} Though historically, organism was a vigorous challenge raised against mechanism, "vulgar organism," for Safa, provided a philosophical prologue for authoritarian one party regimes.\textsuperscript{70} He followed a strategy of reconciliation and made emphasis on "functions" to be performed by different parts of an organism [read society]. Accordingly, functionalist approach perceives society neither as a machine nor an organ. Accordingly, society is a system of mutual interaction among individuals. However, it is also a genuine whole, over and above individuals. In contrast to what mechanists assume it is not the mechanical and mathematical sum of individuals. This group has less agreement with organicists.\textsuperscript{71}

This functionalist emphasis assumed to provide a middle way since it supposed to eliminate the extremes of organicism and mechanist-liberalism which would either lead to authoritarianism and/or totalitarianism and anarchy, respectively.\textsuperscript{72}

Generally, traditionalist conservatives adopted a hybrid vocabulary of organicism to show that society was not a rational construct. Yet, they were aware of the fact that pure organicism would also hinder the self-realization individual as in the case of Gökalp’s solidarism. Hybrid organicism, on the one hand, implied that society has its own potentials of spontaneous creativity and vitality.\textsuperscript{73} Moreover, moral freedom of the individual could not also be defended through mechanist-determinist approaches to life.\textsuperscript{74} In this traditionalist-conservative way of reasoning, organic-

\textsuperscript{68} Ulken, \textit{Yirminci Asr Filozofları} (The Twentieth Century Philosophers) (Istanbul: Kanaat Kitabevi, 1936), pp. 357-74.

\textsuperscript{69} Safa, "Biyoloji ve Milliyetçilik," (Biology and Nationalism) \textit{Çınaraltı}, 38 (June 13, 1942), p.5.

\textsuperscript{70} Safa, "Felsefe ve Milliyetçilik," p.5.


\textsuperscript{73} Ulken, "Descartes ve Skolastik," pp. 6-8.

vitalist ideas inspired from Bergsonism were not restricted only to challenging the positivist mechanism. In certain instances, they were employed to counter religious orthodoxy and metaphysics which in turn confirmed the legitimacy of the traditionalist-conservative discourse on the side of Kemalism. Tunç further elaborated the question. In his words:

Sciences of the Middle Ages, called as theology, had been content that it had constructed a world order on the basis of reason which could be considered as literary. Rationalist philosophies are also content with the prerequisite that the worldview they formulated should be literary. Thus, the common characteristic of all rationalist is found in their replacement of life by reason. However, life and reason are not identical. Life is directed not by holy concepts and reason, but by its own laws.

Against the religious Islamic orthodox tradition that privileged Being over Becoming, unity over multiplicity, traditionalist-conservative vocabulary affirmed creative and multiform power of life, which spontaneously gave rise to new cultural forms.

This type of organic-vitalism imported in traditionalist-conservative discourse was also attractive to Kemalist secular progressives since it emphasized the necessity to mobilize culture. By defining life as a process of continuous and dynamic flux, traditionalist conservatism appeared to support the reform of old religious institutions. Thus, Ulken made a distinction between religion experienced in life and that of formulated in the book. He adopted a critical stand against orthodox Kemal tradition which degraded the experienced religion. Indeed, this kind of traditionalist-conservative radicalism provided new grounds for Kemalist secular progressives who aimed to overthrow the decayed religious and social, political and economic institutions of the Ancient Ottoman regime. Kemalist revolution, in Safa’s words, was “born from a hundred percent national exigencies,” and would be based on different ethical, political and economic principles, as compared to the preceding

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77 Ulken, “İslamiyette Eski Dinlerin İzleri,” pp. 4-5.
78 See Baltacıoğlu, “Talim ve Terbiye de İnkılap,” (Revolution in Training and Education) Yeni Adam, 312 (December 19, 1940), p. 2.
Ottoman Regime. Baltacıoğlu characterized the new society and its constitutive ethical, political principles as follows:

Various characteristics distinguish Turkish society: 1. Laicism. 2. nationalism. 3 industrialism. 4. populism. 5. statism. These thoughts are not dictates which grew out of the imaginative powers of a formulator of system, but the very self of our new life. Since ethical society imposes rules of life on individuals to sustain its living, our new society also requires a genuine new ethics. Revolution has to put forth the rules of this new ethics in all spheres and by all means, and to fight against its enemies. This imperative for its welfare and ultimate success: new mentality against the old mentality, new values against the old ones, new techniques against the old techniques. for me this is the holiest struggle of ethics of revolution.\(^\text{80}\)

Thus, traditionalist conservatism, which developed through Baltacıoğlu’s social-psychology, Tunç’s Bergsonian philosophy, Safa’s conservative literature and Ulken’s sociological approach, placed an interest in moral values as the ends of its ideological spectrum. A novel form of spiritualism, or at least a rejection of mechanistic-positivism, sketched by Ulken in *Türkiye’de Positivizm Temayülü* (The Trend of Positivism in Turkey) was incorporated into traditionalist-conservative discourse.\(^\text{81}\)

**Towards a Politics of Affection**

During the 1930s and 1940s, traditionalist conservatism was a broad intellectual tendency at the crossroads of competing intellectual traditions, such as idealism, pluralism, Bergsonism, vitalism, organicism and personalism. Yet, these intellectuals tried to offer a new vocabulary to Kemalism and to reconcile the deeply-rooted controversy between positivism and religious orthodoxy.\(^\text{82}\) This peculiar traditionalist-conservative position between the two opposing ideologies accounted for the complexity of their conception of the new moral national order. Ulken in *Türkiye’de Positivizm Temayülü* and *Türkiye’de Idealizm Temayülü* (The Trend of Idealism in Turkey) illustrated that Turkish intelligentsia was mainly divided into two opposing camps.\(^\text{83}\) On one side, there was a scientific humanist approach imported by the rationalist ideals of the French Revolution. Proponents of this tradition advanced


\(^{82}\) Ibid., p. 852.

naturalistic positivist understanding of the society. On the other side, there was the religious orthodoxy aiming to preserve or reconstitute the spiritual heritage of the traditional Islamic cosmology. Turkish spiritualism, as labeled by Ülken, was a latent ground for the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals who aimed to formulate a new philosophy of creation and to recapture the essential cultural norms and values responsible for the durability of the nation as a cultural-moral totality. Safa further asserted that the possibility to revive a new Turkist spiritualism depended upon the defeat of the traditional Islamic orthodoxy which had been identified itself with the KelaM school. Scientific humanism and religious orthodoxy in traditionalist-conservative vocabulary, also denied the moral freedom of the individual. Moral life of the nation could not be reduced to a system of external formal structures to be imposed on society, as in the cases of orthodox Islamism and/or vague positivism, since “there are not any refined concepts and logical laws which govern life but of only its own laws.”

Basing on the Bergsonian distinction between open and closed morality and static and dynamic religion, traditionalist-conservative circles strove to give an historical account of religion and morality. Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals aimed to formulate a purely philosophical understanding of a dynamic conception of

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87 Baltacıoğlu, “Akl ve Hayat,” “Mekanik ve Organik Davaların Kıyımları ve Bunlardan Alınacak Dersler.”
morality. It can be seen as an attempt to shed light on the historical and psycho-social origins of morality and religion in modern society. This focus on the sources, nature, and development of morality and religion was also linked to the changing nature of obligations and social order in the transition from traditional community structure of the Ottoman era to the modern social structure of the Republic. Tunç in *Ahlaklığının Çeşitleri ve Zamanımız Ahlaki* (Types of Virtue and Ethics of Our Time) said

we comprehend that our ethics does not have to remain as an ethics of tradition and habit, and that we face with the responsibility of living and sustaining a voluntary ethics on the basis of the ideals and needs of the present time.... Thus, the ethics of the superior man is that which not only complies with the existing order, but also proposes death for the sake of ideals. This ethics which was exceptional, has become general and became an avoidable power which is represented by all the masses of people in the present world of revolutions... Current ethics aims to be creative, and to put justice and security over and above all values; it finds right in responsibility, and responsibility in the service to the public. It perceives work as the responsibility of everybody. 90

What the traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia was trying to do was to understand the nature of new national ethics in constituting the moral content of citizen’s obligations towards the nation state and the nation.91 Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals emphasized both the uniqueness of cultural-moral order and social obligations without sacrificing freedom and free will. Distance from rationalism also shaped traditionalist-conservative conception of social obligation. Social obligation was seen as a form of belongingness where the national moral symbols would be cultivated.92 Obligation was seen as the very social form of individual sense of belongingness and as the social bond primarily experienced by the members of the nation in their private lives. The nature of individual liberties and rights depended upon the means and methods through which social obligations were imposed by social and


92 For a typical conservative assessment, see Ulken “Bir Omür Mü, Bir Jest Mü,” pp. 3-4. Also see Ulken, “Hür unleash ve Mesulluk,” pp. 2-4
political institutions. Social obligations, either imposed and legitimized in a religious framework or as universal standards of good imposed by the State, would have a limited effect on citizen if they were not voluntarily internalized by the members of the nation.  

Traditionalist conservatives were critical of the justification of the obligations [read the new social order] purely on rational grounds, since some institutions, such as the state, which claimed to be the representative of reason, would remain purely a formal loyalty prioritizing institutions before the society and the individual. Here, the basic conservative concern becomes apparent: to prevent the consolidation of an enlightened egoism which would further pave way to the isolation of the state from the individual and society. Rationalist justification of national ethics, in traditionalist-conservative vocabulary, would turn social obligation into a standard to be imposed on individuals from outside by state and/or other institutions. Rather than emphasizing the legality of the institutional structure that was based on the new ethics, they sought a pattern of leadership which would provide a model of action for the nation and individual, and would ultimately serve to display the new social and political good to be voluntarily and spontaneously internalized by the citizens.

In this respect, charisma and charismatic leadership also emerged as a model of moral justification for social and/or political action. Charismatic leadership was held responsible for the development of a “morality of affection” since it derived its legitimacy through mirroring the public opinion. As mentioned earlier, charisma, which ultimately depended on a sense of affection but not on reason, was praised as the refined form of intuitive bond between the ruler and the ruled.  

Charisma and the ethical bond, which it stood for, were the products of folk spirit in traditionalist-conservative vocabulary, and were assumed to be the pillars of the new national order. In this line, unique national and authentic symbols of charisma and power, morality,
and obligation were assumed to lead to a particular kind of national development. It, in fact, opened up the way for pushing religion and morality to a kind of nationalism and to a model of unique national development which could be tolerable by Kemalist state elites.

**Heroism and Appeal to Charisma: Politics in the Traditionalist-Conservative Agenda**

Bergsonism, for the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals in the Republican era, became the principal catalyst for the transformation of new national sensibilities and appropriation of a new modern reality as well as for understanding the nature of the new power relationship between the rulers and the ruled.95 By the emergence of modern nation state and abolishment of the former Ottoman state, traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia realized that a new world was emerging and placed a faith on this new order.96 This nationalist and in some tones romantic sentiment was portrayed by Ülken as follows:

> Our freedom, happiness, art and morality are not an ideal thrown into an indeterminate emptiness, we are realizing the beauty, just, good in this soil.... There is no place for the enemies of the revolution and civilization as well as those currents in this nation, which will dissolve, break up and spoil the unity of culture.97

Ülken, who was affiliated with the Anatolist group in the 1920s, made fresh emphasis on the uniqueness of Anatolian Turkish culture. In his *Destan ve İnsan* (Myth and the Human Being), he implied this as follows:

> I have preferred to find out the humanity in Anatolian myths; to look at the ideal of present man through the lived experience, in other words, to deduce the abstract from the concrete against any kind of utopianism, abstract formalism or Don Quixotism. I have also succeed to rescue myself from the Don Quixotisms of “Islamic Unionism” *Turanianism* and even Ottomanism and Europeanisms, the keepsakes of the Reformation.98

In this context, Bergsonian philosophy not only provided an answer to the intellectual problems and disturbances of the traditionalist conservatives by its criticism of abstract-

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96 For Bergsonian nationalists, see Ülken, “Yeni ve Eski Mecmualar,” (Old and New Journals) *İnsan*, 1,3 (June 15, 1939), pp. 272-4.


rationalism but also gave a full and privileged place to the creative future imagination which had a crucial importance for the nation and state-builder elites aiming to secure the authenticity of the nation.

Tunç in line with his general traditionalist-conservative contentions, stressed that the political needs of the nation could not depend upon the "rational calculations" of the enlightened intelligentsia. Thus, he maintained that "the thing which the ruler and power will pay attention is to closely observe the conditions and necessities of the time and to act accordingly, in short to walk with the creativity of the life." In a similar vein, Baltacıoğlu characterized the legitimate creative statecraft as follows:

The dominant quality which makes the intellectual disposition of our National Chief arresting is this: this great man, when thinks on an economic, political and technical issue... do not reduce the reality to simple abstract schemes... on the contrary, he grasps the full reality... This quality is the exclusive possession of great realist minds which have the capacity to manipulate the social life. We can call this... realist mind.

This realist mind, for traditionalist-conservative intellectuals was a characteristic of the essence of Turkish folk spirit and the ruler had to mirror it. Accordingly,

Let's research on the national characteristic of Turkish nation which mostly persists to the cataclysms of the time and space. What are these? 1) Realism in the world of reason 2) Pantheism in the world of spirit 3) Creativity in the world of Will.

In a similar vein, Safa assured the necessity to go beyond the models and procedures of law, administration and economics in order to create a new dynamic society. Tunç, in line with Baltacıoğlu, argued that this realist mind was an antidote of abstractionism, formalism, and rationalist radicalism. Basing on examples drawn from the English case for realist politics and anti-radicalism, he added that

this country (England) wants to stay aloof from the rigidity... Its opposition to rigid regimes and avoidance of making plans beforehand and adopting life to rational and abstract formula stems from this aloofness... There is an extensive belief in that English foresee the coming five decades in politics. Even if they have such an anticipation they do not follow this as the only method of work. They employ all their means only after they

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101 Baltacıoğlu, "İnönü'nün Şahsiyeti," (İnönü's Character) Yeni Adam, 265 (January 25, 1940), p.2.
102 Idem., For similar assessments, see Tunç, "Yaraticı İrade Meselesi," p. 45.
103 Safa, "Bu Bir İhtilal Harbidi," (This is a Revolutionary War) Tasvir'i Eikar, (February 28, 1941).
experience actual occurrences. They perceive living in past as pedantry and living in future as fancy; and gather all their means in the state of being.  

For the traditionalist conservative, creative statecraft derived its legitimacy from the creative spirit of the nation and would be based on realism and creationism in politics.

Political leadership, for the traditionalist conservative, would act as the mirror of folk spirit. Creative statecraft impied the need for effective leadership and charisma. The right to rule derived from the capacity of the charismatic leadership to represent the folk spirit. Charismatic leadership was assimilated as a political technique as a means of reconciliation of individualism and societalism. This point had been illustrated by Safa as follows:

Is the Great Man a God or a puppet? Neither God nor puppet! Great man directs its ship to the horizons with the wind of history; in harmony with the waves of history preceding him he transcends them. Individualist approach which accrues all will to the captain ignores waves. extremist collectivist approach which accrues all will to waves ignores the captain.

In this respect, Baltacıoğlu typified the rule through charisma as follows:

Who is the greatest statesman, who is the greatest revolutionist? According to me he is the one who intuitively knows, displays and conceptualizes the tremendous substance of the people which live in secrecy and unconsciously. Thus, regard of the Turkish Nation to its leader is not in the manner of the obedience of a timid mass towards a crude dictator. This regard is in the form of sympathy and respect of novel nation which possesses ethical values in its conscience to ethical authority. Despotism gives birth to fear; authority creates spiritual superiority.

All in all, Atatürk’s charismatic leadership and İnönü’s National Chief cult embodied the patterns and language of political leadership for the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals. Primary importance was granted to charisma since it also stood for the best form of experience and manifestation of intuitive knowledge in power game. Tunç further illustrated this characteristic of charisma as follows:

Reason is more restrictive, experimentalist and totalist. Experience awaits and breaks into pieces; it proceeds step by step, avoids leaps. It is only intuition which proceeds with sudden bursts, and aims at transcending great periods of time in each leap forwards.

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104 Tunç “İngiliz Karakter.”
105 For evaluations on creative leadership and organic nature of the society, see Baltacıoğlu, “Dünyann Oluşları,” (Becomings of the World) Yeni Adam, 503 (August 17, 1944), p. 2. See also Tunç “Yaratıcı İrade Meselesi,” pp. 45-6
106 Tunç, idem.
Charismatic power structure, on which the Kemalist legitimacy had been consolidated, provided the best means to translate demands of people to coherent social and political programs.

Charismatic leadership, which ultimately rested on an "ideology of heroism," would ultimately serve to make a synthesis of the traditional values and necessities of present day.\textsuperscript{110} Safa characterized the ideology of heroism as follows:

Since steam machine was invented, businessman has begun to represent the ideal type in the Anglo-Saxon world. By the progress of industrial capitalism heroes of the antiquity and saints of the Middle Ages are being replaced by petroleum riches, coal riches and automobile riches. It was not a coincidence that utilitarian philosophy emerged and became popular in England from Bentham to J.S. Mill after the invention of steam machine. It is also not surprising that pragmatic philosophy which replaced truth with success, gained credence in the United States. This philosophy of freeholding which puts knowledge in the service of utility, replaces the concept truth with the concept of profit and makes interest a principle of right and ethics, is an Anglo-Saxon way of thinking and for a century and half it has vigorously been proceeding to change the ever-existing meaning of heroism.\textsuperscript{111}

Political leadership would enforce the ideology of heroism and self-sacrifice as a model of virtue and political comprehension. Tunç and Safa affirmed that a new morality of self-sacrifice and heroism had to be consolidated to prevent the degeneration of increasing dominance of self-egoism by further expansion of what he called "machine civilization." Thus, Safa pointed out that the development of liberalism and liberal politics of the machine civilization would lead to the emergence of a sense of selfishness. He formulated the basic traditionalist-conservative affirmation as follows:

National ethics which provides the will to sacrifice self for the sake of the salvation of the collectivity instead of ego-centric ethics; nationalist economy which puts ownership in the service of national interest without eliminating it as proposed by socialism, instead of individualist economy; labour instead of gold; pious man instead of usurer; mother instead of whore; hero instead of drunk, gambler.\textsuperscript{112}

This new ethics of self-sacrifice, as also implied by Tunç, would be based on a sense of affection for the charisma of the political leadership.\textsuperscript{113} Thus, modern political


\textsuperscript{112} Safa, "Yarınki Dünyanın Ahlakı."

leadership would think and act intuitively to recognize the needs of citizens and would act creatively in breaking through outdated habits and decayed tradition.

In traditionalist-conservative discourse, the focus of political analysis shifted to the human center because, as pointed out by Ülken “today’s human being is not a given but a puzzle.”114 Paradoxically, this shift to human problem was the most essential modernist component of traditionalist-conservative ideals in society’s transition from the “subject culture” of the preceding Ottoman era to “inherent individualist culture of capitalism.” Though they emphasized the emergence and significance of individual, as a reality in modern world, they still held a distance from liberalism since it fostered materialism and selfishness. Tunç elaborated this as follows:

In this respect, although neither concept of life nor the concept of substance have been clarified by modern physics as Descartes expected, the increase in materialist tendency for a century is not the victory of science, but a product of the continuity of the dominance of industrial and economic life over the faith of men. If the right to life is given priority over the right to ownership and capital in the way towards social justice, a great revolution will be experienced in the worldviews of men and materialist tendency will not be able to preserve its credence.115

The aim of politics, the means to be employed in the political game, and the need to be satisfied through politics, were analyzed from the viewpoint of the new human center, which characterized the traditionalist conservatism as a personalist resistance to any kind of societalisms. The shift of focus to the human center had also manifested itself in traditionalist-conservative conception of religiosity as a subjective individual disposition of the sacred.116

In this respect, traditionalist-conservatives tended to see the ultimate aim of the “governmental rule” as not preventing individual creativity and initiative. “Just rule,” in Ülken’s words, would be maintained by

organizing the municipalities, strengthening of wakfs, increasing of occupational unions can be realized by working out all the ways which will provide men with the habit and esteem to pursue on themselves and use their will.117

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114 Ülken, “Zaman ve İnsan,” p. 987; Safa, “Havava Uçan İdeolojiler.”
115 Tunç, “Hakikatte Herşeyin Madde Olduğunu İddiası.”
Real dichotomy did not rest on the antagonism between Republicans and Democrats in the late 1940s or between the “liberals” and “etatists” in the 1930s. The real conflict for the traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia was between the bureaucracy and creative forces in society.\(^{118}\)

Increasing dominance of bureaucracy in politics by the beginning of the 1940s had further widened the distance between the traditionalist-conservative cultural elites and the ruling statist elites. İnönü maintained a strict control over the party bureaucracy, military and civil bureaucracy. These three pillars of the Kemalist regime had brought him to power as Atatürk’s political inheritor after his death. By the mid-1940s leadership charisma was supplemented by the power of the bureaucracy. The cult of National Chief had been invented to secure a sense of continuity in the pattern of leadership. Thus, the ruling statist center tried to restore the support of the traditionalist-conservative figures. By the encouragement of İnönü, Baltacıoğlu was elected to the Parliament as a Republican member in 1942 and remained in the Parliament until 1950. İnönü also tried to develop his personal relations with Safa. He was even called in by İnönü to be a Republican member of the parliament from the province of Bursa in 1950 elections. The newly emerged interest in the outsiders, namely the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, was due to a major shift in the revolutionary policies of the Republican People’s Party. In its 1947 Congress, Republican People’s Party gave up its former radical revolutionism and adapted a more evolutionist “liberal” approach in its social, economic and political policies. It meant that party would be more responsive to the social and political demands. Consequently, it aimed to widen the intellectual support among the intelligentsia by further incorporating the well-known traditionalist-conservative figures into its ranks.

For traditionalist conservatives, diversity in society did not come to mean degeneration. On the contrary, diversities emerged from social, political and economic tensions which arose from society’s natural growth towards more differentiated forms

\(^{118}\) For a short note on the tension between bureaucratic rule and creativity and initiative, see Safa, “Yatalak Cemiyetlerin Gençliği,” (The Youth of Crippled Societies) Çınaraltı, 49 (August 29, 1942), p. 5.
of organization. If bureaucracy tended to control and manipulate this creative growth then it would hinder the expression of free will of human personality. In this respect, Bergsonian emphases on freedom, free will, creativity, individuality, tension, and evolution created a sense of politics which ultimately provided a ready-made corpus for RPP during its transformation from early radicalism to evolutionism. Moreover, liberal (hurriyetperver) opponents of the regime utilized the "personalist" approach, in varying tones, which had been developed by traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia. Traditionalist-conservative vision of politics based on Bergsonian premises was employed as a means of reducing tensions and conflicts in public life and as a means of promoting the development of democratic competitive politics in essence.

Kemalist Revolution had a decisive impact on shaping the agenda of traditionalist conservatism. It gave birth to their political consciousness, forcing them to engage in the issues of the day and making them aware of political possibilities beyond the model envisioned by the bureaucratic rationalist reading of Kemalist politics. Without exception, traditionalist-conservative figures applauded the Revolution as the beginning of a new age and they were the supporters of the Kemalist political ideals such as the national sovereignty, equality of citizens, and supremacy of parliament. Still, Ağaoğlu was a lasting opposition figure of the statist economic policies of the Revolution. Safa turned to be critical of one party rule following the death of Atatürk in 1938. In 1953, the year when he met with Democrat prime minister Adnan Menderes, bureaucratic privileges and degenerative effects of Revolutionary fanaticism were his primary intellectual concerns. By the mid-1950s till his death in 1961, he became one of the spokesmen of Democratic Party against the Republicans.

Although traditionalist conservatives were Republicans in the 1930s and 1940s, they were not like the tough-minded revolutionaries represented by the Peker clique in the RPP. Like so many of the Republican moderates, traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia believed that the main dangers to the novelty brought about by the Revolution in Turkey were fanatic revolutionaries and bureaucratic intelligentsia

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119 See Safa, "Yeni Bir Dünyaya Hasret."
themselves. Indeed, for traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, the Republic demanded a new ethics and new standards of good and wisdom among its citizens. But it was not possible to expect these in Turkey, given the imitated nature of Westernization through the dominant bureaucratic rationalist reading of Kemalist practices.

In the 1930s, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals were located in the intellectual stratum but they were not included in the political center. Still, it is not misleading to see them as part of the new Republic’s cultural elites, who, as noted before, acted as moral innovators of the nation. Politicization of the traditionalist-conservative vocabulary, -- its allegiance and resistances, appropriation of these themes by the ruling elites during the radical reformism era -- had important repercussions since it led to the emergence of a conservative milieu within the ruling Kemalist center. Moreover, by further elite fragmentation in the ruling center, which resulted in transition to multi-party politics by the mid-1940s, traditionalist-conservative discourse began to be widely utilized purely as a new political framework by the newly emerging political elites. In fact, traditionalist-conservative political discourse, which was being exploited either by Republicans or Democrats by the mid of 1940s, served neither the rule of Democrats and Republicans but to legitimize the rule of the nation-state.

*From Religious Community to the Nation: Changing Functions of Ethics, Religion and Obligations*

Transformation of community from the closed religious-bound Millet system of the Ottoman period to the differentiated modern urban society was linked with the changing functions of ethics and religion.120 Changing function of ethics and religion was related to new conceptions on the nature of social obligations of the new subject, namely the citizen.121 While the institutional structure of modernity grew into maturity, traditionalist conservatives became engaged in promoting new standards for the moral life of the citizen. Traditionalist-conservative illustration of good life was strictly limited

120 Baltacıoğlu, *Sosyoloji*, pp. 100-1.
to the domain of the spiritual world of the citizen, his powers and limitations in a new world characterized by Kemalist modernism.

In line with its societalist ethical aspirations derived from Gökalp, the Republican state upheld social obligations based on citizenship as a value in themselves. But since they objected to Gökalp’s solidarism, traditionalist conservatives were not sympathetic towards this conception of social obligation. They defined obligations in relation to their internalization by the citizens as part of their daily life voluntarily. In this respect, tradition had to be reemphasized, since the social obligations of the citizens, which awaited for new ethical justification in this new era, were partly rooted in traditions. Baltacıoğlu’s theorizings of tradition and morality, as the product of History, was not in contradiction with the thinking of the Republican intelligentsia. Referring to a speech delivered by the Prime Minister of the time, Dr. Refik Saydam, he further tried to maintain that his conception of tradition, as the constitutive element of the nation as a moral community, was not at odds with Kemalist contentions. In this respect, Baltacıoğlu stated

I have found the words of Prime Minister in his reply to the criticism of Kazım Nami Duru very important for all our citizens and especially for my nationality thesis: Dr. Saydam says: “Turkish nation, Turkish community has tradition of its own. It has an ethical conception that relied on this tradition. If a little deviation is observed from this, either people, who carry the responsibility on their shoulders, or you, never hesitate for a moment to take the measures necessary for avoiding the deterioration of this tradition. I have found these words very important. Because to spell out these words is worth of claiming this: “Nationality is a tradition; Tradition of taste, law, morality, language. There is not a nation without a tradition. If tradition is decayed then the nation collapses. State interferes when it is seen that tradition is aimed to be deteriorated.”

He added that the idea of “nation constituted in tradition” was also one the cardinal motives of his book which was written for the General Secretariat of the Republican

122 Taha Parla, Ziya Gökalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye’de Korporatizm (Ziya Gökalp, Kemalism and Corporatism in Turkey) (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1989).

123 Baltacıoğlu, Sosyoloji, p. 125. For Baltacıoğlu’s criticism of Gökalp conception of obligation, see Baltacıoğlu, Sosyoloji, pp. 125-7. For a similar evaluation, see Ulken, “Doğu ve Batı,” (East and West) Millet ve Tarih Suçu (Nation and the Consciousness of History) (İstanbul Pulhan Matbaası 1948), pp. 102-3. See also Baltacıoğlu, “Gelenek,” (Tradition) Yeni Adam, 417 (December 24, 1984), p. 2. Safa in Türk İnşirahına Bakışlar tried to show that Kemalism was not at odds with tradition. See Safa, Türk İnşirahına Bakışlar, pp. 107-10. See also Ulken, Veraset Ve Cemiyet (Inheritance and Society) (İstanbul: Kutuluş Matbaası, 1957 [1924]), pp. 200-1.

124 Baltacıoğlu, “Ahlakta Türke Doğru,” p.2. For a similar criticism of pure reason as the ultimate criterion of “good action,” see Tunc, “Aklı Romantizmi.”
People’s Party. Ultimately, Ülken pointed out that nationalist aspirations necessary to transform religion and morality towards national development would be derived from the realm of culture, namely the irrational realm of social experience.

Historical transformation of Turkish society from an Islamic cosmology to a modern secular one led the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals of the time to formulate an alternative conception of morality and religion with reference to the new meanings attributed to human being, society, morality, obligation, and Kemalist modernism. This radical transition was characterized as a historical move from a closed community structure, which had been characterized by absolutism in politics, to more open mobile urban society characterized by a secular ethics and democracy. Modern political, social and economic activities could flourish through further consolidation of a social ethics which would also guarantee the preservation of moral ideals in the ambivalent world created by Kemalist modernism. This traditionalist-conservative contention was illustrated by Tunç as follows:

Every epoch has its own conception of morality... Because, morals, which is one of the social functions, like all other social functions, depends upon the values created by human interaction in the society and civilization in which it was born. It is because of this reason... closed morality is seen in closed societies and civilization and open morality in open (societies and civilizations).

For Tunç, as well as for Ülken, the basic problem was to understand the changing functions of religion and morality in transition to open society from the closed community structure of the preceding era. Baltacioğlu displayed how Republic smashed the institutional Islam, which functioned as the ultimate criteria of “good” and “right” for religious community for centuries. Religion was also once the only source of “education” [read socialization] and the Republican system undermined

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126 See Ülken Veraset ve Cemiyet, pp. 204, 200. For Safa religious revival was a universal phenomenon, see Safa, “Allah’a Doğru Yönelişler.”
128 See Safa, Türk Inklabına Baktılar, pp. 181-90.
129 For a similar evaluation, see Ülken, Milletlerin Uyanış, pp. 37, 85.
131 Tunç, ibid. See also Ülken, ibid., pp. 99-103.
the institutionalized religion and replaced the secular metaphysics with the religious foundations of ethics and education. In his words:

By the abolishment of the religion in education, the old foundation of the ethics that relies on this is also eliminated. For a long period of time, religion had functioned as a sanction for ethics. Virtue, in a sense, meant religiosity. Now this belief and sanction are lifted. But people have not remained immoral and unconscience. ... When religion is no longer form the foundation of culture, then a thought, namely metaphysics, remains groundless.

Religion, in congruity to its nature, once raised more or less plausible answers to a lot of questions, such as, what is life? why do we live? what will happen at the end?... what is the universe? and (it) silenced all hesitancies. Yet, when religion lost its capacity to answer (these questions), will we give up concerning these? What will answer? Again ... metaphysics... Then, one of the foundations of secular education policy is ... to armor the teacher with a strong (sense of ) metaphysics. 132

No state could be constituted in vacuum. The public spirit envisioned by the state and enforced through law, as a system of social sanctions, had to be in conformity with public morality if the Kemalist state was willing to be the people’s state in the real sense. It was the public morality which was refined in and transmitted by traditions. Republican laws would be internalized as moral sentiments if this correspondence was maintained. Thus, the state had to be re-traditionalized in line with value content of the living tradition which was seen as the source and carrier of the historically accepted habits of virtue. 133

Traditionalist-conservative interest in ethics was derived from the necessity to contextualize Islamic religion as a system of morality. 134 Historical concreteness of national ethics most vividly manifested itself in the living traditions and commonly accepted forms of customary behavior. 135 Consciousness and conscience, which in Islamic theology were seen as God-given-attributes of mankind, gained a new emphasis in traditionalist-conservative vocabulary as historical virtues that revealed

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themselves in the national tradition. The ethical principle for the moral development of
the Turkish personality could be derived from the codes of virtue transmitted through
folklore, myths, fables which were seen as the backbone of the cultural identity. This
concern to promote the moral development of Turkish personality became part of
traditionalist-conservative willingness to reform religion in order to push it towards a
national path of development since it was too late to reform Islam without considering
nationalism.\footnote{See Ulken, “Türkçülüğün Tekamülü (1) Geciktiren Sebepler - Doğuşu - Büyüyoru,” (The Evolution of

Seen from this perspective, traditionalist-conservative modernism is of
particular interest. Contrary to Kemalist positivist modernism, which asserted the
claims of the future over and above the historical tradition,\footnote{Ulken, “Türkçülüğün Tekamülü (1) Geciktiren Sebepler-Doğuşu-Büyüyoru,” pp. 140-8.} traditionalist-
conservative modernism, sought to revitalize the spiritual life of the nation that linked
the past and future through essential cultural meanings in present. Ulken illustrated the
basic motives of this traditionalist-conservative modernism, which aims to promote the
development of national forms of ethics and politics, as follows:

nation is based on a homeland whose borders were ordered in history. It is a conscious
mass of people that establish a unity of culture on same feelings and language or united
as a body in state... Events showed us that it is necessary to... get rid of the dominance of
individual (rule) and dynasty which violate the rights of the public; to free from
reactionary mentalities which impede all attempts of becoming civilized and westernized;
to be revolutionist, in the full sense, in the road of westernization; to bank up the return of
the theological mentality which prevents the progress of the people...; and to separate
religious and worldly affairs, in principle.... For this reason, nation, in the sense we
understand, can emerge with all its capacity, and gain its own authenticity when it
“Zamanımızda Ahlak Meselesi.”}

Basing his argument on criticism of rationalism, Baltacıoğlu objected to the
deliberate actions of the state institutions to formulate rationalist ethics for its citizens,
since he “did not believe that government and security forces would have a positive
role in moral issues.”\footnote{Baltacıoğlu, “Ahlakta Türkçe Doğru” p. 2; Tunç, “Akl,” (Reason) \textit{Mülkiye}, 29 (August 1933), pp.1-3.} He added that “the definition of morality reveals that it is a
realm whose sanction is not derived from punishment but from people’s
conscience.”  

“Morality,” for Baltacıoğlu, “was an active process and the basic values of any moral system could not be understood by pure Reason.” This traditionalist-conservative criticism was expected to prevent the “bureaucratic scientific state” from being an alien institution over society by maintaining order solely by means of “coercion.” Indeed, Safa posed that there were two means to consolidate the new Republican order: one of them was force and coercion and the other was morality. Kemalist state had to choose the latter to consolidate its own vision of state-society relations.

For traditionalist conservatives, though religion could partly serve as a model of virtue, such a model of virtue could not be derived from the values upheld by institutional structure of religion. It was the living tradition which had to be comprehended as the carrier of a set of values and norms which spontaneously formed the natural order of society. Traditionalist-conservative concern with essential moral values let them to search for a refined form of folk religiosity, as part of national tradition, and this search had far-reaching consequences. First, it aimed to shed light on the meaning and changing functions of religion as part of national tradition in the transition to a mobilized and differentiated society. Second, religiosity was treated as a “social” phenomenon, and became a channel through which the modern human being came into contact with the divine and spiritual in modern societies. The social function of religion, which would act as a cohesive factor, was exploited in the age of nation-building. In this respect, Baltacıoğlu, Tunç, and Ülken gave complex readings of religiosity.

Religiosity: The Mystical-Irrational Experience of the Sacred in the World of Modernity

Religious motivation in society, which was part of the living tradition faced the possibility of being destroyed by the imposition of the rational principles of Kemalist westernists. Traditionalist-conservative ethics endowed with nationalism implied that national emotions

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140 Baltacıoğlu, idem. Also see Baltacıoğlu, “Din Zorbalığı,” (Religious Despoticism) Yeni Adam, 627 (December 3 1949), p. 1.


142 Safa, “Ayaktıstı Cevap.”
had to be derived from culture so that they could also generate intellectual representations and moral rules.\textsuperscript{143} Traditionalist-conservative conception of national ethics was an attractive force for Kemalists. It was not formulated as the end-product of a social pressure exerted by a particular social group which sought to shape the order of society in accordance with its own particular conception of “good” that had been justified on the basis of “rationality,” or “utility.” It implied that national ethics would be grounded on culture and on the new ideals of the Revolution. As revealed by Baltacıoğlu morality in modern world was based on desires and aspirations rather than sanctions and burdens.\textsuperscript{144} It implied feelings or higher emotions which could be grasped intuitively and experienced mystically rather than by reason. In Baltacıoğlu’s words:

Unlike science which derives its strength from experience, morality from custom, law from rules, arts from beauty, religion directly derives its strength from the so-called “illegitimate,” mysterious source. Religion is an ideal which embraces not man’s reason, soul (or) passions but all his personality; religion is the most mystical one of the ideals.\textsuperscript{145}

The foremost ambition of the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals was nothing less than the revival of the mystic-essence of the religion refined in folk religion. Indeed, Ülken assured that “we can not talk about an abstract religion but a living religion as experienced by a particular society, (or) a civilization perceived and experienced by a society.”\textsuperscript{146} They, especially Safa and Tunç, had also devoted themselves wholeheartedly to this idea in their writings. In a two-decade period, this endeavour had resulted in the appearance of Tunç’s \textit{Bir Din Felsefesine Doğru} (Towards a Philosophy of Religion) where he tried to formulate an original philosophy of religion.\textsuperscript{147} Safa, in his novels tried to recover the emphasis made on intuition where he later presented it as the means to feel the “spiritual” in reality. In his \textit{Din Karşıında Devlet} (State vis-a-vis the Religion) Baltacıoğlu saw new Kemalist conception of Islam as a key to the cultural and political rebirth of modern Turkey, provided that it was complemented with metaphysics derived from the essential values

\textsuperscript{143} Baltacıoğlu, \textit{Sosyoloji}, p. 126. See also Ülken, “Millet Nedir, Ne Değildir?” p. 183.
\textsuperscript{144} Baltacıoğlu, \textit{ibid.}, p.125.
\textsuperscript{145} Baltacıoğlu, “Din Zorbalığı,” p. 1.
\textsuperscript{146} Ülken, “Türkçülüğün Tekamülü (1) Geciktiren Sebepler-Doğuşu-Bütünçülük,” p. 143.
\textsuperscript{147} Tunç, \textit{Bir Din Felsefesine Doğru} (Towards a Philosophy of Religion) (Ankara: Türkiye Yaymevi, 1959).
secluded in religion and carried by living national tradition. Thus, he later initiated the publication of a religiously-oriented journal, *Din Yolu*, where various articles of Tunç, Safa and Ulken frequently appeared. In his *Aşk Ahlaki, İnşani Vatanperverlik* and *Türk Mistisizmini Teâtkîke Giriş*, (Introduction to the Study of Turkish Mysticism) Ulken detailed his views on new Turkish mythology. Nothing more aptly revealed the importance of religion as a synthesis of materiality and spirituality for the traditionalist conservatives than Safa’s article, *İnsanın Yeni Manası* (The New Meaning of Human Being) published in his journal, *Türk Düşüncesi*.

Traditionalist conservatives reinterpret mystical experience of religion to construct a coincidence between “religion as the source of morality” and “morality as the source of new order.” According to traditionalist-conservative vocabulary, only through shedding light on the experience of the spiritual, which revealed itself in tradition, morality, and religion, could one move towards national lines of development and might act as a source of national development and social cohesion in modern world. This mystic essence could be derived from folk religion. In this respect, Baltacoğlu stated that

> The only unalterable component in the Islamic religion is the book. However, it is the national spirit which grants all characteristics and individuality, all affection and color to the concepts of religion and religious beliefs. A mosque, a tomb, a ritual is the full child of national taste, national religion, national ethics as much as the religion.

It was not accidental that Baltacoğlu referred to religion, which was one of the constituents of national tradition, as the backbone of a society that upheld its natural order in its transition to national forms. It was in tradition, which also covered

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149 For a later assessment, see Ulken, *İslam Düşüncesi* (The Islamic Thought) (İstanbul: Rıza Coşkun Matbaası, 1946), *İslam Felsefesi Tarihi* (History of Islamic Philosophy) (İstanbul: Osman Yalçın Matbaası, 1957).
152 Baltacoğlu, “Din Karşısında Devlet,” p. 2
153 Idem. Also Baltacoğlu, *Tarih ve Terbiye* (History and Education) (İstanbul Suhulet Matbaası, 1933), p. 54.
religion, that citizens could develop their individuality, uniqueness and promote their sense of nationality.

Traditionalist conservatives were simply formulating a new philosophy of religion as the source of new secular metaphysics of religiosity. By emphasizing spirituality, traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia aimed to recover the role of religiosity [read metaphysics] in modern society after the dissolution of the old institutionalized religious forms. If religiosity was recovered then the dissolution of the old religious forms would not disrupt the new social order. Emphasis on religiosity had also implied the changing functions of religion parallel to the new functions attributed to other institutions, such as the state, family or market. Mystic-experience of the sacred, which in the real sense implied traditionalist-conservative emphasis on religiosity rather than religion, would contribute to the consolidation of the new order. They were aware of the fact that the standards of virtue in modern society had drastically altered as compared to the preceding Ottoman era. New forms of experiencing the sacred had to be found since religion as a social institution had an overwhelming impact on shaping the private lives of individuals and maintaining social order. For Baltacıoğlu,

religion has an effect on the structure of the society. Either through its images or rituals, religion is an institution related to the solidarity of the society and consequently to the shaping of individuals by the society. ..... Once moral rules are consolidated, then they do not only regulate the moral conscience of individuals but also life styles in family,...village, city...Patterns of morality in Turkey are changing.155

Once the problem was formulated as on the “changing patterns of morality,” then traditionalist-conservative interest was focused on finding the values and spirituality behind modern religiosity. Accordingly, religion, as part of the tradition, shaped human behavior and national characteristics and historically laid down some standards of virtue in societies which steadily moved towards new forms of organization. Religion, like other elements interfused in tradition, such as language and art, was an historical institution. Religion, as a social and historical institution, did not only provide a set of shared values but also shaped the customs through which men conduct

their relations with each other. It also contributed to the maintenance of uniformity among the population. Still, it had to be valued as a historical institution and as a constitutive factor for national characteristics. Traditionalist conservatives aimed to take advantage of this sense of religiosity in the name of those ruling elites who were willing to consolidate a sense of belonging and uniformity in beliefs and actions of the citizens. In modern society new function of religion, which had been conceived as a social institution, was to support the religiosity among the citizens.

Thus, religion, in conformity with its new function, had to be reinterpreted to accustom people towards the development of a new spirituality in national lines. As implied by Safa, social institutions played a greater role in shaping individuals more the government. Social institutions taught man to accept the commonly shared values and actions. Common good and norms of virtue, partly internalized through common religious experience, was a reasonable method by which right and good action for the Republican citizen could be produced. Manners and beliefs were as important as those laws of the state. Rationalist radicalism could corrupt this system of manners and could “replace a bloody and abstract world with the living world.”

Traditionalist-conservative conception of religion as an integrative part of culture and history was not a reaction to the secular trends in Kemalist radicalism. However, it was not also a return into Islamic formalism and orthodoxy. We must characterize the traditionalist-conservative emphasis on religion as a reconciliatory strategy. As it is shown, religion, for traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, gained its emphasis as part of the national tradition. Still, religious faith could be used to support modern political conventions such as liberty, equality, and tolerance. The problem facing the traditionalist conservatives was to reconcile the political ideals of the Revolution and religious sentiments, which were not necessarily orthodox Islamic


157 Safa, “Yeni Bir Dünyaya Hasret.”

158 Idem.
beliefs and rituals, and to counter the materialism and egoism assumed to be derived from abstract rationalism. The best means of achieving both these ends seemed to be a revival of religiosity, a new civic religion or mythology. This would popularize and would also give a spiritual sanction to the modern political ideals of liberty, equality, and tolerance. It would also provide a counterweight to egoism and materialism. In characterizing this civic religiosity Baltacıoğlu stated that:

freedom of religious beliefs, legal equality of men and women... hostility towards religious fanaticism are the basis of this secular egalitarian ... ethics ... These are also the fundamental values of new societies. It is not possible to call (a society) "modern," or even to live in a society which do not recognize the equality of men and women, respect for profession and work, and freedom of religious beliefs.

Thus, traditionalist-conservative conception of morality aimed to bridge the gap between political ideals of the Republic and religious aspirations dominated the private lives of the citizens. If the ideals of the revolution were assumed to shape the public identity and beliefs, they would assume a more popular and spiritual form. This could be achieved through the formulation of a new mystic national and spiritual interpretation of religion. Religion, as part of the national tradition, was expected to be valued as much as language and customs. New national religious spirituality, in the case of Ülken’s Aşk Ahlakı, would reveal the secluded historical national truths. It was this stimuli which was behind Ülken’s attempts in his Türk Mistisizmini Tetkike Girişi, Türk Kozmolojisi, Türk Mitolojisi, Türk Hikmeti ve Teknik Tasavvur (Turkish Cosmology, Turkish Mythology, Turkish Wisdom and Technical Thinking) and Tasavvuf Psikolojisi (The Psychology of Sufism).

Political motivation behind the traditionalist-conservative emphasis on religiosity could be understood when the rationale of Kemalist secularism is also taken into account. Traditionalist conservatives based their ideas on the duality created by Kemalism between the clerical and folk Islam. The new civic Islam of the Revolution was regarded as a moral system of virtue. Ülken and Safa argued that Kemalism had freed the essence of religion from the dogmatism and scholasticism of the Islamic clergy. In a similar vein,

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159 Baltacıoğlu, “Dinîiler, Dinsizler, Softalar” (Believers, Atheists and Bigots) Yeni Adam, 618 (October 6, 1949) p. 1; Safa, “İnsan Yok, Millet Var!” p. 5, “Yarınki Dünyanın Ahlakı.”


Baltacıoğlu assured that the reactionary stand of Islamists emerged as a result of their ambition to dominate all social, political, and cultural institutions through religion. For him, the ideal of maintaining “religious domination” was the violation of the flow of history. Hence, there was no need for an intermediary religious class of interpreters in Islam. Thus, Baltacıoğlu pointed out that if religion became a tool for religious fanatics, then those characteristics of religion, which had no chance to survive and thus clung to fossilized customs, would hinder life in progress. Thus, he assured that “the new state, nation state can not tolerate this religious fanatics to exploit religion for their own interests.” Lived religion that had been transmitted by national tradition secluded the essential values of religiosity which united the spirit of the citizens. Thus, Safa assured that the new state was not hostile to living traditions, be they religious or not. On the contrary, by announcing former religious holidays as official holidays, the new national state also granted a new status to religion in the Republican era.

Progressive aspects of the traditionalist-conservative conception of religion was related to their attempt to promote philosophy as a mode of secular metaphysics that would lay down the new standards of virtue [read religiosity]. For Ulken “philosophy” had a crucial importance to lay down the standards of virtue since it “would reach the truth, from it to morality and from morality to politics.” A mystical essence would be derived through philosophy that had been praised as a new mode of secular life metaphysics. Indeed, for Tunç, “everywhere and every time it is mysticism which forms the essence of religion.” In the context of radical Republican secularism, the new traditionalist-conservative doctrine of religiosity had radical social and political implications.

164 Idem.
165 Safa, Türk Devrimine Bakışlar, pp. 107-10.
167 For an assessment on religious metaphysics, see Tunç “Hakikatte Herşeyin Madde Olduğu İddiasıdır.” See also Tunç, “İç Alemi Tetkik.” (Studying of the Inner World) Cumhuriyet, (September 14, 1940) For a note on mysticism, see Tunç, “Rüya ve Mistik Dünya,” (Dream and the Mystical World) Cumhuriyet, (September 10, 1941).
169 See Baltacıoğlu, Sosyoloji, p. 136.
This new mystical philosophical metaphysics was humanistic in terms of taking an interest in the living human being, and undermined the old orthodox conception of the clergy, which reduced the human being to merely a subject before God. Thus, Kemalist state elites tolerated the free circulation traditionalist-conservative ideals.\textsuperscript{170} Emphasis on authenticity, and on new mysticism complemented the Kemalists attempts to neutralize Islamic orthodoxy. Traditionalist conservatives viewed the Kemalists attempts to create a civic religion as a progressive attempt for reforming Islam. Since the beginning of the Revolution, a new civic conception of Islam became the source for traditionalist-conservative emphasis on religiosity. The new traditionalist-conservative metaphysics was also attractive for Kemalists since it supported their overall project of Turkification of religion.

\textit{Traditionalist-Conservative Conception of Order: A Synthesis of the Forces of Rationality and Irrationality}

The Bergsonian background of traditionalist-conservative intellectuals was responsible for their faith in secular progress. Traditionalist-conservative vocabulary had also had a resonance among the early Republican generations who were caught up between the conflicting claims of religion and positivist scienticism in formulating the legitimate terms of social and political practices. Traditionalist conservatism appeared as a philosophico-political stand with the claim to resolve the conflict between them. Traditionalist-conservative attitude towards questions of science and religion explicate this historical synthesis.

This resolution had important repercussions for the situation in early Republican era where the clash between positivist scientism and spiritualism of the old religious cosmology was coupled by concurrent developments in politics. Secular Republican government had already overthrown the last remains of the old religious order by the end 1920s when the traditionalist conservatives established the Turkish Philosophy Association in 1927. Beginning from mid-1920s, armoured with science

\textsuperscript{170} Baltacıoğlu, "Türk Rejimini Niçin Severim?" (Why I Like the Turkish Regime?) \textit{Yeni Adam}, 247 (September 21, 1939), p. 2. "Müfrez Vekilinin Genelgesi" (On a Circular of the Minister of Education) \textit{Yeni Adam}, 486 (April 20, 1944), p. 9. In his comment made on a speech delivered by Hasan Ali Yücel, Minister of Education in 1941, Baltacıoğlu stated that there was a parallelism between the Kemalist principles and his approach. It was due to the fact that there was a necessity to formulate the preliminary terms of a Kemalist political idea which could compete with alien ideologies.
and positivism, Republican government provoked extreme religious opposition by passing a series of laws that imposed new restrictions on religious institutions, closed down religious educational establishments, and ended the old religious practices. Appearing at a time of acute ideological conflict, traditionalist-conservative attempts might be interpreted as an endeavour to exploit the potential of Bergsonism to mediate between spiritualism and militant scienticism of the Republic and thus to resolve the continuing struggle between religious orthodoxy and secular Turkish state in favour of the latter. Traditionalist-conservative enterprise, by proposing religiosity as the subjective experience of sacred in modern world had raised support to Republicans to expel religion [read Islam] from the public realm of the nation to the conscience of citizens, without sacrificing the value of the sacred. Indeed, adopting a critical stand against militant scienticism as a form of materialist atheism Safa had proclaimed the ultimate aim of the Revolution as freeing the minds from Islamic scholastics. 171

Traditionalist-conservative search of a middle-way between sciences and spirit can be derived from their criticism of mechanism and formalism and nominalism. Accordingly, positivist theories of evolution was essentially a consequence of mechanist philosophies. 172 Likewise, formalism and nominalism in the Eastern world, as referred by Ulken, which identified the reality with stasis rather than a dynamic process, was consolidated by the domination of the traditional Kelam school in Islamic thought. 173 Indeed, Safa and Ulken linked the questions of formalism and nominalism to the dominance of Kelam school in Islamic theology. Referring to a chronological study of Edward Sachau on El-Biruni, Safa maintained that

4th century is a turning point in the Islamic history of thought. Consolidation of orthodox faith around the date of 500 had closed the means for autonomous questioning (gate of interpretation - içtihad kapısı) until the end of time. 174

Ulken also pointed out that Islamic orthodoxy had reduced human beings to the category of subject and “rationally” set the limits for human creativity and freedom. It hindered the role of human creativity at various states of becoming. Tunç characterized this religious orthodoxy as follows:

> There are three distinctive features of the world view of the Middle Age: 1) God, the creator of everything 2) A spirit which is a part of it (God) 3) And the physical world, namely the nature and our materiality which will be the cause of a testing for this spirit.

Religious orthodoxy framed human freedom with materiality and nature which was seen as manifestations of the divine will. However, traditionalist conservatives reconceived the divine as a creative spirit that constantly realized itself progressively in the natural order.

Traditionalist conservatism of the time had to compete with all other interpretations of Kemalism as well as with those of Islamic traditionalists who were motivated by religious orthodoxy. Traditionalist-conservative reappraisal of the spirit in modern society, as one of the manifestations of creative Will, had distanced them from the religious orthodoxy. Though the Republican progressives sympathized with traditionalist-conservative themes of creativity and spirituality, there was those among them, as we referred elsewhere before, like the Kadro intellectuals, who dismissed the notion of elan vital, the first cause of spirituality and creativity, as a pseudo-mystical concept. Hence, the traditionalist-conservative synthesis was seen as an unstable compound in terms of reconciling opposing themes, such as “religion and science,” [read spiritualism and naturalism] “East and West” [read again spiritualism and rationalism] “Kemalism and tradition,” [read rationalism and irrationalism] etc. Kadro intellectuals had treated this as a suspicious compromise. Nonetheless, traditionalist conservatives extended this unique synthesis of spiritualism and rationalism into the sphere of social relations and projected a vision of national culture that integrated the religious ideals of the past with the secular hope of a unified national community. In

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175 Ulken, “Hürli̇k ve Mesulılı̇k,” p. 2.
176 Tunç, “Eski ve Yeni Dünyanın Görüşlerimiz.”
this respect, traditionalist-conservative emphasis on the vitality of life, creativity, evolution, Will, individual, individualism, morality, religion and religiosity and their place in understanding the human experience in the new world had created a vision of modernity which had special importance for our purpose. The genuine traditionalist-conservative modernism that sought to put the "traditional" into its proper place in the turbulent world of modernity was inspired by many sources, varying from religious sufism, to the triumph of science over nature, from dialectics as in the case of Safa, to mystic-moralism, as in the case of Ülken in the early 1930s. In their quest to illustrate a new vision of modern society, Bergsonism became a source of inspiration for the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals of the 1930s and 1940s. They owed a lot to it in understanding the social and political repercussions of radical revolutionary rationalism in transition to a national society. Articulating some newly introduced concepts, such as vital force, traditionalist-conservative discourse provided a fresh account for the problems of adaptation, growth, regeneration, and repair of the culture in the revolutionary era. It also represented a secular faith of progress and an optimistic perspective which stands for secular progressivism. Clearly, the popular appeal to a secular faith in progress was tolerated if not backed by the positivist Weltanschauung of the Republic.
CHAPTER 8

AGAINST THE POLITICS OF INDIVIDUALISM

Distaste of Market Ethics, Egoism and Pursuit of Self-Interest

“Liberal sentiments” gained a new impetus by the mid-1940s. Traditionalist-conservative criticism of the politics of individualism essentially derived its inspirations from the challenge of rational man argument of classical liberalism which envisaged an interest-seeking individual as the prototype of man in modern society. Still, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals were aware of the fact that a new set of market relations was being born under the political and economic constraints of capitalism. These new economic relations were based on a new division of labour in society. Nevertheless, traditionalist-conservative circles, as best disclosed in Safa’s novels, were more interested in the degenerative effects of the new economic rationale on human spirituality and cultural harmony.

In the preceding chapters, it was argued that traditionalist conservatism, with its overemphasis on folk spirit and tradition, paid more attention to culture and dynamics of cultural creation/renovation than the reasons for economic development. Though an emphasis was made on the necessity of industrialization, modern capitalism, when it led to the growth of individualist aspirations, was also held responsible for the emergence of a materialist-utilitarian culture which would erode even essential cultural values. This traditionalist-conservative criticism of utilitarian and instrumentalist ethics of modern capitalism did not result in any claim to preserve the traditional economic structures of the Ottoman Regime. On the contrary, Safa in his Türk Devrimine

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Bakışlar (Glances at the Turkish Revolution) had pointed out the necessity for urbanization and Baltacıoğlu in most of his writings had characterized the basic objective of the new state as one of maintaining industrialization. Nevertheless, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals were sensitive to the decline of the sense of self-sacrifice, individual isolation and alienation for which they held the utilitarian materialist ethics of modern capitalism responsible. Tunç in his Sefalet Kalkamaz Mi? (Can’t Poverty be Abandoned?) Baltacıoğlu, in Demokrasi ve Sanat (Democracy and Art) and his article Dünyanın Oluşları (Becomics of the World), written a decade later, saw, for instance, the rise of the individual self-interest over and above the general interest of society as the source of all social and political evils which, would ultimately result in moral degeneration of the very individual. In order to prevent the degenerative effect of self-interest seeking excessive individualism, Baltacıoğlu assured that “technical advancement and comfort are different from luxury and debauchery. Every man has the right to comfort but never to debauchery.” In a similar vein, Safa blamed modern forms of materialism for the decline of spiritual values. For Safa, people failed to understand their inner selves and their spiritual and moral place in the universe. Yet, Baltacıoğlu, Safa, Tunç and Ülken were still aware of the relationship between modern economics and the development of new cultural practices. Thus, traditionalist conservatives emphasized work and/or labour since they saw it as a

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5 Safa, “Milli Birlik ve Ahlak,” (National Unity and Ethics) Çınaraltı, 60 (November 14, 1942), p.4


7 See Baltacıoğlu, Sosyoloji (Sociology) (Istanbul: Sebat Basimevi, 1939), pp. 198-233.
realm where individual would realize himself as a part of greater collectivity and would realize its development as part of it. However, they were cautious that the development of moral personality would be hindered because of the emphasis on individual creativity and enterprise which could easily be turned into a kind of selfishness, egoism, and self-interest.

It can be said that it was this selfish attitude, search for materiality and self-interest, which was responsible for traditionalist-conservative timidity towards a middle-class way of life. Indeed, Berna Moran has noted that the "westernized, civilized characters" in Safa's novels, repeatedly illustrated until 1939, were either the son of a wealthy Ottoman family - usually the father was a high-rank bureaucrat - or a character - who exemplified the lifestyle of the middle classes.8 This westernized-modern personality, who signified the lifestyle of wealthy middle classes, who mostly engaged in trading activities. He was passionate, active, as well as selfish, egoist and untruthful in his daily life.9 Thus, Safa, besides his novels until 1939, also in his articles which appeared in various newspapers and journals, blamed the individualist aspirations stimulated by the classical liberalism for the destruction of the mores of heroism. For Safa and well as Tunç, classical liberalism of the middle classes forced the individual to adapt an interest-seeking behavior. Thus, the unity of mind and soul, materiality and spirituality was dissolved.10 Tunç critically illustrated this new personality as follows:

he does not act with his real values and qualities; adoring himself as an aim itself, he strives on a passionate drive to transcend these with all the means and to occupy a higher position... In most of them the values of humanity have been blunted or ...vanished. They were indifferent even to their close circle. They are mostly not being disturbed for the disasters they cause in family and society. They follow their own individual aims...11

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9 Idem. For Safa public interest regulates the private interest. See Safa, “Ekonomi ve Milliyetçilik,” p.5. See also Baltacoğlu, Gençler İçin En Büyük Tehlikeler (Greatest Dangers for the Youth) (İstanbul: Sebat Matbaası, 1939), pp. 27-33.
10 Safa “Milli Ahlak,” (National Ethics) Çınarlıt, 42 (July 11, 1942), p. 5. Also Safa, “Milli Cemiyetlerde İdeal.” (The Ideal in National Societies) Çınarlıt, 48 (August 22, 1942) p. 5. For Safa, science of *mechanique sociale* was developed from nineteenth century onwards. Then, sociologists, psychologists, biologists and statisticians adapted models on the principles of natural sciences to understand the dynamics of society and human world, see Safa, “Sosyoloji ve Milliyetçilik,” (Sociology and Nationalism) Çınarlıt, 35 (May 23, 1942), p.5.
The traditionalist-conservative intellectual wanted the people not to fall into a fetishism of materialism. It was what Safa was critical of in his novels until 1939. Safa demanded the individuals to pay attention to the unity of material and spiritual aspects of their inner worlds which constituted them as unique moral entities.  

In general, Safa and Baltacıoğlu, and to a considerable degree Ülken, stressed that the work organization or the organization of labour was the basis of modern societies. Baltacıoğlu also posited that nation was an urbanized society based on a new functional division of labour. In this respect, Baltacıoğlu argued that the most important aspect of the Kemalist state policy was to pave the way for the spontaneous economic development of this functionally divided society. The most vivid form of modern economy was industrial economy.  

In a similar vein, Tunç further maintained that “industrial plants were basic units of organization of the modern society.” The important point for them, however, was also to show that the degree of national cultural development also depended upon the deepening of functional division of labour, differentiation of interests, hardening of economic tensions, increasing urbanization and rationalization and expansion of state authority in economic matters, as well as its legal and political control over the society.  

Indeed, it was what Tunç had in his mind in the 1940. For him, in today’s economic system there is an ongoing clash and antagonism between the interests of the consumers, producers and owners of property/investors. Thus, since all nations are constituted of these economic institutions all those nations in today’s economic system experience/suffer from the clash of interests.  

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12 For Safa life was not an arena for the satisfaction of material interests and benefits. The hedonistic ethics, which symbolically based on materiality, was seen as the source of moral degeneration in society. See Berna Moran, Türk Românu Eleştirel Bir Bakış, pp.167-80. See Tunç, “İç Ben ile Duş Ben Arasında,” (Between Inner Self and Outer Self) Fikir Sohbetleri (Intellectual Conversations) (Istanbul: Ulku Basimevi, 1948), pp. 131-8. See also Tunç, Ruh Aleminde (In the Spiritual World) (Istanbul: Ulku Kitabevi, 1944). For characterization of this middle class personality, see Safa, Fatih Harbiye, 3rd ed. (Istanbul: ôtüken Yayınevi, 1973), p. 47.  


16 Tunç, “Para Hırslı Karşıında Millet ve Devlet.”
He further detailed the question as follows:

Today there is a duality between economy and politics. The state has dominance over the towns and metropolises since it—as an institution—precedes their emergence/formation. On the other hand, the economic institutions and the accumulated capital of the commercial and industrial classes continue their interest-seeking pressures on the state. This results in a duality between economics and politics. And the necessary conciliation between these two spheres has not been achieved yet. 

This was also how Baltacioglu characterized modern society in his *Demokrasi ve Sanat* and *Sosyoloji* (Sociology) and Ulken in his *Sosyoloji* (Sociology). Accordingly, nation was an urbanized society where a degree of economic division of labour among various groups had been achieved. This totality had also carried the risk of self-destruction because of the increasing claims of middle classes merely to convince their particular interests. Traditionalist conservatives were cautious about the fact that modern economic relations could reduce life to a set of mechanisms based on individual’s will to satisfy his selfish needs. But “the idea of life,” in Tunç’s words, was “not an abstract concept, an empty cap…. What fills this, is (different) ways of life, historical traditions, traditionalized customs, habits, and a common conception of morality.”

Traditionalist conservative tried to point out that hedonism of classical liberalism which exposed an idea of economic system solely designed to create fetishism of matter, would eventually dehumanize the individual and so the society. Indeed, Tunç, like Safa, affirmed that the need to establish a balanced and harmonious relationship within classes and newly emerged groups had urged the consolidation of a “morality of sacrifice.” From this perspective, the veiled cult of heroism, which

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19 Safa, “İşadam ve Kahraman,” (The Businessman and the Hero) *Cimaraltı*, 43 (July 14, 1942) p. 5. For Baltacioglu we live in a machine age. This age was characterized by functional division of labour and increasing urbanization. See Baltacioglu, “Halk Partisinin Yeni Programı Üzerine,” p.2.
20 Tunç, “Şecat,” (Bravery) *Cumhuriyet*, (November 25, 1941). Also Safa “İnsan Yok, Millet Var!” (There is No Man, But Nation!) *Cimaraltı*, 4 (August 30, 1941) p.5. Safa claimed that modern age was an age of radical criticism of the “rational-abstract models” of man and society. He added that “abstract theories on rights of man” was also challenged in the Western world.
revealed in the traditional conservative conception of just rule, acquired a new sense in traditionalist-conservative criticism of individualism of civil society.21

The ultimate aims of Turkish modernization were to achieve a sense of authentic culture to free individual creativity from religious prejudices and to ensure economic prosperity. Indeed, Tunç exposed that there was no legitimate reason to resist this ideal,22 but he also warned that this ideal may lead to cataclysm in society. Tunç argued that urbanization and functional division of labour set everything in modern world.23 However, the reign of cities and urban way of life, for Tunç, also gave way to moral poverty and spiritual decay of individuals.24 This grand movement of freedom from the restraints of traditional society proceeded according to a positivist model of civilization would easily be resulted in the enslavement of the people to technologism and a civilization of materiality. Tunç posited that the reason for cultural poverty was the uneven development of the capitalist market system and the imbalance between economics and politics. The hypothetically invented imaginary “system of economics” of modern individualist capitalism was responsible for the enslavement of man to the material values. In his words:

According to this abstract system (liberal economics) the property/good is valuable so long as there are consumers. Without consumers the good is of no value: and it should either be dispensed or stocked for higher profits in the future. However, the real value of the good lies in the existence of the consumers willing to buy it and in the price they offer, as well as in those who are in need of the good but cannot afford it. Since this abstract science of economy only takes the market into consideration regardless of the humans, the industry constructed on this basis is "inhuman" and continues excessive production. The basic goal of production should be responding

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24 Tunç, “İstikbal İçin Yeni Ufûklar.”
the needs. The economic theories and economic order should be built along this line.25

Safa illustrated modern man as a prototype personality who had been alienated from the traditional and higher values of his authentic culture. Tunç and Safa had further claimed that this prototype modern man was the outcome of utilitarian ethics of modern economy. But for Tunç, it was not only an individual problem but a social one since modern economy also provided an institutional framework for the consolidation of this selfish ethics.26 Basing on these traditionalist-conservative contentions, Safa delineated the ultimate aim of the Turkish Revolution as “to eliminate the individual ideals to earn money and to build buildings, luxury and comfort and to substitute it for self-sacrifice for the devotion to community.”27

Furthermore, Baltacoğlu assured that egoism generated in economic field had tended to dominate the social and political realms.28 As noted before, traditionalist-conservative criticism of utilitarian-rationalist justification of ethics stemmed from their general critical stand against rationalist-individualism. Justification of new citizen ethics in rational-utilitarian lines would also result in intellectualism, which, in traditionalist-conservative vocabulary, was also seen as a symptom of alienation from history and culture. The utilitarian answer to the question of ‘how to behave’ could only be appropriated by confirming to particular group devotions but not to the national general one. Utilitarian ethics, though emerged to justify the group-based interests norms and actions, could not explain general interest.29 Competition of particular group-based ethics together with general national ethics could deteriorate the national motivational aspirations necessary to consolidate the authentic Turkish personality and

25 Tunç, “Sefalet Kalkamaz Mi?”
26 Tunç, “Para Hırsı Karşısında Millet ve Devlet.”
29 See Baltacoğlu, “Bu Yol Anarşyiye Gider,” (This Road Goes to Anarchy) Yeni Adam, 608 (August 22, 1946) p. 2.
Particularistic ethics, as illustrated in Ülken’s Aşk Ahlakı (Piety Ethics) could never give way to the development of an ethics which would enforce the brotherhood of citizens. However, it might generalize group experience, which in the last analysis, was a kind of reductionism and it had to be avoided in the age of nation-state building. Thus, Safa illustrated the development of civil society and its particularistic egoist ethics as follows:

Closed economies were replaced by a worldwide exploitation sphere whereby the basic incentive was the profiteering of private initiative, restricted by no national boundaries. Such a replacement had two aspects: Theoretically, it voiced up the ideal of individual freedom as a natural outcome of the destruction of feudal and monarchical dominance. Morally, it put the individuals under the domination of their selfishness and led them to sacrifice common interest to the advantage of their individual interests. Even to that extent to perceive all values as a means for profiteering. It is the money which is the gauge of everything: This idea has no dignity at all.  

In a similar vein, Baltacoğlu his article Yoksulluğun Ovülmesi (Appraisement of Destitution) pointed out that “personality meant the development and integration of man’s moral entity under the influence of the institutions of the society. Yet, it was not possible to be “autonomous and free for a man who becomes a slave and subject to the material world for money, (and) post.” Traditionalist conservatives did seem to think that neither egoism nor selfishness could be regarded as those terms where the legitimacy of the new political order would be sought. Thus, Baltacoğlu affirmed that people would probably be happier if passions and will for money, goods, property, fame and power were all abandoned. Thus, for traditionalist-conservative intellectual

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ultimate aim of Kemalism had to be the creation of a modern society which would ultimately satisfy the moral needs of its citizens. The new public sphere created by the Kemalist nation-state could not be exploited to satisfy the particular interests of groups. These groups, mostly within the ranks of the middle classes, when solely engaged in satisfying their particular interests, would also be alienated from their real national identity. As also referred by Safa, in *Milliyetçiliğin Birkaç Hakikati* (Some Truths about Nationalism), loss of this sense of belonging and responsibility towards the nation would entail the loss of real individuality.  

Safa in his *İsadami ve Kahraman* (The Businessman and the Hero) provided one of the explicit critics of utilitarian ethics of the middle classes. Ülken’s contribution on the issue could not also be underestimated. As reflected in his *Aşk Ahlaka* or *Insani Vatanperverlik* (Humanist Patriotism), both written in the early 1930s, neither materialism nor quest for a better material life could be taken as the source of ethics as though they were also the products of modern society. In the world of isolated and alienated individual, everything became devoid of spirit, but the “life span of an human being is not his personal property only. It is also a property of the society. The conscious and subconscious of the society?” Thus, sensibilities of the individual could only be realized in its sociability in nation. Traditionalist-conservative emphasis on culture and tradition reasserted itself at this point since these individual sensibilities could be gained when tradition and culture were valued as essentials of this sense of sociability.

Traditionalist conservatives still affirmed the role of economics and primacy of private initiative and property and acclaimed that in its primary aim of creating a new society the Kemalist state intended to stimulate industrialization and urbanization. Safa revealed this basic contention by announcing that the ultimate Republican policy objective had to be the acceleration of urbanization and rationalization; whereas

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34 Safa, “Milliyetçiliğin Birkaç Hakikati,” p. 5.
35 Safa, “İsadami ve Kahraman,” p. 5. See also Baltacıoğlu, *Sosyoloji*, p. 211.
36 See also Ülken, “Fakat Viedan İçin Ölçü Nedir?” (But What is the Criterion for Conscience) *İstanbul*, (June 1, 1946), pp. 3-4.
37 Ibid., p. 4.
Baltacıoğlu, Ülken and Tunç referred to these ideals as industrialization and development of urban society. Ağaoğlu had always remained within the confines of smooth etatism functioned as a shield for private property and initiative. They were aware of the fact that what was worth conserving were those things that had to serve to further the consolidation of the new, urbanized Turkish society.

"Hybrid Organicism" and State As a Nationalized and Re-Traditionalized Institution

Traditionalist conservatism’s peculiar break from any kind of mechanical rational reading of the revolutionary state practices could best be illustrated by traditionalist-conservative vision on society and state. As noted in the preceding chapters, in traditional conservative vocabulary, national history shaped the present day structures of the society. Preexisting institutions and experiences had an effect on the nature and characteristics of modern Turkish society. Turkish society was not the product of a scientific-bureaucratic state. Traditional forms and practices had always manifested themselves in the existing political, social, and political institutions of Turkish society. For the traditionalist-conservative circles to found a society upon untraditional bases was impossible and Tunç pointed out this as follows:

The conviction that it is possible to reach the truth only by the use of reason is the infirmity of reason. Hence, when the power of reason is perceived as absolute the real man, his value, the limits of his/its real power become meaningless... Thinking and living become totally abstract and artificial... This infirmity is most conspicuous when the history is conceptualized on totally speculative grounds.38

Preceding historical determinants, which were embodied in ethics and laws, combined with existing circumstances to determine the particular nature of the society at a particular time. Indeed, Baltacıoğlu’s “traditionalism;” Safa’s focus on “living tradition,” which had been employed to distance him from Islamic traditionalism supposedly aimed to revive the dead religious traditions and practice; Ülken’s emphasis on “culture and tradition” as the essence of the “Turkish renaissance,” and Tunç’s interest in state, nation, organicism, mechanism,

rationalism, and empiricism,\textsuperscript{39} can be seen as the symptoms of traditionalist-conservative sensibility to elaborate a peculiar understanding of tradition, organism, Reason, and society.

Baltacıoğlu’s “traditionalism” was based on the premise that national character was historical. Ancient institutions and national ethics, which were seen part of living and experienced culture, were seen as the irrational layers of national consciousness even those ancient institutions, prejudices and customs themselves ceased to exist.\textsuperscript{40} As also revealed in Ülken’s \textit{Veraset ve Cemiyet} (Inheritance and Society), History, above all tradition, led societies to adopt themselves to new circumstances.\textsuperscript{41} Contemporary problems of society and feasible solutions to them could only be found in reference to customs, tradition, and History.

As already shown, traditionalist-conservative inspirations from Bergsonism which resulted in a timidity towards the destructive effects of any kind of a priori imaginary constructs, such as “Reason,” also created a distance from the mechanic and/or rationalist conceptions of state-society relation since, as revealed by Safa, society was an unquestionable living supraindividual entity.\textsuperscript{42} However, pure organic metaphors derived from biological sciences were also disapproved by the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, as in the case of Safa’s \textit{Biyoloji ve Milliyetçilik} (Biology and Nationalism) or Ülken’s \textit{Yirminci Asır Filozofları} (The Twentieth Century Philosophers), as another variant of reductionism, like atomist individualism.\textsuperscript{43} The


\textsuperscript{41} Ülken, \textit{Veraset ve Cemiyet} (Inheritance and Society) (İstanbul: Kutuluş Matbaası, 1957), pp. 6-25. The book was written in 1924 but published in 1957.

\textsuperscript{42} See Safa, “Sosyoloji ve Milliyetçilik” p.5 For further criticism of mechanism, see Safa, “Felsefe ve Milliyetçilik,” (Philosophy and Nationalism) Çınaralu, 41 (July 4, 1942), p.5; Tunç “Mekanik ve Organik Davaları.”

\textsuperscript{43} See Safa, “Biyoloji ve Milliyetçilik,” (Biology and Nationalism) Çınaralu, 38 (June 13, 1942), p.5. Also see Ülken, \textit{Yirminci Asır Filozofları} (The Twentieth Century Philosophers) (İstanbul: Karaat Kitabevi, 1936), pp. 357-4.
appeal to hybrid-organism, a term which I have coined to imply their personalism, did not result in a pure organic conception of society. Nevertheless, traditionalist-conservative vision of a self-creating society as the lacuna of culture, when coupled with their specific view on Kemalist paternalistic state, resulted in a peculiar traditionalist-conservative design for the contextualization and re-traditionalization of universal state institutions in reference to tradition and culture. Self-sufficient society, with its authentic and genuine cultural structure would be protected by the paternalistic Kemalist state. State’s capability to maintain unity and stability depended upon its responsiveness to authentic culture.

Despite traditionalist-conservative appeal to the ideas that emphasized the organic nature of society, they were still nuances in respect to their conception of organicism and mechanism. Tunç held Aristotle responsible for the invention of the terms “mechanical” and “organic.” However, these terms acquired a specific meaning in Descartes’ mechanical rationalism. Aristotle employed the term “mechanics” only to imply “technics” and “science of invention.” Until modern times, including the Middle Ages, the term came to denote “scientific technics employed to produce machines.” In Descartes’ vocabulary, for Tunç, there emerged a shift in the meaning of the term. By the rise of Cartesianism, the term came to denote a general approach towards the functioning of nature and life. Nature was seen as the big governing machine. In Tunç’s words:

According to this theory nature is compared to a machine. Thus, similar to a machine which is built up of parts with a capacity of motion, nature is also composed of separate parts. Thus, the difference between nature and a machine is not one of quality, but quantity. It is to that extent that the theoreticians in this strand proposed the rewording of nature by machine of universe. According to Descartes machinery resemble the machine of nature as they become smaller. Later naturalists employed the term mechanical for the explanation of objects on the grounds of their shapes and motion. Here mechanical is synonymous to material.

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46 Tunç, “Mekanik ve Organik Davaları.” For Saфа’s discussion on Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza and Leibniz as the founding figures of mechanism and rationalism, see Saфа, “Sosyoloji ve Milliyetçilik” p.5.
In this respect, traditionalist-conservative distance from mechanism was ultimately coupled with an equal distrust towards materialism, formalism and rationalism. As emphasized by Safa and Tunç, in modern times, rationalism and mechanism were extended to human affairs by Leibnitz’s monadism and Spinoza’s rationalist ethics. Consequently, all kinds of human products, be they visible institutions such as state or family, and all kinds of human disposition, be they ethics, aesthetics, and justice, came to be explained as the universal disposition of rational human machine which categorically transcended all cultural and historical differences among societies and even the natural differences between individuals.47

For Tunç, the term “organic,” until German Romantics, was first used by Aristotle to emphasize the priority of the whole to its parts, vitality and mobility to the statis. It was what Safa discussed in his Sosyoloji ve Milliyetçilik (Sociology and Nationalism). Referring to Sorokins’ classification of organist school, Safa stated that contemporary organicism could be understood as a challenging philosophical, psycho-social, bio-organical perspective raised against liberal mechanism.48 In fact, what was appealing in organism was its philosophical openings offered on society and man. In Safa’s words,

Philosophical organism perceive society as superior and external to the individuals. However, it does not compare society with any biological being and/or organ. It rejects mechanical conception of society. In contrast to the liberals, philosophical organism does not accept that society is a mechanical and artificial entity which emerged out of human will and by a “social contract.”49

In Middle Ages organicism supplemented religious metaphysics. Politically, “the Whole” represented the Church or Christian Community in the Western context whereas it was umma in the Islamic world.50 From the eighteenth century onwards German romantics secularized “organic metaphors.” German Romanticism, for Tunç,

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47 Tunç, “Gencilik Nereye Gidiyor?” p.3.
48 Tunç, “Gencilik Nereye Gidiyor?” p.3.
represented the great endeavour for the "reorganization of society" towards achieving nationalism. Thus, the organicist approach towards the state, society, law and history was devoid of any religious connotations and was used as an antidote for religious metaphysics. Society and its parts, namely the individual, also gained heavy emphasis in modern and secularized version of organisms. In this respect, Tunç highlighted the reasons for traditionalist-conservative appeal to secular vocabulary designed in reference to "the metaphor of hybrid-organism." Tunç characterized this transformation in the meaning of the term as follows:

... However, it should be noted that in philosophical organism, nature which is perceived as an organism, is not identical to a nature which had fulfilled it becoming; but a living organism which is on a path of constant progress. This change in the conceptualization of nature was reflected especially on the sphere of history. Accordingly, history is conceived as a being of an evolutionary process, rather than breakthroughs, of unconscious instincts, rather than artificial theorizing, and by a power of the whole, rather than a rational individual.  

He further added that

As far as the practical sphere is concerned organicist theory also affected scientific methodology. In practice it induced incorporation of the individual into the whole, to that extent that, during the heydays of this theory the amelioration of the individual depended on the whole. At the same time the individual was attributed with the self-consciousness that he is an indispensable part of whole. In this respect, the individual is not just a part of a whole, but also a member of it. Thus, there is an organic solidarity between the whole and its parts. In other words, the whole is identified with a body.

In this context, modern nation-state was viewed as a function of national culture that had been conceived as an organic realm in which the universally-sanctioned institutions of the state would further be nationalized and contextualized. Only a nationalized state, which was an organic part of the national culture and tradition, could foster the moral development of its citizens and then it could transform itself to people's state. In this respect, radical culturalism enforced by the state implied the rejection of economism of contemporary liberalism and socialism and universalism of former religious orthodoxy.
Search for a Reconciliation Between the Legal Order of the State and the Moral Order of the Society

Traditionalist-conservative appeal to the secular vocabulary in reference to an hybrid-organic metaphor also hinted for new functions attributed to the state in its search to promote new national sensibilities. Relatedly, state paternalism over society was the ultimate manifestation of the traditionalist-conservative search for the protection of national essence and interest. Moreover, appeals to organic metaphors resulted in a conception of state as an ideal-type institutionalization of national values which would safeguard the natural order of society. These were alternative paths for unique national development in terms of multiple processes in the social, political, and economic spheres. Thus, traditionalist conservatives resorted mutual-dependency between the state and society. Tunç further elaborated this point as follows:

... Today's states and nations have common origins of existence: and the existence of one dependence on the existence of the other. This is the main point of distinction which differentiates them from their antecedents. Thus, distinction between state and nation is unthinkable. It is natural that, due to the complexity of the issues and the rather limited human power, there arise some temporary tensions. However, in the end these tensions strengthen the solidarity in-between, and contribute to reciprocal adaptation. Today's state, essentially is just the reflection of the public power of the citizens. It is formed by the utilization of the public power of citizens who live on shared territories. The nations' aspiration for a state power depends on tradition on the one hand, and on contingencies, on the other... However, the reason of obedience is a matter of reciprocal identification between the state and the nation, and of the fact that the distinction between the two would cause an absolute disaster.

Traditionalist-conservative state was not a mere instrument of national perfection which imposed a rational order over the society. If it remained as an institution "above-society" then its ideals would never be consolidated in society. Tunç envisioned a state order which was in harmony with society. According to Tunç, as also revealed in Baltacıoğlu’s Türk Rejimini Niçin Severim, (Why I Like the Turkish Regime?), legal rational authority of the state had to be reconciled with the "spontaneous moral order of the nation." Tunç and Baltacıoğlu’s conceptions of

56 Tunç, “Devlet ve Millet.”
state, as well as Safa’s understanding of the ideal state as an interventionist-protectionist instrument of the society, in contrast to the impotent liberal state of western societies, fell firmly within the paternalist tradition.\(^{58}\) As noted by Tunç

...the progress of the new life, accumulation of experience, and the rise of new beings/incidents and responsibilities led to the emergence of an unexpected resistance against mechanical theorizing. The rapid development of economy and industry eventually resulted in the intensification of the relation between men, in the division of labour and hence in the increase of solidarity. In the face of the community, that has emerged out of this life, the differentiated individuals of the mechanistic notion disappeared.\(^{59}\)

This envisioned model of philosophical organism, when applied to state-society relations, was responsible for traditionalist-conservative challenge of Kemalist positivist modernism. Thus, Baltacoğlu tried to point out that the universal state had to be re-traditionalized to further maintain the unity with authentic society which was a “living entity, composed of separate parts”\(^{60}\) Society and state essentially referred to different modes of “orders” for reconciliation in the process of re-traditionalization of the universal structures of modernity.\(^{61}\) This was the only way to achieve the unity between the rational order of the state and cultural order of society. If it was achieved, then, the historical dualisms, be they cultural, legal and administrative, inherited from the preceding Ottoman regime, could also be eliminated. Only on this new relationship between the society and the state, the fundamental principles of national ethics would prevent the growth of egoism and selfishness. As stated by Tunç, only the new holism represented by nationalized state could further foster the deepening of the sense of social obligation. However, Tunç, like Safa, drew his limits for this new holism represented by the national state. Accordingly,

Holism of the new ages should not hinder the original development of the individual.... A general ethics has to complement this policy... Individuals have to be trained with a creative ethics and political attitudes which would ensure the development of the whole and civilization.\(^{62}\)

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\(^{58}\) Safa, “Fikir Hürriyeti,” (The Freedom of Thought) Çınaraltı, 8 (September 27, 1941), p.5.

\(^{59}\) Tunç, “Mekanik ve Organik Davaların Nı Yeni Zamanlarda Geçirdiği Sathalar.”

\(^{60}\) Baltacoğlu, “Dünyanın Oluşları,” p.2. See also Baltacoğlu, “Milli Mantığa Doğru,” (Towards the National Rationale) Yeni Adam, 447 (July 22, 1943) p.2. See also Baltacoğlu, “Ahlakta Türkçe Doğru,”p.2.


\(^{62}\) Tunç, “Mekanik ve Organik Davaların Kiyimetleri ve Bunlardan Alınacak Dersler.”
It meant that there should be congruencies between the national order represented by the national ethics and that has been protected and enforced by the institutional fabric of the modern state. The peculiar conception of nationalization of the state and its institutional framework fed from this precept. In traditionalist-conservative vocabulary, nationalization did not come to mean to force the society to transcend itself towards some abstract ideals. As emphasized by Baltacıoğlu, nationalization [read re-traditionalization] would maintain a coincidence between the procedures and rules enforced by the state and values experienced in society. 63 The existing political order had to seek its legitimacy in reference to its closeness to the cultural practices of the society. Traditionalist conservative turned his face to the cultural ethical realm in handling with the corruption of daily life by the historical diffusion of an abstract model of westernization [read modernization] through a modernizing state.

Traditionalist conservative did favour a paternalist state but also a “limited government,” in a special sense. Governments were seen as instruments to make practical arrangements in society. 64 For traditionalist conservative, government had to foster policies which would maintain social, economic development of the citizens. Government, which was different than the state, could not be the source and model for public virtue. Perfection of the citizens could only be secured through expansion of the role they played in the functional division of labour in society. It did not come to mean that government did not have any role in the moral life of the nation. Yet, the guide of nation was not the government, but it was history and tradition being promoted and protected by the national state.

As noted earlier, for Ağaoglu as well as Safa and Baltacıoğlu, society, government and the state were different entities. Government was a weaker entity, best confined to the tending of existing arrangements. The ability of the government to

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manipulate the society was inherently limited. Yet, the state was more than the sum of its functions. It was the symbol of the new public spirit. Rather than pursuing some abstract models of modernization that were seen as magic formulas of human perfection, government had to find a guiding reference in history and in national culture. Moreover, as stated by Ulken, government had to strengthen local administrations especially the municipalities, and had to contribute to the development of people’s ability of self government and initiative through its support for foundations. It was also expected to back voluntary foundations and professional associations which would bestow the ability of the individual to take initiative. However, the ideal of Republican government, as it had to best reflect itself in its educational policy, was not to create a model of revolutionary virtuous people. This was the core principle of Baltacıoğlu’s educational philosophy. Moreover, Baltacıoğlu affirmed that self-government had to be considered as the relevant method of education. Baltacıoğlu had claimed that self-government and the fostering of individual’s sense of initiative-taking were fundamental principles of his pedagogy which viewed the learning as an empirical and experimental process. For him, self-government would also foster the development of a realistic approach.

For the traditionalist conservative, as already noted before, national/collective and individual/particular perfection could only be realized in work process which was based on a functional division of labour in society because, as assured by Baltacıoğlu “work leads to creativity.” In this respect, Tunç’s paraphrasing from the well-known Faust of Goethe was illustrative. For him “what exists at the beginning was neither

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65 Ulken, “Hürriyet ve Mesuliyet”, p.4.
66 Idem.
It is not surprising to see that Baltacıoğlu’s new educational philosophy was also based on the same principle. Thus, for him, real work bestowed the man a real ethics of survival and a realist life conception. It is noteworthy to remind that this conception of work was not in contradiction with their conception of man as moral entity. Yet, work ethics would promote solidarity and mutual-dependence among the citizens. As revealed in Ulken’s Aşk Ahlaki, it would also contribute to the development of a sense of responsibility shaped by the hierarchical structure of the modern stratified societies (meratipler cemiyeti).

Class and Democratic Order

Individuals in society were interdependent through various roles they acquired in the functional division of labour in society. Their unique identity was consolidated in a sense of affection to the moral and political order of the society since it was the society, that is the surrounding moral community which shaped and socialized the individual personality. Thus, individual, could be conceived as “the substratum and carrier of the moral unity called, society.” State policies had to motivate the individual for self-realization and to contribute to the development of a unique democratic order. Democratic order was generally appraised as the best means for individual self-realization, without forcing him to grow into maturity through governmental sanctions.

A basic demarcation line with Kemalists, who favoured a united classless society, was that modern democracies, in traditionalist-conservative vocabulary, was class societies. Emphases made on the themes of solidarity and functional dependence in

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traditionalist-conservative texts did not come to mean that traditionalist conservatives dismissed the term “class” from their political literature. On the contrary, they were aware of the fact that classes and political and economic tensions among them were essential to understand the historical dynamics of modern society. Thus, Safa claimed that non-chaotic class relations in Turkey did not come to mean that there was no classes in Turkey. But this emphasis on “class” did not come to mean that traditionalist-conservative intellectuals viewed classes as basic agents of politics in modern societies. Classes had only an illustrative power to understand modern society. Classes only appeared as part of the social order for traditionalist-conservative intellectuals. Associational institutions, as argued by Ulken in *Hürülük ve Mesulluk* (Freedom and Responsibility), such as foundations, voluntary associations, professional corporations, which also emerged from the process of works, were essential for politics. They placed emphasis on these organizations, since the development of human personality by involvement in these units would both contribute to the development of democratic politics of responsibility and a sense of belongingness, solidarity, and dependence, and would lead the individual to realize his responsibilities to his nation.

Thus, politics had to take as its aim the integration of nation and to set up an organic balance among functionally differentiated classes, since, for Ulken, monopolization of wealth in modern societies had resulted in severe political and economic tensions. Still, these tensions were natural, for Safa, because every society was based on competition, divergence and struggle among its members. These were the natural outcomes of the normal functioning of the society. Besides tensions and competition, there also emerged functional dependence among these classes and groups based on modern division of labour. Thus, state, for Safa had to be a means for arbitration for the natural economic and political tensions in society. In a similar vein, Tunç claimed that

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75 Safa, “İçeride ve Dışarda Milli Ekonomi,” p.5. See also Safa “Ekonomi ve Milliyetçilik,” p.5. Safa argued that there are two factors of production, namely labour and capital. These two factors of production generate value and value circulates in the forms of wage and profit.
76 Ulken, “Hürülük ve Mes'ulluk,” p. 4.
78 For further discussions on corporatism, see Safa, “Milli Cemiyetlerde Ideal,” p.5.
the state which protects the institution of private property eventually goes under the
dominance of social groups/classes and of social body. The direction that an object takes,
depends on the junction of the multitude of the forces which act upon it. Thus, in our
time, the main goal of the states is to find out this junction.79

Ağaoğlu’s appraisal of “society as a set of tensions created by the economic
organization of the society;” Safa’s discussions on corporatism as a method of state
arbitration between capital and labour and Tunç’s model of “state as an arbitrator”
between capital and labour;80 Baltacoğlu’s paternal state and Ulken’s classification of
modern society in reference to a continuous competition between monopolized wealth,
organized labour, and traditional peasantry, were an integral part of the traditionalist -
conservative attempt to incorporate the concepts of ‘state,’ ‘class,’ and ‘conflict’ into
the Republican political vocabulary. Their attempt was in contradiction with the
Kemalist contention which viewed the society as a classless organization of united
brotherhood of citizens.81 Classes, conflicts, and tensions were natural outcomes of the
modern economic division of labour. Thus, in order to control these tensions and to
maintain an harmonious organic integration of particular interests around the general
national one Safa proposed a corporatist system. In his words,

National economy gathers these unions within the framework of cooperative order which
is under state control. All those issues concerning consumption, production, finance,
wage/salary, price are handled in these cooperation’s whereby employees and employers
have equal weight. In the case of failure of consensus between two sides, State interferes
in the name of public.82

In this respect, Tunç stated that the state had to act as an arbitrator among various
interests in order to protect the general interest. Thus, he assured that
due to the acceleration in the socialist movements in the past years, almost all strands of
liberal thought have acknowledged the indispensability of the enhancement of the power
of the state to the expense of their preceding emphasis on private property. On the other
hand, unions have been formed to protect common interest and to limit the power of state
and private property, which are the two most powerful institutions of the new world...

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79 Tunç, “Devlet ve Millet.” For consequences of multiple class tensions on state, and evaluations on
corporatism as a system conflict management, see Safa, “Ekonomi ve Milliyetçilik.” p.5.
80 See Safa, “Milli Cemiyetlerde Ideal.” p.5, “Milli Birlik ve Ahlak,” p. 4; Tunç “İstikbal İçin Yeni Ufuklar”
Also Tunç, “Bugünkü Amerikan Düşüncesi ve Dünyanın Kurtuluşu Tasavvuru,” (Contemporary American Thought
and the Imagination for the Liberation of the World) Çumhuriyet, (April 18, 1943); Ağaoğlu, Devlet ve Ferd (The
State and Individual) (İstanbul: Sanayi-i Nefise Basımevi 1933), p. 43.
81 Ulken, “Demokratik Cemiyetlerde İleri Geri,” p.4. Ağaoğlu, ibid. See also Taha Parla, Ziya Gökalp,
Kemalizm ve Türkiye’de Korporatizm (Ziya Gökalp, Kemalism, and Corporatism in Turkey) (İstanbul: İletişim
States and nations of our time face with such important responsibilities as the just arrangement of division of labour, negation of class and group differentiation and the equalization of their economic interests.\textsuperscript{83}

Having characterized modern society as a tension-ridden entity, traditionalist conservatives affirmed that the best means for reconciling these tensions would be parliamentarianism since it would guarantee the political representation of interests. Representation would balance and harmonize the controversial relations among labour, wealth, and land and would pave the middle way between economic freedom and political equality. For Ülken, democracy, in its modern meaning, referred to the rule by people. It is the acceptance of principles of freedom and equality, at first hand. The basic problem of the present period, that is the practical possibility of democracy, arises out of the question of the compatibility of these two principles. In other words the question runs as follows: Can freedom be fully ensured if legal equality is not accompanied by the functional freedom of the citizens, that is economic equality?\textsuperscript{84}

The most important social question in modern democracies was to maintain a balance between freedom and equality and to harmonize the interests among land, labour, and capital. The answers provided for the methods of maintaining this balance among land, labour and capital characterized their respective conceptions on reformism and/or radicalism in politics. Basic features of reformist and radical politics were formed constituted in reference to the appreciated rhythm and harmony in establishing or challenging a balance among land, labour and capital.\textsuperscript{85} Thus, “conservative” and/or “liberal” aspirations were assumed to derive from the intensity of responsiveness to the “social question,” generated by the unique tensions among land, labour and capital\textsuperscript{86} but not always in relation to political stands in religious issues.

It must be noted that “land, labour and wealth question” and “democracy” as defined by Ülken, and Baltacıoğlu in his Demokrasi ve Sanat, were relevant only in a highly differentiated modern capitalist economy with a sophisticated division of labour. It was the theory of political representation, which the traditionalist conservatives were


\textsuperscript{84}Ülken, idem.

\textsuperscript{85}idem.

\textsuperscript{86}See also Baltacıoğlu, “İngiltere’de Siyasal Partiler,” (Political Parties in England) Yeni Adam, 164 (February 18, 1937), p.6.
committed to. In line with Ülken, Baltacioglu claimed that one of the important features of modern political parties was their relations with functional groups in society. Political parties were not merely instruments for the articulation of particularistic economic and/or political interests but were expected to function as a means of reconciliation between particular and general interest. They were expected to be responsive to the “social question,” as Ülken chose to pronounce. This emphasis on political parties, as means of maintaining balance among land, labour and wealth supported the corporatist aspirations within traditionalist-conservative intellectuals. Only through this theory of representation social and political justice could be maintained among three fundamental interests.

Furthermore, modern political ideologies could be characterized as “progressive” and/or “reactionary” in terms of their conception of the relations among “land, labour and capital.” Accordingly,

In modern democracies, "social problem", finding solutions to the problem of land and labour, has become the basic issue on the agenda. Those theories and political parties which dwell upon this problem, and try to find solutions without disregarding the majority of the citizens should be regarded as progressivist. And those theories and political parties which do not consider this as a problem, and which give priority to riches at the expense of the common good should be regarded as reactionary.

For Ülken, conservatism, as a modern political ideology, gained its likely importance in reference to its cautious approach towards the “social question.” In Ülken’s words:

In general, there might be different proposals regarding the function of the parliament with respect to social problem. Those which propose rapid action can be named as radical, those which propose slow action taking as conservative and those which opt for moderate action as free.

87 Baltacioglu, “Partiler,” pp. 2. 11.
88 Idem. For Baltacioglu, the newly established Democratic Party and National Development Party (Milli Kalkınma Partisi) were factions of the Republican People’s Party. He proposed the Republican People’s Party to transform itself to a “party of association” from a “party of revolution.” For Baltacioglu modern political parties which articulated and harmonized the associational interests would be more functional than factions of the “revolutionary parties.” See also Baltacioglu, “Muhalefet Grupları,” (The Opposition Groups) Yeni Adam, 601 (July 4, 1946), p.2. For Safa’s evaluation on political parties, see Safa, “Gazete, Halk ve Hükümet,” (Daily, People and Government) Tasviri Elkar quoted in Yeni Adam, 414 (December 2, 1942), p.9. For criticism of Democrats, see Safa, “Celal Bayar’ın İtiraflı,” p. 10. Safa, like Baltacioglu, pointed out that the newly emerged political parties were the factions of the ruling People’s Party.
89 Ulken, “Demokratik Cemiyetlerde İleri Geri,” p. 5
90 Ibid., p.4.
91 Idem. See also Baltacioglu, “Partiler,” p.2.
It was argued that conservatism, like “liberal” and “radical” politics in democratic societies also shared the ideal to consolidate the representative democracy. Its distinguishing characteristic could not be derived from its reactionism, but from its vision of gradual and manageable perspective towards the economic, social, and political tensions generated by the competition of basic interests in modern society. Conservatism as opposed to radicalism, proposed a moderate, balanced and harmonious style of manipulation of conflicts and tensions in modern democratic societies.92

The Question of Democracy

In the main traditionalist-conservative texts, the basic feature of a democratic system was defined as a search of balance between freedom and equality of the citizens. The distinguishing features of democracies in different countries were determined by the cultural and historical authenticity of respective nations. Moreover, it was the historically unique nature of the “social question,” namely differing relations among land, labour, and capital, which were also responsible for the emergence of different forms and traditions of democracy.93 Though consolidation of representative democracy became one of the political ideals of the contemporary world, every nation had followed different paths of consolidation because of its unique history and culture.94 Thus, Ülken assured that “a political doctrine of party program can not fully be implanted from one nation to another”95 in order to promote democratic order in the receiver country. In line with Ülken, Baltacıoğlu confirmed that

as any other political regime democracy depends on the social body to which it adopted...
There is no one democracy, but there are democracies. Aside from a homogeneity, among certain democracies, it is possible to observe contrariety with respect to their basic principles. The concept of democracy should be employed with the nation, on which it is grounded.96

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96 See Baltacıoğlu’s editorial note appeared in Yeni Adam, 538 (April 19, 1945) p.9. For Safa’s point on different meanings of democracy, see Safa “Demokrasi Kavramı,” p. 9.
Political ideologies, which sought to formulate alternative solutions to the problems of modern capitalist economies, had to be responsive to the particularly unique historical and cultural conditions of each nation because there was not a universal democratic order which could be imitated from somewhere else. Thus, Safa maintained that

in different types of Western democracies, that is the systems compiled of American, English and French types, there is no common conception of the sovereignty and rule of the people. Those who propose a regime, identical with Western democracy, in Turkey, aspire for something incredible. Because there is no such model of democracy. It is not possible to observe a democratic regime, which has emerged out of abstract legal principles regardless of national conditions, either in history or in the present world. It is unavoidable that Turkish democracy would face the catastrophe of the Constitutional Law, translated by Midhat Pasha, and/or the model of constitutional monarchy, adopted by Ahmed Rıza, if it does not take into account these national conditions.

For Ülken, as well as Baltacıoğlu and Safa, it was not possible to talk about an absolute political formula which would solve all of the problems of nations around the world. Thus, a working progressive democratic solution applicable to one cultural geography could be reactionary in other one. Accordingly,

for example in some western countries the political parties can be categorized as a) liberal interventionist b) interventionist c) protectionist. Peculiar conditions of a country can put the liberal interventionist political parties into the ideal position of democrat and progressive. Because in such countries industry is at the stage of continuous development, even to the extent of spreading to other countries. Under these conditions protectionist and interventionist policies might block social development. However, there are also such countries in which large industry does not exist. The country cannot establish large industry on its own due to the effect of capitalist countries. In these countries state intervention becomes an imperative to support the farmers, tradesmen and merchants, to actively initiate industrial establishments, and to supervise over economic development. Under these conditions, the struggle for the endurance of economic independence against foreign effects has progressive and democratic connotations. And if in such a country, liberal policies regarding customs, industry contain the threat of inviting foreign capital and the risk of losing national economic independence, then liberal interventionist stand is no more than reactionary.

Historically and culturally-bound rhythm and intensity of social, economic, and political tensions in various societies also set the limits of rights and obligations of individuals and groups in different democracies all over the world. Traditionalist-

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98 Idem. See also Safa, “İnsan Yok Millet Var,” p.5.
100 Idem. See Baltacıoğlu, “Yeni Adımın Yolu,” (The Path of Yeni Adam) Yeni Adam, 613 (September 1, 1949) p. 2. Baltacıoğlu stated that he was a democrat and republican in politics. He added that Turkish democracy could develop in its own unique path because of its unique historical and cultural determinants.
conservative circles rejected the cosmopolitan liberal premises on these grounds. Safa further argued that the Marxist challenge raised against the classical liberties and rights of man emerged due to the hypothetical and rationalist bias of the classical liberal theory of rights which were based on an abstract model of man and society. Excessive individualism of modern liberal societies and ineffectiveness of the liberal state to manipulate class tensions and interests resulted in the emergence of Marxism. Liberal order, for Safa, failed to managing class conflicts in modern liberal societies and could not establish a balanced relationship between “freedom” and “equality.”

Ağaoğlu, Baltacoğlu, Tunç, Safa, and Ulken viewed democracy as a system which was most suitable for the self-realization of the individuals. Still, for Ulken, the foremost problem of democracy in the modern world was to find a balance between “freedom” and “equality.” For Ulken neither freedom nor equality of the citizens could be substituted for each other, because this would give rise to the rule of oligarchies or dictatorships in modern societies. In Ulken’s words:

In parliamentarianism the role of the political parties is to represent social classes and professional strata in the parliament and to harmonize the clashes in-between. If social movement does not take place in the way resolving the social problem, reconciliation of these different perspectives continue without any beneficial outcome. On the contrary, if progressive steps for the realization of democratic ideal are taken, then political perspectives take on more limited and artificial forms. Different forms dictatorships emerge out of the destruction of the harmony among the parties which represent social classes, to the benefit of one.

The balance among economic freedom, initiative, and political equality had to be established. Lack of this balance would give way to the “loss of freedom” to attain “equality” or vice versa. In his words:

Does not economic inequality lead to active suppression of a part of the citizens by the others? Even if all kinds of privilege and domination are outlawed, is it sufficient to avoid domination due to economic equality? For example would a rich peasant with plenty of land, not force the poor ones to work as usufruct and shareholders and thus put them into the position of half-slaves? Or would a powerful capitalist, who has monopoly over big

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104 Ulken., ibid., p. 5.
industrial enterprises, not determine the wages of the workers on the basis of his own interest even if it contrasts with the wish and need of the workers? How can the democratic ideals of equality and freedom can be achieved spontaneously, with these risks at hand? Thus, is it not required to give up one for the sake of the other?\textsuperscript{105}

Classical rights of the individual, i.e. freedom of thought and consciousness, the right to have property, etc., were praised by the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals. Still, there was a nuance. In traditionalist-conservative vocabulary these rights were not absolute categories. Thus, Safa claimed that

\begin{quote}
in our time it is clear that to search for the rights of abstract man is useless. Man gains his real substance within the framework of the race and nation to which he belongs. We should approach and understand him within national structure. His strength is the strength of his national structure.\textsuperscript{106}
\end{quote}

Limits to classical liberal rights were set by history, culture which were also held responsible for the uniqueness of any democratic order in modern world.\textsuperscript{107} Parliamentarianism, political representation, and political parties were assumed to be the backbones of modern democratic system.\textsuperscript{108} Indeed, for Baltacıoğlu political parties in modern societies were expected to rely on a functional division of labour in society. Associational organizations were the basis of real parties and emergence of real parties would promote the consolidation of modern democratic representative system.\textsuperscript{109} As it was stated by Ulken

Parliamentarianism is required for the spontaneous realization of the ideals of freedom and equality in a democratic society. Existing political parties should be clear on their standing with respect to the social problem. Here, clarity means that a party should express its social doctrine in detail and... declare its own way for the realization of democracy.\textsuperscript{110}

Nevertheless, there should be a balanced relationship between representation and responsibility; the general interest and particular interests; and "freedom" and "order"\textsuperscript{111} in order to prevent the breakdown of the democratic parliamentarian system. For

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{106} Safa, "Dünyada İnsan Var Mi?" p. 4, "Ekonomi ve Milliyetçilik," p.5, "Eski ve Yeni>Hürriyet."
\textsuperscript{107} For an illustrative example, see Safa, "Dünyada İnsan Var Mi?" p.4.
\textsuperscript{108} Ulken, "Demokratik Cemiyetlerde İleri Geri," p. 4.
\textsuperscript{109} Baltacıoğlu, “Her Şeyin Üstünde Vatan Var,” p. 2.
\textsuperscript{110} Ulken, “Demokratik Cemiyetlerde İleri Geri,” p. 4.
\textsuperscript{111} For Baltacıoğlu general interest was above the particular interests which were articulated by various political parties, be they liberal, conservative, individualist, statist, right or left. See Baltacıoğlu, "Her Şeyin Üstünde Vatan Var," p. 2 For Safa there could not be “particular freedoms granted” before the “freedom of the nation.” See Safa, “Milliyetçiliğin Birkaç Hakikati,” p.5, “Ekonomi ve Milliyetçilik,” p. 5.
\end{footnotesize}
Baltacıoğlu, democracy historically emerged as a balanced system against the absolutist claims of freedom, which would result in anarchy, and rule of dictatorships. Besides the institutionalization of the representational institutions, Tunç also argued that social justice and order had to be maintained in order to consolidate a democratic order. Thus, he further claimed that imbalances had to be melted by social justice in order to prevent private economic interests from imposing themselves on the state. Traditionalist-conservative vocabulary sought for a balance between economic freedom and political equality and it was hoped that it could be achieved when a balance between economic and political power of the state was established.

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113 Tunç, “İstikbal İçin Aranan Yeni Ufuklar.” For changing conceptions of freedom in modern world, see Safa, “Eski ve Yeni Hürriyet.”

114 Tunç, “İstikbal İçin Aranan Yeni Ufuklar,” “Ahlakın Çeşitleri ve Zamanumuzun Ahlakı.” Safa also pointed out the necessity to establish a harmonious relationship between “freedom” and “responsibility.” For him, corporatism was the best means to consolidate this relationship between the interests of capital and labour. State would be responsible for maintaining a balance between “freedom” and “responsibility” under the imperatives of the national good. See Safa, “Ekonomi ve Milliyetçilik.” p.5.
CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

Turkish politics entered into a new period by the establishment of the Republic in 1923. Within a decade after the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, the ruling Republican intelligentsia came to complete the radical program of Westernization under the tutelage of the newly established scientific nation-state. Science for the new state came to provide a new means for the resolution of social problems. Revolutionary rationale of the Kemalist state represented a voluntarist and purposeful interference into the process of social change where "creative spontaneity" seemed to be sacrificed in favour of the "rational organization" of the society in order to institutionalize a model of civilizing modernism.

Radicalism of the scientific national state was first directed at the existing social, political, and economic order inherited from the Ottoman Regime. The Revolutionary cadre then held a more radical stand against organized religion which had been perceived to be the main reason for the backwardness of Turkish society. Kemalist revolutionary radicalism which could be characterized as forced-modernism, nationalism, and scienticism had mobilized the people and intelligentsia for challenging an entire past of the society. In this respect, it aimed to turn a political revolution into a cultural one. It also established new set of propositions about the nature of just rule and legitimate government around which the new political and intellectual alignments and cleavages were obtained from the 1920s onwards.

During the revolutionary period from 1923 to 1931, new political conflicts emerged between the defenders of the newly established Kemalist institutions and the traditional, religiously-framed ones. Students of Turkish politics have conventionally classified this cleavage through the antipodality between modern/secularist and traditionalist/religious outlooks and elite groups which derived their legitimacy through these mutually-exclusive stands. The first group of modernist/secular elites, while
challenging the religious status quo, also felt the necessity to defend the Kemalist achievements in politics and culture. Religious status quo was symbolically represented by the traditional institutions of Caliphate and Sultanate until the mid-1920s. After the mid-1920s and following the abolishment of these traditional institutions, status quo, which the Kemalist radicalism aimed to transform came to refer to traditional religious social and cultural practices. Thus, political and social reaction raised against Kemalist radicalism on established religious practices and institutions were articulated by reactionary, religiously oriented groups. It ultimately led to the idea to conserve and/or revive those religious practices, traditions, and institutions.

By the end of the 1920s, religiously-oriented groups, which had considerable political impact in the First National Assembly, were almost totally neutralized. Following the War of Independence, the main clash was between the Republican secularists and savants of the Ottoman regime who were in allegiance with religious groups that kept their loyalty to the Sultanate and Caliphate. They were willing to derive the true essence of Islam to prevent the religious tradition from total dissolution. These religiously oriented groups totally rejected Republican constitutionalism and aimed to preserve traditional Ottoman institutions of Caliphate and Sultanate in the new constitutional order.

Meanwhile, a new cleavage among the Kemalist secular intelligentsia coincidentally appeared. These new intellectual groupings, unlike the religious reactionaries appeared as a resistance to Kemalist rationalism in politics. This new cleavage within Kemalist modernist secular intelligentsia developed into a schism between traditionalist conservatism and Kemalist rationalism. Traditionalist conservatism, which first appeared as a Bergsonian-inspired affiliation to Kemalism, then acquired a visible political stand by the end of 1920s. What was fundamental about this intellectual grouping was that they were also an organic part of the secular-modernist Republican intelligentsia. Nevertheless, they were not the masters of the political game and stayed at the periphery of the Kemalist power structure. Traditionalist-conservative ideals and aspirations first started to circulate in the cultural
institutions of the Republic, such as the university and other institutions, such as the Turkish Language Association, since this group of intelligentsia were mostly employed in the academia and/or had active roles in those cultural institutions.

With the clarification of the ultimate political and cultural ideals of the Republic, a sense of group consciousness among the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals started to develop through their collective action in some associations, such as the Turkish Philosophy and Sociology Association in the late 1920s, Turkish Philosophy Association in the late 1930s. The journals, *Kültür Haftası, Yeni Adam, İnsan* in the 1930s and 1940s also contributed to the circulation of traditionalist-conservative ideals and to their reaction against the Republican consensus after the Revolution. Circulation of these ideas and aspirations ultimately resulted in the emergence of a premature traditionalist-conservative milieu among the ruling Kemalist intelligentsia.

Meanwhile, Republican radicalism had created a rupture in the political vocabulary of the time. New intellectual groupings within the secular modernist intelligentsia appeared to provide answers about the nature of Kemalist modernism, its future course of the development and its impact on society, culture and tradition. Traditionalist-conservative opinions appeared in this conjuncture and adopted a new stand about Kemalist modernism without an anti-Revolutionary intent. This Republican conservatism, while agreeing on the basic structure of the state distanced itself from omnipresent rationalist revolutionism and provided a competing vision of Kemalism and modernism.

Emergence of a traditionalist-conservative vocabulary was due to the fact that from 1930s onwards, Republican intelligentsia tended to generate a coherent and systematic theory of Kemalism. The new political culture was basically republican and secularist. It rejected, at least officially, all the signs of the Ottoman Regime and posed its aim and focus as being progressive under the guidance of science and technology. The ultimate aim of the secular modernist intelligentsia was set to safeguard the cultural authenticity of the Turkish nation. The cultural components of the collective
identity, such as ethnic origins, customs and language etc., gained a political significance for elucidating the Past, Present and Future of the Republican citizen. New conception of citizenship, rights and obligations of the individual towards the state were defined in a secular-legal framework. Kemalist culturalism represented a rupture from the Ottoman past and traditionalist conservatism developed within the confines of this ‘political and cultural vocabulary of rupture’ which at the same time proclaimed the emergence of the ‘new.’

In this respect, traditionalist-conservative ideas and aspirations flourished within the Kemalist power structure. Traditional conservative body of thought, which could be characterized as a personalist, Bergsonian, moralist perspective, could be developed fully only after the dissolution of the traditional religious cosmology since the ultimate traditionalist-conservative objective was to provide a “history” to the Kemalists’ rootless vision of civilizing modernism. In other words, the ultimate traditionalist-conservative contention was to re-traditionalize Kemalist modernism and to force Islam towards a national development. It was based on modern political concepts, such as nationalism, democracy, freedom and republicanism.

Traditionalist-conservative ideals and aspirations developed in the rather fast course of institutionalization of the modern nation state structures. These ideals aimed at shedding light on the nature of Republican order and the new means of maintaining stability, order and continuity of the Kemalist status quo. Kemalism and traditionalist conservatism, standing on the edge of the Kemalist power structure, manipulated the consolidation of the structures of modernity, most notably the nation-state and capitalism. Capitalism and nation state together with nationalism were central to the Kemalist and traditionalist-conservative visions of modernity.

In the 1930s, public debate between the Marxism-inspired Kadro intellectuals and traditionalist-conservative protagonists of Kemalism indicated the fact that the Bergsonian, personalist, mystic-moralist aspirations of the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals had started to achieve a political significance as competing conceptions of Kemalism. In Ottoman-Turkish polity, as revealed by Ülken in his Türkiye’de Çağdaş
Düşünce Tarihi (History of Contemporary Thought in Turkey), Bergsonian philosophy became a crossroads of protomodernism, anti-scienticism, anti-positivism, anti-materialism/mechanism, anti-Pan Islamism.\(^1\) During the early thirties, materialist philosophy of Kadro and its historical-materialist perspective, which was proposed as a relevant method to explain the historical phenomenon of Kemalism, provoked and united diverse critics of materialist-positivist and mechanist philosophies around the ideal of creating an alternative philosophical and political understanding of Kemalism through some alternative terms and concepts. Bergsonism affected all traditionalist-conservative intellectuals on the evils of modernism and rationalism and also provided a vocabulary through which future hopes in dealing with fatal maladies of civilizing modernism were formulated.

Bergson’s legacy for the Republican intelligentsia reached its apex during and after the War of Independence. Tunç, Ağaoğlu, Safa and Baltacıoğlu were committed to the ideals of the War of Independence and this had politicized their Bergsonian background. It also had significant impact on the intellectual life of the young Republic since creativity, dynamism, elan, vitality, and the Bergsonian conception of tension were utilized, in varying tones, to illustrate the reasons for new dynamism in society, to characterize the modern life and to affirm a political optimism in the age of nation-building.

The importance of traditionalist conservatism for Republican life lay in its quest to elaborate an alternative philosophy of nature and life. Ultimately, these intellectuals were trying to replace the positivist evolutionism with an alternative progressive evolutionism based on the notion of “creative evolution.” The new life metaphysics they offered, contrary to the firm Kemalist belief derived from nineteenth century positivism, did not privilege science as the only means to explain all spheres of human life. Traditionalist conservatives aimed to develop a competing approach to

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Kemalist scienticism which pinned its hopes on science as the means for knowledge, enlightenment, and civilization.

Modern Turkish traditionalist conservatism which heavily utilized the Bergsonian philosophy developed in four philosophical and political lines: the first was against the anti-collectivism/societalism of Republic inherited from Ziya Gökalp’s positivism; the second was on cultural nationalism; the third challenge was on institutional Islam; the last line attacked scientist/positivist modernism. The Kemalist idea of “transcendentalist state,” as delineated by Metin Heper in his *State Tradition in Turkey*, solidified a peculiar power relation between the Kemalist state and society where the state was privileged before the society and society before the individual.² This privileged idea of state easily paved the way to collectivist/solidarist tendencies and revealed itself as a devotion to populism and solidarism for which Ziya Gökalp had been praised as its greatest ideologue. Ağaoğlu, Baltacıoğlu and Ulken promoted personalism, which was erroneously labeled by *Kadro* as an example of individualism and liberalism in the Turkish context. Safa and Tunç criticized vulgar organism and Safa emphasized “philosophical organism,” and “functional interdependence” between the part and the whole. All these notions of the traditionalist conservatives showed their deviation from dominant solidarist tendencies inherent in Kemalism. Traditionalist conservatives did not adhere to the Kemalist vision of a united, classless nation since “tension,” either in social and individual realms, was praised as the real reason for dynamism, creativity and spontaneity. Lack of severe tensions among classes and/or groups, as in the Turkish case, did not come to mean a lack of functionally interdependent classes and/or groups. Ulken’s theory on work or Safa and Ağaoğlu’s conception of a society, as composed of groups and/or classes, led to a conception of society which was a divided but was a functionally interdependent entity. They all had the common concern of bringing out a new synthesis that would solve the tensions between the individual and society, and society and state.

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In an age of rapid social, political, and economic change, everything that had once been accepted as ‘right and just’ was being questioned under the overshadowing presence of the Revolutionary imagination. Still, unlike the religiously-oriented reactionaries of the early 1920s, traditionalist conservatives were devoted to the Kemalist ideals of democracy, republicanism, and nationalism. Moreover, the transformation had also created a persistent dread among the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals of the time. Thus, Baltacıoğlu’s traditionalism was based on a romantic search for the historical and cultural permanents responsible for socio-psychological order and unity. He regarded Kemalists’ search for Order solely in the political sphere as causing cultural and political ambivalence and alienation of state structures from the society. He, like other traditionalist-conservative figures recognized the transformative effects of Kemalist Revolution but felt uncomfortable about the possibility of its failure to fully consolidate its own values and principles. This, he thought, would result in further alienation of the nation from its state. What was unique in this traditionalist-conservative sentiment was its identification with the existing Kemalist institutions and power structures, but not with the traditional Ottoman and religious traditions. Their ardent support of the Revolution was a result of their optimism about the potential of the Revolution to bring about the reforms necessary to abolish the cultural and political dualities experienced by Turkish society. Elimination of this duality was one of their central concerns.

This is why they paid singular attention to the feeling of non-belongingness and isolation which they observed in society and reflected in their work. In other words, traditional identity was excavated as in the case of Safa’s literary criticism of mimetic modernism, to picture those components responsible for not ratifying the man as such as a member of the new political entity, namely the nation. On this point, conservative intellectuals tried to show that Kemalists’ broad confidence in Reason and in its regulative capacity over the society had an erosive effect on the traditional ways of conducting the daily life. The mimetic models of civilization imposed on society was conceived to be the utopia of an alienated group of intelligentsia. Traditionalist-
conservative intellectuals devoted themselves to bringing into light the unintended consequences of this rationalist utopia which would turn the society into an object of rational manipulation.

What the traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia objected was the Kemalist conception of state as an instrument for rational control of the society. Kemalist revolutionaries deemed the new nation-state to be a momentous institution in the evolution of society. It was a search for a deep structure in society that would simultaneously raise it to a higher level of modern societal organization i.e. the level of nation. Ultimately, Kemalism perceived the society solely as an object of manipulation for political power. Correspondingly, the ruling Kemalist intelligentsia conceived social change as a manipulated political process on the road to attaining a higher level of civilization. Baltacioğlu’s educational philosophy, Tunç’s critic of positivist progressivism, or Ülken’s criticism of rationalism intended to show that the real danger for the Revolutionary movement was its attempt to move beyond the phenomenal world; from the world of appearances to the essentials, to the world of the inner truth of the society to realize a ‘project’ of civilizing modernism.

In the sociology of Baltacioğlu or Ülken, society was the only solid realm where the manifestation of creative life force would freely reveal itself. Society was the only actual and concrete collectivity. Consequently, a radical project of change had to lean upon the existing institutions whose basic function was to contextualize and re-traditionalize the rootless vision of modernity. For traditionalist conservatism the locus of worldly power was nation and its nation-state, and the creative spirit of society was derived from its national tradition. Still, for the traditionalist conservative circle, authenticity of the nation did not only stem from the rational essence of the political institutions but from the living energy of the society crystallized in history, beliefs and customs which could be utilized to nationalize and re-traditionalize the universal state structures.

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“Nationalization” did not come to mean the nationalizing of tradition and culture. Culture and tradition were *sui generis* national. “Nationalization” in traditionalist-conservative vocabulary came to mean nationalization and re-traditionalization of the universal institutions and structures of modernity. By implication, it attempted to provide a historical base to Kemalist modernism. With these concerns in mind, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals attached extreme importance to tradition, culture, and history. It is this emphasis which made it possible for a meaningful relationship to be formed between traditionalist conservatism and Kemalism, which despite its civilizing modernism, still upheld the motto of “we resemble ourselves.”

In the early Kemalist era, political and intellectual groupings posed themselves either as the defenders of Past, as in the case of reactionary Islamism, or as the owners of the Future, like the Kemalist radicals. Each of these groups distanced itself from the Present since it was characterized by a deep turbulence, ambivalence, and chaos. Contrary to Islamism that viewed the Present as a deviation from the past practices, values and norms of the Golden Age of the Prophet, Kemalists tended to see the present state of society as a moment of transcendence. The Present was interpreted by the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals as the historical moment which bore both the Past and Future within its folds. This perspective distanced traditionalist conservatism from reactionary Islam and future-oriented utopianism of Kemalism.

Traditionalist-conservative literature, sociology and philosophy aimed to show the disparity between what was above society [read Kemalism and/or westernization] and what actually took place within society. Particularly, Safa’s conservative literature, to borrow Michel Foucault’s phase, was an archeology of the Present, as a search for the layers of Past intertwined with the Present. More precisely, this conservative literature aimed to show how differing conceptions of “truth” could be used to characterize the Present as a chaotic state due to the clash between multiple ‘truths.’

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Traditionalist conservatives focused on the multiple images of life in Present as an amalgam of past and future visions. For them, it was culture and history which had an undeniable effect on the formulation of future ideals and present state of affairs. Thus, their sensibility towards cultural questions was derived from the discrepancies they perceived between 'what ought to be the future of Turkish culture’ and ‘what is secured at Present.”

Kemalist practices of creating an inclusive collective national identity led the traditionalist-conservative intellectuals to focus on the pathologies of the unseen world of individual which at the end would cause disorder their identity. It would also annihilate all accustomed roles and functions in society. Traditionalist-conservative endeavour can best be understood as an attempt to demonstrate the depth, intensity and scope of the present consequences of cultural dualities in society and in the worlds of individuals. For them, in a parochial society still devoted to the religious symbols, forced modernism would reveal itself as an attempt to create an ‘insular totality’ and a tension-creating model imposed on rebellious selves that were squeezed caught up between the Past and the Future. Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals focused on the peculiar manifestations of the parochial personality in a modern society; a restricted and surrounded self between West and East; between science and tradition; between reason and superstition; between past and present.

They then offered a diagnosis and prescription to the ongoing crisis in society. This was a crisis of adaptation, and was emerged due to the disjunction between state fostered alien values and norms and authentic culture. The distance between state’s civilizing ideals and the workings of society, which revealed itself as isolation, loneliness, and non-belongingness in the life sphere of the individuals, had to be eliminated. This was the reason for their radicalism directed against religious umma tradition. The crisis of adaptation implied the inability of the traditional social structures to adapt themselves to new norms and values, on the one hand, and the incapability of the state institutions to penetrate into the society to redefine the authentic symbols of social identity, on the other hand. Traditionalist conservatism offered a middle way
between religious reactionism and modernist radicalism. They were neither fully subordinated to state’s problem of consolidating the rules of the new power game nor did they initiate a reaction against the ongoing Kemalist revolution. Instead, through an involvement in arts and ethics, they chose to act as the “moral innovators” of the new nation. Their precepts can be taken as part of a theory of cultural nationalism in which the idea of nation was proposed as a moral community. The reasons for moral, social and political decadence on the one hand, and future possibilities of the creative evolution of Turkish society towards a unique synthesis of civilization and culture, on the other, were searched.

In their mind re-traditionalization of the universal structures of modernity together with Turkification of Islam were necessary to maintain a genuine authentic self. Two inclusive collective identity claims - modern/secular and traditional/religious - collided with each other on the question of defining the terms of national identity. The collusion between these competing truth claims would result in the disorganization of the individual self. Collusion would also have drastic effects at the social level. Disorganization, confusion and disorder would emerge both at the individual and social levels. An anticipated social self and a politically relevant one had to be the synthesis of the Past and Present. Thus, basic political categories had to have relevant references in culture and history. However, this was not a simple return to the past since there was more than one tradition, namely, religious and national.

This peculiar traditionalist-conservative stand resulted in the support for the Turkification of language and religion which ultimately pushed traditionalist conservatism to adopt a radical stand towards religious reactionism. Traditionalist-conservative intellectuals, without exception, were all opposed to the revival of Islamic umma tradition which was based on the brotherhood of the Muslims all over the world. And yet, traditionalist-conservative endeavour aimed to liberate the moral and social action of the individual and nation state’s will from the restrictions of Islamic dogma without destroying it, since religion was a natural bond in society, like language and customs. This philosophical and political distance between religious reactionism and
conservatism became mostly visible by the appearance of Safa’s journal Türk Düşüncesi by the mid-1950s. Safa asserted that the difference between conservatism and religious reactionism could be found in their stand towards novelty.⁵ ‘Reaction,’ for Safa, was a natural trait in the process of the modification of the living organism. Sociologically, the objective of ‘reaction’ was to restore the status quo ante. But Safa argued, their conservatism never attempted to restore the status quo ante. It was a search for the essentials and permanents in the Past and the Present and those desired to exist in the Future. For this reason alone, their conservatism adopted an historicist and traditionalist stand. Thus, it was natural that in an age of progress and change every society generated its own conservatism and conservatives. Conservatism, unlike religious reactionism, never resisted change and novelty. It only held Past but never gave up novelty.⁶

A detailed analysis of the writings of traditionalist-conservative figures of the 1930s and 1940s would reveal that the adaptation of Bergson’s concepts of tension, conflict, creativity and spontaneity was responsible for the development of a peculiar traditionalist-conservative conception of society and politics. Moreover, having been inspired from Bergson’s critique of utilitarian-rationalism, traditionalist conservatism, developed a comprehensive challenge against the utilitarian moral assumptions. Throughout the 1930s, Bergson-inspired conceptions of ‘individualism, irrationality, freedom and religiosity’ were developed in their corpus of writings.

For traditionalist conservatism, political ideologies could not be defined as a set of principles and procedures. They were the products of definite cultural systems and were designed to meet the needs of a particular society. Societies did not experience the same level of development. It meant that they lived at different historical time intervals. Thus, specific answers provided to meet the needs of a particular society in a definite historical time interval, by such ideologies as liberalism and/or socialism, for

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⁶ Ibid.
instance, were not relevant at another time span for even the original society. In this sense, Kemalism was an historical opening for the Turkish nation.

Spread of cultural products from advanced to less advanced societies created various forms of reactions in the receiving societies. In Muslim countries it, first, provoked religious reactionism, which ultimately claimed the revival of Great Islamic Tradition as an aim and value in itself. Secondly, it resulted in an upsurge of imitative westernization project(s) which become an asset only for the alienated intellectuals in the receiver society. Lastly, imitative modernization stimulated various forms of conservatisms as middle roads between religious reactionism and radical westernism. Traditionalist conservatives, as the representatives of the middle road, asserted that by mobilizing the historical consciousness and natural traits of the society, Turkish revolution, at least in intention and in its initial stages of development, symbolized this third alternative for modernizing societies.

Traditionalist-conservative conceptions of "conservatism" and reactionism were based on their peculiar conception of society as a living entity composed of functionally interdependent parts, which I have referred to as "hybrid organic analogy." In this way, "reactionism" and "conservatism" were conceived to be natural phenomena emerging in societies in their transition to modernity. For traditionalist conservatives "hybrid organic analogy" led them to see the society as a living organism. Thus, it was natural that any living organism would defend itself against any external threat. "Hybrid organic analogy" of traditionalist conservatism was supported with a creationist evolutionary vision of society. For them historical nation, which constituted itself as an authentic self in its customs and experiences, denoted a higher stage of organization as compared to the universal system of religious communities.

Thus, for traditionalist conservatives, 'conservatism' emerged as a natural response of the society to preserve its uniqueness and vitality. The ultimate conservative aim was to prevent the dissolution of the national tradition. Conservatism was also a novel answer to the problems of forced-modernization by providing a coherent set of principles and values derived from society's natural response to
preserving all that belonged to itself. It translated society's creed to protect its particularity and authenticity. It was the expression of the social resistance to excessive Westernization. It was also a resistance to any kind of civilizing modernism.

In the traditionalist-conservative perspective, Islamic reactionism was provoked by the limitlessness of the revolutionary desire for 'progress.' Revolutions provoked reactions in every country, be it the French or the Russian case. As already noted, for traditionalist conservatism, reaction was not an accidental and pathological phenomenon but was an organic necessity. However, the unwavering devotion of Islamic reactionism to History and Tradition considered to have emerged from an ahistorical perspective. Kemalism and traditionalist conservatism, on the other hand, were the symbolic expressions of the authentic Turkish experience of transition to modernity. As noted by Safa, Kemalism did not emerge from "the book of revolutions" but it sprang out as a vital organic necessity i.e., from the reflex of the living organism to defend itself, thus it could be understood, defended and legitimized through traditionalist-conservative ideals and aspirations.

In the final analysis, what the traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia wanted to do was to mobilize the national tradition to achieve traditionalist-conservative objectives within a political environment shaped by Kemalist radicalism. Traditionalist conservatives, up to mid 1930s taken an uncompromising stand against all forms of radicalism, as represented in their dispute with the Kadro intellectuals or in their individual polemics with socialist and/or Marxist oriented intelligentsia who viewed Kemalism as a form of revolt by the oppressed nations of the world against capitalist West. This reaction against radicalism was retarded after the University Reform in 1933, when the leading traditionalist figures were expelled from their post in the Turkish academia. Then, following the tough response of the Republican radicals to traditionalist-conservative figures, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals stepped up their critique of the religious reactionaries of the Republic in order to restore their

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prestige and influence within the Kemalist power structure. They had begun to recognize that a clash within the Kemalist structure would endanger their position.

Repression of the religious reactionaries by the regime was successful in the short term. But the ruling elites could not manage this clash with religious reactionaries with repression alone. Thus, in the long run, the Republic felt the necessity to create its own moralists and the traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia were there to answer the call of the Republic as the moral creators of the nation. Another area of support by this group of intellectuals for the regime was in the clash of the regime with religious reactionaries. Republicans leaned upon nationalism and tried to turn universal Islam towards a national path of development. It is crucial to note that traditionalist-conservative intellectuals perceived Kemalist nationalism as a potentially conservative and anti-cosmopolitan [read anti liberal] force. Traditionalist-conservative devotion to culturalism and their attempt to turn the development of religion to a national path gave signs of a new cleavage structure in modernist Kemalist intelligentsia. Though radical Kemalists and this conservative faction were republican in the fullest sense, the latter’s response to religion through cultural nationalism had revealed the first signs of a new cleavage within Republican intelligentsia on secularism-nationalism axis. From then on, the latter would be characterized by its insistence on religious impulse derived from the national tradition. Faced with the radical modernism of the Kemalist policies, traditionalist-conservative intelligentsia responded by turning towards a national and unique way of development. They utilized some progressive issues, such as nationalism, culturalism and secularism to generate a bulwark against radical vision of civilizing modernism.

In the 1930s, traditionalist-conservative intellectuals were located in the intellectual stratum but they were not included in the political center. Politicization of the traditionalist-conservative vocabulary by the ruling elites during the one-party rule, their allegiance, resistances and appropriation of these themes had important repercussions since it led to the emergence of a conservative milieu within the ruling Kemalist center. Traditionalist conservatism created a sense of politics and a ready-
made corpus for RPP during its transformation from early radicalism to evolutionism in the mid-1940s. The other crucial point to remember is that despite the timidity of traditionalist-conservative figures towards the rising political elites in the mid-1940s, the liberal opponents of RPP also utilized traditionalist-conservative themes in varying degrees. By transition to multi-party politics, traditionalist-conservative themes began to be widely utilized as a new policy framework by the newly emergent political elites. In fact, traditionalist conservatism, which was being exploited both by Republicans or Democrats by the mid of 1940s, did not serve to further consolidate the rule of the competing elite groups. What it did, as an intellectual group, was to further legitimize the state.
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