London School of Economics and Political Science

Towards a "New" Turkishness?
Islam, Education and the "Ideal" Turk in the 1950s

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

I declare that my thesis consists of **99,976** words.

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Abstract

Towards a "New" Turkishness? Islam, Education and the Ideal Turk in the 1950s looks at the evolution of Turkish nationalism and national identity between 1950 and 1960 under Prime Minister Adnan Menderes's Demokrat Party (DP). In this quest, it employs education as an instrument of analysis, motivated by the understanding that at the heart of educational change rests questions of identity. Drawing on a wide spectrum of education and education-related material between 1930 and 1960, this project examines the shifts in educational policy in the 1950s; compares and contrasts this era's educational vision against those of the earlier periods; and seeks to understand how and to what extent the pedagogical discourse regarding Turkishness evolved throughout this decade. The 1950s has now become synonymous in Turkish popular consciousness with the emergence of religion within the public sphere and the conceptualisation of a more religious national identity. This project therefore lends particular emphasis to the Menderes government's approaches to religious education, and asks whether religion played a more assertive role in defining what it meant to be Turkish in this period, as historiography suggests. Where appropriate, this project seeks to place Turkey's process of identity-formation in a global perspective, and thereby to understand how Turkey's changing educational mission, and connected to it, its reinterpretation of Turkishness was a response to various domestic transformations and global developments within the context of the Cold War.

Acknowledgements

It is interesting to read through someone's acknowledgements. I think the only time I had read through an author's acknowledgements (before enrolling in the PhD programme) was when I was writing an annotated bibliography for an undergraduate course at the University of Toronto, and I was advised by my T.A. (Teacher's Assistant) to pay attention to who had funded the research behind a certain book. Thereafter, it went back to being a section to simply flip through, if not skip over.

But now, as I am writing my own acknowledgements at the end of a four-year doctoral programme, I realise how much they reveal about the author and their thoughts, and even feelings, about the PhD experience (and I am keen not to call this a "journey" as those who know me will know how much I dislike that word, though I am sure none of them will read this dissertation. They are supportive of it becoming a book, though). Indeed, it is interesting to think about what made the PhD process what it was for me and who I am grateful for as a result.

First things first. My first set of "thank-you" goes to Prof. Marc David Baer for his matchless style of supervision and the extremely valuable feedback he imparted at every step along the way — especially during the final sprint, when what felt like his willingness to prioritise my work over his and reading through what seemed like an endless series of "final versions" of the five chapters that make up this dissertation within less than a day's time prevented many anxious moments from developing into even more anxious moments. His comments and critique, grounded in his wide-ranging knowledge of Turkish and Ottoman history, pushed me to think about the evolution of Turkish nationalism and Turkish national identity from perspectives I had not envisioned (and perhaps had been somewhat afraid to explore). From the LSE community, I would also like to thank Dr. Tanya Harmer and Nayna Bhatti for being such pillars of support throughout these past four years.

There were many dreams about life in academia that I had had before entering the PhD programme. I had a romantic vision of researching in centuries-old libraries and archives, meeting an interesting person after an interesting person, a conversation or a quick chat with whom would spark a thought in my mind that would evolve into another brilliant theme for my research. Unfortunately for me, this never became a reality. In some ways, this is a good thing. I benefitted from the surprising

tech-savviness of the archives I visited in Istanbul and Ankara. The archivists at the archives of the ministry of national education, named Ferit Ragıp Tuncor Bakanlık Arşiv ve Dokümantasyon Kütüphanesi, where I initially thought I would spend more than a week at, told me that the documents I needed had already been scanned in and were available as electronic copies, which they could transfer on to a memory stick. My initial reaction was one of incredulity: who carries a memory stick these days? It turned out that my father did, who was also in Ankara that week. Upon returning the next day, I waited for half an hour while the archivists migrated the documents I needed on to the memory stick, and I had a cup of *çay* with Şeref Bey, the chief archivist, who told me about his recent trip to Canada when he found out that I was also a Canadian citizen.

The venue of the next pleasant surprise was the National Library in Ankara, which houses every book that has ever been published in Turkey, including the primary school textbooks from the 1950s. A lesser-known service of the library is a photocopying service, by which anyone who is using the library could request either a photocopy of an entire book or a part of a book (depending on the copyright). Before anyone thinks I wasted paper, this service is also available electronically, by which the person receives a .pdf copy of the requested pages. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, halfway through my second year, and all libraries and archives shut, this became a life-saver. I was able to forge ahead with my research almost uninterrupted, thanks to this remarkable feature of the National Library. To everyone who contributed to the smooth operation of this service, especially during the several months we spent under lockdown, I am immensely grateful.

The lonely life of a researcher —or at least, the lonely life of me a researcher— would have been unbearable without those who kept reminding me that there was more to my life than books, documents, manuscripts and the constant sound of typing, even if I did not realise it at times. In this respect, I am humbled to say that there is a long trail of people without whom this dissertation would have been impossible to write. My warmest hugs go to the two core members of my “London family,” Tom Fish and Clementine Fish, whose unfailing friendship —grounded in their unrivalled generosity, warmth, kindness, and humour— continues to put a smile on my face every day. Also included within this “family” is Chris Tennant, who has

remained a close friend since we met at LSE in 2013; and Alex Penler, the best PhD candidate-turned-friend I could have asked for, who reassured me that my frustrations were not unfounded, cheered me on, and made me feel like I was not alone in what otherwise could have been an extremely lonely process. Equally warm hugs go to William Moreland, Kristen Belle-Isle, Benjamin "Jeffrey" Sohl, Caitlyn Davis, and Merve Tahiroğlu for showing me how little geographic distance means for those who are willing to traverse it, even if emotionally; being able to turn to you all for counsel, laughter, and at times, much-needed criticism has helped me beyond words every step along the way. Same goes for Adina Lazar (and Iain Findlay), Mahira Hussein Khan, Aneseh Behzadfar and Hasna Sami, for always answering the phone and providing me with a home-away-from home whenever I needed to get away.

A huge upside of researching on Turkish history was that I had the chance to spend an extensive amount of time in Istanbul for the first time since I left the city of my birth in 2007, when I immigrated to Toronto, Canada with my family. The first round of thank-you's and hugs goes to my friends from Deutsche Schule Istanbul, whose undying friendship all through these years and distances I have come to cherish more than they will ever understand: Nazlı Büyükbayrak, Nazlı Sarıkaya (and Kerim Sarıkaya), Cemre Yüksel (and Nihat Yüksel), Mert Bora, and Bengi Peltekoğlu. Another name I will forever associate with my time in Istanbul is Megan Gisclon. Our Friday ritual of a 35K step walk, followed by our "two-bagel lunches" at Moda Sahil, gave me something to look forward every week throughout the Winter 2021 lockdown and made it possible to come out of what could have been a traumatic phase in my life with the fondest of memories; without her, I do not think I would have been sane enough to see this dissertation through to the end. Last but not least, I am grateful for my kindergarten friends from Sihirli Çan, who were happy to make the time to listen to me whenever I needed to complain; if these past four years have not destroyed the bonds we have kept alive for twenty-odd years, nothing ever will.

I would also like to acknowledge the financial support I have received from LSE, the Istanbul Research Institute (Istanbul Araştırma Enstitüsü, IAE), and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). I would especially like to thank Emir Alışık for allowing me to continue the collaboration with IAE even after the end of the funding cycle, foremost by inviting me to contribute to their exhibition

“What Byzantinism is this in Istanbul!” in November 2021. I will also forever be indebted to SSHRC for its incredibly generous support for my project for the past 2.5 years. The financial assistance that the Canadian government allocates to academics and researchers through funding bodies like SSHRC is an example that I hope more and more countries will take inspiration from, if not follow.

My loudest thank-you’s and my warmest hugs go to my family, my sister Zeynep Ekim, my brother Ömürden Ekim, my mother Hülya Ekim and my father Hakan Ekim. If there is anyone apart from myself who can begin to appreciate both the good and the bad of these past four years, it is them.

Introduction

Every nation has its clichés, certain statements and assertions about itself, about its society, and indeed about its history, that have been invoked so often that they have become truisms. Most will not question how these truisms have originated or why they have persisted in conventional wisdom for as long as they have, but continue to pay lip-service to them, thereby perpetrating a biased image of that nation, along with its past and present. Should such truisms be endorsed by regimes or people with cultural gravitas, it extends their lifeline in popular consciousness.

What follows is a story about one such truism of Turkey that has proved remarkably resilient — that Turkey is a battleground between Islamists, who argue in favour of the "reappropriation of Muslim identity and values as a basis for a political and social agenda,"[1] and the so-called *laik*s (French: *laic*), according to whom the state should be in control of religion and religious visibility. This, in turn, has produced a particular reading of Turkish society that views the former as "true Turks," while anyone who do not publicly or visibly embrace their Muslimness, and stand opposed to its expression or exhibition become enemies of these true Turks.

Those who subscribe to this reading of Turkish society also use it a lens to understand the entire course of Turkish history. According to this view, upon establishing the Turkish Republic in 1923, the founding elite embarked on an anti-religious radicalisation that deprived the Turkish people of their Muslim heritage. As a part of this drive, the elite conceptualised a proudly *laik* national identity, which did not allocate any role to Islam in defining what it meant to be a Turk. This reading also claims that this *laik* nationalism persisted throughout the single-handed rule of the founding elite until 1950, when Adnan Menderes's Demokrat Party (DP) emerged victorious at the polls and restored Muslimness back to national identity. Menderes' time in office —between his election on 14 May 1950 and his ousting by Turkey's first military coup on 27 May 1960— then becomes framed as a new epoch in Turkish history, when Turkish society could finally reconnect with its Muslim roots.

When relaying this narrative, some also invoke the term "secularism" instead of *laiklik*. Although the "arguments" section below will present a more detailed

[1] Nilüfer Göle, "Secularism and Islamism in Turkey: The Making of Elites and Counter-Elites," *Middle East Journal* 51, no.1 (1997), p47.

discussion on this, it is important to make a clear distinction at this point, since these terms are frequently misused, including in some of the literature that has been reviewed for this study. One common misperception is that both terms are incorrectly equated with "no religion," which leads to the assumption that the Republican elite eliminated religion from the Turks' conception of themselves. By definition, secularism means the separation of state authorities and institutions from religious authorities and institutions.[2] There are three different formats of secularism: the American style of secularism, which mandates freedom *of* religion in government; the French style of secularism, which mandates freedom *from* religion in government; and the Turkish variant of the French style of secularism, which mandates "strong state control over religion to keep religion out of politics,"[3] or as "subordination of religion to the state,"[4] termed *laiklik* in Turkish. So, neither term actually conveys the complete abandonment of religion.

But it is also incorrect to use "secularism" instead of *laiklik* in the Turkish context. As this dissertation will discuss at length and from various vantage points, even though the state did exclude religion from the public domain and official spaces, which normally would have signified secularism in its French format, it simultaneously controlled how the population was supposed to practice religion, advising them on the "right" kind of Muslimness.[5] This categorically falls under *laiklik.*

In fact, it is one of the aims of this dissertation to show how the various administrations since the 1930s always tried to control religion and redefine what it

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[2] Jenny White, "Islam and politics in contemporary Turkey," in *Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 4: Republic of Turkey*, edited by Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p357.

[3] White, *Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), p27.

[4] White, "Islam and politics in contemporary Turkey," p357.

[5] In fact, arguably the starkest manifestation of laicism is the *Diyanet İşleri Bakanlığı* (Directorate of Religious Affairs) that has control over anything that is connected to religion, including the education of imams, Islamic prayer-leaders, and their assignments to mosques, as well as the enforcement of laws about the wearing of religious clothing or insignia within public spaces, including government institutions, among others. On *Diyanet*, see Amit Bein, *Ottoman Ulema, Turkish Republic: Agents of Change and Guardians of Tradition* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011); and İsmail Kara, "Diyanet İşleri Bakanlığı: Devletle Müslüman Arasında Bir Kurum," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce 6: İslamcılık,* ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2018).

meant to be Muslim, without reducing their relationship with religion into a simply binary choice between embracing it wholeheartedly or abandoning it entirely. To this end, it employs education as an instrument of analysis. By analysing a wide spectrum of education-related material, this dissertation will argue that being Muslim had always been a constant in Turkish national identity, showing that what changed was the definition of what being Muslim entailed. How this appropriation of Islam and redefinition of Muslimness shifted between the 1930s and the 1950s, and the various domestic, geopolitical, and ideological factors that triggered religion's appropriation and then re-appropriation, will be discussed at proper junctures. Correlatively, the dissertation will contribute to our understanding of the 1950s as an outgrowth and continuation of the transformations that had taken place before Menderes took office, and thereby illuminate a cultural vision that had remained consistent throughout the 1930s and 1940s, and then persisted into the 1950s.

Of course, the cultural vision for Turkey these different administrations conceptualised was not just about religion. And this is the second part of the question that this dissertation is concerned with. It will examine how religion fitted in with the larger cluster of values that defined the parameters of the discussion on who belonged to the Turkish nation and could therefore be considered a Turk.

Overall, this dissertation will argue that the same messaging has laid at the heart of Turkish nationalism since 1923: that Turkey is a state for Turkish-Muslims; what changed was the definition of what it meant to be Turkish and Muslim in the nationalist lexicon throughout the decades. Accordingly, it will discuss to what extent various administrations redefined and reappropriated the categories of Turkishness and Muslimness; how these two categories of belonging interacted with each other; as well as what these changes implied for those communities who could not enter the national fold and therefore faced exclusion at each turn.

The aim of this introduction is to survey the history of history-writing on the origins of the Turkish Republic and Turkish nationalism since 1923 until the 2000s, examining the evolution of what has now become the dominant historiography outlined at the start of this introduction. It will then discuss the works of historians who have started to write back against this narrative. The introduction will then introduce the methodology I have chosen for this study, namely education. It will

explain why education is a powerful vehicle of analysis for understanding nationalism and review the previous studies that have looked at the linkages between education, national narratives, and nationalism. Finally, it will discuss how this dissertation employs education to connect with the revisionist historiography and extend their line of analysis into the 1940s and then through the 1950s. Before launching into this discussion, however, it is important to briefly look at the historical context within which the Turkish Republic was established in 1923.

Research context

The question of when the Turkish Republic emerged could merit a historiographical discussion of its own. For the purposes of this dissertation, this section will only state that the modern Turkish Republic emerged after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end World War I and as a reaction to the Treaty of Sevres that the Ottoman Empire signed in 1920. *Sevres* partitioned the Empire's territories among the so-called Allied Powers, the United Kingdom, France, Greece and Italy and created zones of occupation within the territories it retained. One of the most important clauses of the treaty from the perspective of this study was that the province of İzmir on the Aegean coast was going to come under Greek jurisdiction, and whether or not it would be annexed to Greece would be decided in a plebiscite within five years' time.[6] *Sevres* furthermore proposed the cessation of the provinces of Bitlis, Erzurum, Trabzon, and Van in Eastern Anatolia to Armenia[7], and stipulated that a plebiscite would be held to determine the fate of the predominantly Kurdish areas, which the treaty mapped out as lying east of the Euphrates, south of the southern border of Armenia, and north of Turkey's frontier with Syria."[8]

Various forces of resistance ("*Kuva-yi Milliye*") had sprung up in reaction to the *Sevres*. Mustafa Kemal consolidated them into a larger movement under his command and led a series of military campaigns —which would later be referred to as the War of Independence— against the occupation forces between 1919 and 1922. The war ended with the successful defeat of the enemy, resulting in the *Sevres*'s revision into

[6] Articles 65-83, "The Treaty of Serves."
[7] Ibid., Articles 88-90.
[8] Ibid., Article 62.

the Treaty of Lausanne on 24 July 1923, which restored to Turkish sovereignty the lands that had been promised to Greece and Armenia and cancelled the plebiscite on the future of Kurdistan.

It was the leaders of these military campaigns, spearheaded by Mustafa Kemal, and those who had served in other leadership capacities during the struggle for independence that established the Republic of Turkey on 23 October 1923. Along with the *Kuva-yi Milliye* forces in Anatolia, there had also sprung up various organisations called "associations for the defence of rights" ("müdafaa-i hukuk cemiyetleri"), which effectively served as the political wing of these resistance forces. Mustafa Kemal united these disparate bodies in 1919 into the wider "Association for the Defence of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia," which then morphed into Turkey's first political party in 1923, named the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, or CHP).

The founding elite wanted the modern Republic to mark a sharp departure from the Ottoman Empire in virtually every sphere of life. From the ashes of what they saw as a non-modern, eastern and Islamic empire, they wanted to build a modern, western nation-state, wherein religion was swept away from public spaces into private domains, apart from places of prayer. To this end, the regime pushed through a series of reforms between 1925 and 1934 that aimed to uproot this traditional social order grounded in Eastern-Islamic norms, values and practices.

As part of the Treaty of Lausanne, Greece and Turkey also concluded a separate "Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations,"[9] commonly referred to as the population exchange of 1923. The convention provided for an involuntary transfer of the Muslim population of Greece, including the Greek-speaking Muslims, to what became Turkey, and the Orthodox-Christians of Turkey, many of whom were Greek-speaking but also included Armenian- and Turkish-speaking Orthodox communities, to Greece. The Ottoman Empire had been losing most of its Christian-populated territories since the nineteenth century; several developments —including the Balkan Wars in the lead-up to World War I (1912-1913), World War I, the War of Independence as well as the genocide against the Armenians

[9] The reference to the convention is under Article 142 of the Treaty of Lausanne. For the text of the convention, see https://www.mfa.gov.tr/lausanne-peace-treaty-vi_-convention-concerning-the-exchange-of-greek-and-turkish-populations-signed-at-lausanne_.en.mfa.

of the Ottoman Empire (1915) had already resulted in a mass exodus of the empire's non-Muslim populations. The non-Muslim population now shrank further after the population exchange. Yet, the population of modern Turkey was still not homogenous in 1923, with sizeable ethnic, linguistic and religious minority communities living within the territories of what became the Turkish Republic, along with a Turkish-speaking Sunni Muslim-majority population. It was for this population —that was multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious— that the CHP was to create a monolithic national identity that ignored its linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity, upholding only the Turkishness and Muslimness of its majority.

Historiography

To challenge the dominant historiography, one must understand how this dominant historiography came into being in the first place. This is why this introduction will analyse the history of Turkish history-writing since the 1930s, when the founding elite crafted the first narrative on the origins of the Republic and Turkish nationalism and will then examine how this narrative evolved over time.

The first sub-section of this discussion revolves around the Republic's founding narrative, which was premised on the assertion that modern Turkey represented a sharp break from the country's immediate, Islamic and Eastern past. This narrative was only challenged in the 1950s, when it was revised against the backdrop of changing domestic dynamics as well as the onset of the Cold War, as will be expounded upon in the relevant sub-section. The official narrative no longer branded the *laik* Republic as a complete departure from what immediately preceded it, but "located" the roots of Republican *laiklik* in a series of developments that took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A more existential challenge to the foundational narrative came in the 1960s, when those writing on the Republic's origins discussed the existence of a conservative identity in the country's rural areas that embraced public displays of religiousness; this had developed in parallel to the state-sponsored *laik* identity, which, they argued, had always found subscription only in the country's urbanised areas. The next set of historiographical revisions occurred in the 1980s, when, the dominant historiography argues, Islam was absorbed as a core constituent into Turkish national identity. This triggered the final series of changes to

the foundational narrative in 1990s and 2000s, which defend the view that those who had touted a *laik* Turkishness in the 1930s had imposed a foreign identity on the population and that the "real" Turks were proud Muslims.

The "official history" the early Republic, 1923-1950

The first scholars to grapple with the history of Turkish identity were the founders of the modern Republic themselves, whose works in this field began in earnest in the 1930s. The Republican reforms had set in motion a series of political, economic, legal, social, as well as cultural changes, with the ultimate aim of transforming the country into a *laik* nation-state inspired by the West. One of the aims of this "official" history was to justify these changes. If the purpose of a national narrative is to tell the nation the story of its origins, this "official" narrative was going to tell this story in such a way that the way of life promoted by the Republic would emerge as more suitable to Turks than the way of life their ancestors would have lived under the Ottoman Empire, dictated via Islamic edits. Such concerns determined how history would be written and taught for the coming generations.[10]

According to Mustafa Kemal, "a simple Anatolian tribe could not have established an empire," referring to the *Osmanoğulları* principality that evolved into the Ottoman Empire, and that there had to be a different explanation.[11] This resulted in the founding of the Turkish Historical Society in 1929 (which will be referred to as the Society), tasked with uncovering the Turks' "lost" history. Within a year of its establishment in 1930, the Society had already released its first book, *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* (*The Outlines of Turkish History*, to be referred to as *Outlines*), that "explained" who the Turks were. As per its foreword, the books on Turkish history, especially those available in Western languages, but mostly those in French, misrepresented the role Turks had played in world history and undermined their contribution to the development of civilisation. Therefore, *Outlines* had been written

[10] In a way, the revolutionaries were made into historians, who then became nation builders, as expressed in Dennis Deletant and Harry Hanak, editors, *Historians as Nation Builders: Central and Southeast Europe* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1988).
[11] Afet İnan, "Atatürk ve Tarih Tezi," *Belleten* 3, no:10 (April 1939), pp244-245.

to rectify such travesties and restore the Turks' true reputation.[12] Initially, only a hundred copies of *Outlines* were published and circulated among historians and other experts, who were asked to review and comment on the material.[13] However, Atatürk judged the work to be deficient and inadequate. The Society therefore commissioned the production of a more detailed study that would delve deeper into the themes explored in *Outlines.* The result was the simply-titled, four-volume work *Tarih* (*History*). *Outlines* and *History* became the foundational texts of the Kemalist school of historiography on Turkey and Turkish identity. They were also the first public statements of the Turkish History Thesis (henceforth referred to as the Thesis), replacing the Ottoman- and Islamic-centred approach to Turkish history that had hitherto dominated the nation's textbooks.

The Thesis put forward three claims that are connected to the scope of this study. First, Turks were the progenitors of world civilisations, having created the world's first civilisation in Central Asia and then every other "great" civilisation that consequently contributed to the development of the world of the 1930s. The second claim was connected to the handling of the history of the Ottoman Empire. *Outlines* allocated more than a hundred pages to its discussion on Anatolian civilisations, whereas only 58 pages were dedicated to the history of the Ottoman Empire.[14] In a similar vein, while Volumes 1 and 2 of *History* took the reader from the Stone Age until the Fall of the Roman Empire and through the "Turkish" history of Central Asia until the rise of the Seljuk dynasty (1037 AD-1308 AD),[15] respectively, and Volume 4 was dedicated to the history of the Turkish Republic, only a decade long at the time, the Ottoman Empire received a perfunctory mention in Volume 3 and only within the

[12] Members of Turkish Historical Society ("*Türk Tarih Heyeti*") Afet Hanım, Mehmet Tevfik, Samih Rifat, Akçura Yusuf [*sic*], Dr. Reşit Galip, Hasan Cemil, Sadri Maksudi, Şemsettin, Vasıf ve Yusuf Beyler, *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1930), pp1-3.
[13] On the production of this work: Semavi Eyice, "Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları," *Belleten* 32, no.129 (October 1968); and İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Türk Tarihi Yazılırken: Atatürk'ün Alaka ve Görüşlerine Dair Hatıralar," *Belleten* 3, no.10 (April 1939); and Bekir Sıtkı Baykan, "Atatürk ve Tarih," *Belleten* 35, no.140 (October 1971).
[14] See the table contents in Türk Tarih Heyeti, *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*.
[15] See Volumes 1 and 2 of *Tarih, Tarih I: Tarihten Evvelki Zamanlar ve Eski Zamanlar* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1930); and *Tarih 2: Orta Zamanlar* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1930).

context of European history.[16] Third, the Thesis claimed that the earliest people to establish a civilisation in Anatolia were the Hittites, who were also the earliest known ancestors of modern Turks, and every other civilisation that existed in Anatolia thereafter built on what had been laid down by the Hittites.[17]

The main conclusions of the Thesis have received considerable scholarly attention. Büşra Ersanlı and Etienne Copeaux's studies stand out for analysing these claims against the political context in which they were formulated, unpacking them as products of the early Republic's social and political agenda.[18] Since the Thesis was written to dislodge the claim that Turks had descended from an inferior heritage (as stated in the foreword to *History* and mentioned above), labelling every "great" civilisation as Turkish was going to "prove" Turks' superiority. In return, the "rediscovery" of this great heritage was going to instil in every Turk a sense of pride in belonging to the Turkish nation.[19] The pride of "realising" that their ancestors had been responsible for so much "greatness" was going to be so overwhelming for Turks that it was going to develop them into loyal nationalists.[20]

Another reason was that the Republican leadership needed to justify the logic behind its westernising reforms, when the country had spent much of the previous decade locked in an existential struggle against the western world. Connected to this, the Western cultural tropes the state promoted in lieu of the Ottoman-Islamic values seemed too artificial to form the basis of any popular nationalism.[21] As Tanıl Bora

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[16] See Volumes 3 and 4 of *Tarih, Tarih 3: Yeni ve Yakın Zamanlarda Osmanlı-Türk Tarihi* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1930); and *Tarih 4: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1930).

[17] Tanıl Bora, *Cereyanlar: Türkiye'de Siyasi İdeolojiler* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2017), p231.

[18] Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih: Türkiye'de "Resmi Tarih" Tezinin Oluşumu (1929-1937)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003); Etienne Copeaux, *Tarih Ders Kitaplarında (1931-1993) Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk-İslam Sentezine* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006). Also see, Ersanlı, "History Textbooks as Reflections of the Political Self: Turkey (1930s and 1990s) and Uzbekistan (1990s)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no.2 (2002).

[19] Ahmet Yıldız, *"Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene": Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), p162; and Onur Atalay, *Türk'e Tapmak: Seküler Din ve İki Savaş Arasında Kemalizm* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2018), p202.

[20] Füsun Üstel's studies on this subject show how, even before the creation of the Thesis, the overarching goal of primary education was to have the youth dedicate themselves to the service of their homeland and nation. See, Füsun Üstel, *Makbul Vatandaşın Peşinde: II. Meşrutiyet'ten Günümüze Vatandaşlık Eğitimi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), p276-283.

[21] Kaplan, *Atatürk Devri Fikir Hayatı,* p41.

argues, the Thesis was supposed to help overcome both these issues, allowing the early Republican leadership to frame "westernisation" as a return to Turkey's true self that had been forgotten over the centuries. The Thesis claimed that Turks had created every civilisation that eventually contributed to the production of contemporary civilisation — which, in the era's lexicon, corresponded to the Western civilisation, after which the Republic was in the process of modelling itself. The Thesis now asserted that every technique, method, or even ideology that had enabled the development of European civilisation was invented or produced by Turks. So, the roots of Western civilisation were Turkish, and by becoming more Western, Turks were actually being reformed into their original selves, becoming more Turkish in the process.[22] In return, any behaviour, tradition, or value system that clashed with the way of life the Republic was promoting, meaning those under the Ottoman Empire, was simply "un-Turkish." Connected to this, searching for the roots of Turkish "greatness" within the geographical and cultural spaces that were disconnected from the country's Ottoman-Islamic past was going to minimise the Ottoman Empire's significance within the trajectory of Turks' historical development.[23] It was for this reason that the Ottoman Empire, although never completely struck out of educational material, was dislodged from the epicentre of Turkish history and contextualised within a larger narrative that spanned the entire course of world history.

Vis-à-vis the claim regarding Anatolia, showing that Turks were the first people to inhabit this geography was going to rebut any rivalling claims over Anatolia that were being made at the time by Greece and Armenia. Greeks could present a viable claim of having existed in Anatolia much earlier, since the Greek legacy of Anatolia was still visible in the 1930s, in the form of various monuments and historical sites in cities across Turkey dating back to Ancient Greece and the Byzantine Empire, as well as in the form of sizeable Greek communities living in Turkey's cities who could trace their heritage back several centuries.[24] For their part, Armenians claimed that a part of

[22] Bora, *Cereyanlar*, p229.
[23] İsmail Kaplan, editor, *Atatürk Devri Fikir Hayatı* vol.1 (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1992), p230; and see, Elif Geçkal Erkoler, *Dindar Nesil Yetiştirmek: Türkiye'nin Eğitim Politikalarında Ulus ve Vatandaş Kaygısı* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2019), p46.
[24] Herkül Milas, "Milli Türk Kimliği ve 'Öteki' Türk Kimliği," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce 4: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), p196

eastern Anatolia, the territory between the southern shore of Lake Van in the south and the Black Sea coast in the north, belonged to the greater historical homeland of the Armenians. Labelling the Hittites, who lived in Anatolia before the establishment of the classical world of Greeks and Armenians in this geography, as Turkish was supposed to "prove" that Turks were the oldest people to inhabit this space and buttress the Turkishness of Anatolia.

This interpretation would be channelled through almost every book on Turkish history between the 1930s and the early 1950s. Among the dominant texts were anything written by Afet İnan, but especially "Tarihten Evvel ve Tarihin Fecrinde" ("Pre-History and the Dawn of History")[25] and *Vatandaş İçin Medeni Bilgiler*[26] (*Manual of Civic Virtues*), Mahmut Esat Bozkurt's *Atatürk İhtilali* (*Atatürk Revolution*) [27], Recep Peker's *İnkilap Dersleri* (*Lessons on Revolution*)[28], and Saffet Engin's *Kemalizm İnkilabının Prensipleri* (*Principles of the Kemalist Revolution*).[29] İnan was one of Atatürk's eight adopted daughters and could be said to have formulated the Thesis on behalf of Atatürk under his direct supervision. In her "manual of civic virtues," she dismissed the role of religion in consolidating a nation, asserting that patriotism exerted a much more potent agency in this regard.[30] She also claimed that every continent had been a home to Turks, evidenced by Turks' contributions to the world civilization; and that Ottoman sultans had been agents of foreign powers. Bozkurt posited that the Kemalist reforms had resulted in the rediscovery of Turkish history as richer than that of any other culture.[31] Peker's work expounded upon the negative

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and p199. For an interesting discussion on the concept of homeland and territoriality, see Behlül Özkan, *From the Abode of Islam to the Turkish Vatan: The Making of a National Homeland in Turkey* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012).

[25] Afet İnan, "Tarihten Evvel ve Tarihin Fecrinde," in *Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi Zabıtları* (İstanbul, 1932).

[26] Afet İnan, ed., *Vatandaş İçin Medeni Bilgiler* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931).

[27] Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, *Atatürk İhtilali* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1995). Note that the work was originally published in 1940. Also see, Umut Üzer, *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism: Between Turkish Ethnicity and Islamic Identity* (Salt Lake City, UT: Utah University Press, 2016), p113. — Bozkurt would also serve as the minister of justice, and supervise the secularization of Turkish law and adoption of legal codes from Europe.

[28] Recep Peker, *İnkılap Dersleri* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1984). Peker's work was originally published in 1935.

[29] Saffet Engin, *Kemalizm İnkılabının Prensipleri* (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Matbaası, 1938).

[30] İnan, *Vatandaş İçin Medeni Bilgiler*, p11.

[31] Bozkurt, *Atatürk İhtilali*, pp381-382.

aspects of the Ottoman Empire, while Engin asserted that Turkish history was tantamount to world history, attributing every turning-point that developed and moved the Western civilization forward to Turks.[32]

The titles of the best-known books in foreign languages in this period conveyed a similar view of Turkey. They presented the Republic as a radical departure, and the country's founder, Mustafa Kemal, as a *deus ex machina*, who forged a fresh new beginning that owed hardly anything to its Ottoman past.[33] These accounts accepted 1923 as the crucial dividing line between the "old" and "new" Turkey, with the latter standing for the antithesis of everything the former had purportedly represented. The "old" Turkey amounted to an antiquated civilization, in which a religious outlook reigned supreme.[34] By contrast, the "new" Turkey was unyoked from any attachment to Islam, God, or the Sultan-Caliph; historically rooted in Central Asian and Anatolian civilizations; and culturally anchored in the West. Furthermore, the Republic had not only restored "real" Turkish values back to the Turkish people, but it also constituted the crowning moment in the nation's long history. All these works conformed to the analogy of a "phoenix from the ashes," presenting a cinematic arc of development for the story of the establishment of the Republic, with Atatürk emerging to the forefront and basking under the spotlight all on his own as "The Great Man of (Turkish) History."

Of course, not every historian fell in line. Fuat Köprülü, Ahmet Refik Altınay, and Zeki Velidi Togan were among the leading scholars who questioned the sources and methods of the politically-oriented historians that consciously allowed for ruptures within historical continuity and insisted on methodological soundness. In reaction to the Thesis, for instance, Köprülü argued that it was a mistake to disrupt

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[32] Engin, *Kemalizm İnkılabının Prensipleri*, p143 and p194.

[33] The list is extensive; in chronological order: Berthe Georges-Gaulis, *La Nouvelle Turquie* (Paris: Colin, 1924); Elliott Grinell Mears, *Modern Turkey: A Politico-Economic Interpretations, 1908-1923* (London: MacMillan, 1924); Halide Edip Adıvar, *Turkey Faces West: A Turkish View of Recent Changes and Their Origins* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1930); Henry Elisha Allen, *The Turkish Transformation: A Study in Social and Religious Development* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1935); Sir Harry Luke, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: MacMillan, 1936); Herbert Melzig, *Kamal Atatürk: Untergang und Aufstieg der Türkei* (Frankfurt: Societats-Verlag, 1937); Eleanor Brisbee, *The New Turks: Pioneers of the Republic, 1920-1950* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1951); Geoffrey Lewis, *Modern Turkey* (New York, NY: F.A. Praeger, 1955); İrfan Olga, *Phoenix Ascendant: The Rise of Modern Turkey* (London: Robert Hale Publishing, 1958).

[34] Bora, *Türk Sağının Üç Hali,* p41.

the chronological order of historical developments, and tried to emancipate the historical narrative from the early Republican obsession with pre-historic ages.[35] He wrote his seminal work *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kuruluşu* (*Origins of the Ottoman Empire*) in 1934, in which he traced the Ottoman Empire back to the Anatolian principalities, which, Köprülü claimed, sprang up across Anatolia in the aftermath of the collapse of the Anatolian Seljuk Sultanate (1077 AD-1308 AD). The book was heavily criticised for refusing to gloss over the Ottoman and Seljuk centuries and not linking the Republic with Central Asian and Anatolian civilizations, and thereby distorting the dominant historical sequencing favoured by the regime at the time. Köprülü ultimately published his book in France, where he was in self-exile.[36]

Ahmet Refik Altınay made a similar point by putting forward that, instead of searching for the essence of Turkishness in "pre-historic" documents and artefacts, an in-depth analysis of Ottoman history —with all its glories and embarrassments— should also feature in the official narrative of the nation.[37] Altınay also criticized what was named the Asia Migration Theory, which the Thesis had employed to "explain" the Turks' westward migration from Central Asia, where they had created the world's first civilisation, into the Anatolian heartlands. Altınay put forward that the alleged drought had actually predated human existence and could therefore not be the trigger behind Turks' migration out of this space. As a result, he was forced to leave his post at Istanbul University and left for Vienna, only to return after Atatürk's death in 1939.

Furthermore, Zeki Velidi Togan also questioned these official approaches to history-writing, cautioning against the dangers of confining historical studies to a narrow intellectual space, whose parameters were set by the political leadership.[38] To form a credible opinion on Turkish history, he posited, one should focus on the "historic" periods, referring foremost to the Ottoman Empire, on which there was

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[35] Referenced in Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih,* p155.
[36] Halil İnalcık, "Türk İlmi ve Fuad Köprülü," *Türk Kültürü*, no.65 (1968), pp289-294.
[37] Referenced in Zafer Toprak, "Türkiye'de Çağdaş Tarihçilik, 1908-1970," in *Türkiye'de Sosyal Bilim Araştırmalarının Gelişimi,* ed. Sevil Atauz (Ankara: Türk Sosyal Bilimler Derneği, 1988), p431; also see, Muzaffer Gökman, *Tarihi Sevdiren Adam, Ahmet Refik Altınay* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1978).
[38] Zeki Velidi Togan, *Tarihte Usul* (İstanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1950). Togan explains in the foreword that the book was based on the lecture notes he prepared for a course of the same name at Istanbul University between 1929-1932.

ample, scientifically-sound, first-hand material.[39] Facing a similar fate as Altınay, Togan was also forced to step down from his lectureship at Istanbul University.

The first challenges to official history: 1950-1980

The image of Turkey created in the works of İnan, Bozkurt, Peker and Engin formed the basis of Turkish historiography until the 1950s. There are several reasons why it went largely unchallenged.[40] First and foremost, history-writing remained a venue of controlled discourse[41] — which discouraged historians from barging out of the nationalist framework and embarking on a critical venture into Turkey's recent past to revise the Thesis, as Köprülü, Altınay and Togan's experiences showed. In terms of why Atatürk was able to orchestrate a consensus on this image of Turkey among non-Turkish historians, Erik Zürcher writes that it appealed to a wide spectrum of opinion in the West. To the liberals and the social-democrats, the replacement of the court of the Sultan-Caliph with a representative government was a triumph for democratic values; while for those on the intellectual left, the independence struggle could be framed as a success-story within the narrative of anti-colonial struggles.[42]

This master narrative came under questioning in the 1950s, with Turkey's transition into multi-party democracy and the end of the CHP's single-handed rule over Turkish politics. With the victory of the Demokrat Party at the polls in 1950, the state stopped operating in a Kemalist straitjacket, which lifted the restrictions on academic inquiries. The reasons for and the consequences of this change are discussed in Chapter 1. The introduction will pay attention to another development that unfolded against the backdrop of the Cold War and influenced the nature of history-writing in this period. This was the greater degree of interest in Turkish history from the intellectual and academic circles in the U.S., who were engaged in a struggle to win the hearts and minds of the newly post-colonial nations and entice them into

[39] Togan, *Umumi Türk Tarihine Giriş 1: En Eski Devirlerden 16. Asra Kadar* (İstanbul: İş Bankası Yayınları, 2019), see the book's introduction. The work was originally published in 1946, and was based on the lectures he delivered at Istanbul University in 1928.
[40] Erik J. Zürcher, "The Ottoman Legacy of the Turkish Republic: An Attempt at Periodization," *Die Welt des Islams* no.32 (1992), pp. 238-239.
[41] Frank Tachau, "The Search for National Identity Among the Turks," *Die Welt des Islams* 8, no.3 (1963), p174.
[42] Ibid.

the Western fold by showcasing the benefits of the Western style of life.[43] This led to the formulation of a theory of modernisation, which posited that traditional societies would be transformed into modern states, if they followed the Western model. To this end, Turkey had much to offer.[44]

Nathan Citino writes that, for the experts at the Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs at the U.S. State Department, Turkey appeared in the middle of the "American Middle East Map."[45] Unlike the Arab states, Turkey was a Muslim-majority country that followed a pro-Western foreign policy, manifested through its acceptance of the Marshall Plan, an American recovery programme to finance the rebuilding efforts of European countries after 1945; an active interest in joining Western alliances, chief among which was the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and recognition of the state of Israel. Also, Turkey seemed to be in agreement with the U.S. policymakers on the basic precepts of modernisation. The Republic's state- and nation-building process had been carried out in a way that confirmed all the expectations of U.S. theoreticians, "succeeding as an elite-driven institution-building process, inspired exclusively from the West" and driven by a commitment to what these policymakers identified as secularism.[46] (It should be noted here —as it will also be argued at length under the "arguments" section— that this was an incorrect

[43] For the latest works on the U.S.-Turkey cultural relations in the 1950s and how this impacted the construction of the modernisation theory, see: Begüm Adalet, *Hotels and Highways: The Construction of Modernization Theory in Cold War Turkey* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018); Nicholas Danforth, "Malleable Modernity: Rethinking the Role of Ideology in American Policy, Aid Programs and Propaganda in the Fifties," *Diplomatic History* 39, no.3 (2015); Perin Gürel, *The Limits of Westernisation: A Cultural History of America in Turkey* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007); and Nathan Citino, "The Ottoman Legacy in Cold War Modernization," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no.4 (2008). Also interesting in this regard is Michael Meeker, *A Nation of Empire: The Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernization* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).

[44] There is abundant literature on the modernisation theory. Aside from the books cited specifically on U.S.-Turkish relations, see Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Michael Hunt, *Ideology and Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); and William Hitchcock, "Marshall Plan and the Modernization of the West," in *Cambridge History of the Cold War: Origins, 1945-1962*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[45] Nathan Citino, "The Ottoman Legacy in Cold War Modernization," p586.

[46] Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşit Kasaba, "Introduction," in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, ed. Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşit Kasaba (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1997), p3.

application of the term secularism. Secularism, in the way that it is used here, refers to the separation of state authorities from religious authorities and creation of a political infrastructure free from the influence of religious teachings. This, however, did not reflect the Turkish realities at the time, as it overlooked the state's control over religion through such regulatory bodies as *Diyanet*.) As a result, it seemed as if the early Republican reforms had already transformed Turkey into a successful model of an American-defined modernity. These all set a convenient stage for American researchers who were assembling facts to confirm the superiority of the Western model — catapulting Turkey "into a model to be emulated, a case to be explained and a laboratory in which to experiment. It was both a template on which modernization theory was based and object on which it was enacted."[47]

One of the fathers of modernisation theory, Dankwart Rustow led the first U.S. study group on the Middle East to conduct fieldwork in Turkey in 1954-1955.[48] He mentioned in his writings that his goal was to prepare an overview of the political agendas of the early Republican governments and the DP and compare them against the overarching mission of the Young Turk movement. The Young Turks was a political organisation that was active in the nineteenth century, whose members were united in their opposition to the autocratic regime of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r.1876-1909) and their wish to prevent the dissolution of the empire.[49] Yet, this was where the members' commonalities stopped, since the membership represented a wide spectrum of opinions and political leanings. Nonetheless, Rustow only lent emphasis to the Young Turks' positivism, concluding that the Young Turks had realised the supremacy of the sciences and empiricism, in lieu of religion, as the organising principles of life. This led him to "locate" the beginnings of Turkey's so-called modernisation efforts in the late Ottoman Empire, as opposed to 1923.[50]

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[47] Adalet, *Hotels and* Highways, pp2-3.
[48] See Thomas Naff, editor, *Paths to the Middle East: Ten Scholars Look Back* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993).
[49] Şükrü Hanioğlu, *The Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p144.
[50] Robert E. Ward and Dankwart Rustow, editors, *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964); Rustow, *A World of Nations: Problems of Political Modernization* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1967). Although it must be noted that Rustow would later question his earlier views on U.S.-Turkish partnership in

Other leading scholars of "development and democratisation studies" presented similar analyses. For instance, Lewis Thomas glorified the legacy of the reforms promulgated in the Ottoman Empire between 1839 and 1874 under Sultans Abdülmecid I (r.1839-1861) and Abdülaziz (r.1861-1876), arguing that "the key to Turkey's internal stability was to be found in its own history…because the generation now in power are…the sons of the last generation who ran the Ottoman Empire."[51] Framing Atatürk as a man of his times, he also interpreted the Kemalist reforms as a step in a cumulative process that stretched back to the nineteenth century.[52] Daniel Lerner, another scholar of this field, posited that "what America is…the Middle East is striving to become."[53] In his best-known work on the subject, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*, he argued that any nation could be "modern" by adopting the social and political practices and institutions that were the basis of Western countries. In this sense, he also concurred with the significance of the Ottoman past, recognizing Turkey as an example rather than the exception and adding that "its past provided a model…for the role of dynamic government in the critical decades of rapid growth that lied ahead."[54] Added to these were the writings of George McGhee, the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey between 1951 and 1953, who appreciated Turkey's potential as a model of development in the region.[55]

This trend encouraged several historians to rethink the earlier approaches to history-writing. Assigning history a teleological mission, they searched for the ideological antecedents of the republic in earlier periods. The result was the tracing of

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Turkey, America's Forgotten Ally (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1989). He would see Turkey as a singular ally with a specific legacy of reform that could not be replicated elsewhere. His familiarity with Turkey made him grow sceptical of the modernization theory's universalistic claims as well as its negligence of particularities.

[51] Citino, "The Ottoman Legacy in Cold War Modernization," p587.

[52] Ibid., p588.

[53] Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1958) p79.

[54] See the arguments in Daniel Lerner and Richard D. Robinson, "Swords and Ploughshares: The Turkish Army as a Modernizing Force," *World Politics* 13 (1960), p44.

[55] See for instance, George C. McGhee, *Envoy to the Middle East: Adventures in Diplomacy* (New York, NY: Harper&Row Publishers, 1983), p81; and also, McGhee, *U.S.-Turkish-NATO Middle East Connection: How the Truman Doctrine Contained the Soviets in the Middle East* (New York, NY: St. Martin's, 1990), introduction; and McGhee, "Turkey Joins the West," *Foreign Affairs* (July 1954).

a steady development of westernisation in the late Ottoman Empire until the "inevitable" emergence of the Republic. One of the best-known examples of this strand is Bernard Lewis' *The Emergence of Modern Turkey.* Lewis problematized the chief function of Kemalist history-writing, which had been to "destroy" what remained of the Ottoman and Islamic feelings of identity, and to have later generations view the empire as a historical burden that the Republic fortunately cast off. *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* opens with narrating the decline of the Ottoman Empire in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, discusses the impact of the West on the far-reaching reforms to the empire's administrative style and social reorganization in the nineteenth century, and finally remarks on the Republic. Lewis argues that Atatürk's reforms built on this Ottoman legacy that had been prodding Turkey in the direction of a western-leaning, "secular" state for the past two centuries.[56] In another example of modernisation literature, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*,[57] Niyazi Berkes illustrates how the disruption of traditional structures of Ottoman society over the course of two centuries, necessitated by successive military defeats and a worsening economic situation, eventually culminated in the appearance of Turkey as a "secular" nation-state. Although Lewis and Berkes invoke the term "secularism," they discuss the elimination of religion and religiosity from the public domain under the Republic *as well as* the state's efforts to prevent religious influence in various other spheres, which by definition should have corresponded to *laiklik*; they do refer to these changes as the products of the Turkish version of secularism in their texts, however.

Another pioneering work of this period is Şerif Mardin's *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought.*[58] Mardin, too, seeks to delineate the antecedents of Turkish political thought, but traces its ideological roots even farther back to the eighteenth century, concentrating his analysis on the Young Ottomans, whom he identifies as a group of Ottoman intellectuals who wanted to modernise the empire along European-inspired lines. He describes them as the earliest forerunners of modernisation, even

[56] Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).
[57] Niyazi Berkeş, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964).
[58] Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962).

adding that there was "hardly an area of modernization [in contemporary Turkey] that did not take its roots from the work of the Young Ottomans."[59]

Analysed together, the works of Lewis, Berkeş and Mardin —along with those of Rustow, Thomas, Lerner and McGhee— posited that certain developments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries laid down the groundwork for the Kemalist movement in the twentieth century. At a first glance, their analyses may seem to be contradicting the early Republican discourse. This is accurate to some degree since their work did break with the earlier "obsession" with locating Turkey's roots in Central Asian civilizations and provided continuity along the Ottoman-Turkish axis. However, these scholars still accepted the Turkish state and society as undifferentiated entities, characterized by Western-inspired modernity as well as the absence of any attachment to Islam, which was the principal feature of the Republican paradigm that had hitherto dominated the historical literature.

In this sense, it was the historians of the 1960s that caused the first cracks in the Republic's edifice of scholarship. In terms of the scope of this dissertation, the most important change was a "bottom-up" approach to understanding Turkey, with historians studying the micro-aspects of social change in both the Ottoman Empire and the Republic and analysing the cultural and societal transformations from the vantage point of "ordinary people" who were removed from the loci of power. A summary of their critiques was that the policies the founding elite followed "negated the historical and cultural experience of the people in Turkey."[60] It had proved almost impossible to generate a genuine support from the public for the restriction of religion to the private realm; religion was a manual according to which people organised virtually every sphere of their lives and its absence from the public domain was disorientating. These historians did not reflect on the experience of westernisation as a success story, but as a failure that "undermined the normative order in society."[61]

One of the most influential works in this regard was Şerif Mardin's "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics."[62] In this article, Mardin investigates the

[59] Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, pp3-4.
[60] Bozdoğan and Kasaba, "Introduction," p4.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Şerif Mardin, "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics," *Daedalus* 12, no.1 (1973).

dynamics that led to major confrontations within Ottoman and Turkish political life, concluding that they all stemmed from the ideological cleavages and the emotional gap between the urban centre and non-urbanized periphery.[63] Instead of establishing contact with the rural populations, the CHP had followed the Ottoman tradition of only investing in institutions that would shape a generation of foot-soldiers at the centre, and could therefore not secure a firm commitment to its ideology across the entire geography, Mardin explains.[64] In return, traditional patterns of everyday life subsisted across rural Turkey, while the new cosmopolitan culture that the elite wanted to create took root and germinated only at the core.

This argument would appear in the works of several historians in the later decades, such as Richard Tapper,[65] Onur Atalay, and Metin Tamkoç. Similar to Mardin, Atalay identifies the urbanised, educated middle and upper-classes as the "main targets" of the revolution, while Islam continued to fester in rural areas.[66] Tamkoç's *Warrior Diplomats* merits further recognition, as it builds upon Mardin's arguments in several ways. Tamkoç describes the transformation of Turkish national identity in the early Republic as a "super-structural revolution," drawing traditional society towards modernity through authoritarian means.[67] He adds that a second revolution should have followed, pushing through drastic changes to Turkey's socio-economic life, uprooting traditional values and recasting the traditional infrastructure, with "traditional" referring to the Islamic norms and value-systems that had governed the routines of everyday life in the Ottoman Empire and still dictated much of it for the rural population after 1923.[68] This, however, never happened, which resulted in the persistence of these structures across much of Turkey.

Mardin's contribution to Turkish historiography is extremely important. It has been referenced frequently since its publication and laid down one of the founding blocks of what would form the dominant narrative of Turkish history. Not only did

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[63] Mardin, "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics," p171.
[64] Ibid., pp183-184.
[65] See for instance: the essays in Richard Tapper, editor, *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics and Literature in a Secular Society* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991).
[66] Atalay, *Türk'e Tapmak*, p89.
[67] Metin Tamkoç, *Warrior Diplomats: Guardians of National Security and Turkey's Modernization* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1976), p120-121.
[68] Ibid., p114.

Mardin, and later Atalay and Tamkoç, recognize the existence of a pattern of identification that was disconnected from the state-sanctioned, western-influenced national identity, but he also asserted that the Kemalist narrative on Turkey described the experience of only a small percentage of the Turkish population. Yet, one must be wary of reading this as a criticism of Kemalism as an anti-democratic imposition, which would come to the fore only in the 1990s. In fact, Mardin and Tamkoç did not delegitimise the Kemalist framework, but the Kemalist version of history would no longer be *the* official narrative of Turkish history, either. It was now reduced to the status of being a constitutive element within a larger narrative. This narrative still acknowledged the *laik* identity of the central state but confined the scope of its influence to the country's urban centres, in parallel to which had developed an alternative identity that was still formulated on the basis of conservative values.

The emergence of a master narrative: The 1980s

The 1970s and the 1980s were transformative decades for Turkish nationalism and Turkish history-writing. The most pivotal development in this respect was the military coup of 12 September 1980, which was a response to the political violence and turmoil that had characterised the 1970s. Most of these episodes of violence had flared up between right-wing and left-wing political organisations, playing out against the backdrop of the Cold War and raising suspicions that such destructive levels of instability could make Turkey vulnerable to manipulation by the Soviet Union. Hugh Poulton's important book on the subject *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and the Crescent* puts forward that, following the breakdown of Turkish society in the 1970s, the military administration that had taken office after the coup no longer saw *laik* nationalism as a tenable ideology that could band the nation together.[69] This is why it introduced the "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis" (henceforth referred to as the Synthesis), which identified Islam as one of the founding blocks of national culture.[70] The Synthesis was premised on the idea that a Turkish national identity that accommodated the religious

[69] Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (London: Hurst Publishing, 1997).
[70] Copeaux, *Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk İslam Sentezine*, p82 and p409; and see Ali Nejat Ölçen, *İslam'da Karanlığın Başlangıcı ve Türk İslam Sentezi* (Ankara: Ekin Yayınları, 1991).

sympathies of the population would enhance the attraction of nationalism, and would therefore reduce the appeal of leftist ideologies.[71]

The Synthesis had another feature that would produce important implications for post-1980 Turkish historiography. It maintained the imagined historical continuity between the pre-Ottoman Central Asian civilisations and the Turkish Republic, only to add religion into the mix, asserting that Turkish culture consisted of the Turkish nation's historic roots in Central Asia and its Islamic values.[72] This is why Tanıl Bora argues that the Synthesis should best be named the "Kemalist-Islamic synthesis,"[73] and Umut Üzer calls it "a conservative form of the Turkish History Thesis."[74] Disagreeing with both interpretations, Bozkurt Güvenç argues that, from this period onward, Turkish nationalism would be defined in Islamic terms, and the principle of eliminating religion from the public realm would only be upheld in rhetoric.[75] Güvenç is incorrect, as Islam did not start to dominate Turkish national identity after the 1980 coup, but it did become *a part* of the official understanding of Turkishness. The changes marked an official acknowledgement by the military administration that, for the central's state definition of being a Turk to find legitimacy across the Turkish population and keep the nation together, it needed to incorporate religious elements.

This influenced history-writing in the 1990s and 2000s in a significant way. The 1990s and the early 2000s were also another period in Turkish history that was marked by political instability as a result of weak coalition governments. This peeled away from the trust vested in governments that were closely affiliated in public consciousness with *laiklik*. The rise of the conservative and pro-religion Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2002, furthermore, encouraged scholars to become more critical of the 1930s, questioning the discourse on the origins of the Republic that was promulgated in this era. These works stopped interpreting the emergence of modern Turkey as the inevitable result of certain developments. For example, Feroz Ahmad's *The Making of Modern Turkey* was striking in using the phrase "making" as opposed to

[71] For the full transcript of the report, see Bozkurt Güvenç, editor, *Türk-İslam Sentezi* (İstanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1991), pp69-100.
[72] Copeaux, *Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk İslam Sentezine*, pp50-54.
[73] Ibid., p411.
[74] Üzer, *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism*, p93.
[75] Güvenç, pp101-103.

"development" or "evolution," claiming that it was avoiding the "element of voluntarism" that was inherent in latter terms.[76] In this sense, the Turkish Republic did not organically evolve out of the late Ottoman Empire but was "made" in the image of the Kemalist elite. According to Erik Zürcher, too, modern Turkey was the wilful creation of politically-motivated leaders. He writes that it was the Young Turk movement who had led the struggle for independence, with the ultimate aim of preserving the sultanate and the caliphate; in return, he describes the proclamation of the republic as a coup within the movement orchestrated by a wing sympathetic to the worldview of Mustafa Kemal.[77] These critiques are reminiscent of the first books on Turkey that came out in the 1930s and 1940s, without the enthusiastically celebratory tone, framing the Republic as the inorganic creation of a group of people who pushed through a system modelled on a particular view of the world, which stood at odds with what they understood as Turkish realities.

Zürcher puts forward that Atatürk belonged to a class of people who advocated the adoption of an entirely European lifestyle "lock, stock and barrel," if Turkey was to survive in the modern world.[78] Şükrü Hanioğlu terms this group *garpçılar*, who asserted that "Islam and modern life could not be reconciled" and that there were no other paths lying in front of Turkey apart from the one with the ultimate terminus of European civilization.[79] Connected to this, Hanioğlu has emphasized Atatürk's commitment to what he terms "hyper-westernization" in almost all his works. For example, he views Atatürk's initiatives in westernisation as to have "surpassed even the most avant-garde projects of the radical Ottoman westernizers,"

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[76] Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge, 1993).
[77] Erik-Jan Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), and Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993).
[78] Touraj Atabaki and Zürcher, editors, *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah* (New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2004), pp1-13.
[79] Şükrü Hanioğlu, "Garbcılar: Their Attitudes toward Religion and Their Impact on the Official Ideology of the Turkish Republic," *Studia Islamica*, no. 86 (August 1997); also, see Hanioğlu, "Blueprints for a Future Society: Late Ottoman materialists on Science, Religion, and Art," in *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*, ed. Elisabeth Özdalga (London, Routledge, 2005).

and depicts him as the paradigmatic devotee of Western modernity, as someone who could not conceive of "being modern" outside of its Western format.[80]

Another important contribution to the literature in this period was Hakan Yavuz's *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey.* Yavuz parses the evolution of Islamic identity into "three, complex, and often overlapping processes." First is the one triggered by the "secularizing, state-centric" elite's inability to transform traditional society in the Anatolian heartlands after 1923.[81] As a result, non-urban populations turned to the social paradigms articulated by Islamic groups, while the Kemalist variation of national identity found more subscription in cities. Yavuz argues that contrary to the pathologies of the modernisation theory, "secularisation inadvertently revitalized the religious identities it was supposed to eliminate."[82] (Once again, Yavuz's use of the term "secularisation" refers the exclusion of religion from the public domain and is not entirely incorrect, but the reaction of the rural population would also have been against the way the state interfered in people's lives to control the religious content they were exposed to and the practices they were engaging in, which would have more accurately been captured by *laiklik.*) The third and final process set in after the 1980 coup, when the introduction of the Synthesis reconfigured Turkey's political and social landscape.[83] Most significantly for the purposes of this dissertation, he concurs with Zürcher and Hanioğlu in that the Kemalist Republic of the 1920s was based on a sudden rupture with Turkey's recent cultural past, whereas the post-1980 coup Turkey was based on remembering and building on its legacy.[84]

These developments moved the Turkish historiography away from the teleology of *laiklik* and created a new teleology of Islamism. Turning the Kemalist

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[80] Hanioğlu, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), p202.
[81] Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 2003), p4.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid., p5.
[84] It must be mentioned that not everyone writing in this period agreed with this interpretation of Turkish history. For instance, there were also historians like Orhan Koçak who argued that Ataürk's worldview represented a synthesis between "national essence" and "global values," arguing that he had wanted Turkey to embrace some aspects of the European civilization, while maintaining a Muslim identity. Yet, dominant scholarship downplayed these elements. For such a view, see: Orhan Koçak, "1920'lerden 1970'lere Kültür Politikaları," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasal Düşünce 2: Kemalizm,* ed. Ahmet İnsel (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001).

paradigm upside down, it reviewed Turkish history not as a history of modernisation, but one of religious victimhood. This is presently the official narrative on Turkish nationalism and the origins of the Turkish Republic. Their proponents argue that the early Republic espoused a radically *laik* nationalism until after the 1980 coup, when the introduction of the Synthesis pulled Islam back into the fray. In return, every development in between becomes evaluated within the context of this "tug-of-war" between Islamists and *laik*s. The dominant historiography also fits the rise of the DP under Menderes into this narrative, identifying him —for reasons that will be discussed in Chapter 1— as the first development that challenged, though could not reverse, the early Republican discourse on what it meant to be a Turk.

The revisionist historiography

Historians have been revising this dominant narrative since the mid-2000s. One of its most commonly problematised tenets is the Kemalist elite's supposed ability to override popular conservatism in the early Republic. For instance, Hans-Lukas Kieser has discussed how the reality of nation-building resembled more of a "process of trial-and-error" than following a fully-fleshed out political framework and strict guidelines, laid down by a specific school of thought.[85] Jenny White also puts forward that "national transformations are still embedded within discourses of the past," which imbue the new state with a sense of cultural familiarity and help the new leadership earn legitimacy from the local population.[86] The crux of White's argument is that the Kemalist project of nation formation did not come out of a pre-determined, single declaration of nationhood, but involved a process of trial-and-error, in which the elite tried to develop a workable framework for national identity. This realisation has led historians to look beneath the thick blanket of official discourse and observe what really happened on the ground, and eventually question whether the elite wielded unrestricted authority over drawing the boundaries of Turkishness.

These "revisionist" historians call attention to how the Kemalist elite remained hemmed in by a variety of external and internal factors that, in return, forced them to

[85] Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Turkey Beyond Nationalism: Towards Post-Nationalist Identities* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).
[86] Jenny White, *Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks,* p24.

keep Republican identity tethered to its preceding Ottoman variations. In most cases, this meant building on pre-existing structures of identity, defined mainly in terms of religious affiliation. Even though the overarching objective of the Kemalist establishment might have been that Islam would become superfluous, the circumstances did not allow the leadership to recast national identity in a far-reaching way. As Ryan Gingeras and Ceren Lord argue, despite the boisterousness with which the Kemalists heralded the changes, they recognised that a *laik* public was going to be slow in the making.[87] As a result, they renegotiated the meaning of being Muslim,[88] which feeds into the argument that the character of the early Republican engagement with religion should more accurately be identified as Islam's gradual disestablishment, but not abandonment or elimination.[89]

At least since the 1990s, historians have agreed on how "being Turkish" during the independence struggle between 1919 and 1923 was defined exclusively in religious terms. This line of argumentation has received further attention among the revisionist school of historians. For example, Onur Atalay pulls together many examples —such as the declarations from the congresses in Erzurum and Sivas in the opening years of the struggle; the so-called "Amasya Circular" that articulated the objective of establishing an independent republic for the first time; the opening of the parliament with the reading of the Quran by Kamil Efendi, a member of parliament from Karahisar; and speeches delivered within the first parliamentary sessions, describing the establishment of the Republic as "Allah's miracle" and referring to the new capital Ankara as "the present-day Mecca"[90]— to show how the Turkish nation was defined as the Muslim population of the Ottoman Empire.[91] A more recent work

[87] Ryan Gingeras, *Eternal Dawn: Turkey in the Age of Atatürk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). Ceren Lord, *Religious Politics in Turkey: From the Birth of the Republic to the AKP* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
[88] Burak Bilgehan Özpek, "Türk Modernleşmesinden Günümüze," *Daktilo 1984*, 12 December 2020, accessed on *Daktilo 1984*'s YouTube page.
[89] Menderes Çınar, "Islamic Activism in Turkey," in *The Oxford Handbook of Turkish Politics*, ed. Güneş Murat Tezcür (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), accessed online; and Murat Akan, "Capturing Secularism in Turkey," in *The Oxford Handbook of Turkish Politics,* accessed online.
[90] Onur Atalay, *Türk'e Tapmak*, p179.
[91] Ibid., p128. Hasan Kayalı's recent work merits attention, as he makes an unprecedented point, arguing that the Ottoman government as well as the Turkish and Arab nationalist

by Ryan Gingeras discusses how the national struggle was framed for the Anatolian population as a struggle to protect Islam and argues that one common, overarching trait of those who became Turks was that they were Muslims, making the case that being Muslim was the primary marker of being a Turk in the 1920s.[92] Gingeras, too, presents a series of examples to demonstrate this point; particularly noteworthy is his close reading of the Turkish national anthem by Mehmet Akif Ersoy, which reads like "a rallying cry on behalf of Muslims to rush to the defence of Islam."[93] Ceren Lord, too, concurs with this assessment of an elevated Muslim identity in the 1920s.[94]

Erik Zürcher had also agreed in a 1999 article that the language to inspire the local population and jolt them into action was that of Muslim nationalism.[95] However, as discussed in the previous section, Zürcher interprets this as an opportunistic manoeuvre, concocted by the Kemalists only to pull forces into the fray, whose Islamic sensibilities would then be completely ignored when the ruling cadres pressed ahead with reforms after 1923. One reason why Mustafa Kemal and the cadres at the helm of the independence struggle opted for such an approach was practical. As mentioned in the brief historical context provided at the beginning of this introduction, various developments throughout the nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries had already turned what became the Turkish homeland into a space populated predominantly by Muslims.[96] Not only did the Kemalist allies need the manpower to fight the war, but also the human capital to build back a country that had been ruined

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movements sought to sustain the Empire by establishing a federative union. However, this a contentious claim, as Fuat Dündar criticizes. and

[92] Gingeras, *Eternal Dawn*.

[93] Ryan Gingeras discusses Mehmet Akif Ersoy at length, arguing how Ersoy found the notion of ethnic nationalism detrimental to the notion of proper, genuine devotion to Islam. See, in addition to Gingeras's *Turkey in the Age of Atatürk*, see the following podcast on the same book, John William Armstrong, "Paradoxes of Turkey in the Age of Atatürk," *Turkey Book Talk* with Ryan Gingeras, no.112.

[94] Ceren Lord, *Religious Politics in Turkey*. Also see Metin Heper, "Kemalism/Atatürkism" in *The Routledge Handbook of Turkey*, ed. Metin Heper and Sabri Sayari (2017). Also see, İbrahim Yılmaz, *Atatürk'ün İslam İnancı* (İstanbul: Truva Yayınları, 2008); Sinan Meydan, *Atatürk ile Allah Arasında* (İstanbul: İnkılap Yayınları, 2009); and Metin Hülagü, *İngiliz Gizli Belgelerine Göre Milli Mücadelede İslamcılık ve Turancılık: İslam Birliği ve Mustafa Kemal* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2008).

[95] Erik-Jan Zürcher, "The Vocabulary of Muslim Nationalism," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, no. 137 (1999).

[96] Soner Çağaptay, "Population Resettlement and Immigration Policies of Inter-war Turkey," *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 25/26, no 1/2 (2002), p1.

after almost a decade of continuous fighting. Adopting a nationalist discourse that alienated the Muslim-majority population would have devastated such efforts; therefore, the goal was to make sure that Islam did not evolve into a force of counter-mobilization against the regime and supplemented the state-building efforts.[97]

These authors are clear on the fact that Mustafa Kemal's movement in 1919 was not a nationalist movement but targeted Muslim communities. They miss an important point, however, which Hasan Kayalı raises in his most recent book, *Imperial Resilience.* He points out that Mustafa Kemal's movement aimed to establish a federative union with Arabs, arguing that the overarching aim of his movement was to preserve the Muslim-majority parts of the Empire, which included Syria and Iraq, by expelling foreign occupiers and native Christians.[98] Fuat Dündar puts forward several examples to criticise Kayalı's argument. For example, when all the resistance groups in Anatolia and Thrace were brought together under an umbrella organisation in 1919, the organisation for Aleppo was excluded. He also discusses how the first parliament that convened in Ankara in 1920 did not have any representatives from the Arab provinces.[99] Although Dündar's criticism is valid in that Mustafa Kemal's movement did exclude Syria and Iraq, both Dündar and Kayalı discount how Mustafa Kemal's Muslim nationalism at the time included all Muslims of Anatolia, including Arabs and Kurds living across this geography. So, not only that "being a Turk" was defined exclusively in religious terms at the start of the independence movement, but this Muslim nationalism included all Muslims, regardless of their ethnic designation.

It must also be noted that it was not only for the rural populations that Islam carried meaning as a category of belonging.[100] Even for the elite, whether they would

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[97] Murat Akan, "Capturing Secularism in Turkey." See also, Taha Parla and Andrew Davison, *Corporatist Ideology in Kemalist Turkey: Progress or Order?* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), p110. Parla and Davison also underline how Atatürk had said in his *Nutuk* that the 1924 Constitution had accepted Islam as the state's official religion, "with the purpose of not providing an opportunity for those who are inclined to interpret the phrase 'laic government' as antireligious."

[98] Hasan Kayalı, *Imperial Resilience: The Great War's End, Ottoman Longevity and Incidental Nations* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2021).

[99] Fuat Dündar, "Imperial Resilience: The Great War's End, Ottoman Longevity and Incidental Nations," *Middle Eastern Studies* 58, no.4 (2022).

[100] Yıldız, "*Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene!*," p132; Bora, *Cereyanlar*, p217; Marc Baer's arguments in this regard will be discussed below.

ever have admitted to it or not, religion was the most reliable category in terms of dividing the population. Atalay marshals the Lausanne Treaty as a powerful case in point, discussing how the treaty, negotiated by the Republican leadership, determined the legal status of the former Ottoman subjects based on their religion.

The first departure, at least *officially*, from this understanding of being a Turk took place in 1924, with the release of the new constitution.[101] The Article 88 of the 1924 Constitution specified that, "regardless of one's ethnicity or religion," one could gain membership into the Turkish community through an acquisition of Turkish citizenship.[102] The "revisionist" historians all agree that "being Turkish" was defined as "unity in culture, language, and a shared past" in this period, whereby anyone who "had been raised under the influence of Turkish culture, spoke Turkish, and demonstrated loyalty to Republican values" could have a claim to Turkishness.[103] By not defining the nation as a community of Muslims, it put in place a non-religious understanding of nationalism for the first time, forging a "voluntaristic" formula to bind the nation together that asked for "unity in language, ideas, and feelings."[104]

However, the idea of "unity in religion" did not disappear as a category that determined who could belong to the Turkish nation. This is where Soner Çağaptay's differentiation between "Islam as faith" and "Islam as culture and identity" becomes useful. The crux of this distinction is that Kemalist secularism had pushed the faith dimension of Islam to the margins, but kept "Islam as culture and identity" still central to the state-building project,[105] which Atalay refers to as "civic religion." [106] As Çağaptay identifies, voluntarism, territory and language were the official markers of Turkishness in the 1920s; by delineating each of these concepts, he shows that Islam still shaped nationalism in the early Republic. "Territory" and "language" required

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[101] For the text of the 1924 Constitution, see "Teşkilatı Esasiye Kanunu," on the official website of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Turkey, https://www.anayasa.gov.tr/tr/mevzuat/onceki-anayasalar/1924-anayasasi/.
[102] Article 88, "Teşkilatı Esasiye Kanunu."
[103] Yıldız, "*Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene!*,",p16.
[104] Soner Çağaptay, "Population Resettlement and Immigration Policies of Inter-War Turkey," p4.
[105] Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), p15.
[106] Onur Atalay, *Türk'e Tapmak,* p78.

loyalty to the homeland of Anatolia and the ability to speak Turkish. The "voluntaristic" element, furthermore, required a commitment to a shared past and culture, which referred to the common heritage of Ottoman-Turkish Muslims, their joint history, belief systems, and traditions. This is where Islam enters the fray: Çağaptay explains that, at the time, a "shared past" referred to the independence struggle waged against the Christian West, and "shared culture" denoted the mores of ex-Ottoman Anatolian Muslims. This meant that Islam and an Ottoman heritage would *de facto* determine who would qualify as a Turk. Overall, ex-Ottoman Muslims (voluntarism), living in Anatolia (territory) could be integrated into the body of the nation, if they learned Turkish (language).[107] Those who did not share the Turkish culture were non-Muslims, because they lacked Islam. Granted, "unity in religion" might have been abandoned as an official category of belonging. Yet, this definition of being a Turk carried very little meaning when it came down to determining who would be allowed to belong to the nation in practice.

This "civic religion" morphed into "political religion" in the early 1930s, when "the nation" was elevated to the status of an object of devotion.[108] Turks were now expected to commit themselves to the service of the nation and the homeland, effectively worshipping both entities as if they constituted a religion and wean themselves off any Islamic norms. The 1930s are traditionally labelled as "the decade of authoritarian nationalism" or the decade of "High Kemalism per excellence."[109] It was in this decade that the Turkish History Thesis was formulated. Another example is the rise of such figures as Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, Tevfik Rüştü Aras, and Ali Fethi Okyar —whom Yıldız identifies as the "radical wing" of the CHP establishment[110]— who were

[107] Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey*, p14. Some other works that examine Turkish nationalism before the 1930s include, Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabs, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997); Jacob Landau, *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995).
[108] Atalay, *Türk'e Tapmak,* p97.
[109] Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey*, p1.; also see, Çağaptay, "Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and Minorities in the 1930s," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no.3 (2004); Sypros A. Sofos and Umut Özkırımlı, "Colonising the Past: History and Memory in Greece and Turkey," in *Nations and Their Histories*, ed. Susanna Carvalho (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009).
[110] Yıldız uses this designation many times throughout the book.

strong in their conviction that religion would soon run out of steam. Furthermore, the memoires of individuals who lived through this period also note how religion had started to "retreat" from public spaces.[111] Some have also analysed Turkey against the backdrop a profoundly anti-democratic Europe, when many countries advocated single-party regimes led by strongman leaders and rejected Enlightenment-inspired government structures and social policies.[112]

Çağaptay's studies merit recognition for exploring how religion and Ottoman culture still played a role in determining who qualified as a Turk in the 1930s, despite the traditional historiography's insistence that Islam would have been removed as a marker of being a Turk in this period. He organises the understanding of Turkish national identity into three concentric circles: There was the outermost "territorial" circle, established in the 1920s, which effectively accepted the Anatolian territory as the basis of the nation; the middle circle represented Islam, which welcomed Muslim migrants as part of the Turkish nation; the innermost circle comprised of those who were ethnically Turkish, with ethnicity being tantamount to speaking Turkish. This meant that ex-Ottoman non-Turkish Muslims were encouraged to move into the inner core by learning Turkish, while non-Muslims would be kept outside of the inner core, though still included within the larger body of the nation.[113] Çağaptay also demonstrates this in the form of a hierarchy. At the top were ethnic Turks. Following them were Crimean Tatars and Karapapaks, who were also welcomed "due to their ethnic relationship with Turks." The third group from the top consisted of Muslims from the Balkans, who did not have independent states with which they could identify, such as Pomaks and Bosnians. The fourth group comprised of Muslims from the Caucasus who did not have national homelands, but they were thought to have

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[111] For example, Donald Everett Webster [*The Turkey of Atatürk: Social Process in the Turkish Reformation* (Philadelphia, PA: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1939), p128] and Grace Ellison [*Turkey Today* (London: Hutchinson and Co, 1928), p175] both observed how one could not spot a headscarf in cities anymore, while Lilo Linke noted during her travels across Turkey in 1935 nobody under thirty years of age even stepped into a mosque [Lilo Linke, *Mustafa Kemal Türkiyesi* (İstanbul: Koridor Yayıncılık, 2008)]. Another striking example is the 1931 poem "*Her Akşamki Yolumda*" ("On My Evening Walk") by Ziya Osman Saba, in which the poet laments how he is the last remaining devotee to "Rabb," meaning God.

[112] Kieser, *Turkey Beyond Nationalism.*

[113] See the sketch in Çağaptay, "Reconfiguring the Turkish Nation in the 1930s," *Nationalism and Ethics* 8, no.2 (2002), p76.

been marred by communism and were therefore distrusted. At the very bottom stratum were Christians, Jews, non-Muslims as well as Kurds and other Muslims with a history of strong nationalist movements.[114]

Based on the 1930s concept of "race" in Turkey, which he holds tantamount to language, Çağaptay asserts that Turkish racialism was meant to accommodate the country's diversity.[115] A strong case in point was the "Citizen, Speak Turkish!" campaign that had first started in January 1928, then petered out, only to gain momentum again in the early 1930s. Against this backdrop, Çağaptay calls attention to the role played by the Jews of İzmir in revitalising the campaign as a way of reducing the deep-seated aversion the community endured[116] as well as the various efforts exerted by Christian minorities to promote the use of Turkish within their communities.[117] Although Çağaptay recognises that such campaigns led to violence and harassment inflicted upon those who did not adopt the Turkish vernacular, he nonetheless asserts that these policies "kept the avenues of assimilation open to those who were not ethnically Turkish," and were therefore inclusive.[118] Even though non-Turks and non-Muslims found themselves either in the outer circles or at the bottom of Turkey's system of social stratification (to connect with the analogies above), he posits that the nature of Turkish nationalism allowed them to rise through the ranks and sidestep segregation or persecution.

Howard Eissenstat agrees that the systemic de-emphasis and the attempted elimination of religion, at least on paper, should have had the potential to change the non-Muslims' relationship with the state; yet, they remained the *personae non gratae* of Turkish society.[119] It is within this context that he also grapples with the concept of race and racism in the 1930s Turkey.[120] Eissenstat recognises that there took place a

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[114] Çağaptay, "Population Resettlement and Immigration Policies of Interwar Turkey," p21.
[115] Çağaptay, "Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no.3 (2004), p89.
[116] Ibid., pp93-95.
[117] Ibid., p96.
[118] Ibid., p97.
[119] Howard Eissenstat, "Metaphors of Race and Discourse of Nation: Racial Theory and Beginnings of Nationalism in the Turkish Republic," in *Race and Nation: Ethnic Systems in the Modern World*, ed. Paul Spickard (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), p250.
[120] For a comprehensive summary of the different voices in this debate, see Chapter 3 of Cihan Çelik, "The Nature of Turkish Authoritarianism, 1930-1945" (PhD diss., SOAS, 2017).

paradigm shift in the centre of gravity of Turkish nationalism in the 1930s, with the elite "adopting a racist discourse for their programme of nation-building." Comparing the racial discourse emanating from Ankara against the policies of discrimination and persecution in Germany and the U.S. at the time, however, he concludes that Turkish racism was "aggressively assimilationist,"[121] since it aimed to fold Muslim groups into the rubric of nation instead of pushing them out.[122]

Both Eissenstat and Çağaptay's arguments need to be slightly tweaked. It would be incorrect to posit that non-Turkish Muslims or non-Muslim Turks were given a seamless entry into the Turkish society of the 1930s, if they complied with the requirements of belonging to the Turkish race, which meant speaking Turkish. This is where Marc Baer's contributions to the scholarship are helpful, as they show how, despite the official rhetoric, Turkey granted rights only to Muslim Turks, while denying full integration to non-Muslims and non-Turks, "maintaining the pre-state division of society based on religious groups, but adding race as a determining factor."[123] Regardless of how ardently a non-Muslim Turk or non-Turkish Muslim spoke Turkish, for example, they would not be allowed into the circles of powers, which was a space reserved for Turkish Muslims.[124] Baer discusses the Wealth Tax of 1942-1944, which reorganised the population into the categories of "Muslim, non-Muslim, foreigner and *dönme* (who were descendants of Jewish converts to Islam)," as a demonstration of how the Turkish government failed to live up to its founding principle of *laiklik*.[125] It was initially introduced under the rubric of penalising those who had accumulated

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[121] Eissenstat, "Metaphors of Race and Discourse of Nation," p239.
[122] Ibid., p252.
[123] Marc David Baer, "The Double Bind of Race and Religion: The Conversion of the Dönme to Turkish Secular Nationalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46, no.4 (2004), p685.
[124] Ibid., p688.
[125] Baer, "The Double Bind of Race and Religion," p705.; Also, for more information on Wealth Tax, see: Ayhan Aktar, *Varlık Vergisi ve Türkleştirme Politikaları* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2018); Rıdvan Akar, *Aşkale Yolcuları ve Çalışma Kampları* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2009); Rıfat Bali, *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri: Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000); Baer, "Turkish Jews Rethink 500 Years of Friendship and Brotherhood," *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 24, no.2 (Fall 2000); Baer, *Sultanic Saviors and Tolerant Turks—Writing Ottoman Jewish History, Denying the Armenian Genocide* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2020). For a striking account of the experience of minorities in Turkish Republic, see Mario Levi's novel, *İstanbul Bir Masaldı* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1999); and Yılmaz Karakoyunlu, *Salkın Hanım'ın Taneleri* (İstanbul: Öteki Yayınevi, 2000).

unfair sums of money from the black market during World War II; however, Baer's study shows how the way it was implemented targeted non-Muslims, who still controlled much of Turkey's wealth in this era and were either forced to pay out exorbitant amounts of tax or were deported to concentration camps out in the eastern provinces. Similarly, even though non-Turks were compelled to seek assimilation by speaking Turkish, they were not always viewed as Turks,[126] as Turkish blood and lineage remained the determining factors of Turkishness.[127]

Overall, the first generation of nationalists might have looked with disdain at the hegemony of Islam in defining one's identity and genuinely believed that Islam would soon peter out of society as a consequence of the Republican reforms.[128] At the heart of their policies vis-à-vis Islam, however, lied an interesting contradiction: Baer, Çağaptay and Eissenstat's contributions to the scholarship have shown that religious identities persist within the context of even avowedly *laik* nation-states, defying attempts to have them replaced with non-religious identities. Whether willingly or not, the ruling elite still referred to Islam as a social cement to hold a major part of the population together and even relied on its saliency to divide the population, which was the essence of the Ottoman approach that their policies were supposed to have been formulated against. This dissertation aims to extend this revisionist school of history that focusses on the 1930s and the early 1940s into the late 1940s and the 1950s, analysing how and in what ways the ruling elite appropriated Islam in the opening years of the Cold War. Once the historiography of the 1950s is revised, showing how the DP's attitude vis-à-vis religion connects with the earlier attitude vis-

[126] Baer, "The Double Bind of Race and Religion," p704.
[127] Sinan Yıldırmaz makes an interesting point about how this national identity constructed with the exclusion of non-Muslims complicated the state's objectives. Such homogenizing identity politics of the 1930s decreased the size of the Armenian, Greek, and Jewish communities, who had traditionally been the progenitors of urban culture. The communities that populated the cities after their expulsion were not familiar with the social and cultural tropes that would have been prevalent in contemporary metropolitan settings, and were not often comfortable with existing within such a cultural milieu. As a result, the Kemalist state deprived itself of groups that would be willing or able to develop a bourgeois city culture that would ideally have complemented the secularist overhaul of institutions. See, Sinan Yıldırmaz, *Politics and Peasantry in Post-War Turkey: Social History, Culture, and Modernization* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2017).
[128] İlker Aytürk, "Nationalism and Islam in Cold War Turkey, 1944-1969," in *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no.4 (2014), p695.

à-vis religion, it will trace a cultural vision that has remained coherent throughout the almost century-long history of the Turkish Republic.

Methodology

The revisionist historians whose works have been analysed above have deployed sound methodologies to arrive at an understanding of nationalism that was more flexible and inclusive, and did not denounce religion as one of its constitutive elements as previous historical accounts had suggested. Without downplaying the significance of their methodologies, this dissertation will argue that education presents a more powerful tool of analysis.

Analysing educational material yields a better reading of a state's self-conception for several reasons. To start with, states have traditionally viewed education as a mechanism through which they can channel their own national discourse. This allows them to generate specific "regimes of truth" that legitimize their vision for society and eventually facilitate the creation of a new social order.[129] Within the realm of education, *history education* specifically plays a more pronounced a role in this effort, captured most effectively by Bernard Lewis' dictum, "when someone wants a new future, it searches for a new past."[130] Scholars who have studied the politicization of education have underlined how history introduces a particular image of the past and nurtures a profound belonging to this image.[131] Uniting people around a common past and within the same historical vision of continuity, as Susana Carvalho and François Gemenne show, also socializes them into a controlled realm, wherein

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[129] Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp253-255; more specifically, see Anssi Paasi, "Nationalizing Everyday Life: Individual and Collective Identities as Practice and Discourse," in *Geography and Research* 19 (1999), p4.

[130] Bernard Lewis, *Remembered, Recovered and Reinvented* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), p11. Lewis has also recognised the importance attached to education by the Kemalist elite, by arguing that the elite used education as an instrument to raise a new generation, who considered the Republic the most glorious product of the Turkish people and to have existed on the Turkish homeland; quoted in Özkan, *From Abode of Islam to the Turkish Vatan: The Making of a National Homeland in Turkey* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), p121.

[131] Thomas S. Popkewitc, Miguel Pereyra, and Barry M. Franklin, eds., *Cultural History and Critical Studies of Education: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Schooling* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001).

certain events and people are labelled "important." This creates a line of logic that justifies the present social order and thereby legitimizes a state's status quo.[132] The role of history education does not end after the founding of new nations, which increases the importance of history education as a vehicle to putting together a nation's self-image. It constantly regenerates the nation by continuing to celebrate the past and demonstrating the "undisputed presence" of the nation.[133] It also surrounds those who study the material with "wish images" — constant visual reminders of how a "perfect" member of society should look and act like. [134]

Historiography of education

Education as an instrument of historical analysis is not new. There are several studies on the development of education in the late Ottoman Empire[135] as well as in the first decades of the Republic.[136] Within non-Turkish contexts, too, there are

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[132] Susana Carvalho and François Gemenne, "Introduction," in *Nations and their Histories*, ed. Susana Carvalho and François Gemenne (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009).

[133] See the introduction of Sypros A. Sofos and Umut Özkırımlı, "Colonising the Past: History and Memory in Greece and Turkey."

[134] Mandana Limbert, "Oman: Cultivating Good Citizens and Religious Virtue," in *Teaching Islam: Textbooks and Religion in the Middle East*, ed. Eleanor Abdella Doumato and Gregory Starrett (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), pp103-124.

[135] Although it exceeds the scope of this essay, Benjamin Fortna's studies on late Ottoman education system under Abdülhamit II have been recognized as pioneering contributions to the field; Benjamin Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: State, Islam and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Fortna, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman Secular Schools," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32 (August 2000); and Fortna, "Ottoman Educational Legacy," in *Turkey's Engagement with Modernity*, ed. by Celia Kerslake, Kerem Öktem and Philip Robbins (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010). Also belonging to the corpus of literature on late Ottoman educational legacies, see Mustafa Gündüz, "Sociocultural origins of Turkish educational reforms and ideological origins of late Ottoman intellectuals, 1908-1950," *Journal of the History of Education Society* 38, no.2 (2009).

[136] These include İlhan Başgöz and Harold E. Wilson, *Educational Problems in Turkey, 1920-1940* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1968); Selim Sabit Aykut, *İçtimai ve İktisadi Türkiye: Rakamlarla Kültür Hareketleri, 1923-1942* (Ankara: Başbakanlık İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, 1945); İsmail Hakkı Tonguç, *İlköğretim Kavramı* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1946); Nevzat Ayas, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitimi: Kuruluşlar ve Tarihçeler* (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1948); Sıtkı Bilmen, *The Turkish Lycee: Its Stable Characteristics and Curriculum* (Ankara: Maarif Basımevi, 1960); Hasan Ali Koçer, *Türkiye'de Modern Eğitimin Doğuşu ve Gelişimi, 1773-1923* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1974); and Reşat Özalp and Aydoğan Ataünal, *Türk Milli Eğitim Sisteminde Düzenleme Teşkilatı: Talim Terbiye Kurulu, Milli Eğitim Şurası* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1977). Despite being published in 2006, another study that fails to push the boundaries of analyses and repeats the conclusions of an earlier school of historiography is the edited volume of papers presented at the symposium "Educational

masterful accounts and edited volumes that explore the connection between the evolving structure of education and changing conceptions of nationalism.[137] However, these studies err on the side of the sources they use: many of them limit their analyses to what the leadership articulated at the "official-level," instead of examining the material that was studied by the nation's youth or what the experience of schooling would have meant to those who went through it. This dissertation identifies this as a crucial gap, as there is often a significant disconnect between what policymakers proclaim in public and implement in practice.

This review will look at one of such works, Andreas Kazamias' *Education and Quest for Modernity in Turkey,* which became the first detailed account on the evolution of the Turkish education system upon publication in 1966. Kazamias' work incorporates many of the previous studies on Turkey's system of education and has also been referenced by almost every work on the subject. Kazamias argues that the entire Kemalist movement "was an experiment in education: how to create new values, new ideologies, new human beings…or new Turks." He identifies schools as important agencies for the inculcation of social attitudes, adding that schools shape a person's future political views, cultural norms and social behaviours.[138] After discussing the importance of education for the leadership, Kazamias turns his focus on the development of the system of education. Most of the examples he and other historians of the field cite are taken out of speeches and addresses of contemporary politicians, foremost Atatürk, İsmet İnönü as well as the ministers of education that

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Policies in the Republican Period" at Atatürk Higher Institution of Culture, Language and History (*Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu*) in December 2005, Murat Alper Parlak, ed., "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Eğitim Politikaları Sempozyumu," (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2010).

[137] See, for example, the works by Shervin Malekzadeh, such as "Children Without Childhood, Adults Without Adulthood: Changing Conceptions of the Iranian Child in Post-Revolutionary Textbooks (1979-2008)," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 32, no.2 (2012); and *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 21, no.1 and 2 (2001) on the history of education in various Middle Eastern states. On the development of national education systems in different regions, see the collected volume John L. Rury and Eileen H. Tamura, eds., *Oxford Handbook of the History of Education* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); and Tanya Fitzgerald, ed., *Handbook of Historical Studies in Education: Debates, Tensions and Directions* (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2020).

[138] Andreas M. Kazamias, *Education and Quest for Modernity in Turkey* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

served in early Republican administrations, including Rıza Nur (1920-1921), Reşit Galip (1932-1933), Saffet Arıkan (1935-1938) and Hasan Ali Yücel (1938-1946). Based on such sources, their analyses conclude that education was a programme of indoctrination in *laiklik* which did not allocate any space to religion in educational material, and correlatively, in Turks' understanding of themselves.

Furthermore, Kazamias and other historians marshal several modifications to the country's legal edifice to corroborate their main argument. Some of these oft-cited developments include the "Law on the Unification of Education" that brought all educational institutions under the purview of the ministry, prohibited religious instruction, and mandated foreign schools to remove religious illustrations from textbooks and school buildings. They also point to the step-by-step closing of *imam-hatip* schools, founded to train government-employed Islamic prayer leaders, that had survived into the Republic from 29 in 1924, to 20 in 1925, two in 1926 to none in 1929 as well as the removal of self-standing religion courses in 1934.[139] An analysis of his material leads them to argue that Republican education aimed to create a society whose views of themselves, their nations and the world around were not shaped by religious teachings.[140] [141]

Although these are significant contributions, the scholarship needs a more nuanced appraisal. Analysing the changes at the very top is useful in unpacking the official mindset, but it does not always offer a glimpse into what unfurled on the ground. This is why Barak Salmoni, Büşra Ersanlı, Elif Erkoler, and Yeşim Bayar's

[139] See İsmail Kaplan, *Türkiye'de Milli Eğitim İdeolojisi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999), Chapters 6 and 7.

[140] Another article that is frequently cited and could also be clustered within this body of literature is: Mustafa Gündüz, "The radical transformations and deep continuities of a decade: Turkish educational policy, 1938-1950," *Paedagogica Historica* 52, no.3 (2016).

[141] There has been a collection of PhD dissertation that have been written on the history of education in the early Republic for a few decades. These works also suffer from the same shortcomings criticized in this paragraph. See, for example, Fatma Gök, "Educational Change and Politics in Turkey" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1991); Ahmed Eskicumalı, "Ideology and education: Reconstructing the Turkish curriculum for social and cultural change, 1923-1946" (Phd diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1994); Jessica Selma Tiregöl, "The Role of Primary Education in Nation State-Building: The Case of the Early Turkish Republic (1923-1938) (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1998); and Chapter 3 of Jennifer Ashkenazi-Coburn, "Atatürk, Islam, Modernity and Turkish Education: A Comparative, Historical Analysis" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2007).

studies have broken new ground in this sub-field of history that examines the close conceptual and operational links between education and politics. They all recognize that the educational system evolves in close cooperation with national thought. Bayar writes that nationalism is not simply about imagined communities, but about the struggle for control over the imagination of these communities; accordingly, education presents a chance for such control.[142] Salmoni and Erkoler also describes schools as "small republics" out of which the ideals of the new order radiate.[143] Büşra Ersanlı's studies, too, underline how educational material are produced with the specific purpose of buttressing the state's self-legitimising narrative.[144]

Of course, previous works have also raised these points; however, these historians engage in a close reading of the organization and content of textbooks, an approach that is absent from other works.[145] More importantly, their contributions show how the Republican education did not aggressively depreciate religious consciousness or dismiss the role of Islam in defining Turkish nationalism.[146] For example, Salmoni investigates the continued curricular exposure to Islam throughout

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[142] Yeşim Bayar, "The Dynamics Nature of Educational Policies and Nation-Building: Where Does Religion Fit In," in *Secular State and Religious Society: Two Forces in Play in Turkey*, ed. Berna Turam (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

[143] Barak Salmoni, "Ordered Liberty and Disciplined Freedom: Turkish Education and Republican Democracy, 1923-1950," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no.2 (March 2004). Erkoler, *Dindar Nesil Yetiştirmek.*

[144] Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih*, p114.

[145] One PhD dissertation that does take such a nuanced approach is Ali Babahan, "Nationalism and Religion in the Textbooks of the Early Republican Period in Turkey" (PhD diss., Middle East Technical University, February 2014). Babahan breaks down the early Republican period into three sub-periods, showing how Islam was accepted as part of and parcel of being Turkish in the early 1920s; was not mentioned in conjunction with or within the context of Turkishness in the 1930s; and reappeared in the 1940s in discussions on values of "being Turkish." Faith Childress, "Republican Lessons: Education and the Making of Modern Turkey" (PhD diss., The University of Utah, 2001), too, acknowledges that Kemalism, in the form an ideology that supposedly guided the Republican reforms, was not fully fleshed out ideology that remained stubborn in its rejection of Islam from the start. Also important in this regard is the PhD dissertation of Tuğrul Yörük, which teases out the persistence of religion in educational material during the early Republic and how the approach to religion changed in the post-1945 era, Tuğrul Yörük, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Din Öğretimi Programı Anlayışı" (PhD diss., Ankara Üniversitesi, 2011).

[146] Salmoni, "Islam in Turkish Pedagogic Attitudes and Materials, 1923-1950," *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 24, no.2 (2000); Büşra Ersanlı, "History Textbooks as Reflections of the Political Self: Turkey (1930s and 1990s) and Uzbekistan (1990s)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no.2 (2002).

the early years of the Republic, showing that although religion was eliminated after 1934 as a separate course of study at all levels of education and would not be reintroduced until 1949, Islam remained a prominent topic of discussion in history and literature courses. These findings lead Salmoni to conclude that the curriculum emphasized the combined unity of Islam, Turkish ethnicity and nationalist loyalty, pointing at a continuous Turkish-Islamic link in the educational material in the 1930s, when religion, as per traditional historiography, was supposed to have been removed from official spaces, including education.[147] Connected to this, Erkoler discusses how early Republican textbooks excluded non-Muslims from the construction of the proverbial "us," which remained a space reserved for Muslims.[148]

Arguments

As mentioned at the start of this introduction, this dissertation identifies and differentiates between three different types of secularism: the American style of secularism, which mandates freedom *of* religion in government; the French style of secularism, which mandates freedom *from* religion in government; and its Turkish variant, termed *laiklik* or laicism, which mandates "strong state control over religion to keep religion out of politics."[149] The dissertation will also look at how the state in the late 1940s and the 1950s regulated its relationship with Islam in different spheres of the country's political and social life, foremost political rhetoric, lifestyle and nationalist discourse; and will discuss which one of the three types of secularisms captures each dynamic most effectively.

As will be discussed in relevant chapters, the political rhetoric employed by the elite and the lifestyle promoted in the 1930s were in the style of French secularism, which "rendered Islam irrelevant as far as legislation was concerned, removed religious references and language from the affairs of the state,"[150] and consigned religious practices to the private realm. Yet, it was the state, and not the individual, who determined how religion would be practiced in the private realm, sanctifying its

[147] Salmoni, "Islam in Turkish Pedagogic Attitudes and Materials".
[148] Erkoler, *Dindar Nesil Yetiştirmek*, p54.
[149] White, *Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks,* p27.
[150] Menderes Çınar, "Islamist Activism in Turkey," in *The Oxford Handbook of Turkish Politics,* edited by Güneş Murat Tezcür (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), accessed online.

own version of Sunni Islam and crafting its own version of being Muslim as the "correct" way of understanding and adhering to the faith. As an "ideal" Turk, one then had to subscribe to and abide by the state's advice on how to be a "good" Muslim.

Then, while Sunni Islam was being disestablished in the public realm, it was simultaneously becoming re-established in the private realm. This categorically stands at odds with the definition of secularism. Because the state was actively involved in a matter pertaining to religion, determining what religiousness would look like on behalf of the nation, the very nature of this approach was *laik*. In fact, in terms of nationalist discourse, the state would always be *laik*, since how to be a "good Muslim" would always be defined by those at the helm.

In the 1940s, various geopolitical trends and domestic developments —as will be discussed in the following chapters— precipitated a shift in the state's relationship with religion vis-à-vis political rhetoric and lifestyle. In both spheres, the state's attitude started to shift away from the French style of secularism that did not allow religion any role in government or any arena within the public realm. But it would not shift over to the American style of secularism, either. Instead, the shift was from "hard" secularism, which is more in line with the French format of the concept, to "soft" secularism, which falls somewhere in between the French and American formats, allowing for some religion in government and education. This shift would start in the late 1940s and continue throughout the 1950s, gradually allowing for "more" religion to creep into the official parlance as well as the depictions of the "ideal" lifestyle promoted by the state through these decades. Within the realm of nationalist discourse, however, the administrations of the 1940s continued the previous administrations' *laik* approach, defining the kind of Muslim an "ideal" Turk was supposed to be. The picture that emerges regarding the early Republic's engagement with secularism is that the various administrations —from the 1930s until the end of the 1950s— employed a *laik* nationalist discourse to put in place a government and create a society that initially aligned with the French style of secularism and then later started its transition towards the American format.

As stated earlier in this introduction, there were two main pillars of being an "ideal" Turk: being Turkish and being Muslim. Three factors determined whether one was Turkish, one of which was the Turkish language. Although the educational

material never stated this, the fact that the material was only and exclusively produced in Turkish showed that speaking the language was the *sine qua non* of belonging to the nation. Also, students were to recognise the "greatness" of Turkey by studying the "greatness" of its past, and commit themselves to enhancing this greatness in the present; in fact, this point was emphasised with such frequency that one would not have been considered a part of the Turkish nation without a demonstrated devotion to this cause. These were the two planks of Turkish ethnicity.

Then, the question arises whether someone could belong to the body of the nation if they spoke Turkish, voiced their belief in Turkey's greatness, and pledged their commitment to enhancing it. A careful reading of the material shows that speaking Turkish and paying lip-service to Turkey's greatness were supplemented by another determinant of Turkishness: bloodline or *soy* in Turkish, which also corresponds to the concept of race. The educational material emphasised how the "real" Turks were descended from a long line of Turks, who had contributed to the development of Turkish civilisations through the ages. This hinted at a racial, blood- or *soy*-based understanding of nationalism in this period. Not only would an "ideal" Turk speak Turkish and commit themselves to a life that would be spent in service of the country, but they also would have descended from a line of ethnic Turks, who effectively would have done the same.

Added to these was the Islamic component of national identity. Islam, as an "ideal" Turk was expected to practice it in the 1930s, was "cleansed" of elements that one might identify as religious. Being Muslim meant being clean, respecting the elderly and caring for the poor; observing such Islamic rituals as attending mosque or praying did not appear within the arsenal of "good" Muslims, however. This amounted to a secularisation of religion. In the 1930s, the *laik* nationalist discourse emptied religion of any religious meaning and repackaged it as a set of cultural mores that happened to fit into the lifestyle the Kemalists were trying to introduce, designed according to the French style of secularism.

Several aspects of the 1930s definition of an "ideal" Turk carried over into the 1940s. Speaking Turkish continued as *sine qua non* of Turkishness by virtue of the fact that material was still published exclusively in Turkish; unless one read Turkish, they would not have access to any information on who Turks were or who they were

supposed to be. *Soy* also persisted as a marker of Turkishness; the educational material continued to impart to students that they were the descendants of a line of "great Turks," conveying the impression that if one's ancestors were not Turkish, meaning that if they did not speak Turkish or had contributed to Turks' greatness, they could not claim Turkish ethnicity — in return, conveying that Turkishness was passed down or inherited, and not acquired. One of the most significant ruptures of the 1940s happened vis-à-vis the definition of being Muslim, when the faith aspect of Islam started to creep into the conception of Turkish nationalism. As Muslims, Turks were not only supposed to subscribe to a set of cultural mores, but the "Turkish" form of being Muslim now also involved observing various Islamic rituals, such as mosque attendance, praying, belief in angels, and fasting during Ramadan.

The Turkish nationalism of the 1950s, by contrast, tied Turks more aggressively to the land that encompassed the nation. An "ideal" Turk was not only supposed to descend from a *soy* of ethnic Turks, but they were also to exist within the boundaries of the modern Republic, adding a soil-based aspect to the already blood-based understanding of Turkish nationalism. Correlatively, the educational material made it clear that the lands that formed the Republic of Turkey were meant exclusively for the descendants of Turks, which by definition included being Muslim. Vis-à-vis the definition of Muslimness, there was very little change from the 1940s, the reasons behind which will be discussed in Chapter 1.

Since the 1930s, the official discourse on Turkish nationalism championed a racial-religious definition of national identity, with the concept of the nation always premised on a racialised understanding of Turkishness along with Muslimness. In this context, race referred to a unity in blood and lineage, emphasising the significance of having descended from a line of ethnic Turks, who spoke Turkish and contributed to the greatness of the Turkish people. Added to this, Muslimness was an essential component of being a Turk, and although what being Muslim entailed developed and fluctuated in response to events and societal changes, it always remained a salient marker of Turkish identity. So, Turks were Sunni-Muslims, who were bound together by an ancestry of ethnic Turks and lived in the Turkish homeland.

Motivated by this analysis, this dissertation will posit that, rather than between Islamists and *laiks*, the battle that did play out in Turkish society and politics

was over which one of these two pillars of Turkishness (ethnicity and *soy* versus Islam) was going to exert more weight in terms of determining the overall colour of national identity. Throughout the decades under study (between the 1930s until the end of the 1950s), Turks were always Turkish first. In fact, as will be discussed in relevant junctures below, Turks were the "real" Muslims, "better" Muslims than other Muslims by virtue of their ethnic Turkishness. Even when "more" Islam was added to the construct of national identity in the 1940s and the 1950s, the most important lesson remained obedience to the state and self-sacrifice to the nation. Accordingly, the chief objective of education remained raising nationalist citizens, who viewed Turkey as a state exclusively for *Turkish*-Sunni Muslims.

This dissertation will also probe education-related and educational material to understand what this approach to nationalism signified for the country's population. Although Turkey housed an ethnically Turkish Sunni Muslim-majority population, a considerable percentage of its population hailed from different religious (Christian, Jewish and Alevi) and ethnic backgrounds (mostly Arab and Kurdish). If Turkey was conceptualised as a state for Turkish-Sunni Muslims, such a definition of national identity implied that Turkey's ethnic and religious minorities, who had lived for centuries in what became the territories of the Turkish Republic after 1923, were now seen as interlopers in a land they used to call their own.

Jews and Christians were not Muslims, so were not considered Turks. The status of Alevi and Kurdish communities represents a more interesting case. The members of the Alevi community were mostly Turkish-speaking, although there were also Kurmanji- or Zazaki-speaking, therefore ethnically Kurdish, Alevi communities in various towns across eastern Anatolia, in particular in Tunceli.[151] Interestingly enough, the broader Alevi culture had much in common with the lifestyle *à la* French secularism that the Republic was promoting in the 1930s. They were Muslims, but their interpretation of Islam did not require its adherents to pray, fast, or even go on the Hajj; asked them to "live according to the inner meaning of religion rather than its

[151] Talha Köse, "Between Nationalism, Modernism and Secularism: The Ambivalent Place of 'Alevi Identities'," *Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no.4 (2013), p592.

external demands"[152]; and emphasised correct conduct as well as responsibility to the wider community of believers.[153] So, in terms of understanding of Islam, Alevism overlapped with the Kemalist interpretation of Islam in the 1930s, and could have easily fitted into the Kemalist project of instituting a secular lifestyle.

The "problem" was that Alevism followed a sect of Islam that resembled the Shiism of Iran, which was different from Sunni Islam. In this sense, it was the *laik* aspect of the Turkish state that complicated matters. Although the Kemalists in the 1930s wanted to cleanse the public realm from religion, they also controlled the type of religion that was to be practised in private. This was the rationale behind the passing of a law (No.677) on 30 November 1925 to close down religious networks and monasteries that operated beyond the control of the state, including the Bektaşi lodges, which were fundamental institutions under Alevism.[154] The Kemalist interpretation of Islam espoused an individualist notion of the faith, whereas the religious orders and the communal ties they espoused were intrinsic to the Alevi faith; and allowing for the preservation of such connections would have been anathema to the Kemalist project, since it would have allowed for the development of a parallel identity, unyoked from the homogenous Turkish identity. As the Alevi community did not want to be homogenised under the Turkish rubric of Islam, their religious loyalties became a threat of the ideal vision of the nation, from which they were excluded.[155]

Kurdish-speaking members of the Alevi community found themselves in a more precarious position, and so did the members of the larger Kurdish community; neither were considered part of the Turkish nation. Unlike the adherents of the Alevi faith, the Kurds were Sunni Muslims — which meant that, before the 1930s, they could be integrated into the Turkish nation because of their common religious identity with the Turks. Even the Amasya Circular, mentioned above, had identified Kurds — along with, of course, Turks— as the two major communities living on Ottoman lands,

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[152] Martin von Bruinessen, "Kurds, Turks, and the Alevi Revival in Turkey," *The Middle East Report*, no.200 (July-September 1996), pp7-8.
[153] Köse, "Between Nationalism, Modernism and Secularism," p593.
[154] Ibid., p596.
[155] Ibid., p591.

recognising the latter's ethnic and cultural rights.[156] With the racist turn of the 1930s, the matters became more complicated, as their common religion was not enough to bring them into the national fold: Kurds spoke their own native language, were not ethnic Turks, and could not have any claims to a Turkish *soy.* Since the state no longer recognised the existence of any non-Turkish ethnicities, Kurds became "Turks who simply had forgotten Turkish"[157] and were forced to learn —or in this case, re-learn— the language to be integrated into the Turkish nation, while never being afforded a genuine chance at integration since they lacked Turkish lineage. Furthermore, Kurds were a tribal people whose political loyalties rested with feudal landlords, and who therefore resisted the authority of a centralised administration.[158] Therefore, Kurds subscribed to an organisation of state and society that was fundamentally and diametrically at odds with the state and society that the modern Republic wanted to create: homogenous, with a unitary identity, and controlled by the centre.[159] The subsequent chapters will show how this racial-religious messaging —that cast out anyone who did not descend from a *soy* of ethnic Turks and was not Muslim— persisted through the 1930s and the 1940s, and into Menderes's Turkey.

Significance of sources

This dissertation makes use of the speeches and addresses of senior officials; the different curriculums that were implemented in the early Republic; various history textbooks that were used in the 1950s; along with newspapers and magazines. To this end, it draws on the archives of the Ministry of National Education, the State Archives of the Presidency of Turkey, the National Library (in Ankara), and the Atatürk Library (in Istanbul). The archives of the Ministry of National Education in particular has proved to be a rich source base, since it houses the majority of documents related to

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[156] Mesut Yeğen, "Turkish nationalism and the Kurdish question," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no.1 (2007), p127; and Hamit Bozarslan, "Kürd Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898-2000), in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce 4: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), p848.

[157] White, *Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks,* p31.

[158] Yeğen, "Turkish nationalism and the Kurdish question," p128.

[159] Yeğen, "Türk Milliyetçiliği ve Kürt Sorunu," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce 4: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), pp882-883.

the history of education in Turkey. When I visited the archives in Autumn 2019, they could not locate the copies of primary school textbooks, since the archives were undergoing a process of reorganisation and the primary school textbooks had not been digitised. The curriculum and the transcripts of the meetings of education councils, however, had been, to which I was granted access. For copies of primary school textbooks, I consulted the National Library in Ankara. In search of a complete array of speeches by Adnan Menderes and Tevfik ileri, his minister of national education, I visited the State Archives of the Presidency of Turkey. The Atatürk Library houses an impressive collection of Ottoman and Turkish newspapers and magazines, although some volumes are missing or in poor condition. For example, I was unable to access the copies of the *Zafer* newspaper between 1955 and 1957, as the archivist informed me that they were too fragile to be handled. Regarding the copies of other magazines and newspapers I used, however, there were not any issues.

Beyond its contributions to the historiography, the significance of this work lies in the sources it makes use of, most of which have either not been analysed in an academic study or explored in detail. The different curriculums that Chapter 3 looks at —namely the primary school curriculum of 1930, 1948, 1956 as well as the draft curriculum of 1959— have never been studied extensively, nor have they been analysed within the context of the changing geopolitical environments or their connection to nationalism and national identity. The primary school textbooks that are the focus of analysis in Chapters 4 and 5, too, are woefully underutilised.

Although there are academic works that do make references to the content of textbooks used across public schools in the early Republic, none of them examines these documents in their entirety, which fails to provide the scholarship with a global picture of what students would have learned at the end of their studies. Instead of simply summarising the main argument of textbooks, these chapters take a look at the entire spectrum of subjects, examining the lessons that students were supposed to gather from studying these various episodes in world history, and how these teachings were supposed to shape their vision of themselves as well as the world around them, and communicate to them what it meant to be Turkish.

In terms of textbooks, the dissertation will confine the scope of analysis to primary school history textbooks, with primary education being defined as the

education students receive from grades one through five, between the ages of seven and eleven. The significance of history education to the study of nationalism was discussed above. Regarding the significance of primary education, compared to middle- or high-school students, students at this age are more impressionable and less questioning, but they also have the capacity to absorb less information. Therefore, this paper is motivated by the assumption that the narrative on the Turkish past communicated at this level would have been distilled down to its most pivotal elements, prioritizing those episodes that would have more clearly and powerfully exposed the exemplary virtues of Turkishness. Because history as a class was not offered between grades one through three, this dissertation will narrow the parameters of analysis even further, focussing on history textbooks that were studied in Grade 4 and Grade 5.

Also, previous works on Turkish education do not combine these texts with other aspects of education, such as the experience of schooling, including uniforms, interactions between students and teachers, commemorations and celebrations, to demonstrate how these non-textual elements would have reinforced the central messaging of the education system. This dissertation taps into this larger spectrum of sources that are at the disposal of historians of education to present a more comprehensive picture of Turkey's system of education. Added to these, journals *Doğan Kardeş* and *İlk Öğretim* that Chapter 5 of this dissertation uses have not been used in academic research before.

Chapter structure

Chapter One analyses Menderes's rise within the context of Turkish domestic politics and discusses how the circumstances under which Menderes emerged to the political fore informed the way he presented his party to the Turkish electorate. It then examines the speeches on education by senior ministers, probing the problems, concerns, and considerations that, they claimed, would be at the forefront when formulating educational policies as well as the key tenets around which the DP would revise and reorganize Turkey's system of education. The chapter then studies the changes that had been set in motion in the late 1940s against the backdrop of the opening years of the Cold War and related geopolitical developments. Finally, it

compares the image of Turkey and Turkishness that Menderes claimed to be building against the state of the country he inherited in 1950, questioning whether —as historiography claims— Menderes did indeed diverge from the CHP's vision for the Turkish nation in any meaningful way.

Chapter 2 focusses on the different curriculums (the 1930, 1948, 1956 curriculums as well as the draft recommendations on curricular changes that were submitted to the ministry in 1959) that were implemented in the early and mid-Republic, probing the objectives of education, primary school education, and history education as outlined in each curriculum. The aim here is to tease out, and compare and contrast, the lessons that each curriculum was supposed to communicate by introducing students to various episodes of the Turkish past, and correlatively, the values and norms that students were meant to internalise by studying these topics. The chapter will then account for the changes across these different curriculums and discuss their implications for Turkish national identity.

Chapter 3 and *Chapter 4* draws together the arguments made in the first two chapters to demonstrate how the official mind — manifested through policies and the curriculum — was channelled through the material that was distributed to students. *Chapter 3* takes a detailed look at topics covered at Grade 4 level, while *Chapter 4* shifts its focus to the Grade 5 material. Both chapters investigate how Turkishness was packaged and communicated to the nation's youth, piece together the historical narrative that was being constructed for the students; and extrapolate how Muslimness and Turkishness featured in these narratives of the nation.

Chapter 5 looks at how classrooms operated as political hubs. It asks how the rhythm of everyday life complemented the state's attempt at identity formation and reinforced the core lessons of Turkish education. To this end, it studies the era's conception of the ideal child; the profiles of ideal teachers and ideal students; uniforms; and the nature of celebrations and commemorations that were held in the 1950s, with a detailed look at the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the conquest of Istanbul in 1953. This chapter also evaluates the experience of schooling from a gender perspective, trying to understand whether the state curated the everyday experience of going to school differently for female and male students.

Chapter 1
Islam, nationalism and Turkish politics in the 1950s

1945 was a turning-point in Turkish politics. In a speech delivered less than two weeks after the end of World War II in Europe, President İsmet İnönü announced that, as wartime limitations were slowly being lifted, the regulations that governed the country's political and intellectual life would also be rethought.[1] When delivering his annual address to the parliament later that year, he made references to a press law that had allowed Ankara to shut down newspapers deemed guilty of criticising the government. İnönü remarked that the measures of this nature were products of post-revolutionary conditions that were kept in place during the war but had now become outdated and would be out of place in the kind of democracy that the country would be evolving into under his stewardship.[2] In both speeches, he encouraged the formation of an opposition.[3]

It was as a result of these changes that an opposition party could emerge victorious at the polls in 1950, send the CHP into the ranks of the opposition for the first time in the party's twenty-three-year-old history, and successfully form a government. This chapter will first examine the political circumstances in which the DP was formed, campaigned and ultimately won the elections; and discuss the impact of this domestic context on the way the DP presented itself to the Turkish electorate and explained its vision for the Turkish nation. It will then address how this vision was reflected in the party's approach to education, focussing on the two themes Turkey's system of education would emphasise under the Menderes administration, namely national values and religion, as asserted by Menderes and his leading ministers in various speeches and addresses. Based on these speeches and pledges made at the government level, this chapter will make the case that the conception of Turkishness was starting to change in this period, incorporating Turkey's so-called traditional values, which now included Islam. Thereafter, this chapter will question whether the

[1] İsmet İnönü, "19 Mayıs Gençlik ve Spora Bayramı Töreninde Gençliğe Sesleniş," in *Ayın Tarihi*, no.38 (Basın Yayın Umum Müdürlüğü, 1-31 May 1946), pp51-53.
[2] İsmet İnönü, "TBMM'nin 7. Dönem, 3. Yasama Yılı'nı Açış Konuşmaları," in *İsmet İnönü'nün TBMM'deki Konuşmaları, 1920-1973* 2 (1939-1960), ed. Ali Rıza Cihan (Ankara: TBMM Kültür, Sanat ve Yayın Kurulu Yayınları, 1993), pp54-64.
[3] Ibid.

changes that the DP implemented, or promised to implement, heralded a new epoch, as historiography suggests. This is why this chapter will then turn to an analysis of the 1945-1950 years under the last CHP administration, examining the shifts that had already started to take place in the country's social, cultural, and political life against the backdrop of the early Cold War years. It will finally assess how these transformations, which had already been set in motion before the DP came to power, would have shaped the role religion played in Turkish society throughout the DP years.

The electoral politics in Turkey between 1945 and 1950

Neither of İnönü's two speeches, mentioned above, were technically announcing an official transition into a democratic or a multi-party system. Since the establishment of the Republic, the leadership had kept in place the trimmings of a democratic regime. The Turkish constitution stipulated that elections be held every four years and did not ban the formation of political parties. Yet, these elections never involved a transparent process, effectively serving the purpose of "confirming" the single list of candidates nominated by the CHP.[4] The parties that did attempt to challenge the CHP's rule either failed or were closed down in the process.[5] The Republic's first opposition *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası*[6] (1924) as well as *Serbest Cumhuriyet Partisi* (1930) were both founded at Atatürk's command to create the veneer of a multi-party system, and then shut down within less than a year when they threatened the CHP's hold on power.[7] *Ahali Cumhuriyet Fırkası* (September 1930-January 1931) could not reach an audience beyond the party's hometown of Adana and the surrounding region, and therefore fizzled out four months after its formation. *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Amele ve Çiftçi Fırkası,* founded around the same time as *Ahali Fırkası*, had not even had a chance to organize properly when it was shut down for

[4] For an informative work on the transition from the single-party to the multi-party period, see Taner Timur, *Türkiye'de Çok Partili Hayata Geçiş* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003); and Cemil Koçak's five-volume work *Türkiye'de İki Partili Siyasi Sistemin Kuruluş Yılları (1945-1950)* published by İletişim Yayınları.
[5] Article 13, "1924 Anayasası".
[6] Erik Jan Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic: The Progressive Republican Party, 1924-1925* (Leiden: Brill Publishing, 1991).
[7] Cemil Koçak, ed., *Belgelerle İktidar ve Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014); Ahmet Ağaoğlu, *Serbest Fırka Hatıraları* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2018).

sympathizing with leftism.[8] As a result, between 1923 and 1946, the CHP ruled almost uncontested. The first opposition of the post-World War II period, *Milli Kalkınma Partisi*, was formed on 18 July 1945. Upon establishment on 7 January 1946, the DP was the sixth party to have been formed in opposition to the CHP. DP would be followed by a seventh party, *Millet Partisi,* on 20 July 1948.

However, İnönü's speech would not result in the creation of an entirely open political space after 1946. Fifteen years after the example of *Amele and Çifti Fırkası,* left-leaning parties were still not welcome in Turkish politics.[9] Nor would they be welcome throughout the 1950s as the Cold War was gathering storm, in reaction to which Turkey joined the U.S.-led Western bloc of nations against the Soviet Union and communism. Some parties that could be plotted on the right of the spectrum were also shunned: reactionaries who wished to turn the clock back to the pre-Republican era or religious functionaries who subscribed to a vision of Turkey as a state organised around Islamic principles were not allowed to organise.[10]

Furthermore, there were several ways in which new parties were blocked from making a splash on the political scene. If the DP experience was to shed a guiding light, the only way to survive in the Turkish politics of the late 1940s was to minimise, if not eliminate, the differences with those at the helm and thereby not attract too much attention. This effectively meant mirroring the CHP.[11] At the outset, the DP would not have seemed to be presenting a problem. The party's senior leadership —Celal Bayar (president, 1950-1960), Adnan Menderes (prime minister, 1950-1960), Fuat Köprülü (foreign minister, 1950-June 1956, with a brief stint as deputy prime minister, July 1955-December 1955), Fatih Rüştü Zorlu (deputy prime minister, May 1954-July 1955; foreign minister, November 1957-May 1960), Refik Koraltan (speaker of parliament,

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[8] Suna Kili, *Atatürk Devrimi: Bir Çağdaşlaşma Modeli* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2011), p111.
[9] Tanıl Bora and Kerem Ünüvar, "Ellili Yıllarda Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Hayatı," in *Türkiye'nin 1950li Yılları*, ed. Mete Kaan Kaynar (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015), p159.
[10] Cem Eroğul, "The Establishment of Multi-Party Rule, 1945-1971," in *Turkey in Transition: New Perspectives*, ed. Irvin Schick and Ertuğrul Ahmet Tonak (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1987), p103.
[11] Sabri Sayari, "Adnan Menderes: Between Democratic and Authoritarian Populism," in *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey*, ed. Metin Heper and Sayari (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), p69.

1950-1960)— had all served in key capacities within the CHP establishment, including as members of parliament, with Bayar as Atatürk's last prime minister from November 1937 to January 1939.[12] Furthermore, many of the DP's founders had played important roles in the struggle for independence. Bayar was a pivotal figure in uniting the local populations in İzmir and across the Aegean province against the Greek invasion.[13] Menderes had also organised a resistance movement against the Greek forces in his hometown of Aydın in the Aegean province and later fought in the frontlines in the so-called Great Offensive that began on 26 August 1922 and culminated in the decisive defeat of the enemy on 18 September 1922.[14] Koraltan, too, carried out activities around the city of Konya in central Anatolia to mobilise the local populations for the war-effort; became appointed by Atatürk to a commission in Summer 1920 to tour the Western front and boost the morale of the troops; and was later a member of the Independence Tribunal in Istanbul between December 1923 and February 1924, established to persecute the enemies of the state.[15]

They were politically "clean" individuals without any dubious track-records and could therefore be trusted not to steer too far from the established norm. Journalists, academics and some politicians who were active in this period also concur that the DP was able to organise only after İnönü had reviewed the party programme[16] and confirmed that it was similar enough in content to that of the CHP.[17] Nevertheless, the threat that the party might be shut down at any moment lingered, captured by Bayar's

[12] *Demirkırat,* Episode 1, directed by Mehmet Ali Birand and Can Dündar (1991, TRT-Milliyet Productions).
[13] İsmet Bozdağ, *Bilinmeyen Yönleriyle Celal Bayar* (İstanbul: Emre Yayınları, 2005), p21.
[14] Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Menderes'in Dramı* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2020).
[15] Erol Yüksel, *Milli Mücadele'den 27 Mayıs'a Bir Siyasetçi: Refik Koraltan* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Başkanlığı, 2019).
[16] Cemil Koçak, *Türkiye'de İki Partili Siyasi Sistemin Kuruluş Yılları (1945-1950) 2: İktidar ve Demokratlar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), p17 and p22; Rıfkı Salim Burçak, *Türkiye'de Demokrasiye Geçiş, 1945-1950* (İstanbul: Olgaç Matbaası, 1979); and Metin Toker, *Demokrasimizin İsmet Paşa'lı Yılları: Tek Partiden Çok Partiye, 1944-1950* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1990); and Mahmut Goloğlu, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi IV: Demokrasiye Geçiş (1946-1950)* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2013). Also see, Feridun Kandemir, *En Büyük Siyaset Fırtınaları ve Neticeleri* (İstanbul: İkincil Basımevi, 1956).
[17] Koçak presents several examples in this regard, see for instance, Koçak, *İktidar ve Demokratlar,* p35; Anıl Varel, "Ellili Yıllarda Muhalefet: Hükümete Yönelik Temel Eleştiriler ve DP Karşısında CHP'nin İdeolojik Konumlanışı," in *Türkiye'nin 1950'li Yılları,* p207.

comment that the CHP "could despatch the gendarmerie and shut us down…and not a single leaf will fall in this country."[18]

Added to these was another, more legitimate impediment: offering a programme that was too *dissimilar* to that of the CHP could verge on being unconstitutional. The CHP's so-called "Six Arrows" —representing its six ideological pillars of republicanism, populism, nationalism, laicism, statism, and reformism— had been coded into Article 2 of the Turkish constitution in February 1937, making it illegal to contradict the CHP's founding principles.[19] In order to survive, any other party in the running had no choice but to become effectively "intertwined" with the CHP.[20]

The difficulties facing the new parties did not end after they had received the green-light from the CHP. In the case of the Demokrats, the party was banned from establishing a presence in the eastern provinces and the frontier regions; could not electioneer in villages; and those who wanted to join were reportedly bullied, harassed and intimidated.[21] To prevent the DP from amassing any meaningful following immediately after it had been formed in January 1946, the CHP even changed the date of the upcoming parliamentary elections. Originally scheduled for 1947, the government announced on 2 July 1946 that the elections would now be held on 21 July 1946, giving the DP only three weeks to prepare. The 1950 elections, out of which the DP would emerge victorious, was also married with irregularities,[22] with the press reporting that ballots were still being spotted in the sea days after the polling had taken place on 14 May.[23] More strikingly, after the results had been announced, the Commander of the First Army General Kurtçebe Noyan reportedly contacted Party Inspector Sadi Irmak, who was tasked with "inspecting" party

[18] Koçak, *Türkiye'de İki Partili Siyasi Sistemin Kuruluş Yılları (1945-1950) 5: Uzlaşma* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), p493.
[19] Ibid., p76.
[20] Bayram Koca, "Ellili Yıllarda Merkez Sağ: Demokrat Parti'nin Özgürlük ve İstismar Arasındaki Dini Politikaları," in *Türkiye'nin 1950'li Yılları*, p297.
[21] Koçak, *Uzlaşma*, pp102-129, and p174.
[22] See, for example, Ahmet Emin Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte Gördüklerim ve Geçirdiklerim Volume 4, 1945-1971* (İstanbul: Rey Yayıncılık, 1971); and Nadir Nadi*, Perde Aralığından* (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Yayınları, 1966).
[23] *Demirkırat*, episode 2.

activities, informing him that the army could claim that communists had meddled with the elections and nullify the outcome, if İnönü agreed.[24]

"Enough! Now the people have their say!"

This uneven electoral playing field was emblematic of the country's general lack of democratic freedoms, Menderes and Bayar claimed as they toured the country between 1946 and 1950 to interact with voters and introduce their party. On 1 April 1947, they were scheduled to travel to İzmir. There were no official rallies or meetings planned; rather, they were supposed to convene with other leading members of the party to discuss the upcoming by-elections. Having heard about this trip, the CHP's then-Prime Minister Recep Peker, who was set to be travelling from Istanbul to Ankara at the time, rerouted his journey through İzmir. His appearance in the city was effectively a show of force against the DP: large groups of students were instructed to attend, and factory-workers were given an extra day's wages to show up in support.[25]

On the day of Peker's public appearance, Bayar and Menderes arrived in İzmir and made their way to the Deniz Gazinosu, where their meeting was to be held. Those who had turned out to greet them were so high in number that they filled up the road in front of the Gazino and temporarily blocked the traffic. To disperse the crowds, the police fired into the air and took some of the attendees into custody. Seeing all this unfurl, Menderes leaned out of the window and spoke to the crowds, telling them that "nobody has the strength to put out the love of freedom that is in the heart of every Turk. [If you're bent on getting rid of us], also tear apart their hearts and try to extinguish this love of freedom."[26]

The DP's campaign poster in 1950 played upon similar sentiments. It featured a hand held-up in protest, with a Turkish-flag tied in the shape of a bow-tie to an invisible wrist, motioning the spectator to stop; the caption read, "Enough, now the people have their say!"[27] According to Selçuk Milar, the creative mind behind the

[24] Ayşe Hür, *Çok Partili Dönemin Öteki Tarihi: İnönü ve Bayarlı Yıllar* (İstanbul: Profil Yayıncılık, 2015), p125; and *Demirkırat*, episode 3.
[25] Kemal Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi* (İstanbul: Afa Yayınları, 1996), p159.
[26] "1 Nisan 1947," in *Adnan Menderes'in Konuşmaları, Demeçleri ve Makaleleri* vol. 1, ed. Haluk Kılçık (Ankara: Demokrat Parti Yayınları, 1991), p188.
[27] Selçuk Milar, "Yeter Söz Milletindir Afişi Nasıl Doğdu," in *Toplum ve Bilim* 9, no. 54 (1988).

poster, it was meant to gesture the government to stop, saying that Turkey had had "enough" of the injustices inflicted upon those who supported the opposition, and "enough" of being deprived of the basic functions that should be fulfilled by responsible government. It also symbolised the promise that, under a DP administration, the Turkish people would finally regain their voice.[28]

Both Menderes' intervention in İzmir as well as the DP's campaign poster captured the crux of the message embedded in the DP's self-narrative. The public had long been unhappy with the status quo and its repressive policies, and his party would emerge to the fore as the institutional answer to these calls for change. Against the authoritarianism of those who had come before him, Menderes was going to usher in a new epoch in Turkish politics, one that would be characterized foremost by democratic freedoms and a government that was responsive to the needs of its public. Samet Ağaoğlu, who served as a member of parliament in all three Demokrat administrations (1950, 1954, 1957), would later describe the party as a "people's movement…a manifestation of the people's longing for freedom,"[29] which captured "a great following that was thirsty for human rights and freedoms."[30]

This point was entrenched in the first article of the party's manifesto, which claimed that the core mission of the DP and reason for its founding was to democratise the country's political life.[31] It also received constant emphasis from DP members of parliament at the first few sessions of the new parliament.[32] They asserted that the ninth parliament, the first DP-dominated parliament, should be re-ordered as the first parliament of a democratic republic, distinguishing it from the previous eight parliaments that convened under the CHP's "aristocratic republic."[33]

As a member of parliament from İzmir, the famous novelist and women's rights activist Halide Edib Adıvar identified 14 May as the onset of a new age in Turkish

[28] Milar, "Yeter Söz Milletindir Afişi Nasıl Doğdu".
[29] Samet Ağaoğlu, *Arkadaşım Menderes: İpin Gölgesinde Günler* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2011), p55.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Madde 1, "Demokrat Parti Programı" (1946).
[32] Osman Bölükbaşı in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 1, p63 (9. Dönem, 1. Yasama Yılı, 4. Bileşim, 1. Oturum, 31 Mayıs 1950).
[33] Sinan Tekelioğlu in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 1, pp64-65 (9. Dönem, 1. Yasama Yılı, 4. Bileşim, 1. Oturum, 31 Mayıs 1950).

history, in which "a sun has risen in the mind of our great nation that is emitting the light of democracy."[34] Her opposition to the CHP was important. Halide Edib was an ardent nationalist, spearheaded rallies against the Allied forces occupying Istanbul after World War I, and even served as "Corporal Halide" during the struggle for independence. After the establishment of the Republic, however, she spoke out against Atatürk's "expectations of the people around him," criticising the establishment of a single-party regime and what she saw as a one-man rule that was forming around the person of Atatürk.[35] Halide Edib went into self-exile in 1925, only to return in 1939 after Atatürk's death.[36]

In his first address to the parliament, Menderes remarked that this "democratic spirit" would imbue the country's system of education.[37] According to the prime minister, a more democratic system of education meant a system of education based on national values. A nation's youth could be knowledgeable about the latest advances in sciences and technology, but that country could not enjoy "full" independence as long as its youth was raised the under the influence of "foreign systems of belief."[38] The DP's manifestos in 1946 and 1950 both underlined this point, affirming that the future generations would not only be equipped with scientific or technological knowledge, but would also be taught the importance of protecting and preserving national values."[39] Guided by this understanding, the system of education

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[34] Halide Edip Adıvar in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 1, pp98-99 (9. Dönem, 1. Yasama Yılı, 5. Bileşim, 1. Oturum, 2 Haziran 1950).

[35] Ayşegül Altınay, *The Myth of the Military-Nation: Militarism, Gender and Education in Turkey* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), p53.

[36] Halide Edib was not forced out of the country for disagreeing with Atatürk. In the case brought against her, she was being accused of treason for having supported the idea of Turkey coming under an American mandate in 1919, which ignored her substantial efforts in the struggle for independence thereafter. See, Hülya Adak, "National Myths and Self-Narration(s): Mustafa Kemal's *Nutuk* and Halide Edib's *Memoirs* and *The Turkish Ordeal*," in *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no.2/3 (2003), pp510-511.

[37] Menderes, "19. Cumhuriyet Hükümetinin (I. Menderes Hükümeti) Programını Sunuş Konuşması," 29 May 1950 in *Başbakanlarımız ve Genel Kurul Konuşmaları* 4, ed. İrfan Neziroğlu and Tuncer Yılmaz (TBMM Basımevi: Ankara, December 2014), 7-17; also presented in "Mecliste dün okunan D. Parti programının tam metnini veriyoruz," *Zafer,* 30 May 1950, pp1-2 and p6.; "Mecliste okunan D. Parti programının tam metnini veriyoruz," *Zafer,* 31 May 1950, p2.

[38] *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 1, p29 (9. Dönem, 1. Yasama Yılı, 3.Bileşim, 1.Oturum, 29 May 1950).

[39] Madde 34, "Demokrat Parti Programı" (1946) and Madde 35, "Demokrat Parti Tüzük ve Programı" (1950).

that was going to be implemented under the DP was still going to make sure that the youth cultivated a robust foundation in the sciences and technology, but differently than their predecessors, this foundation of Western knowledge was now going to be "fortified" with a layer of ideals that made Turkey Turkish.[40]

One of the reasons why the DP gave special importance to the teaching of national norms and traditions was the belief that their absence under the CHP had led the youth morally astray.[41] Journalists for the DP's mouthpiece the *Zafer* newspaper published several articles on this topic. Authors such as T. Feda[42], Muhip Dıranas[43], and Ali Fuat Başgil[44] complained about how the whole system of education was structured on alien cultures and moral codes that did not sit well with the nation's character, causing the youth to move through life without any ethical guidance that could also function as a moral compass. To fix this, many called for a vigorous emphasis on national values.[45] Educators were not only tasked with imparting information or enhancing a student's mental aptitude, they opined; they also needed to concentrate the hearts and minds of the nation's young on the national ideal.[46]

Halide Edib made similar remarks. She asserted that the CHP's goal had been to raise as many literate people as possible, because they needed more people to pay lip-service to the party propaganda.[47] In this pursuit, the party had hurried forward with their "hunt for the youth" and inculcated them with their totalitarian thinking, which amounted to "one-party, one-leader and one-everything."[48] In this rush to create more foot-soldiers for the regime, the CHP had also implemented a programme that had been adopted wholesale from the West, without any introspection,

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[40] Menderes in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 6, pp22-23 (9. Dönem, 2. Yasama Yılı, 58. Bileşim, 1. Oturum, 30 Mart 1951).
[41] See, for instance, Samet Ağaoğlu ve Mükerrem Sarol's speeches in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 1, p81 and p91 (9. Dönem, 1. Yasama Yılı, 4. Bileşim, 2. Oturum, 31 Mayıs 1950).
[42] See, for example, "Orta ve yüksek tahsilde başarısızlık sebebi nedir?," *Zafer*, 12 August 1949, p2 and p5; "Memleketin eğitim durumu hakkında düşünceler," *Zafer*, 17 August 1949, p2; and "Eğitim durumu hakkında düşünceler," *Zafer,* 19 August 1949, p2.
[43] Muhip Dıranas, "Bir derginin başına gelenler," *Zafer,* 27 May 1949, p2.
[44] Başgil's speech was covered in "Maarif işlerinde geri zihniyet," *Zafer*, 24 July 1949, p1.
[45] Dr. Aziz Yergök, "Mekteplerimizdeki terbiye," *Zafer*, 9 August 1949, p2.
[46] Harun Bayır, "Türkiye'de ahlak ve karakter," *Zafer,* 7 July 1949, p2.
[47] Halide Edip Adıvar in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 1, pp98-99 (9. Dönem, 1. Yasama Yılı, 5. Bileşim, 1. Oturum, 2 Haziran 1950).
[48] Ibid.

evaluation or criticism, and did not include any lessons on the country's customs and traditions, effectively failing to teach students how to be Turkish.

So, the CHP's system of education had raised a generation of students that were completely oblivious to their nation's unique traditions, as a result of which the nation's youth were now embroiled in a moral crisis. The problem did not stop there, however, as this moral crisis presented a security risk. Avni Başman, the DP's first minister of national education, was one of the first officials to voice this concern. To mark the onset of this tenure, he delivered a short address, in which he highlighted the importance of defending national solidarity. Along with a robust personality and the mechanics of sound reasoning, he stated, the youth needed to absorb a value system that cherished the nation and the fatherland, so that they would be properly girded against any threats to the well-being of the nation.[49] Başman did not point out what sort of threats loomed on the horizon. According to his argumentation, the risk of an invasion perennially existed on and would never leave Turkey's doorstep, and the only way that students would ever rise to the defence of the nation was if they dedicated their entire beings to its service. This level of dedication would only be possible if they became well-versed in every element that contributed to Turkey's greatness, which would make the nation the ultimate object of their affections.

Başman remained in his post only until 2 August 1950, when he was replaced by Tevfik İleri. The causes that İleri had publicly been passionate about before entering government service were a strong indication of the premium he would place on raising students as fierce nationalists, just like Başman had done. When he was a student at the Istanbul University's Faculty of Engineering, İleri had been a member of societies whose mission was to foster and intensify feelings of nationalism among the youth by encouraging the use of local products and organising ceremonies to commemorate "the great Turks that served the great Turkish nation."[50] In a speech he delivered at the Istanbul Technical University a year before he entered politics, İleri argued that it was the economically and morally unsound nations that had suffered

[49] The speech was delivered on 30 May 1950. The text of the speech was published in *Tebliğler Dergisi* 13, no.593 (5 June 1950), p21. *Zafer* also reference the speech in an article, "Milli birlik hedefimizdir," *Zafer*, 31 May 1950, p1 and p6.
[50] Dr. Abdurrahman Bozkurt, *Tevfik İleri: Cumhuriyet'in İkinci Eğitim Mimarı* (İstanbul: İdil Yayıncılık, 2012), p119.

and faced extinction during World War II; the Turkish nation was to "embrace the cause of nationalism" to avoid a similar fate.[51]

Unlike Başman, it was clear to İleri what nationalism was to be a weapon against, however: communism and communists. This was why students were supposed to learn "how to love their nations before anything else."[52] İleri despised communism and communists to such an extent that he considered subscribing to this school of thought "the greatest crime," and anyone who did "succumb" to its teachings as a traitor "who had sold out his own nation to Russia."[53] It was because of such views that many in the DP viewed him as "the man that will save the country from the red menace."[54] İleri served as minister for education until April 1953, when he was forced to resign because of allegations of being a reactionary.[55] These allegations would have been fundamentally ungrounded or misguided, however, because İleri was asked to step back into the same role in 1957.

Indeed, it was this view of geopolitics that İleri channelled into the task of revamping Turkey's system of education. What is interesting and telling is that, although İleri was a staunch anti-communist, he did not invoke communism in every speech he delivered on the need to develop a strong sense of nationalism. Sometimes, the threat was unidentified. In his address to mark the start of the 1950-1951 academic year, İleri put forward that the ministry was now tasking its teachers with elevating this nation, "to which we will take pride in belonging until death," to the level of "great civilizations" in a way "that is befitting its glorious history."[56] To this end, teachers were to enlighten students to their nation's "great" past and the honourable sacrifices of their ancestors — which, İleri asserted, would lead these students to grow up into patriotic adults. He identified patriotism as the noblest of virtues, explaining that a patriotic individual would always feel the need to serve his country and make every possible sacrifice for its sake. In this vein, it would be these

[51] Bozkurt, *Tevfik İleri,* p122.
[52] Ibid., p122
[53] Ibid., p127.
[54] Ibid., p53.
[55] Ibid., p98.
[56] Tevfik İleri, "Okulların 1950-1951 ders yılı başlaması münasebetiyle Milli Eğitim Bakanının radyoda yaptığı konuşma," *Tebliğler Dergisi* 13, no.610 (2 October 1950), pp93-96.

students who developed into patriotic Turks that would carry out the duty Atatürk assigned to the youth and transform this nation to "a more robust, beautiful and prosperous" form before handing it down to the next generations. İleri also reminded the students of how history was littered with examples of nations slipping under foreign domination shortly after gaining their independence. To avoid this fate, they needed to be always at the ready to defend the nation. Overall, the purpose of learning was not to achieve good grades, but to become "this ideal Turk" that the country needed "each and every one of its students" to be.[57]

Then, one of the main pillars of the DP's system of education was to make sure that students came out of the system as fierce nationalists, who loved their country and nation above anything else. This was to furnish the youth with a moral compass for life which they had woefully lacked under the previous system. Also, learning about their country's values as well as its profound "greatness" was going to spark such loyalty to this profoundly "great" nation that students were going to be spurred into action whenever Turkey came under attack.

According to some of İleri's speeches, another motive behind raising a nationalist generation was to ward off communism, which he identified as Turkey's number-one enemy. Yet, as his other addresses, as well as his predecessor Başman's thoughts on education demonstrated, not everyone subscribed to this view. This is significant, as it showed that not every change that took place in the 1950s was immediately connected to communism and Cold War geopolitics. It was a period in which Turkey was grappling with its own identity against the backdrop of its own historical trajectory *as well as* the backdrop of the Cold War. As this dissertation will show, it was only towards the end of the 1950s that Turks would start to understand their country in opposition to the communist threat.

The DP and Islam

There were other changes that Menderes hinted at in his inaugural speech to the parliament. He distinguished between the reforms that the public had internalised

[57] İleri, "Okulların 1950-1951 ders yılı başlaması münasebetiyle Milli Eğitim Bakanının radyoda yaptığı konuşma."

(“*millete mal olmuş”*) and those that the public had not internalised (“*millete mal olmamış*”).[58] Menderes never made it explicit which reform, he thought, appeared within the realm of the “internalised” and which appeared within the realm of the “un-internalised.” However, the first few changes that were introduced reconstructed some of the country’s religious practices and spaces to a different pattern, fuelling the assumption that the Demokrats had been uncomfortable with the CHP’s understanding of the concept of secularism, especially with its implementation vis-à-vis political rhetoric and lifestyle.

On 16 June 1950 —roughly a month after the DP had taken office and on the eve of the holy month of Ramadan— the Menderes government struck down from the penal code, which had banned the call to prayer in Arabic. The article had been put in place on 2 June 1941, charging any violation with imprisonment for up to three months as well as monetary punishment between 10 to 200 liras.[59] From the perspective of religious communities as well as those who disapproved of the CHP’s discomfort with public displays of religion and religiosity, this was going to be the most consequential change that would be introduced throughout the 1950s. The jubilation among these communities was such that, according to some, it even shrouded over every mistake Menderes would commit thereafter.[60]

There were other changes that signified the re-emergence of religion to the public fore. The American scholar Howard Reed, who was based in Turkey in the early 1950s, reported on the uptick in private mosque construction, bankrolled by wealthy entrepreneurs.[61] There was more widespread and open observance of daily prayers

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[58] Adnan Menderes, “29 Mayıs 1950 Pazartesi 19. Cumhuriyet Hükümetinin (I. Menderes Hükümeti) Programını Sunuş Konuşması,” in *Başbakanlarımız ve Genel Kurul Konuşmaları* pp7-17; pp14-15.

[59] Koca, “Ellili Yıllarda Merkez Sağ,” pp293-319 and pp301-303; also see, Mustafa Armağan, *Türkçe Ezan ve Menderes: Bir Devrin Yazılmayan Gerçekleri* (İstanbul: Ketebe Yayınları, 2019), p13 and p20.

[60] Armağan, *Türkçe Ezan ve Menderes,* p17; also see, Emin Karakuş, *40 Yıllık Bir Gazetenin Gözü İle Ankara* (İstanbul: Hürriyet Yayınları, 1977), p167.

[61] Howard A. Reed, “Revival of Islam in Secular Turkey,” *Middle East Journal* 8, no.3 (1954), p271; See also, Reed, “Turkey’s New Imam-Hatip Schools,” *The World of Islam* 4, no.2 (1955), p150; Mahmut Makal, *Bizim Köy* (İstanbul: Varlık Yayınları, 1950), and for its English translation, see Makal, *A Village in Anatolia*, trans. Wyndham Deedes (London: Valentine Mitchell Publications, 1954). For a discussion of this point, see, Bernard Lewis, “The Revival in

and fasting in Ramadan, and a greater tendency to invoke religious phrases in daily parlance — which led Reed to remark that people were becoming more comfortable with embracing their Muslim heritage in public. He also commented on the increase in the number of state-funded publications with religious content that ran articles on rehabilitating Ottoman history, glorified the memory of the Sultan-Caliph, and critiqued Atatürk's reforms,[62] such as Necip Fazıl's *Büyük Doğu,* Esref Edip Fergan's *Sebilürreşad*, as well as *Serdengeçti* and *Büyük Cihad.* Added to these, the female members of the House of Osman, the ruling dynasty of the Ottoman Empire, were allowed to return. Also, the *Diyanet* was granted a larger budget.[63]

Such changes created the impression that the DP was pivoting away from the state-sanctioned lifestyle *à la* French secularism under the CHP, which had confined expressions of a religious lifestyle to the private realm. Yet, as below paragraphs will show, these changes were not indicative of an onset of freedom of religion within the public realm in the style of American secularism that would have allowed the population complete freedom over public displays of piousness. The transformation should best be seen as being from "hard" secularism, the French format, to "soft" secularism, as somewhere in between the French and American interpretations. More importantly, accompanying this transition to "soft" secularism was the extension of the state's *laiklik* —which had hitherto dictated the kind of Muslim Turks were supposed to be in private, as later discussions will expound upon— into the realm of lifestyle. Even though "more" religion was being allowed into the way Turks could comport themselves in public, the degree of piousness they could demonstrate would be set and controlled by the state.

The introduction to this dissertation has already discussed how, in popular consciousness, Menderes is overwhelmingly remembered as the leader who brought religion back into Turkish social and cultural life.[64] Some books on Menderes's life,

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Turkey," *International Affairs* 1 (1952); and Uriel Heyd, "Islam in Modern Turkey," *Journal of Royal Central Asian Society* 34 (1947), p299.

[62] Reed, "Revival of Islam," p271.

[63] "İktidar," *Demirkırat*, episode 4, directed by Mehmet Ali Birand and Can Dündar (1991, TRT-Milliyet Productions).

[64] Nicholas Danforth, "The Menderes Metaphor," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* (Winter 2015), p100.

too, paint the portrait of a religious man. Mustafa Armağan argues that Menderes was devout to such an extent that, some relayed, when Bayar was reluctant to lift the ban on the call to prayer in Arabic, saying that he was worried it would prompt a backlash from the CHP, he handed in his resignation.[65] Taşkın Tuna posits a similar assessment, framing the onset of the Menderes era as the end of a mentality that banned the word *Allah*.[66] Taking it further, the Islamist ideologue Necip Fazıl Kısakürek looked down upon Menderes as a disappointment, effectively arguing that he was not religious enough; according to Kısakürek, Menderes had been destined to achieve "all sorts of greatness," but had died when Allah realised that he would not prove equal to the task he had been set.[67] In his writings, he is unforgivably harsh on Menderes, asserting that Menderes could not appreciate the fact that his movement was tasked with destroying the world the CHP had built, and constructing another world that accommodated the realities of the Turkish people.[68] He compares the lifting of the ban on the call to prayer in Arabic to "letting someone enjoy the taste of a single grape from a bowl of *ashure* (Noah's pudding), then shelving away the bowl, and beating away with a stick the hands of anyone who dared reach for it."[69]

The fact that someone like Kısakürek expressed his disillusionment with the religiosity Menderes displayed and channelled is telling. Such portrayals of Menderes that paint him as a pious figure present an incomplete picture of the former prime minister, misconstruing his understanding of Islam and his interpretation of religion's role and place in Turkish society. There are several historians as well as contemporaries of Menderes who put forward a more nuanced reading of his view on religion and Islam. For example, Jeremy Seal asserts that Menderes was driven by political convenience rather than conviction. He adds that he could not find any evidence in Menderes's personal life that he was particularly pious but positioned

[65] Armağan, *Türkçe Ezan ve Menderes*, p23.
[66] Taşkın Tuna, *Adnan Menderes'in Günlüğü: Siyasete Karışan Kan* (İstanbul: Şule Yayınları, 2020), p110.
[67] Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *Benim Gözümde Menderes* (İstanbul: Büyük Doğu Yayınları, 2018), p422.
[68] Ibid., p127.
[69] Ibid., p128.

himself closer to a pious constituency as they represented a critical electoral subset in the era's Turkish politics.[70]

Presenting a more refined analysis, Samet Ağaoğlu writes that Menderes "believed in God, like a farmer that prayed for rain."[71] It was a personal form of piety, resembling an expression of gratitude for God's care and protection that Menderes would have felt at several pivotal moments in his life, when he was spared from the travesties that were inflicted on those around him. For example, Menderes was virtually untouched by tuberculosis in his youth when the disease took the lives of almost all his loved ones, including his parents and his younger sister. Another example was his survival of the plane crash only a few kilometres outside of London's Gatwick Airport on 17 February 1959, which killed fourteen of the twenty-four people on board.[72] Ağaoğlu opined that the nature of Menderes's relationship with *Allah* manifested itself whenever the former prime minister gifted carpets to mosques; or during his visit to the Topkapı Palace in 1956, when Menderes could not enter the room that housed the Prophet's belongings, saying that he felt "completely overwhelmed with excitement."[73] His son, Aydın Menderes, concurs with this analysis, asserting that Menderes's piousness "came from within," referencing his father's enthusiasm for performing morning prayers at the Eyüp Mosque in Istanbul, whenever he happened to be in Istanbul and had the chance.[74]

İleri, too, was a similar figure in many ways. His religiosity went hand-in-hand with his nationalism. In fact, the way nationalism and religion came together in İleri's worldview was indicative of the era's format of Turkish nationalism. In an edited volume on İleri's life, commissioned by the Directorate of Religious Affairs, one of the articles identifies İleri as a "hero…whose unchanging quality was his belief in *Allah* and his self-determination not to veer off the path of absolute commitment to the

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[70] Jeremy Seal, *A Coup in Turkey: A Tale of Democracy, Despotism and Vengeance In a Divided Land* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2021); also see Seal's podcast "On Adnan Menderes and the long shadow of Turkey's 1960 coup," *Turkey Book Talk*, hosted by William Armstrong, no. 137.
[71] Ağaoğlu, *Arkadaşım Menderes,* p39.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid., p40.
[74] Aydın Menderes and Taha Akyol, *Demokrasiden Darbeye: Babam Adnan Menderes* (İstanbul: Doğan Egmont Yayıncılık ve Yapımcılık, 2011), p112 and p130.

Allah."[75] The appointment of a man "with such love for his nation and his country" was a matchless opportunity afforded to Turkey's education, and especially religious education, another article from the same compilation puts forward.[76] The same article quotes one of İleri's speeches, wherein he asserted that, just like building roads, bridges and schools, providing proper religious education to "our Muslim-Turkish children" ("*Müslüman Türk çocuklarımıza*") was an apolitical service to this nation."[77] Also, in his speech at the Istanbul Technical University in 1949 where he touched upon the importance of raising the youth as fierce nationalists to be able to fend off communism, İleri also mentioned that a nationalist education should be supplemented with religious education.[78]

The DP's party manifesto in the lead-up to the 1950 elections, the prime minister and other ministers' public addresses, as well as some speeches by DP members of parliament seemed to be confirming that the Turkish government's former approach to religion was changing. Yet, the changes did not signify Turkey's development into a particularly pious nation. For once, Article 14 of the DP's 1950 manifesto stated that the party considered religious freedom as a fundamental human right, adding that it was imperative to prepare an action-plan and address the issue of religious education and founding institutions to train religious functionaries.[79] In his first speech to the parliament, which was partially analysed above, Menderes also alluded to this shift in approach, reaffirming that his government would operate with the understanding that secularism necessitated a disconnect between state and religion. In this sense, it would uphold people's freedom of religion and conscience, but would continue to clamp down on any activity that promoted the spread of "backward-minded ideologies."[80]

This liberalisation was also going to provide the nation with the religious guidance and services that it had been deprived of as a result of the CHP's

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[75] Agah Oktay Güner, "Tevfik İleri'nin Siyasi Hayatı ve Şahsiyeti," in *Her Yönüyle Tevfik İleri*, ed. Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1997), p54.
[76] Yakup Üstün, "Tevfik İleri'nin Din Eğitimine Hizmetleri," in *Her Yönüyle Tevfik İleri,* p84.
[77] Ibid., p86.
[78] Bozkurt, *Tevfik İleri*, p64.
[79] Madde 14, "Demokrat Parti Tüzük ve Programı" (1950).
[80] Menderes in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 1, p29 (9. Dönem, 3. Bileşim, 1.Oturum, 29 May 1950).

interpretation of secularism.[81] One parliamentarian complained that, for example, while curtailing the freedoms and operations of Islamic institutions, the CHP had granted concessions to Christians. The Patriarchate could continue its operations, commissioning the building of new churches and missionary schools, he commented, which struck an unfortunate contrast with Turkey's Muslims, "who were unable to find a man to wash and bury their dead."[82] Another member of parliament interpreted the CHP's secularism as irreligiousness, which he equated with "not reform, but anarchy," asserting that the CHP, while claiming to be nationalist, had dissociated this nation from its true self, which included Islam.[83] It was for this reason that the country desperately needed a *külliye*, a religious institution.[84] One parliamentarian even spoke in favour of teaching some Arabic so that students would be able to read the Quran in its Arabic original and interpret the text for themselves, and thereby have a better understanding of their duties as adherents of the faith, which was a part of their identity.[85] The comment on the teaching of the Quran in its original language might have sounded extreme. However, these statements were not expressions of a wish to create a more Islamic Turkey, but of the need to re-introduce certain Islamic elements so that the country could regain a part of its identity that, they claimed, it had lost during the CHP era. In this sense, this religious liberalisation was going to allow Turkey to become more Turkish.

Geopolitical considerations were also a factor in this change in attitude. Once again, some linked the need for religion and religious education to the fight against communism.[86] Deprived of any religious, moral guidance, the youth could explore "dangerous ideologies to light their path," to which a proper religious training was the

[81] Fikret Başaran in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 20, p942 (9. Dönem, 4. Yasama Yılı, 53. Bileşim, 1. Oturum, 25 Şubat 1953).
[82] Sinan Tekelioğlu in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 1, pp64-65 (9. Dönem, 1. Yasama Yılı, 4. Bileşim, 1. Oturum, 31 Mayıs 1950).
[83] Gazi Yiğitbaşı in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 2, pp106-107 (9. Dönem, 2. Yasama Yılı, 6. Bileşim, 1. Oturum, 15 Şubat 1950).
[84] Ömer Bilen in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 5, pp774-775 (9. Dönem, 2. Yasama Yılı, 51. Bileşim, 1. Oturum, 25 Şubat 1951).
[85] Yeredağ Kişioğlu in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 5, pp430-433 (9. Dönem, 2. Yasama Yılı, 48. Bileşim, 1. Oturum, 22 Şubat 1951).
[86] Samet Ağaoğlu, "Gençlik üzerine bir dertleşme," *Zafer*, 1 September 1949, p2.

only effective antidote.[87] The leadership could never shield Turkey against "the red scare" if it continued to attack religious traditions.[88] It was for this reason that some parliamentarians even wanted to introduce religion classes not only in Grades 4 and 5, but also in those schools that currently offered teaching up until Grade 3.[89]

Whether introduced as part of Turkey's democratic opening, to provide a more comprehensive moral training to the youth, or as an antidote against communism, being exposed to religious education was going to help students become more fierce nationalists, because Islam was one of Turkey's national values. This religious ideal referred to "the belief in the presence of an endless force, in the supremacy of the rule of law, and in the moral superiority of an honest human being."[90] Accordingly, a student was first to understand that he belonged to "a great nation" that was destined to achieve all sorts of greatness on the world-stage, which was going to spur him into the service of the nation. The religious ideal would then move the individual to espouse a balanced view of the world and behave properly to others.[91]

A few months prior to opening another school year, İleri spoke at a congress on "moral education," organised by National Unity of Turkish Teachers' Association, in his capacity as education minister.[92] Bringing together more than 150 delegates from across the country, it took place at the Linguistics, History and Geography Faculty of the University of Ankara between 23-29 April 1951. Many aspects of the congress, including the list of participants, the opening speeches, and the conclusions of different commissions, received wide press coverage in the leading newspapers, such as *Zafe*r, *Ulus*, and *Akşam*.[93] Although İleri delivered the opening address, Bayar was also in attendance as president, indicating the importance of the conference.

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[87] Ali Rıza Oktay, "Din terbiyesi: Taasubu ancak şuurlu bir din terbiyesi ile önlemek kabildir," *Zafer*, 3 May 1950, p2.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ahmet Gürkan in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 5, pp427-429 (9. Dönem, 2. Yasama Yılı, 48. Bileşim, 1. Oturum, 22 Şubat 1951).
[90] Harun Bayır, "Türkiye'de Ahlak ve Karakter," *Zafer*, 7 July 1949, p2.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Tevfik İleri, "Tevfik İleri'nin Türkiye Öğretmenler Dernekleri Milli Birliğinin Tertip Ettiği Ahlak Terbiyesi'ndeki konuşmaları," *Tebliğler Dergisi* 14, no.642 (14 May 1951), p13.
[93] Akşam, for instance, ran pieces on the congress everyday throughout, even covering the attendees' departure for Ankara in "Davet edilen bir kısım öğretmenler dün Ankara'ya gitti," *Akşam,* 22 April 1951, p3. Or for instance, a brief reporting from a session, in which one of the participants spoke about the dangers of co-ed education, "Kız ve erkek talebe bir arada

In his speech, İleri unpacked the titular concept of "moral education." First, schools were to impart "western values," which the minister interpreted as "scholarly mindset and positivist thinking based on realism and reality." This was going to form the core of students' educational development, as also mentioned above. And this core was going to be layered with the moral and cultural values that were particular to the Turkish nation.[94] Having robust morals was important, because morals helped one "to establish harmony and order in his relationship with themselves and with the outside world." But an individual could only have robust morals, if the individual learned the importance of selflessness and sacrifice. So, according to the minister, for a certain behaviour to be morally upright, it needed to carry a meaning and purpose, which was essentially a reflection of the meaning and purpose individuals found within themselves.[95] To find meaning and purpose in one's own self, the individual needed to believe in an eternal entity, something grander than one's own mortal existence. This was why, İleri underlined, the DP's educational paradigm emphasized the importance of belief in the nation and *Allah.*[96] Inspired by Turkey's own ethics and cultural values, the ministry would introduce new pedagogic methods to strengthen the students' commitment to the nation and God.[97]

So, an educated person was someone who harnessed these two streams of knowledge, appreciating the importance of staying up-to-date on the ideological and scientific currents in the western world, while never losing sight of his own traditional, national values, which included a firm belief in God. In this one speech, İleri captured the crux of the changes the party would roll out vis-à-vis the country's system of education. Being knowledgeable about the latest intellectual currents in circulation in the West —a strand of thinking that had originated in the *Tanzimat* era and was inherited by the Young Turks and the Kemalists— had not lost its importance; it was still the core tenet of being a Turk. But this was not enough; this core was now

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okumamalı," *Akşam,* 28 April 1951, p2. More interesingly, see Adnan Adıvar, "Ahlak kongresi," *Akşam,* 29 April 1951, pp1-2.

[94] İleri, "Tevfik İleri'nin Türkiye Öğretmenler Dernekleri Milli Birliğinin Tertip Ettiği Ahlak Terbiyesi'ndeki konuşmaları," p13.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid.

enhanced by the notion of being knowledgeable in a collection of national values that included religion. In other words, a system of education designed to teach the young about their country would be incomplete without teaching them about Islam.

Although the Demokrats did want to present themselves as the party that gave religion back to Turks, there was also plenty of reason to doubt the DP's genuineness when it came to its dedication to revitalising the country's religious life, including religious education. There were too many instances that made the government seem as if it was expressing a perfunctory interest in the matter without any intention of taking any substantive action. Menderes constantly lambasted what the CHP had left behind, but did not flesh out what would replace it, some complained. Turkey had lost what had come before, but still had not attained anything new.[98]

For example, the Directorate of Religious Affairs' received a threefold increase in its budget in 1951, from roughly three million liras to eight million liras. Still, no budget was set aside for the directorate in 1952, and only 48,000 was allocated in 1953, which fell short of even covering the expenses of one school, let alone build new ones.[99] Although the DP set in operation seven *imam-hatip* schools in the 1951-1952 academic year, they were poorly-equipped and were unable to properly train prayer-leaders within the allotted 10 months.[100] In 1953, the DP increased the number of *imam-hatip* schools up to fifteen. When their constructions were completed, many complained about the appalling conditions they were in, with multiple rows of desks and chairs crammed into a space physically too small to accommodate even a few; the administration of these schools, their respective members of parliament relayed, needed to appeal to the Turkish Red Crescent, a humanitarian aid organization, as they were short of basic supplies and provisions.[101] Furthermore, the *imam-hatip* courses were being taught by individuals without a firm grounding in religious scriptures, who could not even recite the *al-Fatihah* — the opening verse of the Quran

[98] Nuri Ocakoğlu in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 25, p851 (9. Dönem, 5. Yasama Yılı, 49. Bileşim, 3. Oturum, 24 Şubat 1954).
[99] Ömer Bilen in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 20, p960 (9. Dönem, 4. Yasama Yılı, 53. Bileşim, 2. Oturum, 25 Şubat 1953).
[100] Tevfik İleri in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 17, pp91-92 (9. Dönem, 4. Yasama Yılı, 3. Bileşim, 3. Oturum, 12 Kasım 1952).
[101] Burhanettin Onat in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 25, p864 (9. Dönem, 5. Yasama Yılı, 49. Bileşim, 3. Oturum, 24 Şubat 1954).

that is also recited in every full prayer cycle. The member of parliament for Yozgat, a city in central Anatolia, relayed an incident in his hometown, where a *mufti* wanted to interview candidates to be prayer leaders, none of whom could again recite the *al-Fatihah*.[102] There were constant complaints about the acute shortage of trained religious functionaries as well as warnings about the danger of having inexperienced and irresponsible religious functionaries stepping into the vacuum.[103]

Other problems included a lack of financial support available from the state for the construction of mosques. Wealthier individuals in some regions, such as in Kayseri and Konya, had to donate land for the new buildings, fund their construction, and even pay for the salaries of prayer leaders. Although it was possible to speak of a more active, legal printing press that specialized in religious material, *Diyanet* still censored the manuscripts and books being brought back in by Hajj pilgrims, and apart from the state-sponsored version of the Quran, other versions and manuals of prayer could only be accessed if purchased from traveling salesmen.[104]

It is important to remark once again on the character of Turkish secularism throughout these years. Although Menderes explained the changes he was ushering in as a timely corrective to the country's implementation of the principle of secularism, his government's attitude vis-à-vis Islam was also not exactly secular. There took place a definite shift from "hard" secularism to "soft" secularism, as evidenced by people's willingness to engage in more public manifestations of piousness. Allowing for a degree of religion to enter the public fold brought with it the need to manage these displays of religiosity. In fact, that Menderes stated in his speech, quoted above, that his government would stamp out "backward-minded ideologies," referring to the conservative interpretations of Islam, was a testament to how the state was going to intervene and regulate the population's interaction with religion. As the country transitioned from the French style, "hard" secularism towards the "softer" American style secularism, the state employed a *laik* approach to lifestyle to make sure that only a specific way of practising Islam would take hold across society.

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[102] Quoted in Tevfik İleri in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi* 17, p219 (9. Dönem, 4. Yasama Yılı, 6. Bileşim, 1. Oturum, 19 Kasım 1952).
[103] Lewis Thomas, "Recent Developments in Turkish Islam," p24; also, see: Sterling, "Religious Change in Republican Turkey," p402.
[104] Reed, "Revival of Islam in Secular Turkey," p275.

The CHP and Islam

A more crucial point is that the religious revival that Reed had remarked on in his memoirs had come underway before the end of the 1940s. It was even possible to observe significant changes following Mustafa Kemal's death in 1938. With the onset of the İnönü presidency, the CHP leadership started to admit that the state's interpretation of secularism needed to be rethought and had started to take steps in this direction.[105] As early as 1939, İnönü asked Istanbul University's Faculty of Letters, led by Abdülhak Adnan-Adıvar, to put together an *Encyclopedia of Islam* that would offer a Turkified interpretation of Islamic history.[106] Adıvar was a telling choice to lead such an effort: his writings in 1940s were critical of the Kemalists' all-out push for secularism that imposed "Western positivism just as Islamic dogma had been imposed in the past."[107] The CHP also granted permission to Turkish citizens in 1947 to make the pilgrimage to Mecca after a two-decade hiatus.

In July 1947, the CHP's steering committee decided to allow for the founding of "private educational institutions" ("*dersane*") to teach "the basic principles of worship," provided that these institutions were established in cities that already housed state-run primary schools; the teaching took place outside school buildings, though still under the purview of the ministry, and in the Turkish alphabet.[108] A few months later in December 1947, the CHP's Grand Congress hinted at how it might take these changes one step further, discussing the prospect of introducing religion courses in primary schools (which will be discussed in the next chapter), increasing the salaries of religious personnel, as well as allocating dedicated pots of funding for the maintenance of houses of worship.[109] Added to these, Turkey's first faculty of divinity opened in 1949 as part of the University of Ankara network, with 85 students enrolled

[105] Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınlar, 1990), p275.
[106] Etienne Copeaux, *Tarih Ders Kitaplarında,* pp80-81.
[107] Abdülhak Adnan-Adıvar, "The Interaction of Western and Islamic Thought in Turkey," *Middle East Journal* 1, no:3 (1947), p279.
[108] Koçak, *Dönüşüm: Ordu, Din, Hukuk, Ekonomi ve Politika* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015), pp177-184.
[109] Ayşe Hür, *İnönü ve Bayar'lı Yıllar*, p113.

in its first year.[110] So, even before the DP victory at the polls, people were becoming freer to learn more about and practice religion.

But why did the CHP feel the need to change tack vis-à-vis religion? One of the factors was the changing political landscape in the country. Within the Turkish context, this was connected to the transition to multi-party politics. The fact that multiple parties could now enter the contest, in the words of Hakan Yavuz, stopped politics from being an "administrative means to implement an elite-defined civilizational project," and imbued Turkish politics with "a deliberative quality."[111] Now that the people had been granted a say in determining the trajectory of the country's political life, their concerns would have to be taken into consideration at least for electoral gains. Parsed this way, the more liberal attitude towards religion was a natural consequence of the realization that the CHP's form of secularism would not have turned out enough votes to carry any party to electoral victory.[112]

According to this line of argumentation, the liberalisation of the leadership's attitude towards religion was a consequence of the liberalisation of political life, which triggered questions of religious identity.[113] But then, this does not fully explain why the party decided to tap out of its echo chamber and transition into a multi-party democracy. One school of early Cold War historians of Turkey points at Turkey's shifting international posturing against the emerging Cold War dynamics.[114] In this sense, they argue that, following the end of World War II, the CHP lost interest in furthering the previous isolationist, anti-imperialist and more defensive attitude towards the West that had taken shape under Mustafa Kemal, captured perhaps most

[110] Hür, *İnönü ve Bayar'lı Yıllar*, p114.
[111] Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 2003), p61.
[112] F. Michael Wuthrich, *National Elections in Turkey: People, Politics and the Party System* (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 2015), p120.
[113] Elisabeth Özdalga, "The Hidden Arab: The Critical Reading of the Notion of 'Turkish Islam'," *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no.4 (2006), p533.
[114] For a comprehensive overview of Turkey's foreign policy, see: William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774* (London: Frank Cass Publishing, 2000); Duygu Sezer, "Turkey's Security Policies," in *Greece and Turkey: Adversity in Alliance*, ed. Jonathan Alford (London: Gower Publishing, 1984); Kemal Kirişci, *Turkey and the West: Faultlines in a Troubled Alliance* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2017).

effectively by his slogan "peace at home, peace in the world" ("*yurtta sulh, cihanda sulh*"), and wanted to enter the Western fold.[115]

What changed after 1945 was the rise of the Soviet Union as a security threat.[116] The first development in this regard took place on 19 March 1945 when the Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov gave notice of his country's intention to denounce the 1925 Treaty of Friendship and Nonaggression.[117] On 7 June 1945, the Kremlin demanded a base on the Bosporus and the Dardanelles and the realignment of Turkey's eastern borders by ceding Kars and Ardahan to the Soviet Union in return for renewing the said treaty.[118] The last straw was a statement by the Soviet press in December 1945, which "created the impression" that the Kremlin was gearing up to press territorial demands on Turkey. For the U.S., this had signalled the need to take a firmer stance against such threats of Soviet encroachment. The top item on İnönü's agenda was how to strengthen Turkey's defences so that the country would be able to retaliate in the event of a Soviet invasion, and he determined that Turkey could only withstand an attack of this kind with Western military support. His worry, however, was that Western civil societies and publics might not be comfortable with their governments extending assistance to a country with authoritarian tendencies.[119] So, according to this school of historiography, Turkey had to win the hearts and minds of the members of the U.S. Senate and U.S. civil society, convincing them it was a genuine, credible democracy. As opined by Feroz Ahmad and Hakan Yılmaz, Turkish democratisation was then a mere foreign policy ploy to have Turkey integrated into the U.S.-led Western camp.

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[115] Umut Üzer, *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism: Between Turkish Ethnicity and Islamic Identity* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 2016), p167; and also see Yüksel Taşkın, *Anti-Komünizm'den Küreselleşme Karşıtlığına: Milliyetçi-Muhafazakar Entelijansiya* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007).

[116] Koçak, *Dönüşüm*, p496; also see Ekavi Athanassopoulou, *Turkey-Anglo-American Security Interests, 1945-1952: The First Enlargement of NATO* (London: Frank Cass Publishing, 1999); Melvyn Leffler, "Strategy, Diplomacy and the Cold War: The United States, Turkey and the Cold War, 1945-1952," *The Journal of American History* 71, no.4 (1985).

[117] George S. Harris, *Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American Problems in Historical Perspective, 1945-1972* (Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1971), p16.

[118] Harris, *Troubled Alliance*, p17; and Hale, "Turkey," in *The Cold War and the Middle East,* ed. Yezid Sayigh and Avi Shlaim (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p235.

[119] Bruce R. Kuniholm, "Turkey and the West Since World War II," in *Turkey Between East and West*, ed. Vojtech Mastny and R. Craig Nation (New York, NY: Routledge, 1996), p47.

This argument has an element of truth to it but is flawed. The rhetoric of democracy was indeed a part of the U.S. grand strategy throughout the Cold War because it garnered public and congressional support. But beyond that, there are no documents to corroborate the assertion that the U.S. forced Turkey into a change in regime style after 1945, demanding democratic credentials as conditions for admission into the institutions of the new Western-led order. The 1950s "was an early phase in Western Europe's economic and political reconstruction…and liberal democracy as understood today had not yet taken root."[120] Even Washington was marred by racial segregation, more than a decade away from the start of the civil rights movements, and Portugal was a dictatorship under Antonio de Oliveira Salazar when it was admitted into the UN and NATO. Added to this, Barın Kayalıoğlu effectively argues in his work that "American officials disregarded Turkey's experiment with democracy" when formulating their policies,[121] and in many cases, remained sceptical of a democracy that was too young to inspire confidence.[122] More interestingly, Kayalıoğlu posits that İnönü, too, knew that Washington did not care about Ankara's democracy, but he himself was worried that, should Turkey's process of democratisation crumble down and fall apart, the U.S. might interpret it as a sign of the ineffectiveness of democracy in containing communism and withdraw military aid from Turkey, which would pressure İnönü into shelving his own experiment.[123]

This experiment referred to entering what İnönü envisioned as the next phase in Turkey's democratisation. There were many instances, which this chapter has also discussed, that could make one question whether İnönü would genuinely be in favour of this transition. For example, the CHP had resorted to several measures to stifle the headwinds that the opposition might generate, including changing the date of the elections to make sure the opposition would not evolve into a known quantity for the public and allowing for all sorts of irregularities to run rampant. However, it is difficult to determine whether such meddling had occurred because of the prerogative of various members of the CHP or at İnönü's behest. The *real* litmus test of İnönü's

[120] Kirişci, *Turkey and the West,* p44.
[121] Barın Kayalıoğlu, "Strategic Imperatives, Democratic Rhetoric: The United States and Turkey, 1945-1952," *Cold War History* 9, no.3 (2009), p321.
[122] Ibid., p336.
[123] Ibid., p330.

commitment to democracy came in the aftermath of the DP victory. İnönü still had the leverage to deploy the army, overturn the results, and forge ahead with the status quo — and chose not to.

The more important question to focus on is the reason why İnönü set in motion a process that forced him into a compromise on one of the founding principles of his party and eventually cost him his grip on power. This was the narrative İnönü wanted to write for Turkey. As Danforth points out, this was not a repudiation or a contradiction of the Kemalist revolution, but it called for its evolution. Now that enough time had passed, it was possible to observe how the reforms had landed, so the leadership was going to progress to what could be interpreted as the next stage of the revolution.[124] This was the line of reasoning that the DP took forward into the new decade, transforming the so-called "un-internalised" reforms into a more palatable format. This is not to completely disregard the influence the U.S. and the geopolitical circumstances had on this transition, but it is likely that these factors played a larger role in convincing other members of the CHP of the benefits of political and religious liberalisation than İnönü.

There were of course nuances between the two parties' approach to religion, the chief among which was that, while İnönü rolled out these changes timidly, the DP was able to carry them forward with confidence.[125] With the transition to multi-party politics, the need to appeal to the electorate's religious sensitivities, as well as the growing realisation that religion was a weapon against communism, Menderes could proceed with the country's religious liberalisation with fewer obstacles to contend with. As a result, Turkish cities and towns exhibited a higher concentration of elements associated with Islam. It is misguided to brand the DP as the party that introduced religion back into Turkish society, however.

Then, why has this been the perception? An immediate answer to this question lies with the trends in historiography, as discussed at length in the introduction and earlier in this chapter. A second answer can be found by analysing the climate of the 1950s. Şevket Süreyya Aydemir argues that the weakness of the CHP was not its

[124] Danforth, "Multi-Purpose Empire: Ottoman History in Republican Turkey" *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no.4 (2014), p660.
[125] Bayram, "Ellilerde Merkez Sağ," p300.

programme, but rather its fatigue, which he refers to as the Aristides complex, named after the Ancient Greek statesmen.[126] Aristides was an honourable man that won several elections in succession. One day, on another election day when his name was again on the ballot, Aristides bumps into a man, and realising that the man has not recognised him, asks him whom he should be voting for. The man exclaims "anyone, but Aristides…we have had enough. It has always been Aristides, we need a change."[127] Aydemir marshals this example to convey a simple, but powerful truth: the public was bored with the CHP. Added to this, the changes that ushered in a less militant form of secularism were simply too little, too late. The legacy of the past 27 years in power had burnished in the public consciousness an image of the CHP as a "religion-less party," which proved almost impossible to change, despite the CHP's track-record to this end.[128]

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed nationalism and religion as the two dominant themes that informed the Demokrats' system of education. Their reasoning suggested that the Turkish youth would return to their true self by devoting themselves to the protection of their national values, which included religion. As also discussed throughout this chapter, there were several reasons why the DP lent emphasis to raising a nationalist youth who also embraced being Muslim as part of their identity. Some believed that a training of this nature would provide the young with much-needed ethical and moral guidance, which they had hitherto lacked. Others put forward that the combined forces of nationalism and religion would also turn the young away from communism. Granted, there was an element of truth to this, as there was a growing number of people who did believe that religion would be an antidote against communism, but "the more religious one is, the less likely one is to become a communist" was not a correlation everyone subscribed to in the late 1940s.

After analysing the changes that the DP claimed to be introducing and reviewing their reasoning, it is useful to turn to the origin of these changes, which this

[126] Aydemir, *Menderes'in Dramı*, p173.
[127] Ibid., p174.
[128] Koca, "Ellilerde Merkez Sağ," p298; also see Makal, *Bizim Köy*.

chapter identified as the transition to the multi-party period in 1945. As explained above, the rise of the Soviet Union as a security threat on the country's eastern border pushed Turkey to appeal for Western military support. İnönü believed that he needed to strengthen Turkey's democratic credentials, if the bill to extend military aid was going to pass the U.S. Senate. Turkey's transformation into a democracy, wherein multiple parties were to compete in free and fair elections, meant that the electorate's opinion on the kind of Turkey they wanted to live in was going to matter. This, İnönü opined, necessitated the coming into being of a more pious Turkey.

As discussed above, there were no demands from Washington for democratisation in exchange for financial aid. Nor was the communist threat an overpowering factor in İnönü's decision-making, although it would have helped other members of his party —who were initially against this relaxation— to eventually buy into the compromise İnönü was making on one of the CHP's founding principles. This transformation in Turkish politics was a consequence of the narrative İnönü wanted to craft for the country; it was going to unlock a new phase in the Kemalist revolution, which would gain more and more followers as the above-mentioned Cold War dynamics set in more decisively.

Then, the changes that took place in the late 1940s and into the 1950s were supposed to form the next step in the country's trajectory of democratisation, unlocking and ushering in a wider set of freedom and rights that Turks had hitherto not been able to enjoy. This triggered a transition from "hard" (or the French style of) secularism to "soft" secularism, allowing for a more religious lifestyle to manifest within the public realm. The appearance of "more" religion in public did not result in an era of freedom of religion in the style of American secularism, however. The state was in charge of determining the degree to which Turks would be allowed to engage with religion within official spaces, allowing only a specific type of Muslimness to come to the public fore. Therefore, this shift to "soft" secularism simultaneously resulted in a shift to *laiklik* vis-à-vis lifestyle. What came into place was not a secular approach to religion, but the permission by the state to embrace a more conservative form of being Muslim in public.

Connected to this, this approach was a holdover from the late 1940s, which the DP carried forward. The next chapter will examine the curriculums that remained

in effect throughout the 1950s to acquire a better sense of what national values and religion meant in the era's lexicon. As the following chapters will show, nationalism instead of religion—regardless of how it would be defined by the *laik* state— would put its stamp on the 1950s. It was a proudly nationalistic Turkey that Menderes wanted to create, as every other administration had since 1923, and it is this understanding of an "ideal" Turk that the historiography has hitherto missed.

Chapter 2:
The Curriculum

The last chapter has discussed the DP's approach to education and highlighted the two main pillars of a system of education that Menderes wanted to have in place in Turkey: nationalism and religion. More accurately, this was a form of nationalism that accommodated religion — or as already outlined briefly in the introduction, racial-religious nationalism. This chapter will look at the curriculums that were implemented in this period to understand the ways in which these curriculums upheld and reinforced this educational vision. In other words, if nationalism and Islam were intertwined, as Chapter 1 put forward, this chapter will investigate how this racial-religious understanding of Turkishness was going to be channelled to students.

The Republican Peoples' Party (CHP) had just put into effect a new primary school curriculum in 1948, two years before the DP took office. The DP administration would not introduce a new primary school curriculum while in power. It would republish in 1956 a revised version of the 1948 curriculum, albeit with only minor modifications. This did not mean that the Demokrats were entirely pleased with the programme they inherited, however. In fact, the ministry of education had started working on "improving" it as early as 1953, convening the fifth meeting of the *Milli Eğitim Şurası* (National Council on Education) expressly for this purpose. By 1959, the ministry would have agreed on the guidelines that would drive the writing of a new curriculum. Although a few alterations had been made and further revisions were underway, the nuts and bolts of the system of education that remained in effect through this period had been created by the CHP. In other words, those who went through any part of their primary education throughout the Demokrat years studied within a framework of education and in accordance with an educational vision that was largely steeped in late-Republican tradition.

Instead of focussing only on the curricular practices of the DP, this chapter will start the analysis with the first curriculum that the modern Republic published in 1930; continue with the 1948 curriculum introduced under the CHP; before examining the contents of the two curricular documents the DP released, the revised version of the 1948 curriculum in 1956 as well as a guideline for curricular changes issued to the ministry of education in 1959. To better tease out the differences and continuities

across these documents, this chapter will compare and contrast the goals of education, primary education, and history education as outlined in each curriculum; and then will look at how these curriculums discussed the teaching of various topics that made up the Grade 4 and Grade 5 history programmes. It will focus on four topics in particular, namely the Turkish civilisations in Central Asia, Turks' historical relationship with the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish Republic, and Turks' historical relationship with religion. While examining how each curriculum handled the teaching of Turks' Central Asian and Ottoman past, their Republican present, and their relationship with religion, this chapter will also discuss how the curriculum's approach to these topics reflected the way the administration of the time would have conceptualised Turkish national identity, as well as the domestic and geopolitical considerations that would have shaped these conceptualisations.

As this chapter will argue, the objective that governed each curriculum's treatment of these four topics was to craft the narrative of a "great" nation. Overall, there were two main planks to belonging to this "great" nation throughout the period under study: ethnic Turkishness and Muslimness. In the 1930s, the curriculum emphasised the Turkish language and a commitment to enhancing the greatness of the Turkish nation as the two primary determinants of Turkish ethnicity. Added to these was being Muslim, which was also a precondition to being a Turk. Yet, simply satisfying these criteria —speaking Turkish, devoting oneself to the service of the nation, and being Muslim— was not enough to claim a belonging to the Turkish nation; one needed to have descended from a line of ethnically Turkish Muslims, to come from a *Turkish-Muslim* soy, to be a Turk. Furthermore, it would be more accurate to think of ethnic Turkishness and Muslimness as intertwined in the 1930s, as religion was presented as a cultural, rather faith-based, concept. This makes their relationship somewhat more complicated. Turks were nominally Muslims, so unless one identified as a Muslim, they could not be considered a Turk. But being Muslim in the 1930s entailed being clean, honest and respectful, among having other similar qualities — which traditionally marked one's cultural disposition rather than their adherence to a certain faith.

The preconditions to being a Turk started to change in the 1940s. The most striking change was vis-à-vis the definition of being Muslim, as "Islam as faith" rather

than just “Islam as culture” started to enter the nationalist discourse. The 1930s’ definition of being Muslim was not entirely discredited or lost its currency, as students were told that they still needed to abide by a set of cultural norms and values to be considered “real” Muslims. But students were now simultaneously being told that being Muslim also involved carrying out such faith-based deeds as praying, believing in angels, and fasting during Ramadan, among others.

Because the DP did not release a new curriculum, the changes that took place vis-à-vis the understanding of who belonged to the Turkish nation will be discussed in the chapters on Grade 4 and Grade 5 textbooks. Yet, as mentioned above, the DP did release curricular documents that did give an indication of the direction in which education, and correlatively nationalism, would soon be travelling. These documents were mostly concerned with religion, and showed that the definition of being Muslim, as it fit into the definition of being a Turk, would not be drastically transformed between the late 1940s and the 1950s. Only in 1959 would there appear some signs of change, which this chapter will discuss below at length.

Another important line of continuity between the 1930s and 1959 was that the educational material drove students towards a stronger embrace of their Turkishness, albeit not their Muslimness. In fact, Islam became another area in which Turkish “greatness” could be proven, with Turks being framed as the superior Muslims by virtue of their Turkishness.

Because religion is a sensitive theme for this period, this chapter will first present a quantitative analysis of religion classes between 1923 and 1956, connecting the increase and decrease in the number of religious classes to contemporaneous developments within Turkish politics. It will then proceed with a qualitative assessment of these programmes, looking at their instructions to teachers on how they should teach each of the four topics mentioned above.

Quantitative look at curriculums:

Contrary to conventional wisdom, the Republican administration had not uprooted the Ottoman curriculum and immediately rolled out a revolutionary primary school programme in October 1923. The changes were gradual and accumulative. In fact, the first schools of the Republic still studied the last Ottoman curriculum titled

"Mekatib-i İbtidaiye-yi Umumiye Talimatnamesi 1331," introduced in 1915. The first Republican syllabus was introduced at the start of the 1924-1925 school year. From this point on, instead of a wholesale removal, every new programme would witness the step-by-step reduction of Islamic and religious elements. In this sense, for those students who had commenced their primary education under the Ottoman *talimatname*, the Republican *müfredat* would have contained some sweeping changes. First, the 1924 curriculum re-organised primary education around five years, shortened from the six-year-long Ottoman programme. While the 1915 curriculum had provisioned religion classes at every level of primary education (eight class-hours in the first two years, and five class-hours in the remaining four years), they were only present in the last four years under the new programme (two class-hours a week only), meaning that the nation's first-years would no longer study religion. Even at the very beginning, not only did the Republican system apportion drastically less class-time to religion (reduced from 23% to 6%), but also exposed the youth to religion later in their courses of study.[1]

The ministry of education rolled out another syllabus only two years later in 1926.[2] An important new development was the introduction of a new subject called "*hayat bilgisi*" ("life knowledge") for the first three years of primary education, which combined several courses from the realms of sciences and social sciences. As its name signified, the course was meant to impart the sort of knowledge that, according to the state, needed to be in every child's arsenal as they embarked upon their journey through life. Strikingly, it did not include religion. The new syllabus also relegated religion classes to the last three years (two class-hours a week, corresponding to 2% of overall class-time), delaying a student's exposure to Islam even further.

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[1] Hasan Cicioğlu, *Türkiye Cumhuriyetinde İlk ve Ortaöğretim (Tarihi Gelişimi)* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Yayınları, 1982), pp94-95. – Also noteworthy is that the 1924 curriculum was the first of its kind to allow females to study in public institutions. However, it stipulated that males and females studied in separate schools, which followed a slightly different syllabus. While they both taught a total of five classes per day – three in the morning and two after lunch – with no classes scheduled for Thursday afternoons, female students had one additional class-period a week for home management in Grade 5 and two class-periods for stitching and needlework. Also important, for the purposes of this project, male and female students were exposed to the same religious and Islamic content.

[2] Cicioğlu, *Türkiye Cumhuriyetinde İlk ve Ortaöğretim*, pp94-95. This was the first programme to describe the content of each course in detail and list their primary objectives.

The ministry would revise the 1926 curriculum twice, first in 1930 and then in 1933, reconceptualising the provision of religion classes in both years. Between 1930 and 1933, students could study religion only at Grade 5, a half-hour a week, as optional and outside of scheduled class-time.[3] Also, the syllabus no longer listed "religion classes" in the table of contents[4], and provided information about them only at the very end, suggesting that the teaching of religion was no longer considered a "real" part of the programme, but something that was unimportant, negligible, and quite literally out of sight. In 1933, the ministry removed religion entirely from the curriculum.[5] Thereafter, the CHP released a new curriculum in 1936, which became the first primary school programme that neither apportioned any class-time to religion nor offered religion as extracurricular.[6] This curriculum remained in place until 1948.

This was a process of steadily increasing step-by-step anti-religious radicalisation that decreased the youth's exposure to religion throughout the 1920s and the early 1930s. It unfurled alongside the Republican revolutionary package, which the CHP leadership rolled out throughout the late 1920s and the early 1930s, that reorganised the "ideal" Turkish lifestyle according to the French style of secularism. One of the chief aims of these reforms was to sweep religion away from public spaces and into the private realm. Just as religious motifs and symbols were removed from public spaces and any sort of public display of piousness was discouraged if not outright banned, schools, too, as official spaces, were emptied of any religious content. Being religious would still be considered a part of being Turkish, but this was a strictly cultural interpretation of religion.

When the 1948 curriculum was released, religion had not been offered as a self-standing, separate course of study for fifteen years. Although this latest curriculum was also devoid of any religion classes, it became the last Turkish primary school curriculum that did not apportion any class hours to religious instruction. Some

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[3] Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Maarif Vekaleti, *İlkmektep Müfredat Programı* (Ankara: Devlet Matbaası, 1930), pp229-231.
[4] Ibid., p1.
[5] Barak Salmoni, "Islam in Turkish Pedagogic Attitude and Materials, 1923-1950."
[6] This was also the first programme written in modern Turkish, using the Latin alphabet. Although the 1930 version of the 1926 curriculum also used the Latin alphabet, this was not an original programme, but an amended rendition of a previous programme.

discussions had been underway at the time regarding the merits of adding religion back into the curriculum. The then-Prime Minister Hasan Saka had submitted a proposal to the CHP's parliamentary group on 10 February 1948 for the creation of a commission that would be tasked with assessing whether religion should be re-introduced into the primary school curriculum.[7] In its report, the commission recommended putting religion classes back into the 4th and 5th grade programmes as an optional extracurricular activity.[8] When Saka's successor and the last CHP prime minister Şemsettin Günaltay presented his party programme on 24 January 1949, he announced that his government would lay down the foundations for those who would like to exercise their right to learn about their religion. This was the first time a CHP government programme had mentioned religious education, and is often referred to as a turning-point in Turkish historiography.[9] On 1 February 1949, the ministry of education circulated a communique among governors, informing them that schools would start offering religion classes to students in Grade 4 and 5 from 15 February onward, at two hours per week, after students had returned from their semester breaks.[10] The governors were also asked to notify the schools that they were not to reshuffle the timetables already in place and being followed, but to schedule religion classes at "reasonable hours so as to make attendance possible." As a result, "*din dersleri*" would be slotted in as extracurriculars.[11] Furthermore, these classes would be optional and not be graded, since a mandatory teaching of religion would be "unthinkable in a secular state like the Turkish Republic."[12] A student would also a need a parent's written consent to be able to enrol.

Bringing religion classes back into the curriculum was an outgrowth of the leadership's decision to bring religion back into the public sphere. There were various factors, as Chapter 1 pointed out, that would have motioned the CHP towards rethinking its strict interpretation of secularism, and correlatively, making religion a

[7] Mehmet Ali Gökaçtı, *Türkiye'de Din Eğitimi ve İmam Hatipler* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005), p171.
[8] Ibid., p172.
[9] Ibid.
[10] "İlkokullarda din öğretimi hakkında," *Tebliğler Dergisi* 11, no. 524 (7 February 1949), p153.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

part of the primary school programme. One was the rise of the Soviet Union as a security threat, against which the CHP needed to appeal to the American military support, but believed that the U.S. Senate would not be forthcoming on extending aid to Ankara, unless it democratised. Overturning the previous anti-religious radicalisation was a step in this process of democratisation, as the leaderships needed to become more attentive to the wishes of the electorate, which included the relaxation of the "hard" secularism of the previous years. What was also consequential was İnönü's own vision for Turkey — and that he saw democratisation as well as unlocking religious freedoms as the next step in Turkey's revolution. It was fundamentally a combination of these last two strands of reasoning that Menderes and the DP would carry over into the 1950s, as it expanded on the changes ushered in by the CHP. Concerns about communism, too, would have factored into the DP's decision-making, but such Cold War-related concerns would start to exert more weight towards the end of the decade.

The DP rolled out its first revisions to the 1948 curriculum in November 1950, when Tevfik İleri, as the minister of education, placed religion classes back into the timetable.[13] As the directive explained, the ministry was enacting this change to be able to respond to the "religious needs of Turkish children."[14]

A few important points accompanied this directive. First, the ministry advised schools not to increase the weekly class-time to accommodate religion classes, adding that they should carve an hour out of the class-time apportioned to Turkish language and literature classes. The DP might have been worried that adding another class-hour to the weekly timetable in the middle of the school-year could cause some administrative complications; also, having to stay at school for another class-hour in the evening would surely have frustrated both students and their parents.

Second, the directive stated that religion classes should be taught by "willing teachers," and if more teachers than needed expressed their interest in teaching religion, older teachers would be pulled to the front of the line. The directive did not explain the rationale behind this preference for "older" teachers, nor did it specify

[13] "Din dersleri hakkında," *Tebliğler Dergisi* 13, no.617 (20 November 1950), p116.
[14] Ibid.

who qualified as an "older teacher." It is tempting to speculate that older teachers would have received religious training under the Ottoman system and might therefore be trusted to have a more thorough familiarity with religious perspectives, whereas younger teachers would not have gone through any official training, or having been raised under previous curriculums, would have been completely unknowledgeable in this area. The third and last point was that, if any parents wished to seek an exemption, they had to inform the school at the start of the school year; whereas parents previously notified the school when they wished to opt their children in, now a notification was required to opt them out.[15] All these changes suggested that religion was becoming more entrenched in the Turkish system of education, and correlatively, Turkish national identity.

Qualitative analysis:

As stated above, the ministry engaged in a gradual reduction of religion-classes between 1923 and 1933. From 1933 until 1949, the primary school programme did not offer any religion classes. It is important to think about what the reintroduction of religion classes signified in terms of Turkish secularism and its role in shaping Turkish nationalist discourse. At a superficial glance, the gradual depletion and then later complete elimination would have meant that, with the release of every new programme after 1923, students were exposed to less and less Islamic material. Since religion was no longer offered as a separate class, there would have been fewer reasons for students to actively engage with or think about religion or even reference anything connected to religion in their conversations about school. By becoming less centrally-placed in their courses of study, it was also becoming less-centrally placed in the early adolescent ecosystems; This would have seemed like the influence of French style of secularism, resulting in the removal of all religiously-charged elements from the public realm, and the reconceptualization of Turkish nationalism, which did not recognise Islam as a key tenet of national identity. Accordingly, the reintroduction of religion classes in 1949 would have then marked the reversal of the pedagogical trajectory the government had hitherto charted, signifying that the CHP and the DP was weaving religion back into the cultural fabric of the nation. Parsed this way, their

[15] "Din dersleri hakkında," p16.

reintroduction would have been tantamount to the rising influence of American style of secularism, allowing students the freedom to learn about their religion.

Observing only the fluctuating numbers of religion classes lends itself to a facile analysis, however. For a more a thorough analysis, one must scan for religious content across the board. For example, Barak Salmoni has looked at how history and life knowledge classes continued to include topics that could have appeared within the remit of religion classes, arguing that the removal of religion classes did not necessarily end students' exposure to religious content.[16] Plugging this conclusion into a broader discussion on the connection between education and nationalism, Salmoni posits that religion never disappeared from the classroom, allowing him to make the case that Islam had always formed a part of the Turks' understanding of themselves.

Salmoni's studies are a step in the right direction, but they require further nuancing. One must not only search for the existence of religious content in subjects taught in school, but also examine what this religious content consisted of, how it was communicated to students, and how various other lessons that students were supposed to draw from their studies in other subjects complemented the government's messaging. This will paint a more comprehensive picture of Turkey's national identity — as well as to what extent this picture was moving as the country transitioned between the CHP and DP administrations. It is for this reason that this chapter will turn to a qualitative analysis of the 1930 and 1948 programme and will then unpack the changes that were either introduced or contemplated in the 1950s.

1930 Programme

Primary school curriculums generally started with a section on educational objectives that set out the goals for the coming academic year.[17] In the 1930 programme, this section was rather short and uninformative.[18] Many of them were practical recommendations, geared towards tapping into a student's learning

[16] Barak Salmoni, "Islam in Turkish Pedagogic Attitudes and Materials."
[17] The 1930 curriculum was the first curriulum to describe the content of each course in detail and list their primary objectives. From 1936 onward, programmes also included a section on "objectives of education" and "objectives of primary education," published at the beginning of the programme.
[18] *İlkmektep Müfredat Programı* (1930), pp3-4.

potential, such as instructing students to record everything they learned in a journal[19] or fine-tuning the curriculum according to local environments,[20] advising teachers to call attention to the importance of cotton manufacturing in Adana, for instance.[21]

By comparison, the curriculum went into more detail when outlining the goals of teaching each subject.[22] History classes were to cultivate national consciousness; explain that today's civilization was the culmination of "a long, celebrated past"; and impart exemplary values through teaching the lives of "great men."[23] Crucially, inclusion into this list seemed to have been restricted to literally men only, since no women were included in this number of "great individuals" that students were encouraged to model themselves after. Furthermore, Turkish history was to dominate a critical percentage of class-time, and any reference to contemporaneous developments elsewhere in the world "could only be welcome," if they reinforced a specific point made about Turkish history.[24] Indeed, the Republican narrative would either outright deny or significantly downgrade any influence on Turks from other civilisations, glossing over the role of any "foreign" elements from the Turkish consciousness they were trying to create.

Guided by these principles, both Grade 4 and Grade 5 programmes focussed on the pre-Ottoman Turkic civilizations that sprang up in Central Asia and Anatolia and then linked them to the modern Republic. This was a clear indication of the influence of the Turkish History Thesis, discussed in the introduction. Students were to understand this pre-Ottoman past as a "golden era" of Turkish confidence on the world-stage, which later dwindled away throughout the Ottoman centuries, only to be resurrected with the establishment of the Republic. In this sense, the Republic represented the restoration of every positive virtue that Turks had historically commanded. The second unit in the Grade 4 syllabus was about "the Turks," in which students learned about "the geographical characteristics of Central Asia" as the

[19] *İlkmektep Müfredat Programı* (1930), p10.
[20] Ibid., p9.
[21] İbid., pp9-10.
[22] Ibid., pp6-8.
[23] Ibid., p67.
[24] Ibid.

ancient homeland of the Turks and compared its features against those of Anatolia, the contemporary homeland of the Republic, for example.[25]

There were also units on the Seljuks and the Ottoman dynasty. The latter touched upon "several conflicts with Byzantium" in the centuries leading up to the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, and then covered the conquest itself.[26] In historical terms, almost two-centuries of developments fell under the purview of this unit. Teachers were even asked to quickly touch upon "the periods between rise and fall," and then take students through "national history," which consisted of the history of the Turkish resistance during World War I and the independence struggle.[27] Lastly, students studied "the spread of Islam among Turks," with teachers instructed to teach "briefly and succinctly" about the emergence and spread of Islam.

Fifth-grade history classes started with a survey of different forms of Eastern and Western medieval administrations, and then covered "the Renaissance in Europe, absolutist monarchies in Europe, constitutionalism in England, the independence of the United States, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution and the invention of the steam engine and the telegraph." Only after studying developments in Europe did the syllabus turn to the Ottoman Empire, taking students through the classic periodisation of Ottoman history, from its rise (*yükseliş devri*), through its stagnation (*duraklama* devri*)* and its decline (*gerileme devri).* There was also a unit on "the life and civilization of the old Ottomans."[28] The last three units revolved around "Turks' steps towards modernisation," spotlighting the causes and consequences of the *Tanzimat* (the so-called "period of reforms); constitutionalism in the Ottoman Empire; the rule of Abdülhamid II, which also touched upon the Balkan Wars, World War I, and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The independence struggle as a topic merited its own unit, which also covered "the Turkish nation-state," "the abolition of the caliphate," and "the emergence of the secular republic."[29]

In contrast to the chapter on history classes, the chapter on religion classes was not organised into units. Nor did the chapter put forward a discussion on the

[25] *İlkmektep Müfredat Programı* (1930), p68.
[26] Ibid., pp68-69.
[27] Ibid., p69.
[28] Ibid., p70.
[29] Ibid., p70.

objectives of teaching religion. Rather, it read like a hastily assembled list of topics on religion that the ministry would have thought of on the spot. The topics were broad and mundane, such as "not meddling in someone else's affairs and minding one's own business" and the importance of being studious, adding that praying alone would not lead to salvation.[30] A spirit of positivism and secularism set the overall tone of the chapter. A strong case in point was the description of the human mind as "the arbiter of morality and worldly affairs." It did not fall under the purview of religious authorities, the chapter explained, because even Islam had accepted the authority of the mind and the sciences over such matters.[31] Students would also learn that, although there were other Muslims than Turks and Arabs, Turks were "the most advanced" of the Muslim nations, with the level of advancement being determined in terms of technological and industrial progress.[32]

First and foremost, then, the 1930 programme envisioned that history classes would inculcate in students a strong sense of pride in belonging to the Turkish nation by teaching them about Turks' historical greatness, grounded in a reimagination of the past in which Turks had created every civilisation in the world. As students realised how they were the descendants of a great nation, they were going to develop into nationalists, whose lives revolved around enhancing this greatness. This was the ultimate objective of history education — so much so that teachers were discouraged from teaching anything that did not have some sort of relevance to Turks or the course of Turkish history: Turkey was the lodestar of the universe, and any strength or ability that Turks had was a result of their own unique, historical development, and not of any interaction with foreign elements.

This complete disregard for the impact of any non-Turkish elements in the making of Turkish civilisations and implying that anything Turkish was the product of purely Turkish efforts also hinted at an underlying anti-ethnic and anti-religious sentiment. That students only learned about the conflicts with Byzantium when they were supposed to learn about the founding of the Ottoman Empire, too, suggested

[30] *İlkmektep Müfredat Programı* (1930), p229.
[31] Ibid., p230.
[32] Ibid., p231. — The programme also stated that every Muslim country was free to worship in the vernacular.

that anti-Greek views underpinned Turkish nationalism. Interestingly enough, these were still subtle allusions that were devoid of the bellicose language that pervaded the later programmes. Connected to this, the 1930 programme also did not identify students as foot-soldiers of the revolution, which would enter the curriculum in 1948.

This is surprising, since the Republic had emerged out of a crucible of war only seven years ago, and the population could have been receptive towards a more militaristic messaging when the memory of war was still fresh. However, the opposite could also be accurate, since this messaging would have also landed on a war-weary population. It is also important to analyse the framing of this objective within the context of the 1930s, when Turkey was pursuing a policy of pacifism both at home and abroad, captured by Atatürk's slogan "peace at home, peace in the world" ("*yurtta sulh, cihanda sulh*"). Students still learned that they had founded every great civilisation in the world, which would have implied strong fighting capabilities and soldierliness, but the distinction here was between telling the youth that they were strong and asking them fight. The 1930 curriculum placed a larger premium on having students devote themselves to the great Turkish nation by becoming aware of its greatness, rather than by confronting those who are inimical to it.

Vis-à-vis the treatment of Ottomans, it is difficult to put forward a detailed analysis at this point, since the curriculum was largely devoid of any instructions on how teachers should discuss the Ottoman Empire. There were a few pointers, however. For example, the curriculum distanced Turks from Ottomans, signified by its reference to the Ottoman civilisation as "civilisation of old Ottomans." And the reference to the pre-Ottoman Central Asian civilisation as a Turkish "golden age" that dwindled away with the onset of the Ottoman rule signified that students were to regard the historical memory of the Ottomans with embarrassment. This negative portrayal of the Ottoman Empire was a product of the Kemalist reforms that were being rolled out at the time, including the Turkish History Thesis. As the Republican leadership tried to unlink the legacy of the Ottoman centuries from the Republic, it provided students with an invented history of Central Asia to serve as a basis of their national pride and tried to erase from the national psyche any connection between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. Students were to gather that Turks' greatness had nothing to do with their Ottoman past.

As per the 1930 programme, the "ideal" Turk was someone who recognised the greatness of the Turkish nation and dedicated themselves to the life-long pursuit of enhancing this greatness. Furthermore, this historic greatness had been the result of exclusively Turkish efforts without any input or contribution from any foreign agents — which, in return, meant that, unless one descended from a Turkish bloodline or *soy*, then one could not claim to have contributed to Turks' greatness; and in the absence of any such contribution, one could not have any claim to being Turkish. This signified the racial dimension of Turkish nationalism.

Turks' Muslimness was also folded into the greater narrative of Turkish greatness. Turks were Muslim, but they were unlike any other Muslim, having advanced far ahead of the rest in every imaginable field, but foremost in technology, the sciences, and various industries. It was because of their progress in such fields that they were also able to advance Islam. In this sense, Turks were "good" Muslims by virtue of the fact that they were Turkish. Also importantly, the qualities that propelled them into the limelight within and even to the leadership of the Muslim world were all secular in nature and were all qualities they were being told to cultivate as Turks. In fact, students were told that they were Muslims, only to find out that there was virtually no difference between being Turkish and being Muslim. This was the cultural dimension of Islam that eventually became incorporated into the nationalist discourse of the 1930s. Another example in this regard was that being Muslim was held tantamount to being devoted to one's nation and showing respect to one's parents; once again, Turkey's historical interaction with Islam was re-imagined to such an extent that it was effectively emptied of any religious content. The nationalist discourse thereby imbued non-religious norms, values and competences with a sense of religiosity; and in return, presented concepts and proficiencies that had nothing to do with Islam as Islamic.

It is possible to interpret this interpretation of Muslimness as part of the revolutionary reform package, built around secularism, that tried to relegate religion to the private realm. Yet, herein lies the problem, because the advice on how to be a "good" Muslim contained in textbooks did not only relegate religion to the private realm but interfered into the private realm to shape how Muslimness should look like, whether it was practiced in public or in private. This was therefore an example of

direct state control over religion, or of *laiklik*. Indeed, this was one of the continuities of Turkish history — that Turkish nationalism was always *laik*, and not secular.

1948 Programme

Many of these threads would carry over into the 1948 programme. This programme not only included a section on the "objectives of national education," but also on "the objectives of primary education." First and foremost, national education needed to serve the interests of the nation. Whether a system of education was serving this purpose would be determined by the degree to which "a student took pride in being a child of the Turkish nation, appreciated its duties and responsibilities, remained committed to the principles of the Turkish revolution, respected the rights and freedoms enshrined in the constitution, and advanced scientific progress to contribute to the welfare of the nation."[33] Primary education was the first step in this process, tasked with "inoculating students with a love for national culture" and "enflaming in students a passion" for serving the nation.[34] In this respect, history classes, for example, should not simply narrate a series of developments, but demonstrate how Turks had maintained a superior culture since "time immemorial," spread it around the world, and thereby set an example in all spheres of life, while committing great sacrifices. The goal was that students understood "the important role" Turks had played in the creation and development of world civilization.[35] Finally, students were to study Atatürk's actions against those committed by imperial administrators and the sultans, with the end goal of "appreciating how Turkey had taken such a great leap forward under the Great Leader."[36]

The principles behind teaching history also did not change. More importantly, there was almost a complete overlap between the objectives of history classes and those of national education, showing how history education constituted the core of primary education. Only by exploring Turkish history could students explore the meaning behind Atatürk's dictum, "How happy is the one who says I am a Turk,"

[33] Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, *İlkokul Programı* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1948), p1.
[34] Ibid., pp3-4.
[35] Ibid., p4.
[36] Ibid.

which was effectively the core mission of Turkish education.[37] The chief objective of history was to have students think about the principles that underpinned the revolution "as early as possible" and to raise them in such a way that they would willingly sacrifice themselves in the service of the nation.[38] By learning about their nation's past, students understood that "the achievements and comforts of today" were the result of a long and painful struggle, and appreciated that they were "the children of a great nation with an honourable past."[39] To reinforce this point, teachers were to draw attention to the key roles Turks had played in the creation of world civilisation, emphasising how they had founded "a great civilization" in Central Asia; were responsible for producing Islamic culture[40]; achieved breakthroughs in the sciences and technology while the West remained seeped in ignorance and then progressed by emulating Turks. Because of the poor practises that had characterised the Ottoman administration, Turks had lagged in the past few centuries, but they had started to reclaim their rightful place under the guidance of "our saviour" Atatürk.[41]

There was also a section on the goals of history classes at the primary school level, which lent even more emphasis to the importance of the revolution and the matchless leadership of Atatürk.[42] For example, students were to learn about the "incompetence of the Sultans, who could not appreciate…the glory of the Turkish nation, had set Turkey back in every field imaginable, allowed parts of the homeland to come under foreign invasion, and even allied with the enemy at the expense of the nation's well-being."[43] Students were also to analyse Atatürk's reforms in detail, comparing the virtues of the new nation they created against the *modus vivendi* under the Ottoman rule.[44] In fact, the programme often asked teachers to make comparisons to reinforce the supremacy of the Republic. It suggested that teachers could contrast the Ottoman-era schools against the ones the students sat in today, pointing out that Ottoman students lacked the comfort of clean buildings, sat on straw

[37] *İlkokul Programı* (1948), p127.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., p124.
[40] Ibid., p124.
[41] Ibid., p126.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

mats, and struggled to learn the Arabic alphabet.[45] Finally, the primary-level history education was to instil "in every fibre of the student" the feeling that he was a soldier "in the army of the Turkish revolution."[46]

As mentioned, these concepts of "being a soldier" and "enemy" were largely absent from the 1930 programme. The 1930 programme had drawn attention to the greatness of the Turkish past and discussed how Turkish history had been written — and essentially Turkey was created— by Turks and Turks only, without any contribution from foreign influence or foreign agency. Its focus on "the struggles against Byzantium" had also intimated that Greeks were *personae non gratae*. It had not, however, employed any militaristic and belligerent language. The new curriculum now referred to students as soldiers who were dutybound to protect the achievements of the Turkish revolution and effectively commanded them to always be ready to fight for the nation. It was also clearer on who the enemy was. Since students were enlisted in the "army of the Turkish revolution," the programme was instructing teachers to teach students that they should be suspicious of anyone who fought against Turkey during World War I and the struggle for independence. As the following chapter will show, this meant anyone who supported the Sultan's regime during the war years as well as Europe and its alleged apostates in the country, which included any non-Turkish and non-Muslim person living amongst them, referring to first and foremost the Christians, Jews, Arabs and Kurds of Turkey.

A deep-seated suspicion and distrust against the non-Sunni Muslim members of the Turkish population had long been engrained in the Turkish psyche and had even produced disastrous consequences for Christian and Jewish communities in Turkey, such as the Wealth Tax of 1942, which is mentioned in the introduction, and would produce another catastrophic episode in 6-7 September 1955 when the Greek communities across the country were targeted in a pogrom.[47] So, why did a more militaristic tone pervade the educational material towards the end of the 1940s?

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[45] *İlkokul Programı* (1948), p128

[46] Ibid.

[47] On the pogrom of 6-7 September 1955, see Güven Dilek, "Riots against the Non-Muslims of Turkey: 6-7 September in the context of demographic engineering," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 12 (2011); and Ali Tuna Kuyucu, "Ethno-religious unmixing of Turkey: 6-7 September riots as a case of Turkish nationalism," *Nations and Nationalism* 11, no.3 (2005).

This was the result of the changing geopolitical circumstances, against which the core message of Turkish education needed to be recrafted and repackaged, though not altered. The above discussion on the 1930 programme has mentioned that, although chauvinism and militarism also predominated in this era, the mood of the 1930s would not have been conducive to calling the youth to war. Connected to this, Turkey was trying to maintain its neutrality within the international arena between 1939 and 1945 as World War II was raging on its doorstep. So, maintaining this messaging would have aligned with Turkey's foreign policy aims.

"War-weary" and "neutral" did not define the Turkey at the end of World War II (the late 1940s) and the gathering storm of the Cold War (the 1950s), however. As the country was actively seeking entry into the Western fold, it would have become more apparent that it was not going to be able to maintain the neutrality it did only a few years ago, and was going to have to put boots on the ground on an international scale for the first time since 1923. The U.S. and Great Britain had even raised Turkey's wartime neutrality as grounds for opposing its membership in the United Nations (UN).[48] So, the geopolitical considerations necessitated that the Turkish youth should become accustomed to the idea of Turks engaging in physical fighting and would therefore have motivated this shift in tone in educational material. Now, students were not only taught that they should take pride in Turkey because of the country's historical greatness, but that they should be ready to take up arms and defend it.

The history classes in Grade 4 once again identified Central Asia as "the homeland of the Turks," devoting a chapter to this topic. The following units then focused on the Sumerians, the Hittites, as well as the Greek and Roman civilizations.[49] Another unit turned to the "Turks who remained in the homeland," broken down into three sub-chapters on the Central Asian Huns, the Uyghurs and *Göktürks* (translated as the Celestial Turks). As had been the practice, the programme kept systematically referring to pre-Ottoman Turkic civilizations as Turks. The last unit of the programme analysed the Great Seljuk Empire, emphasizing the Turks' domination over the Muslim world under the Seljuk leadership, various dealings with Byzantium, most important of

[48] Danforth, *Multi-Purpose Empire,* p665.
[49] *İlkokul Programı* (1948), pp134-135.

which was flagged out as the Battle of Malazgirt that had facilitated the Turkification of Anatolia.[50] There were also two units on Islam. One was on the birth of Islam, examining "the Arabs," the life of Prophet Mohammed as well as the so-called period of four caliphs that followed the death of the Prophet. The other looked at the spread of Islam among Central Asian Turks and the Turkish states that accepted Islam.[51]

In Grade 5, students first learned about the Anatolian Seljuk State, the successor to the Great Seljuk Empire, studying some patterns of migration from the west (the crusades) and from the east (Mongolian invasions). The second unit introduced students to the Ottoman state and walked them through a series of developments until the conquest of Constantinople. The study of Ottoman history took up much of the rest of the programme. The conquest of Istanbul merited its own unit — which was strikingly titled "conquest of Istanbul by Turks."[52] The following four units took students through the developments until the *Tanzimat* period, the last of which introduced them to what was described as "Ottoman-Turkish civilization."[53] In the remaining chapters on Ottoman history, students discovered the latest advances in Europe, the *Tanzimat* period and the two constitutional periods, before turning to an in-depth examination of the independence struggle. The material on the emergence of the Republic was a repetition of the material from the 1930 programme; the outline remained the same, only to be filled in with a greater amount of detail. Students learned about the post-World War I Ottoman state, Atatürk's arrival in Samsun, the opening of the parliament, the cleansing of the homeland from, enemies, the Lausanne treaty, abolition of the Ottoman sultanate, and finally the proclamation of the Republic.[54] The final unit was on the Republican reforms.[55]

One major change from the 1930 programme was the way Ottomans were depicted. The 1930 curriculum had painted an overwhelmingly negative view of them, dismissing Turkey's Ottoman heritage and watering down its value to the development of Turkish civilisation to near-nothingness. The 1948 curriculum broke

[50] *İlkokul Programı* (1948), pp135-136.
[51] Ibid., p135.
[52] Ibid., p136.
[53] Ibid., p137.
[54] Ibid., p138.
[55] Ibid.

with this practice. It singled out the sultans who reigned over the empire's last few centuries and blamed them for the broken state Turkey had found itself in at the end of World War I. Connected to this, the terms "Ottoman" and "Turkish" were used interchangeably, a striking example of which was the claim that it was "Turks" who had conquered Constantinople, whereas the previous curriculum had not attributed any Turkish agency to the conquest. Another was that the Ottoman civilisation was now referred to as the "Ottoman-Turkish civilisation," rather than "the civilisation of the old Ottomans." Of course, these were factually inaccurate, but it signified an important shift in the way the leadership thought about Turkey's Ottoman legacy as well as the grander trajectory of Turks' historical development. Central Asian civilisations still represented the pinnacle of Turkish history that was only matched, if not surpassed, by the establishment of the Turkish Republic; however, the Ottomans were now being woven into this narrative of Turkish greatness.

There was a spectrum of reasons why the Ottomans were depicted differently in 1948. First, it is possible that the death of Atatürk in 1938, who had a hostility towards the Ottoman Empire, motivated a historiographical shift. Also, as the empire stayed farther and farther in the past and posed virtually no risk or threat to the security of the Republic and the reforms seemed entrenched in Turkish society securely enough that they were not likely to be overturned, it was safe to bring back elements of the Ottoman past. Connected to this, Turkey had changed so drastically since 1923 that there was very little reason to fear that the Western world would still see Turkey through the lens of the old empire. Europeans might still have their own prejudices about Turkey and Turks, but these would not have been connected to the legacy of the Ottoman Empire. The change was also an extension of the post-1945 democratic opening that sought to re-organise Turkish social and cultural life to a pattern that was more familiar to the Turkish population. A narrative premised on the greatness of the Central Asian past was simply too distant, too unfamiliar for anyone to take pride in, whereas it would have been easier for students to connect with the greatness of the more recent Ottoman Empire.

The changing treatment of the Ottoman past did not bring about a comprehensive embrace of the empire, however, but rather a very selective, pick-and-choose approach towards some of its aspects. Whereas the CHP was ready to boast

about Ottoman glories as a demonstration of Turkish abilities, it abandoned them in other areas where they performed poorly or disadvantageously, renouncing any connection with them when discussing a failed military campaign, for example, or even completely brushing over the atrocities they committed. Also significantly, there was no mention of the role of Christians in the making of the Ottoman Empire, nor any discussions of intermarriages and conversions in the making of the Ottoman elite — which the chapters on textbooks will expound upon.

The role of *soy* in determining who qualified as a Turk persisted from 1930 into the late 1940s. The curriculum continued to stress how Turks' contemporary greatness had stemmed from the efforts of a long line of Turks, who had dedicated their whole lives to enhancing Turks' greatness. Unless one descended from a bloodline of ethnic Turks, one could not belong to this community, since they could not be trusted to genuinely serve towards this end, as evidenced by the actions of non-Turks and non-Muslims between 1914 and 1923.

Vis-à-vis the role of Islam in determining who qualified as a Turk, there were more consequential changes. The CHP expanded the 1948 curriculum in February 1949 with the reintroduction of religion classes. Their structure and content were outlined in an editorial for the daily *Cumhuriyet.* The objective of these classes at the fourth-grade level were to teach students about "love and its derivations," such as love for one's parents, teachers and the nation; respect for the elderly; and teaching students that the greatest love of all was the love for *Allah*.[56] Also included was a lesson on how to be a "good Muslim" and Islamic ethics, although the article did not unpack what these concepts entailed. In Grade 5, students then learned about "the importance of believing," with the curriculum exploring the concepts of believing in angels, the scripture, the Prophet, and the judgement day.[57] The last topic listed was one's obligations and duties as subjects of God.[58]

As it would have become obvious by now, there were also significant differences in the way the two programmes handled religion, both in religion classes but also in history classes. Even before the introduction of religion classes in 1949,

[56] "Okullarda din dersi programı," *Cumhuriyet*, 11 February 1949, p2.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.

teachers were told to teach their students how the Seljuk Turks had been the leaders of the Islamic world, including their role in spreading Islam into neighbouring regions as well as shaping, if not single-handedly producing, Islamic culture. Turks had not only been Muslims, but they had actively contributed to the creation of an Islamic civilisation, with the realm of Islamic countries now being redefined as a geography that had been dominated (politically, militarily, and culturally) by Turks.[59] These narratives signified the continuation of "Islam as culture" in Turkish nationalist discourse. Students learned that Turks had achieved these successes as Muslims, but this framing did not digress from the original aim of having students realise Turkish greatness, and thereby raise a youth that was fanatically devoted to Turkey. As also had been the case in the 1930 programme, the 1948 programme underlined that it was owing to their Turkishness that Turks were better Muslims.

Furthermore, by the end of the 1940s, religion was no longer introduced to school-aged children as a fundamentally non-religious concept, which asked its followers to love their families and devote themselves to their nation; the classes now involved the teaching of subjects and practices that could be labelled as more traditionally religious. This was the introduction of the faith aspect of Islam. It overlapped with the overall relaxation in the country's political and cultural life that simultaneously allowed religious symbols to come out of the shadows.

Yet, two points need to be raised here. First, the emergence of such a faith-based definition of Islam was not tantamount to the emergence of freedom of religion, or the American style of secularism. The nationalist discourse, as conveyed through the educational material, still put forward a very precise definition of what "good" Muslimness would entail. So, the state was still palpably in control of what religion and being religious meant, which pointed at the persistence of *laiklik* in the conceptualisation of Turkish nationalism. The second point is that the introduction of "more" religion did not drive students towards a greater embrace of their faith or convey the emergence of a more devout national identity. The focal point of students' attention was still the Turkish nation, and not the Islamic faith.

[59] This, of course, was an inaccurate assessment, since the caliphal line, which belonged to the heirs of the Mamluk Sultan, only passed on to the House of Osman after Selim I's conquest of Egypt in 1512.

"Demokrat-ising" the curriculum in 1956

It is not that the Demokrat Party did not release a new primary school curriculum in the 1950s; it was more the case that it ran out of time. As Turkey entered the Western fold of nations, joining the UN and NATO, the culture of education, too, started to change. The emerging alliance with the US ended the era of "classic Western example" in Turkish education, replacing it with "American-patented approaches."[60] This would start the process of "Americanising" Turkey's system of education. Henceforth, the authorities who were tasked with revising educational programmes would no longer come together around a table, write out a new syllabus, and then outright approve it for nationwide implementation. Instead, the ministry of education adopted a method called "programme development,"[61] whereby the programme drafted by the authorities would first be trialled in select schools, and then revised if needed, before being rolled out across the nation.

This was a recommendation put forward by Kate Wofford, an American educationist at the University of Florida, who was invited to Turkey in the 1951-1952 school year to identify the problems in the 1948 curriculum. Her advice was put to debate at the fifth convening of the National Council on Education (*Milli Eğitim Şurası*) in February 1953. One of the commissions of the *Şura* was tasked with specifically this purpose — to revise the primary school programme and recommend updates in keeping with "contemporary needs."[62] Led by Fuat Baymur and Adnan Eseniş, both recognised as authorities on primary school education in this period, the commission produced a comprehensive list of 24 recommendations.[63]

Vis-à-vis religion classes, the commission advised that Islamic history and the life of the Prophet should only be taught if a particular episode carried moral and ethical lessons for the students. Teachers were advised not to delve too deep into such metaphysical subjects as "afterlife," "death" and "fate" that a child might either not comprehend or easily misunderstand. Teaching of dogmas were also to be

[60] Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Eğitim Tarihi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1992), p112.
[61] Seval Fer, "1923 Yılından Günümüze Cumhuriyet Dönemi ilköğretim Programları Üzerine Bir İnceleme," in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Eğitim Politikaları Sempozyumu*, ed. Murat Alper Parlak (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2010), p112.
[62] *Beşinci Milli Eğitim Şurası* (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1954), pp349-357.
[63] Ibid., pp-350-351. The first six points raised are on this very issue.

avoided, with teachers being asked to speak calmly, "without any passion," when unpacking religious concepts.[64] The report also stated that religion classes would remain as electives and would continue to be taught during scheduled class-time like other subjects. Students would also receive a grade, but their grades would not have an impact on a student's passing or failing the year.

The debate that followed the report's presentation is particularly interesting, especially the parts that pertained to religious education, as it showed that there were still disagreements over what should fall under the purview of religion classes and whether religion should be taught at all in a secular country like Turkey. Some members were strong in their views that religion had no place in the curriculum. One such member, Bülent Nuri Esen, made the case that teaching religion violated the principle of secularism.[65] Esen marshalled several legal documents to corroborate his point, the first of which was the Turkish Constitution, where the principle of secularism was enshrined in the second clause. Another was the fourth clause of *Türkiye Evkaf ve Şeriye Vekaletleri Kanunu*, which stipulated that the parliament and the government were responsible for matters of public concern, and not matters of belief. Furthermore, a few other members called attention to the eighteenth clause of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that protected the freedom of belief and religious choice; this effectively meant that religion could only be provided via private channels and not through the public system, they asserted.[66]

Shortly after Esen had spoken, İsmail Hakkı Ülgen posited that such matters, connected to teaching religion at the primary school level and especially the question of whether it was congruous with the principle of laicism, merited their own discussion. He asked the commission president to move the council into a sub-discussion on this topic.[67] In an effort "to avoid misinterpretations and misunderstandings" on what was a sensitive issue, the council voted in favour and

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[64] *Beşinci Milli Eğitim Şurası*, p354.

[65] Kemal Atatuğ had made a point about religion classes when he had spoken earlier in the session and argued that religion classes should also be graded. He added that he had three Armenian students in his class, who were consistent with their studies in religion and were happy to sit an exam.

[66] *Beşinci Maarif Şurası*, pp373-375.

[67] That Ülgen put in place such a request is perhaps not surprising, since he had been spearheading the Ministry's efforts on this front for the past two years.

launched into an exclusive discussion on religion, only a few minutes after it had started to debate the conclusions of the report.[68]

The commission president recognized Minister İleri as the first speaker of the caucus. This was only the second time İleri had spoken at the Council, after he had delivered the opening address. First, İleri pushed back on what he viewed as "allegations" that teaching religion was a violation of *laiklik*. If the government even attempted to move in this direction, the parliament would protest, he remarked. İleri called attention to Britain's Education Law of 1944 that, according to him, stipulated even more rigid regulations, some of which could even be considered "backward-minded." Yet, Britain was not worried, since the British were confident that their constitution provided a bulwark against any attacks on freedom of conscience. So did the Turkish Constitution.[69]

Moreover, there were other legal measures that safeguarded such fundamental human rights. *Kanuni Medeni Teşkilat-ı Esasiye* protected freedom of conscience, which correlatively protected the right to be educated in religious matters. Being in favour of the former but against the latter was simply a conflict of interest, İleri posited. He argued that defending freedom of conscience while denying the right to religious education would be akin to telling people they had the right to cross from one valley to another but refusing to provide them with a bridge that would make it possible for them to exercise this right in the first place.[70] For many, religious education was the bridge that facilitated the crossing. There was also the *Tevhid-i Tedrisat* that granted the ministry the right to found schools as well as educate prayer leaders and religious functionaries.

Also, İleri added, parents wanted their children to have at least an elementary understanding of the fundamental precepts of Islam. Should religion be excluded from the curriculum, it would simply be studied elsewhere; this would expose students to an improper interpretation of religion, "tainted" with dogmas and laden with metaphysical concepts. The ministry had brought the teaching of religion under its own supervision because it wanted to eliminate the need in public to turn to so-called

[68] *Beşinci Maarif Şurası*, p380.
[69] Ibid., p381.
[70] Ibid., p381.

hocas, who authoritatively laid down doctrines as truisms without allowing for any questioning or critical thinking. This was also connected to the reason why students' work in these classes should be graded, İleri posited: the current practise could create the impression that religion did not even have to be dignified with a grade and therefore was not taken seriously, in which case parents could find more value in seeking the tutelage of *hocas.*

It was striking that İleri's speech did not mention communism at all. Religion was not being reintroduced into the curriculum as a bulwark against the appeal and spread of the communist ideology. It was a part of an effort to rein back the extremes of the Turkish revolution as well as a response to a demand from the public. It is also worth noting here that these demands that were being satisfied by the council here were only those of Sunni Muslims. The religious needs of students who would have been Christians, Jews, Alevis or Shia Muslims were completely ignored, so much as that it had not even occurred to a single member of the council to raise such a point.

The discussion that followed afterwards revolved around the three themes that İleri highlighted in his own speech, the first of which was whether a *laik* government should be involved in the teaching of religion. Some parents might have wanted their children to learn more about Islam but satisfying every demand of the public was not necessarily a democratic practice, some rebutted.[71] They claimed that democracy had a predetermined set of rules, which meant that democratic governments should display similar features across the board. "Like penicillin," it had one formula, and *laiklik* was one of the key ingredients.[72]

Laiklik did not mean the absence of religion, however, some members of the council posited. First, the 70th and 75th clauses of the Turkish constitution protected the freedom of conscience. The former stipulated that every citizen could believe in any religion, philosophy or political view he wished, while the latter established the citizen's right to observe and fulfil the demands of their religion. When the constitution was drafted in 1924, it had proclaimed Islam as the official religion of the state, and then the removal of this clause in 1928 had effectively established the

[71] *Beşinci Maarif Şurası*, p385.
[72] Ibid., p386.

government's impartiality to any religion.[73] Another text that was brought forward was *Tedrisat-ı İptadiye*, which listed religion as one of the subjects that should be taught throughout primary education.[74]

Furthermore, Christian and Jewish communities in Turkey had never been barred from receiving religious training. When religion was removed from the curriculum, it cut off only the Muslim population's access to religious training, even though they corresponded to about 98% of the Turkish population. In this sense, putting religion back into the curriculum was basically expanding the scope of individuals who enjoyed the country's secular freedoms (that had practically hitherto been granted to only Christians and Jews).[75] It would thereby imbue many of the legal documents with meaning for Muslim citizens, such the 266th clause of the *Medeni Kanun*, Turkish Civil Code —which stated that the responsibility for a child's religious training resided with his/her parents.[76] As long as parents made an unfettered decision about their children's enrolment in religion classes and enrolment remained voluntary, teaching religion did not eschew freedom of conscience.[77] Interestingly enough, while the council members drew comparisons against Christians and Jews, nobody brought up the status of Turkey's Alevis or Shia Muslim communities, who had also lost their freedom go exercise their religion. Although Christians and Jews were not considered "full" members of the Turkish nation, their religious institutions — churches, synagogues, patriarchate and chief rabbinate— were allowed to continue operations under the Republican order, whereas the convents, lodges, and religious networks that would have been the Alevi equivalent of churches and synagogues were shut down or were forced underground. As mentioned in the introduction, this would have been connected to the regime's concerns regarding stability and control, since the intricate *modus operandi* of such networks and establishments could have easily slipped out of the state's supervision, risked the formation of alternative nodes of

[73] *Beşinci Maarif Şurası*, pp404-405.
[74] Ibid., p406.
[75] Ibid., p398.
[76] See Clause 266 of "Türk Kanunu Medenisi," which remained in force between 17 February 1926 and 8 December 2001, when it was replaced with a version of the text that employed a simpler language.
[77] Ibid., p391. – Also, Rauf Miral made a similar point.

belonging on the periphery, and evolved into a security risk. In contrast, the patriarchate and rabbinate operated in hierarchical structures that would have been easier for the state to manage and keep a lid on.

Some members of the council also drew attention to the demand for religious education from parents, who did not want their kids to wonder what to say at someone's death, as no mechanism was available to teach them how to deliver prayers. Some had even stopped sending their children to school.[78] For example, a parent in the Black Sea town of Giresun had told a member of the council in 1937 that they were refusing to send their child to school, since the school would not "let their child hear the sound of God."[79] In return, students also seemed keen to study Islam. In the 1949-1950 academic year, 414,417 students were enrolled in Grades 4 and 5, 2,797 (Muslim) and 3,002 (non-Muslim) of whom opted out of religion classes; this yielded an almost 1% opt-out rate. In 1950-1951, 418,953 appeared in the same cluster, 1,427 (Muslim) and 1,598 (non-Muslim) of whom chose not to partake, or some 0.7% of the students. Even in the absence of any force or pressure, some members of the council put forward, students were interested in receiving religious training.[80] Added to these, primary schools in Belgium, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom," all offered religion courses to their students, and that only the governments beyond the "Iron Curtain" banned religious education, participants argued.[81]

Then, one important question revolved around what students would learn about when they learned about religion. For instance, one council member posited that religion should mean not lying, not stealing, respecting one's parents and the elderly, and loving one's country — which was reminiscent of the definition of religion in the 1930 programme. The same member recited a personal anecdote from 1923, when he was a lieutenant in Polatlı, a town in between Ankara and Eskişehir. Out of the 200-250 people in his regiment, 150 were oblivious to the name of the Prophet, but claimed that they were willing to kill themselves should their wives ever remove

[78] *Beşinci Maarif Şurası*, pp387-388.
[79] Ibid., p416.
[80] Ibid., p408.
[81] Ibid., pp394-397.

their veils.[82] He asserted that this sort of thinking had nothing to do with Islam, nor did it signify anything Islamic.[83] Instead of metaphysical concepts, the ministry should prioritise the teaching of such values as maintaining national unity and being magnanimous.[84] Then, students were to understand religion as a moral force that supplemented and reinforced one's worldly duties and responsibilities.[85]

If this was not the image Turks had of religion, the fault resided with the ministry and not with Islam. The ministry had let the demand for religious education be abused by people who either did not mean well or had been led astray themselves, and therefore tarnished Islam's reputation.[86] Now, it was incumbent upon the ministry to show that only by being well-versed in the sciences and scholarly methods could one appreciate the essence of religion, as captured in an hadith, "*bir saatlik ilim, bin saatlik ibadete bedeldir,*" meaning an hour of science was tantamount to a thousand hours of worship[87]; or in Einstein's maxim "religion without science is lame, science without religion is blind."[88] Not everyone concurred with these interpretations. Some questioned the validity of only teaching the so-called ethics of religion. Fuat Gündüzalp reminded the council that Islam also involved absolution and praying, which the ministry would have no right to gloss over if it were serious about presenting a truly global picture of the religion. What if a student wondered why his teacher, who talked about praying and fasting, did not practise them, he asked. Would the ministry then provide prayer rooms in schools, too?[89]

When the DP finally issued an updated programme in 1956, it did not amend a significant portion of the 1948 curriculum, only reshuffling and reorganising the content into different units. The unit on "homeland of the Turks" was re-titled as "Turks, Turkish Civilization and how the Turks spread around the world," and "The

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[82] *Beşinci Maarif Şurası*, pp389-390.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid., p378.
[85] Ibid., pp383-384.; Similar comments were made by Alexander Haçopoulos in Ibid., pp425-426.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid., pp412-414.
[88] The quote is actually "science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind," but was misquoted by the council member and also transcribed incorrectly in the record of proceedings.
[89] *Beşinci Maarif Şurası*, p433.

Spread of Islam Among Central Asian Turks and Muslim Turkish States" now read "The Birth of Islam, the Prophet and Spread of Islam: The Spread of Islam among Central Asian Turks and the role of Turks," for example.

In technical terms, this updated version of the 1948 syllabus was the first primary school curriculum the ministry had published since 1933 that apportioned some space to religious studies. In contrast to the 1930 programme, religion was listed in the table of contents and was not relegated to the end of the publication. The first topic at the Grade 4 level was "*besmele*" —learning how to deliver the first prayer in the scripture— which was not included in the list *Cumhuriyet* had published. The second unit on "love" was carried over from the 1949 version verbatim. The third unit focused on "being Muslim," stating that the first rule of Islam was appreciating that "there is no God but Allah, and that Mohammed is his messenger," and then delving into an exploration of the life of the Prophet, focusing on his early life before becoming the Prophet, his life as the Prophet, and "his life for justice." The longest unit was the last unit on "Islamic morality," defined as "being honest, not hurting anyone either physically or verbally, getting along with everyone, not lying, not accusing anyone, not talking behind people's back, not meddling in people's personal affairs, being clean and healthy, and being ready to extend help."[90] The programme for Grade 5 was the same as the one described in the *Cumhuriyet* article.[91]

Analysing the *Şura* debate as well as the 1956 version of the 1948 curriculum is indeed interesting, because it showed how complicated a process the reintroduction of religion would have been. Indeed, had this change been necessitated by the rise of communism and therefore a security threat, fewer officials might have questioned the merits of teaching students about religion. Yet, even four years after the CHP had put religion classes back into the curriculum, there were still doubts about whether this was the right way forward. On the one hand, it was a democratic response to a public demand; on the other, it was a stab at the very heart of the Turkish state. Some still subscribed to the notion of exposing students only to those aspects of "Islam as culture" that was inscribed into the 1930 programme, while

[90] *Beşinci Maarif Şurası*, pp299-300.
[91] Ibid., pp300-302.

others approved of keeping in the faith-dimension of Islam as it was done in the 1948 programme or even of adding in more faith-based content. The 1956 version of the curriculum ultimately kept in place elements of both interpretations.

What was coming into being was a Turkey in which one was welcome to subscribe to the 1930s interpretation of Islam as culture or could embrace an interpretation of Islam that accentuated its faith-based dimensions as was sanctioned under the 1948 programme. Although these discussions did point at a less stringent interpretation of Islam and being Muslim, whereby Turks could choose from a wider spectrum of traits to decide on the kind of Muslim they would like to be, the state remained the arbiter on the kind of Muslim that would ultimately be empowered — fuelling a *laik* nationalist discourse.

***"**Demokrat-ising" the curriculum in 1959*

Wofford had also recommended that a contingent of teachers travel to the US for further training. In 1952, a group of 25 teachers visited University of Florida "to increase their knowledge on education and educational practices."[92] The group were guests of the university from 23 October 1952 until 1 September 1953. Upon their return in late 1953, bolstered by the conclusions of the *Şura* that same year, the same group of teachers started working on redrafting the 1948/1956 curriculum.

Called "Draft Program for Experimental Village Schools," the curriculum they prepared was implemented in select schools in Bolu at the start of the 1954-1955 academic session.[93] In 1955, the Istanbul Directorate of National Education prepared a "Curriculum for Istanbul's Experimental Schools" and pushed it into effect in 1955-1956 school year.[94] The observations from the implementation of these two syllabi would eventually be conveyed in a report to the ministry of education in 1959, titled "National Commission Report on Education."

In 1957, the Ministry of Education asked the Ford Foundation for assistance with "various educational matters, with an especial attention paid to the training of

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[92] Cicioğlu, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde İlk ve Ortaöğretim,* p100. Also, see Kate V. Wofford, *The Workshop Way With Foreign Students* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1954).
[93] Özcan Demirel, *Eğitimde Program Geliştirmeye: Kuramdan Uygulamaya* (Ankara: Pegem Akademi Yayınları, 1999), p16.
[94] Ibid.

teachers."[95] The Ford Foundation was founded in 1936 as a philanthropic organisation. After World War II, it focussed its operations on "enhancing technical expertise, rational management, and means of public education" in underdeveloped countries.[96] According to the report published in September 1950 on the Foundation's programmes, the Ford Foundation's purpose was to "advance human welfare," which the leadership held synonymous with democratic ideals that, it claimed, was "on challenge in the world today." Spurred to action by such concerns, the Foundation's activities were going to help with "the establishment of peace, the strengthening of democracy, the strengthening of the economy, education in a democratic society, improved scientific knowledge of individual behaviour and human relations."[97]

More importantly for this dissertation, these activities were formulated after close consultation with government officials, meaning that the Foundation's programmes were often designed to further U.S. foreign policy objectives. They exported American ideals on behalf of the U.S. government, showcasing the merits and benefits of an American way of life, with the objective to influence the societies, in which they operated, in norms that would encourage them to shape their countries in a way that would uphold U.S. objectives abroad.[98] Turkey was one of the first countries the Foundation visited, when it took its first trip in 1952 to become acquainted with the country and explore possible avenues of cooperation.[99] However, it could not launch any meaningful projects until 1957, when it was invited by the ministry of education to produce "a long-term plan to meet the educational demands of the country" and improve primary and secondary education in Turkey.[100]

The committee the Foundation appointed for the task was composed of Philip Coombs, F. Champion Ward and Louis Smith. Coombs was a program director for

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[95] "Türkiye Eğitim Milli Komisyonu Raporu" (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1960), p1.
[96] Ali Erken, *America and the Making of Modern Turkey: Science, Culture and Political Alliances* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018), p52.
[97] Francis X. Sutton, "The Ford Foundation: The Early Years," *Daedalus* 166, no.1 (1987), p49.
[98] On the connection between the Works of philanthropic foundations and the U.S. foreign policy, see Edward H. Berman, *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockfeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy: The Ideology of Philanthropy* (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983); and Olivier Zunz, *Philanthropy in America: A History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).
[99] Erken, p70.
[100] Ibid.

education at the Ford Foundation, who was later appointed by U.S. President John F. Kennedy to serve as the first Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Culture in 1961; Ward was the director of the Foundation's Overseas Development Programme for the Middle East and North Africa and later became its Deputy Vice President for Education and Research in 1963; and Smith was an educational advisor for the Foundation.[101] In its report presented to the ministry on 4 December 1957, the committee recommended the establishment of a "National Commission on Education," which would bring together teachers, academicians, and bureaucrats to "observe and evaluate the state of education in the country, understand how modern countries grappled with similar problems," and in light of these findings, formulate a new framework for Turkish education.[102] Advising the commission were Howard Wilson, the Dean of the Faculty of Education at University of California and Pierre Guillon, Professor of Classical Civilisation at University of Aix-en-Provence.[103]

To discuss the upcoming trips and their objectives, the commission held three meetings in Ankara that took place between 16-18 October 1958, on 5 December 1958 and 2 January 1959.[104] The first part of the trip was to be a nationwide tour between 4 January 1959 and 2 February 1959, during which the commission visited "educational institutions of all sorts and at all levels" in such cities with drastically different demographics as Trabzon, Rize, Erzurum, Diyarbakır, Adana, Mersin, along with Ankara, Istanbul and İzmir. The conclusions from these trips were then evaluated at a string of meetings in Ankara between 2-10 February 1959, after which the commission embarked on an international tour. Between February and June 1959, the commission visited Japan, the U.S., the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, Italy, and finally arrived in Vienna on 1 June 1959, where they finalised the report to be submitted to the Ministry of Education.[105]

The report is historically significant, because it signalled a change in attitude vis-à-vis religion and nationalism. Of course, there were some overlaps with the previous approaches, too, especially in terms of emphasising the importance of raising

[101] Erken, *America and the Making of Modern Turkey*, p71.
[102] "Türkiye Eğitim Milli Komisyonu Raporu," p1.
[103] Ibid., p2.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid., p3.

students who stood at their nation's disposal. It was through education that a nation "could protect its greatest values and traditions" and set the groundwork for a "rich and powerful future," the report put forward.[106] It also observed that in "today's advanced countries," education served a more functional purpose; it aimed to raise "productive, adaptable, and vigilant" individuals, who were capable of "serving the nation" wherever and whenever it needed their service the most.[107] Earlier curriculums had set similar objectives.

The most noticeable departure was in the way Turkey's relationship with Islam was discussed. "It is common knowledge" that Turks converted to Islam in the eighth century, the report put forward, asserting that Turks' conversion to Islam as well as the role they played in spreading the faith throughout Central Asia, China, India, and the Balkans were arguably the two of the most important turning-points in the history of Islam's development. Converting to Islam had also been a turning-point in the history of Turks' own development as people, because becoming Muslim meant "more than just accepting a new religion." Not only were Turks' religious practices transformed, but also their moral, political, and cultural understandings took on a more "Islamic" character, the report asserted.[108]

The report then argued that two civilisations had emerged out of the course of world history, the Christian-Western civilisation and the Muslim-Eastern civilisation; although they both "employed scripts based on the Phoenician alphabet, recognised the value of the teachings of the ancient Greeks, and used calendars first invented by the ancient Egyptians, they differed in terms of their understanding of morality, law, art, science, philosophy and government."[109] Until the fifteenth century, the Eastern civilisation had been superior to the West, but they also became so confident in their supremacy that they ignored the West's cultural renaissance and its scientific advances. As a result, this inflated sense of confidence hindered their progress — which catapulted the Christian-West to the centre of the civilised world, while relegating the Muslim-Eastern countries to the status of their political and economic

[106] "Türkiye Eğitim Milli Komisyonu Raporu," p11.
[107] Ibid., p14.
[108] Ibid., p23.
[109] Ibid.

playing grounds.[110] Because Turks had internalised the values of the Islamic civilisation, they belonged to the latter.

The report applauded Turkey's interactions with the Christian-Western civilisation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the Ottoman Empire had tried to model first its military and then its structure of government after Western examples through the pre-*Tanzimat* and *Tanzimat* reforms, respectively; and had then continued on its Western-facing trajectory of development through the twentieth century, the most powerful symbol of which was the founding of the Republic.[111] Still, the report asserted that Turkey's interactions with the West had remained "incomplete," which it found lamentable.[112]

This did not mean that Turkey should have severed ties with the Eastern-Islamic civilisation, since Turkey's religion, language, and history —factors that, the report claimed, defined the nation— lied in the East.[113] The goal here was to make sure "Turkey reached out to the West, without being uprooted from the East" and thereby "create a Turkish civilisation that combined the most valuable elements from both civilisations."[114] The "most valuable aspect" of Christian-Western civilisation was the premium it placed upon scientific education, and Turkey had made progress in this area, but unfortunately Atatürk's dictum that "the supreme guide in life is science…had only adorned the walls of some faculties like some sort of ornament," and remained a mere slogan.[115] Should Turkey continue to invest in Western-inspired education, it would become a model for other countries in the Islamic-Eastern civilisation, because these Muslim countries still had no understanding of scientific research. Therefore, the new system of education needed to establish "the Turkish school," which meant "providing Western knowledge at a Turkish setting" and raising "many Western Turks" as quickly as possible.[116]

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[110] "Türkiye Eğitim Milli Komisyonu Raporu," p24.
[111] Ibid., p25.
[112] Ibid., p24.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid., p26.
[116] Ibid., p98.

Furthermore, teaching religion and sciences was entirely compatible with the secular nature of the Republic. Islam demanded that its followers "travel to China for the sake of knowledge…,remain in a state of energetic battle against evil…, and promote justice, mercy, and love."[117] Due to misapplication, the spread of false ideas, and the absence of any reforms that could have "updated" the faith to the needs of contemporary societies, the message of Islam had digressed from its true meaning and degenerated into fanaticism, and hence, irrelevance.[118] Religious education had also not been revamped, and as a result, Islamic institutions failed to produce outstanding scholars as they once did. They were now tasked with raising preachers and prayer-leaders who can restore purity back to Islam. Islam had emerged as a "revolution against the guidance provided by iconoclastic religions." So, there was no reason why this revolution "could not be accommodated today by the Turkish revolution." Turkish schools needed to raise a youth that understood this potential.[119]

There is indeed much to unpack here. Discussing world history in terms of its fragmentation into Christian-Western and Islamic-Eastern civilisations was reminiscent of the theories of social scientists, such as Bernard Lewis, that came to prominence in the 1950s, accepting the way of life that characterised the West as the only format of modernity, and correlatively, its absence in the so-called non-Western world as evidence of their backwardness. The report's interpretation of Turkish history furthermore read as if it had been lifted out of the pages of modernisation literature, discussed in the introduction, tracing a steady course of Western-inspired development since the eighteenth century that reached its apotheosis with the establishment of the Republic in 1923.

Another striking feature of the report was that it encouraged a stronger embrace of Turkey's Muslim identity than had been the case. For example, none of the documents the ministry had hitherto published argued that Turks' understanding of morality and politics became more Islamised upon their conversion to Islam. In fact, the assessment had been quite the opposite, with curriculums asking teachers to emphasise that it was the Turks who had shaped Islam's trajectory of development,

[117] "Türkiye Eğitim Milli Komisyonu Raporu," p108.
[118] Ibid., p109.
[119] Ibid., p110.

and not *vice versa*. Islam was now presented as an all-consuming, all-encompassing mainframe that informed every aspect of Turkish life; more than a religion, it provided a moral compass, a political guidebook, and a legal code.

So, the report's assessment was that Turkey had "reached out" to the West, while remaining tethered to the East, effectively positioning itself in the middle of these two "worlds." And because of this unique geostrategic positioning, the report imagined Turkey in a new role — that of a bridge between the global West, consisting of Western Europe and the U.S., and the global East, consisting of Muslim-majority countries that had not undergone a process of Western-inspired modernisation similar to that of Turkey.

Overall, the significance of this report lies in the fact that it was one of the first documents that crafted a national narrative couched in Cold War rhetoric. Up until this point, the impact of the Cold War on Turkey's domestic developments had been negligible, as there were other forces of circumstance behind some of the changes that did take place. Documents and conversations that focussed on the revisions that should be made to Turkish education, too, had made only cursory references to the onset of the Cold War and the rise of communism as a factor that should prompt a rethinking of Turkey's positioning on the world-stage. So, this report marked a turning-point. It tasked Turkish education with raising "Western Turks," which had never been stressed as the end-goal of any educational initiative before. These "Western Turks" were the result of Turkey's ability to combine the best of the two worlds mentioned above. "Western Turks" were Turks who appreciated and internalised the merits of a Western-style education based on science and technology, but still held on to their Eastern cultural roots — in other words, Turks who were groomed with the ideals of the West, while remaining tethered to the traditions and culture of the East. They were going to showcase the benefits of Westernisation and thereby help the U.S. capture the hearts and minds of a population that still had not entered the Western fold in the global fights against the Soviet Union.

And it was in this context that the report also re-imagined Turks' historical relationship with Islam. Granted, the report did not suggest that Turkey's religious identity should supersede its national identity in that religion was still only one of the constituents of Turkishness. But Turks needed to take more pride in their Muslimness,

since only as proud Muslims could they become appealing role-models for the rest of the Muslim world and serve a geopolitical purpose.

10 months after the submission of the report, the Demokrat Party was overthrown in a military coup on 27 May 1960. The National Unity Committee under the leadership of Cemal Gürsel, who took over the government, did not ignore the findings of the commission, however, and published the report on 15 July 1960, only a few months after the takeover.[120] The ministry finalised its draft on 14 April 1961 and announced its decision on 12 September 1961 that the draft programme should be implemented in select schools for five years.[121] In the 1962-1963 school year, this draft curriculum was tested out in 106 schools in 14 cities. After 1964-1965, its scope expanded, pulling 1881 schools into the fray.[122] The result was the 1968 primary school program that remained in effect in slightly modified renditions until the early 2000s. It is not easy to assess the extent to which suggestions written in the report materialised in the following decades, as Turkish politics, state, and society would undergo a significant transformation between 1960 and 1968 — which makes it difficult to attribute any of the statements made in the 1968 curriculum to the 1959 report by the Commission on National Education. The report, however, still revealed important details about the changing culture of education at the time, and correlatively, the changing ideas on how Islam and Muslimness fitted into the era's conception of an "ideal" Turk.

Conclusion

The chief objective of Turkish education was to cultivate unquestioning loyalty to the state and shape students into loyal foot-soldiers of the nation by having them realise Turkey's historical greatness; as well as understand that this greatness had been possible owing to the efforts of a long line of ancestors, who devoted themselves to bettering the circumstances of their people. The 1948 programme would later put a slightly different spin on it. If one were to be considered a nationalist, simply

[120] "Türkiye Eğitim Milli Komisyonu Raporu," Preface.
[121] T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Eğitim Araştırma ve Geliştirme Dairesi Başkanlığı, *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığında Program Çalışmaları* (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1997), p21.
[122] Ibid.

recognising the country's greatness was no longer enough. Now students were told to stand *en guarde* to protect the achievements of the Turkish revolution, which marked the pinnacle of Turkish greatness on the world-stage, against the machinations of those who worked towards Turks' detriment in the past few centuries, but especially during World War I and the independence struggle.

These statements communicated salient hints about who was allowed to enter the fold of the Turkish nation. First, speaking the Turkish language was the *sine qua non* of being a Turk; since the material was only produced in Turkish, one could only have access to information about Turks, if one spoke Turkish. Also, one needed to commit oneself to a life spent in service of the nation. Yet, a simple declaration of commitment to this cause would not be enough. The curriculum intimated that only those who had descended from a line of Turks could muster any genuine interest in enhancing the greatness of Turks and the Turkish nation, pointing at a racial dimension to Turkish nationalism. The 1948 programme deconstructed further on this point, stating that Turkish greatness needed to be protected against those who had historically tried to chip away at it; since only ethnic Turks who descended from a bloodline (or *soy*) of Turks could contribute to Turks' greatness, every non-Turk could be assumed to have historically worked or be contemporaneously working against it, which excluded them even more aggressively from the construct of the nation.

Another determinant of being a Turk was being Muslim, the meaning of which changed against the backdrop of shifting domestic and geopolitical concerns. The 1930 programme located the source of Turkey's greatness in the pre-Islamic civilisations Turks had founded in Central Asia and Anatolia. It also billed Islam as a "culture" that championed the espousal of positivist norms attitudes in public, introducing to students a definition of Islam that was unyoked from its more faith-based aspects, such as praying and fasting. Such a view on the Turkish past and Islam supplemented the revolutionary reform package that was being rolled out in Turkey at the time that was meant to distance Turkey away from the legacy of the empire and distance Islam away from the public eye.

These concerns started to dissipate after 1945 for reasons that have been discussed at length above. Driven into action by political (transition to multi-party democracy), geopolitical (the rise of the Soviet Union and communism), and even

ideological (İnönü's vision for Turkey's future) triggers, Turkey reincorporated some aspects and elements of its past following its conversion to Islam (namely the Seljuk and Ottoman years) into its historical trajectory. Turkey's relationship with Islam was also redefined. In this vein, the objective of religion classes went beyond the 1930s' cultural interpretation and included more faith-based topics and themes such as knowing certain prayers by heart and the life of the Prophet, allowing a more conservative, faith-based understanding of religion to prevail.

Nevertheless, the restoration of a more traditional meaning to religion and inclusion of examples from Turkey's Islamic past did not mean that the Turkish education was now going to raise a religious youth. Students could espouse a more devout form of Islam in public (and also at school) if they wished to do so, but the "unlocking" of this freedom did not peel any importance away from what had been the guiding theme of Turkey's system of education — realising Turks' greatness. Islam and Islamic centuries were simply other areas that proved Turkish superiority.

The 1959 report marked a watershed in Turkish nationalist discourse in terms of how being Muslim fitted into being a Turk. Becoming a nationalist and contributing to Turk's greatness now required becoming a "Western Turk" — someone who received a Western-inspired education in the sciences and technology, found value in a Westernised way of life, but also took pride in their roots in the East, which the report foremost associated with Muslimness. Students were now to see Turkey as firmly placed in the Islamic East, but also acting as a bridge with the West, showcasing the benefits of Western-style modernisation to Muslim countries and shepherding them into the Western fold.

Such a narrative signalled that Turkey was aligning itself with the U.S. in its global fight against Soviet Union and would now be leveraging religion as an antidote against the spread of the communist ideology, therefore embracing its Muslim identity more strongly and more publicly. The ideas in the 1959 report suggested that accepting a faith-based definition of religion and allowing for more public manifestations of piousness were no longer only about a democratic opening; it served a geopolitical purpose. The more passionately Turks, or "Western Turks," took their Islamic identity to heart, the likelier it was for them to set an example for the

populations of other Muslim-majority nations, allure them into the fold of the U.S.-led world order, and turn them against and away from communism.

Chapter 3:
Grade 4 textbooks

Nationalism and religion were going to be the key tenets of the system of education Menderes and the DP wanted to introduce in Turkey. Based on the different curriculums that were implemented throughout the 1950s, such a system involved cultivating an undying loyalty to the nation by having students recognise the greatness of the Turkish nation, and then channelling this loyalty towards protecting the achievements of the Turkish revolution against the so-called enemies of the nation, which, judging by the context, were Europe and Christians. Any discussion of other civilisations that were labelled as Turkish, too, became folded into this greater effort. The approach vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire was a more nuanced; those episodes that projected the *Ottomans* in a superior way were woven into the narrative as *Turkish* successes, but the others were disowned. Turks' historical relationship with Islam received a similar treatment. Although the changes in Turkish politics after 1945 restored a more faith-based meaning to religion, programmes suggested that Islam's inclusion into the curriculum simply opened up another area, where Turkey's *national* greatness would be "proven." Although Menderes had intimated that religion was going to be one of the main pillars of Turkish education, it was effectively subsumed under the larger umbrella of nationalism.

This chapter will now turn to how these curricular objectives were communicated to students in the 1950s. How were textbooks going to rally students around the flag? As the curriculum stated, they projected Turks as the progenitor of every "great" civilisation. Their greatness was a result of three factors. Their excellence on the battlefield allowed them to spread their civilisation into new territories as well as defend these civilisations against enemies. Owing to their political acumen, Turks had also understood the value of national unity, of forming and maintaining a united front against interlopers at all times; if nobody could divide them from within, they could confront any challenge with a full force. Added to these, regardless of their religious beliefs, Turkish civilisations were always governed according to a logic that consigned religion to the private realm.

Students did not learn about the Ottoman Empire in Grade 4, so this chapter will not be exploring how that curricular strand was developed in textbooks. However,

thes textbooks did discuss Turks' historical relationship with Islam, and the Great Seljuk Empire (1037 AD-1194 AD) that predated the Ottomans, which contained salient hints about how the Ottoman Empire would eventually be presented. There was significant religious content in Grade 4 textbooks even when discussing the history of non-Islamic Turkish societies in Central Asia, as well as when covering such topics as the life of the Prophet, the Abbasid and Umayyad caliphates, and Turks' conversion and contribution to Islam. Students learned that, for Turks, faith never informed their actions that had public consequences. Although Turks had clearly become Muslims after their conversion to Islam, as a result of which students would be expected to perceive themselves as Muslim, students were not encouraged to act in the name of Islam. As they would learn, non-religious concerns governed Turks' relationship with Islam. Turks were nominally Muslim, but the nation was the epicentre of their existence. The history of the Great Seljuk Empire, too, was narrated —or rather, invented—along these lines. It was a Turkish civilisation that was renowned for its soldierliness and military might; its leaders understood the importance of national unity for the longevity of the state; and never let their attachment to Islam dictate how they should manage the affairs of the state.

Then, Grade 4 textbooks upheld the curriculum's objective of burnishing the nationalist credentials of Turkish students, but building upon the discussion in the curriculum, explained what had made these civilisations great. The overlap between the great Turkish civilisations and the Turkish Republic would have become clearer to students, as the factors that had catapulted the historical Turkish civilisations into greatness were also among the principles according to which the Republican state and society were organised — which was evidence that, as another Turkish civilisation, the modern Republic was going to parallel the earlier Turkish civilisations in greatness.

There were also differences between the textbooks that the DP inherited from the CHP in 1950 and the ones it released after 1954. First, a more bombastic tone seemed to pervade the texts after 1954, describing Turks' greatness with a more dramatic language, which this chapter will point out where applicable. However, there is not enough evidence to suggest that Turkey of the 1950s was more nationalistic than the Turkey of the 1940s. It is possible that this change in tone in educational material after 1954, and the appearance of more excited, dramatic phrasings, was the

result of the switch from the government press to private publishing houses; and the fact that these texts were written by authors who would have been more willing to write them, as opposed to those who were commissioned by the government. The following section will discuss the history of textbook production in more detail.

There was also an uptick in religious rhetoric after 1954, commensurate with this uptick in bombastic rhetoric, and more importantly, commensurate with the uptick of religious symbols and motifs that would have appeared within the public realm as the 1950s wore on, as discussed in detail in Chapter 1. However, once again, this enhanced religious content did not include any messaging that drove students towards a stronger embrace of their faith; their newfound Muslimness had nothing to do with the functions they were to fulfil as foot-soldiers of the nation.

One important distinction of the textbooks the DP released after 1954 was that they presented Anatolia as the historical homeland of Turks, and following Turks' conversion to Islam, as the historical homeland of Turkish Muslims. This was missing from the CHP-era texts that had remained in use until then and had also not been specified in either the 1948 or the 1956 programmes.

It is possible that this Anatolia-focussed narrative was a consequence of the deteriorating relationship with Greece towards the middle of the decade in connection to the status of Cyprus.[1] Cyprus was under Ottoman control between 1571 and 1878, when the Ottomans handed over the island to British rule in exchange for its diplomatic support in the Russo Turkish War of 1877-1878.[2] Cyprus's status as part of the British Empire was even recognised in the Lausanne Treaty.[3] For most of its recent history, Cyprus was populated by Turkish Muslims and Greek Orthodox, who also dominated the population in the 1950s. From 1950 onward, Greece started calling for the incorporation of Cyprus, which it recognised as a land of ethnic Greeks, into mainland Greece.[4] This emphasis on the Turkishness of Anatolia could therefore have been in reaction to such irredentism by Greece, since Greece had also historically

[1] Foti Benlisoy, "Ellili Yıllar Türkiye'sinin Tarihi: Azınlıklar Tarihi," *Türkiye'nin Ellili Yılları*, p366.
[2] Şükrü Sina Gürel, *Tarihsel Boyut İçinde Türk-Yunan İlişkileri (1821-1993)* (Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, 1993), p53.
[3] Article 20, "The Lausanne Treaty".
[4] Derya Sevinç, "Demokrat Parti Dönemi Türk-Yunan İlişkileri (1950-1960)," PhD diss., (Ankara Üniversitesi, 2012), p83.

claimed parts of Anatolia as Greek and had even been given jurisdiction over the İzmir province under the terms of the Sevres Treaty in 1919. The framing of Anatolia, where students who read these texts likely lived, as a Turkish homeland would have encouraged students to become more protective these lands.

The nationalist discourse from the late 1940s largely persisted into the 1950s, including the race-based element of national identity. What was new was the introduction of this soil-based aspect of nationalism. It would produce important consequences for those who were considered non-Turks. The stronger identification of Anatolia as a Turkish homeland also resulted in language that exhorted the youth to leverage their soldierliness towards maintaining Anatolia's Turkish character, meaning its continuous population with Turks. In return, anyone or any community that violated Anatolia's status as a Turkish homeland would be framed as the enemy, excluding the ethnic and religious minorities of Anatolia even more aggressively from the construct of the nation. Anti-Greek sentiments had underpinned the 1930 programme, and the 1948 programme had also specified that Turks should constantly remain in a revolutionary mindset, which encouraged distrust in the members of those communities Turks had fought in the past, but more specifically between 1914 and 1923. But these messages had been subtler in tone. Now textbooks clearly stated that Turkey was a state exclusively for Turks. This would manifest itself most starkly — and in a hugely devastating way— on 6-7 September 1955, with the attacks on the country's Greek, Armenian and Jewish communities.

Commissioning textbooks

Passed on 22 March 1926 and implemented on 3 April 1926, the second clause in the "Legislation on the Ministry of Education" ("*Maarif teşkilatına dair kanun*") called for the creation of an internal body within the Ministry of Education called "*Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi*"[5] or the "Board of Education." This is perhaps not the most accurate translation, however, since the board wielded significantly more power than the name might suggest. Along with the Commission of Directors ("*Müdürler Komisyonu*") and Committee of Inspection ("*Teftiş Kurulu*"), it was one of the main

[5] "Maarif teşkilatına dair kanun," *Resmi Gazete,* no: 338, 3 April 1926.

three bodies that effectively ran the ministry. As indicated at the time of its creation by the then Minister of Education, Mustafa Necati, it was tasked with charting the fundamental aims of education and putting in place a system of training and schooling "in accordance with the country's needs and the demands of contemporary civilisation"; it was the engine that was supposed to "take us to our ultimate destination,"[6] which was "the level of contemporary civilisations," as Atatürk stated in his speech to mark the tenth anniversary of the Republic's founding. Among its main responsibilities were advising the minister; revising educational programmes and curricula; taking precautions to improve the moral standing of the population; following international publications and commissioning their translations into Turkish; and —most importantly for this chapter— examining and approving the textbooks that were to be studied at the primary- and secondary-levels."[7]

The extent to which the Board remained involved in the production of textbooks fluctuated over the decades. Originally, the Board was responsible for examining educational material and deciding whether or not they should receive a textbook designation. It did not commission the writing of a textbook or was not directly involved in their production; the authors themselves would submit their manuscripts to the Board for review, and if deemed appropriate, these texts would then be included on the ministry's list of textbooks for that year.

A new regulation went into effect on 3 June 1933 that allowed the Board to tighten the grips.[8] The parliament's committee on education had also prepared a report that explained the reasoning behind the changes that they introduced. As one of the main instruments of education, textbooks played a crucial role in the intellectual and moral training of the "Republican generation," and this was why textbook production had to come under a stricter state control.[9] Under the ministry's

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[6] Reşat Özalp and Aydoğan Ataünal, *Türk Milli Eğitim Sisteminde Düzenleme Teşkilatı* (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1977), p38.
[7] Ibid., pp597-598.
[8] "Maarif vekilliğine bağlı mekteplerde okutulacak ders kitaplarının basılması ve dağıtılması ile bu maksat ile kurulacak mektep kitapları sandığı hakkında kanun," *T.C. Resmi Gazete*, no. 2426, 13 June 1933, p2683.
[9] "Maarif vekaletince hariçte bastırılacak mektep kitaplarının ihale sureti ve bu kitapların bası masraflarını karşılamak üzere ihdas olunacak mektep kitapları sandığı hakkında I/612 numaralı

unrestricted supervision, the government could ensure that textbooks were written in full compliance with the country's norms and values and that any further entrepreneurial intervention into the field of education could be avoided.[10] To this end, there was only going to be one textbook for each level.[11] From 1933 onward, then, the ministry — or more specifically, the Board of Education — would be in charge of commissioning, publishing and distributing textbooks.[12]

These changes aligned with the political climate of the 1930s. As the CHP government continued to roll out the revolutionary reform package, it needed to make sure that these reforms found a receptive audience. By controlling what students studied, the government was to turn the youth into unquestioning foot-soldiers of the regime; and by making sure that every single student studied the exact same material, it facilitated the "creation" of a uniform body of people, who subscribed to the unitary ideal of the nation, set and managed by those at the helm.

These regulations were overturned on 6 June 1949 — again, in line with the changing political climate in the Republic. According to this new legislation, the ministry of education was still responsible for authorising textbooks. However, it no longer had any role to play in their overall production, being merely tasked with examining those that had been written by independent authors and were submitted to the ministry for review and acceptance.[13] It could only commission a textbook if those in circulation were deemed "unable to meet demand." If accepted, textbooks would be used in state schools for up to three years, when they would be re-evaluated and revised, if necessary.[14] Another change was that the authors would now be asked to make their own arrangements to have their books published, meaning that

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kanun layihası ve Maarif ve Bütçe encümenleri mazbatası," Commission Report no. 253 on Legislation no.2259, 16 April 1933, p1.

[10] Ibid., p2.

[11] Ibid., p3.

[12] The legislation was assigned the responsibility over textbook production, publishing and distribution to the Board of Education was accepted on 10 June 1933; "Maarif vekaleti merkez teşkilatı ve vazifeleri hakkında kanun," *T.C. Resmi Gazete* no.2434, 22 June 1933, pp2765-2766.

[13] "Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına bağlı okullarda okutturulacak ders kitaplarının seçilmesi, basılması ve dağıtılması hakkında Kanun," *T.C. Resmi Gazete,* no.7230, 11 June 1949, p16322.

[14] Ibid.

textbooks would no longer come out of the ministry's own printing press,[15] which in the meantime suggested that there would be less state intervention in the economy.

It took some time before multiple textbooks appeared on the market, however; up until the 1954-1955 school year, the ministry would reprint textbooks that had been authorised under the CHP's supervision.[16] From 1954 on, fresh titles started to be included into the Ministry's annual list of authorised textbooks in *Tebliğler Dergisi*.[17] By the 1957-1958 academic year, there were already eleven to choose from only for Grade 4 and Grade 5 history classes.[18]

Authors, cover-pages and opening pages

As mentioned, only one textbook was in use at Grade 4 and Grade 5 levels across all schools that remained under the ministry's supervisory umbrella until the 1954-1955 school year. Named *İlkokullar İçin Tarih 4 (History for Primary Schools 4)* and *İlkokullar İçin Tarih 5*[19]*(History for Primary Schools 5)*, both had initially received authorisation from the Board of Education on 14 July 1945; their sixth editions was printed on 16 January 1950 (before the elections that brought the DP into power on 14 May 1950).[20] The authors of both textbooks, Faik Reşit Unat and Kamil Su, had served in various positions within the education ministry under the CHP: Su had become a superintendent for the ministry in the 1940s, tasked with auditing educational institutions and ensuring that their operations were in step with the ministerial guidelines; became the chief-auditor of the ministry publications towards the end of the decade; and then served as a member of the Board of Education in the early 1950s. Following a similar career trajectory, Unat had presided over the

[15] "Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına bağlı okullarda okutturulacak ders kitaplarının seçilmesi, basılması ve dağıtılması hakkında Kanun."
[16] See, for instance, "1950-1951 öğretim yılında ilkokullarda okutulacak ders ve yardımcı kitaplar hakkında," *Tebliğler Dergisi* 13, no.603 (14 August 1950), pp50-51.
[17] "1954-1955 yılı ders kitapları hakkında," *Tebliğler Dergisi* 17, no.799 (17 May 1954), p40 and p42.
[18] "1957-1958 yılında okutulacak ders kitapları hakkında," *Tebliğler Dergisi* 20, no.968 (12 August 1957), p92.
[19] Faik Reşit Unat ve Kamil Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih IV. Sınıf* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1950), see the cover page.
[20] "1950-1951 öğretim yılında ilkokullarda okutulacak ders ve yardımcı kitaplar hakkında," *Tebliğler Dergisi* 13, no.603 (14 August 1950), p51.

ministry's publications between 1926 and 1941; had been involved with the founding of the Turkish Language Association (*Türk Dil Kurumu*, the official regulatory body of the Turkish language) in 1932; and would then be appointed as the vice-president of the Turkish Historical Society in 1962.[21]

In contrast to Unat and Su, the authors whose names appeared in the ministry's list of authorised textbooks in the lead-up to the 1954-1955 school year hailed largely from intellectual circles and educational institutions. This chapter will examine five of these textbooks, written by Ziya Şölen and Sabahattin Arıç; Emin Oktay; Niyazi Akşit and Osman Eğilmez; Himmet Akın and Çağatay Uluçay; Ali Ekrem İnal and Rakım Çalapala. Akşit and Uluçay were both teachers at the Istanbul Educational Institute, while Akşit also served as the principal of *Yüksek Öğretmen Okulu*, founded to train secondary-school teachers, at the time of his textbook's publication, and Uluçay was a well-known historian.

From the perspective of someone who would have completed their primary education after 1980, there were several elements that were "missing" in these textbooks, that they would have become accustomed to seeing in every educational material throughout their time in school. First, none of these works included a copy of the national anthem, the text of Atatürk's "Address to the Turkish Youth," a full-page photo of Atatürk, or a map of Turkey placed within its neighbourhood.

Once again, it would have struck the post-1980 generation of students as surprising that these textbooks did not feature Atatürk on their cover-pages. Instead, they had chosen imageries connected to —as students would subsequently find out— what were identified as ancient Turkish civilisations. Şölen and Arıç's book had a collage of temples, palaces and statues; Akşit and Eğilmez had chosen an image of a stone carving of a winged-lion and a figurehead with bull-horns, well-known symbols of the Hittites; Oktay's cover included images of various sculptures, belonging to what were labelled as Turkish civilisations; and İnal and Çalapala's book displayed six images, those of a Neanderthal, a warrior on horse-back in military armour, another warrior on foot with a spear, a winged lion (associated with the Hittites), the pyramids

[21] Copeaux, *Tarih Ders Kitaplarında (1931-1993)*, p122; Also see, Muzaffer Gökman, "Faik Reşit Unat (1899-1964) ve Bibliyografyası," *Belleten* 28, no.111 (1964), pp506-523.

of Giza, and a Greek temple. Differing slightly from the rest, Akın and Uluçay's cover contained Islamic imagery: in the centre was a warrior on horse-back throwing his spear, surrounded by images of a mosque, the Trojan horse, an Ionic column, pyramids of Giza, and Neanderthals around campfire.

These cover-pages were indicative of what students would learn in Grade 4, which covered Turks' historical evolution from the so-called pre-historic era until around the time when the Anatolian principality *Osman Oğulları* (later to evolve into the Ottoman Empire) was gaining strength across this geography. Within this bracket, students learned about the so-called "ancient Turkish civilisations," which included the Sumerians, the Hittites, the Central Asian Hunnic and the Western Hunnic empires, the Celestial Turks (*Göktürks*), the Uyghurs; the histories of Athens, Sparta and Rome; the birth of Islam, Turks' conversion to Islam, the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates; and the Great Seljuk Empire. There were only minor differences between the contents of pre-1954 and post-1954 textbooks, which had happened as a result of a change introduced to the curriculum by the National Education Council in 1953: the latter also included the history of the *Anadolu Selçukluları* (Seljuk Sultanate of Rum) and the Crusades, which had previously been covered in Grade 5.

Turkish education is notorious for following a demanding curriculum. Even for a system that operated at a high standard, these fourth-grade history classes would still have been daunting, asking students to sift through a hefty list of topics. To make matters more difficult, chapters seemed to be jumping from one episode of the past to another without connecting them in a meaningful way. Then, how did these state-sanctioned narratives of the past communicate to the students the lessons that were outlined in the introduction to this chapter, which were supposed to form the students' perception of the Turkish past, Turkish present and of themselves as members of the Turkish nation?

From the steppes of Central Asia to Anatolia

One of these lessons were stated in a chapter called "the purpose of history," the opening chapter in four out of the five post-1954 textbooks that were studied for this dissertation. One textbook put forward that, "in pages of history," students would learn about how Turks, "the oldest nation in the world," had spread civilisation to all

corners of the world and appreciate the meaning behind Atatürk's maxim, "How happy is the one who says I am a Turk."[22] Another explained that the purpose of history was to teach "us about the past of our great Turkish nation" and its advances "along the path of civilisation."[23] This was the crux of the message history classes were to communicate to students in the 1950s[24] — that Turks were a great nation and that students themselves were responsible for enhancing this greatness. Throughout the course of the year and sifting through whichever textbook they were studying, students explored what made Turks so "great" and how they could contribute their nation's greatness. Although this message was originally put in place in the 1930s, it was still being taught in the 1950s.

Turks were "great" because they had founded modern civilisation; they had established the world's first civilisation in Central Asia and spread it virtually to every corner of the world as they migrated out of this region. It was the topic of the first chapter in every textbook, including Unat and Su's textbook. Thereafter, Unat and Su made a quick segue into the global history of the advances mankind had made during the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages,[25] before linking the conversation back to Turks, stating that Turks "had made progress in civilisation" throughout these periods. They had "built beautiful houses, conceived of innovative ways to make lands more fertile, and placed a premium on the development of fine arts,"[26] while the impression was that the rest of the world remained idle and led primitive lives. Unat and Su claimed that "local populations had a backward lifestyle…to which Central Asians would inject their own civilisations."[27] If Turks had ever lived in such a way, it was not discussed in textbooks; from the very beginning of time, Turks had always been more advanced to the rest of the population, students learned.

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[22] Himmet Akın ve M. Çağatay Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih* (İstanbul: İsmet Matbaası, 1957), p6.
[23] Emin Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV* (İstanbul: Atak Yayınevi, 1958),p8.
[24] Unat ve Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih IV. Sınıf,* p3. Unat and Su's textbook started with a chapter on "what is history" – to which the authors gave a rather bland, apathetic answer: history was a way of knowing when a particular event took place. Because the term "*tarih*" could mean both "history" and "date," this sentence read almost as if the authors conflated these two meanings, implying that history was a mere sequencing of dates. More useful are the opening chapters in four of the five post-1954 textbooks on "the purpose of history."
[25] Unat ve Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih IV. Sınıf,* p5.
[26] Ibid., p11.
[27] Ibid., pp13-14.

The textbooks that entered circulation after 1954 would convey the same message, but with a heightened, more passionate tone of nationalism, pompously positioning Turks at the core of world history. Even the titles were worded in a way to reflect this attitude: whereas Unat and Su's titles, such as "History and Chronology," "Turks' Homeland" or "Migrations," read rather straightforward and uninteresting, the titles that appeared in textbooks after 1954 demonstrated the Turk-centric focus of the narrative in a more excited way. They now read "Turks, Turkish Civilisation and Turks' Spread Around the World,"[28] and "Turks, Turkish Civilisation and How Turks Spread Around the World."[29] The titles of later chapters, too, would become imbued with nationalist bravado; for example, "Sumerians" were now identified as "Turks that settled in Mesopotamia" and "Hittites" as "Turks that settled in Anatolia."[30]

Just as Unat and Su's text, the post-1954 textbooks told students that Turks were progenitors of civilisation. Şölen and Arıç's text from 1954, for example, put forward that "we are justifiably proud of our Turkishness," before adding that "Turks created the first civilization; spread it everywhere; taught it to other nations; and became leaders of civilization."[31] When everyone else was wearing animal pelts and dwelled in caves, Turks had left behind such "uncivilised" modes of existence.[32] While "humans lived a wild life everywhere else," "our ancestors took important steps along the Path of Civilisation," establishing "great cities, towns and villages" and were engaged in farming, raising livestock and mining "valuable resources," students were told in Oktay's textbook,[33] and that while everyone in the world were ignorant of farming and mining, "our ancestors made houses out of wood and established villages…and led advanced lives," in Akın and Uluçay's.[34] As per İnal and Çalapala, archaeological excavations had revealed that Turks had at their disposal a variety of

[28] Ziya Şölen and Sabahattin Arıç, *Tarih IV* (İstanbul: Ders Kitapları Limited Şirketi, 1954), see the table of contents.
[29] Ali Ekrem İnal and Rakım Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4* (İstanbul: Atlas Yayınevi, 1958), see the table of contents.
[30] Emin Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV* (İstanbul: Atak Yayınevi, 1958), see the table of contents.
[31] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih IV*, p17. — Same sentiments are expressed almost verbatim in İnal and Çalapala, p14.
[32] Şölen and Arıç, p18.
[33] Oktay, pp22-23.
[34] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p18.

items for everyday and military-related use, such as swords, knives, forks, axes, needles, cauldrons, earrings and bracelets — which showcased how advanced Turks would have been at the time.[35]

Akın and Uluçay's text also included an interesting statement that deserves further attention. It told students that "our ancestors had arrived in our homeland, our Turkey, from out East. To the east of our homeland is Iran, and then Central Asia; this was our ancestors' homeland."[36] The text made no mention of the people who would have occupied Anatolia at the time, and conveyed the sense that Anatolia was empty of people, waiting for Turks' settlement. This phrasing also identified Anatolia as Turks' true homeland, which gave an early signal of the soil-based nationalism that would be promoted by the Menderes administration throughout the 1950s and would come through every other text in later chapters. This shifting of weight to Anatolia from Central Asia in history-writing indicated that not only would Turkish identity be tethered to the Turkish landmass, but this landmass would also be tethered to Turks — and that the geographical area in which Turks found themselves was being reimagined as an exclusively Turkish space.

The second chapter, which handled Turks' migration out of Central Asia, showed a similar pattern across the 1954 divide. All texts relayed a similar story. When drought ravaged the previously fertile lands of Central Asia, Turks needed to emigrate, and they fled in three directions: eastward to China, southward to India, and westward to Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Egypt, thus spreading civilisation everywhere, although some refined this last point on westward migration, claiming that a part of this group had arrived in the Near East (referring to modern-day Iran, Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Syria and Egypt), while others forged ahead all the way to Europe, more specifically "the Caucasus, northern Black Sea, the Balkans, Italy and other European states."[37] In line with the focus on Anatolia, Akın and Uluçay claimed that, out of these three waves of migrations, "the westward push into Mesopotamia,

[35] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p17.
[36] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p17.
[37] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih IV. Sınıf*, pp11-13. For examples from the post-1954 textbooks, see, for instance, Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, p23; Akın and Uluçay, p19; İnal and Çalapala, pp17-18; Niyazi Akşit and Osman Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1958), pp11-12.

Anatolia, as well as the Aegean and the Mediterranean regions" was "the most important."[38] This "proved" that Turks constantly populated Anatolia through history; "first the Hittites, then the Seljuks and then the Ottomans made it their homeland…and gifted this beautiful land to us."[39] Oktay's textbook conveyed a similarly nationalistic, Anatolia-centric message, underlining how those Turk that arrived in this geography had formed the largest group of migrants out of Central Asia, which effectively transformed Anatolia into a second homeland.[40] Some had chosen to stay behind and brace Central Asia's adverse conditions; according to İnal and Çalapala's account, they had also progressed, albeit at a slower pace than those in "our beloved Anatolia"[41] — which, once again, elevated Anatolia to a higher status.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding where they ended up, Turks "realised they were more advanced than the local populations."[42] Texts never unpacked this category of "local populations." The lands that Turks migrated to were populated by people who lived in such a primitive way that these lands might as well have been empty of any settlement. And in return, the civilisations that did spring up across these geographies, namely the Sumerians, the Hittites, the Western Hunnic Empire, the Central Hunnic Empire, the Göktürks and the Uyghurs were all Turkish, or were labelled as such, since there were no other groups of people in the world who were advanced enough to establish a civilisation apart from Turks.

All textbooks from this period described these civilisations in a similar way, which makes it possible to put together a comprehensive picture of how the DP imagined the nation, or conceived of its key tenets. First, a militarist vision dominated the texts. The Turkish past was depicted as a sequence of state formations, conquests and defeats, in which Turks featured as a nation of soldiers. It was the battles that carried the narrative forward, and the information on the development of society and institutions were handled under a separate heading, effectively unyoked from the main narrative and treated as a sidenote to the accounts of victories and heroisms that made up the main plotline. Added to this, each one of these civilisations tasked

[38] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p19.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, p32.
[41] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p18.
[42] Akın and Uluçay, pp18-19.

their populations with making sure national unity was maintained at all costs. In fact, every one of these ancient civilisations would fall as a result of disunity and internal chaos, which sounded a warning to Turkish students that a similar fate would await them if they let the bonds that held them together tear apart.

On top of this Turkish militarism and commitment to national unity, textbooks also created the impression that Turks had always formed what were at its heart monotheistic societies. Although the narrative did not omit the fact that these Turkish societies followed a polytheistic belief system, which involved the veneration of many deities, the discussion on religion would almost always be centred on how they worshipped one or two "main gods" in particular. This, of course, made no sense; it was a reading of an Islamic understanding of religion back into the past. Different textbooks raised these points differently; however, they were invoked with such consistency across the board that they made up a formula for Turkishness and Turkish civilisation, as conceived and imagined in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s.

Students first studied the Sumerians (c.4500-c.1900 BC). Sumerians were described as capable warriors that wielded spears, shields and bow-and-arrows in battles.[43] They placed a large premium on military service so that they would always be prepared to fight for their countries[44] and when the time came, Sumerians would "not hesitate to sacrifice their lives."[45] None of these resources mattered, however, when the Sumerian state became embroiled in in-fighting. This deflected the military's attention away from external threats and weakened their defences, making them vulnerable to attacks from their neighbours. As a result, the Sumerian state soon crumbled down. Sumerians had also invented writing, identified as the written form of the Turkish language that was spoken throughout Central Asia.[46] They had also laid the foundations of modern-day astronomy, mathematics, geometry and physics; were the first to fragment the year into months, weeks and days; and introduced measurements for length and weight.[47] Some of these statements were factually

[43] Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, p28.
[44] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p23. İnal and Çalapala's text was also in agreement with that of Oktay vis-a-vis the Sumerians' religious beliefs.
[45] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p22.
[46] Oktay, pp30-31.
[47] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p22; and İnal and Çalapala, p24.

incorrect. For example, Sumerian is not classified as a Turkic language; in fact, linguists have not been able to place it within a language family. However, Sumerians had indeed invented writing, which was a turning-point in world history — it was such a "great" development that it could only have been undertaken by an equally "great" civilisation, which, according to the Turkish national narrative, could not have been any other group of people than Turks.

Following Sumerians, students were then introduced to the Hittites (c.1650 BC-c.1190 BC). The only important distinction between Unat and Su's narrative and those that were produced after 1954 was that the latter called attention to the Hittites' "special status" as being the Turks who settled in Anatolia. Out of the Turks who migrated out of Central Asia, the largest number of them had come to Anatolia, which, according to this narrative, automatically transformed Anatolia into Turks' second homeland. Turks then became the first people to develop Anatolia, which — by their reasoning— meant that the history of Anatolia started with the Turks' arrival.[48]

The rest of the chapter went along similar lines across the 1954 divide. Once again, students were told that the Hittites lent a great deal of attention to their military, so much so that citizens were described as soldiers who were waiting to be called up for war. While discussing how "successful" a civilisation the Hittites had established, the textbooks only mentioned their victories on the battlefield, letting students know, for example, that the Hittites' robust armies allowed them to conquer much of Anatolia. Once again, the Hittites were said to have valued their love for their homeland above anything else. In fact, whoever committed a crime against the state would have to be inflicted with a penalty that was consistent with the severity of their transgression, which often meant their execution.[49] Only towards the end of the discussion was it mentioned that the Hittites had achieved "other successes, too," referring to their contributions to arts and architecture.

Huns (370 AD-469 AD) and Göktürks (552 AD-744 AD) were also described in similar ways, with an overwhelming amount of space devoted to military affairs and

[48] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, pp26-27. The text included a detail description of the "physical beauties" of Anatolia, claiming that "our Turkey" was fabled for its "many products" and "various riches." This was why it served as the cradle of every "great and ancient civilisation since time immemorial." It was "our duty to protect this gift from our ancestors."
[49] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p32; Akın and Uluçay, p29.

patriotism. The Huns were "very courageous and heroic people," whose children started military training at an early age, learning horseback-riding and artillery.[50] One text even posited that Central Asian Huns "lived a life grounded in military affairs," threw arrows "that made a whistling sound as they pierced through the sky," and were resilient against hunger, thirst and extreme temperatures.[51] According to one absurd legend, one of the legendary Hunnic leaders Oğuz Khan had refused his mother's milk after being breastfed once and asked for raw meat instead; having matured in forty days, "his feet were as robust as those of a bull, his waist as slender as that of a wolf, and his chest as hairy as that of a bear."[52] Another text asserted that the Chinese constructed the Great Wall of China to shield themselves from Turkish assaults.[53] However, even such a colossal edifice failed to keep "fiery" Turkish soldiers away, who were "trained to shoot at birds while galloping on horseback."[54] Huns were furthermore happy to sacrifice themselves for their homeland and freedom, especially because they could never tolerate living under someone else's control.[55]

Göktürks, too, were adept at horse-riding and wielding all sorts of weaponry.[56] One Göktürk legend told the story of a leader who, after supressing rebellions on behalf of a neighbouring empire, expressed his desire to marry the emperor's daughter. In response, the emperor turned him down, saying that he could never have a "slave" as a son-in-law.[57] At the face of such a response which was clearly unforgiveable to a Turk, the Göktürk leader destroyed the empire.[58] Students were reminded of a line from the Orkhon inscriptions, recorded in the early eighth century in Orkhon valley in modern-day Mongolia and relayed the legend of Turks' origins, that "unless the blue skies came crumbling down or the earth split open," nobody

[50] Akşit and Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf*, p58.
[51] Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, p81. — Same sentiments are expressed in another 1958 text, İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p63; also see, Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p63.
[52] Akşit and Eğilmez, p60.
[53] Ibid., p55. This would be repeated in almost every textbook. See, for instance, Akın and Uluçay, p64.
[54] Akşit and Eğilmez, p56.
[55] Akın and Uluçay, p63.
[56] Ibid., p69.
[57] Akşit and Eğilmez, p62.
[58] Ibid.

could ruin Turks.[59] The same legend also advised Turks to always stay together and united, adding that "as long as Turks did not let lose the grip on its unity," nobody could defeat them.[60]

Interestingly enough, the Uyghurs (744 AD-840 AD) were the only Turkish civilisation that was not renowned for their militarism. According to Unat and Su, they were nonetheless "quite progressive and advanced" and raised many scholars who went on to produce "invaluable works in the sciences and literature."[61] They had accepted Buddhism, but because they were "an open-minded and forward-thinking people," and some of them had converted to Islam or Christianity.[62] Their most important accomplishment the invention of the world's first printing press.[63] This was factually incorrect, however, as the world's first printing technology for paper books was invented in China during the Song dynasty (960 AD-1127 AD).

The textbooks after 1954 described the Uyghurs in almost the same way, albeit by invoking more heightened rhetoric. They called attention to how the Uyghurs had embraced "an advanced form of living"[64] and had established the "most advanced civilisation" among people who remained in Central Asia[65]; how their invention of the printing press[66] proved that Turks were "at least one step ahead in civilisation" than everyone else[67] and made Turks famous around the world for being the "masters of printing"[68]; how they left behind many sculptures, miniatures, and murals that showcased Turks' sophistication;[69] and how they were advanced in producing paper, embroidery and mining.[70] Differently than the 1950 text, some post-1954 textbooks did not mention that Uyghurs were Buddhist. Oktay stated that Uyghur Turks had converted to Buddhism under the influence of Indians, with whom they had lucrative

[59] Akşit and Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf*, p65.
[60] Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, p86. – Another 1958 text reinforced these same point, İnal ve Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p68.
[61] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih IV. Sınıf*, p87.
[62] Ibid., p88.
[63] Ibid., p87.
[64] Oktay, p87; Akşit and Eğilmez, p65; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p69.
[65] İnal and Çalapala, p70.
[66] Oktay, pp87-88.
[67] Akın and Uluçay, pp69-70.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Akşit and Eğilmez, pp65-66.
[70] Akın and Uluçay, p69.

trade relations, but that they later converted to Islam. Also, İnal and Çalapala identified Uyghurs as the first Turks to abandon their original faith.[71] Neither text mentioned that some Uyghurs had been Christians, as Unat and Su's text had done.

These narratives represented the image of an ideal Turkish society, as envisioned in the late 1940s and in the 1950s. Indeed, the textbooks described and introduced these civilisations in a such way that the norms and values they had subscribed to would not have seemed unrelatable to students. They learned that their "ancestors" were extremely proficient soldiers; had a self-effacing commitment to serving the interests of the nation; were responsible for inventions and discoveries that influenced the trajectory of human development; and although they were religious, religion did not dictate the rhythm of their daily lives and they continued to thrive in non-religious capacities. This was also how students were to live their lives.

The textbooks that DP released after 1954 introduced mostly minor changes, projecting a more excited, colourful tone in the narrative. The emphasis on this ancestry of "greatness" indicated the race-based nature of Turkish nationalism, which had persisted in Turkish nationalist discourse since the 1930s. One significant change that stamped the texts that were produced in the 1950s was the framing of Anatolia as the Turkish homeland, which introduced a soil-based dimension to the concept of being a Turk. Differently than the students of the late 1940s and the early 1950s, those who attended primary school after the DP released new textbooks in 1954 would have learned that Anatolia was an exclusively Turkish space, and correlatively, that any non-Turk in this geography was an interloper.

The messaging vis-à-vis being religious advised students that, as Turks, religious considerations should never inform their behaviours that had public consequences and that religion should always be a private matter. The "ideal" Turkish lifestyle was then going to be in the style of French secularism, which mandated freedom from religion within the public realm. Yet, Turks were not free to determine the kind of "religious person" they wanted to be in private. Although this would become clearer in sections that cover Turks' conversion to Islam and the civilisation they established following their conversion, even at this juncture, students were not

[71] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p71.

presented with examples of their ancestors (or purported ancestors) who were particularly pious in their personal lives, carefully observed the rituals of the faith they adhered to or even became a leading member of the clergy; the Muslimness of an "ideal" Turk was cultural and not faith-based.

The next topic was the ancient Greco-Roman civilisations. Unat and Su's characterisation of Greeks peeled away from the lustre of their contributions to world civilisation, intimating that Greeks had borrowed heavily from Turks. The authors claimed that a branch of the Central Asian tribe out of which the Hittites emerged had pushed on to Crete to establish the Minoan civilisation[72] — which, of course, was factually incorrect. They also wrote that those who had established the first civilisation in the Italian peninsula were Etruscans, who had migrated out of Anatolia.[73] The ancient Greek historian Herodotus had asserted that Etruscans immigrated from the kingdom of Lydia, around the modern-day province of Manisa in western Anatolia, but contemporary scholars of classical civilisations believe that Herodotus' account was flawed, as archaeologists could not find any evidence of an immigration of Lydians into Etruria, the Etruscans' homeland. Unat and Su also stated that Rome would eventually become fragmented into two empires, one of which was Byzantium that was centred in Istanbul, adding that Byzantium existed until 1453, when Istanbul was conquered by Turks.[74] There is also an element of inaccuracy here, as some Ottomans were Turks, but many were not, but this will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

By contrast, the post-1954 textbooks focused their narratives squarely on the assertion that the Greek and Roman civilisations had originated in Turkish soil; and that Greeks and Romans had borrowed and had been influenced so heavily by Turks that their civilisation could be considered Turkish at the core. Even the way the subheadings were worded —such as "How Did Turks Spread around the World?"[75] or "The Aegean Basin and Its Civilisations"[76]— reflected this reading of ancient Greeks and Romans. The texts examined for this study agreed that "Aegeans" ("*Egeliler*"),

[72] Unat ve Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih IV. Sınıf*, p28.
[73] Ibid., p64.
[74] Ibid., p68.
[75] For example, Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, see the table of contents; or İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, see the table of contents.
[76] Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, see the table of contents.

who had belonged to the Central Asian tribe that had arrived in Anatolia, had forged ahead to Crete from Anatolia, where they founded "an advanced civilisation."[77] After they had left Crete, they returned to the western shores of Anatolia, where they established the Ionian civilisation.[78] Thereafter, they spread into mainland Greece and the Aegean islands, laying the foundations of what blossomed into the ancient Greek civilisation.[79] Akın and Uluçay wrote that the reason why Athens could become the leading Greek city-state was because it had been modelled after the Ionian civilisation, linking Athens' supremacy in the ancient world to its alleged Turkish roots.[80] Also, the texts claimed that the Greek civilisation was a hodgepodge of elements, borrowed from different civilisations: their alphabet was designed after that of the Phoenicians in Syria; their religion was inspired by that of the Aegeans; and they imitated the works of Anatolian artists.[81] In other words, there was nothing "Greek" about anything Greeks left behind; if it was going to be labelled as anything, it was more accurate to label it as Turkish. "In short," one text added, "the Greek civilisation essentially emerged out of the Ionians, and hence Anatolia"[82] — and hence the Turks.

The Roman-Turkish link was more subtle. Oktay's text, for instance, did not even suggest any particular connection between the Turks and the Roman Empire, nor did it imply that Turks influenced the rise of Rome.[83] Other texts stated that many tribes had settled in the Italian peninsula, one of which was the Etruscans that had migrated over from western Anatolia, implying that Turks had played a role in the development of this civilisation, too, but without making any claims about Turkish influence on Roman society and culture.[84] The only bit that displayed the same heightened tone of nationalism was the discussion on the collapse of Byzantium; in

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[77] Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, pp40-41; Akşit and Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf*, p31; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p35; and İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, pp34-35.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Akın and Uluçay, p43.
[81] İnal and Çalapala, p43.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Oktay, p58. Oktay wrote that several groups of people had influenced the development of Roman civilisation: "Italics," who descended on Italy from mainland Europe; "Etruscans," who arrived on the western shores of Italy via sea journeys; followed by the Phoenicians and the Greeks, who settled in the island of Sicily.
[84] See, Akşit and Eğilmez, p41; Akın and Uluçay, p47; and İnal ve Çalapala, p46-47.

stark difference to Unat and Su's factual, yet "unexcited" statement on the topic, students were told that the collapse of Byzantium had "finally" been possible in 1453, "thanks to the great Turkish Sultan Fatih."[85]

It is interesting that the authors were happy to claim Turkish influence over the ancient Greek civilisation, but not over the Byzantine Empire. The reason was each civilisation's connection to Anatolia. The textbooks stated that the Greeks had descended from the Turkish tribes that had migrated out of Central Asia, so they had originated in Anatolia, were influenced by Turks while they were in Anatolia, but had eventually left for mainland Greece, brushing over the fact that there still would have been Greeks remaining in this geography. So, it was possible to craft a narrative around ancient Greeks that ignored their connection to Anatolia. It would have been impossible to craft a similar narrative around the Byzantines, however, as Byzantium had its very centre in Constantinople. This would have been why they were brushed out of the narrative, with students only learning about when they ceased to litter what was fundamentally Turkish lands.

The presentation of the Greco-Roman civilisations once again showed how the post-1954 texts re-imagined Anatolia as strictly and exclusively Turkish land, whose history had either been shaped by Turks or through Turkish influence. Correlatively, this also meant that no other nations or groups of people could possibly have a viable claim on Anatolia as theirs; those who were not Turkish were simply foreigners and could not belong to this Turkish space — which, once again, would produce serious repercussions for Turkey's ethnic and religious minorities in the 1950s.

Turks' conversion to Islam

The second part of Grade 4 history textbooks was on Islamic history. Although not every textbook organised their chapters in the same manner, the information this part as a whole covered can be organised into three main headings: the birth of Islam, the Prophet and Turks' conversion to Islam; the Umayyad (*Emeviler*) and the Abbasid (*Abbasiler*) caliphates. This would have marked the first-time students would have

[85] Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, p65; Akşit and Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf*, p48; İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p52.

been exposed to religious or Islamic material within a school setting — which renders its content even more important in terms of understanding the government-sanctioned interpretation of religion, and how students were "instructed" to think of being Muslim and Turks' historical relationship with Muslimness.

The profile of the Prophet set a telling example. In every text, the Prophet emerged as a powerful symbol of laicism. Unat and Su depicted him as a man who wore clean, white clothes, with a small turban; had an unassuming beard and always groomed himself well; and allowed only a modest dose of ritual into his life.[86] The post-1954 authors furthermore described him as polite, gentle, honest and as someone who cared for the poor and the elderly[87]; as well as patient, goal-oriented, contemplating and industrious, with most of his attention taken up by military matters and the maintenance of peace.[88] Although his wife descended from a wealthy family, the Prophet did not care about money, as he was concerned about the development of mankind.[89] Texts also connected the Prophet's success in life to his willingness to change and adapt, instead of remaining stuck in one mindset. To the chapter was appended a list of alleged statements by the Prophet, which told students that "patriotism is next to Godliness"; that "those who do not respect others do not get respected themselves"; "those who earn their living, God loves them the most;" and "those with strong ethics are God's beloved."[90]

The Prophet's portrayal would have been reminiscent of Atatürk's portrayal in the life-knowledge classes students would have taken in the first three years of their education. Not only did the texts construct a seamless congruence between the appearance of the two leaders, but the Prophet's rhetoric as well as the values he preached also dovetailed with those of Atatürk — which, again, students would have read and even memorised in life-knowledge classes. Furthermore, students would have already learned in the earlier lessons of their history classes that their ancient

[86] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih IV. Sınıf*, p92.
[87] Akşit and Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf*, p73; Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, p92; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p73.
[88] Akşit and Eğilmez, p73; Akın and Uluçay, p75.
[89] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p75; Akşit and Eğilmez, p71.
[90] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih IV*, p76; See a similar list of advice in İnal and Çalapala, p77.

ancestors had observed the same set of practices and subscribed to the same set of values that, as they now were finding out, that Muslims observed and subscribed to.

This set up an interesting dynamic between the Turks that populated the ancient civilisations, Muslims and the contemporary Turks of the Republic. Even before their conversion to Islam, Turks had already been living like Muslims; correlatively, it also implied that those who converted to Islam also started subscribing to a lifestyle that was inherently Turkish. In this sense, the terms "Turk" and "Muslim" became almost interchangeable, imbuing the former —an ethnic designation— with a sense of holiness, and emptying the latter —a religious affiliation— of much of its religious content.[91] In return, this set-up also transferred what were deemed exemplary Republican virtues on to the Prophet and the Islamic moral-code, thereby "teaching" students that the Republican ideals and practices were in line with those of Islam. Accordingly, listening to Atatürk was tantamount to carrying out the wishes of the Prophet and forming an Islamic society, which was fundamentally analogous to a Turkish society anyways.

A similar logic underpinned the portrayal of the Medina community, the first community to be governed according to Islamic principles. First, the people of Medina were heroized for extending shelter to Mohammed, as he was running away from his hometown of Mecca, where the locals had been inimical to his message.[92] Despite being militarily weaker, they still had the courage to protect the Prophet, thereby serving as the primary vehicle in the preservation and spread of the faith. More importantly, Medina was where the four caliphs —Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali— reigned for thirty years after Mohammed's death, which is referred to as "the period of the four caliphs" (632 AD-661 AD). Textbooks in the 1950s framed this period as a "Golden Age, when Islam spread peacefully as "good, clear and easily comprehensible religion" across Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Iran and Egypt.[93] These caliphs were also elected

[91] See, for example, Baer, "The Double Bind of Race and Religion," also cited in the introduction.
[92] See Akşit and Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf*, p73; Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, p92; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p74; İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p76.
[93] Akşit and Eğilmez, pp67-68; İnal and Çalapala, pp78-80.

as heads of state and not appointed as successors, which meant that Medina was administratively "a form of republic."[94]

If the first state that had been governed according to the dictates of Islam was a republic, then a republic as a form of government was compatible with Islam. This assigned positive religious credentials to the Republican venture, affirming that the changes that had been introduced since 1923 had reorganised the Turkish state and society into a format that embraced the original message of Islam. In the meantime, this meant that any action or practice that contradicted the Republic's agenda could automatically be assumed to represent a perverted interpretation of the faith. One could also argue that there was nothing particularly Islamic about this discussion, and that while Islam was being folded into the Republican narrative, it also became re-imagined as a non-religious concept that asked its community of believers to practice magnanimity, simplicity, honesty, and justice (just as the Prophet had done) as well as to defend those in need of protection and appreciate the benefits of living in a republic (just as the Medina community had done).

Vis-à-vis the Umayyad (661 AD-750 AD) and Abbasid (750 AD-1517 AD) caliphates, texts followed a similar approach. Although these were Islamic polities, textbooks downplayed their statuses as Islamic states, focussing on their non-religious aspects. According to Unat and Su, Umayyads had attacked "Western Turkish provinces," which roughly were established in modern-day Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.[95] The Turks who lived in these provinces were "shrewd, valiant, robust and agile, and were as advanced in military matters as they were in civilisation."[96] Their only flaw was that they could not get along with each other, as a consequence of which they were defeated by the Umayyads. Yet, Unat and Su jumped around this conclusion, stressing how these Turks were "devoted to their independence and put up a heroic defence of their beautiful cities."[97] "Unable to

[94] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih IV*, p72; Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, p95; İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p78; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p75.
[95] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih IV. Sınıf*, p98.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.

stomach being enslaved," they used "the smallest opportunity to revolt"[98] and being "so committed" to their honour, they eventually marched against the Umayyads.[99]

After 1954, students learned that the Umayyads followed an expansionist agenda and were bent on destroying every community that stood in their way. In this sense, Turks had become the biggest obstacle to the Umayyad's territorial ambitions in Central Asia, as they were more courageous, more advanced in civilisation, and "loved living freely and independently."[100] The motive behind the Umayyads' assault on the Turkish provinces was therefore "not to convert Turks to Islam, but to exploit their riches."[101] The Umayyads furthermore had committed "all sorts of evil acts" against Turks, killing those who could wield a weapon as a measure of precaution and set every Turkish city ablaze.[102] Turks staged an uprising upon every opportunity and were fighting so relentlessly that only after "extremely violent clashes and long periods of siege" could the Umayyads enter Turkish cities.[103] Once again, Turks could not fight back as effectively as they should have, because they were disorganised and lacked unity.[104] Unable to tolerate the maltreatment under the Umayyads, a Turkish "hero" named Ebu Muslim finally led a rebellion against the Umayyads and defeated their empire.[105] In fact, Ebu Muslim (or Abu Muslim) was a Persian general, but it would go against the grain of the Turkish national narrative to have Turks as soldiers in an army that was commanded by a non-Turk. If there was an act of courage that Turks were involved in, they needed to be the dominant figures in it. Akşit and Eğilmez also stated that, although Arabs ultimately realised that they should co-exist with Turks, "it was too late; Turks never forgave what Arabs had done to them."[106]

The portrayal of the Abbasid dynasty was more positive. Unat and Su wrote that the Abbasids "had learned from the Umayyads' mistakes and used Turks to their

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[98] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih IV. Sınıf*, p99.
[99] Ibid., p100.
[100] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p81.
[101] Akşit and Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf*, p78.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, p98; Akşit and Eğilmez, p78; İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p82.
[105] Oktay, p98; Akşit and Eğilmez, p79; Akın and Uluçay, p77; İnal and Çalapala, p82.
[106] Akşit and Eğilmez, p78.

own benefit."[107] Once again, benefitting from Turks meant employing them in statecraft and military-related matters. The Abbasid army was defined as "a Turkish army led by Turkish commanders,"[108] and it was because of Turkish leadership that the Abbasids could survive for 500 years, the authors added.[109] In fact, Turks were slaves of the Abbasid caliphate, which of course was not mentioned.

The narrative persisted after 1954. According to Akın and Uluçay's text, for example, the Abbasids had appointed Turks to "every important position,"[110] such as commanders and senior advisors,[111] with Turks basically "taking care of every business of state."[112] Their standing army was even composed exclusively of Turks,[113] students learned, when Turks had actually been deployed in the army as slaves; and into the frontier-provinces in southeast Anatolia the Abbasids settled only Turkish families, suggesting that only Turks would have been strong enough to defend the caliphate against invaders.[114]

That the Umayyads were identified as enemies of Turks and Abbasids were "saved" from the wrath of Republican messaging had nothing to do with these caliphates' renderings of Islam and Islamic practice. Rather, it was linked to how they treated the Turks: under the Umayyads, the Turks had received unfair treatment, while the Abbasids understood the benefits of installing Turks at helm of the state or deploying them the frontline of the military, where Turks would always stand out.

This was also the reason why Turks converted to Islam under the Abbasids. On this point, all texts agreed. The Abbasids had treated Turks with "the respect they deserved" and put them in charge of the military and the state, Unat and Su wrote, which facilitated the Turks' acceptance of Islam.[115] Since Turks "could only live freely,"[116] they were reluctant to convert to Islam as long as they lived under the

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[107] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih IV. Sınıf*, pp104-105.
[108] Ibid., p105.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Akşit and Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf*, p80; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p79.
[111] Akın and Uluçay, p77.
[112] Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, p99; İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p85.
[113] Akın and Uluçay, p79; İnal and Çalapala, p85.
[114] Oktay, p99; Akşit and Eğilmez, p80; İnal and Çalapala, p85.
[115] Unat and Su, p106.
[116] Akın and Uluçay, p81.

unjust regime of the Umayyads.[117] By contrast, the Abbasids understood that Turks would not convert perforce, so they treated them well and elevated them to important positions,[118] demonstrating that Islam "suited their lifestyles."[119] Of course, none of this was accurate: since these Turks were the slaves of the Abbasids, they were forced to convert to the religion of their masters.

Absent from these texts was the sense that the world entered a new phase with the Turks' conversion to Islam or their conversion had marked a turning-point within the trajectory of Turks' historical development. In fact, Turks' conversion faded in significance vis-à-vis the fact that Abbasids appreciated their competence as soldiers. In this sense, Turks' identity as statesmen and soldiers —as professionals serving in secular capacities— mattered more than their identity as Muslims. Islam also dictated a way of life almost identical to the one Turks had lived pre-conversion, so no major change had taken place in this regard.

However, Turks' conversion had made an impact on Islam, as Turks continued to spread the faith around the world.[120] Without Turks, "the Byzantines and the crusaders would have destroyed the Abbasids and driven Muslims into deserts."[121] It was the Turks "who protected Islam and contributed to the development of Islamic civilisation."[122] After the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate, students learned that Turks spread Islam to China where they convinced the Timurid Empire (1326 AD-1526 AD) to convert to Islam; and to India, where they established the Mughal Empire (1526 AD-1857 AD), an Islamic empire.[123] Turks had therefore "provided an invaluable service to the faith"[124] and, as a result, had enhanced Islam's honour, dignity and strength.[125]

The earlier sections had already established the similarities between Turkish and Islamic cultures; now, they were also claiming that Turks had provided a distinguished service to Islam, saving Islam from extinction and carrying it to all sorts

[117] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p89.
[118] Akşit and Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf*, p82; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p81.
[119] İnal and Çalapala, p89.
[120] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih IV. Sınıf*, p106.
[121] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih IV*, p74.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid., pp89-90.
[124] Ibid., p90.
[125] Akşit and Eğilmez, p82; Akın and Uluçay, p81; İnal and Çalapala, p90.

of glory. And Turks could provide such a service to Islam because Turks were distinguished soldiers and statesmen from birth. This implied that Turks could become "better" Muslims than every other Muslim could propel themselves to the leadership of the Islamic realm owing to their Turkishness.

This attitude came most starkly to the fore vis-à-vis pre-Islamic Arabs, who were profiled as Turks' binary opposites. In sheer contrast to Turks, who had been "civilised" since practically time immemorial, these Arabs lived in abject primitiveness; they also lacked national unity, constantly fought with each other, and worshipped all sorts of totems and idols.[126] After 1954, Arabs' portrayal became more and more damning. The textbooks now described pre-Islamic Arabs' lifestyle as "quite awful," adding that they lived either in tents or huts made of palm branches,[127] lacked sanitation, constantly fought with each other, had blood feuds, and even buried girls alive; simply put, they were "backward in civilisation."[128] Also, these "totem-worshipping Arabs," were afraid of Islam's spread, because it would bring about their financial decline: before their conversion to Islam, Arabs would set up markets to take advantage of the tourist traffic to Kaaba, which had been a holy site even before the spread of Islam into the Arabian peninsula, and sell their produce. The spread of Islam was going to bring this tourist traffic to a halt, they feared.[129] Arabs did not hold Islam at high regard at first, another text asserted, because Islam did not allow them to discriminate between the rich and the poor, which went against their value judgements, the texts also put forward. [130]

This was another product of Kemalist history-writing that reacted to every aspect of Arabic culture as a burden that Turkey had finally overthrown with the proclamation of the Republic. For example, even though early Muslims and Muslim civilisations were ethnically Arab, the textbooks did not comment on Arabs following their conversion to Islam. Students never learned about Damascus and Baghdad, which were major cultural centres. More broadly, the material would never acknowledge the influence of Arabic culture on Turkish culture. In fact, after these

[126] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih IV. Sınıf*, p92.
[127] Akşit and Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf*, p71.
[128] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p73; İnal ve Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p74.
[129] Akın and Uluçay, p73; Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih IV*, p69.
[130] İnal and Çalapala, p76.

chapters on the Prophet, the Umayyads, and the Abbasids, Arabs would be brushed out of history until they "re-appeared" with the onset of the "Italian-Turkish war" of 1911-12 in Tripoli. However, this would have only received a mention, because it had also marked Atatürk's entry on to the historical stage; the wars in Algeria and Tunisia, for example, would be completely glossed over.

Another important aspect of this presentation on Islamic history was that the key tenets of the faith were introduced as if the readership had no prior knowledge about Islam. For instance, there were such sentences as "the religion that Mohammed spread after becoming the Prophet is called Islam"[131]; "the believers are Muslims"[132]; and "according to the Quran, which is the Islamic scripture."[133] They even explained that those who were deemed "good" went to heaven, and those deemed "bad" went to hell; and listed the five pillars of Islam: declaring belief in the oneness of Allah, praying, fasting, alms-giving and going on the holy pilgrimage.[134] The only major difference between Unat and Su's text and those that were published after 1954 was that the latter invoked the term "*hazreti"* or "his excellency" before Mohammed's name, whereas the former referred to him merely as the Prophet. Also, instead of "*Tanrı*" or "God," the post-1954 texts used the term "Allah."

Using Allah instead of "Tanrı" was an important change because it showed that the DP had allowed Islamic lexicon to creep into official parlance. "Tanrı" is a more inclusive term, since it refers to God, but it could be invoked within the context of any religion, while Allah is the Arabic word for God and is a Muslim term. Such language in official texts would therefore have alienated non-Muslims, who would have felt an acute sense of disconnect between their own realities and the realities of Turks that were presented in these texts.

It is important to note the kind of Muslimness that was being empowered and promoted by these narratives on various Islamic communities and individuals, including the depiction of the Prophet. They featured elements of both "Islam as culture" and "Islam as faith." The Prophet set an example of honesty, magnanimity,

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[131] Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, p92.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih IV. Sınıf*, p93; Akşit and Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf*, p72; Oktay, p92; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p75.
[134] Akşit ve Eğilmez, p73; Akın and Uluçay, pp72-75; İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p76.

respect and cleanliness, which were among the cultural traits that Turks were supposed to have in their arsenal. By contrast, the portrayal of the Medina community included some faith-based aspects of Islam. Students found out that, through the efforts of Muslims of Medina, "Islam as religion" had spread across a vast geography, and that these societies, which accepted Islam, were ruled in accordance with Islamic principles; the textbooks did not state anything about whether or not they demonstrated the above-mentioned cultural traits. Furthermore, the Quran, the Hajj, and the five pillars of Islam, which students now learned about in history classes, were strictly faith-based concepts.

Then, a more faith-based —or put differently, a more traditionally religious— understanding of religion was creeping into the definition of being a Turk throughout the late 1940s and the 1950s, while a more cultural understanding of Islam that had entered the national narrative in the 1930s still persisted. Yet, it is important to note that this was not a narrative that was being Islamised. The authors discussed Turks' service to the faith always in connection to the qualities that had made Turks the progenitors of civilisation since time immemorial. Turks' Turkishness, and not their particularly robust commitment to the faith, was the reason why they had been able to achieve so much "greatness" throughout history, and it was also the reason why they could rule the Muslim world. Turks' entry into the Islamic realm had opened up another arena in which Turks' superiority as Turks vis-à-vis the rest could be proven.

The Battle of Manzikert (*Malazgirt*) (1071AD)

The remainder of the topics to be covered at the fourth-grade level was lumped under a larger heading called "The Spread of Islam among Central Asian Turks and the Role of Turks in Spreading Islam."[135] The centrepiece of this third and last part was the Battle of Malazgirt (1071). According to Su and Unat, the battle was instigated by the Byzantines, who were alarmed by the Turks' conquest of northern Syria and south-eastern Anatolia under Sultan Alparslan of the Great Seljuk Empire. The emperor Romanos Diogenes interpreted this westward march as a harbinger that the

[135] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, see the table of contents; the same heading was used in İnal and Çalapala and Oktay's textbooks, see their tables of contents.

entire Anatolian region might soon slip under Turkish domination.[136] To ward off this "great threat," Diogenes confronted Alparslan's forces with a "strong army" near the town of Malazgirt in eastern Anatolia.[137] The "quite bloody" battle ended with the "unforgettable victory" of the Turkish armies and the capture of Diogenes. Sultan Alparslan, "a magnanimous leader as much as a valiant soldier," respected the emperor so much that he allowed him to march back home, however,[138] just like Atatürk had captured but then subsequently released the commander of the Greek forces Nikolaos Trikupis in 1922.

There were several changes to this account of the battle with the release of new textbooks after 1954. First, the narrative now included more vivid, even dramatic details that intensified the overall messaging. Not only had the Byzantines been gripped by "an overwhelming sensation of fear" by the Turkish invasion of eastern Anatolia, they were also struggling to stop these invasions[139] and were finally jolted into action when they "realised" that Anatolia would soon slip out of their control.[140] Against at least 200,000 Byzantines, another textbook posited, the Turks had a force of about 50,000 men.[141] Alparslan pre-emptively made a peace offering, which the Byzantine Emperor Diogenes "swiftly" rejected.[142] In what proved to be a "very bloody" battle, "the enemy was completely destroyed," one textbook asserted, adding in bold letters that Turks once again emerged victorious out of a battle with a "much, much" stronger enemy.[143] Students were also told that Alparslan greeted his "unfortunate enemy" with a smile and "consoled him with pleasant words."[144] In return, Diogenes "had kneeled before the greatness of Alparslan"[145] and "shed tears of joy and gratitude" to "the agile and magnanimous Turkish leader."[146]

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[136] Unat ve Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih IV*, pp123-124.
[137] Ibid., p124.
[138] Ibid., p124.
[139] Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, pp102-3.
[140] Oktay, p102; Akşit and Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf*, p88; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p85.
[141] Oktay, p103; Akın and Uluçay, p86; İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p95.
[142] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih IV*, p80; Akşit and Eğilmez, p88; İnal and Çalapala, p95.
[143] Şölen and Arıç, p80; Akşit and Eğilmez, p88; İnal and Çalapala, p95.
[144] İnal and Çalapala, p95.
[145] Akın and Uluçay, p86.
[146] İnal and Çalapala, p95; also, see Oktay, p103; Akşit and Eğilmez, p88.

Second, some post-1954 textbooks discussed the battle in more religiously-charged terms. In these renditions, Diogenes was quoted as having responded to the peace offering by claiming that "he would destroy all Muslims and Turkish states," as a result of which Alparslan had decided to confront him.[147] Furthermore, the battle was now reported to have started on a Friday afternoon, after Alparslan had observed the congregational prayer with his armies, one of the most exalted rituals in the Islamic calendar; he was dressed in white, creating the impression that he was cut from the same cloth as the Prophet; and before the start of the battle, delivered "a roaring sermon" and weaved his horse's tail, which traditionally signified in Islamic literature that the character was ready for death.[148] Alparslan only had two choices before him, one textbook put forward: "to win or to become a martyr (*şehit*)."[149]

Once again, the appearance of such religious rhetoric did not mean that a more Islamic worldview shaped Turkish history-writing after 1954, as the narrative was still set within a framework that exalted Alparslan's Turkishness while also accommodating religious terminology. Turks's Muslimness might now be more in the forefront, but textbooks continued to label everything they achieved as a *Turkish* achievement, and not an achievement that was for the greater good of the Muslim community. As above examples indicated, texts constantly emphasized that Alparslan was a *Turkish* leader and that the army that defeated the Byzantines was a *Turkish* army. One text introduced Alparslan as "one of the famous Turkish heroes" who tried to "relieve Anatolia" from the Byzantine rule.[150] Another posited that the Turkish factions within the Byzantine army —which another textbook would identify as *Uzlar* and *Peçenekler* (both semi-nomadic Turkic people living in Central Asia)— accounted for much of its strength; when the battle started, they realised they were fighting against Turks, switched over to the Turkish side and helped destroy the Byzantine army.[151] In another example of how the messaging emphasised the Turkishness of the

[147] Akşit and Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf*, p81.
[148] Akşit and Eğilmez, p88; İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p94.
[149] İnal and Çalapala, p95.
[150] Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, p103; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p85.
[151] Akşit and Eğilmez, p88; Akın and Uluçay, pp85-86.

episode, Alparslan's release of Diogenes was hailed as a symbol of "Turkish humanity" — which was "as much a source of Turkish strength as courage and agility."[152]

Appended to this chapter in one textbook was an excerpt from the *First Great Turkish Dictionary* written in 1074 by a Seljuk-Turk named Kaşgarlı Mahmut. "In those days," the text read, "everyone was dying to learn Turkish." The dictionary defined "Turk" as "the soldier of God whom God employs to maintain peace in the world," and added that "we could not take enough pride in being a child of such a great and honourable nation."[153] Interestingly enough, Akın and Uluçay used the phrase "*Tanrı askeri*" instead of "*Allah'ın askeri*," although they had previously invoked *Allah* instead of *Tanrı.* The inconsistency makes one wonder whether the use of *Tanrı* here was an oversight. Another reading passage told students about how Alparslan's father had told him and his brothers that, "if they chose to act alone, they could easily be broken, like a single arrow"; but "if they liked each other and helped each other, they would remain robust and strong like an unbreakable bundle of arrows."[154] In return, the authors advised students not to lose sight of national unity, so that they could do justice to the maxim, "strong like a Turk".[155] So, the *Malazgirt* narrative emphasised the two key tenets of Turkish strength: soldierliness and national unity.

Vis-à-vis the conclusions of *Malazgirt*, all texts, including that by Unat and Su, agreed to a certain extent. One difference in between was that Unat and Su put forward, "in a few weeks, Turkish forces appeared around the Sea of Marmara, cementing Turkish control over Anatolia for the first time since the Hittites.[156] This implied that there had been a period in the history of Anatolia when Turks were physically absent, which likely referred to the Greco-Roman period after the so-called "Aegeans" left for Crete and then came back as Ionians, at which point they were not labelled as Turks anymore. In this sense, the Battle of Malazgirt marked their physical return to their homeland.[157] Of course, this was a distortion of historical facts, as it

[152] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p86.
[153] Ibid., pp88-89.
[154] Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, p105.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih IV*, p92.
[157] Carole Hillenbrand, *Turkish Myth and Muslim Symbol: The Battle of Manzikert* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p6. Hillenbrand also makes an interesting point: Malazgirt is now celebrated in Turkish nationalist discourse as the opening of Anatolia as a homeland to

glossed over the fact that Turkish tribes had been infiltrating the Anatolian countryside for at least a few decades before the final showdown.

Instead of calling it a "return," the post-1954 accounts of Malazgirt put a different spin on the narrative. They framed the Turks' repopulation of Anatolia as the beginning of the history of Turkey (*Türkiye Tarihi*) and built up Malazgirt and its aftermath as a symbol for the birth of the Turkish nation on Turkish soil. They argued that this victory "had opened the gates" of Anatolia,[158] where Turks established a new homeland and they laid the foundations of the State of Turkey (*Türkiye Devleti*) that "has persisted up to today."[159] Instead of marking Turks' return to their homeland, *Malazgirt* had marked the beginning of an interrupted history of Turkey within this geography, which would continue under the Anatolian Seljuk Empire, through the Ottoman years and finally with the Republic of Turkey.[160] This was a strong indication of the soil-based dimension that Turkish nationalism would acquire in the 1950s.

Another consequence of *Malazgirt* was the Turks' recognition by the Western world, which, the texts put forward, had triggered the Crusades. The Crusades received attention in every textbook in this period, with significant differences in emphasis. According to Unat and Su, there were three motives behind the Crusades. First, the crusaders were deeply religious people, who were animated by their desire to recapture the Christian holy-lands.[161] Within the crusading armies were also those who wanted to exploit the riches of the Muslim world. Another motive was to stop the Seljuk Empire's expansion in the direction of Byzantium and thereby the Turks' relentless march towards Europe.[162]

Turks. It has even become somewhat of a cliché in popular parlance, which is a testament to how long this framing of Malazgirt has been a part and parcel of the state-sponsored narrative of Turkish history. It was, however, absent from the original narrative formulated by the *Thesis* in the 1930s and the early 1940s. Since this interpretation had asserted that Turks had dominated Anatolia uninterruptedly since practically time immemorial, within the context of arguing that there had been a Turkish presence in Asia Minor for millennia, it would not have made sense to assign prominence to an event that was supposed to mark Turks' arrival. See, Ibid., p202.

[158] Akşit and Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf*, p89; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p87.

[159] Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, p103 and p106; İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p95.

[160] Akşit and Eğilmez, p89; Akın and Uluçay, p87; İnal and Çalapala, p95 and p98.

[161] Unat and Su, *Tarih V. Sınıf* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1952), pp17-18.

[162] Ibid.

A more dramatic tone pervaded the post-1954 narrative. The texts acknowledged that the Crusades might have been billed to Europe's Christians —who "were filled with loathing against Muslims"[163]— as a chance to wrest back control over the Christian holy-lands[164] or as an opportunity take over the trade routes across the Near East.[165] Yet, in reality, the Crusades symbolised a Christian world that was frightened by Turks' encroachment into what were Christian lands,[166] implying that they were organised against Turks and not the Muslim world. Once again, this was not factually correct, since the principal targets of the Crusades were Arabs and Saladin (1137 AD-1193 AD), a Kurdish Sunni-Muslim, who reigned as the first sultan of Egypt and Syria since they controlled the holy-lands.

The fighting had also been in the service of Islam, of course, but once again, it was the Turks' effort and agency in this regard that deserved attention. "Throughout the six crusades that spanned 174 years, it was the Turks who "spilled their blood" to protect Islam, one text wrote, without any mention of the Arabs' and Kurds' contributions to the war effort.[167] Another put forward that the Crusaders needed to search for another way into Jerusalem, because Turks had "fought like lions and spilled their blood for every inch of their homeland." Had Turks not settled in Anatolia and stood in their way "like an impenetrable mountain," Islam might have remained confined to the Arabian Peninsula; yet "the unwavering faith of our ancestors served as a mighty shield for Islam, which knocked out anyone who came in its way."[168] This framing of the Crusades ignored the fact that the Crusaders had indeed been successful in occupying Jerusalem for two centuries after the end of the First Crusade (1099 AD-1291 AD). A reading excerpt in a textbook from 1957 painted an even more dramatic picture. It claimed that the Seljuks did not have shields; "their love of God and their people shielded them instead. They roared on with the spirit of heroism and sacrifice in the name of their people. With every assault, the name of God echoed

[163] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p92.
[164] Akşit and Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf*, p90; also, see Oktay, *Yeni Tarih Dersleri IV*, p117.
[165] See, for instance, İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p102.
[166] Ibid., p84.
[167] Akın and Uluçay, p94.
[168] Ibid.

across the skies and instilled fear in the hearts of knights. Against Europe, only one strength, Turkish strength, protected Islam."[169]

Safeguarding the Muslim world might have been on the mind of the leader of the Anatolian Seljuk Empire, Kılıç Aslan, as he galloped towards the crusading armies, but the real reason why he had fought "a Christian army that was at least ten-to fifteen-times larger than his own" was because he wanted to make sure that Anatolia remained in Turkish hands.[170] The texts even added that Kılıç Aslan was recognised as "one of the greatest heroes of our Turkish nation" without mentioning how he might have been remembered across the Muslim world.[171] This does sound like an anachronistic assessment, imposing the concept of nationalism on a pre-nationalist era, but it reinforced one of the main lessons that the textbooks were to communicate: Anatolia belonged to Turks and it was going to remain in Turkish hands, underlining once again the soil-based dimension of the 1950s format of Turkish nationalism. More strikingly, the textbooks even defined this showdown as the Turks' "first independence struggle" which demonstrated Anatolia's inviolability,[172] even arguing that it was "this fire [that had driven the crusaders out of Turkish lands] that would drive Osman Bey and Atatürk to action and make the enemy kneel."[173] Hidden behind the textual façade of Islam, the original message of Turkish greatness as *Turks* (and not Muslims) remained intact — and that all "great" Turks through history strived to create an independent state in Anatolia for Turks, who were also Muslims.

Conclusion

By the end of their studies in Turkish history in Grade 4, students would have learned that Turks were a "great" nation, who were progenitors of civilisation and had spread it around the world, resulting in the establishment of virtually every "great" civilisation that the world had ever seen. If Turks had not directly founded a civilisation, then they influenced its development in a critical way. Turks' "greatness" rested on three pillars: their matchless performances on the battlefield; their ability to

[169] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul IV İçin Tarih*, p104.
[170] Ibid., p87.
[171] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 4*, p104.
[172] Akın and Uluçay, p105; and Akşit and Eğilmez, *Tarih İlkokul 4. Sınıf*, p93.
[173] Akın and Uluçay, p105.

remain united at times of crises; and the fact that they never let religion and religious beliefs influence the way they conducted their worldly affairs. The lessons on the history of Islam, Turks' interaction with contemporary Islamic states before their own conversion to Islam, and the history of Turkish civilisations that were founded post conversion nuanced the messaging on religion further. Turks had become the leaders of the Muslim world, just as they had been the leaders of every other civilisation the world had ever seen. And it was their innate qualities of soldierliness and statesmanship that had enabled them to rise to the defence of the Islamic realm whenever it came under threat and thereby catapulted them to the top. Put differently, Turks were "better" Muslims because of their Turkishness.

Another important messaging that pervaded the 1950s textbooks was the status of Anatolia as a Turkish homeland. Starting with the lesson on westward migration out of Central Asia, the Hittites, and the ancient Greece, students learned about the significance of Anatolia for Turks: it was space that belonged purely and exclusively to Turks. Furthermore, when Turks "re-entered" Anatolia in 1071, they had "re-entered" as Sunni Muslims. This would have instilled in students the notion that non-Turks, including non-Muslims, could not have any viable claim to belonging to this geography; and in return, made the ethnic and religious minorities of Turkey who would have been among the students studying this material feel more like interlopers.

Speaking Turkish was still one of the main planks of Turkishness. In addition to the fact that the educational material was only produced in Turkish, the dictionary entry by Kaşgarlı Mahmut, quoted and cited above, had stated that around the time of *Malazgirt*, when the Great Seljuk Empire was at the peak of its powers, "everyone was dying to learn Turkish." This was a stark testament to how the Turkish language had survived through the centuries as a marker of Turkish ethnicity; another marker was the willingness to enhance Turks' "greatness." To be considered a Turk, one needed to have descended from this bloodline of "great" Turks, who had been Turkish-speakers and spent their lifetimes contributing to Turks' "greatness." The emphasis on Anatolia as a Turkish-Muslim homeland, as the preceding discussion demonstrated, furthermore added a soil-based dimension to this race- or *soy*-based nationalism.

This chapter has also discussed how being Muslim, in the form that it would fit the state's definition of an "ideal" Turk, included both cultural and faith-based aspects

of religion. This was a remarkably less stringent interpretation of Muslimness than had been the case in the 1930s. Still, the fact that students received advise about the kind of Muslim they were expected to be afforded testament to the *laik* nature of the nationalist discourse. This was further reinforced by Anatolia's framing as a space that was meant for Turkish-Muslims. Had Turkish nationalism been formulated under the influence of the French style of secularism, whatever faith Turks adhered to and however they practised it would not have been the state's concern, as long as official spaces remained free *from* anything to do with religion. Under the American format of secularism that mandated freedom *of* religion, Turks could have displayed their religious affiliations within the public sphere, but Muslimness would not have been a prerequisite to belonging to the Turkish nation. That to be a Turk, one not only had to be Muslim and subscribe to a certain kind of Muslimness, whose parameters were set and determined by the state pointed at a state control over religion — which corresponded to *laiklik*.

Chapter 4
Grade 5 textbooks

By the time they reached Grade 5, students would have spent a year learning about how their ancestors had ruled the ancient and pre-modern worlds. The fifth-grade history classes took students through episodes of Turkish superiority from roughly the thirteenth century up until the end of World War II. The previous Grade 5 curriculum, designed and first implemented under the CHP and then remained in effect until 1954, had also included the history of the Anatolian Seljuks. The changes to the curriculum in 1954 took the Anatolian Seljuks out of the fifth-grade curriculum and added it to the previous year's material. After 1954, therefore, fifth-graders only studied the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic.

This chapter will continue the analysis on textbooks with the same set of authors, whose work at the Grade 4 level were analysed in the previous chapter. It will look at how the key themes from the Grade 4 material persisted into Grade 5 and framed the narrative on the Ottomans and the Republic — and examining how the perception, presentation, and indeed, appropriation of the Ottoman past and thereafter the rise of the Republic fitted in with what came before.

Unlike the pre-modern civilisations in Central Asia and Anatolia, the Ottomans would not always be marked as "Turkish." In fact, one of the most important questions that have dominated the historiographical debate is the extent to which the early Republicans viewed Ottomans as "Turkish." Several works have dominated the field on this topic. Büşra Ersanlı's "theory of fatal decline," which she unpacks in an essay of the same title[1], claims an ethnically Turkish foundation for the empire, suggesting that the early Republican historians viewed the Ottomans until the end of the sixteenth century as fundamentally Turkish in character and disposition. This was the period that they identified as a "Golden Age," marked by resounding victories on the battlefield that resulted in a relentless expansion of frontiers as well as what they referred to as "a more enlightened" approach to religion. The feeble performance of the military and the intrusion of more conservative, religious thought into the

[1] Büşra Ersanlı, "The Ottoman Empire in the Historiography of the Kemalist Era: A Theory of Fatal Decline," in *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion on Historiography*, ed. Fikret Adanır and Suraiya Farooqhi (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

management of worldly affairs in the seventeenth century started to peel away from this earlier Ottoman image. This was when stagnation and thereafter decline set in.

In step with Ersanlı, Sefika Akile Zorlu-Durukan posits[2] that, while Atatürk's state-building project required the construction of the immediate past as "worthless, corrupt and irredeemable," this approach did not govern the Republican treatment of the earlier periods. Correlatively, the early Republicans accredited "the Turkish race" with the glorious parts of Ottoman history, with "glory" being defined in terms of territory and strength: as long as the empire was expanding and simultaneously transforming itself into a force to be reckoned with, it constituted an entity they were happy to associate themselves with. In this sense, as the Ottoman expansion and strength dwindled, so did the extent to which they were considered Turkish.

Added to these, Nicholas Danforth[3] argues that the term "Ottoman" did not necessarily designate an entire era, but rather referred to certain concepts, institutions and activities. His research shows how the nationalist rhetoric, for example, lauded the armies from the time of Osman I, the progenitor of the Ottoman dynasty, until the reign of Sultan Vahdeddin, the last sultan of the empire, as "our soldiers" and always identified them as "Turkish." Various other achievements, too, were labelled as "Turkish." One striking example that Danforth marshals is that the mosques, bridges and fountains, which are now largely seen as symbolising the epitome of Ottoman architecture, were at the time viewed as Turkish. In this paradigm, what slipped in and out of the realm of Turkishness were the sultans, the court and the royal family – who gradually "lost" their Turkishness as their actions heralded a less glorious era in Ottoman history.

Overall, militarism persisted as a key theme. Above anything else, Turks were still a nation/community of soldiers. And within this context, as long as the Ottomans walked away victorious from battlefields with newly-conquered territories and stories of fearless sultans commanding their forces to all sorts of glory —in other words, when their actions could be folded into the narrative of "greatness"— they were

[2] Sefika Akile Zorlu-Durukan, "The Ideological Pillars of Turkish Education," PhD diss., (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2016).
[3] Nicholas Danforth, "Multi-Purpose Empire: Ottoman History in Republican Turkey," pp659-660.

"Turkish" or the terms "Ottoman" and "Turkish" were used interchangeably. When they could longer advance militarily and did not commit acts of "greatness," these terms of use no longer applied, however. The army still remained a symbol of fortitude and resilience, but now it symbolised only *Turkish* fortitude and resilience. "Ottoman" now referred to the sultan, the royal court, and the people who populated the state apparatus, and would not be invoked to describe anything connected to the military; since soldierliness was a key tenet of Turkishness and sultans could not demonstrate soldierliness on their part, they were no longer "Turkish." The new textbooks the DP released after 1954 applied the terms "Turkish" and "Ottoman" in the same way, but as had been the case in Grade 4 textbooks, employed a more passionate language when describing episodes of Ottoman militarism. The reasons that had triggered this shift in tone and rhetoric were the same as in Grade 4 material.

Another theme that extended into Grade 5, especially in post-1954 textbooks, was to what ends Turks' soldierliness was going to be leveraged: towards safeguarding the homeland of Anatolia and maintaining national unity. This was another element that made Ottomans "Turkish." The authors even praised those sultans who "Turkified" Anatolia and criticised those who failed to pursue similarly assimilationist policies. As the previous chapter has discussed, such Anatolia-centric policies could be linked to the worsening nature of Turkish-Greek relations and the crisis around the status of Cyprus that was flaring up in the early 1950s; and afforded testament to the soil-based aspect that Turkish nationalist discourse was acquiring in this period.

This prominence given to national unity would have also explained the absence of any mention of the Kurdish and Alevi communities from the educational material and their exclusion from the construct of nationalism. As explained in the introduction, both communities were built on tribal structures and patronage networks, and resisted the policies of the central government that were meant to bind the population to a single command centre in Ankara, such as taxation and conscription. From the perspective of those at the helm, these traditional patterns of belonging would have meant that Kurdish and Alevi communities would never pledge loyalty to the national state and could disrupt national unity.

The importance attached to maintaining the Turkishness of Anatolia produced important ramifications for how the empire's ethnic and religious minorities were

represented in educational material. Every text analysed for this chapter ignored their role in the making of the Ottoman elite. Non-Turks (non-Turkish and non-Muslim) were completely brushed out of the discussion on the earlier Ottoman centuries, when the successes of the Ottoman state were underwritten by Turks and Turks only, or so the texts conveyed. The minorities, foremost the Greeks, featured in the narrative more frequently when discussing the later centuries of Ottoman stagnation and decline, and then the Turkish War of Independence, but they were depicted as disgruntled communities that, despite maintaining a better standard of living at Turks' expense, were still unhappy with their statuses and complicit in an effort to break down the Ottoman state and the Turkish nation. Having studied this material, students would have left school with a sense of vengeance, fuelled by a deep mistrust, against the non-Turks and non-Muslims present in Anatolia. It was against the backdrop of this intensifying anti-Turk rhetoric that the pogrom of 6-7 September 1955 against the Greek, Armenian, and Jewish communities of Turkey would play out.[4]

Another theme that continued into Grade 5 was religion, or Turks' historical relationship with Islam. The texts were clear on the fact that Ottomans were Muslims, it was *how* they acted on their Muslimness that mattered. And in connected to this, their Turkishness hinged on the nature of their relationship with Islam. Up until the "era of stagnation," the sultans had not allowed religion to inform their behaviours and practices that had public consequences. As students would have learned in the previous year, Turks' Muslimness was confined to realm of the private and the personal; the public realm was organised according to what could be referred to as "scientific knowledge." It was during the so-called "era of stagnation" that religion started to creep into everyday life, which became another reason why the sultans and the royal court "lost" their Turkishness. They had let religion seep into what had been the domain of the secular, violating one of the fundamental pillars of Turkishness.

These depictions aligned with the discussion on the role of religion in defining what it meant to be a Turk in Grade 4 material. It is tempting to describe this sort of nationalist discourse as the style of French secularism, since it encouraged the

[4] Ali Tuna Kuyucu, "Ethno-religious unmixing of Turkey: 6-7 September riots as a case of Turkish nationalism," p362.

restriction of anything to do with religion to the private domain; however, this chapter will once again make the case that the nature of this sort of nationalism should be described as *laiklik*. As the below discussion will point out where relevant, it was not only that religion, religious symbols and expressions of piousness were pushed away and out of the public eye, but even the type of Muslim that Turks were expected to be behind closed doors was delineated by the state.

Paralleling the changes in Grade 4 textbooks, the post-1954 textbooks employed more religious rhetoric. Yet, once again, this did not detract from the nationalist focus of the narrative, and since Turks had always been Muslims, it did not necessarily yield a more religious portrayal of Turks. However, this uptick in religious rhetoric, combined with the focus on Anatolia as a Turkish homeland, was more consequential for Turkey's ethnic and religious minorities. It would have reinforced in students' minds that, for Anatolia to retain its Turkishness, it needed to be populated by Turkish Muslims. This sort of framing would have encouraged them to regard the non-Muslims among them as unwelcome presence in a space that, for the safety of the Turkish nation, needed to be populated by Turkish Muslims.

One new theme that marked the Grade 5 material was Europe's portrayal as an enemy. There had not been any clearly defined enemies at the Grade 4 level, except for anyone who violated the Turkishness of Anatolia. Now, students read about how Europe concocted all sorts of designs and machinations to curb Turks' upward trajectory on the world-stage. Europeans could simply not be trusted, since in their interactions with Turks, they always seemed to be operating with a hidden, nefarious agenda. In the meantime, Europe was also an object of emulation, especially after the sixteenth century; the developments that "Europeanised" the empire were lauded, while officials who opposed change along these lines were ridiculed.

This was another way of rallying students around the flag. Europeans were not to be trusted, but "Europeanising" did not necessarily entail trusting them. Students learned that Europe was able to rise to the top by learning from Turks and adopting their signature qualities. So, by "Europeanising," Turks were essentially reclaiming the

qualities that they had lost.[5] Correlatively, this meant that the sultans who were uninterested in "Europeanising" the empire were also uninterested in reclaiming the roots of Turks' "greatness."

Osman I (r.1299 AD-1323 AD) to Mehmed II (r.1451 AD-1481 AD): The founding

The presentation of the first three rulers of the Ottoman state —namely, Osman I, Orhan, and Murat I— were curated according to these themes. Every textbook started its discussion by listing the territories that Osman I conquered, and then identified him as "an invaluable commander and a good-natured person, who was also just."[6] In a similar vein, one of Orhan I's most consequential accomplishments was the conquest of the city of Bursa, as well as the expansion of the boundaries up to the Dardanelles Straits and the district of Üsküdar on the edge of the Bosporus, which currently forms a part of Istanbul.[7] Similarly, Murat I was celebrated for his virtues as a soldier and his victories on the battlefield: especially important were the conquests of the cities of Tekirdağ and Edirne in Thrace, texts put forward, once again holding soldierliness and conquest tantamount to proof of greatness.[8] The authors also mentioned the establishment of the Ottoman standing army under Murat, composed of *janissaries,* an elite infantry unit, and *sipahis*, professional cavalrymen[9] — which enhanced the "power of the Turkish army"[10] and "carried the Turkish flag from castle to castle and from country to country."[11] Of course, the army would not have carried the Turkish flag with them, as the flag that students were expected to imagine here did not exist until 1923. Also, the janissary corps were slave-soldiers, recruited from the conquered territories in the Balkans, subjected to conversion to Islam, and then enlisted in the army. They were not Turks

[5] This reasoning was also predominant in the Turkish History Thesis of the 1930s, which the introduction has discussed.
[6] Ziya Şölen and Sabahattin Arıç, *Tarih V* (Ders Kitapları Türk Limited Şirketi: İstanbul, 1954), pp7-8; Ali Ekrem İnal and Rakım Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul:5* (Atlas Yayınevi: İstanbul, 1958), p10; Himmet Akın and M. Çağatay Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih* (İnkılap Yayınevi, İstanbul, 1958), p9; Faik Reşit Unat and Kamil Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V* (Milli Eğitim Basımevi: İstanbul, 1952), p32.
[7] Akın and Uluçay, p9; Şölen and Arıç, p8; İnal and Çalapala, p12; Unat and Su, pp33-34.
[8] Unat and Su, p35; Akın and Uluçay, p10; and İnal and Çalapala, p13.
[9] Unat and Su, p38; Şölen and Arıç, p8; Akın and Uluçay, pp13-14; and İnal and Çalapala, p14.
[10] Akın and Uluçay, p14.
[11] Ibid., p13.

or Muslims, but the texts never mentioned their Christian or non-Turkish (often Slavic) origins. The military was conceptualised as a purely Turkish entity, which allowed the authors to present every military success as a purely Turkish achievement, overlooking the role any non-Turks might have played in the writing of these success stories.

On Yıldırım Bayezit, Unat and Su wrote that he was given the alias *Yıldırım*, meaning "thunderbolt" because of his swiftness on the battlefield.[12] His overriding ambition was to secure "Turkish unity in Anatolia" — for the sake of which he undertook preparations to gather all the remaining Anatolian principalities under his command and conquer the city-state of Byzantium. To this end, he commissioned the construction of the Anatolian Fortress (*Anadolu Hisarı)* on the Asian side of Istanbul to monitor the supply routes that connected Constantinople to the Black Sea and thereby cut off any assistance that might be provisioned.[13] Around the same time, however, an army of crusaders marched on to the Ottoman territories in Bulgaria, which precipitated the Battle of Niğbolu (or Nicopolis, 1396). At the end, "the Turkish army devastated the crusaders," took as hostage "the most famous of French knights," and almost captured the Hungarian king.[14] This section did not communicate anything other than Yıldırım's militarism, which reaffirmed that, if a sultan was a capable general, nothing else about him really mattered. Also crucially, his militarism —as narrated in the text— served the clear purpose of unifying the Anatolian lands by conquering Constantinople.

Unat and Su also appended a reading passage, which described Yıldırım as a "courageous soldier," "an intelligent sultan" and "a proud man."[15] At *Niğbolu*, one of the captured French knights was John the Fearless, who was also a nobleman. To have him repatriated, "the French Kings [*sic*]" had to collect "serious amounts of tax from the population." When John was about to be released, Yıldırım issued him a warning: "…I know that, in order to erase the memory of your mortifying defeat and restore your reputation, you'll organise another attack on me…Know that you'll always find me ready on the battlefield to confront you and your armies, because I was born to

[12] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p38.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., p40.
[15] Ibid., p42.

find and defeat whoever stands in front of me."[16] John the Fearless was captured at the end of the Battle of Niğbolu, which, Unat and Su had explained, the Europeans had instigated to distract the Ottomans from capturing Constantinople and therefore unifying their lands. Yıldırım's pledge to war with anyone who stood in the way of such an objective could therefore be read as a celebration of a "Turkish" sultan's commitment to preserving national unity at all costs.

The textbooks after 1954 adopted a more unabashedly anti-European tone, depicting Europeans in a weaker position and amplifying the assertion of Turkish superiority vis-à-vis Europe. Also differently from Unat and Su's narrative, an element of religiosity had seeped into the narrative, with every text of this period describing the crusaders at Niğbolu as to "have been set in motion by the spirit of Christianity,"[17] and portraying the battle itself as an effort to force Turks out of and away from Europe.[18] Although distracted from capturing Constantinople, Turks had still accumulated so much power that the Byzantines had no other choice but to "kneel, bow and curtsey" in their presence; in fact, the power dynamic between the two empires had become such that the Ottoman sultan could handpick and appoint anyone to the Byzantine throne.[19] The post-1954 texts might have reframed the Battle of Niğbolu as a Christian vs. Muslim confrontation, but what remained in the foreground was Turks' greatness over Europeans, underlining that it was Turks who had defeated Europeans, and not the combined power of Islam and Muslims.[20]

Only one post-1954 textbook included the passage on Yıldırım's encounter with John the Fearless, and this rendition of their conversation, too, channelled these later texts' more bombastic attitude. The "daring and heroic knights of Europe" were confident that they could defeat the Turks, saying that "even if the sky were falling, we would hold it up with our spears."[21] On their march over to Niğbolu, the crusading armies "had torched villages and massacred Turks," but when they arrived at the battleground, they were confronted by the guards of the fortress, who "had sworn not

[16] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p42.
[17] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p20; İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, p14.
[18] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V*, p10; Akın and Uluçay, p15.
[19] Akın and Uluçay, p14; İnal and Çalapala, p14.
[20] Şölen and Arıç, p10; Akın and Uluçay, p20; and İnal and Çalapala, p16.
[21] Akın and Uluçay, p20.

to abandon their posts unless they were killed."[22] The leader of the guards had even said, "as long as this body is standing, this soil will remain ours."[23] It was through the actions of such leaders and commanders that "our grandfathers, whose rule spanned three continents," could build "such a great empire," students were told, in a very clear reference to Ottomans as Turks.[24] This time around, Yıldırım also did not warn John the Fearless against organising another attack; instead, he told him that "if you had any pride, you would pick up your weapon again…and give me the chance to win another victory,"[25] in a clear reference to Turks' soldierliness.

Spotlight: Mehmed II's conquest of Constantinople (1453)

As a result of the successes of Murat II in the Crusade of Varna (1444) and at the Battle of Kosovo (1449) against the Hungarian King who "had sworn not to leave any Turk alive in Europe,"[26] Turks had become comfortably settled in the Balkans.[27] With the enemy defeated, the Turkish unity in Anatolia secured, and Byzantium "surrounded by Turks from all four sides" and embroiled in infighting, the time was ripe to conquer Constantinople.[28] To this end, Sultan Mehmet II commissioned the construction of the Rumelia Fortress opposite from the Anatolian Fortress to block any logistical relief coming in from the Black Sea region; had cannons cast that could break down the Byzantine fortifications; and encircled the city from both land and sea.[29] This arduous campaign culminated in the final attack on 29 May 1453, following which "the glorious Turkish flag started fluttering atop ancient Byzantine walls."[30]

As stated before, it would not have been the Turkish flag that would have fluttered atop the Byzantine walls. But this was a testament to how the account was steeped in pride of being a Turk. Many historical details were omitted to accentuate the "Turkishness" of the event. For example, claiming that Byzantium was

[22] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p20.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., p21.
[26] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p48.
[27] Ibid., p50.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid., pp50-51.
[30] Ibid., p53.

"surrounded by Turks on all four sides" struck the role of non-Turks, such as the Christian communities of the Ottoman Empire, and even the non-Ottomans, such as the Genoese on the other side of the Golden Horn, out of the record. Also, the largest cannon used in the assault was cast by Orban, an engineer from Hungary, whose contributions to the siege were never mentioned. As much as this account was a majestic portrayal of Turkish militarism, it was also meant to read as a devastating account of Byzantine weakness. Unat and Su did not even comment on the defence measures the Byzantines would have taken; they were astonished to the point of being helpless and at the mercy of Turks' strength, and were protected for as long as they were because of their fortifications, not through any acts of courage.

The conquest had also triggered a series of developments that eventually contributed to the rise of European civilisation. For instance, the Renaissance had started in Italy, because some Byzantine scholars who fled to Italy after 1453 had taken "the rich libraries of Byzantium" with them. Furthermore, there had already formed a receptive audience for this type of knowledge across Italy before the conquest because Italy neighboured "the Turkish-Islamic states that had already given birth to an advanced civilisation."[31] Now that the ancient trade routes that connected the Mediterranean with India had come under Turkish control, Europeans needed to develop new commercial networks. This resulted in the so-called "Age of Discovery," with Christopher Columbus discovering America and Ferdinand Magellan circumnavigating the world.[32] Students learned that that these developments had shaped the European civilisation into its contemporary form, suggesting that Europe owed its success to Turks.

One noteworthy change in the coverage of the conquest after 1954 was that every textbook had a chapter dedicated exclusively to the topic. Once again, more dramatic details stamped the narrative that also included religious references. For example, Mehmet II was described as a "multi-lingual,"[33] "forward-thinking and

[31] Unat ve Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p68. – However, the authors recognised the role of several other factors in this regard, too, which included the production of paper, the creation of publishing houses, and the wider dissemination of books; as well as the fact that Italy had been the epicentre of the ancient Roman civilisation.
[32] Ibid., pp58-65.
[33] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V,* p19.

extremely knowledgeable"[34] as well as "one of the most exceptionally bright leaders of his generation."[35] Furthermore, he had spent "two-years planning the assault,"[36] "working day and night,"[37] and employed "measures that no commander had previously thought of," which left the Byzantines "dumbfounded."[38] Striking a stark contrast against the seemingly all-powerful Turks, Byzantium had "shrunk to the size of a city-state" and "was stuck in a desperate situation,"[39] with Emperor Constantine XI hoping for help from "Christian Europe" against "Muslim Turks."[40] When Mehmed II encircled Constantinople, he commanded a force of 200,000 soldiers and 400 naval artilleries,[41] and fought "shoulder-to-shoulder with Turkish soldiers on his grey horse."[42] As soon as he realised that Byzantium's days were numbered, Mehmed II "delivered a fiery sermon to energise the Turkish lieutenants and soldiers."[43] During the Middle Ages, countless armies had laid siege to Constantinople but had failed to conquer it. This honour now rested with the heroic Turkish army led by Mehmet II, as a result of which he was awarded the title *Fatih,* or Conqueror.[44] Strikingly, this information was absent from Unat and Su's pre-1954 text. The post-1954 textbooks also highlighted that Mehmet II treated the city's Christians "very well," "allowing them complete freedom in their beliefs."[45] In the meantime, Istanbul became transformed into a "Turkish and Muslim city."[46]

Again, there were several gaps and errors in these renditions. Although it was mentioned that Mehmed II spoke several languages, for which he was reputed, it is confirmed through historical records that he was indeed fluent in Greek, which was not specified. Also, it was not Mehmet II who delivered the sermon to spur the troops into action but Akşamsaddin, a religious scholar as well as a tutor and advisor to the

[34] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p22.
[35] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5,* p24.
[36] Akın and Uluçay, p23.
[37] İnal and Çalapala, p25.
[38] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V,* p19; İnal and Çalapala, p27.
[39] Ibid.
[40] İnal and Çalapala, p25.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Şölen and Arıç, p19; Akın and Uluçay, p23.
[43] İnal and Çalapala, p27.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Şölen and Arıç, p19; İnal and Çalapala, p27.
[46] Akın and Uluçay, p23.

sultan. Furthermore, even though the texts stated that Mehmet II had not meddled in the religious and confessional practices of Constantinople's non-Muslim population, they noted that he had in the meantime started to transform Constantinople into a "Turkish" and "Muslim" city without unpacking what this process would have entailed, glossing over the fact that he had repopulated the city with Christians and Jews from other parts of the empire to revive its commercial life. Finally, that other armies had laid siege to Constantinople but failed was simply incorrect, since the crusaders were able to sack Constantinople in the thirteenth century and then subsequently occupy it for about half a century — which was conveniently crossed out of the narrative. So was the fact that Arab armies had also laid siege to Constantinople, though they had never been able to occupy it. This omission reinforced the nationalist messaging regarding Turks being "better" Muslims than Arabs (which also pervaded the discussion on Arabs and Islam in the Grade 4 material) claiming that Turks had been the only Muslims to accomplish such great a task.

Furthermore, the conquest was discussed within the framework of preserving Turkish unity. According to Akın and Uluçay, Fatih knew that Constantinople "had to be taken" from the Byzantines, because it "sat at the intersection of trade-routes" and "fragmented the Ottoman lands into two."[47] In a similar vein, İnal and Çalapala told students that the Byzantine leaders had been "sowing the seeds of discord among Ottoman princes" and provoked Europeans "into making things difficult" for them.[48] So, the future of Byzantium posed an existential threat for the empire, which made its destruction a matter of survival.

On the consequences of the conquest, the authors did not barge out of the framework put in place under the CHP. They once again pointed at Italy's geographical proximity to the Muslim-Turkish civilisation and the flight of Byzantine scholars to Italy after the conquest of Istanbul as the leading reasons why Italy became the birthplace of the Renaissance.[49] The emphasis remained on the role the Turks had purportedly played in triggering the developments that consequently shaped the European civilisation into its current form. The only difference was that the tone became

[47] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p22.
[48] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, p28.
[49] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V,* p28; İnal and Çalapala, p34.

noticeably more bombastic. İnal and Çalapala claimed that since "Turks and Muslims had enriched themselves by improving the trade routes with India,"[50] Europeans wanted to discover the source of "our" riches and steal away these profits. In this sense, robbing Turks off their wealth was "the biggest factor" that precipitated the so-called "Age of Discovery."[51] So, Europeans were envious of Turks' achievements and were trying to bring about their downfall, and could therefore not be trusted.

When the textbooks mentioned that the use of gunpowder in cannons had revolutionised warfare, they not only stated that it was an invention that Turks "had taught" Europeans,[52] but also added that "more so than Europeans, Turks had benefited from the use of cannons," and that Turks "had cast the largest cannons of this period."[53] Same applied to the production of paper, which was a trade Europe had learned from Turks, but could not master as well as Turks did.[54] Every tool in Europe's arsenal had then originally been a Turkish innovation or creation, and these instruments of change, which were inherently Turkish, had facilitated Europe's climb up the ladder of civilisation.

It is interesting to think about how a student in the 1950s would have thought of Turks' purported supremacy over Europe, since it is likely that, in the eyes of the youth of this period, the U.S. would have been the bastion of world civilisation. But such positioning of Turks against Europe reflected the influence of the Kemalist worldview that seemed to have persisted into the 1950s. Kemalists accepted Europe as the crux of civilisation, but also wanted to portray Turks as the progenitors of civilisation. Suggesting that it was the Turks who had propped up Europe on the world-stage in the first place helped in this regard. From their point of view, Europe's predominance could not be challenged, but acknowledging the Turkish "roots" of this predominance recast Turks in their roles as the creators of civilisation.

[50] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, p31.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V,* p21.
[53] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p25.
[54] İnal and Çalapala, pp30-31.

Bayezid II (r.1481 AD-1512 AD) to Suleiman I (r.1520 AD-1566 AD): The rise

The conquest also marked the start of what is referred to in historiography as the "rise" phase of the Ottoman Empire, which included the reigns of Mehmet II, Bayezid II, Selim I, and Suleiman I. Again, the main focus was the successes on the battlefield and the expansion of imperial borders, which was connected to the reason why the CHP and DP historians identified this period as one of rise; as long as the sultans kept conquering new territories, the Empire was "rising." For instance, Unat and Su celebrated Mehmet II's seemingly-unstoppable drive for more land, marshalling the size of the territory he conquered as a demonstration of his soldierliness, which, in return, was a symbol of his "greatness." He was "not the type of leader who would content himself with only one grand achievement," who therefore went on to conquer all of Serbia except for Belgrade, Albania, and the Peloponnese region of Greece[55]; annexed Crimea and the island of Lesbos along with several other islands in the Aegean Sea; and at the end, had pushed the boundaries out to the Euphrates in the east and to the Danube in the west.[56]

According to the post-1954 authors, too, "being on the rise" meant territorial expansion.[57] For example, İnal and Çalapala posited that Mehmet II wanted to expand the borders as much as possible and served "this great cause for thirty years" after the conquest of Constantinople.[58] Differently than Unat and Su, however, their texts conveyed the same message in a more colourful language. Some authors wrote that the Turkish navy "transformed the Mediterranean into a Turkish lake and waved the glorious Turkish flag from the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean"[59] under Mehmet II's guidance, as a consequence of which "we reached our highest form of civilisation."[60] It was significant that the authors thought Turks had reached their peak "greatness" by being the supreme naval power, which was a testament to the premium placed on militarism and soldierliness in the making of Turkishness. But what was celebrated

[55] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p75.
[56] Ibid., p76.
[57] See, for instance, Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V*, pp29-32; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, pp39-41; İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, pp39-42.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Şölen and Arıç, p30.
[60] İnal and Çalapala, p39.

here was not only the seemingly relentless expansion of frontiers, but also how this expansion was facilitated by Turks and Turks only. First, as mentioned above, it would not have been the Turkish flag that the navy would have waved, for the simple reason that a Turkish flag did not exist at the time. Also, although the authors referred to it as the "Turkish" navy, the Ottoman navy had many non-Turkish crewmembers, most of whom were Greek, whose role in the development of such an iconic Ottoman institution was completely ignored. This framing suggested that only Turks wrote the success stories into the narrative of Turkish history.

By contrast, Mehmet II's son Bayezid II received a completely different treatment. Just as students were to admire the former's leadership, they were to condescend the latter for the lack thereof. Simply put, he had not been able to "achieve much in his long reign." All authors posited that Bayezid's wars against Egypt were inconclusive, as they did not result in any territorial gains; and he effectively sat back and watched as the Safavid Empire's Shah Ismail provoked a rebellion within the empire.[61] After 1954, Bayezid was not only described as "passive," but even also as "retarded."[62] Differently from Unat and Su's account, the post-1954 textbooks mentioned that Shah İsmail provoked a rebellion by trying to disseminate Shiism across eastern Anatolia.[63]

Some texts did note some redeemable qualities in Bayezid II. Akın and Uluçay as well as İnal and Çalapala, for instance, called attention to how he had built medreses, surrounded himself with scholars and poets, commissioned various works, and thereby made a contribution to the development of sciences and culture in the empire.[64] Nevertheless, these did not carry much weight in their assessment of the overall importance of Bayezid II's reign; his failure to display any soldierly attributes or expand the empire could not be explained away or vindicated by his attention to the arts. At the end, the authors still described Bayezid II as a leader that was "neither successful nor mature," and identified his reign as "a period of stagnation" within a period that had otherwise been marked by progress.[65]

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[61] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p76.
[62] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, pp42-43.
[63] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p41; and İnal and Çalapala, p43.
[64] Akın and Uluçay, p41; and İnal and Çalapala, p43.
[65] İnal and Çalapala, p43; and Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V*, p34.

The section on Bayezid II took up only a few sentences, since in the absence of military victories, there was effectively nothing to communicate to students. On this point, all texts agreed. Although Unat and Su also pointed out the threat foreigners posed to national unity, the post-1954 authors were more specific on the form in which this threat might materialise. What blemished the sultan's reputation was his idleness in the face of foreign meddling, but the example also identified foreign belief systems as a hazard. The authors implied that Bayezid should have been worried about the spread of a religion that was not Sunni-Islam, because he should have known that it would not have sat well with Turks. The presence of Shia Muslims —or in fact, anyone who was not Sunni Muslim, including Christians and Jews— would have introduced an element of difference to the community, which would have weakened national unity, and hence made Turks more vulnerable to attacks, either external or internal. Turks were Sunni-Muslims, and anyone that did not fit into this criterion did not belong to their fold and were a red-flag.

With Selim I's accession to the throne, the Ottoman Empire continued on the trajectory laid out by his grandfather Mehmet II; Selim "had not taken after his father; he was brave and bold," wrote Unat and Su.[66] Whereas many states had sent ambassadors to congratulate him, Safavid Iran under Shah Ismail had held back; this was why Selim I's first military campaign was against the Safavid Empire in 1514, the authors explained, since Safavids' actions had trampled "Turkish" pride.[67] Thereafter, he led his armies into Syria and Palestine, which were under Egyptian control at the time, and then marched on to Cairo.[68]

What Unat and Su omitted from their account was more telling. Granted, the conquest of Syria, Palestine and Egypt was an important achievement, but its significance went beyond the mere expansion of imperial boundaries. With the acquisition of these territories to the east, the empire's geographical centre of gravity shifted from the Balkans towards the Middle East, on which the authors did not make a comment. That the caliphal office was transferred from Egypt to Constantinople following the conquest of the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt, too, received only a

[66] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p81.
[67] Ibid., p79.
[68] Ibid., p80.

perfunctory mention — which was reminiscent of how Grade 4 textbooks had covered Turks' conversion to Islam. Unat and Su only stated in their very last paragraph on Selim I that the caliph had accompanied him back to Constantinople and passed on the caliphate in a religious ceremony.[69] There was no discussion of Selim I demanding the caliphate; nor did the authors romanticise the Ottomans' seizing of leadership over the rest of the Muslim world and taking the three holy cities.

As per the texts that were published after 1954, Shah Ismail had not only insulted Turks, but had also tried to conquer Anatolia by spreading the Shia faith.[70] So, the reason why Selim I had attacked was to protect Anatolia's territorial integrity, which had once again come under threat because of an effort to spread a faith that was foreign to Turkish lands. Here, too, students learned that anyone who espoused a religion other than Sunni Islam represented an element of risk, since they could always try and disseminate a non-Turkish belief system, which would disrupt the unity that lay at the core of Turkish strength, soldierliness, and thereby greatness.

This example might have portrayed Selim as a devout Muslim, but more than a commitment to his faith, it demonstrated a commitment to keeping his "nation" together, for which a common religion was integral. When Turkish lands were not under threat, Selim, as an exemplary Turk, devoted all his energy towards acquiring more territory. İnal and Çalapala put forward that "while Shah Ismail kept burning down towns and villages as he retreated, the Ottoman army managed to march into eastern Anatolia after an arduous journey…after the war, the Iranian city of Tabriz opened its door to the heroic Selim."[71] Also, the war with Egypt was now said to have lasted only "for a few hours" and had resulted in "the swift and immediate capture" of all Syrian and Palestinian towns. Meanwhile, Akın and Uluçay wrote that, the Emir of the Hijaz sent Selim the keys to Mecca and Medina without being prompted, a gesture that signified that the Emir was bowing to Selim's authority.[72]

It was within this framework that the texts communicated Selim's acquisition of the caliphate. Only one textbook added that, by acquiring the caliphate, Selim I

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[69] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p80.
[70] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V*, p35; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p42; and İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, p44.
[71] İnal and Çalapala, p44; see also, Akın and Uluçay, p42.
[72] İnal and Çalapala, pp44-45.

ruled over the wider Islamic community.[73] Indeed, students would have had the impression that Selim I's greatest contribution to the course of Ottoman/Turkish history lied in his many conquests,[74] as encapsulated in a statement that appeared in one of the textbooks, that Selim had been "the greatest of Ottoman leaders, who had conquered vast lands and even ventured into the African continent."[75] This was how students were to remember him, not for earning the empire the title of Sultan-Caliph.

Appended to the paragraphs on Selim I in one textbook was a reading passage about how Selim's back was covered in boils as he prepared for another Iranian campaign. On the journey over, the boils were enflamed, and Selim was told he "was about to become one with God." In response, he asked "whom (the person that he was speaking to) thought he had been with the whole time," ordered that the Yasin surah[76] be recited, and then passed away without the slightest fear of death.[77] Selim was clearly a devout Muslim; in fact, he was devout enough to assert that he had been with God throughout his entire existence. Yet even those closest to him did not know about this. This was an important message, as it captured the core of the Turkish approach — that religion was a private matter between God and the individual.

The next section was on Suleiman I, with his many conquests dominating the narrative. Unat and Su introduced him as "the great Turkish leader, who decked out the empire with shining conquests," capturing Belgrade, Rhodes and Serbia, and securing a decisive victory against Hungarians at the Battle of Mohacs (1526).[78] Turks also burnished their credentials as the premier power in the Mediterranean in this period, after "the famed Turkish admiral Hayrettin Barbarossa Pasha" emerged victorious out of the Battle of Preveza (1538) against the forces of Spain, Venice and the Holy Roman Empire under the command Andrea Doria, "the most famous admiral

[73] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p43.
[74] Ibid., p37.
[75] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, pp45-46.
[76] Yasin refers to the 36th sura in the Quran is usually recited when someoone is on the verge of death or after someone has died.
[77] Akın and Uluçay, p38.
[78] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, pp84-85.

of Europe".[79] Suleiman also laid siege to Vienna (1529), which ultimately failed, but the authors "explained away" this failure by linking it to "adverse winter conditions."[80]

Again, the post-1954 authors presented a more bombastic rendition of these developments. Akın and Uluçay told students that upon Suleiman's accession to the throne, "the world's most famous leaders" had dispatched ambassadors, who bestowed gifts upon him in a bid to establish friendships.[81] Furthermore, the Battle of Mohacs (1526) was now identified not only as a demonstration of Turkish militarism, but also as a turning-point that established "Suleiman's supremacy" in the eyes of his enemies.[82] The narrative on the Vienna campaign, too, had changed along these lines: although the siege had failed, it was an exhibition of Turkish strength,[83] because Suleiman had still laid the groundwork that would have culminated in a victorious outcome. However, he had prepared for a battle. And when the Austrians did not "muster the courage to face us," Suleiman had to carry out a siege without any cannons that would easily have struck down the fortress of Vienna.[84] It was because of the timidity of the enemy that the campaign had ended in a debacle.

Overall, Suleiman's reign marked a "Golden Age" for Turks, students were told, because the borders had expanded massively: they now reached the Caucasus, modern-day southern Russia and Hungary in the north; Morocco and the Aegean Sea in the west; the Great Sahara, Amman and the Persian Gulf in the south; and included within these borders about 60 million people, "two-thirds of which, İnal and Çalapala added, were Turkish and Muslim."[85] And Europeans admired the strength of the "mighty Ottoman Sultan" "throughout the Renaissance and Reformation periods" so much that they named him "Suleiman the Magnificent."[86] Up until this point, Europe had been depicted as a nefarious entity that was bent on curbing Turks' rise on the world-stage. They were still that enemy, but now Turks had now become so "great"

[79] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p91.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p43.
[82] Ibid; see also, Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V*, pp39-40.
[83] Ibid; see also, Şölen and Arıç, pp39-40.
[84] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, p49.
[85] Ibid., p52.
[86] Ibid., pp44-45.

that even such a committed enemy was in awe of them — which the textbooks framed as a badge of honour.

Before proceeding with the discussion on the narrative of Ottoman stagnation and decline, it is useful to tease out what the narrative on the so-called periods of rise and progress signified in terms of who qualified as an "ideal" Turk. As pointed out in the preceding sections, a soil-based dimension to being a Turk came to the fore in the nationalist discourse that pervaded the post-1954 material. The Turkish language as well as the need to contribute to the "greatness" of the Turkish nation also persisted from the 1930s as the primary markers of Turkish ethnicity. So did the race-based aspect of nationalism, with the textbooks placing a strong, clear emphasis on how the material's target readership (primary school students, i.e.: the "ideal" Turks of the future) were the descendent of a line of ethnic Turks, who spoke Turkish and dedicated their lives to enhancing the "greatness" of the Turkish *soy*.

"No Sultan to mention:" The stagnation and decline

After the end of Suleiman's reign, "which had demonstrated Ottomans' superiority vis-à-vis all its neighbours," the empire was said to have spiralled into a period of stagnation. This was when Ottomans stopped being Turks. According to Unat and Su, stagnation set in because sultans who acceded the throne were either too young or mentally deranged; the offices of the state were allocated to the highest bidder; the army was left unsupervised; and the palace became a place of degenerate modes of entertainment, which drained large sums of cash from the treasury.[87] The authors after 1954 largely agreed with this description. Akın and Uluçay even asserted that providing the names of the sultans after Suleiman was pointless, because they no longer contributed to the empire's development.[88] Another text also problematised the so-called "sultanate of women," describing it as a period when sultans who were incapable of running a state delegated the empire's management to their wives or

[87] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, pp93-94.
[88] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p50.

mothers, who turned for advice to significantly underqualified people, who were "ignorant, ineffective and only worked to enhance their own profit."[89]

The post-1954 authors also lamented how "the Ottoman state stopped making progress in almost any given field,"[90] whereas Europe reorganised its armies into more dynamic structures and invented new weapons.[91] Although the CHP-era material had been clear on the fact that Ottomans had stopped making progress, they had not compared the Ottoman Empire against Europe. For the post-1954 authors, the problem was not only the fact that the Ottoman Empire was "stagnating," but that it was "stagnating" while its foremost enemy, Europe, embarked on an opposite, upward trajectory. One text put forward that, now that Europeans were gaining strength, they moved to push Ottomans out of Europe.[92] From a student's perspective, this would have reaffirmed Europeans as Ottomans/Turks' clear enemy. It would have also implied that, whereas Turks had underwritten Europe's rise on the world-stage, Europe was now leveraging its newfound strength —which it had built up thanks to Turks— against Turks. As long as Europe was bettering itself, it would take advantage of its improved circumstances to destroy Ottomans/Turks.

Since, during this era of stagnation in Ottoman history, Europe was said to be "making progress in the field of civilisation" by foremost reorganising its militaries and inventing new weaponry, the "era of stagnation" —just as like the "era of rise"— was effectively a military term.[93] According to Unat and Su, Treaty of Zsitvatorok (1606) signed between Sultan Ahmad I and the Habsburg Monarchy was one of the first signs that the empire had come to a standstill. It nullified the previous arrangement, whereby the latter had acknowledged the superior rank of the Ottoman sultan and

[89] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V*, pp44-45; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, pp50-51; İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, pp57-58.
[90] Şölen and Arıç, p45.
[91] Akın and Uluçay, p51.
[92] Ibid.
[93] It would be incorrect to state that there were no military successes in this period, as the Ottomans conquered the island of Crete from the Venetians; several castles in Austria; and the region of Podolia (which covered the modern-day southwestern Ukraine and northeastern Moldova) from Poland. See İnal and Çalapala, p57.

had agreed to pay an annual tribute.[94] Ahmed I had also negotiated peace with Iran, under the terms of which Ottomans had to cede some territory.[95]

There were also some occasional moments of progress, one of which was the reign of Murat IV. Unat and Su wrote that Murat IV "ruled with a firm hand, reminiscent of Selim I's leadership," disciplining the janissary corps, suppressing the pockets of rebellion that sprang up in Anatolia, and reconquering from Iran Azerbaijan and Baghdad.[96] Another was the period when the Grand Vizier Köprülü Mehmet Pasha (1656-1661) practically governed at the behest of the sultan; built back the power of the empire by rooting out corruption, reined in the reactionary proclivities of the janissary corps (albeit only temporarily, it would turn out), revamped the navy and secured a victory against the Venetians in Crete,[97] as a result of which "every state had once again become afraid of Turks."[98] This re-emergence of a robust military nation would prove to be short-lived, however: with the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) signed with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Habsburg Empire, Venetian Republic and the Tsardom of Russia, "many territories that had been won over through great efforts and had cost the blood of tens of thousands of Turks were given back to the enemy."[99] This was "tantamount to the violation of the Turkish state," Unat and Su claimed.[100] The last statement was particularly important, as the military was now evolving into a representation of the Turkish nation, while the sultan and the royal court would be built up as internal apostates.

The post-1954 textbooks, too, lent a great deal of emphasis to the wars that did not yield any gains. For example, several texts stated that "we wanted to take advantage of the death of the Shah of Iran" in 1578, but ended up becoming embroiled in a war that lasted almost forty years, during which the Ottoman Empire

[94] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p95.
[95] Ibid., p95.
[96] Ibid., p96.
[97] Ibid., p97.
[98] Ibid., p98.
[99] Ibid., p100. Hungary was ceded to the Austrians; the Peloponnese region and the Dalmatian coast to the Venetians; and the Azov Fortress to the Russians, see Ibid., p102.
[100] Ibid., p102.

lost "our" eastern provinces to Iran.[101] All authors agreed that, up until the signing of the Treaty of Zsitvatorok (1606), "we had been the greatest empire."[102] Murat IV and Grand Vizier Köprülü Mehmet Pasha were once again singled out as to have reigned over brief periods of positive change. When Murat came of age, he "salvaged" the control of the state from "women and worthless statesmen"; "extinguished the rebels that questioned the laws of the state," and even "killed thousands" [103] as well as "chopped off the heads of many"[104] to this end; shut down the coffeehouses that had become "hotspots of gossip"; "following in the footsteps of Selim I and Suleiman I," led the armies into battle and re-captured Baghdad from Iran.[105] Köprülü, "one of the greatest men of our history," was also "as ruthless as Murat IV,"[106] punishing those who did not carry out his commands; he also made sure everyone, "including the armed forces," were obsequious to his demands, restructured the army and the navy, and secured a victory against the Venetians.[107]

The post-1954 material then suggested that extreme violence and heavy-handedness could be warranted, and all sorts of lives and freedoms could be sacrificed at the altar of military strength, which they equated with greatness. The quasi-totalitarian administrations of Murat IV and Köprülü were exalted, since they had restrengthened the military and restored the martial character of the nation, which they equated with Turkishness. It is difficult not to read these arguments as vindications of the strict measures and social controls that had been put in place throughout the Republican era. Although no comparisons were drawn between the periods of Murat IV and Köprülü and the 1930s, the information provided herein would have planted the seeds of a crucial strand of thought: as a people constantly surrounded by enemies, Turks needed to practice martial vigilance at all times; and any measures that aided in this effort would therefore be justified, regardless of how violent or invasive they might be.

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[101] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V*, p45; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p51; İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, p60.
[102] Şölen and Arıç, p46; Akın and Uluçay, p53; İnal and Çalapala, p60.
[103] İnal and Çalapala, p59.
[104] Ibid., p61.
[105] Akın and Uluçay, p51.
[106] Ibid., p53.
[107] Şölen and Arıç, p47; Akın and Uluçay, p53; İnal and Çalapala, p61.

Following the era of stagnation was the era of decline, marked by a further loss of territory and the Ottoman Empire once again lagging behind the European civilisation.[108] Unat and Su's discussion revolved around on a series of wars that engulfed Europe for 25 years, during which the Ottoman Empire could have regained the territories it had ceded to Austria under the Treaty of Karlowitz. "Because the leading statesmen had a narrow vision of the world and lacked political acumen," none of them used this window of opportunity to their advantage, however.[109] The era also witnessed the so-called "Tulip Period" under Ahmed III (1718-1730), which the historiography of this period recognises as an era of reform that delayed the empire's collapse. Unat and Su noted the positives of this era, describing Ahmed III as a man of refined taste "that valued fine arts and knowledge"[110] and noting that this was when Istanbul received a fire brigade and a publishing house."[111] Still, they concluded that the demerits of the period, which referred to the missed opportunities on the battlefield, outweighed the merits.[112]

One of the conclusions to draw from this presentation of "decline" was that the loss of territory, in the absence of any fresh military victories to compensate for this loss, meant decline. More importantly, there was now a proverbial distance between the rulers and the ruled. Sultans were no longer referred to as "our leaders," and in fact, never received the designation "our." Compared against the way these authors had introduced, for example, Mehmet II, Selim I and even Bayezid II, the discussion on the sultans who ruled throughout this period had a sense of foreignness to them; the declining quality of their militarism signified that the leadership (Ottoman) and the broader nation (Turkish) were no longer cut from the same cloth, as the decrease in their soldierliness suggested a loss of their Turkishness.

The definition and causes of "decline" were understood and communicated along the same lines after 1954. In this period, Europe advanced militarily, economically and within the realm of civilisation, whereas "we, instead of pushing through any comprehensive changes, even appeared to be regressing to a less

[108] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p108.
[109] Ibid., p115.
[110] Ibid., p111.
[111] Ibid., p112.
[112] Ibid., p113.

developed state on a daily basis, were defeated in many wars, and lost a significant swathes of territory."[113] These texts also marked out the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) as a turning-point, under the terms of which the empire had effectively acknowledged that Europe was getting stronger,[114] and that "Ottomans were declining, because they had started to lose territory."[115] Once again, the post-1954 authors wrote that the "Tulip Period" was a time of lavish forms of entertainment and unprecedentedly high levels of spending that aimed to divert the public's attention away from the dire situation the empire found itself, as much as it might have witnessed a few useful developments, such as the arrival of the printing press, the creation of a paper factory and a fire brigade, as well as the translation of foreign works into the vernacular.[116]

Following this chapter was a chapter on the "Ottoman-Turkish civilisation," which summarised many of the points raised above. However, there was one point that should be emphasised. All authors lamented the loss of the mindset that had valued the fine arts and the sciences. The sultans in this era paid a great deal of attention to the development of the sciences, with Mehmet II, Selim I, and Suleiman I commissioning the construction of medreses alongside mosques, wherein the leading thinkers and teachers of the period gathered.[117] More than operating as institutions of religious learning, medreses offered training in law, medicine and mathematics," thereby raising "invaluable, Turkish experts,"[118] transforming Istanbul into one of the world's leading centres of knowledge by the sixteenth century.[119] Later, this science-based curriculum of the earlier empire was surrendered in favour of one that was structured around religion,[120] which hastened the empire's downfall.[121] Overall, all texts agreed that as religion creeped in, "we could not keep up with and benefit from

[113] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V*, p52.
[114] Şölen and Arıç, p49; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p54; and İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, p64.
[115] Akın and Uluçay, p58.
[116] Şölen and Arıç, pp52-53; Akın and Uluçay, p59; İnal and Çalapala, pp70-71.
[117] İnal and Çalapala, p80.
[118] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p126.
[119] Ibid., p125.
[120] Akın and Uluçay, p73.
[121] Ibid.

the advances in Europe,"[122] and Europeans "gained superiority over us."[123] Then, an important reason why the Ottoman Empire was able to achieve so many successes in its earlier years was because the sultans had understood the importance of scientific and technological knowledge. It was also on this foundation that the Turkish system of education was premised. Thereafter, the infiltration of Islam into every sphere of life, —especially into those domains that used to be governed according to scientific knowledge— had chipped away at the empire's dynamism and strength, and eventually precipitated its demise. Unless religion was kept in check and its influence restricted to the private realm, it could evolve into a destructive force.

In return, this communicated to students that, as "ideal" Turks, they should confine religion to the realm of the private and the personal. The texts found value in the fact that the *medreses* taught religious knowledge but emphasised how they combined the teaching of this type of knowledge with the teaching of the latest advances in the sciences and humanities to produce full-rounded individuals. Both sets of texts (pre- and post-1954) put this messaging forward, which also mirrored the system of education that was being put in place in the late 1940s and the 1950s — as well as the Turkish state's switch from "hard" secularism to "soft" secularism vis-à-vis the state-sanctioned lifestyle that "ideal" Turks were expected to adopt.

Also argued in this chapter was the fact that Europe's rise was always going to be at Turks' expense. Europe was not only making progress, but it was making progress "over us," meaning that Europe's "win" determined Turks' "lose, and that for one side to win, the other had to lose. This instilled a sense of distrust vis-à-vis Europe and any other group that might be construed as its representation, such as Turkey's ethnic and religious minorities.

The age of reform

The next three chapters were on the so-called reform (*Islahat*) and *Tanzimat* periods, as well as the First and Second Constitutional Periods. The material presented in these chapters are crucial, as they revolved around the final centuries of the empire

[122] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, p72.
[123] Ibid., p73.

before the outbreak of World War I, when "decline" continued apace, with the empire suffering further territorial losses and being outrun and side-lined by Europe in almost every area in which they had once been more advanced. Interactions with Europe also became denser in this period, offering a better glimpse into the Ottomans' perception of Europe and Europeans in return.

The *Islahat* period witnessed the introduction of a series of reforms that re-modelled the empire's army after those in Europe, first under Selim III (1789-1807) and then his successor Mahmud II (1808-1839). Unat and Su described Selim III as "a clever sultan," for having realised the need to re-organise the armies.[124] To this end, he imported weapons from Europe, invited instructors from France and Sweden, and brought into use new uniforms that were inspired by those worn by European soldiers, which culminated in the creation of a professional army that became an alternative to the janissary corps.[125] Taking this a step further in 1826, Mahmud II destroyed the janissaries, who by that point had not only become an ineffective fighting force and disrupted virtually every attempt at rejuvenation, and thereby cleared up a major stumbling block in the way of the "Turkish" army's transformation.[126] Thus far into the discussion, the narrative remained the same: military-related developments occupied the focal point of the authors' lens as well as the messaging that Ottomans needed to learn from Europe to regain their dynamism on the world-stage — which meant, as it will be remembered from the previous discussions, a return to Turks' true selves, since Europe had been able to rise on the world-stage by following the examples' Turks had set in the earlier centuries.

This approach also shaped the description of the individuals student learned about in the chapter on *Tanzimat*. One of them was Mustafa Reşit Pasha, who is credited with playing an influential, if not a leading, role in the production of the "Edict of Gülhane" (1839) that set in motion the era of sweeping reforms. Employed in the empire's diplomatic service, Mustafa Reşit "served as ambassador in European capitals," Unat and Su underlined, and was an "open-minded man, who loved his

[124] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p146.
[125] Ibid., p147.
[126] Ibid., p151.

nation ("*milletini sever*") and wanted the best for his country."[127] Included within this description was a list of exemplary characteristics: a European mindset and a desire to serve one's country that was fuelled by one's love for his fellow countrymen. Also setting a model for students was Gazi Osman Pasha, who had coordinated the empire's defence efforts at Plevne in the 1877-1878 Russo-Turkish war. He was responsible for "our army's" performance, despite the sultan's mismanagement of the war effort from his throne.[128]

Indeed, Unat and Su would always designate the army as "Turkish." Another case in point was the Italian invasion of Tripoli (1911), when the Italian regiments were confronted by "the Turkish forces" under the command of Mustafa Kemal.[129] By contrast, the leadership and the government —and correlatively, any sort of action that had been taken by the prerogative of either of these entities— would be labelled "Ottoman." For example, when discussing the confrontation between Mahmud II and the Governor of Egypt Mohammed Ali, students were told that it was "the Ottoman state" that had sought assistance from Russia, and never "us" or "our leader."[130]

Of course, the scope of the centuries of reform was not confined to military-related matters. Much had changed in the *Tanzimat* period, Unat and Su added, including the way "our government operated," referring to the establishment of the ministries of the interior and foreign affairs, as well as "our language and literature," with the translation of novels, short stories and plays from European languages into "our own."[131] Yet, it was also in this period that "the sultans and the leading statesmen" started borrowing ever-growing sums of money from European governments to fund their excessive lifestyles, of which the new palaces that were being built across Istanbul were the greatest manifestation.[132] Again, this strategic use —or in this case, the disuse— of personal pronouns when narrating the activities of the sultans created a calculated distance between the material and its audience; emotionally and psychologically, students were far removed from the consequences

[127] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p156.
[128] Ibid., pp163-164.
[129] Ibid., p168.
[130] Ibid., p152.
[131] Ibid., p160.
[132] Ibid., p160.

of the sultans' decisions or actions. On the other hand, they were supposed to feel a more personal attachment to cities, concepts and institutions that, as per the authors, were still relevant to the 1950s' Turkey.

Strongly disliked were also the Christian minorities within the empire, who were unappreciative of the new rights granted to them through the *Tanzimat* reforms, seeking out ways to separate themselves from "Turkey."[133] Up until this point, the empire's ethnic and religious minorities had been absent from the historical narrative, suggesting that they were irrelevant and peripheral to, and in fact virtually non-existent in the making of the empire's more glorious centuries. Some discussions contained examples that would have communicated to students the dangers of allowing different religions to spread among Turks. But in these examples, the sources of threat were always external. Now, the texts were starting to frame non-Muslim and non-Turkish communities *within* the body of the empire as unreliable entities.

Every textbook after 1954 described Selim III and Mahmud II in the same way, praising them for having recognised the need to reorganise the army. Akın and Uluçay called Selim "open-minded and innovative."[134] According to İnal and Çalapala, both sultans had understood that, unless they set the empire on a European-inspired trajectory, the state was going to crumble.[135] Mustafa Reşit Paşa and Gazi Osman Paşa once again received stellar treatments with the former being described as someone who was "knowledgeable, patriotic,"[136] "understood the West well, spoke Western languages, and appointed like-minded people of the same calibre to positions of authority."[137] In this vein, Gazi Osman Pasha was "a great Turkish hero" for having defeated an enemy that was "much, much more powerful, thereby reminding the world of the matchless heroism of Turks."[138]

Just like in Unat and Su's textbook, the army continued to be treated as an entity that belonged to "us." For instance, Şölen and Arıç wrote that between 1807 and 1812, "we" were fighting the Russians, adding that "we" had to give up the region

[133] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p160.
[134] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p87.
[135] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, p93.
[136] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V*, p85.
[137] Akın and Uluçay, p95.
[138] İnal and Çalapala, p109.

of Bessarabia when "we" were ultimately defeated.[139] Following the defeat of "our army" at the hands of Egyptians, furthermore, Mahmud II agreed to an understanding of cooperation with Russia, according to which the Russians were supposed to come to "our" aid, should a third power attack "us."[140] In another instance, Russians, "who wanted the Ottoman state to remain weak," were said to have provoked the Bosnians living under "Ottoman purview" to demand independence; Russians had then attacked "us" when such demands were struck down.[141] Yet another example is Akın and Uluçay as well as İnal and Çalapala's critique of Abdülhamit, who had not only stifled the reform movement (as discussed below), but his miscalculations had also lost "us" significant chunks of land,[142] devastating "the Turkish people, whose heart overflowed with the love for their homeland."[143] As these examples demonstrated, any changes to the status of land and territory was also considered a development that should concern the contemporary generation of Turks, whereas changes at the leadership level were always carried out by agents and institutions who were referred to in the third person, who therefore appeared at a distance; it was "the Ottoman state" —and not "the Turkish state"— that had remained weak.

It is worth focussing on the above statement made about Russia in the textbooks that entered into use after 1954, as it reflected the Turkish state's changing perception of the Soviet Union against the backdrop of the Cold War. Now that Turkey was aligning itself with the U.S. in the bipolar division of the world, they started to present a derisive image of Russia. Russia is already described as an entity that wanted to destabilise Turks in the above-quoted example. Several other texts also underlined how Russia was working towards "our downfall."[144] Erasing "the Ottomans" from the map was the perennial mission of all Russian czars,[145] and Czar Nicholas I had even approached Britain to come up with a plan to invade and partition "Turkey's territories."[146] Russians were also said to be spreading rumours about "Turks," calling

[139] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V*, p79.
[140] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, pp91-92.
[141] Şölen and Arıç, p91.
[142] Akın and Uluçay, p103; İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, p113.
[143] İnal and Çalapala, p113.
[144] Şölen and Arıç, p86; Akın and Uluçay, p92;
[145] İnal and Çalapala, p103.
[146] Şölen and Arıç, p86.

them "executioners of Christians" and "devils."[147] There were also some positive remarks made about Russia, but these were mostly about the "Europeanising" trajectory that Russia had embarked on under Peter the Great, which was supposed to set an example for Turkey. Şölen and Arıç argued that "Russia had been a backward country" up until the reign of Peter the Great, who re-organised his country based on the precedents set by Europe, disassembling "the Russian equivalent of the janissary corps and replacing it with an army who received a European-style training," and introducing for both men and women a European-inspired dress-code.[148] Making a similar point, İnal and Çalapala argued that Peter the Great "had grasped the backwardness of his people," as a result of which he "Europeanised" the upper-classes, opened new schools and factories, and established a strong army.[149]

Non-ethnic and non-Muslim minorities were also the *personae non gratae* of post-1954 texts. Although Unat and Su had singled out these same groups as enemies within and without, the textbooks after 1954 adopted a more passionate tone when "enlightening" students to the alleged dangers presented by non-Turks. Drawing inspiration from the ideas coming out of the French Revolution and motivated by "our failures" in supressing the Serbian uprising, Greeks also took action towards establishing their own states.[150] Students learned that Greeks had even set up clandestine organisations that operated on an "anti-Turkish agenda" and disseminated "anti-Turkish information."[151] Those who joined such organisations prodded the larger Greek community to take action against "us," which finally led to their separation from "us."[152] İnal and Çalapala put forward that the Greek and Jewish merchants had accumulated significant amounts of wealth by selling *ulufes* — certificates that were issued to janissaries which rendered them entitled to trimonthly payments.[153] This, the authors claimed, contributed to Greeks maintaining a higher standard of living than Turks.[154] The Greeks' singling out would have been connected

[147] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, p108.
[148] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V*, p54.
[149] İnal and Çalapala, p65.
[150] Şölen and Arıç, p81.
[151] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p89.
[152] Ibid., pp89-90.
[153] İnal and Çalapala, p94.
[154] Ibid., p98.

to the deteriorating diplomatic relations with Greece in this period. Interestingly enough, the narrative continued to exclude the Armenian, Kurdish and Alevi communities; keeping them brushed out of the historical account would have automatically invalidated any claims of violence or policies of extermination inflicted upon them. Since non-Turkish and non-Muslim communities allegedly had such comfortable lives, furthermore, any allegations regarding Ottoman massacres would simply be a lie. All of this would have fuelled even more distrust against non-Turks.

World War I, the Independence Struggle, and the rise of the Turkish Republic

As per Unat and Su's text, the Ottoman leadership and the Turkish public were now thought of as separate entities. It was the decisions and actions of the former that embroiled the latter in trouble, while the Turkish people would set an example of courage and resilience in pulling themselves away from a situation they themselves had not been responsible for. This distinction lay at the heart of Mustafa Kemal's *Speech,* which he delivered over the course of six days at the CHP's General Congress between 15-20 October 1927. As Toni Alaranta argues, the speech constituted the official historical view of the Republic's foundation, presenting "the struggle for independence as an effort accomplished by the Turkish nation to construct a Turkish nation-state through descriptions of the internal enemy and national will."[155]

Even in the 1950s, *Nutuk* still served as the foundation of the official narrative on World War I and the struggle for independence. The discussion on World War I in fact read as if it had been lifted out of its pages. Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish nation, including the army that was always described as Turkish, was constantly pitted against their "other," the "degenerate" sultan and those that populated the "incompetent" Ottoman status apparatus. The Sultan and his men "did not think about the country," wrote Unat and Su; the Sultan only cared about safeguarding his throne, while the ministers carried out every dictum of the enemy in an effort to protect their positions.[156]

[155] Toni Alaranta, "Mustafa Kemal's Six-Day Speech of 1927: Defining the Official Historical View of the Foundation of the Turkish Republic," *Turkish Studies* 9, no.1 (2008), p116.
[156] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p181.

Against them were those who loved their countries, who courageously fought for "our" fatherland, while the sultan betrayed the valour of "our" troops.[157] Although "those leading the state" were confident in a swift German victory, Mustafa Kemal (serving as a military attaché in Bulgaria at the time) strongly questioned the government's trust in the infallibility of German stewardship and took action accordingly.[158] When "the Ottoman state entered the war," Russia had become locked into the Black Sea; to help Russia break out of its isolation, the naval forces of Britain and France launched an assault on the Dardanelles. "Thanks to the unerring, on-the-mark shooting and targeting of Turkish artillerymen," however, they could not pass through.[159] Then, Britain and France deployed their armies to the Gallipoli peninsula (*Gelibolu yarımadası*), where they were confronted by "the Turkish army and its matchless commander Mustafa Kemal…and felt the weight of Turkish strength."[160]

This narrative also suggested that the Turkish people and Mustafa Kemal formed one, single entity: the people who eventually made up the Turkish nation were those who had hitched their wagons to the struggles waged specifically and exclusively by Mustafa Kemal, both during World War I and the independence struggle (1919-1923). What transpired in the Caucasus, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, and Egypt between 1914 and 1918, for instance, did not receive a mention. Unat and Su even claimed that "the Ottoman state" had incurred many losses on these fronts because of "inefficient leadership and command,"[161] implying that the theatres of conflict wherein Mustafa Kemal was not present would not be credited to the Turkish people and had nothing to do with the creation of the Turkish Republic.

The independence struggle, too, was conveyed via the Kemalist discourse that dominated *Nutuk*, again placing the Turkish nation and Mustafa Kemal diametrically at odds with the Ottoman government. The "famous Turkish hero" Mustafa Kemal "knew that the country would not be saved by smiling at the enemy; according to him, only fighting would suffice to this end. It was better to die as a nation with dignity

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[157] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p180-181.
[158] Ibid., p176. — Same sentiments were expressed in the 1954 text Şölen ve Arıç, *Tarih V*, p97.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid., p177.

rather than continue to exist without."[162] After he had left Istanbul for the Black Sea port-city of Samsun to set in motion the independence struggle on 19 May 1919 and later arrived in Erzurum, Mustafa Kemal surrendered his army uniform, because he wanted to forge ahead with the support and love of the Turkish people.[163] The government in Istanbul was afraid of Mustafa Kemal, because "he enjoyed the backing of the Turkish nation,"[164] and furious at the fact that the nation had rallied around him, it wanted to punish everyone who collaborated with him. Not only had the sultan condemned Mustafa Kemal to death, but he had also assembled an "army of paid, incompetent mercenaries," whom he despatched to Anatolia to stifle the efforts of "the new Turkish Government."[165]

Thereafter, Unat and Su described the various battles that made up the independence struggle, including the First (6-11 January 1921) and Second (23 March-1 April 1921) Battles of İnönü as well as the Battle of Sakarya (23 August-13 September 1921).[166] The narrative glorified the sacrifices of the Turkish people, for example, by asserting that "having been dealt a shattering blow in the Second Battle of İnönü, the enemy paid the price of pitting themselves against Turks."[167] The final military operation on 26 August 1922, dubbed "The Great Offensive," was "egregiously violent," with the Turkish army "flowing like a flood" against the enemy trenches and "the Turkish artilleries rumbling without interruption." This left the enemy "dumbfounded" and sent them "scrambling away."[168] When the enemy was decisively defeated on 30 August 1922, this victory showed the world "what Turks were capable of, attracting everyone's attention and appreciation."[169] There was no mention of the Armenian genocide or the burning of İzmir.

This narrative, founded in the narrative of *Nutuk*, carried over into the textbooks published after 1954 with more intensified language.[170] There were,

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[162] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p181.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid., p182.
[165] Ibid., p184.
[166] See, Ibid., pp186-189.
[167] Ibid., p187.
[168] Ibid., p192. – also, see Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V*, pp109-110.
[169] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p193.
[170] Şölen and Arıç, p101 and p110.

however, a couple of more important differences between the two accounts. Not only had the sultan signed the Sevres Treaty with the Allied powers, or the "nation's death warrant,"[171] as a result of which the Ottoman territory became heavily partitioned — "a project that revealed the bad intentions Europeans had against Turks."[172] But the "weak and helpless" sultan had also organised "a caliph's army, populated with well-meaning, yet naïve and ignorant foot soldiers,[173] and ordered it to attack "our national forces" to curb the resistance efforts.[174] Interestingly, Unat and Su had not specified that the army the sultan gathered (which they had described as "unpaid, incompetent mercenaries") was a caliph's army. This would have worked as an example of how detrimental a force religion could be if it were allowed to organise public life. It also would have set the stage for the introduction of Kemalist reforms, the first of which was going to be the separation of the sultanate and the caliphate.

Furthermore, the Sultan and his ministers were not the only unwelcome figures in the post-1954 rendition of the struggle for independence. These texts also claimed that the nation was beset with figures and groups who were "hiding in plain sight and waiting for the right moment to attack." For instance, minorities had formed fifth columns against the interests "of our country, stabbing us in the back…despite having lived in the Turkish homeland more comfortably than us and nourished themselves with Turkish bread."[175] This reminded students that the presence of ethnic and religious minorities among Turks was a source of danger. As with other examples of the machinations of non-Turkish and non-Muslim communities, such portrayals would have justified the policies of violence and discrimination followed —and indeed would be followed again in 1955— against these communities.

Furthermore, when the Greek commander-in-chief was captured, he received "a very good treatment" at the hands of Mustafa Kemal, who thereby "once more showed to the world the Turks' humanity as much as its courage and heroism."[176] Like the Byzantine emperors and generals, the Greek commander, Nikolaos Trikoupis, was

[171] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p116; İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, p133.
[172] İnal and Çalapala, p132.
[173] Ibid., p131.
[174] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V*, pp106-107; Akın and Uluçay, pp114-116.
[175] Şölen and Arıç, p100.
[176] Akın and Uluçay, p121.

also not named in any of the texts, which —at least from the students' perspective— would have made him an easily forgettable figure and therefore peeled away from his importance. The presentation of this encounter between Mustafa Kemal and Trikoupis was reminiscent of the encounter between Sultan Alparslan and Emperor Diogenes after the Battle of Malazgirt (1071), and identified Mustafa Kemal as another victorious Turkish commander in a long line of victorious Turkish commanders. It also signified how the end of the Ottoman Empire, which was going to culminate in the founding of the Republic, was also a return to the more glorious trajectory that Turks had been on centuries earlier, symbolised by their victory in Malazgirt. Making a similar point, the texts added that the joy Turks had felt when the enemy left İzmir on 9 September 1922 "was reminiscent of the joy "that had filled the hearts of our ancestors at *Malazgirt*, *Niğbolu*, *Çaldıran* and *Mohacs*. Led by Mustafa Kemal, "Turks had put on a performance that would have honoured its ancestors."[177]

These anecdotes completely glossed over the burning of İzmir after Turks had recaptured the city, the expulsion of the Greek community, as well as the Armenian genocide. One should question why Turks would have felt "overjoyed" at the fact that they almost burnt İzmir to the ground. Since this episode was omitted from the official narrative, students would not have been aware of such a development, however.

The Republican reforms

The penultimate chapter in Unat and Su's textbook was on the series of reforms that were pushed through in the early years of the Republic. From this point on, Unat and Su discussed anything connected to a pre-1923 event with the vague temporal clause "back then." The objective was to present the Ottoman Empire as an antithesis to the Turkish Republic in virtually every sphere of life.

"Back then," they wrote, people were discriminated based on their wealth and education. The "old" Shariat courts often listened to false witnesses, accepted bribes, and engaged in all sorts of corruption. The Republican courts, by contrast, acknowledged the equality of all citizens before the law, and signed into effect a civil

[177] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p122.

code that placed men and women on an equal legal footing.[178] "Back then," furthermore, there was significant inequality between men and women. Women were effectively considered slaves or ornaments, and nobody even thought of paying attention to their ideas. With the onset of the Republic, women gained the respect they deserved; they entered the business world and could run for office.[179] Regarding dress-code and timescales, students learned that men used to wear red, fringed hats called *fez*, which "made them appear laughable," and Turkish women wore a burqa with a face covering. Neither had anything to do with religion or nationalism, the authors cautioned.[180] Under the Republic, hats replaced the *fez*, and the burqa was replaced with "clothing that is worn by civilised people," which "saved" Turkish men and women from appearing ridiculous in front of other nations. There were further changes that brought Turkey in step with "the entire world," including the adoption of the Western calendar, timescale, and numerals that were in use "in highly developed nations." [181] Other reforms included the adoption of the new Turkish alphabet; the establishment of the Turkish Historical Society that was tasked with writing Turkish history based on "accurate sources and documents" and telling "the entire world the history of the Turks, who had a long past and an old civilisation"[182]; the establishment of Turkish Language Association[183]; and the founding of technical institutes, village institutes and village schools in every corner of the country.[184] Added to these were a series of projects to develop the country's infrastructure, which speeded up the construction of new irrigation systems; revitalised local industries; and improved transportation links across the country by expanding the railway network.[185]

The section on Turkey's military —the last section of the chapter— did not read like a list of reforms; it was more like a declaration on the state of the Turkish

[178] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p203.
[179] Ibid., p203.
[180] Ibid., p204.- The later texts would be more explicit about the fact that the *fez* set Turks apart from Europeans; and that the Ottoman were not using the calendar that the Europeans were using.
[181] Ibid., pp203-204.
[182] Ibid., p205.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid., p206.
[185] Ibid., pp207-208.

army. Unat and Su observed that every branch of the military stood at the ready to safeguard the country and the pride of the nation. Whether serving within the ranks of the army or in the home-front, "every Turk knew that he or she was tasked with national self-defence." In "this country of ours that is a valley of heroes," every Turk had "an undying faith in the strength of the Turkish soldier."[186] In whatever form necessary, the Turkish nation did not shy away from committing any sort of sacrifice; "the army relied on the nation, who in return trusted the army."[187]

The post-1954 textbooks, too, took students through the same set of reforms, starting with the abolition of the sultanate and the caliphate.[188] As per usual, the tone was more bombastic and nationalistic, employing a language that was more blistering when discussing the state of the empire and more venerating when unpacking the changes that were rolled out in the early years. İnal and Çalapala wrote that the reforms made sure "Turkey would never be mistaken for the Ottoman Empire, now confined to the pages of history."[189] After having gained "its Republic," "our nation" had to make progress in the field of civilisation, "which it had lacked for centuries." As per Akın and Uluçay, Atatürk had not waged the independence struggle solely to cleanse "our country" from enemies; he also wanted to develop "our nation" in every way possible,[190] "reach the level of developed nations, and even surpass them."[191] As a result of the reforms, "our nation made such progress that it shocked the world," inspiring several other nations "to open their eyes and try to remove the shackles of backwardness and slavery."[192]

The discussion on the separation of religious and worldly matters included interesting expressions. İnal and Çalapala told students that this reform had salvaged "our nation from backward-mindedness,"[193] while Akın and Uluçay wrote that the Ottoman Empire had been a Muslim-Turkish state, whose foundations were

[186] Unat and Su, *İlkokullar İçin Tarih V. Sınıf*, p210-211.
[187] Ibid., p211.
[188] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V*, p115; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p112.
[189] İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, p137.
[190] Akın and Uluçay, p126.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid.
[193] İnal and Çalapala, p139.

predicated on Islamic principles.[194] Over time, these "institutions of backwardness" crumbled down in Europe, while, even in the so-called eras of stagnation and decline, "we still had in the Ottoman Empire people who meddled in the affairs of the state by using religion as an excuse."[195] In return, the removal of religion from the public sphere was tantamount to "the fixing of a deficiency" that allowed "us" to march ahead in the field of civilisation.[196] Interestingly, İnal and Çalapala reaffirmed Turks' commitment to Islam, with the caveat that, "in this new system of *laiklik*," religious principles only governed religious matters, while the principles of governance would be modelled after those in "advanced countries."[197] Şölen and Arıç also reminded students that the separation of religious and worldly matters was also a practise in ancient Turkish civilisations.[198]

So, the separation of religious and worldly affairs did not mean anti-Islamic radicalisation or the creation of a new social modality. As much as it was supposed to elevate Turkey to the level of advanced civilisation, the reform also facilitated a return to Turks' true self. It furthermore reaffirmed that Turkey's official approach to religion was not changing in the 1950s: in the pre-modern Turkish civilisations in Central Asia, the Seljuk Empire, and the first three centuries of the Ottoman Empire, religion was a private and a personal matter and did not inform the actions or policies of the government or government officials. It was this relationship with Islam that the CHP and Mustafa Kemal had reinstituted, which the DP was taking forward.

The rest of the discussion was quite similar to that of Unat and Su. All authors lent a great deal of emphasis to the rights and freedoms women were gaining under the Republic versus their statuses "back then" or "in the era of sultans"[199]; took students through the changes in dress and attire[200]; justified the surrendering of the lunar calendar by explaining that "our time scales were not compatible with those of

[194] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p127; and İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, p139.
[195] Akın and Uluçay, p127.
[196] Ibid.
[197] İnal and Çalapala, p139.
[198] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V*, pp115-116.
[199] Akın and Uluçay, p128; Şölen and Arıç, p116 and p118; İnal and Çalapala, p145.
[200] Akın and Uluçay, p128-129; Şölen and Arıç, p116; İnal and Çalapala, p141.

advanced nations"[201] as well as the Arabic alphabet in favour of the Latin alphabet so that illiterate people could "quickly learn" how to read and write[202]; and told students that *medreses* had to be closed, because they had become hiding spots for "absent-minded people and draft dodgers."[203] Furthermore, these authors noted the founding of Turkish Historical Society and Turkish Language Association, whose missions were to simplify the Turkish language and publish works on "the great role Turks played in the history of humankind and civilisation," respectively.[204] No new information was communicated vis-à-vis reforms to revamp the economy, with the texts focusing on the implementation of new systems of irrigation, the construction of dams, the introduction of new measures that were designed to protect local industries, the expansion of transportation networks, mainly railways terminals and ports, "such as those in Europe and America,"[205] as well as the establishment of credit banks (such as Sümerbank and Etibank), and factories that produced sugar (in Alpullu, Uşak, Eskişehir and Turhal), cotton (in Kayseri, Nazilli, Ereğli and Malatya), wool (in Bursa), and paper (in İzmir), and manufactured iron and steel (in Karabük),[206] along with a series of measures to develop Turkish agriculture.[207] As a result, "the pieces of our country that had been left to ruin under the sultanate finally started to blossom."[208]

Some of the post-1954 textbooks concluded this chapter with a note on the state of the military, just as Unat and Su had done. "Our army is always ready to protect our country and our honour…and the matchless heroism of our soldiers has become legendary across the entire world." The annexation of Antioch (Hatay) in 1938 as well as the victorious culmination of the Korean War (1950-1953) had all been possible thanks to the power of Turks. "If we remember the words of Kaşgarlı Mahmut from the eleventh century (who had stated that "Turk means the soldiers of God") in

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[201] Şölen and Arıç, *Tarih V*, pp116-117; Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, pp128-129; İnal and Çalapala, *Tarih İlkokul: 5*, p143. – İnal and Çalapala also invoked the adjective "Western" instead of "advanced."
[202] Şölen and Arıç, p117; Akın and Uluçay, p129; İnal and Çalapala, p144.
[203] Akın and Uluçay, pp129-130; İnal and Çalapala, p143.
[204] Şölen and Arıç, p117; Akın and Uluçay, p131; İnal and Çalapala, p144.
[205] Şölen and Arıç, pp118-120; Akın and Uluçay, pp131-132; İnal and Çalapala, p146.
[206] Şölen and Arıç, p119.
[207] Ibid.
[208] Akın and Uluçay, p132.

conjunction with Atatürk's 'How happy is the one who says I am a Turk,' we will once again remind ourselves of our trust in our army and our nation."[209] This was not a reform but served effectively as a pledge to tie students to the flag. It was perhaps the most apt way to conclude a history lesson, reminding students of their foremost duty in life, as stated in the curriculum and repeated several times in textbooks — to devote themselves to the service of their nation and be ready to die for its sake.

Conclusion

Having just spent a year learning about the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic in great detail, in what ways were students expected to read their past as commentaries on themselves? As it would have been made abundantly clear, the myth of a military nation had endured spectacularly throughout the text. Above and beyond anything else, students would have learned that they were descendants of a line of epic heroes, whose martial character and valour they had inherited. Soldierliness was therefore hegemonic in the public understanding of what it meant to be Turkish. Student also learned that Turks had channelled their soldierliness toward one end in particular: to safeguard the unity of their homeland. In this sense, Anatolia —as the Turkish homeland— was conceptualised not only as a homeland only for Turks, but also as a homeland that could be protected only and specifically by Turks. These two arguments captured the two planks of the Turkish nationalist discourse that the government channelled throughout the 1950s: race (or *soy*)-based and soil-based.

Another key tenet of being a Turk was being Muslim. But Turks —like their ancestors in Central Asia, the Seljuk Empire and during the "birth" and "rise" phases of the Ottoman Empire— never let religion inform their actions with public consequences or decisions on worldly matters. This was the approach to Islam that the Republic was bringing back, as part of its grander endeavour of restoring the qualities that had carried Turks to the pinnacle of world civilisation. This chapter has discussed at various, relevant junctures how the description of the lifestyle of an "ideal" Muslim was predominantly seeped in the style of French, or "hard" secularism,

[209] Akın and Uluçay, *İlkokul V İçin Tarih*, p132.

but had started to transition to “soft” secularism in this period, which is best interpreted as in between the French and American styles of secularism. However, the state still controlled the type of Muslim an “ideal” Turk was expected to be — which suggested the *laik* nature of the Turkish nationalist discourse in the 1950s, as it had been since the 1930s.

The definition of an “ideal” Turk as a racially Turkish Sunni Muslim who lived within the boundaries of Anatolia meant that the non-Turks (those who were ethnically and therefore racially non-Turkish and non-Muslim) of Turkey were not only interlopers in a foreign land, but also viewed as eternal fifth columns, who would automatically plot with internal and external apostates. In line with the more intensifying language that pervaded the post-1954 material, they were depicted as agents with even more nefarious motives, who had no qualms about stabbing Turks in the back. Students were constantly reminded that, as history had shown, “anyone who is not from us” could not be trusted.

Another enemy was Europe. And the construction of this enemy, too, reinforced the Turkish education’s nationalist and nationalising agenda. Europe was first presented as an obstacle to Turks’ interests, mainly because it disrupted Turkish unity in Anatolia; and then became a yardstick of civilisation and an example for them to follow; and was then once again an entity that was vehemently against their efforts to reclaim the position they were destined to hold. As students learned, however, the concept of “Europeanisation” was just another way of expressing that the nation was becoming “more Turkish,” since Europe had built its civilisation on the foundations laid down by Turks, and what seemed to be European-inspired reforms would transform the nation into an entity akin to what had already existed before the sixteenth century. In this sense, Europe as well as the ethnic and religious minorities of the Republic were trying to prevent Turks from reconnecting with the roots of their greatness and once again becoming the most formidable force on the world-stage. To achieve this end, Turks needed to be surrounded by people who would be supportive of this goal. Only Turks, so racially Turkish Sunni-Muslims, belonged to this category.

Chapter 5
The lived experience of schooling

There are many reasons why governments pay attention to children's education. One reason is that, as discussed in the introduction, education provides one of the most effective vehicles of social and cultural engineering.[1] By exposing students to the "right" ideas, they control the way students think about themselves, about their nations, and about how their nations are positioned in the world vis-à-vis other nations and peoples. One side to this project of social and cultural engineering is the educational material that students learn from. Another is the environment in which they study this material. The chapter will focus on this aspect of education, analysing what students were supposed to "understand" by simply attending school every day in the 1950s—who they were, who they were *not*, and how they were supposed to be.

The early Republican administrations paid a great deal of attention to how the nation's children lived out their childhood, because children were "pure and malleable."[2] Unlike the adult population, children had no past. From the leadership's perspective, this meant that they offered a blank canvas upon which the government could impose its views. The absence of any recollection of how life was lived before 1923 or any attachment to attitudes and ideas associated with the pre-Republican past made children "malleable" in a way that the adult population might never be.[3] If raised properly, they could bend to the government's will and toe the government's

[1] There are many studies on the growing interest in children and the "construction" of childhood in the early Republic. See especially the essays in Benjamin C. Fortna, ed., *Child in the Late Ottoman Empire and After* (Leiden; Brill Publishing, 2016); Yasemin Gencer, "We Are Family: The Child and Modern Nationhood in Early Turkish Republican Cartoons (1923-28)," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 32, no.2 (2012); Güven Gürkan Öztan, *Türkiye'de Çocukluğun Politik İnşası* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2019); and Yiğit Akın, *Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar: Erken Cumhuriyet'te Beden Terbiyesi ve Spor* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004).

[2] Kathryn Libal, "National Futures: The Child Question in Republican Turkey," (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2001), p120.

[3] Çiçek, "The Interplay between Modernization and Reconstruction of Childhood: Romantic Interpretations of the Child in Early Republican Era Popular Magazines," in *Child in the Late Ottoman Empire and After*, ed. Benjamin Fortna, p28; and Yasemin Gencer, "Child and Nation in Early Republican Turkey," *Ottoman History Podcast*, 19 April 2013, https://www.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/2013/04/childhood-family-press-turkish-nationalism-republic.html.

line without judgement or much questioning—something the adult population could also not be trusted to do.[4] This understanding made the experience of childhood a main focus of social engineering policies, transforming childhood years into a phase in one's life that needed to be lived in a certain way, so that children could grow up to guarantee the future of the country's socio-political order. It was for this reason that schools served as major sites of experimentation.[5]

This chapter will look at three aspects of schooling that reveal the type of individual the Menderes government would have aimed to "create." It will first inspect the dress-codes and uniforms that were instituted across Turkey's public schools in the 1950s, teasing out how they fitted into the overall culture of schooling. The chapter will then examine various examples of "ideal" teachers and students to get a sense of the array of behaviours and attitudes teachers were supposed to display and students were expected to adopt. Lastly, it will focus on the nature of celebrations and commemorations to analyse how ceremonial occasions functioned as a microcosm of the culture of Turkishness that students were supposed to be socialised into.

Overall, the everyday experience of schooling reinforced the government's nationalist messaging that was simultaneously being channelled through the educational material. Every Turk was born a soldier, and the chief objective of education was to sharpen this innate soldierliness, creating a generation of Turks that was fiercely loyal to their nations. This messaging, originally formulated in the 1930s, remained consistent throughout the 1950s, albeit with a few changes.

First, the form of Turkish nationalism that schools fostered now demonstrated a growing consciousness of Turkey's Muslim identity. The core lesson of Turkish education —the extreme love for one's nation— was still free from any religious connotations; one did not love or defend one's nation in the name of Islam. Yet, students learned that the nation, to which they were to commit themselves, was a nation of Muslims. This turned non-Muslims into the target of their nationalism.

Second, in the political climate of the early Cold War years, the totalitarian nature of Turkish education had to be rethought. There was a proliferation of

[4] Çiçek, "The Interplay between Modernization and Reconstruction of Childhood," p29 and p31.
[5] Fortna, "Preface," in *Child in the Late Ottoman Empire and After*, p180.

extracurricular activities, such as student government, that were meant to introduce students to a life under democracy, reflecting the core values of the Western world that Turkey joined. Yet, as the below discussion will show, these measures remained mere trappings, as the way these extracurricular activities were carried out did not demonstrate a genuine commitment to a free and open society. The result was a patch of democracy being imposed on what remained fundamentally a system with authoritarian tendencies — which continued to place a premium on respecting figures of authority, conforming to rules, and carrying out commands without questioning.

It is also important to analyse the experience of schooling through the lens of gender, thinking about whether male and female students would have experienced "going to school" in the 1950s differently. Students constantly heard that "every Turk is born a soldier" throughout their time in school and, in the words of Ayşegül Altınay, "the barracks served as a major site for imagining the nation," then what role did women play in sustaining this "myth of a military-nation"?[6] This is particularly important from a gender perspective, since military-related concepts are often associated with masculinity, which makes it tempting to assume that the Republican national identity was markedly more masculine in its essence.

Being a soldier was in some ways genderless.[7] Females were told they were "the military daughters of the military nation," while males were told they were "the military sons of the military nation."[8] And in fact, the rhetoric of equality dominated the early- and mid-century Republic's discussions on men and women. Yet, this chapter will argue that it was more accurate to view the newfound status of women through Deniz Kandiyoti's analysis — as "emancipated but unliberated."[9] Altınay makes a connected argument, positing that women exerted "designated agencies," which was an "agency by invitation only."[10] Şirin Tekeli echoes this point of view by

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[6] Ayşe Altınay, *The Myth of the Military Nation: Militarism, Gender and Education*, p31.
[7] Öztan, *Türkiye'de Çocukluğun Politik İnşası*, pp86 and p90.
[8] Altınay, pp46-47.
[9] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Emancipated but Unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish Case," *Feminist Studies* 13, no.2 (1987).
[10] Altınay, p52. Also covering this topic, White, "State Feminism, Modernization, and the Turkish Republican Woman," *NWSA Journal* 15, no.3 (2003); Yeşim Arat, "The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey," in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey,* ed. Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşit Kasaba (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1997),

arguing that the Kemalist reforms never addressed the "problem" of male predominance in society and put in place a new social contract that would secure equality between men and women.[11] Yaprak Zihnioğlu, too, has made the case that the Kemalists set in motion a movement for women's right without women, imposed a singular type of an ideal woman —"the Republican woman"— on the female population that would deny them their maturity in age or experience (which she terms "infant woman" or "*çocuk kadın*" in Turkish), and continued to accept the public realm as a male domain.[12]

This meant that only those women with certain characteristics would be "invited" to share the same space as men and be placed on an equal footing with them. Even if the iconography of nationalism displayed images of empowered, independent women in leadership roles, the *practice* of nationalism remained the domain of males. This understanding of men and women's place in society was also evident in the education system, the experience of childhood and experience of schooling. Although the rhetoric of equality dominated the national narrative, it was, at the core, a narrative with men cast in leading positions and women relegated to supporting roles. Far from being "genderless," the myth of the military-nation was a gendered discourse, in which "military daughters of the military-nation" remained mere symbols or exceptions. Where applicable, this chapter will present examples of how the system of schooling silenced the "female-ness" of its female students, amalgamating them into what remained predominantly a male experience, and assigned them roles that only supported, and never spearheaded, the chief mission of being Turkish, which was to enhance the greatness of the nation through soldierliness and maintenance of national unity.

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pp101-103; Arat, "Nation Building and Feminism in Early Republican Turkey," *Conflict and Change in Twentieth Century*, ed. Celia Kerslake, Kerem Öktem and Philip Robins (Oxford: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), pp39-40; Zafer Toprak, "Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkasından Önce Kurulan Parti: Kadınlar Halk Fırkası," *Tarih ve Toplum* (March 1988), pp30-31; Kathryn Libal, "Staging Turkish Women's Emancipation: Istanbul, 1935," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4, no.1 (2008), pp34-35.

[11] Şirin Tekeli, "Tek Parti Döneminde Kadın Hareketi de Bastırıldı," *Sol Kemalizme Bakıyor*, ed. Ruşen Çakır (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1991), p109.

[12] Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2003).

A quick look at uniforms

When one mentions schooling or going to school, one thing that immediately comes to mind is uniforms. In fact, the sort of uniforms that are instituted in schools often reveal important information about the culture of discipline in that particular school; and in the case of public schools, about the culture of discipline in that very country in which those schools operate. In the case of 1950s Turkey, primary school students enrolled in public schools wore black apron with white collars, and were told to wear simple, undistinguishable, dark-coloured shoes. As part of the overall attire, male students had to have a short, soldier-like haircut, and female students were also encouraged to pull back their hair, supporting a tidy, clean outlook. This had in fact been the standard uniform in Turkish state schools since the 1930s and remained in effect until the 1989-1990 academic year.[13] For example, reminiscing about his primary school years, the author Altan Öymen mentions that, when he started his primary school education in September 1938, "uniforms in all state schools were the same; our aprons were sandy grey with a collar that was made from white pique fabric or white calico and had circular edges.[14]

Because the uniform remained consistent for several decades, it lends itself to a shorter analysis, which should explain the brevity of this section. Nevertheless, having students wear the same uniform between the 1930s until 1989 points at a clear line of continuity in terms of the culture of schooling. First, uniforms play an equalising role in terms of closing the apparent financial gap between students from different socio-economic backgrounds. The colours black and white are also formal, serious, and sober colours, imbuing the attire with a sense of conservatism. Added to this, the cut and the fit of an apron "blanket over" individual body types. The latter point is important, as the black apron is a particularly masculine attire. Instead of obscuring one's sexuality, it obscures the sexuality of female students, making them

[13] Interestingly enough, the black apron would only become mandated in 1981 as uniform, "Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı ile Diğer Bakanlıklara Bağlı Okullardaki Görevlilerle Öğrencilerin Kılık Kıyafetlerine İlişkin Yönetmelik," 22 July 1981. Prior to that, the ministry had only circulated instructions on dress-codes in 1942, effectively banning schools from requiring that students wore anything other than an apron, "Giyim Eşyası Hakkında Tamim," 1942.
[14] Altan Öymen, *Bir Dönem Bir Çocuk* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık, 2002), p79.

appear more "male" in public, which dovetails with the role the Republican regime assigned to women in the early Republic.

Furthermore, uniforms make it more difficult for individuals to stand out. In fact, when posing as a cohort of students, it is often easier to think of students not as individuals but as members of a larger community, since students wearing black aprons very easily fade into one another. Analysed from this perspective, it should not come as unexpected that the black apron appeared as part of the guidelines on dress-codes for the first time in the 1930s, when Turkey embarked on a more rigid, nationalising trajectory. Just as they would have done in the 1930s, schools in the 1950s, too, produced —or aimed to produce— a single type of individual who did not attract any attention because of his or her unique attributes. Indeed, any qualities that students might have had that would have set them apart was concealed behind the black apron and the soldierly haircut. It provided testament to Altınay's assertion that "the barracks served as a major site for imagining the nation," as quoted above, since students did resemble an army of soldiers, whose only function seemed to be to come together, set aside all their differences, and form a united front. Both the manliness of the uniforms and the soldier-like appearance of students reinforced a part of the messaging the ministry would have liked to channel though the experience of schooling — that every student was a soldier, and that their chief purpose in life was to contribute to and maintain national unity.

The ideal teacher and the ideal student

In April 1952, the journal *İlk Öğretim* (which means "primary education" in Turkish) ran a poem entitled "My School." It was meant to have been written from the perspective of a student, who wanted to convey how he felt about his school. It read, "being ignorant in this world means being half a human-being, and half human-beings are a threat to this country; one should study and labour for his country."[15]

Launched by the then-Minister of National Education Hasan Ali Yücel in 1939, *İlk Öğretim* had the stated mission of "facilitating communication and cooperation

[15] Muzaffer Baranok, "Okulum," *İlk Öğretim* 17, no.323 (1 January 1952), p224.

among primary school teachers and ministry officials."[16] It ran until 1966, publishing articles on issues that concerned teachers; domestic and international developments in education; the circumstances in which teachers had to operate; and commentaries about books, magazines, poems, plays and films with educational value.[17]

Since the above-mentioned poem was deemed fit to be printed in *İlk Öğretim*, the sentiments it expressed would have reflected the "official view" on how students should understand the reason behind coming to school every day. The poem is striking for holding education tantamount to public service —or to quote from the poem, labouring for one's country. If one went to school to be educated, the definition of an "educated person" was not simply one who could read and write, conduct basic arithmetic operations, or was familiar with the history and geography of one's country. It was someone who appreciated the importance of working for one's nation.

The Minister of National Education Tevfik İleri's radio address to mark the start of the first school year under a Demokrat administration revolved around this very point. The crux of the speech was on the need to "especially raise our children *vatanperver*."[18] Referring to someone who loves and nourishes (*perver*) his/her fatherland (*vatan*), *vatanperver* literally means "patriotic." However, it is more accurately transliterated as "nationalistic," as the way it is used in common parlance carries a stronger connotation than simply having loving feelings for one's country. It is more typically invoked to describe a person who is willing to commit all sorts of sacrifice in the name of their country.

İleri delivered a similar speech at the Teachers Institute for Girls in Konya a few days later, describing a teacher as someone "whose beating heart was consumed with the love for their country and nation," and as someone who could spark in the hearts of children "flames of knowledge along with nationalism."[19] Only then would "the nation's future stability" be guaranteed, he asserted in an address to Istanbul

[16] Hasan Ali Yücel, "Arkadaşlarım!," *İlk Öğretim*, no.1 (18 February 1939), p1.
[17] "İlk Öğretim dergisinin yayım programı," *İlk Öğretim* 19, no.378 (1954), p14.
[18] "Milli Eğitim Bakanı ders yılı münasebetiyle radyoda bir konuşma yaptı," *Akşam*, 2 October 1950, p2.
[19] "Milli Eğitim Bakanı Konya'da öğretmen namzetleriyle bir konuşma yaptı," *Akşam*, 7 October 1950, p2.

Teacher's Institute a few weeks after speaking in Konya.[20] It was the nation's teachers who were tasked with raising children "*vatanperver*," and the strength of nationalism they could muster in them carried crucial implications for the nation's future. If the youth was the Republic's saviour, a teacher's role was to facilitate the transformation of children into these saviours who would propagate the Turkish Republic.

Such views were also actively expressed by the leading intellectuals of the time, such as Şevket Rado, who worked as a columnist for the *Akşam* newspaper in the 1950s, later assuming responsibility over managing its editorial content. In an article he published around the start of the new school year in 1950, Rado reminded the nation's teachers that they were serving in the army — the "army of education."[21] And this army was "deployed" on two fronts, the war-front and the culture-front, which, in fact, could be thought of as one entity. To be fit for combat, it was not enough to receive military training; these "student-soldiers" needed to subscribe to a certain cultural vision. As İleri highlighted in his speeches and what the poem in *İlköğretim* conveyed, this vision required students to accept the nation as the lodestar of their universe and its protection as the chief purpose of their existence. And it was a teacher's ultimate responsibility to cultivate this sort of understanding.

Such an interpretation of a teacher's role persisted through the decade. Even towards the end of the 1950s, President Celal Bayar expressed similar views on a teacher's duties when delivering a speech in 1958 to mark the 110th anniversary of the founding of Çapa Higher Institute of Education in Istanbul.[22] In his remarks, Bayar set up a congruence between Turkey's army and its teaching corps. Reminiscent of Rado's article, Bayar once again blurred the boundaries between these two institutions, arguing that they jointly led the efforts on the country's "most noble and historical mission," which was to maintain the Republic and contribute to its "greatness." The members of the teaching corps were supposed to accomplish this by raising students with an all-consuming devotion to their countries.

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[20] "Öğretmen okulları açıldı," *Akşam*, 24 Ekim 1950, p2.
[21] Şevket Rado, "Cumhuriyet Devrinin Eğitim Ordusu," *Akşam*, 28 October 1950, p5.
[22] "Öğretmen Okullarının Kuruluş Yıldönümü," *Zafer*, 17 March 1958, p1 and p4. See also Bayar's speech at the opening of Bursa Educational Institute: "Bursa Eğitim Enstitüsü Açıldı," *Zafer*, 11 October 1958.

İlk Öğretim published the memoirs of several teachers, which are helpful in drawing a more vivid portrait of who qualified as an "ideal" teacher. In the 1952 issue of the journal, a teacher named Muzaffer Ergin introduces a colleague of his, whom he identifies as "a teacher outside the bounds of the law" as well as "an idealist and a happy teacher."[23] The reader understands that the colleague in question was native to Anatolia and had been assigned to a school in Macedonia around the time when the Balkan Wars were gathering storm. He was deeply unhappy with the circumstances he found himself in, as he only wished to be reunited with his ancestral land of Anatolia, and once again "to be able to breathe in in its air of freedom." "Nourished on the love of homeland and Turkishness," he was "tormented" by the fact that the lands that had once belonged to his homeland were taken away at the expense of "his heroic ancestors…and now reeked of gunpowder and blood."[24] He was disgusted by the "wayward and insolent" ways of the Bulgarians that lived in the village, and so left his house only when it was time to "serve." Otherwise, he wanted to be alone with the thoughts of "the glorious epics" the village had been responsible for, and "ran in his mind from battle to battle, from victory to victory that adorned the annals of history."[25] During his lessons, "the tiny hearts of his students would be filled with the pride of being the grandchildren of such a generation."[26]

This entry offers much to tease out. First, it discussed an event from 1912-1913, but the entry was still published in a government-sanctioned journal, which means the central messaging would have resonated with a mid-century audience. As much as communicating the qualities that made up an "ideal" teacher, the entry also alluded to the characteristics of the ideal Turkish nation. Judging by the tone of the narrative, although the teacher might be "operating outside the bounds of the law," the reader is expected to view his unlawful acts as magnanimous and exemplary. He was assigned to what had effectively become enemy territory, so his acts of defiance —refusing to leave his home except to carry out the task (that of teaching) that had been set upon him by his home government and teaching students about *Turkish*

[23] Muzaffer Ergin, "Yönetmelik ve Kanun Dışında Bir Öğretmen: İdealist ve Mutlu Bir Öğretmen," *İlk Öğretim* 17, no. 337 (1 August 1952), p6.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

history— could easily have put his life in danger. Even at the face of death, however, the teacher's love for his country acted as his moral compass; it seemed that there was no force, no risk potent enough to disrupt the ties that bound a teacher, or an ideal Turk, to his or her homeland.

The teacher's attitude towards the Bulgarian population versus his students also merits attention. He has an unforgivably disparaging view of the former, whom he clearly sees as uncivilised. Bulgarians had also inflicted violence upon the Turks in the village, as suggested by "the smell of gunpowder and blood," which makes them appear untrustworthy and dangerous. Despite such disparaging views on Bulgarians, the teacher is still optimistic about their children, who, he opines, could still belong to the community of Turks, provided that they receive "proper" education. This is interesting, because it likely referred to the Turkish government's policies of assimilation vis-à-vis its ethnic and religious minorities. Of course, these children were also Bulgarians and therefore Christians, but they could still be integrated into the body of the Turkish nation if they were socialised into a Turkish ecosystem and subscribed to certain notions of Turkishness. The key tenet of Turkishness that emerges from the text is soldierliness. In fact, there seems to be nothing the teacher can think of about his country except for its "glorious epics" and his ancestors "running from victory to victory," which reaffirms the centrality of militarism to being Turkish. That these children were proud to have heard about the sacrifices of their ancestors is telling, because these "Turkish" epics did not represent their past, but the fact that they could still take pride in them conveyed that these students were becoming "Turkified," which of course meant that their pasts, histories and identities were being erased from public consciousness. What was left unstated was that these children were never going to qualify as "full Turks," since they did not satisfy two *sine qua non* of Turkishness; they were neither ethnically Turkish nor Muslim.

Another important point to raise here is that the land that the teacher felt so passionately about and longed to be united with was the Ottoman Empire, as around the time of the Balkan Wars, the Turkish Republic had not been founded. Yet, the entry does not distinguish between the Empire and the Republic, and in fact, one could easily think that the events took place in the early years of the Republic, rather than the dying days of the Empire. That the teacher, as a Turk, had missed Anatolia

specifically suggested that Turks' attachment had always been to Anatolia, which, the entry thereby implied, was Turks' historic homeland.

Before returning to Anatolia, the teacher notes that there were other Turks in the village, but they had resigned themselves to God and did not pay attention to the matters of the world. Therefore, only the children could revive the past glories.[27] This was not a critique of being religious in general. Yet, the teacher was clearly unhappy with the fact that the Turkish adults had become so religious that they had stopped caring about worldly matters. It was this form of being religious —allowing religion to inform your behaviour and day-to-day life to such an extent that simply nothing else mattered— that the teacher took issue with. It was also this form of being Muslim that was antithetical to being Turkish.

Towards the end of the entry, the teacher is also said to have exhaled a sigh of relief upon his return to Anatolia, citing the absence of "a bell or a foreigner's voice" that had been a source of irritation for him in Macedonia. This is the most salient statement in the piece in terms of revealing whom the teacher —and thereby, the government—thought should be admitted into the body of the nation. He is relieved to have escaped from those who emitted a "foreign" voice, referring to the people who had relinquished any allegiance to the homeland, and Christians, as symbolised by "bells" in the previous sentence. Of course, it was unlikely that the teacher would not have seen any Christians, Jews, Arabs or Kurds in Anatolia at this point in time, but this was an idealised image of the Turkish homeland. Unwelcome in this geography —and therefore, unwelcome within the body of the Turkish nation—were not only those who did not commit themselves to the nation or committed themselves too excessively to religion, but also non-Muslims and non-Turks. It is important to note that teachers reading this entry in 1952 would likely have had in their classrooms students who were Christians, Jews and Kurds. The attitude that was expected from them therefore amounted to discrimination against these communities, which was of course reflective of the government's policies at the time.

Another example is by a teacher named İlyas Sunar, who studies with his students a letter from a former student. The student was writing from Korea, having

[27] Ergin, "Yönetmelik ve Kanun Dışında Bir Öğretmen," p6.

been deployed there with the Turkish troops serving in the Korean War (1950-1953), which was the first war within the Cold War context that Turkey had contributed manpower to. Sunar mentions that students would have been familiar with the central theme of the letter, as they would have heard similar stories from their fathers and grandfathers (who would have fought in World War I and the struggle for independence), and they would have grasped by now how Turks had garnered global acclaim for their soldierliness.[28] Sunar also adds that the letter contained the essence of the advice that he, as a teacher, had always tried to impart.

The student had written that he had been "a child of a poor family and [had] only very few happy days in his life. One of those happy days [was] the day on which [he was] composing this letter."[29] He mentioned that he fully comprehended what it meant to love one's country when he arrived in Korea. Upon saving the life of another soldier in his regiment, the soldier had invited him back to his home country of Canada as an expression of gratitude. However, the student added that he was "burning with the desire to be reunited with his homeland so passionately" that he declined the offer.[30] He had signed off on the letter by telling Sunar "I wish you had not kindled in me such a love for my country."[31]

The entry clearly conveyed that an "ideal" student always remained tethered to the homeland. The ending is peculiar, because it implied that moving to Canada would have offered the student a superior way of life. In fact, there is even a sense of remorse in not being able to fight back against the pull of the nation. Within the context of the 1950s and the Cold War, this point here would have been to counter the appeal of the U.S. that would have been prevalent in the era's cultural atmosphere. Moving to the West would have had its charms, but an exemplary student would not have succumbed to its temptations. Their love for their country should be so potent that the urge to become reunited with the homeland should cancel out any other forces that may pull on their conscience and lure them away.

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[28] İlyas Sunar, "Bir Öğretmenin Not Defterinden," *İlk Öğretim* 16, no.315-316 (15 March 1951), p90.
[29] Ibid., p91.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.

The observations of a teacher that appeared in a 1952 issue of *İlk Öğretim* also merit attention. On his first day on the job, he asks a student to tell his name, which prompts the student to "shoot up" like a "a soldier speaking to his commander." When he calls the same student up to the blackboard, the teacher notes that the student "put his heels together and stood to attention,"[32] invoking the term "*esas vaziyet*," referring to a proper soldier's posture — with head held high, chest puffed out with pride, arms on the side and tightly pressed up against the body, with a neutral expression on the face. When he tells the student that he should study more thoroughly, the student makes a promise with such firmness in his voice that the student knew, the teacher states confidently, that his promise would be held tantamount to a soldier's pledge.[33]

The "ideal" students comported themselves as if they were soldiers; demonstrated through their behaviour that they understood the significance of obedience and hierarchy; were fanatically devoted to the homeland; and took pride in their nation's greatness, which they knew to equate with their military victories. Then, there was effectively no difference between being a student and being a soldier. In return, the role of an ideal teacher was tantamount to that of a general.[34] They were expected to create an environment in which students observed military-like discipline; constantly reminded their students of the greatness of the Turkish past, which once again referred to what seemed like an endless series of battlefield successes; and subscribed to the conceptualisation of Anatolia as a Turkish-Muslim homeland. Also important was that these entries were by male teachers and featured male teachers. In fact, none of the issues of *İlk Öğretim* between 1950 and 1960 (that was available at Atatürk Library in Istanbul) included an entry about an interaction with a female student and a female teacher. The teaching corps was certainly not dominated by men, as women had been employed as primary school teachers since the beginning of the Republic. However, that these entries profiled an exclusively male cast of characters —perhaps unintentionally, since *İlk Öğretim* frequently published photos of female teachers on its covers— did point at a tacit understanding that the experiences

[32] Veli Öz, "Tarihçi Mehmed," *İlk Öğretim* 17, no.339 (1 September 1952).
[33] Ibid.
[34] Güven Gürkan Öztan, *Türkiye'de Çocukluğun Politik İnşası,* p76.

of a male student and a male teacher conveyed more universal lessons that everyone reading these entries could learn from, whereas the female experience might only be instructive for other females.

There were some developments in the 1950s that did signify that the culture of schooling was changing. This period saw a proliferation of school activities, centred around democratic practices. These included student governments, student councils, work committees, debates, and voting; and other initiatives that encouraged students to express their opinions in front of a larger community.[35] Furthermore, the ministry of education organised essay writing competitions on themes other than the greatness of the Turkish nation and Turks' sacrifices on the battlefield, such as on the United Nations[36] and the Red Crescent.[37] The week of 3-10 December was declared "Human Rights Week," when schools were encouraged to study the text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)[38] and discuss its importance. On the tenth anniversary of NATO on 4 April 1959, the ministry also asked schools to put together conferences on NATO's importance.[39] On the tenth anniversary of the Council on Europe on 5 May 1959, schools were also going to organise activities to enlighten their students to the aims and work of the Council.[40]

In his work on teachers in the early Republic, Barak Salmoni discusses these weeks of dedicated activities, when students were to be free to express their own opinions and even assume the leadership of some of these activities from teachers. He asserts that, although students *appeared* to be in charge, these activities always involved a teacher who presided over the proceedings and determined the way they unfolded.[41] Students were allowed to express their opinions on forums and run committees, but there was always a teacher present to supervise the nature of

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[35] Barak Salmoni, "The 'Teacher's Army' and Its Miniature Republican Society: Educators' Traits and Social Dynamics in Turkish Pedagogical Prescriptions, 1923-1950," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and Middle East* 21, no.1-2 (2001), p69.
[36] "Birleşmiş Milletler Antlaşması," in *Tebliğler Dergisi* 13, no.609 (25 September 1950), p91.
[37] "Kızılay Kompozisyon müsabakası," *Tebliğler Dergisi* 19, no.912 (16 July 1956), p93.
[38] "İnsan Hakları haftasının kabulü hakkında," in *Tebliğler Dergisi* 13, no.618 (27 November 1950), p118.
[39] "NATO günlerin üzerine," in *Tebliğler Dergisi* 22, no.1048 (16 March 1959), p24.
[40] "Avrupa Konseyi günleri," in *Tebliğler Dergisi* 22, no.1053 (20 April 1959), p38.
[41] Salmoni, "The 'Teacher's Army' and Its Miniature Republican Society," p70.

discussions and authorise decisions. In fact, without the institutional "stamp of approval" they provided, the student-led committees were devoid of any meaning. Salmoni refers to this as "controlled democracy,"[42] by which the regime —or in this case, the school administration— put in place the trapping of democratic life, but still kept the social and cultural spheres firmly regulated so it could control the type of individual that would be "created" in these spaces. Guided by this, schools continued to churn out consummate nationalists who did not see any duty in life beyond the nurture of their nation's greatness and were willing to sacrifice themselves for its sake, if need be.

A good example in this regard was the government's handling of a request by the Heibonsha Publishing House in Japan that was putting together a volume made up of writings and pictures by children from around the world.[43] The ministry stated that the contributions of Turkish students should revolve around "concrete and realistic examples from the various stages of their lives." They were expected to write freely about their experiences and feelings, and not regurgitate any articles they might have read in books or magazines.[44] Nevertheless, the ministry noted that it would prefer children to write about how they marked days of national significance and how they felt on election days in their schools.[45] Unfortunately, *İlk Öğretim* did not publish any of the submissions chosen to be sent to Japan. However, the analysis of how students observed days of national significance, which is the subject of the next section, leads one to the conclusion that the content of these entries would not have been any different than the depictions of "ideal" students and teachers discussed above.

Most activities that the ministry organised also had a strict national focus, such as the initiative to celebrate "the works, lives and memories of great Turks."[46] Another was the initiative to organise "Hero Days" at least three times in an academic year with the purpose of drawing attention to "our national virtues" that made it possible

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[42] Salmoni, "The 'Teacher's Army' and Its Miniature Republican Society," p69.
[43] "Japonya'nın 'Dünya Çocuklarının Yazı ve Resimlerinden Seçilmiş Örnekler' serisi için memleketimizden istemiş olduğu yazı ve resimler hakkında," in *Tebliğler Dergisi* 20, no.954 (6 May 1957), p51.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] "Okullarımızda Türk büyüklerine ait günler tertibi," in *Tebliğler Dergisi* 14, no.666 (29 October 1951), p143.

to overcome superior forces and focussing on the importance of national defence; to the sacrifices committed on the home-front; and to the examples from "Great Turkish Wars" ("their names, the size of our forces, and the number of enemy soldiers that were defeated").[47] In another announcement in 1957 on the organisation of "Hero Days," the ministry stated that the purpose of these days was to "remind our citizens the task that will befall them in the eventual war that we shall wage together as a nation, mentally prepare them for this eventuality, and contribute to our ongoing work to keep the soul and spirit of heroism alive among our citizens."[48] Even the children's libraries were tasked with introducing its visitors to "our ancestors who made contributions to Turkishness and humanity."[49] All these activities could have easily taken place in the 1930s, or at any other point throughout the Republic.

Ceremonies, celebrations, and commemorations

John Gillis writes that "the need to commemorate arises from an ideologically driven desire to break with the past…and to construct as great a distance as possible between the old and the new."[50] When present conflicts seem intractable, the "past offers a screen on which desires for unity and continuity could be projected."[51] This succinctly captures the reason why consecutive Turkish administrations lent a great deal of emphasis to celebratory and commemorative occasions — to imagine a Turkish nation characterised by a specific set of values and qualities that foremost set them apart from what immediately preceded the Republic, as Hale Yılmaz argues.[52]

The problem was, when the recent past was cast aside and Islam, in the sense that most people understood it, became "un-Turkish," the ruling elite did not have many cultural tropes to choose from to pull into their construction of national

[47] "Okullarda yapılacak Kahramanlık günleri ve Milli Savunma günleri hakkında," in *Tebliğler Dergisi* 14, no.674 (24 December 1951), p179.
[48] "Milli Savunma konferansları ve Kahramanlık günleri hakkında," in *Tebliğler Dergisi* 20, no.945 (4 March 1957), p22.
[49] "Çocuk kütüphaneleri hakkında yönetmelik," *Tebliğler Dergisi* 20, no.986 (16 December 1957), p237.
[50] John Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p8.
[51] Ibid., p9.
[52] Hale Yılmaz, *Becoming Turkish: Nationalist Reforms and Cultural Negotations in Early Republican Turkey, 1923-1945* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2013), p179.

identity. And the ones the Republic chose to rally the population around, such as the flag, the nation, and the homeland, could not connect with the population's collective consciousness in the 1930s.[53] This scarcity of genuine cultural motifs to play upon to bring the nation together increased the importance of pomp and circumstance.[54] The overwhelming emphasis on ceremonials resulted in "secular acts of worship,"[55] which created the impression that the nation had indeed subscribed to a nationalism based on the new code of ethics. What was being produced was essentially so artificial, so disconnected from the realities of the people they were supposed to represent, that the regime needed to put on exaggerated displays to hide its own storytelling from itself. And what unfurled beneath this veneer of pageantry was ignored.[56]

This set the tone for how such days of national significance were marked even in the 1950s, by which point a higher number of people might have espoused an allegiance to the Turkish flag or would not have been as alien to the concept of pledging allegiance to a nation-state rather than a religion. However, these spectacles, in which speeches were read that emphasised the greatness of the Turkish nation and everyone involved chanted anthems that glorified the Turkish state and renewed their vows of commitment, still had much to hide from itself. A part of this effort to indoctrinate children with self-effacing love for the *Turkish* homeland and the *Turkish* nation involved glossing over the fact that, in the groups of children that took these pledges, there would have been Christians, Jews, and Kurds, whom successive Turkish administrations never considered "real" members of the Turkish nation. The ceremonials tried to conceal the country's ethnic and religious diversity by creating the optics of a nation of Turks, united in their love and devotion of the country.

The major celebrations and commemorations were, in the order that they were observed in the school year: the Republic Day on 29 October that celebrated the proclamation of the Turkish Republic on 29 October 1923; the anniversary of the death of Atatürk on 10 November; National Sovereignty and Children's Day on 23 April that commemorated the founding of Turkey's national assembly on 23 April 1920; and

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[53] Özkan, *From Abode of Islam to the Turkish Vatan*, p6.
[54] Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih*, p46.
[55] Öztan, *Türkiye'de Çocukluğun Politik İnşası*, p204.
[56] Orhan Koçak, "Kaptırılmış İdeal: Mai ve Siyah üzerine psikianalitik bir deneme," *Toplum ve Bilim* 70 (1996), p120; and Tanıl Bora, *Türk Sağının Üç Hali: Milliyetçilik, Muhafazakarlık,* p46.

the Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sport's Day on 19 May that commemorated Atatürk's landing in Samsun on 19 May 1919 that the official Turkish historiography regards as the beginning of the Turkish War of Independence. Because of its association with the youth, 19 May was not observed at the primary school level, so this chapter will focus on how 29 October and 23 April celebrations.

In addition to these holidays, there were also two religious holidays, Eid al-Fıtr (*Ramazan Bayramı*) and Eid al-Adha (*Kurban Bayramı*). Although both holidays fall on specific days on the Islamic calendar, it does not always fall on the same dates on the Gregorian (Western) calendar, since the former is shorter than the latter by eleven to twelve days. As a result, both religious holidays were often celebrated during the school year. Although the start of the holy weeks were not marked with a state ceremony, they were still established as non-working days. On the other hand, other religious holidays, such as the Mawlid (or *Mevlüt* in Turkish) and Hıdırellez, were neither prohibited nor mandated, which meant that citizens were allowed to observe these days privately but they would not marked at the state-level.[57]

In 1950, when the Demokrat Party assumed office, the Republic Day celebrations were a two-day affair. According to official instructions on how the day should be observed, all official offices and buildings were to be decorated with flags during the day and decked out with lights during the night. Boards and placards were also to be placed in the main squares and along the main boulevards in Istanbul that showcased the progress the country had made since 1923. Also, attendance at official ceremonies was only possible with a strict dress-code, with men required to wear coattails and a top-hat, although the announcement in *Akşam* did not include any specifics on women's attire.[58] The *Zafer* newspaper, the DP's official mouthpiece, reported that year that residents of Ankara, despite the rain, had spent the night before on the streets to make sure their city was properly decked out for the day's events,[59] and flooded the streets leading up to the Ankara Race Course (*hipodrom*), where the main ceremony was held.[60] A ceremonial rifle salute took place on the day

[57] Yılmaz, *Becoming Turkish*, pp183-184.
[58] "Cumhuriyet bayramı," *Akşam*, 25 October 1950, p3.
[59] "Bugünkü törenlerin programı," *Zafer*, 29 October 1950, p1; also reported in "Türkiye Cumhuriyet 27 yaşında," *Yeni İstanbul*, 29 October 1950, p1.
[60] "Her yerde törenler yapıldı," *Zafer*, 30 October 1950, p1.

itself at 8:30pm, at the sound of which every citizen observed a moment of silence in honour of our "eternal leader" Atatürk and all those "mighty lives" that were struck down while serving for our Republic under his command.[61] At night, the bands of several military academies, including the War Academy and the Naval Academy performed national hymns and traditional folk music.[62] This would remain the established pattern of official ceremonies in the first half of the 1950s,[63] whereby private offices, federal buildings as well as the main squares and boulevards were decorated with flags during the day and lit up at nights, and schools and state offices received two and a half days off[64]; and bands performed in the evening.[65]

Some schools were invited to participate in the city-wide celebrations, but their contribution to the overall event was rather minimal, comprising of singing the national anthem.[66] Every school organised its own celebrations. The preparations typically set off a week in advance, during which teachers discussed the benefits the country had reaped from transitioning from a sultanate to a republic. [67] Students were encouraged to think about what "the Turkish nation owed to Atatürk" and think about what sort of conditions "they would otherwise be living in" and be grateful.[68]

İlk Öğretim often published anecdotes by teachers, headmasters, inspectors, and other officials on how they observed these days national significance. More than just an exercise in sharing episodes of sentimental value, they were meant to act as guidelines on how teachers were expected to observe these days. One such entry was by Mazhar Sarıkaya, who served at the time as the headmaster of the Mukuf Primary School, located in a village near Tunceli in eastern Turkey, on how his school observed

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[61] "Bugünkü törenlerin programı," *Zafer*, 29 October 1950, p1 and p4.
[62] Ibid., p4.
[63] Only the celebrations in 1957 were rather different in style and messaging. They featured an Ottoman military band ("*mehter takımı*"), the members of whom wore traditional garments and "revived episodes/memories from our history." The band was accompanied by cavalrymen and navy officers, who pulled military cannons along the parade, and as *Zafer* noted, received an enthusiastic applause from the audience. See "Cumhuriyet bayramı törenle kutlandı," *Zafer*, 30 October 1957, p1 and p4.
[64] "Büyük bayram heyecanla kutlanıyor," *Akşam,* 29 October 1952, p1.
[65] "Ankara dünkü muhteşem geçit," *Akşam*, 30 October 1952, p2.
[66] "Türkiye Cumhuriyet 27 yaşında," *Yeni İstanbul*, 29 October 1950, p1. Also see, "Büyük bayram heyecanla kutlanıyor," *Akşam,* 29 October 1952, p4.
[67] Şevket Rado, "Sözün Gelişi: Cumhuriyet Türkiye'si," *Akşam*, 30 October 1952, p3.
[68] Rado, "Sözün Gelişi: Cumhuriyet Türkiye'si."

the Republic Day. Sarıkaya documents the actions and dedication of his students with immense pride. His students had started to decorate the school six days before 29 October, starting with Atatürk's portrait.

The crux of the story Sarıkaya wanted to recount revolves around what transpired on the night of 29 October, when the recording of the speech Atatürk had delivered to mark the tenth anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic was to be broadcast at 10pm on Ankara Radio.[69] Sarıkaya had initially wanted to listen to the broadcast with his students, but because students lived far away from the school and "under the threat of wild animals," they could not travel back so late in the evening. Nevertheless, Sarıkaya writes that he heard a knock on the door at 9pm. One of his students, whom he refers to as Küçük Ali, had "journeyed" for half an hour with his uncle, "sacrificing his everything, even his most precious sleep, only to have the voice of Atatürk resonate deep in his soul."[70] Tears had started to stream down Ali's cheeks when he heard Atatürk exclaim towards the end of his speech "how happy he who says I am a Turk," Sarıkaya writes, adding that he could hear "the beating of [Ali's] little heart with love for Atatürk."[71] He remarks at the end that it was students like Ali that made him proud to be a teacher.

The anecdote clearly promoted an all-consuming, even self-effacing commitment to the nation; Ali had risked his life to hear Atatürk's voice, and was particularly moved when Atatürk said, "how happy who says I am a Turk." But this anecdote is especially striking because of the location of the school. Tunceli historically had, and still has to this day, a Kurdish-majority population. It is very likely that Ali was Kurdish, yet the education he had received at the local school had transformed him into a devoted Turkish nationalist, or so the teacher wanted to believe. Of course, the fact that Ali was Kurdish is never mentioned, but it would have been obvious to *İlk Öğretim*'s readership. In return, the teacher would have taken pride in the fact that he seemed to have consigned Ali's Kurdishness to oblivion and successfully assimilated him into the Turkish culture. It is also possible that Ali felt the

[69] Mazhar Sarıkaya, "Öğretmenin Anıları: Küçük Ali," *İlk Öğretim* 18, no. 360 (15 July 1953), p12.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid., p12.

need to make an appearance, as his absence as a Kurd could have been misconstrued as a symbol of his rebellion or lack of devotion to the nation.

The second day of celebration was 23 April. Although the day is still commonly referred to as "Children's Day," its official name is "National Sovereignty and Children's Day" — which bore important implications for how the day would be observed. In fact, a careful examination of the content of the speeches delivered in recognition of the day's significance, the poems the children were encouraged to recite, and the performances they put on reveal that there was not anything particularly "childish" about the nature of these celebrations. Nor were the celebrations necessarily put together with children's interests or concerns in mind. Rather, the officials or the person leading the ceremony (a headmaster or a teacher) reminded the students that the value they had in the eyes of the state was, and would always remain, commensurate with the level of force and dedication, with which they performed their duties as guardians of national sovereignty. More so than about "children," the day was about "national sovereignty."

Many speeches were actually centred around this theme. In his address to children on Ankara Radio on 23 April 1958, the Minister of Education Celal Yardımcı argued that, "being a great nation" was only possible by paying the utmost attention to "children's health, ethics, and education from the cradle to the grave."[72] Having at its disposal every tool of civilization, the Turkish nation was now ready to narrow down and seal off the gap between itself and the most advanced civilisations; this was why Turkey placed a great premium on raising the next generations with no efforts or expenses spared, so that they would be well-equipped to aid in this effort, Yardımcı asserted.[73] At the end of the day, "the honour of realising this objective" rested on the shoulders of the nation's children.[74] So, the minister admitted that the state's care for its children served a clear, well-defined purpose: their health and well-being was a concern, not as an end in and of itself, but because they were the ones who were supposed to take the nation forward.

[72] "Maarif Vekilinin 23 Nisan Bayramını Açış Konuşması," *Zafer*, 23 April 1958, p1.
[73] Ibid., p4.
[74] Ibid.

Yardımcı's speech on 22 April 1959 played upon similar themes. Emphasising the fact that 23 April was not only "Children's Day, but *National Sovereignty and Children's Day*," he posited that, by marking "national sovereignty" and "children" together on a single day, Turkey was effectively demonstrating that it understood the inter-connected nature of its "two most invaluable achievements," as well as its wish that these achievements may always be celebrated in tandem.[75] Sovereignty and children were inseparable, because children were the ones who made up the nation and guaranteed its survival. Not lending emphasis to children's health, morality and education was one of the greatest markers of ignorance for any nation, Yardımcı continued; this was why Turks took pride in their country's "generous" and "self-sacrificing" regime, "whose beating heart was bursting with love for its children, whose arms opened up to embrace its children with all the warmth and compassion it could muster, whose primary occupation was its children's physical and mental health as well as their upbringing and education."[76]

The editorials that came out during the week of 23 April touched upon these points, too. The day itself was a testament to a nation's resilience and tenacity in holding on to its "sovereignty" and "rejecting enslavement," one editorial in *Zafer* put forward, for example. Since children guaranteed that a nation survived into the future, they represented the greatest hope that future generations would understand what sovereignty meant for the country and never underestimate the importance of their roles as its guardians.[77]

On the day itself, students gathered at their schools by 8 am on 23 April to attend the official celebrations, which, in the case of Istanbul in 1951, were being held in "Bayezit, Taksim, Barbaros (Beşiktaş), Fatih and Kadıköy."[78] *Zafer* reported that fourth- and fifth-graders at schools in Eminönü attended the proceedings in Bayezit, along with members of the district government, representatives from political parties, the heads of parent-teacher associations as well as "a larger crowd."[79] At 10:30 am, the district-governor of Eminönü and the director of national education "inspected"

[75] "23 Nisan Bayramları," *Zafer*, 23 April 1959, p4.
[76] Ibid.
[77] "23 Nisan'ın büyük ve derin manası," *Zafer*, 24 April 1958, p1.
[78] "Bayram bütün yurtta heyecanla kutlanıyor," *Akşam*, 23 Nisan 1951, p2.
[79] Ibid.

the students, after which the assembly sang the national anthem, followed by the singing of the Children's March by the students.[80] Finally, there took place an official parade, during which the students "marched back to their schools in proper file and order."[81] The nature of 23 April celebrations remained more or less the same throughout the decade, with multiple ceremonies taking place in major cities, attended by district heads of political parties, representatives from the humanitarian organisation Turkish Red Crescent and Directorate General of Child Services; the district-governor would then carry out an "inspection" of the children, followed by the singing of the national anthem and "the children's march."[82]

The Turkish Children's March instructed children to "keep your eyes forward and hold your head high," referring to them as "our nation's hopes for tomorrow."[83] "Children belong to the sacred homeland, they are the branches of a mighty tree," the march went on, stating that they were also "in need of help, in need of care," before addressing children as "*özü ateşli Türk çocukları*."[84] It is helpful to translate this last verse bit-by-bit. "*Türk çocukları*" means "Turkish children; and defining this noun is the adjective "*özü ateşli*" — which could either mean "fiery at the core," or translated more loosely "descended from a line of the fiery ones."

The march would have sent a very familiar message. First, advising children to "keep your eyes forward and hold your head high" implied that they were on a mission, which was to make sure that "better tomorrows" awaited the nation, as the subsequent verse explains. So, the children's lives were not theirs to plan out; how they were going to unfold was already preordained. They were going to spend it in the service of the nation. And as the verse that followed put forward, children were to dedicate their lives to national service, because they were not independent beings; they were "branches in a mighty tree." So, their lives only had any meaning if they were a part of something grander, meaning the nation. Otherwise, there was almost

[80] "Bayram bütün yurtta heyecanla kutlanıyor," p2.
[81] Ibid.
[82] "Milli Hakimiyet ve Çocuk Bayramı hararetle kutlanıyor," *Akşam*, 23 April 1952, p1-2; "Milli Hakimiyet ve Çocuk Bayramı bütün yurtta neşe içinde kutlanıyor," *Akşam,* 23 April 1955, p1; "23 Nisan Törenle Kutlandı," *Zafer*, 24 April 1958, p4.
[83] See the text of the "Turkish Children's March."
[84] Ibid.

no purpose to one's existence. This told students that the nation and the country always came first, and definitely before the individual.

Furthermore, it was significant that the march identified children as "Turkish children." There definitely would have been non-Turks in the cohorts of students singing this anthem in the 1950s, whose ethnic and religious identities were once again ignored. This was a testament to how schools functioned as spaces for assimilation into the dominant Turkish culture. Also, telling themselves that they were descendants of "the fiery ones" would have reminded students of the importance of soldierliness as an innate, hereditary quality of Turks.

According to a lesson plan that appeared in *İlk Öğretim* in 1950, the chief objective of the celebrations was to have students grasp and appreciate the day's meaning and importance.[85] Every student was to help in some capacity, with the roles they could assume ranging from decorating their classroom in collaboration with the entire school, joining the school chorus, reading out essays, reciting poetry to playing games, participating in school plays, and representing the school in official citywide — and if selected, nationwide— celebrations.[86] The teachers also encouraged students to listen to the speeches broadcast on the radio, which they then would discuss in class. Above all, three concepts were to dominate the four-day-long celebration. Students were to become familiar with the duties and responsibilities of a member of parliament; discuss "the travails and tribulations" of living under a sultanate; and learn more about the wars "we have suffered through," especially the war of independence, at the end of which "Atatürk has saved us from the enemy." The lesson-plan asked teachers to remind students that "they were tasked with safeguarding the independence of an honourable nation, that Atatürk had entrusted this nation to them," and that as long as they did, they would have many more 23 Aprils.[87]

İlk Öğretim also presented a selection of poems that students could recite throughout the celebratory period. One such poem by Vebbi Cem Aşkun read: "One Turk meant one world; we are the descendants of an almighty nation; it is our right to

[85] F.A., "Yaşanmış ders konuları, ünite ve ders planları: 23 Nisan," *İlk Öğretim* 15, no. 296-296 (15 May 1950), p114.
[86] Ibid., p114.
[87] Ibid.

be proud; we are greater than great."[88] Playing upon similar themes, another by Ferit Ragıp Tuncor ended with a verse that "explained" the popularity of 23 April celebrations through their success in focussing attention on the glorious Turkish past, decked out with acts of valour.[89]

All of this reinforced the fact that 23 April was not really about children *per se*, but about children in connection with the nation and their roles as guardians of sovereignty. The festivities, speeches, and poems accentuated the same themes and reminded them of the same duties and responsibilities that were pulled to the forefront in almost any official ceremony: that they were the descendants of a heroic nation; that their ancestors had had to suffer through unspeakable hardships to establish the Republic; and that it was their existential duty to cherish and protect these accomplishments. In fact, the only aspect of these celebrations that could have targeted children was the presence of children themselves. Also importantly was the emphasis on this day being for *Turkish* children. This was another example of the Turkish government's policies of oppression against the country's ethnic minorities. Although students might not have realised this, with every poem they recited and every march they sang, they were paying lip-service to the government's messaging that Turkey was for Turks only. In return, the only way for non-Turks to exist within these Turkish lands was to be assimilated (albeit perforce and as second-tier members) into the Turkish community.

A detailed look at the 500th anniversary celebrations

In 1953, Turkey celebrated the 500th anniversary of the conquest of Istanbul to great pomp and circumstance. Nicholas Danforth and Gavin Brockett have produced immensely detailed accounts of the celebrations that stretched over ten days, and included lectures, conferences and seminars on Mehmet II achievements as a sultan; parties, fashion shows with dresses inspired by Ottoman style, concerts, a new played called *The Conqueror (Fatih)*; wrestling tournaments, equestrian competitions, and a soccer match dedicated to the memory of the sultan; as well as the opening of new

[88] Vebbi Cem Aşkun, "23 Nisan," *İlk Öğretim* 15, no. 295-296 (15 May 1950), p115.
[89] Ferit Ragıp Tuncor, "23 Nisan," *İlk Öğretim* 15, no. 295-296 (15 May 1950), p115.

schools and libraries, among other events to mark the occasion.[90] On the day of the anniversary, there was a military parade up to Mehmet II's tomb and re-enactments of various moments from the siege, such as Turkish soldiers pulling a model of an Ottoman galleon up the Golden Horn in tribute to Mehmet II's transporting of the Ottoman fleet overland, with mosques and historic buildings illuminated at night.[91] Schools in Istanbul as well as such provincial towns as Balıkesir, Bursa, Erzurum, Kayseri, and Zonguldak organised their events, wherein teachers and officials delivered speeches, students recited poems, and displayed paintings by students that reflected their own understanding of the conquest.[92]

Both Danforth and Brockett point out how these public ceremonies emphasised Fatih's alleged Turkishness, his Western outlook, and his secularism, writing him into the narrative of Turkish nation that the DP government wanted to propagate.[93] Although they mention how students were folded into these celebrations, these mentions are quite brief and do not communicate anything more than what someone might have already guessed: delivering speeches, displaying artwork and reciting poetry were common features at almost every school event. It is therefore interesting to look at how students commemorated —or were told to commemorate— the anniversary of the conquest of Istanbul, and how this act of remembering connected with Turkey's overall culture of remembrance to reinforce the narrative that the culture of schooling was already exposing students to.

Mehmet II did not only make an appearance in the era's children's literature around the time of the 1953 celebrations. In fact, he had become a popular feature as soon as the preparations for the anniversary had gone underway,[94] with the late

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[90] Nicholas Danforth, *The Remaking of Republican Turkey: Memory and Modernity since the Fall of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Gavin D. Brockett, "When Ottomans Become Turks: Commemorating the Conquest of Constantinople and Its Contribution to World History," *The American Historical Review* 119, no.2 (2014), pp399-433.
[91] Danforth, "Multi-Purpose Empire: Ottoman History in Republican Turkey," p660.
[92] Brockett, p416.
[93] Danforth, "Multi-Purpose Empire," p661.
[94] Among the most acclaimed films of the decade were several films on Ottoman history, such "Üçüncü Selim'in Gözdesi ve Lale Devri" (directed by Vedat Ar), "Cem Sultan" (Münir Hayri Egeli), "Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa" (Baha Gelenbevi), "Yavuz Sultan Selim Ağlıyor" (Sami Ayanoğlu) and "Yıldırım Bayezit ve Timurlenk" (Münir Hayri Egeli). See, Mehmet Ö. Alkan, "Soğuk Savaş'ın Toplumsal, Kültürel ve Günlük Hayatı İnşa Edilirken," in *Türkiye'nin 1950'li Yılları*, pp604-605. This period's most famous writer of historical fiction was Feridun Fazıl

1940s and the 1950s witnessing a proliferation in this genre. Almost all the titles that were published in this era were set during the Ottomans' so-called "rise phase" and around the time of siege of Constantinople, and emphasised Mehmet II's military might, valour, deep knowledge and benevolence. One of the best-known examples of this genre in the 1950s was Reşat Ekrem Koçu's *Fatih Sultan Mehmet'ın On Fedaisi,* which revolves around the heroism and sacrifices of ten children that partake in the conquest of Constantinople.[95] The greatest wish of all these ten children, all of whom are male, is to be as great a soldier as the sultan, and catch the sultan's attention with their courage, candour and bloodthirstiness. At the end of the play, Koçu reminds the reader that they are all descendants of this heroic bloodline. Another popular example from the 1950s was Enver Behnan Şapolyo's *Fatih İstanbul Kapılarında* (1953), which tells the story of Mehmet II's upbringing, from his childhood until the conquest of Constantinople.[96] In the novel, the young Mehmet shows a particular interest in Turkish history, asking his mother to recite excerpts from well-known Turkish legends, which accentuate Turks' bravery and commitment to "greatness."[97] At one point, he wonders about Kılıç Arslan, who is then introduced to him as "the hero that would not surrender his homeland to the crusaders invading Anatolia." Şapolyo also mentions that, before the Greeks and Romans arrived, the local population was Turkish.[98]

Other examples in this regard include *Fatih Sultan Mehmet ile Keloğan* by Niyazi Ahmet Banoğlu (1943). The novel's protagonist Keloğlan is a fictional character in Turkish folklore that is bald from birth and is meant to have an ugly appearance, but is very clever and often saves the day. In the said novel, after the general of the "Turkish forces" refuses to enlist Keloğlan in the military, Mehmet II sees how upset Keloğan is and commands his general to overturn his decision; Keloğlan infiltrates the

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Türbentçi, who had become particularly popular for his serialised novel *Hayrettin Barbarossa Is Coming.* See, Danforth, "Memory, Modernity and The Remaking of Republican Turkey: 1945-1960," (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2015), pp120-121.

[95] Reşat Ekrem Koçu, *Fatih Sultan Mehmet'in On Fedaisi* (İstanbul: Çocuk Kitapevi, 1953). A popular novel from the 1940s that played upon similar themes was Ahmet Kayıkçıoğlu, *Akıncı Civan Ali* (İstanbul: Göktürk Kitabevi, 1945).

[96] Enver Behnan Şapolyo, *Fatih İstanbul Kapılarında* (İstanbul: Rafet Zaimler Kitabevi, 1953).

[97] Ibid., pp12-13.

[98] Ibid., p59.

local population and starts collecting intelligence on Byzantium's war plans.[99] Other plays connected Mehmet II with Mustafa Kemal, arguing that they demonstrated the same courage, intelligence, and heroism; and identified Byzantium as the embodiment of fustiness that festered away in the middle of "the Turkish homeland."[100]

Another striking example was the serial *Doğan Kardeş* ran between 25 May 1950 and 4 January 1951. *Doğan Kardeş* was a children's magazine that ran from 1945 to 1978 and enjoyed the highest subscription rate among children at the time. The magazine did not only print content with entertainment value, but often published articles, stories, and poems that would have supplemented children's studies at school. Written by Enis Regü, "How did Fatih take Istanbul?" discussed the developments leading up to the conquest, starting with the death of Murat II on 5 February 1451, which resulted in Mehmet's accession to the throne.[101] As expected, the serial contains strong militarised messaging even from the first episode, when the reader learns that Mehmet's father had bestowed upon him the task of conquering Istanbul, which would become a stunning display of "heroic Turkishness."[102]

The first part of the serial was organised around military-related developments, such as the construction of the Rumeli Fortress[103] and of a road of greased logs to drag Mehmet's ships into the Golden Horn,[104] and the final showdown between the Ottomans, labelled as Turks, and the Byzantines. The episode on the final assault on Constantinople, which was mostly about Turkish military prowess, also called attention to Mehmet II's compassion, benevolence and magnanimity, marking a transition to the second party of the serial, which was going to be on Turks' humanity.

In the said episode, Mehmet sends an emissary to Emperor Constantine, who communicates to the emperor how concerned Mehmet was about the bloodshed that

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[99] Niyazi Ahmet Banoğlu, *Fatih Sultan Mehmet ile Keloğlan* (İstanbul: Bozkurt Kitap ve Basım Evi, 1943).
[100] See, for example, Şapolyo, *Fatih Sultan Mehmet* (Ankara: Türkiye Çocuk Esirgeme Kurulu Genel Merkezi, 1953); Beria Siral, *Küçük Serdar (Fatih Sultan Mehmet'in Çocukluğu)* (İstanbul: Rafet Zaimler Yayınevi, 1953); and *İlkokul'a Temel Bilgiler Kitabı: İstanbul'un Alınışı*, no.39 (February 1949).
[101] E. Regü, "Fatih İstanbul'u Nasıl Aldı?," *Doğan Kardeş*, no.191 (25 May 1950), pp67.
[102] Ibid., "Fatih İstanbul'u Nasıl Aldı?," *Doğan Kardeş*, no.191 (25 May 1950), pp6-7.
[103] Ibid., "Rumeli Hisarı Niçin Yaptırıldı," *Doğan Kardeş*, no. 192 (1 June 1950), pp6-7.
[104] Ibid., "Kara'da Yürüyen Gemiler," *Doğan Kardeş*, no. 202 (10 August 1950), pp6-7.

was going to ensue, and in the interest of innocent bystanders, he asks whether Constantine would consider surrendering, which the emperor dismisses.[105] The episode does not problematise Mehmet's determination to proceed with the attack despite his worries about the violence it was going to inflict. Even the language used in this episode does not prompt one to question this bit. Through the education they would have received by the time they were reading this serial, children would have been conditioned to accept soldierliness as Turks' existential quality, and would have interpreted Mehmet's attitude merely as an example of "Turks being Turks," while the emperor's rejection of Mehmet's "charitable" offer would have been a demonstration of Constantine's sheer recklessness for gambling away the lives of his subjects.

The subsequent episodes were replete with anecdotes of Turkish humanity and benevolence. Moments before the assault, Mehmet cautions his soldiers against unnecessary killings, ordering them not to use any arms or treat anyone badly, unless the enemy strikes first.[106] As Mehmet enters Hagia Sophia, he realises that a ceremony is taking place, and asks the priests to proceed as they would have done without his interruption, after which he informs the priests that "there is no need to panic. We are not a destructive nation. Tell the public that, we are not going to touch anyone. Everyone will be free in their religious beliefs."[107] When Mehmet later sees a soldier trying to destroy the relics as "the works of infidels," he becomes infuriated, telling him that they should be honoured to have been left such "works of art."[108] A few days after the conquest, Mehmet asks the priests to take a tour of the empire; upon their return, the priests praise the "Turkish" justice system that was operating through the empire, asserting that as long as "your country operates on this basis, it will always make progress."[109]

There were many similarities between the way Byzantines were portrayed in the serial and in Grade 5 textbooks. For example, the Byzantines do not have a modicum of soldierliness in them. Emperor Constantine is said to be in a constant

[105] Regü, "Padişah'ın Emri, Yarın İstanbul'a Gireceğiz," *Doğan Kardeş*, no. 213 (26 October 1950), pp6-7.
[106] Ibid., "Son Gece," *Doğan Kardeş*, no. 215 (9 November 1950), pp6-7.
[107] Ibid., "Fatih Sultan Mehmet Ayasofya'da," *Doğan Kardeş*, no. 219 (7 December 1950), p7.
[108] Ibid., "Fatih'te Sanat Sevgisi," *Doğan Kardeş*, no. 220 (14 December 1950), p7.
[109] Ibid., "Fatih İstanbul'u Nasıl Aldı," *Doğan Kardeş*, no. 223 (4 January 1951), pp6-7.

attempt to pay Mehmet off, which the latter rejects, saying that taking Istanbul is not a matter of wealth for his him or his people.[110] Furthermore, the serial does not discuss any of the measures the Byzantines would have put in place, conveying to students that, against the Turks' confidence, the Byzantines are in a panicky state, completely dumbfounded and helpless at the looming Turkish assault. The only solution they can think of is to pray, which the serial also identifies as a sign of ignorance and weakness. When Mehmet offers Constantine the opportunity to flee, the emperor chooses to stay, believing that "God will help us."[111] And when the Turks start firing cannons, Constantine "reassures" his armies that "God is with them," while the public gathers in churches to pray.[112] Before the final assault on Constantinople, the clergy tells the public "that the Turks will not be able to pass Hagia Sophia, for at that point, an angel is going to descend from the sky and wield his flaming sword to push the enemy back."[113] The serial mentions that at the very moment that Turks attack, it starts to rain, which the Byzantines interpret it a sign from God.

One element of inconsistency here is that, although relying on religion is dismissed as ludicrous, it is still the priests —so, religious functionaries— who vouch for the quality of the Ottoman judicial system. Of course, that the priests were able to safely tour the empire as the representatives of a religion that, as students either would have learned by now or were in the process of learning, was not only foreign to the lands they were touring but was also viewed with suspicion would have been a testament to Turks' benevolence. But there are no subsequent dialogues in the serial that explain why the priests would have carried so much weight in the eyes of Turks.

The serial, as textbooks had done, also presented the whole conquest as a purely and exclusively Turkish achievement, glossing over the contributions of any non-Turkish elements. Differently than textbooks, however, *Doğan Kardeş* lent a great deal of emphasis to Ottomans' benevolence, humanity, and tolerance. The textbooks had also hinted at tolerance as a salient feature of the Ottoman rule, but this "tolerance" discourse dominated the second part of the serial in a way that it never

[110] Regü, "Urban'ın Yaptığı Büyük Toplar," *Doğan Kardeş*, no. 193 (8 June 1950), p7.
[111] Ibid., "Türk Ordusu Bizans Surlarında," *Doğan Kardeş*, no. 194 (15 June 1950), pp6-7.
[112] Ibid., "Bizans Surları Topa Tutuluyor," *Doğan Kardeş*, no. 195 (22 June 1950), pp6-7.
[113] Ibid., "Son Gece," *Doğan Kardeş*, no. 215 (9 November 1950), pp6-7.

featured in any of the discussions in Grade 5 textbooks. This discourse of "Ottoman tolerance" was likely the result of Turkey's efforts to justify its place in the new liberal international order by connecting with the new geopolitical rhetoric emanating from the Western world. Even though there might be doubts about the strength of Turkey's democracy at the time, this messaging would have intimated that Turkey's history marked it as a member of the free world. Their "Turkish" ancestors had showcased all the values and virtues that were now being touted as the key tenets of the U.S.-led Western world order, to which Turkey then rightfully belonged.

Doğan Kardeş also published a special edition to mark the centennial. On the first page of the issue, the magazine stated that "we are kneeling in honour of Fatih," and "as Turkish children, and the Fatih's grandchildren, we have made a pact to continue protecting this beautiful piece of our homeland," concluding that "as long as the world exists, Istanbul will remain Turkish."[114] This was a clear statement of ethnic nationalism. *Doğan Kardeş* did not pledge that Istanbul would remain a part of Turkey, but that it would remain Turkish. And in this vein, the magazine was not taking this oath on behalf of children of Turkey, but specifically on Turkish children.

The special issue also featured an essay by Neşe Onural, a student at the Talatpaşa Primary School in the Bomonti district of Istanbul. Onural wrote that, now that she had learned about Fatih, her heart would not stop beating with excitement wherever in Istanbul she visited. Strikingly, she added that she loved Fatih as much as she loved Atatürk,"[115] before comparing Fatih's conquest with Atatürk's victory against the enemy in 1922 and referring to Atatürk as "Turkey's second Fatih."[116]

The next few issues of *Doğan Kardeş* devoted considerable space to various topics related to the conquest. One essay, penned by a primary school student Suna Alantepe, encouraged her "fellow readers" of *Doğan Kardeş* to always keep Fatih and Suleiman the Magnificent in their hearts and minds, which would remind them of how the annals of Turkish history read like an endless succession of heroic episodes. She then appealed to both Fatih and Ulubatlı Hasan in her essay,[117] reassuring them that

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[114] "Fatih ve İstanbul," *Doğan Kardeş*, no. 348 (28 May 1953), p3.
[115] Neşe Onural, "Fatih'i Nasıl Tanıdım?," *Doğan Kardeş*, no. 348 (28 May 1953), p10.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ulubatlı Hasan was a soldier in the service of Fatih Sultan Mehmet, who achieved legendary status for the role he played in the conquest of Constantinople. He became one of the first

"Turkish children" would never forget who they were, and in return, lose sight of who they themselves were, based on the examples these heroes had set.[118] Alantepe had also submitted a poem to the magazine, in which she promised to protect the "glorious" Istanbul with "the blood of Turkishness" and to ensure that "our flag" always fluttered over the city.[119]

Both Onural and Alantepe clearly thought of Fatih and Suleiman, and in fact, one could presume, all earlier Ottoman sultans, as Turkish. More strikingly, they saw the Republic not as a restoration of Central Asian civilisations, whose names were not even mentioned in any of the submissions to *Doğan Kardeş*, but as a direct continuation of the early Ottoman Empire. This showed how the Ottoman Empire had been incorporated into, and even comfortably been accepted as part of, the narrative of Turkish history and Turkishness; for the children of the period, 29 May 1953 was a celebration of being Turkish, and not necessarily that of a bygone past. Another striking point was Alantepe's promise to protect Istanbul "with the blood of Turkishness." In fact, Alantepe might not even be aware of the strikingness of what she had put on paper, as such phrases were so commonly invoked in Republican literature that its violence and aggressiveness might have been lost on her. Whether Alantepe appreciated the significance of her pledge, it was a testament to the strength of the ethnic-centric nationalism that was being channelled through the culture of schooling. Istanbul did not only belong to Turkey, but it was *Turkish*; and it was not going to be protected by those living in Turkey, but by *Turks*. Aware or not, primary school students had internalised —or were at least paying lip-service to— the government's messaging that Turkey was for Turks and Turks only. Although both Onural and Alantepe were female, furthermore, their submissions were written from the perspective of a soldier, which was once again a testament to how the culture of schooling, as representative of the wider political culture Turkey, disregarded the femaleness of female students. Apart from the vantage point of a soldier, there was no other way to commemorate Turkish ancestors. Furthermore, not a single Ottoman

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Ottoman soldiers to climb the walls of Constantinople and plant an Ottoman flag. According to accounts of the siege, Ulutbatlı Hasan died, collapsing back on to the ground with 27 arrows in his body.

[118] Suna Alantepe, "Fatih," *Doğan Kardeş*, no. 350 (11 June 1953), p4.

[119] Neşe Onural, "Fatih'in Zaferi," *Doğan Kardeş*, no. 353 (2 July 1953), p4.

or Turkish female were celebrated at these events, or indeed would be celebrated for decades to follow, as a result of which students had no example of a female figure to take inspiration from. Females were expected to model themselves after men.

Also publishing a special edition to mark the centennial was *İlk Öğretim.* The journal presented its readership with extremely detailed material on the history of the conquest, which consisted of an essay on the state of Istanbul before 29 May[120]; a list of every attempt at laying siege on the city (which stated that "others," mostly Arabs, had attempted twenty times and Turks six, succeeding upon their seventh try)[121]; and an exhaustive timeline of events and developments that took place during Fatih's reign after he had captured Constantinople.[122] The fact that *İlk Öğretim* had mentioned the Arabs' attempt at conquering Istanbul is striking, as Grade 5 textbooks had completely removed them from the narrative. Nevertheless, *İlk Öğretim* made this statement to reinforce Arabs' incompetence vis-à-vis Turks, which of course was a familiar theme across educational material.

An entry by Ali Rıza Kılçar, the principal of the Patlangıç Primary School in the southern city of Fethiye, described how one of the teachers at his school taught his students about the conquest. The teacher had placed a scale model of Constantinople in the middle of the classroom to showcase, in a three-dimensional form, what the city would have looked like under siege.[123] On the blackboard was a corresponding map of Constantinople that plotted out where the Turkish and Byzantine forces were stationed, and below the map was a list of important dates. As he narrated the "adventure that was the conquest," "everyone was in throes of excitement; imagining themselves as if they were the heroes of the day, their little hearts bursting."[124] When the teacher mentioned that Constantine was stabbed, the class erupted in jubilation, chanting "Long live the Turks!" He told his students, addressing them as "Fatihs of

[120] Cemil Boran, "Fetihten Önce İstanbul," *İlk Öğretim* 18, no. 356-357 (1 June 1953), pp2-3.
[121] Mithat Sertoğlu, "İstanbul Kaç Kere Muhasara Edilmişti," *İlk Öğretim* 18, no. 356-357 (1 June 1953), pp4-5.
[122] "Fatih Devrinin Kronolojisi," *İlk Öğretim* 18, no. 356-357 (1 June 1953), pp11-14.
[123] Ali Rıza Kılçar, "Bir Tarih Dersinin Hikayesi: İstanbulun Fethi," *İlk Öğretim* 18, no. 356-357 (1 June 1953), p16.
[124] Ibid.

tomorrow," that bringing Istanbul under Turkish rule was among the greatest episodes in world history, showcasing Turkish strength, courage and intelligence.[125]

These poems, essays and anecdotes revealed the great extent to which the conquest of Constantinople was viewed as part of Turkish history, providing testament to how mid-century Turks did not think of Ottoman history as separate from their own history, but even embraced it proudly and wholeheartedly as the root of all the qualities that, they were taught, made them the envy of the world, and made them "Turkish." Teachers invoked Fatih's name as a term of commendation, and everyone in class was able to rejoice at Ottoman successes as if they were their own, recent successes. As in Grade 5 textbooks, furthermore, these lived experiences were completely devoid of any references to the role of non-Turks in the conquest of Constantinople. In fact, that students chanted "long live the Turks" when they heard of the death of the Byzantine emperor demonstrated how oblivious they would have been to the contributions of ethnic and religious minorities to the making of the Ottoman Empire. Accordingly, the experience of schooling, too, presupposed that everyone who attended a public school in Turkey in the 1950s would have been ethnically Turkish, ignoring the presence of non-Turkish identities within schools, and by extension within public and official realms.

İlk Öğretim's special edition also presented a selection of poems by a few of the best-known poets of the early and mid-century Republic. Some of these poems discussed the familiar trope of Turkish soldierliness, of which the conquest of Constantinople had been the prime example. For example, one by Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca claimed that "from the moment we are drinking our mother's milk until we are marching the flag forward, we grow up with stories of glorious conquests."[126] This verse is already laden with many references to the Turkish ideal of an exemplary upbringing. One spent one's childhood listening to —or rather, revelling in the glory of— the accounts of their ancestor's valour. One's childhood phase ended when one was finally ready to stand up for his country, which is what the act of carrying a flag signified. Another by Cemal Oğuz Öcal pledged that "as long as our hearts keep

[125] Kılçar, "Bir Tarih Dersinin Hikayesi: İstanbulun Fethi," p16.
[126] For all four poems, see "Fetih ve Fetih Hakkında Yazılan Şiirlerden," *İlk Öğretim* 18, no. 356-357 (1 June 1953), p5 and p10.

beating, Istanbul will remain Turkish; as long as Turk's blood stays the same, his habits won't change." Some poems analysed the significance of the conquest from a religious perspective, expressing great jubilation at the city's Islamisation. One by Mithat Cemal Kuntay, for instance, celebrated how, after the conquest, "the sound of the *ezan* rose over the mountains in outer space five times a day; oh, the *ezan*-filled Konstantaniyye of the *Kaisers*." A poem by Ümit Yaşar Oğuzcan put forward that, as the Turkish troops entered Istanbul, they were chanting "Allah, Allah."

These poems touched upon an important theme that textbooks had also explored. The conquest had set in motion the process of Istanbul's Turkification, which simultaneously brought about its Islamisation. An important task awaited Fatih after 29 May, asserted one entry in *İlk Öğretim* —which was to "inject Istanbul with a new soul, reconstruct the city and Turkify it."[127] In this effort, Fatih's first act was to "clean up" Hagia Sophia, the author wrote, explaining that Hagia Sophia was preserved in its original state up until the *Tanzimat* period, when Sultan Abdülhamit II painted over the mosaics. In the Istanbul neighborhood of Fatih, he had also commissioned the construction of a mosque, eight medreses, a library, an *imaret* (public soup kitchen) …and Turkish villages where "the old public" used to live; "in order to maximize the use of what was left behind," churches were converted into mosques. As part of the effort to Turkify Constantinople, Fatih had also resettled several prominent families from Mora, Serbia and Lesbos to the city.[128]

Of course, this narrative glosses over the fact that many of the families that were resettled in Istanbul were neither Turkish nor Muslim. They were chosen to revitalise commercial and economic activity in the city, which remained in the hands of non-Muslims communities of the empire. However, the more important bit to tease out from the above paragraph is regarding the act of *Turkifying* a city. What were students supposed to understand from the concept of making a city "more Turkish"?

First, there was an Islamic component to being Turkish. Islam was injected into the cultural fabric of the city only to replace the Christian elements that had already been put in place, however. According to above examples, Fatih constructed only one

[127] Cemil Boran, "Fatih ve İstanbul," *İlk Öğretim* 19, no. 365 (1 December 1953), p4.
[128] Ibid., p5.

mosque; and especially when compared against his other contributions to the city's architectural fabric (eight educational institutions, a library, and a soup kitchen), "one mosque" does not strike the reader as an overwhelming addition that would have redefined the city's overall outlook or character. Furthermore, churches had been converted into mosques for a purpose: to make these sites more useful. Of course, this presupposed that Constantinople's population after 1453 was Turkish and therefore Muslim, which was not the case.

Although historically inaccurate, these claims reflected an important aspect of the thinking of the time. Such religious sites fulfilled a practical function, providing the population with a prayer space, but did not showcase Turks' devotion to Islam. It is important to remember that nowhere did it say Fatih was *Islamising* his capital; his intention was to *Turkify* it. Although marking out Istanbul as Turkish did require injecting a dose of Muslimness into it, this was not done in service to the faith. Fatih had not commissioned the building of the one mosque or converted Hagia Sophia into a mosque in the name of Islam, but in the name of Turkishness — just like students did not think of Fatih as an Islamic leader, but a Turkish one. Being Muslim was intrinsic to being Turkish, so the two could not be separated, but students were encouraged to embrace their Muslimness only as part of their Turkishness. Also, discussing Constantinople as a Turkish city was once again a strong allusion to the mono-ethnic character of the Turkish Republic, to which non-Turks and non-Muslims could not truly belong.

Although not on the conquest of Constantinople, similar themes were raised in a play that *İlk Öğretim* published, which is also helpful in showing how the students of the 1950s viewed at least parts of Ottoman history as Turkish history. The play was about the Battle of Niğbolu that took place in 1396 between the Ottoman forces under the command of Yıldırım Bayezid and a crusader army composed of troops from European countries. The play opens with the King of Hungary having an audience with the Pope, telling him that "Turks have captured all of Balkans; our co-religionists are in trouble. If we don't stop them, they can capture all of Europe, destroying our

everything and our religion."[129] Also present is the Byzantine ambassador, who echoes similar sentiments. The Pope decides to gather a "big army" to defeat the Turks and protect "their religion." At Niğbolu, a janissary tells the governor Doğan Bey that "infidels are gearing up for war," to which Doğan Bey responds, "we will not be troubled by the numerical superiority of infidels. We are soldiers of *gaza*," adding that "as long as the blue sky up above is not torn and the black earth down below does not cave in, nothing will beat the Turks.[130] Thereafter, Yıldırım exclaims "God is with us" and proceeds with the assault.

First, the play revolved around a religious plot. The enemy was not a specific nation or a group of nations, but rather Christians and Christianity. Turks, too, were identified in religious terms as "soldiers of *gaza*," which referred to Muslim soldiers who were engaged in a holy war against non-Muslims. Nevertheless, although Turks were Muslims, they were always discussed as Turks, and not as Muslims. For example, it was the Turks that sparked fears in the heart of the enemy, not Muslims; also, the ultimate victory would belong to Turks, and again, not to Muslims. In return, the play encouraged students to take pride in being part of the Turkish nation, and not the wider community of Muslims. The observations in *İlk Öğretim* from a stage production of the play even noted that students "were excited to feel the heroism of Turks."[131] It was nevertheless significant that the play identified Turks as Muslim. Turks were foremost devoted to their nations; the play did not waver on this. But they were still, even if nominally, a nation of Muslims, in which non-Muslims would be outsiders.

At the end of the play, students recite two poems, one of which is called "*Koçaklama*"—which is a genre in Turkish folk literature that explores the themes of war, courage, and heroism. The poem reads: "He is not stopping, my lion-hearted; let's show them, in the name of the nation; let's crash through mountains; it is sweeter than life, let's die, let's die with courage." The poem clearly glorifies those who die in battle, but more importantly, it glorifies those who die in battle in the name of their nation, claiming that ending one's life in this way more honourable than

[129] Nurettin Fidan, "Tarih Dersi İle Dramatize Örnekleri," *İlk Öğretim* 19, no. 372 (15 March 1954), p8.
[130] Ibid., p9.
[131] Ibid.

staying alive. The second set of verses the students recite are the first and final poems of a poem named "Akıncılar" by the Turkish poet Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, which went as follows: "we were as merry as children at the raids with a thousand riders; with thousand riders, we defeated a huge army."[132] The verse implied that these "invader" soldiers were excited and joyous to be conducting these raids; and although the enemy was superior in numbers, this hardly mattered. Earlier in the poem, it is also stated that some of the invaders became martyrs and "flew" up to the heavens. Read in conjunction with this last verse, this implied that soldiers greeted their death with pleasure. Also, that the soldiers who achieved such a victory was "*akıncılar*" was significant, since the term "*akıncı*" ("invader") in Ottoman lexicon referred to soldiers of Turkish origin, who were stationed in the border regions of the Rumelia province and spearheaded invasions into enemy territories. Again, such legendary acts of courage were committed by Turks and Turks only.

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So far, there was no difference between how male and female students were folded into the national narrative. This is why this chapter will employ material that may not be directly related to education to piece together an idea of how female students would have experienced schooling in the 1950s. In fact, albeit not within a school setting, girls and women were assigned specific roles, which produced important ramifications for how the new regime perceived its female citizens. At the outset, the regime constantly emphasised the greater set of rights that women had garnered with the transition to the Republic. In fact, this new "liberated" woman was one of the featured elements of the regime's iconography. Yet, beneath this discourse of gender equality and women's empowerment lay the reality that distorted this public messaging almost entirely.

For example, children's publications pigeonholed girls into traditional preoccupations. They never expressly told girls what they should be when they grew up, but they did create the impression that certain roles and attitudes were more suitable for them. In one of its issues, the children's magazine *Doğan Kardeş* had the picture of a young girl on its cover, sitting in a tidy bedroom and composing a letter;

[132] Fidan, "Tarih Dersi İle Dramatize Örnekleri," p9.

the caption read "a letter for my heroic father in Korea."[133] Writing letters to their absent soldier-fathers (or in some cases, brothers) [134]; and when older, being self-sacrificing enough to see their husband, brother, or son off to die and assume all responsibilities in the absence of a male figure; and even being patriotic enough to "bury their fallen husbands and sons with the love for their nation" were how girls and women were supposed to help keep the nation together.[135] This implied, above anything else, females were carers —mothers— of the nation.

While motherhood was exalted, the image of a working mother or a working wife became the object of subtle criticism. In fact, just because women had been allowed to join the work force also did not mean they were encouraged to. One editorial in *Zafer* captured this conundrum that women faced very powerfully, as they would have been caught between their desire to work and their moral obligation to stay home and care for their families. The editorial asserted that the modern woman was tasked with solving every problem of the home.[136] While she could have at least afforded one or two maids in the past, now she herself had to act like the housekeeper, the cook, and the scullery maid, in addition to fulfilling the function of being the lady of the house. Moreover, if the family ran into financial problems, she was expected to take up employment. Even if she was worn out, she did not have the right to reflect any of that on to her husband or children; she still had to be compassionate towards her children and smile for her husband, because above and beyond anything else, she was first and foremost a mother and a wife.[137] So, even if a woman needed to work to help with the family's finances, this was a source of embarrassment, as it chipped away at the husband's manliness. Therefore, women were almost expected to work, but pretend like they were not working, so that they would not disturb the family and home equilibrium. In other words, they had the option of becoming working women in the Republic, but only if they needed to, and

[133] *Doğan Kardeş,* no. 225 (18 January 1951), cover page.
[134] Fortna, "Bonbons and Bayonets: Mixed Messages of Childhood in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic," in *Childhood in the Late Ottoman Empire and After,* p184.
[135] Öztan, *Türkiye'de Çocukluğun Politik İnşası*, p90.
[136] Perihan Parla, "Bugünün Kadını," *Zafer*, 6 November 1957, p2.
[137] Ibid., p2.

when they did, their assumed identities were to be cloaked under their state-assigned identities as mothers and wives of the nation.

The advertisements that appeared in the magazines and newspapers of the era show that publications of various genres targeted women with products that would have appealed to their role as homemakers. Examples include an ad for a cleaning product called *Fay*, which depicted a woman mopping the floors with a smile; the caption read, "she is mopping with pleasure, because she is using FAY." [138] Another was for a brand of butter called *Sana* that —or so the ad promoted— contained enough vitamins and calories to fill a child with "life and health."[139] In this vein, an ad for *Arı* flour claimed that it would help women raise "healthy and robust" children, which would produce the added benefit of tying the father to the home.[140]

Although these images were not of female school children, they still presented an image of the future that awaited them. It is interesting to reflect back on the portrayal of an "ideal student" from this perspective and understand how the system of education placed females within Turkish society. Based on these examples, men fought for the nation in the frontlines, while women served in secondary capacities in the home-front; put differently, men were supposed to be strong pillars of the nation, while women propped them up. Turkey was a nation of proud soldiers. Yet, there were no symbolism or imagery that imparted to women that they were expected to do any physical fighting, as men did. In other words, in a country of soldiers, women were told they were soldiers, but they were not expected to assume this responsibility. This effectively rendered them second-class citizens. Also, given the fact that soldierliness was one of the core messages of Turkish education, this meant that female students were not learning anything that was going to prepare them for the roles they were expected to fulfil when they left school. Parsed this way, one could even argue that primary school education was mainly geared towards males, who were supposed to become the main drivers of the national narrative. Girls, on the other hand, were learning because they needed to know enough to be able to assist when needed. Reflecting back on Onural and Alantepe's submissions to *Doğan Kardeş*

[138] *Zafer,* 18 November 1957, p5.
[139] Ibid., p5.
[140] *Akşam,* 29 September 1951, p6.

from this perspective is interesting, because although they had pledged to protect Istanbul "with the blood of Turkishness," they would never be called upon to do so.

A striking case in point was a cartoon that was published in *Akbaba*, entitled "Woman in Turkey, Man in Turkey and a Child in Turkey."[141] It showed that Turkish women had undergone a transformation from having to wear the headscarf to wearing high-heels and a bikini in public; the modern man was fitted in a tailcoat and a top hat; and the modern child no longer worked as a street vendor, but was now depicted as a happy child, who played around with his toy cars and enjoyed his childhood. This Turkish child that was supposed to have undergone a transformation and be enjoying his childhood, representing Turkish children, was male.

Conclusion

As this chapter has argued, the experience of schooling complemented the chief objective of the curriculum and the crux of the messages that was supposed to be communicated via textbooks in various ways. First, the descriptions of how ideal teachers were to conduct themselves as well as how ideal student were supposed to behave called attention to the premium placed upon orderliness, discipline, and obedience — qualities that made up an exemplary soldier. Equally important was understanding that working for one's country and nation represented the noblest of tasks; in fact, ideal students were expected to embrace the fact that they were supposed to spend their entire lives trying to better the conditions in which they and their fellow Turks lived.

The culture of celebrations, including the performance that were put on, the roles assigned to students in them, and the content of speeches the authorities delivered to mark the occasion, reinforced similar points — that "real Turks" spent their lives in service of the nation. The celebration that took place to mark the 500th anniversary of the conquest of Constantinople, too, crafted a similar profile for Turks, mainly focussing on the nation's shrewdness on the battlefield and their willingness to die for their country. This chapter also called attention to what was left unacknowledged in these celebrations, namely the presence of non-Turkish and non-

[141] "Türkiye'de Kadın, Türkiye'de Erkek, Türkiye'de Çocuk," *Akbaba*, 10 July 1952, no.17, p3.

Muslim members of Turkey, reinforcing how the Turkish nation was conceptualised as a body of people that only included ethnic Turks and Muslims. The material on the conquest of Constantinople furthermore was telling in terms of how Muslimness fitted into the understanding of Turkishness in the 1950s: Turks were Muslims, but every action they carried out was for the sake of their nation, for the sake of Turkish "greatness," and never for Islam.

The lived experience of schooling furthermore reinforced the dominant understanding of nationalism of the 1950s: that an "ideal" Turk was an ethnic Turk, who spoke Turkish and devoted their lifetime to protecting the homeland and enhancing the "greatness" of the nation; was a descendant of a bloodline of other ethnic Turks; and lived in Anatolia. This was once again a demonstration of the racial-religious nationalism that had persisted since the 1930s, combined with the soil-based nationalism that came to the fore in the 1950s.

The lifestyle depicted in these anecdotes did allow for a more public embrace of one's piousness, so the "ideal" lifestyle of an "ideal" Turk was no longer cast in the style of French secularism that re-imagined public domains as spaces *free* from religion. Yet, these anecdotes did not paint the picture of a society that enjoyed freedom *of* religion as would have been allowed under the American format of secularism. Rather, this was a lifestyle modelled after the principles of "soft" secularism, permitting a degree of religiosity into the public realm, but still keeping these spaces under state control. This signalled a nationalist discourse steeped in *laiklik*, since the state crafted a profile for an "ideal" Muslim and determined the qualities that populated this profile, instead of allowing individuals to decide the way they would like to practice their religion.

Although the culture of schooling might have created the impression of teaching a national narrative that valued its sons and daughters with equal measure, the last section argued that Turkey's national narrative remained masculine in its essence. Analysing "soldierliness" from the perspective of gender roles assigned to adult men and women, it argued that the system of education and the experience of schooling was designed with male students as their target audience; the central teachings on how to defend one's country did not prepare female students for the roles they were later supposed to fill, at least not directly. Women were to remain on

the sides or in the background, grooming men to take their place on the front-lines so that they could drive the nation forward. In other words, they remained adjuncts of the action, but not shapers of it.

Conclusion

This dissertation has contributed to our understanding of Turkish nationalism, showing how Islam has always been a part of Turkish national identity since the country's establishment in 1923. In this sense, it has challenged the main historiographical framework within which scholars have studied the Turkish past, which propounds the notion that the history of the Turkish Republic is a battleground between Islamists and *laik*s. According to this interpretation, *laik*s consist of the members of the state apparatus and a small circle of urban elites that are bent on eliminating religion from official spaces, while Islamists represent the wider Turkish society that, this interpretation asserts, has been trying to recover its Muslim heritage since the country's founding. In return, every development becomes folded into this narrative of a "tug-of-war" between these two camps of Turkish society. So, as the narrative goes, the Kemalist state ignored the country's Islamic realities and formulated a national identity on the basis of culture that rejects any role for Islam in defining what it meant to be a Turk. And this culture persisted until the rise of the DP under Menderes, who embarked on a process of ushering in changes that would allow the society to reconnect with its Islamic roots but was stopped short by the Kemalist elements in 1960. Thereafter, Muslimness was incorporated into Turkishness only in the aftermath of the 1980 coup in the form of "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis," and only to counter the appeal of communism, not out of a genuine concern for the people's religious sensitivities, this narrative asserts.

This dissertation has pushed back against this narrative by connecting with the revisionist historiography of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s that started to emerge in the early 2000s. These revisionist historians, whose works are discussed in the introduction, have demonstrated how the Kemalist elite in the early Republic had to rely on the saliency of religion in managing the population. To be considered Turkish, one needed to be Muslim, and this remained a constant of Turkish nationalism.

The dissertation carried their line of analysis further into the late 1940s and the 1950s. To this end, it employed education as an analytical tool, studying the connections between a state's educational behaviour and its self-conception. Within the bracket of education, it focussed on history education at the primary school level,

at Grades 4 and 5, driven by the conviction that schoolchildren at this age are more impressionable and less questioning, which makes them prime targets for social engineering. Since students at this age also have less capacity to absorb information, the material presented to them would have been distilled down to its most pivotal elements, featuring episodes that, from the regime's perspective, more powerfully and succinctly conveyed the ideal virtues of Turkishness. Guided by this understanding, this dissertation examined a wide spectrum of education-related and educational materials from the 1950s —such as the speeches of leading DP ministers on education; the different curriculums that were implemented through this period; textbooks that were used; as well as various other material that shed light upon the experience of schooling in this era— and compared them with the same type of material from the 1930s and the late 1940s, meanwhile analysing the changes in between against the domestic and geopolitical context of the relevant period.

Overall, the dissertation argued that the racial-religious nationalism of the earlier periods extended into the 1950s. Speaking the Turkish language (by virtue of the fact that the textbooks were only and exclusively produced in Turkish) and committing to a lifelong service to the nation stood out from the educational material as the two main planks of Turkishness. One could not claim Turkish ethnicity by simply ticking off these two boxes, however; one also needed to have descended from a line of Turks, who had done the same throughout their lifetimes. The curriculum, textbooks, as well as the examples from the lived experience of schooling all emphasised how students, as "real" Turks, were the descendants of generations of "great" Turks. This pointed at the race-based —or in Turkish, *soy*-based, meaning lineage or bloodline— aspect of Turkish nationalism. Added to this in the 1950s was a soil-based dimension, which tethered Turks to their homeland of Anatolia, and in return, Anatolia to Turks. To be considered a "real" Turk, and thereby claim Turkish ethnicity, one also needed to have made one's home in Anatolia. Correlatively, claiming a Turkish *soy* would now depend on having ancestral roots in this geography.

Turkishness was one pillar of being a Turk; the second was Muslimness. This was another element of continuity through the early Republic. What changed was the definition of what being Muslim entailed. The nationalist discourse in the 1930s supported a more cultural definition of being Muslim, espousing a set of habits and

attitudes that did not have anything to do with Islam as faith, such as respecting the elderly and maintaining cleanliness. By contrast, the 1940s saw the introduction of more faith-based elements into the definition of being Muslim, with students now learning about the five pillars of Islam, the Quran, the Prophet Mohammed, and even the meaning of certain prayers. This understanding of Islam as both culture and faith persisted into the 1950s. In this sense, the rise of Menderes did not usher in a new epoch in the history of Turkey's relationship with Islam. Although there appeared "more" religion (in the form of Islamic rhetoric and imagery) in the era's educational material, such changes should be seen as a confident continuation of the transformation that had already been set in motion under the last İnönü government.

The "ideal" Turk of the 1950s was an ethnically Turkish Sunni-Muslim, who had descended from a *soy* of Turks and lived in Anatolia. Although Turks were Muslims, the chief objective of Turkish education was, and remained, raising nationalist citizens, who also —and only— accepted being Muslim as part of being a Turk. From the twin pillars of Turkishness and Muslimness that made up the "ideal" Turk, Turkishness would always weigh heavier. In fact, through the various different elements that constituted the overall experience of education, students learned that Turks were better Muslims and had been able to rise to the top of the Muslim world because of their Turkishness. Correlatively, this implied that, although Turkey was a Muslim country, it was a country for *Turkish*-Muslims, to which the country's ethnic and religious minorities could never truly belong.

This dissertation has also been careful about delineating between the concepts of secularism and *laiklik* as it applied to the Turkish state's approach to religion vis-à-vis different sphere of life. In the 1930s, the political rhetoric invoked and the lifestyle promoted by the state was in the style of French secularism, which mandated freedom *from* religion within official (and also public) spheres. However, the nationalist discourse, as channelled via the curriculum and textbooks, empowered a specific way of being Muslim as the "right" kind of Muslimness that would fit the "ideal" Turk — which suggested state control over religion, or *laiklik.* The *laik* nature of the nationalist discourse would extend into the 1940s and the 1950s in that the state would continue to define the type of Muslims Turks were expected to be. Some changes took place vis-à-vis political rhetoric and lifestyle, however. In line with the

transformations in the domestic situation and the geopolitical context, as discussed at length throughout this dissertation, the leadership started to break out of the French style of secularism, allowing for public expressions of piousness. Nevertheless, the appearance of "more" religion within the public sphere did not result in the American style of secularism, mandating freedom *of* religion. This is why this dissertation has described the change that did transpire as a transition from "hard" secularism to "soft" secularism, or as to have set the country *en route* from the French style of secularism to its American iteration.

In fact, Turkish nationalist discourse has ascribed a key role to Islam in defining what it meant to be a Turk since 1923; at no point throughout the Republican history would it have been possible to be considered a Turk without being a Muslim. Another element of continuity is the portrayal of Turks as leaders of the Muslim world. As mentioned at several junctures throughout the dissertation as well as this conclusion, it was because of their Turkishness that Turks were better Muslims, and it was precisely for this reason that they were destined to project a commanding voice over the Islamic realm. This line of thinking also persisted through the rest of the Cold War years, into the 1990s, and even further into the Justice and Development Party (AKP) era in Turkish politics after 2002; the Turkish society's negative view of the proliferation of Arab tourists in various cities across the country in recent years as well as the backlash against the Syrian refugees since 2011 could be explained as an outgrowth of this reasoning that placed Turks at the top of the Muslim world.

Then, what has changed in terms of the Turkish nationalism's relationship with religion and Islam since the end of the 1950s? The roots and causes of some of the ruptures that would unfurl in the coming decades were already apparent in the document "Türkiye Eğitim Milli Komisyonu Raporu" that was submitted to the ministry of education in 1959 and analysed in Chapter 2. The changes that this "commission of national education" advised the ministry to introduce encouraged a stronger embrace of Turkey's Muslimness as a bulwark against communism. As the Cold War wore on and Turkey became a more solid member of the U.S.-led alliance, Islam as a determinant of national identity started to exert more weight. Islam's newfound significance as the principal element of Turkish nationalism became solidified with the

introduction of Turkish-Islamic Synthesis in 1986.[142] According to the pre-1980 formulations of nationalism, congruence between Islam and the Turkish culture was so seamless that Turks could convert to Islam with ease, since they immediately realised that the conversion was not going to introduce an element of foreignness to the way they had hitherto lived their lives; Turkish culture was larger than, and superior to, the new religion Turks were adopting. The Synthesis flipped these dynamics around; it instead put forward that Islam was superior to Turkish culture, presenting it as the principal element of national identity. As a result, the state dropped "Islam as culture" that had hitherto appeared within the arsenal of traits that marked one's Muslimness and accepted only "Islam as faith."

The past two decades under the AKP has also witnessed the redefinition of how being Muslim fits into being a Turk. The AKP's format of Turkish nationalism has capitalised on the earlier notion of Islam as the backbone of the nation, as promulgated by the Synthesis, but also subscribes to the view that the wider Muslim community stands above national community, which is a tenet of Islamist discourse; in the meantime, the AKP has stuck with the already available script of racial nationalism, propagating a fusion between nationalism and religion, only to add its own imperialist, irredentist spin. For example, accepting religion's superiority over ethnic cultures has allowed the AKP to promote Islam as a unifying force across ethnic and sectarian divides, and make appeals to Kurdish and Alevi communities even for what turned out to be electoral gains. However, the AKP has simultaneously resorted to nationalist imageries and symbols to instil a sense of pride in being a Muslim Turk, envisaging Turks as leaders of the Muslim world. Although this strand of thinking has persisted since the 1930s, the AKP's Ottoman nostalgia —and the recreation in nationalist discourse the former Ottoman space as Turkey's hinterland— has projected this vision of Turks as "the best" Muslims beyond the country's borders. This became more apparent in Ankara's foreign policy vis-à-vis the Arab Spring protests that erupted in 2011, when then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan supported the aspirations of political parties who would have been more willing to follow Ankara's guidance on the world-stage and thereby burnish Erdoğan's credentials as the *de facto*

[142] Please refer to the introduction for more background information on the Synthesis.

leader of the Muslim-majority countries in North Africa and parts of the Arab world. It also manifested in Erdoğan's vow to pray at the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus at the time, once the conflict in Syria had ended with the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's ousting and the installing of a new regime, friendlier to Turkey. In this vein, Erdoğan's references to Muslims in other countries as "our Muslim/religious brethren" is a symptom of the AKP's imperialist twist on racial-religious nationalism. Although the nationalist discourses channelled by previous administrations had viewed Turks as the "best" Muslims, Turks were encouraged to use their qualities —which had positioned them at the top— to defend themselves and the Turkish revolution against external and internal enemies and enhance their own "greatness," and in favour of the greater good of other Sunni Muslim communities outside of Turkey's borders.

Chapter 1 discussed how Menderes and Tevfik İleri, his minister of national education, stressed "national values" ("*milli değerler*") as a motif that would mark the system of education the DP was going to usher in. Belonging to this cluster of Turkey's national values was religion, which was going to be an important part of the party's pedagogical approach. Correlatively, the goal was to raise a nationalist youth that also viewed being Muslim as part of their national identity. To question whether the DP's approach to religion and nationalism marked a departure from what immediately preceded it, the chapter investigated the changes to Turkey's political, social and cultural life that the CHP had started to roll out in the late 1940s, concluding that it was a confluence of geopolitical, domestic, and factors in this period that had facilitated the re-emergence of public manifestations of piousness.

To understand the implications of religion's re-emergence to the public fore on national identity and the extent to which Turkishness was being reconceptualised in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, *Chapter 2* turned to an analysis of curriculums. To this end, it not only examined the primary school programmes that were implemented in this period (the 1948 and 1956 curriculums), but also looked at the 1930 programme's treatment of Turkish nationalism. The most noteworthy differences among these programmes were regarding Turkey's historical relationship with its Ottoman past and Islam. While the 1930 programme "located" the source of Turkey's greatness in the pre-modern civilisations of Central Asia and Anatolia, the 1948 programme brought the early Ottoman Empire into this fold. And whereas the

1930 curriculum promoted a positivist form of Islam "as culture," the 1948 curriculum allowed a more conservative understanding of religion to prevail. These changes were a product of Turkey's domestic transformation as well as the wider geopolitical transformations against which Turkey had to position itself. Despite these shifts, however, the chief objective of education remained the same — to create nationalist citizens for a Turkey that was for Turkish-Muslims. A stronger embrace of Turkey's Muslim identity only came to the fore in the 1959 report against the backdrop of growing Cold War-related pressures on Turkey. The U.S. policymakers and educational advisors, under whose influence the 1959 report was drafted, wanted to build up the country as an example of the benefits of westernisation for Muslim-majority nations, which the U.S. wanted to position against communism and the Soviet Union.

Chapter 3 looked at how Grade 4 textbooks upheld the objective of raising nationalist students, who accepted Turkey as a state for Turkish-Muslims. All topics these textbooks covered presented an image of Turkey as a historically great country, grounded in the (invented) fact that Turks were progenitors of world civilisation — which they were able to accomplish because they were pre-eminent soldiers; understood the importance of communal, and then national, unity; and although they were religious, they never let religion inform their public behaviours and practices. Once again, Turks' relationship with Islam was discussed as a mere nominal affiliation with the faith, implying that their Muslimness had not had any practical impact on the way they lived, or did not add to or peel away from their greatness. Importantly, this chapter identified a shift in framing and tone between the textbooks the DP had inherited from the CHP and the textbooks it released in 1954. One such shift was the focus on Anatolia as the historical homeland of Turks, which implied that the future of this "great" nation was contingent upon Anatolia's preservation as a Turkish, or rather as a Turkish-Muslim homeland. This would have anchored in students firmly the idea that anyone in Anatolia who did not fit this description was an interloper.

Chapter 4 then explored how these themes shaped the material they studied in Grade 5 which revolved around the Ottoman Empire, World War I, and the founding of the Turkish Republic. Some parts of Ottoman history were folded into the overarching narrative on Turkey's greatness. The formula for greatness remained the same in both sets of textbooks (pre- and post-1954): as long as the Ottomans

demonstrated soldierliness, cared for unity, and organised their public lives according to Islamic principles, they were labelled as "Turkish." Once again, there was a greater focus on Anatolia as a Turkish homeland in post-1954 texts. The discussion on the struggle for independence and the Republican reforms, too, was organised around these themes, showing how the Ottoman sultan and the country's ethnic and religious minorities were "*un*Turkish," because they refused to fight and even disrupted the unity of the resistance forces. If Turkey was going to retain its greatness, it was going to have to be populated by Turkish-Muslims, who had historically been the only ones that demonstrated soldierliness, understood the importance of unity, and governed their lives according to *laik* principles — and contributed to Turkey's greatness.

Chapter 5 finally explored how the lived experience of schooling supplemented and reinforced the core lessons of the curriculum and textbooks. The profiles of exemplary students and teachers highlighted all-consuming, almost fanatical dedication to the nation. The celebrations and commemorations, too, were organised around the theme of Turkish greatness, valorising the sacrifices of Turkish soldiers and glorifying Turkish achievements. The chapter also discussed how the way these days of national significance were marked excluded non-Turks, including non-Muslims, from the body of the nation that was being celebrated. For the members of the country's ethnic and religious minorities, these days were also acts of assimilation. By forcing them to partake in these events, sing anthems, recite poems, and perform in plays that essentially applauded the exclusive Turkishness of everything they were being told to take pride in, the government forced them to pay lip-service to a national narrative that ignored their realities and identities. This chapter also shed light on another aspect of Turkish education that did not come through the material students studied, namely its masculine nature. An analysis of how students must have experienced schooling revealed that there was virtually no difference between the type of experience that would have been curated for male versus female students. In some ways, the experience of schooling was genderless. Yet, a more careful examination showed that girls and women were cast as the weaker members of the population, which intimated that they would not be strong enough to engage in any form of fighting — which, in return, meant that they would not be able to demonstrate any soldierliness, a key marker of Turkishness.

Overall, the 1950s did not see the emergence of a more religious understanding of Turkishness, contrary to both popular consciousness and also the dominant historiography. Instead, as this dissertation has argued, the Demokrat party officials, and of course Menderes, subscribed to an interpretation of Turkishness that was originally crafted by the CHP in the late 1940s, which, in return, had its roots in the founding years of the Republic. This is why it makes more sense to read the 1950s not as an era of new political, cultural, and social freedoms, but as a more confident continuation of the mindset that had governed the late 1940s.

The conclusions of the dissertation will seem controversial to those who continue to read the 1950s as an era of unprecedented religious liberties. Unfortunately, those who populate this group are not small in number. The political climate in Turkey is partly responsible for the persistence in popular consciousness of such a reading of Turkish history. The incumbent President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has claimed several times since coming to power in 2002 that he was continuing the mission that Menderes had launched in 1950 and spearheaded through the decade — and build a national identity that is more embracing of Turks' Muslim heritage.

There is now an "Adnan Menderes Democracy Museum" in Menderes's hometown of Aydın, housed in a replica of the Hacıalipaşa Mansion, the former prime minister's ancestral home that was constructed specifically for this purpose. The museum's official website describes Menderes as "the politician that started democracy in Turkey and lay the foundations of democratic consciousness."[143] With his "crushing victory in the 1950 elections," he became "the first prime minister of democratic Turkey" and started the country's "struggle for democracy."[144] Furthermore, *Yassıada* —where Menderes, Fatin Rüştü Zorlu (minister for foreign affairs) and Hasan Polatkan (minister for economy) faced trial after the 1960 coup d'état— was renamed "Democracy and Freedom Island" in 2013, in clear reference to how the current establishment would like the senior ministers of the DP to be remembered: as heroes of Turkish democracy, who were brave enough to barge out

[143] See the Adnan Menderes "box" on the homepage of the museum's official website (only available in Turkish), https://menderesmuzesi.com/index.html.
[144] Ibid.

of the framework the Kemalists imposed on Turkish society, bring religion back, and dare to truly represent the Turkish people.

The dissertation may also seem controversial to some for having lent emphasis to what the historical narrative excluded from the Turkish past and therefore the body of the Turkish nation: the Christian, Jewish, Kurdish, and Alevi communities of Turkey, or more accurately, of what became the Turkish lands in 1923. For example, when the Netflix production *The Club* ("*Kulüp*") was released in 2021, it was met with consternation from the Turkish public. The series explores the developments of the 1950s from the perspective of Istanbul's Jewish community. It is indeed unique in that it takes the viewer back to a time when religious and ethnic minorities corresponded to a greater proportion of the population, and sheds light on elements that had once been woven into the cultural fabric of Istanbul, but has since then been driven underground and consigned to oblivion through decades of discriminatory policies directed against Turkey's Christian, Jewish, Alevi, Kurdish, and Arab populations.

Many in Turkey are still oblivious to the country's ethnically and religious diverse past, as well as to the role these communities played in the making of what the Turkish national narrative has claimed as "Turkish" history. And as this dissertation has demonstrated, Turkey's system of education is responsible for this darkening of certain aspects of the Turkish past in an effort to "invent" a more ideal history — which crafted a narrative of Turkish greatness that had been possible through the efforts of Turkish-Muslims. Scholars who also examine the connection between education and national identity should therefore pay attention to what is excluded from the educational material as much as what is included in it, and thereby tease out the identities that the material, and thereby political regime, gloss over as much as the ones that they pull to the forefront. It has been the hope of this author to contribute to these efforts with the writing of this dissertation, and to keep contributing with any work that this dissertation will form the basis of.

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