Early Republican Reforms from the Perspective of Elite vs. the People, with Particular Reference to the Alphabet and Language Reforms

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ABSTRACT

The people and the intellectuals, the two significant agents of the efforts of Westernization over centuries, were handled as two separate groups by two sides, which prevented the planned modernization at the desired rate. The principal way to overcome this gap, which is concretized within the context of alphabet and language reforms, is to comprehend mutually. So the position of the people in Westernization efforts is studied throughout the thesis. The thesis comprises of two parts: First, the general philosophy and the aims of the reforms put into effect after the formation of Republic, a general outlook of the people in the post-war period and the manner in which people comprehended the reforms are briefly examined. Second, the alphabet and language reforms from the perspective of its relation to the people have been examined. The gap between the intellectuals and the people is the common point of these two parts.

KISA ÖZET

Yüzyıllardır sürdürdüğümüz Batılılaşma çabalarının iki önemli unsuru olan aydın ve halk, kendilerini birbirlerinden uzak iki ayrı grup gibi algılamış, bu ise hedeflenen modernleşmenin yeterince gerçekleşmesini önlemiştir. Dil ve Harf Devrimleri bağlamında somutlaştırmaya çalıştığımız bu kopukluğu aşmanın yollarından başta geleni, her iki kesiminde birbirini daha iyi anlamasıdır. Bu amaçla tez boyunca halkın Batılılaşma çabalarındaki pozisyonu irdelenilmeye çalışıldı. Tez iki kısımdan oluşuyor. Birinci kısımda Cumhuriyet sonrası Batılılaşma sürecinde yapılan inkılapların genel felsefesi, amaçları, halkın savaş sonrası durumu ve genel olarak devrimleri algılayış tarzı kısaca verilmeye çalışıldı. İkinci kısımda ise, ilk kısmın genel plandaki yaklaşımları Harf ve Dil devrimleri bazında incelendi. Halk-aydın arasındaki kopukluk ise, her iki kısımda ele alınan ortak nokta oldu.

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INTRODUCTION

Westernization within the context of modernization is a policy which has been pursued for decades by the state, since the Tanzimat era. Accordingly, much effort has been exerted on; many speeches, articles, and books examining this subject. Westernization has been looked at from many different points of view. Many valuable and excellent works have been produced. Intellectuals - in other words, the elite group - have featured prominently on the agenda, as most of the westernization movements have been examined from their perspective. The subjected people have been evaluated as 'object' most times, causing strange contrariness to appeared and some deficiencies to come up during the execution of reforms. This situation has slowed down the Westernization efforts of both the Turkish people and the intellectuals to the targeted level. Taking into consideration the intellectuals alone has prevented an 'accurate definition' of them and has resulted in their mis-approach to the people. So, in this thesis, I have tried to present the outlook of the people, their evaluation of all attempts at reform, and finally an analysis of their behavior toward the intellectuals.

In the thesis, relative emphasis is given to the place of elite within the process besides to the people. Although intellectuals were expected to convey the reforms to the people, as a result of their modernizing elite behavior, a big gap between the people and

the intellectuals arose. By presenting how the intellectuals perceived the people, I have tried to show the manner of the intellectuals in defining the people. Additionally, ideals, contradictions in their thought, relations with the people and the state, attitudes upon adopting the reforms, and their conducts are also briefly discussed.

Alphabet reform, which was examined from the perspective of its relation to the people, is the prerequisite of language reform, which needed a longer time period. That is why I took them up together. In a separate chapter, the relationship of the intellectuals with the people is again clearly emphasized. Turkish intellectuals have mentioned that there was a tremendous gap between Ottoman intellectuals and the people, and that the people had their own separate oral literature. To what extent was this gap ameliorated by the alphabet and language reforms? How did the people comprehend the intellectuals and their messages, for what did they hope? To what extent did the people make a connection between their moral values and thoughts and Western principles? Which meanings did they attach to principles related to the future? To what extent did they assimilate their existing principles? It is possible to ask more questions. It is evident that the efforts of the elite, who have not asked these questions themselves or have replied from the perspective of their own biases, will not give the desired results. Especially, the analysis of the popular dimension of Westernization will be helpful in determining the sociological and demographic structure of Turkish society in the Republican era. and the mode of approach to the West, to produce internal solutions, and gain an interior dynamic.

The Language Reform in itself is a relatively well-studied subject. But those available sources generally do not address the subject of the study at any length to our particularization: the place of the people. Therefore, in doing this research a shortage of

particular source material has been a considerable disadvantage. The shortage of books on behavioral and social analysis in this context and the deficiency of suitable resources arose because of the difficulty in accessing the accumulation of information for this analysis due to the length of wars then followed by reforms. To compensate, I have made use of post-Republican works, foreign resources, memoirs, newspapers and magazines, Atatürk's Six-day Speech, and many other writings. Especially, I should emphasize that The Wild (Yaban), a novel by Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, was very useful for me as a first novel in its scope.

Furthermore, I have tried to relate the implications of my work toward the present. I have also tried to illustrate the effects of alphabet and language reforms on the people and the way people have perceived these reforms.

CHAPTER I

EARLY REPUBLICAN REFORMS AND THE PEOPLE

Kemalism has been the origin of definitions, descriptions and discussions for a long time. It has been handled as an accumulation of principles rather than as an exact definition.

The term 'Kemalism' was first used by Western authors. Later, in Turkish, it was referred to as 'Kemalist Principles' basing the title on the principles forming the concept. It is possible to determine the definitions of Atatürkism (Kemalism) from different aspects. Each definition puts forward a different dimension. But we will try to focus on the targets of Kemalism devoted to people and the description derived from this approach. Within this context, according to The Handbook of a Kemalist (Atatürkçünün El Kitabı), the aim of Kemalist ideology is to transform the Turkish people through rationalist and scientific method, into a 'contemporary-modern' society.[1] These aims can be widened as the awakening of the Turkish nation by having them adopt National sovereignty as their own, as in many European countries born of the Great French Revolution, enabling the Republic's citizens to share in the process of rule.

Hamza Eroğlu summarizes the purpose of Kemalism, which was to raise the level of the people and find place in the contemporary family of nations, in the following statements:

> Kemalism, firstly, is to recognize and present the rights of the nation. This, in a way, is the statement of national sovereignty. Kemalism is, at the same time,

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[1] *Atatürkçülük-Kemalizm, Atatürkçünün El Kitabı*, (İstanbul: M. Kemal Derneği, 1984), p.5 & 9.

reaching to the level of contemporary civilization and Westernization; in other words, modernization, free mind and thought; freedom and democracy.

Kemalism means the construction of a secular order and realization of a state administration with a positive scientific mentality. With this progressive meaning, Kemalism means forming social and political institutions suitable to Turkish society and being a modern society. In other words, Kemalism means the orientation of the Turkish nation toward future aims and gains a honorable place within the global human family.[2]

Atatürk, in his statements and speeches, stated that the target of all reforms was to bring to the Turkish nation a prosperous standard of living and to provide them with all the facilities of the modern age:

We have always moved westward... Advance toward civilization requires toil. We have to risk hard in order to attain the desired level of development in social, economic, and scientific fields. The rules of the society will have to be modified in time to suit the changing circumstances. At a time when the discoveries of civilization introduces new miracle everyday and when they awe the whole humanity, we simply cannot sit down and take pride in our past achievements. We want to modernize this country. All our efforts and work are geared toward this objective. Are there any nations which did not orient itself toward the West if it wanted to become civilized?.. Countries are many, but the civilization is one and same, to which all countries should adhere for development. The downfall of the Ottoman Empire had started the day it had cut its ties with Europe in the pride of its military victories over the West. This was a serious error, which we will not repeat.[3]

These aims, however, were not peculiar to the republicans. The men of the Tanzimat and the nationalists of the pre-war period had pursued the same aim: to revolutionize society by scientific means and to apply to Turkey the methods that had proved so effective in the West. In the writings of modernist ideologists of the second half of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth, one often finds

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[2] Hamza Eroğlu, *Türk İnkılap Tarihi*, (İstanbul:MEB , 1982), pp.379-380.

[3] Enver Ziya Karal, *Thoughts from Atatürk*, (Ankara: İş Bankası, 1956), pp. 48, 49 and 69

programs similar to those of Mustafa Kemal and his supporters: modernization of the educational structure, borrowing of techniques and ways of thinking from the West, emancipation of women, secularization of the state and so forth.

A series of rather important changes following the Tanzimat and continuing throughout the nineteenth century is a factor capable to let us better comprehend the revolution movement introduced by Atatürk in Turkey after 1923. When we extract a chronology and an inventory of the innovations related with the Tanzimat declared in 1839, we notice that there is a lot worthy of attention in the list. In fact, it can be observed that quite a number of innovations had begun before Tanzimat:

> The establishment of a Postal Administration in 1834, such steps which remove the influence of traditional Islamic practices from the Ottoman administration as the establishment of the Ministries of Finance and Interior and the creation in 1848 of committees for agriculture, commerce industry and public works. The first telegraph line was established in 1855, the first railroad began to be constructed in 1866, the Ottoman Bank as a public institution was founded in 1860 with powers of emission constitute the infrastructure of the changes to occur in the economic field.
>
> Several major changes followed suit in both the law and public administration. The adoption of a Penal Code in 1840 inspired by the French 'Code Pénal', the presentation to the Parliament of a draft Commercial Code, prepared likewise as an amalgamation of the provisions of several foreign laws, the establishment in 1847 of the Ministry of Education, the creation of teachers' schools in 1857 and the supply of upwards of thirty new schools with teacher output of these schools, the publication of a land ownership regulation in 1858 to reshape the Ottoman land ownership system, the reorganization of the courts of commerce between 1861 and 1863, the introduction in 1862 of a new land and marine trade law after the French model, the approval of a new Provincial Administration Law in 1864 with the effort of Ali and Fuat Pashas and the introduction in 1870 of 'majalla' representing a more meaningful and coherent legal framework to family law matters must be remembered in this connection. [4]

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[4] Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, (London: Oxford University Press,1976), pp.98-123

The development and modernization measures introduced after Tanzimat in a piecemeal fashion were creating a sort of irritation among the Ottoman statesmen and the intellectuals due to the slowness of the appearance of their results. As for Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, one of the founders of the Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki) movement called also young Turks (Genç Türkler), his total Westernization idea represents a different concept in that it is an institution suggesting the introduction of the social change processes within a frame of interrelation and interaction series. Atatürk had felt it necessary to attack the problem from several fronts at the same time in order to accelerate the economic development and to give a stronger support to the modernization processes. Professor Daniel Lerner describes the situation with the following words:

> To increase the industrial output, Atatürk had taken up the matter through the simplification of the language, secularization of the state, establishment of schools, constructing roads and erecting new cities. By such institutional innovations, he was aiming at ensuring that the isolated style of life of the rural masses are ended and that the traditional Anatolian living manners are steered towards the requirements of the modern age. Disregarding the clothing accessories such as the fez and veil, he ensured that many pictures of his taken in Western gear are distributed and seen by everyone. In this structural and behavioral matrix, Atatürk erected several cement mills and a strong republic. This psychological medium truly permitting a participant style of life was being reinforced by an economic development and political modernization processus which helped build a Western mind. [5]

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[5] Daniel Lerner, *The Passing Of Traditional Society*, (Illionis:Free Press Glencoe, 1958), p.105

Taking up where the Committee of Union and Progress left off, Mustafa Kemal was to effect even more radical changes. As the rhythm of innovations was so rapid and so noticeable from the outside, observers in Turkey and abroad came to believe that the Kemalist reforms were by their very nature profoundly different from all past processes of change in Turkish society. This view was upheld by Mustafa Kemal himself: "If you remember the past of some six years ago." He said at the end of the twenties,

> You will realize that we have different foundations and different principles governing the state, the common relations between members of the nation, the advance on the way to civilization -in one word everything that concerns our structure, our organization and our national needs. These great changes effected by our nation in the space of only six years represent grandiose movements, more sublime and intense than what is commonly meant by the word revolution.[6]

These descriptions, interpretations and the statements are related to Kemalism, which formed a base for lighting the way for the future, will give some clues in examining Kemalism, Westernization, reforms and principles from the people's perspective.

1. KEMALISM, REFORMS AND THE PEOPLE

Early Republican reforms involved a readiness, even zeal, to transform the traditional Ottoman society into a modern one by radical, forced measures aimed at achieving success within the span of a single generation. Compared to previous movements, what distinguished the Kemalist era was the manner in which reforms were executed. The step-by-step policy of the past gave way to an unconditional radicalism

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[6] Quoted by Tekin Alp, *Le Kemalisme*, (Paris: F. Alcan,1937), p.175

dictated by the new circumstances. Turkey itself had some difficulty assimilating this rapid pace of change.

1.1. The Urgency in Making Reforms

The Ottoman Empire, in its "*longest century*",* declined and was defeated as a consequence of severe and long wars. It had taken its destiny from the nationalistic storm of the 19th century and produced a number of large and small states from its territory after World War I. The last occupied land, Anatolia, was liberated as a result of the National Struggle led by Mustafa Kemal. However, this was not the end of the struggle, just a status change.

What would be the basic dynamics of the new state? Would the old institutions of the Empire survive, or be used by the restoration, or worn down by radical decisions? Mustafa Kemal and his companions chose the third alternative and started to establish a new state with no relation to the old one. After having made this radical and definite decision and target appointment, now, the focus of the debate was to determine the speed and the timing of the reforms. Would the reforms be performed gradually or very quickly? Despite many of Atatürk's friends having different views, since the number of the people desiring to start with no time lost were in the majority, Atatürk took side with those who wanted to act with haste. The target was to raise the Turkish Nation to the

* İlber Ortayh uses this term as a title of his valuable book (İstanbul:Hil, 1989).

desired contemporary level quickly. "Now the 'reform storm' was blowing throughout the country and Turks were being exposed to a hard examination."[7]

To reform staff, because of the vast amount of work to be done, the shortage of time and the urgent necessity of executing the details; progression would have to be revolutionary not evolutionary. İsmail Habib Sevük quotes Atatürk's rhetorical question, asked in the presidential room of Turkish National Assembly, between September 1922 and April 1923, : "Shall we make Turkey progress gradually or radically?" The reply: "There exist two systems, the first one is known, the mode of the Great French revolution; that is, the regimes will change, counter-revolutions will occur against the revolution. While the right section defeats the left, and the left section beats the right, one and a half centuries pass... Does this nation have so much blood in its veins and time to spend?"[8]

In his speech to the Great Congress of 1935, Recep Peker insistently stressed the urgency of reforms:

> If we said everything is okay, our order is proper, let the state progress evolutionary and move in this manner to overcome the problems, we risk not only the future prospects but also the reform results gained up to now. This mentality extinguishes the holy excitement which is the initiator of revolutionary thought. This is nothing more than turning back to the dark ways composed of the putrid thoughts of centuries and about face to the war of life and death by escaping from the velocity of progress in the world.[9]

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[7] Paul Dumont, *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*, (Ankara:Kültür Bakanlığı , 1993), p.120.
[8] İsmail Habib Sevük, *Atatürk İçin*, (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı,1981), p.67 (from the part of "İnkılaplar ve O")
[9] *C.H.P. Dördüncü Büyük Kurultayı Görüşmeleri Tutalgası*, (Ankara: Ulus, 1935, p.46.

Although there were those claiming that these accelerated reforms were too hasty, to some scholars they were not a sudden development in the chain of events that emerged following the National Struggle, and were the final forms of the ideological debates. "Kemalism is the ultimate form of the Westernization movements after the National Struggle, continuing from the Tanzimat years."[10]

To them, there is an unbroken continuity in Turkish modernist doctrine from the ideology of the Tanzimat to the six Kemalist arrows and one can discern numerous changes along the way, but the main lines are clear: Kemalist thought was closely linked to that of the Young Turks, and it owed much to the ideological movements of the second half of the nineteenth century.

Another view represents the mentality that rejected the relationship between Ottoman improvements and the reforms, and seeks to disprove that these reforms were an extension of earlier improvement measures. Since these two groups put forward relative criteria, it is difficult to make strict distinctions.

Most of the Turkish intellectuals, no matter which idea they hold, have focused the general idea that, in order to catch up with the Western countries which had completed their technological revolutions centuries earlier and to get rid of the negative results of the war, some renovations reforms were inevitable. Almost all of the intellectuals and authorities of Republican era were of a revolutionary mind. They claimed that the new Turkish state had no and should not have any relation to the past. The principal argument leading to this comment was the belief that the connection between the Ottoman Empire institutions, and the thoughts of the caliphate institution and the

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[10] See Niyazi Berkes. *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma*, (İstanbul:Doğu-Batı, 1978); *Tarık Zafer Tunaya, Türkiye'nin Siyasi Hayatında Batılılaşma Hareketleri*, (İstanbul: Yedigün,1960).

conditions of post-war period had to be abolished. Everything belonging to the past should be changed and adapted to new conditions.

Celal Nuri İleri stated the following, in his article Renewal of Nations (Milletlerin Tecdidi) in 1922:

> The new generation should have another type of mentality, sensibility and working style. If a new capital was added to the sturdiness and firm intention, Turks would have acquired a national Renaissance and rebirth. However, present methods must definitely change for the education of future generations[11]

Ağaoğlu Ahmet also stated that a new universe was born in the capital city of the new state, Ankara, saying "basic principles of this state, thoughts to be inspired, the route to be followed, and the targets to be reached will be completely different and new."[12]

As well as the intellectuals of that era, some researchers have held similar views. For example, to Paul Dumont, the events were the expected results of normal occurrences.

> On 3 March 1924, Turkey, which was assumed to be faltering between Panislamism and Bolshevism, made her decision by choosing the European and Western values unconditionally. Vitally, Mustafa Kemal did not endeavor so much. Turkey, -entered amongst the cruel wheels of Westernization- has been preparing for such a revolution.[13]

What was the position of the people? To what extent were the people aware of the events? Did they know the minds of those who performed the reforms for them? Was

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[11] C. Nuri İleri, "Milletlerin Tecdidi", *İleri*, no. 1731, 29 Teşrin-i Sani 1338/1922.
[12] Ağaoğlu Ahmet, "Meclis Açılırken", *Vatan*, no.137, 15 Ağustos 1923.
[13] Dumont, *op. cit.*, p.120.

the necessity of the reforms explained adequately to them? Or were the people in their daily struggle for existence and interested more in healing wounds, than in reforms? These are the questions which will constitute the focus of next sections.

1.2. The Goal of Reforms, or Reforms on Behalf of the People

At the base of many of early Republican reforms, anxiety to keep the benefits of people in precedence and to raise them to the level of 'contemporary civilization', could be observed.

The principal aim was to become a civilized society. Old institutions should be replaced with new ones and a new order fitting the new theory of life* should be established.

Uriel Heyd describes the aim of the reforms in a similar manner, especially that the removal of the gap between the intellectuals and the people was one of the primary aims of the reformers. "At the same time far-reaching social reforms set in. Populism (Halkçılık), the Kemalist form of democracy, aimed at breaking down the political and cultural barriers which for centuries had separated the common people (halk) from the educated and privileged classes."[14]

Since the aim in reforms was determined to be 'reform on behalf of the people', this time the target mass became the peasants which constituted 80 per cent of the population. The state strove to raise this large mass to the desired level, initiating an

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* Halil Berktay describes another aspect of this thory as "to worship education instead of belief" concretized in Atatürk's words of "The truest guide in life is science". See Halil Berktay, "Dört Tarihçinin Sosyal Portresi", *Toplum ve Bilim*, No.54/55, Yaz/Güz 1991, p.28

[14] Uriel Heyd, *Language Reform in Modern Turkey*, (Jerusalem, 1954), p.20.

'accelerated' modernization. Avni Başman in 1927 identified these targets as follows in 1927:

> If Turkey is not only composed of an educated minority, if the producer peasant mass forming the economic basis of these minor people, constitutes the main pillar of Turkey ..., the following must be the greatest national ideal for a Turkish youth:
>
> Working for people until there is no village undeveloped, unlit with the light of civilization, unachieved in its destiny from humane life.[15]

After the identification of aim and the target, now, is the time to determine the style and the performers of these reforms. "Political élite who have been in power (truly, always in power) since the republic, started to do the best for the people and to perform some structural changes."[16]

The logic of such an attempt can be assumed in "having accepted themselves in the duty of 'rescuing the state' and seeking a solution 'from the top down' since the Ottomans period."[17]

The logic of the emergency of activities done for the people will be inspected. Let us turn to the peasants who were determined as target.

It is possible to realize the effort of raising the people -especially the peasants- to the aimed position in the works of authors of Republican era:

> To handle the greatest mass which has the general and common adjectives, as 'people', that is the scale of society and the basis, to render them

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[15] Avni (Başman). "Halka Doğru." *Hayat*, Vol.I. no.25, 19 Mayıs 1927, pp.481-482.
[16] Mithat Baydur - M. Lütfullah Karaman, "Türkiye ve Ortadoğu Özelinde İslam Ülkelerinde 'Siyasi Elit-Halk' Çelişkisi Üzerine Hatırlatmalar," *Türkiye Günlüğü*, no. 33 (March-April 1995), p.73
[17] *Ibid.*, p.74

dominate in the country by raising it from every aspect and increase the quantity, and finally, to walk towards a nation of the people by eliminating groups above and below this class.

If we accept this view, it is necessary to understand 12 million peasants when we say 'people' with broad and narrow adjectives.[18]

An idealist, and a somewhat romantic, 'rural development' trend started among state administrators. The desire to raise the peasants, who constituted the majority people, to the level of contemporary nations immediately, captivated everybody. Intellectuals used this subject in their works, statesmen sought ways of realizing this ideal in either speeches or works done. The best way to reach people was by means of press and publications. For this purpose, in 1933, the Republican People's Party (hereafter abbreviated as the RPP) published a new newspaper called Native country (Yurt).[19] It's target audience was only peasants. Populism was the main policy. The aim of publishing the newspaper was again to 'enlighten and raise the Turkish peasants.' It dealt with all their necessities, on the way of progression; it made friends with them by 'addressing' them.

The intense transformation efforts and actions to this purpose will be discussed in detail in the next sections.

2. THE PLACE OF THE PEOPLE DURING THE KEMALIST REFORMS

To well understand the attitude the people, it's better to give the outlook of the them during the reforms.

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[18] Nusret Kemal."İnkılap İdeolojisinde Halkçılık," *Ülkü*, Vol.III. no.13. Mart 1934, pp.41-44.

[19] CHF Katibi Umumiliğinin Fırka Teşkilatına Umumi Tebligatı, Vol. 3, pp.98-99 cited in Hakkı Uyar-Türkan Çetin, "Tek Parti Yönetiminde Köylüye Yönelik Propaganda- Yurt Gazetesi", *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 1, January (1994), p.52.

2.1. A General Outlook of the People

At the beginning of the Republic, there existed a nation which had been neglected for centuries, exhausted from long-wars of the declining years of the Ottoman Empire, pessimistic about future prospects. They had won their independence, but a decade of war and reform, massacre and countermassacre, banditry, blockade, and foreign occupation had decimated the population and shattered the economy of the lands that composed the new Turkey.

The most depleted section of the population during World War I and the ensuing National Struggle was the peasantry. In the initial days after the declaration of Republic, 80 per cent of the population were living in villages. According to a census held in 1927, the population was 13,269,606 in Anatolia and eastern Thrace.[20] The per cent of the urban district was 24,2 per cent (3,300,000), the per cent of the rural district was 75.8 per cent (10,342,000).[21] Epidemics, poverty, and the destruction of the post-war period were widespread. An author gives the following example to illustrate the situation of the country, by pointing out the work to be done: "There are at least 300,000 orphans. The education of these uniformly is the duty of this nation."[22]

It is very difficult to obtain well ordered, statistical data about the conditions of the country and the people of this period. The nation was trying to treat its wounds in the wreckage. Numerical data can be obtained only from foreign sources, the often insufficient official records of the Ottoman Empire, or by estimation.

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[20] Başvekalet İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, *İstatistik Yıllığı*, V (Ankara:1931-1932), 35-99

[21] *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Köylerimiz*, (Ankara:Köy İşleri Bakanlığı, 1973), p.6.

[22] Cited in Mehmet Kaplan, İnci Enginün, (et. al.) (Zeynep Kerman, Necat Birinci, Abdullah Uçman), *Atatürk Devri Fikir Hayatı, Vol.I*, (Ankara, Kültür Bakanlığı, 1981), p.371.

Conditions were grave. Tremendous problems faced the administrators of the new state.

> There were not any schools and teachers in 35,000 of 40,000 villages at the beginning of the 1930's. In 32,000 villages there was neither a school, nor a post office, nor a grocer. The number of people living in villages was approximately 11 million and only 2 per cent of whom were literate. The population of 32,000 of the villages was below 400. The population in 16,000 of these villages was below 150.[23]

The disruption was massive. Most non-Muslim were gone, with the Greek community reduced from 1.8 million to 120,000, the Armenians from 1.3 million to 100,000. No less than 2.5 million Turks died during the war.[24] Besides the demographic structure hindering the attempts for advancement and the attainment of a contemporary level, the mentality, the education, levels of cultural and material, structure of the people was not so heartening, either. Traditional patterns had not yet been demolished and the people would have to be prepared for the reforms: "The general feature of the population was traditional. The overwhelming number of the people were illiterate and since they could not make use of the limited education facilities, individuals and the subgroups have lived with certain taboos and within idée fixes."[25]

This situation had not changed by the beginning of 20th Century. The Anatolian people had not known anything but robbery and murder of oppressive officers, prolonged military duties, gendarme pressure, tax collectors, tax-farmers, and usurers since the

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[23] Nusret K. (Köymen), "Köy Seferberliğine Doğru", *Ülkü*, Vol.I. no. 5, June 1933, p.355.
[24] *Başvekalet İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü*, op. cit.
[25] Sulhi Dönmezer, "Toplumsal Değişme ve Atatürk İnkılapları," *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, No.19, (1990), p.23.

Celali Rebellions in the late Ottoman period. These caused bloody rebellions and massacres because of sectarian (mezhep) differences. The wars in the Balkans and Arabia had continued. Men had been conscripted by force. Moltke, who lived in Turkey for a long time, writes that the recruit means 'the village oppressed by the state' in his memoirs. Moltke gives some examples:

> There are some villages having no young and working persons. I advise you to be present during this man-hunting and to see the coming of soldiers with feverish eyes and tied hands.
>
> The peasants escaped to the mountains. They were followed by the dogs. The ones caught, children and disabled people, were the majority, transferred in lines tied with the ropes.
>
> I haven't seen a soldier beaten for a reason other than desertion. Soldiers who had deserted did not say a word, although beaten by switch 200 times but then watched an opportunity to escape.
>
> According to the newest census, there are 600 Muslim and 200 Christian families. 200 persons, 20 per cent of Muslims, were conscripted. 200 more soldiers were demanded at this time. Whereas the ones who are in the period of liability to military service escaped to the mountains, there were only the children and old people in the streets. This situation is considered to last the life time.[26]

The author of The Initiation of the National Struggle in Aegean Region (Ege'de Kurtuluş Savaşı Başlarken) Nurdoğan Taçalan gives an example of Çeşme: "The youth from Çeşme were in Yemen for their military service. There was only one Turk between 20-30 years old in Çeşme in 1908. He was a dwarf. So Yemen was named the Çeşme Graveyard."[27]

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[26] Moltke, "Türkiye Mektupları", *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi*, No.11, p. 52 cited in Doğan Avcıoğlu, *Milli Kurtuluş Tarihi, (1838'den 1995'e)*, Vol.3, (İstanbul:Tekin, 1983), p.p. 912-914.

[27] Nurdoğan Taçalan, *Ege'de Kurtuluş Savaşı Başlarken*, (İstanbul: Hür, 1981), p.56.

In 1920, in the Turkish National Assembly, during the 'populism program' debates, some orators stated that the position of the Anatolian people had not changed after the Constitutional Period (Meşrutiyet):

> Turkish peasants have remained as before the Constitutional period. Interminable taxes were collected by the force of gendarme. Turkish peasants died in the Balkans, in Karadağ, on the Orient front, in Yemen again and again. They were devastated. They became exhausted, became feeble, selling their ox, hulls by the force of the gendarme. Therefore, the peasants could not understand anything from the Meşrutiyet, which was declared by brilliant ceremonies in 1908[28]

This breaking of the people by the state and its administrators was still a fact to be realized and was stressed, by post-Republican élite authors.

Many Republican era intellectuals pointed out the gap between the people and the state. They also blamed the Ottoman intellectuals for this bad situation and finally, they stressed that the Ottoman intellectuals had lived apart from the people and their problems.

Ahmet Cevdet illustrates the neglect of the Anatolian villages: "A letter sent by Pazarköy and Düzköy villages counsel of elders: 'Each of us are 40-60 years old. We have neither seen nor heard from our ancestors that a governor, an inspector or a journalist had visited our villages."[29]

F. Nafiz Çamlıbel, a famous poet, provides another excellent example of this claim:

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[28] Samet Ağaoğlu, *Kuva-yı Milliye Ruhu*, (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1981), p.64
[29] Ahmet Cevdet, "Köylüleri Dinleyiniz", *İkdam*, 30 Haziran 1926.

The government swallowing the people by giving hope,
The government lying down in Istanbul,
It applies every sentence to the peasants, it becomes true,
It shares the peasants' good and life,
You, harness your wife to the plough,
You, water your fields with your tears,
You, work and earn, and then feed others,
You, pay taxes and join the army.[30]

Yet another example of this view, a passage of an article regarding Atatürk's opening speech published in an semi-official newspaper, Hakimiyet-i Milliye:

> The Turkish peasant, deprived of blessings by being exposed to merely citizenship obligations up to Republican era, is now free. The Turkish Government, working to assure the life of citizens with no usurpation and influence, will be careful to render the peasant's work free from usurpation and profiteering[31]

With this negative assessment of the pre-Republican era, what were the goals of the intellectuals in the Republican Era? Were they satisfied by only making claims? Did they know the real conditions of the peasants? Most likely not. The miserable lives of the peasants was not a situation to be hushed up by closing eyes and ears. The cocoon surrounding the intellectuals was perforated and they were faced with the truth. Usury and brigandage were turning the people topsy-turvy. Two articles illustrating the situation:

The (G) village of (A) town of K city central Anatolia region...

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[30] Avcıoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 906.
[31] Zeki Mesut, "Çiftçiye Toprak", *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 9.11.1929.

> The last days of the holiday, I went to my hometown. I found the peasants thoughtful. To them: 'Congratulations my fellow-townsman! This year you got plenty of crops and forgot yester year's disaster. Why do not you smile now?
>
> Yes, it is so; but we couldn't make use of it.. We grew, we harvested, but we filled the granaries and wallets of others.
>
> Farm-laborers, arriving at the last spring with a ox, had to take seed from other rich farm-laborers by giving the half of their crop, or borrowed money with an interest rate of 200 per cent [32]

Following this speech, the author asked the peasants why they had borrowed at such high interest instead of the low interest offered by the State Agricultural Bank (Ziraat Bankası). The peasants replied that the Bank gave up to 100 lira, with bureaucratic restrictions. The peasants however gulp down the money like hungry dogs.[33] The author continued as follows:

> This event reminded me that I do not know the peasants although I am a peasant. So I should learn... [The government liberated the people from despots but not from the spongers]
>
> In some villages, the teachers are loaning with an interest of 200 per cent. Moreover, with the respect of the peasants...
>
> The peasants are not dealing with the elections. It is time to work. District administrator says: 'If the tax collector heard, it wouldn't be good for you.' Everybody kept silent against this threat and the man of the tax collector won the elections bar none Typhoid fever is epidemic. There is no doctor. The town doctor went to Istanbul. - To spend the money earned from warted hands...-
>
> A hoy!.. The noble men going to doctor for jerry-built cough and sneeze! I know, you think these words are a made-up story, or a story of African wildmen. Your eyes couldn't diffuse these dark holes! And you do not believe many Anatolian towns have been surviving deprived of a doctor for years and years. Because the doctors educated with the money that peasants saved by skimping on essentials, have run to the big cities to watch over your holy bodies.[34]

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[32] Emin Türk (Eliçin). "Köyümde neler gördüm?". *Resimli Ay*. 10 (1929). pp.7-9.
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] *Ibid.*

The second article:

> The problems of the people do not merely consist of earthquakes, floods or drought. The peasants are suffering not only from misery but also from usury. The current interest rate throughout the Anatolia is not just 25-30 per cent as considered. This ratio is an astounding degree. In some places, there are some terms used between the peasants and usurious: Let's bend!.. (Bükelim) is one of them. I have told some interest procedures in some towns:
>
> The landlord (agha) was loaning 100 TL. with interest or in return for a guarantee. As time passes he demands the money. If the peasant cannot pay the money, he desires the agha's grace. Then agha replies:
>
> -Then, let's bend!..
>
> This term means that: The value of the written note will be doubled .. That is, the 100 TL. written note will be replaced with a 200 TL. one.
>
> Distressed and anxious peasants comply with this proposal willy-nilly. If he can not pay for it on time, the written note is bent easily, a 100 TL. debt becomes 400 TL. in two years.
>
> In this treatment, the generosity of the agha is not unlimited. His kindness continues with respect to the peasants' guarantee. When he understands that the field and the house of the peasants will not recompose the debts, he gives up 'bending' and refers to the court-bailiff with a tyrannical face.[35]

The Republican intellectuals confronting this unbearable view had to do something and started to struggle in their position. The most effective weapon was literature. The authors tried to write works about peasants to explain the conditions of the people, in order to help them.

> It is observed that the strong current of 'aiming at the Anatolian's problems and peasant realities' was born in the atmosphere of People's Houses, the translation of Western classics, and the opening of village institutes. Although every noble current and art movements lost their speed, the realists telling of the

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[35] "Bükelim", *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, 18.7.1929. (This article whose written by Mah. autographed is estimated to belong to Mahmut (Soydan) who is Siirt deputy and the editor-in-chief of Hakimiyeti Milliye).

peasants and soil problems have not lessened their speed; they filled this gap with their works.[36]

The Wild (Yaban), a novel of Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu has a special place among post-war works voicing the conditions of the villages and the peasants. The view in 'Wild' is heart-rending: An ugly nature, a contaminated environment; disabled and sick people, ignorance, taboos, a way of life formed by instincts. The war is continuing in a world away from them. They do not deal with the war, except with the fear of enlistment. "The attitude of the peasants toward the National Struggle is the just opposite of the novel's hero. Even the massacres of the withdrawing enemies do not cause a reaction. They accept all with resignation. Ahmet Celal, who lost his one arm for them, was utterly mad. But the situation making him sad is his work."[37]

Yakup Kadri includes self-criticism in the foreword of the novel, a plea which had not been made until then, holding intellectuals responsible for this bad situation:

> You, the Turkish intellectuals , are the reason for this! What have you done for this ruined country and poor people? After exploiting pitilessly and leaving them as dregs on the soil, you found yourself to have the right of being disgusted with them.
>
> The Anatolians used to have a soul that you couldn't penetrate, a head you couldn't enlighten; a body you couldn't manipulate. You left them amongst bestial feelings, ignorance, poverty, droughts. They have grown like wild grass in between the soil and the sky. Now, you come here to reap? This urticaceae of thorns? Of course these will prick your feet. Here you are bleeding and are pulling a sour face. You are filled with anger. This distressing situation is your work and only your work.[38]

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[36] Tahir Alangu, *Cumhuriyetten Sonra Hikaye ve Roman*, (1930-1940), Anthology, Vol..2, (İstanbul, 1965), foreword.
[37] Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Yaban*, (İstanbul:İletişim, 1984) , p.17.
[38] *Ibid.*, 26.

Some Turkish intellectuals were aware of the situation of the people and tried to take necessary measures. Some authors like Yakup Kadri proclaimed themselves sick of swallowing the bitter pill, and of making pitiless self-criticism.[39]

The commander of the Western Front, İsmet Pasha, spoke to officers leaving Bursa with their families during the İnönü Wars, like the hero of *Yaban*, Ahmet Celal, "Look at me! Let nobody hear that, the nation is our enemy. They think the war is going on because of you."[40]

While the double-courting were being established, Hamdullah Suphi spoke in the Turkish National Assembly, in autumn 1920, in the same manner. "Virtually, we're in a suspended position, and indeed the people do not understand anything about us."[41]

The administrators and the intellectuals voiced this criticism many times. They were, however, trying to do something to effect the change with an idealism and most of the time, romanticism of the traditionalism. Their efforts were just like growing a tree rapidly by means of artificial drugs and hormones. As Atatürk stated "They were trying to succeed at great works in a limited time duration."* When we inspect the attempts for change led by the administrators, this can be seen clearly.

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[39] In the 1990's, Turkish intellectuals have the similar feelings. The opinion of a journalist on this subject is very interesting: "In reality, Anatolia is a nightmare or an inferiority complex for Turkish intellectuals. They always assume that they have neglected the peasants and have not striven for them although they are the benefactor." Doğan Hızlan, "Türk Aydının Serüveni", *Hürriyet*, (İstanbul), 1 Ağustos 1995.

[40] İnönü'nün Hatıraları,*Ulus*, 17 Mayıs 1968.

[41] Cited in Avcıoğlu, *op. cit.*, p.912.

* Quoted in Atatürk's "10th Anniversary of the Republic Discourse".

2.2. Attempts for Change by the Governing Elite

The target of the new Turkish Republic was to form a modern, secular, national state and society. Officials hoped to implement the new reforms with an increase in education and culture and by raising the general economic level of the people. Accomplishing all these targets, however, was not simple.

In the era leading up to 1930, some policies aimed at the villages were put into effect by the Republican administration. After the declaration of the Republic, the new 'Village Law' was promulgated in 5 months. For the first time, villages were accepted as administrative entities. Although the laws were actually applied, the 1929 world economic crisis prevented their success.

Besides the Village Law, tithes (Aşar tax) was abolished in 1925. The activities of the Agricultural Bank increased and lending was made easier. In the end:

> In 1930, Turkish reforms were performed in great amount at the top level. The government leaving liberal economic policies started to implement an étatist economy policy. Some measures were taken to raise the economic level of the people. The world economic crisis and the opposition party experiment brought to light the economic problems of the people.[42]

The 1930's was the decade in which the RPP tried to widen the social base of the reforms. In 1933, on the 10th anniversary of the Republic, Atatürk defined the target of

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[42] Uyar & Çetin, *op. cit.*, p.51.

the Turkish reforms as "to raise above the contemporary Civilization level"[43].

Many new institutions played an important part in the spreading of reforms and Kemalist ideology to the masses: People's Houses, national schools, People's Reading Halls, sport clubs, various education and cultural associations, teacher chambers, village teacher organizations, village institutes, and courses aimed at the peasants such as the mobile village blacksmith's trade and joinery courses, and village women's mobile courses. History and citizenship lessons, in which the Republican ideology was presented, taught at the secondary education level. Reform history lessons were added to university curriculums.

At this point, it is worth to inspect the People's Houses (Halk Evleri), since they have a special place among the others from the dissemination of reforms point of view. In order to remedy the deficiencies exposed by the Free Republican Party episode, the RPP also became the government's principal agent for mass political education and indoctrination in the ideals of the Republic. This kind of adult education program had begun with the Turkish Heart movement, which had played an important role in initially organizing Turkish national feeling against the peace settlement and the Allied occupation. But its energies had been absorbed by the nationalist movement and it did not recover its early vigor during the early years of the Republic. In 1932, therefore it was abolished and its branches were absorbed into a new organization set up by the RPP, the People's Houses, established in the cities and larger towns, and, later, the People's Rooms

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[43] *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, Vol.II, (1906-1938), (Ankara:Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü, 1952), pp.318-319.

(Halk Odaları), opened in the small towns and villages.[44] The main objective of the new organization was to educate people in the Kemalist ideals and to create ideological unity between the educated elite running the party and the Assembly, and the masses. Thus the opponents of the Republic would be deprived of possible mass support for their subversive ideas. The People's Houses and the People's Rooms functioned on several levels. They became adult-education centers as well as schools for political education for Turks of all ages. They became community centers, with programs of sports, movies and cultural activities. They developed their own educational courses, research, and publication in areas needed to support the Kemalist doctrines, especially in Turkish history, language, and folklore. Their fine-art sections presented performances and encouraged mass participation in the presentation of modern music and art. Their sports sections emphasized team sports to develop a feeling of cooperation for the common effort. Their social divisions cared for those in need. The adult-education sections offered courses on reading, handicrafts, fine arts, health and hygiene, and the like. Village affairs sections were established in some areas to improve the physical and social condition of the villagers and to encourage a feeling of unity between them and the city dwellers by arranging visits. The principal organ of the movement was Ülkü (Ideal), published by the Ankara People's House starting in 1932 under the editorship of RPP General Secretary Recep Peker for four years and then of the distinguished historian Fuat Köprülü until 1941. Many local People's Houses published their own journals and books, which included useful materials on local history, folklore, and society.

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[44] Stanford Shaw and E.K. Shaw, *History of Ottoman Empire and Modernization of Turkey*, Vol. II. (London:1972), p.383

Besides work on this vast front, economic efforts were also being made, and the target mass, the peasantry, was again on the agenda. The revolutionary wing surrounding Atatürk and İsmet İnönü, controlled the development of private industry, making it independent of trade and the industrial bourgeoisie.

In 1922, the peasant class had been declared 'the Master of Nation', but the Republic had not been able to enter the village and destroy the will of the Agha. In the 1930's the administrators worked hard to overcome this situation but the state abolished the Agha order formally. In 1937, Şükrü Kaya spoke of the liberation of the peasants and economic liberation to the National Assembly.

> Dear friends, 15 million of 18 million Turks are farmers. Most of them do not work in their own fields. To grant soil to Turkish peasants means rendering them active and successful for this country by giving economic freedom. If we are expecting benefit from this great mass, we should rescue them; they should be the master of their own land instead of working others' fields.[45]

After 1936, it became clear that rescuing the peasants did not mean simply land distribution, equipment and tool supply or financial help. Prime Minister İsmet İnönü spoke as follows:

> We have seen after a couple years of experiment that production and income have increased in industry at the expense of agriculture... As in the Credit and Consumption Cooperatives, it is inevitable to enter a planned and participatory period to arrange and increase production. We'd like to establish communes equipped with new machines, ploughing and watering systems and harvesting machines...[46]

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[45] Kemal Arıburnu, *Milli Mücadele ve İnkılaplarla İlgili Kanunlar; Esbabı Mucibeleri ve Meclis Görüşmeleriyle*, (Ankara:Güzel İstanbul, 1957), p.94.

[46] Prime Minister İsmet İnönü's Discourse in RPP's Congress,1936, quoted by Avcıoğlu, *op. cit.*, p.1408.

To activate the agrarian workers, in 1935, successful soldiers were educated as the pioneers of education and development in the villages. With the village institutes, a peasant army was to change the land policy, awaken the villages and apply modern agricultural techniques. In 1937, a change in the constitution allowed for the expropriation of land at high prices. Despite the difficulties of the war and bureaucratic restrictions, the Land Law was passed in 1945. After the 1930's, the government attempted many activities by means of rearrangements aimed at the peasants who were the biggest population mass.

To outline the activities of the reform staff in technical detail is beyond the scope of this work and it needs further research. However, the studies which have been mentioned just to give an idea of the devotion of the people, especially to the peasants, lasted both while Atatürk was alive and after his death. Atatürk, the founder of the new regime, and his companions worked unceasingly just to disseminate information, pass appropriate reforms, and perform the desired modifications and development. Activities such as economic investment, education and propagation devoted to the peasants continued at high pace. The people were being forced into the modern age. The attempts of the administrators sometimes hit the target but many times resulted in impatience. The individuals striving also were mostly alone, often faced with restrictions instead of support from bureaucracy.

2.3. The Response and/or Participation of the People Reforms

The manner in which reforms were received by the people, or the contribution of the people to these reforms, has been widely discussed for many years. Many different

opinions have been put forward. While close friends of Atatürk argued that the people supported the reforms, there were many who defended the opposite point of view.

The leftists considered the reforms as a mere superstructure changes and they deemed them to be non-radical superficial improvement. "The Turkish reforms are deficient and inadequate. The essential is the substructure, -the people- reform. The reforms started by Atatürk with the National Struggle, have influenced only the superstructure -the élite-, but it has not influenced the people, who form the main section of society. This is a bourgeoisie reform."[47]

Some authors criticized the reforms intensely: "Deputies found themselves representing unlikely reaches of Anatolia which they had never seen."[48] "The Kemalists followed the policy of secularization by abolishing the caliphate and adopting a state policy of strict laicsm; they had to confront a social reaction, similar to what the Union and Progress had faced earlier".[49] Keyder after pointing out these opinions, describes that "the regime was devoid of the kind of social base characteristic of fascist or populist examples... Thus it was regime where bargaining and political posturing remained within the confines of the elite."[50]

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[47] Bülent Ecevit, *Atatürk ve Devrimcilik*, (İstanbul:Tekin, 1974), p.p.62-63. Ecevit also defines the substructure reforms as the first step of the superstructure reforms.
[48] Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey- a study in capitalist development*, (London;New York: Verso,1987), p.85.
[49] *Ibid.*, p.88.
[50] *Ibid.*, p.109.

This group of authors tried to evaluate the reforms from the people's perspective and even denied the importance of Atatürk at the beginnings of the National Struggle: "The National Struggle started spontaneously against the occupational forces."[51]

In the conservative wing, there were radical and extremists claiming that the reforms happened in spite of the people, that the people did not approve of these reforms, and called all Westernization efforts "treason"[52]

The debate continued between the ones believing that reforms could not be accomplished without the people's desire and support and the ones saying reforms could not be accomplished by referendum.

In spite of all these arguments, the Kemalist group alluded that the reforms had been performed by an élite group:

> Atatürk was executing the reforms based not on a class but by a pioneer élite group. He chose a way of creating a medium by annihilation of old-fashioned thoughts and banishing the irrational position of religion from human and social life. Or to be more exact, he tried to do both as much as possible.[53]

Hamza Eroğlu states, in the same manner, that the spirit of the reform movement moved from top to bottom: "Turkish reforms first emerged as a thought. This thought was extended to society, became consciousness, Turkish reforms are not the result of

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[51] Taner Timur . *Türk Devrimi ve Sonrası*, 1919-1946 (Ankara:Doğan, 1971), p.73.
[52] D. Mehmet Doğan, *Batılılaşma İhaneti*, (İstanbul:Beyan, 1986).
[53] Doğan Kuban, "Atatürkçülük Üzerine Yorumlar", in *Atatürk Konferansları*, (Ankara:T.T.K.,1970), p.173.

coincidence or fatalism."[54] In 1931, the statement of Kütahya Deputy Alaaddin Bey, in the Great Congress, illustrates this point of view: "Friends, the reform's raising of the nation does not only come from bottom to top as in France. Sometimes, these reforms come from top to bottom."[55]

Thus, in the definition of one sociologist, Kemalists attended the 'from top down' policy of the Young Turks although they differed from traditional Ottoman bureaucrats.[56]

In 1930, General Secretary of the Republican People's Party Recep Peker stated a different opinion in the evaluation of the reforms: "Turkish reforms were done by the people against the authorities. But when the reformers came into the power, they moved from power to the people. During this time, many hardships and difficulties were seen in the strata of the people living away from the realities."[57]

How were the reforms, evaluated differently by these intellectuals, comprehended by the people? First, we need to analyze and define the people's mode of acceptance and rejection. The assumption up to now has been questionable. Neither were the Turkish people reactionary, nor were the reformers praised or slandered. Each side should be analyzed from its own perspective. The initial reaction of the people at this onslaught of

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[54] Eroğlu, *op. cit.*, p.494.

[55] *CHF Üçüncü Büyük Kongre Zabıtları, 10-18 Mayıs 1931*, (İstanbul: Devlet, 1931), p. 230.

[56] Ali Kazancıgil, "The Ottoman Turkish State and Kemalism ", in A. Kazancıgil ve E. Özbudun (eds.), *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State*, (London:C.Hurst & Co., 1981), p. 48. It is possible to trace the idea of taking the reforms to the people from the thoughts of Ziya Gökalp, who was one of the theorist behind the reforms : " The intellectuals of a nation are named the 'élite' of that nation. The élite are distinguished from the people by their education and culture. These are the ones who should move towards the people. Why will they go?...Just to take civilization to them!", Taha Parla, *Ziya Gökalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye'de Korporatizm*, (İstanbul:İletişim,1989), pp.75-76.

[57] Recep Peker, *İnkılap Dersleri*, (İstanbul: İletişim,1984), (First, published in 1935), p.20.

rapid change could be described as bewildered. Paul Dumont depicts the general opinion of the people in his book, *Mustafa Kemal*, in which he quotes from E. Herriot's *Orient* in 1933 :

> Even the name of God (Allah) has been changed, because Kemal wanted to replace the name of *Allah* with *Tanrı* which is an old Central Asia term. Isn't this much reform excessive? Many Turks think that. However those who speak loudly are in the minority. Since there are some legislative restrictions of government-which the Turkish Great National Assembly resolves in necessity-and it doesn't hesitate to apply this legislation. Which one is better, to announce the Ezan in Turkish or be imprisoned for declaring it in Arabic? To wear a European hat or be put to death for wearing a *fez*? Many Turks, faced with such a dilemma, did not hesitate to chose the less hurtful way.[58]

The comments of Mete Tunçay are similar to this and even more severe: "When the reactions against the hat reform were suppressed by force, although the hat is a very expensive item, nobody could say it was expensive. Now, the goal is to preserve the head, not to wear hat or *fez*."[59]

The people were distressed perceiving this new outer world, and watched the events with curiosity, sometimes with bewilderment, sometimes with feverish excitement and many times with insensitivity. This feeling of confusion could also be felt among the intellectuals, stemming from their breaking away from the people, which came from the nature of the reforms. The long-term relation with the Western world, which they had not comprehended before, was perhaps the greatest factor in this gap. As we analyze the

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[58] Quoted by Dumont, *op. cit.*, p.119.

[59] Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye'de Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması*, (Ankara: Yurt, 1982), p.150.

comprehension and applications as a typical adaptation of the 'Noble State' mode, we observe that the missing operand is the 'people. This was the people as the reform staff perceived. It was a fictitious entity. It had no reality. The reform staff are remembered romantically in the people's collective memory. A real perception, a real understanding became very difficult.

3. THE DIFFERENCES IN REACTIONS BETWEEN THE ELITE AND THE MASSES

The reactions of the people and of the intellectuals to the reforms were very different and a gap between them could easily be observed.

3.1. The People vs. the Intellectuals within the Context of Reforms

In the course of these arguments, we face these questions: Is it possible that we have considered reforms and the interior conditions from which they arose? Could the 'contemporary civilization level' be transferred by an unqualified style and mechanism during the appropriation? That is, could they be considered merely connected with the 'exterior conditions.'? If we reply to these questions positively, then we face the intellectuals who were responsible for this transfer. The mission of the intellectuals in the operation of the reforms by the people will be the focus of the subject.

However, the gap between the state and the masses which is stressed throughout this work, is one of the facts. The attitude of the élite against the reforms at the beginning -and even later- is very interesting. Many of them acted with a mentality inherited from

Ottoman state behaving as if they knew everything on behalf of the people and would do the best for them. So they could neither could be useful to the people nor become proper reformers and finally the revolutionary elite have formed a totally independent class, having no connections whatsoever with the masses which they claim to represent.

To Şerif Mardin, the close friends group sometimes left Atatürk alone.[60] Doğan Avcıoğlu shares the same opinion: "The interesting aspect was that Atatürk was encountered with hindrance rather than support from the bureaucracy."[61] Mostly, Atatürk worked alone to apply the reforms, and he tried to orient the intellectuals by himself in case of need. Many times he went among the people to show what was necessary by actually doing it. He followed a heavy schedule of work, traveling regularly around the country by train to spread the ideals of the Republic among masses through a personal image.

The Sarayburnu Address of Atatürk, reported by Falih Rıfkı Atay, is an example of Atatürk's attempts to apply the reforms and to show himself among the people:

> Atatürk was not a hypocritical oriental despot, depressing and chilling. On the contrary, he was a friend of the people, joining the entertainment, sharing their joy, drinking, playing with and speaking to them. He felt very happy amongst the people. When he entered amongst the people, hypocritical bigots used to go away. Unlike the dictators, keeping the people away from them by a wall of soldiers, frightened of the people, Atatürk used to feel powerful amongst the people. He did not expect any aggression from them during his lifetime. Like Shakespeare's king, threatening his prime minister by leaving power and becoming plain a citizen, Mustafa Kemal followed the same path, saying in annoyance: 'I go to the nation' The origin of his reforms, will-power, was his belief in the people.[62]

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[60] Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye'de Toplum ve Siyaset*, (İstanbul:İletişim, 1990), p.139.
[61] Avcıoğlu, *op. cit.*, p.1360.
[62] Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Çankaya.*,(İstanbul:Bateş,1969), pp.441-442.

Falih Rıfkı complains of the hindrances of the intellectuals instead of support: "He faced all the hindrances not from the people but from the intellectuals. His unique dictate was to forbid the incitement of the people by reactionary intellectuals, either professional or from religious schools (medrese). Amongst the leaders whose names had been heard since the Tanzimat, Atatürk was unequivocally the leader who understood the people properly and joined them."[63]

Actually, Atatürk was disturbed by this people-intellectuals struggle. He was troubled since he could not see his effort and self-sacrifice in the intellectuals and made the following observation:

> The Islamic Communities consist of two groups of people: the public representing the majority, and the intellectuals making up the minority. In degenerated countries, the majority and the minority have different concepts and ideas and there is a full opposition between these two. While the intellectuals try to guide the people in the direction of their selection, while the majority rejects to be prodded toward an objective of which they do not participate in the design and development. When the intellectual minority fails to convince the majority group in the benefits of the course of action it selects, it begins to use other methods including persecution and violence. Before long, we find ourselves in front of a stern and high-born administration. Here we encounter the point which we should dwell at some length on: we notice that we are not to detour the people toward our own objectives either through convincing methods or by strict measures. Why?
>
> Gentlemen, in order to be able move toward a common objective adopted by the people and intellectuals alike, there should be a natural parallel between the interests of these two groups. Stated differently, the objectives determined by the intellectuals must be derived from the popular conscience and aspirations. Has it always been so in this country? No. Undoubtedly, there are lost of well-intentioned intellectuals among us. But we fail in general in giving proper consideration to our national characteristic and needs as the basis of our studies and research preceding our goal-setting. However, let's not forget that we should produce the basics by ourselves. We should observe the history, deep traditions of

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[63] *Ibid.*, p.442.

the people correctly and properly. Approaching and joining the people is the greatest duty of the intellectuals.[64]

Atatürk stated that these intellectuals, who did not understand the mentality, aims, prospects, and aspirations of the people, brought about this gap. Since the Turkish intellectuals could not express the modification and thought accumulations in their minds to the people effectively, the people could not understand if the reforms were simply state enforcement, modernization, technological superiority, the introduction of the traditions of a higher society, or a necessity, so they perceived the intellectuals as seeing the excitement of the reforms in a different light and the expected bridge could not be built. "Even the close friends of Atatürk reacted to the reforms with bewilderment and with lack of intelligence, and at the beginning they resisted the reforms. As they realized the results of the reforms, their thoughts changed completely."[65]

Some of the intellectuals entrusted with the duty of taking the reforms to the people, claimed that they were acting on behalf of and in the name of the people, and that they neither could be beneficial to the people nor join them. Since the people could not observe the solutions of problems which would arise from the advancement, development, civilization put forward by the intellectuals for them, they sometimes, reacted quite negatively.

The manner in which the problems were approached and the contents of the solution put forth by the intellectuals caused the people to react to many of the reform movements. Until then, although the intellectuals and the people had been coexisted

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[64] ***Atatürk'ün Söylev Demeçleri***, Vol-II, pp.138-144. See also Zeynep Korkmaz, ***Atatürk ve Türk Dili-BELGELER***, (Ankara:TDK, 1992), p.395.

[65] Hikmet Bayur, "Atatürk ve Dil Devrimi", in *Dil Devrimi Üzerine*, (Ankara:TDK, 1967), p.54.

peacefully, they suddenly appeared as two distinct groups having different cultures and attitudes and unable to unify. Accordingly, as one author commented:

> During this period, while the intellectuals were trying to introduce the reforms and modifications in the Western style, the masses were living in a way determined by Islamic rules. The reciprocal distrust between the intellectuals and the people, keeping its ties with tradition, is one of the crucial truths of our previous 200 years' history.[66]

It will be suitable, at this point, to mention some triage-comic incidents to illustrate this difference and the apprehensive attitude of the people toward the reforms.

In the 1930's the poorly dressed peasants were not to be allowed to enter Ankara.[67] The care of the image of the new state presented to Western countries was of utmost importance to the administration. The peasants were pitiful, poor and incongruous with the images in the minds of the reformers; the peasants might grumble to them and brought distrust to the administration.

In the illustrated news of newspaper *Ulus* dated 12 July 1940, a peasant woman named Ayşe from Hırbaz village of Adıyaman, arrested an agricultural officer in modern uniform, suspecting him of being a 'foreign spy'. The peasants let him go after proof of his identity was provided.

The following statement was told by peasants to Hamdullah Suphi:

> -- All the pashas have told us 'give!' Since Abdulhamid's reign, we have given. We've been told 'die!', so we died. They went away, the new pashas came. They told us 'give!' too, so we gave. We were told 'die!', so we died. They went

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[66] D. Mehmet Doğan, *Tarih ve Toplum*, (Ankara:Rehber, 1989), p. 14.
[67] *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 11.01.1934 .

> away, now you have come. You tell us 'give!', we give. We have been told 'die!', we die. Now, we're wondering. When will you say 'Take!' to us?[68]

Another humorous example is as follows:

> The newly established Symphony Orchestra was giving concerts throughout the country. After a long trip, the orchestra finally arrived in Sivas. The people didn't concern with orchestra. Everybody was gathered in the concert hall with the gendarme force. After the concert, a journalist wanted to interview a citizen about the concert. So he approached the citizen with his tape-recorder: 'How did you like the concert?' he asked. The answer: 'By God! I could not understand anything from the concert, but Sivas has not suffered this much since the invasion of Tamurlane.[69]

These kinds of occurrences and the inability of the people to appreciate the reforms at the desired level, was admitted by the intellectuals confessing as follows:

> The observations and trials have shown that the reforms did not take root reach to the peasants, constituting the majority of the people, by science or art means. The dynamic period of the reforms closed before Atatürk's death, the old society structure could not be changed in a way to support the developments, and the peasants became the fundamental of a developing a political organization supported by reactionaries. That is, the intellectuals and authors were losing their pioneering role in history under the support of the state.[70]

The writer of the above statements, Tahir Alangu, made these observations in the newspaper Cumhuriyet several times. Although he overdoes the criticism, he sees the mistakes and the solutions.

This gap between the intellectuals and the people did not continue much longer. Finally some rebellions and reactions began subside.

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[68] H.Suphi (Tanrıöver), "Köycülük", *Türk Yurdu*,Vol. 21-1 no. 196-2, Feb. 1928, pp. 51-52.

[69] *Yayın Dünyasına Anahtar Dergisi*, (İstanbul, 1990), p.11.

[70] Alangu, *op. cit.*, foreword.

3.2. The Rebellion against Reform

The people, suffering from fatigue and exhaustion not only from the National Struggle continued to do so under the adaptation of the new modifications. However, this suffering was to be expected in the revolutionary period as no revolution or reform could be undertaken without pain. Acceptance of reform by all of the people is in fact, contrary to human nature. Accordingly, there were some rebellions and reactions to the Kemalist reforms. Following are examples by researcher Paul Dumont on the general outlook of the country and the reactions:

> The works were not performed spontaneously. The reform was achieved with difficulties. Virtually, the government had to stand against the obstinate resistance of which it suffered to overcome... Especially, passive resistance was difficult to overcome and disturbing at the same time. How could you stop a person praying in Arabic at home? What could be done for the 'concubine' life against the law forbidding polygamy? How could the people be forced to go to secular courts instead of solving problems 'in a friendly manner'? How could the people be forced to leave their traditions and their beliefs? There was also active resistance such as assassinations, riots, uprisings and even army rebellions. There were some revolts incited in a secret way by the Sheik of the Naqshibandi sect which was against Atatürk's reforms.[71]

'Nation' had been a religious term in Ottoman political and social life, and it indicated belonging to a religious symbol-system completely. With this character, the term "nation" was used to define citizens. It also was the people's expressive style of their identity.

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[71] Dumont, *op. cit.*, p.123.

> This religious character of term "nation" could be clearly seen in eliminating the nonreligious differences and in its unifying function. In pre-republic and post-republic period, this function of the Islamic religion was highly utilized. For instance, during the sessions for government establishment in first Turkish National Assembly, Mustafa Kemal Pasha defined the Great Assembly as a 'mass composed of Islamic components' and declared that the places where Kurdish people live is within our borders.' [72]

The term "nation", still defined by religious character during the National Struggle, was expressed in Kemalist ideology after the Republic separate from its religious character, as a result of the secularist principle. Indeed, Atatürk made use of nationalism with its classic meaning during the National Struggle, and with its Western meaning in the post-war period. So a definition of nationalism fitting to international criteria became one of Atatürk's six basic reform principles. As a result, the 'Turkicism' doctrine, which had been postponed during the Ottoman Empire, was put forward insistently. Islam was no longer the state ideology.

In regions where religious factors were felt intensely, whose religious men held power, where the daily life was arranged by religious rules, the people were kept suitable for exploitation. The majority of the Eastern Anatolian people lived far away from Istanbul and were neglected by the Ottoman State, lived in poverty.

The new state had to take great pains with the Sheik Sait rebellion -as a known sample of the reactions and rebellions- which arose in such a situation, and caused many

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[72] *TBMM. Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:1, İçtima Senesi:1*, Vol.I, 01.05.1336 (1920), p.165.

severe conditions. These rebellions were, in a way, reactions to the reforms carried out between 1923-1928. Let us look at this rebellion through Shaws' words:

> Early in 1925 a serious revolt began in southern Anatolia led by the Kurds. It was stimulated by the Russian Communists, who no longer could use the Armenians as a weapon of disruption and by the Turkish conservatives to express their own opposition to the governments religious and secularist policies. Ravaging widely in the area of Diyarbekir under the leadership of Sheik Sait, the rebels burned and looted Elaziğ and a number of smaller towns. As the movement attracted sympathy among conservative groups in İstanbul and elsewhere, Kemal acted decisively to curb it before it became a rallying point for a general reaction against the Republic. On March 3 Ismet replaced Ali Fethi as prime minister. He got the Assembly to issue the Restoration-of-Order Law (Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu-March 4, 1925), by which the government was given virtual dictatorial powers for a period of two years, with Independence Tribunals (İstiklal Mahkemesi) again being established in Ankara and the eastern provinces to convict, imprison, and/or execute rebels according to the gravity of their crimes. The rebels soon were disbanded. Sheik Sait and his chief assistants were captured (April 15), convicted by the Eastern Independence Tribunal (May 25), and executed (June 29), thus putting the cap for the moment on both the Kurdish and the conservative reactions.[73]

The people were convinced that their sacred values were being replaced with 'foreign-nonmuslim' rules and that 'the religion was being annihilated'. They directed the reactions, rebellion feelings, accumulated for centuries, towards the new Republic, probably with no idea that they were actually taking revenge on the destructive wars, poverty and exhaustion blamed on the Republic Administration.

The rebellions against the reforms were not restricted to the Sheik Sait incident. Many others were seen in different places.

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[73] Stanford & E.K. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p.381

> The work did not go well outside of the Kurdish regions. Rebellions in which many people were killed, went on until the eve of the World War II with great struggles. For instance, the government faced great rebellions in the Black Sea and interior Anatolian regions right after the law forbidding wearing of the *fez*. As well as the several modifications in worship, many serious uprising were seen in different places. However none of these storms could prevent the Kemalist reforms no matter how serious.[74]

There was a violent reactionary incident in Menemen, a town in Western Turkey near İzmir, which readily shocked the secular military-bureaucratic elite out of its complacency. A small congregation led by one Dervish Mehmet left the mosque after morning prayer and marched to the town square, demanding the restoration of Islamic law and Caliphate. Dervish Mehmet who belonged to the Naqshibandi mystical order (dissolved 1926) claimed that he was the Mahdi, a messianic figure, who had come to save the world. A reserve officer in the local gendarmerie, a force hated by the local population as the repressive arm of the state, was sent to quell the disturbance. But he was seized by Dervish Mehmed and beheaded. His dead was stuck on a flag pole and paraded around the town.

This incident may been trivial enough in itself. Yet it proved to be traumatic for the regime. It occurred not in a backward region of Anatolia but in one of its most advanced provinces. This was (wrote Kemal to his Chief of the General Staff) all the more 'shameful for all republicans and patriots because some the people of Menemen had applauded and encouraged the savagery of the reactionaries.' Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, a Kemalist intellectual and diplomat who has written some of the best

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[74] *Dumont, op. cit.*, pp.123-124.

novels describing this period, captured the anger and bewilderment aroused by the Menemen affair in party circles. He wrote with great indignation that:

> it is as though nothing has happened all these years as though... the idea of any of our radical reforms has not altered anything in this country. ...Who were the passive, silent observers of this tragedy? Citizens of this secular, contemporary Republic of Turkey. That is the true calamity. It means the prevailing climate and environment, the moral climate, the moral environment was not that of the revolutionary, republican and patriotic Turkish Youth; it was the climate and environment of Dervish Mehmet, a devotee of the Naqshibandi [Sufi] Order which we have described with such adjectives as 'rebellious', 'brutal', 'thieving' and 'reactioner'. Had it not been so, this man could not have found twenty minutes to do his work... Sheik Mehmet is just a symptom, a shadow. [75]

Yakup Kadri's analysis of the situation was shared by the majority in the People's Party. At this point, it will be suitable to give the comments of Faroz Ahmad connected with the opposition movement in regard to this subject:

> It was generally agreed that the reforms undertaken in the second half of the 1920s had not taken root and that the state's liberal approach to the religion and to ideology in general had proved a failure. The mass of the people, even in the more advanced parts of the country, did not identify with the new state. The population was suspicious, sullen, and resentful, unable to comprehend the new emerging order. The hand of the past was far from dead; for despite its exclusiveness, the deposed Ottoman ruling class had not lived in total isolation from the rest of society, especially with regard to ideology. During the five centuries of its rule, it had created a vast network of institutions and loyalties, particularly religious loyalties, amongst virtually all strata of society. Not even a revolution could destroy these overnight.[76]

However, determinations and definitions should be made properly before biases. Did the people rebel just to show that they were against the reforms? To what extent was the administrator's behavior a determinant? Could the quarreling between the local and central interests -the newly formed center- have determined it? Could utterly different reasons such

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[75] Yakup Kadri's article appeared in the semi-official party paper Hakimiyeti Milliye (National Sovereignty), 30 Dec. 1930.
[76] Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, (London:Rutledge,1993), p.61.

as inattention to social relations, have initiated the events, and so could they have been provoked? To what extent and how did the people apprehend the reforms? While many reforms were identified as disbelief (küfür) by conservative intellectuals, what was the people's opinion? Did the westernizing and conservative intellectuals speak in the name of the people? Depending on the case, were the people a Sheik Sait or Menemen fanatics? If not, how did the events expand? Were religious symbols used as an agent? Or, conversely, were they, -like dress, alphabet and so on- used as targets? It is possible to ask more questions. However, it is difficult to find unequivocal answers to them as these questions are interrelated. Reasons and solutions to this partial digestion of reforms can be ascertained by objective analysis.

3.2.1. The Ineffective and Temporary Nature of the Reactions

The great confining factor in suppressing the rebellions, was the constant, severe precautions. The crucial reasons for these reactions was the lack of communication between the top and bottom of society and the lack of thorough explanation. The people reacted against an unknown modification through fear of losing the things they held as sacred.

To Hasan Köni, another reason the rebellions were so short-lived was that "Turks, who are Turanian people, are accustomed to discipline and authority."[77] Turks recognized the state as holy and they did not rebel in the worst conditions. Essentially, the people were very far away from making a decision about the reforms. The people were living poorly, scattered and disordered, 'exhausted and impoverished" as Atatürk said. Yakup Kadri also stated that the people were so insensate as to drive a man

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[77] Hasan Köni, "Harf Devriminin Önemi Üzerine", *Atatürk Arastirma Merkezi Dergisi*, No. 21, July 1991, p.494.

* Atatürk uses this term in "*The Address to Turkish Youth*".

mad and that they had lost their ability to react.[78] Islamists felt that the real reason for the temporary nature of the rebellions were different:

> These reactions, forming the 'reactionary movements phobia' of Tanzimat and Republican intellectuals, continued underground as a passive reaction. Virtually, the most important reason for the temporary nature of the people's reactions is that the effect took place in the subconscious of the nation as a result of protecting the esteemed structure stemming from the religious-national-historical basis of the Ottoman State institutions. If not, it is impossible to conclude that the Muslim people were in a structure which did not react to innovation and their intellectual-institutional attacks.[79]

What was the social, economic, cultural, philosophical position of the people living in this accelerated reform tempest? To inspect the social case of the people during these idealist and hopeful modification attempts will be an essential criterion in explaining the behavior of the people against the Westernization movements.

So far, the position of the people during the reforms in the post-Republican period has been examined: the conditions of the people, their manner of the perception of reforms and events, acceptance or rejection reasons of the reforms, the angle of perception of the élite to the people and the works done with no special goal but in a general mode. In the second part, it will be suitable to try to obtain net and concrete results by making a more specific inspection. So, we have chosen alphabet and language reforms as a case study. Because, in this part, as in the previous one, many similar facts will be encountered. At the same time, many events in the alphabet and language reforms period had parallels with the ones of the general reform period outlined in the previous chapter.

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[78] Karaosmanoğlu, *Yaban, op. cit.*, p.17.
[79] Doğan, *Tarih ve Toplum*, pp.234-235.

CHAPTER II

THE ALPHABET AND THE LANGUAGE REFORMS AND THE PEOPLE

1. ABOUT THE ALPHABET AND LANGUAGE

Language is the most specific character of homo-sapiens.[1] Man differs from other creatures in his ability to produce symbols for nature, beings and their relations, arranging, changing and producing new relations. Language accumulation, formed by the desire and ability of human being's to arrange the environment, becomes both an agent and a target. Grammar rules, scripts, and the logic of the symbols constitute the sphere in which language, alphabet and culture flourish.

The above relations can be examined under 3 headings:

1- Language is a part of culture. Human behavior is involved in language; so language is an unavoidable portion. Ceremonies, rites, stories, legends and laws are intensely connected to alphabet and language. Language is also a crucial part at the same time. Everybody aiming to understand a culture should essentially be master of that language.

2- Every alphabet and language serves as the index of their culture: Languages exhibit the organizer experiences common in their cultures and thought ways. They also provide lexical terms for time-dependent references values and attributes.

3- Language is related symbolically with its culture. Since language is one of the well-processed symbols system, so there are naturally symbols of certain ethno-cultures. This is composed not only of representation of culture, but also it is an event in which the parts become an organizer symbol for the whole (or counter whole) and an aim (target) by itself.[2]

To consider alphabet and language isolated from their surroundings would make it difficult to comprehend the problems. These are affected by the environment and vice versa. It is

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[1] "Dil," *Sosyal Bilimler Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. I (İstanbul: Risale, 1990), p.287.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp.288-289.

an interesting phenomenon that constitutes both the agent and the aim of humans. We can consider the formation of concepts, the conversation of them, the effects of social changes within the language. Alphabet and language show the development level of human works. They are crucial pure symbols. All changes can express themselves with language. Developments and thoughts which cannot be expressed are considered null. Cemil Meriç states the following about the Abbasi's translation activities: "If the Antiquate works, such as Greek, Syriac, Keldanish, had not been translated to Arabic, they would have immersed into the darkness of the Middle Ages."[3] This claim, although perhaps a bit exaggerated, defends the expression force of a language is kept equivalent to the 'vitality' of a thought or event. Life improves with alphabet and language and conceptual relations.

Orhan Hançerlioğlu states that there is a relation between thought, improvement thought, and language.[4] It could be accepted as a correct view when we compare with the above-mentioned facts. The most crucial character of human being is to 'produce abstract concepts', as we mentioned before. The formation of a conception and the period of molding of the concrete world by the abstract world is closely related with the human mind. The larger the abstract world, the larger the thought activity. This provides much material and data in conceiving the universe. This conception comprises the definition of the environment from social, cultural and the time aspects in many ways.

One of the greatest functions of language is its use in education, providing communication between the generations. Language, accumulated with environments and universe, is a valuable treasure and method in the education of the generations, adaptation to environment and to render it more important. At that point, the method of transmission should

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[3] Cemil Meriç, *Kültürden İrfana*, (İstanbul:İnsan, 1990), p.78.

[4] Orhan Hançerlioğlu, *Bilim ve Düşünce Tarihi*, (İstanbul:Remzi, 1993), p.87.

be stressed. Many of those who put forward their opinions on language comprehend language merely as an accumulation and ignore the methodical feature. Virtually, language brings to mind the method of its accumulation. If it were to be solely an accumulation, benefits of the generations from language would decrease significantly. That is why "the Latin language of the first century, BC, was accepted for the formation of Antique Age culture: That is, humanism appropriated an education based on language formation."[5] This shows that art-schools and the thought system bring a language system with them. The language both carries the thought and also improves it when thought systems and civilizations emerge that cannot develop their own alphabet and language, they become insufficient in self-determination, encounter contradictions, and are unable to develop effective cultural structure.

2. A SHORT HISTORY OF ALPHABET AND LANGUAGE REFORMS

The last decades of the Ottoman Empire was a period in which all these concepts were being argued and indistinctness was on the agenda. The activities held in early Republican reform period, the Ottoman Empire's last days during which all these concepts were argued. Because to understand the language reform, this era serves as an excellent beginning. Of course, not only the broader sense of language reform but also the concept and mentality of reform and the reforms in general will be appreciated from the Kemalist philosophy point of view.

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[5] Kemal Aytaç, *Avrupa Eğitim Tarihi*, (Ankara: 1972), p.100.

2.1. The Pre-Republican Phase*

Turks have used several alphabets throughout their history. The Göktürk alphabet, used in Central Asia is peculiar to Turks.[6] The Uighur Turks (745-970) who were the inheritors of the Göktürks, developed their own Uighur alphabet.[7] Turks have also used Sagud, Mani and Indian originated Brahma alphabets. They have sometimes used Tibetan, Chinese, Mogol-Passepa and Syriac alphabets.[8] Arabic letters came into use after their acceptance of the Islamic religion in the 10th Century. "The Arabic alphabet has dominated Turkish and its dialects for approximately 1000 years, ever since the 10th century."[9] The Turkish language has gained a different accumulation for reasons stemming from the nature of the Islamic religion.

Many views were put forward during the Ottoman Empire about the alphabet reform. Tanzimat men demanded a new alphabet by revising the Arabic alphabet. Since they were evolutionary, wanting a gradual revision, they failed to set results. Firstly, Münif Paşa submitted a project to Sultan Abdülaziz about an alphabet change.[10] This merely consisted of changes devoted to reading the letters more easily. On the other hand, Abdullah Cevdet moved to change the script in *İçtihat Magazine*.[11] He was the first to use European numbers in the magazines and books.[12] A more clear proposal came from Ahundzade Mirza Fethali, who was a famous Azerbaijani prose-writer and poet. He agreed that the Arabic alphabet should be revised.[13] Similar debates continued among the authors and poets of the late Ottoman period. Şinasi, Ali

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* For a much more detailed information about the improvement of Arabic script in pre-republic era and the transition period to the Latin script, see Feyziye Abdullah Tansel, "Arap Harflerinin İslahı ve Değiştirilmesi Hakkında İlk Teşebbüsler ve Neticeleri (1862-1884) ", *Belleten*, Vol.XVII, No.66 (1953), pp.223-249.

6 Ömer Güngör Feyzoğlu, *Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılabımız*, (İstanbul:MEB., 1981), p.13.

7 Bilal N. Şimşir, *Türk Yazı Devrimi*, (Ankara:TTK,1992), p.2.

8 M. Şakir Ülkütaşır, *Atatürk ve Harf Devrimi*, (Ankara:TDK,1981), p.15.

9 Şimşir, *op.cit.*, pp.5.

10 Ş.Süreyya Aydemir, *Tek Adam*, (İstanbul:Remzi Kitabevi, 1981), Vol.III, p.214 and ÜL.KÜTAŞIR, *op. cit.*, p.17.

11 *Ibid*, p.314.

12 Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Çankaya*, (İstanbul:Bateş, 1969), p.419.

13 Şimşir, *op.cit.*, p.21.

Suavi, Namık Kemal, however, did not want the Arabic alphabet to be replaced with a the Latin one.[14] They demanded, instead, the revision and simplification of Arabic alphabet.[15] Surprisingly, Sultan Abdulhamid the Second wanted to adapt the Latin alphabet.[16] The alphabet issue was discussed fervently during Constitutional Monarchy. The most widely discussed point was the writing of the letters separately but not adjacent. Ziya Gökalp and other Turkists wanted to preserve the Arabic alphabet. Some authors, such as Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın and Celal Nuri İleri supported the Latin alphabet during the Balkan Wars era. Enver Pasha who became minister of war in 1914 produced an alphabet to increase literacy in army and also to facilitate reading and writing. This attempt aimed at writing the letters not adjacent but separately was devoted mostly to shape.[17] The new script was adopted, even to the extent that the official kindness certificates were written with it.[18] Language and alphabet reform were taken very seriously. These discussions about the alphabet before the Republican era were parallel with the ones about language.

Up to the 19th Century, the reaction to the inclusion of foreign words in Turkish was mostly limited to complaint. Towards the end of the century, the idea of revising the entire society was on the agenda. A new language seemed the only way to fulfill this end.

Tanzimat authors and poets tried to write with a language which could be understood by the people. Ziya Pasha, Şinasi, Namık Kemal, Ahmet Mithat, Şemsettin Sami defended this principle. They tried to write clearly. The frequency of debates on the subject of the style of

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[14] Saadettin Buluç, "Osmanlılar Devrinde Alfabe Tartışmaları", in *Harf Devriminin 50. Yıl Sempozyumu*, (Ankara: T.T.K., 1981), p. 45.
[15] Şimşir, *op.cit.*, p.23.
[16] *Ibid.*, p.29.
[17] Ahmet Emin Yalman, " Latin Harfleri," *Vatan*, No. 339, (19 March 1924).
[18] Atay, *op. cit.*, p.437.

Turkish increased. Some authors began to form a rich language in the *Servet-i Fünun* Magazine. Many new synonyms entered Turkish as a result of this movement. The idea of writing with a language that the people could understand easily was somewhat disregarded. This was also a period in which the Turks discovered their nationhood, a discovery stimulated by the growth of Western-type nationalism. "The stimulus of external pressure is seen in the genesis of Mehmet Emin Yurdakul's famous Turkche şi'ler, (Poems in Turkish), which were written in the burst of patriotic feeling aroused by the Greco-Turkish War of 1897."[19]

In the second Constitutional Period, the language debates accelerated. The raising of national consciousness and attempts devoted to the people brought out the "purification of Turkish in a renewed manner."[20] In this period, Ziya Gökalp played a significant role in the purification movement with his poetry and prose.

As a result of this effort, some progress was achieved. "In reality, much progress had already been made by 1908 in purging the language of Arabic Persian extravagances; many novelists and journalists had tried to bring the written language closer to the spoken language and had used a clearer, neater style."[21] These efforts were still not adequate, however, so the desired change was not attained in any way.

> The language reformers did not emerge as a group with program about 1911. A group of writers gathered round a Salonican journal called Young Pens, (Gench Qalemler) and demanded the suppression of Arabic and Persian grammatical rules in Ottoman Turkish and the replacement of superfluous Arabic and Persian words where exact Turkish synonyms existed. On the other hand, they opposed the demands of rigid

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[19] C.E.Bosworth. "Language Reform and Nationalism in Modern Turkey," *The Muslim World*, LV, 2 (April 1965).
p.117.

[20] Emin Özdemir, *Dil Devrimimiz*, (Ankara:TDK,1969), p.26.

[21] Bosworth, *op. cit.*, p.118.

purists for the ejection of common words of Arabic and Persian origin and for the revival of archaic Turkish words.[22]

There was no a union of opinions. There were contradictions between thoughts and applications. Some intellectuals supported purification but used complex language in their writings. Others opposed purification but used purified language in their writings. This dilemma continued until the Republican era.

2.2. The Alphabet and the Language Reforms in the Republican Era

These two reforms were indirect but most effective steps toward breaking old religious traditions. The Arabic-Persian letters had come to be seen as unsuitable for writing Turkish and blamed for the extremely low level of literacy among the Turks. So, to many authors, "abolishing the Arabic alphabet was in Atatürk's mind beforehand"[23] on account of different literacy ratios, the need for new culture formation, the target of reaching a Western level and the diminishing of traditional thought patterns. During the Erzurum Congress of 7-8 July 1919, Atatürk declared that the Latin alphabet would eventually be adapted.[24]

By the early 1920s, there was a precedent when in 1924 the Soviet government decided to replace Arabic letters with Latin in its Turkic republics. The matter was debated in Turkey throughout the 1920s. Atatürk waited for suitable conditions for the alphabet reform between 1923-28.[25] From 1923 onwards, the alphabet debate gained velocity and once again became troublesome. Some people from abroad joined these debates. In 1926, the alphabet reform was

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[22] *Ibid.*
[23] Aydemir, *op. cit.*, p.312. For more and documental information see Korkmaz, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-11.
[24] Mazhar Müfit Kansu, *Erzurumdan Ölümüne Kadar Atatürk'le Beraber*, (Ankara:TTK, 1966), Vol. I, p.111.
[25] Şimşir, *op. cit.*, p.57.

about to be carried out.[26] However, this was suspended due to unforeseen causes and the conservatives were too powerful to permit such an innovation. Meanwhile, some people stated their own ideas for adapting the Latin alphabet. Finally, the government moved decisively to implement the Latin alphabet .

On 8 January 1928, Minister of Justice Mahmut Esat Bozkurt made a speech supporting the introduction of the Latin alphabet. Afterwards, the work accelerated. On 28 May 1928, the law of International Figures Acceptance was passed. On 28 February 1928 first *hutbe** given in Turkish was addressed in Istanbul. On 27 June of the same year, a Linguistic Council was established to work on the Latin alphabet. This council published a report on alphabet and grammar a month later, followed by the preparation of a new alphabet project. The most radical members of the council, however, argued that at least a period of 5 years was needed. Atatürk liked the new project and devoted 3 months to adapting the new alphabet.

There was some hesitation in the adaptation and success of the reform. In August of the same year, Mustafa Kemal showed his decisiveness and announced that the Arabic script would be replaced by the Latin one once and for all. The Turkish alphabet reform started with the Gülhane Address.[27] A campaign was launched to learn and to teach the new alphabet. Deputies were tested by Atatürk himself in Dolmabahçe Palace. Many meetings and sessions were convened and many decisions made in this place. In the application of this reform, he worked like a teacher and introduced the new alphabet in Dolmabahçe Palace on a blackboard. Atatürk then began to demonstrate the Latin alphabet in public throughout the country. He continued this activity until his death.

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[26] *Ibid.*, p.81.

* Hutbe: Prayers/sermon delivered by the offical preacher in the mosque on Fridays.

[27] *Ibid.*, p.157. For the complete speech see Korkmaz, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34.

Finally, on 1 November 1928, Parliament passed the law introducing the new letters with no objections and this required all Turks to learn and use Latin letters in place of the traditional Arabic ones by the beginning of the new year, either by passing an examination or by attending a system of special national schools established to teach their use. On 3 November, the law was published in the official newspaper. "The new Turkish letters were accepted instead of Arabic letters which had been used to write in Turkish and they were shown in the attached list."[28] Other articles were published to demonstrate the new alphabet's manner of application.[29] The First book using the Latin letters was published on 1 January 1929[30]

A rapid campaign was launched in public services for the usage of new alphabet. New type-writers were bought. The press, which was one of the most important agents in the Latin alphabet reform, accelerated the adaptation of the new alphabet. There was some annoyance, both from journalists and from the readers. The new alphabet began to be used in the schools. "The Turkish alphabet reform won its greatest victory in the schools. Especially, some brilliant results were obtained in the primary schools."[31] From then on, the new alphabet was used in many places, such as ships, trains, stations, shops.

There is a strong relationship between the alphabet and language reforms. The alphabet reform was the first great step in language reform.[32] Alphabet reform meant language reform in a way. The new Turkish alphabet would decrease the effects of Arabic and Persian on Turkish.[33]

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28 *Ibid.* pp.71-72. (Article-1)
29 Aydemir, *op. cit.*, p.320.
30 *Ibid.*, p.321.
31 Şimşir, *op. cit.*, p.228.
32 Frank Tachau, "Language and Politics: Turkish Language Reform," *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 26, No.2 (April 1964), p.194.
33 Özdemir, *op. cit.*, p.41.

> The lengthy discussions on the subject of a new script had aroused wide public interest in linguistic problems generally; its adaptation prepared the people psychologically for fundamental changes in the language itself.[34]

Right after the alphabet reform, the work to replace foreign words in the language with Turkish ones was launched. By the middle of 1929 all publications were being printed in the new script, while, on 1 December 1929, Arabic and Persian courses were removed from the curriculums of all schools and the use of these two languages even for religious books was strictly prohibited. In this process, the Linguistic Council led the way, by changing the names of official posts. A brochure was published. On 12 July 1932, the Turkish Language Society (Türk Dil Kurumu, hereafter abbreviated as the TLS), was established under the personal chairmanship of Atatürk. The society's first important activity was to convene a congress at which ideas on the past, present and future status of the language were to be advanced and debated, and a basic working program for society was to be prepared. Right after this, a collection of the words used in the daily speech of the people was launched. In this work, the society was aided by a Cabinet decree "enjoining the administrative organs all over the country to collect the words used in the everyday speech of the people, but not recorded in the standard dictionaries or not used in the written language."[35] As a result of this large campaign, several dictionaries and books were published.

With the establishment of the Language Society, the 1st language Congress (26 September-5 October 1932) and the 2nd language Congress (21 August 1934) were convened. On 24 August 1936, the 3rd language Congress, which brought significant results, was held. During this time, the sun-language theory, put forth by Atatürk, set out to prove that, 'the

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[34] Heyd, *op. cit.*, p.23.
[35] Tachau, *op. cit.*, p.197.

Turkish language was the basic source of cultural languages in the world', just as the Turkish civilization of Central Asia had allegedly carried with it the seeds of all later world civilizations.

Atatürk's death in 1938 temporarily stemmed the onrush of linguistic reform. The stages of alphabet and language reforms were focused on the debate between the supporters of the TLS's pure Turkish activities and the ones objecting to it. The details and the stages of the purism will be discussed in the following chapters.

It is possible to find basic clues about the ends and accomplishment reasons of reforms with its historical duration. It would be useful to outline the views of different people, especially of the reform adherents, just to give their approaches to the people.

3. THE REASONS ENGENDERING THE ALPHABET AND LANGUAGE REFORMS

What were the targets in reforms and alphabet-language debates going back to the pre-Tanzimat period?

With the Tanzimat the necessity of carrying the literate to the people, which was far removed arose. So writing a language that could be understood by the people appeared on the agenda. For this purpose, the alphabet and the language, which had already been subjected 'improvements', were changed radically and reforms were performed with state support to render the language a 'culture language' having native elements. Generally, it can be concluded that these reforms were accomplished by the force of two factors: "The first one is nationalism through the effect of recognizing itself; secondly the emergence of new words and concepts belonging to new institutes which were the result of social and cultural advancement."[36]

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[36] Kamile İmer. "Dil Değişmesinde Toplumsal ve Kültürel Etkenlerin Önemi", in *Atatürkün Yolunda Türk Dil Devrimi, Topluçalışım 17-18 Ocak 1981 Bildiriler Toplugörüşmeler*, (Ankara:T.D.K.,1981), p.67.

Indeed, language has been widely (though in some cases erroneously) accepted as one of the prime indicators of national identity. The second half of the 19th century, in which the purism reform was launched, was a period in which the Turks discovered their nationhood, which brought about the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire in Greece and the Balkans. However, the essential reason for initiating the language reform was 'Westernization'.

One of the purposes of this revolutionary measure, perhaps the first to have an impact on the structure of Turkish society, was to accelerate the process of literacy and education in the new Turkey. Like any true reform or regime, the republican government recognized that the reform would acquire roots only if it succeeded in educating the broad mass of the people.

The similar reasons for the alphabet reform were explained in an article entitled National schools in the first issue of the people's magazine published by the National Education Ministry's Training Branch on 11 February 1920:

> Atatürk removed the Arabic alphabet in order to raise this nation to the level of developed countries after driving away the *Sultan*, closing the *Tekke's*, putting the *Hodja's* right and founding the people's Republic. He introduced the Latin alphabet used by Western countries. The Great National Assembly promulgated the needed law.[37]

Köprülüzade Fuat, stated similar views: "By leaving Arabic letters, we stripped off the oriental culture of the Middle Ages and proved our desire to join contemporary Western culture."[38]

To Hasan Eren, one of the aims of Atatürk in alphabet reform was to lay the foundation of an alphabet union all of the Turkic Republics. [39] In the reform years of Turkey, alphabet debates were also held in Baku.

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[37] Cited in Ülkütaşır, *op. cit.*, p.68.

[38] Köprülüzade Fuat, "Alfabe İnkılabı," *Ülkü*, Vol. X.I.I., No. 67, Eylül 1938, pp.1-2.

[39] Hasan Eren, "Yazıda Birlik," in *Harf Devriminin 50. Yıl Sempozyumu*, *op. cit.*, p.3.

To Güngör Dilmen, the aim of these reforms was to have people reading books, to make them literate, and finally, to carry them from homes with one book (the Koran) to homes with several books.[40]

In 1924, the famous journalist Ahmet Emin Yalman stressed the necessity of alphabet reform to render the Turkish language 'a people's one': "If Arabic, Persian letters were to be used, Turkish will not become a people language; it will remain an 'élite language.' "[41]

Atatürk stated the aim of the alphabet reform in several speeches as follow: "With the new alphabet, the Turkish nation will be able to discover its high intelligence and ability. To teach our new alphabet to everybody, -even to the farmers working in their fields, and shepherds, as soon as possible- is a duty of conscience and honor for all of us."[42] Atatürk pointed out the same purpose in Sarayburnu where he introduced the alphabet reform and explained its goals:

> Much work have been done, but there remains an extremely necessary task that we have to finish. Every Turk must learn the new Turkish script. Teach the new Turkish alphabet to every citizen, to every women, man, porter, and boatman. You must take this as your patriotic and national duty.
>
> While you are engaged in this, remember that it is a disgrace if ten or twenty per cent of the nation, of the society, know how to read and write and eighty per cent do not. Those who are human beings should be ashamed of themselves. This nation has not been created so as to be ashamed of itself. It has been created to be proud of itself and of its history which is full of proud moments. But it is not our fault if eighty per cent of the nation is illiterate. It is the fault of those who bound the head of the Turk in chains, without understanding his natural disposition.

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40 Güngör Dilmen, "Yazıda Devrim", in *Harf İnkılabı Sempozyumu*, (İstanbul: İ.Ü.A.İ.İ.T.E.,1983), p.18.

41 Yalman, "Latin Harfleri," *Vatan*, No. 339, (19 Mart 1924).

42 Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, Vol. II, (1906-1938), (Ankara:Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü, 1952), pp.253-256. See also Hakimiyet-i Milliye, (İstanbul), 11 Ağustos 1928 and Ülkütaşır, *op. cit.*, p.78.

> It is time for us to eradicate root and branch the errors of the past. We shall correct these errors an in doing so I want all citizens to play an active role. As a result, Turkish society must learn the new alphabet within a year or two.
>
> With its own script and its native intelligence, our nation will take its place by the side of civilized world.[43]

It is possible to perceive the same feelings and targets in a speech in given the Turkish Great National Assembly's opening ceremony, which he made on 1 November 1928:

> First, we should give a key to read and write the Turkish language easily and this must not make unprofitable the efforts of the people. The Great Turkish nation will strip off ignorance easily and shortly, merely by means of such an agent, adapted properly to it is own good language.
>
> This key is only the Turkish alphabet adapted from the Latin alphabet. A simple experiment has proven that these letters are suitable to the Turkish language, obtained from the easiness in reading and writing of old people in rural and urban regions.
>
> Promulgation of new the Turkish alphabet law by Turkish Great National Assembly will constitute an essential passage in developing struggle of this country.[44]

Several matters could be pointed to in Atatürk's speeches. He desired the application and the appropriation of the reforms by the people. Another point is that just for this appropriation, a decision was made and the new alphabet was purposely named the "New Turkish Alphabet"[45]. Lord Kinross praises these tactics: "Atatürk presented these letters as Turkish letters, which he considered the key for easy literacy, instead of the Latin letters."[46]

The third point is the concern to raise the literacy rate of the people. Literacy in the early republic was abysmally low. According to the 1927 census less than 9 per cent of the population was illiterate; the actual figure for literacy was probably even lower. Mustafa Kemal believed that literacy made one human and therefore to teach the illiterate and make them human beings,

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43 Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, *Ibid.*

44 Ibid., p.358.

45 Dilmen, *op. cit.*, p.74.

46 L.Kinross, *Atatürk- Bir Milletin Yeniden Doğuşu*, (İstanbul:Sander, 1984), p.670.

so to speak, was a national duty. Therefore, intense and quick endeavors were started just after the announcement of the reforms. We can observe the passion of Atatürk to accomplish these reforms as soon as possible in his trips and speeches. "Atatürk planned to create a new language, not a gradual and evolutionary process but with definite measures in the shortest possible time."[47] One of the most striking examples of Atatürk's haste was in a speech to Falih Rıfkı :

> 1 December 1928
> Atatürk asked me:
> --What idea do you have about the new alphabet ?
> --There are two proposals, one requires 15 years, the other 5 years.
> He looked at me:
> --This will either be completed in three months or not.[48]

Then, he started to execute the works himself. After practical courses and lectures in Dolmabahçe Palace, he arranged tours in August and September of 1928 to teach the new alphabet. Using a blackboard, he personally examined the people and was very pleased with the results. He said: "It is a tremendous pleasure to me to see how eager the Turkish People are for the alphabet which they believed in with so much desire, high comprehension, and haste."[49]

In the first years of the reforms, İsmet İnönü rejected alphabet reform. "Could the illiteracy of the people be a necessity in performing such reforms which will bring the state execution to a halt?"[50] he asked. He became a passionate defender, however, as a result of Atatürk's definite attitude and extraordinary endeavors. On 29 August 1928 in a conference convened at Dolmabahçe Palace, he stated the aims of the reforms as follows:

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[47] Heyd, *op. cit.*, p.20.
[48] Atay, ***op. cit.*** p. 440.
[49] *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, Vol.III, (1918-1937)*, (Ankara:Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü, 1954), pp.81-82. See also Ülkütaşır, op. *cit.*, p.105.
[50] Quoted by Şimşir, *op. cit.*, p.83.

> Sirs! The Latin alphabet satisfies a certain and deep need of the Turkish Nation. First, I shall point out something. Why do we take the Latin alphabet? While Atatürk was starting such a struggle, he merely considered the liberty and the education of Turkish nation.[51]

Later, in 1969, İnönü explained the reasons of alphabet reform in his memoirs in newspaper Ulus as follows: "The alphabet reform was performed not only for easy reading and writing but also to change our culture... to get rid of Arabic culture. The Arabic script will not be brought back again. This means that there will not be any ties with the past."[52]

Similarly, historian Bernard Lewis outlines the aim of Atatürk in alphabet reform as to teach the new alphabet and to immerse the feeling of 'past' into the history, so a clear-minded generation could be raised.[53]

Historian Mete Tunçay also mentions the break from Ottoman-Islamic Culture among the most important reasons for alphabet reform.[54] Levent Köker supports this theory with an interesting idea: "Although it wasn't mentioned amongst the aims, alphabet reform was considered a facilitating agent in creating a forgetful society which is a result of desired Kemalist identity appropriation."[55]

For this situation, which is defined as "Amnesia of the Republic"[56] by some authors, Faroz Ahmad states a similar opinion. Ahmad stresses the 'building' of the Turkish Republic and evaluates the adaptation of the Latin alphabet as an essential, destructive arrangement of fundamental traditions. With his own words: "Perhaps the most iconoclastic reform of this

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51 *Milliyet*, (İstanbul), 30 Ağustos 1928, No.915. Also cited in Ülkütaşir, *op. cit.*, p.76.
52 "İnönü'nün Harf Inkılabı Hatıraları", *Ulus*, 13-15 1969.
53 Bernard Lewis, *"The Emergence of Modern Turkey"*, (London: Oxford University,1976), p. 428.
54 Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye'de Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması*, (Ankara:Yurt Yayınları,1982), p.230.
55 Binnaz Savarı, "Türkiye'de Dinin Denetim İşlevi", *AÜSBFD*, Vol.XXXIII, No.1-2 (Mart-Haziran 1978), p.176
56 Ayşe Kadıoğlu, "Milletini Arayan Devlet: Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Açmazları," *Türkiye Günlüğü*, No. 33, (Mart-Nisan 1995), p.95.

period was replacing the Arabic script by the Latin writing of Turkish. At a stroke, even the literate people were cut off from their past. Overnight, virtually the entire nation was made illiterate."[57]

Some authors explain the reasons of the language reform from different point of view. To them Western countries would only comprehend the Turkish people as a Western society after accepting the new alphabet and writing from left to right .[58]

Similarly, apart from increasing literacy ratio in the country, the alphabet reform, as it was called in the press, had another purpose which seems far ahead of its time. Its real goal was to unite Turkey with Europe in reality and mentality.

> The implications of this step were very great, very deep, and long-term. This reform, more than virtually any other, loosened Turkey's ties with the Islamic world to its east and irrevocably forced the country to face west. The script on its own proved insufficient to bring about the union of Turkey with Europe, but that union became a goal cherished by the Turkish elite who saw it as the culmination of their country's experiment in capitalism and later democracy.[59]

The aims and the targets of these two reforms can be collected under 3 articles presented by Doğan Aksan:

> 1- Transformation of language to a structure which will raise the society to contemporary level by bearing it to satisfy the daily life's needs with abstract concepts,
> 2- Using a pure Turkish in the language of education just to spread the education throughout the all country.
> 3- Tending to creation and construction in science by getting rid of the drawbacks of an education performed by foreign concepts.[60]

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57 Feroz Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p.80.
58 Dilmen, *op. cit.*, p.11.
59 Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p.82
60 Doğan Aksan, " Sözcükbilim Açısından Dil Devriminden Çıkarılabilecek Sonuçlar Üzerine," *in Atatürk'ün Yolunda Türk Dil Devrimi, op. cit.*, p.118.

The interesting point of these different views is that the majority of intellectuals think of the people overwhelmingly and believe that these reforms had to be performed for the people's benefit. With these reforms, the people would take their place in the family of contemporary civilization after getting rid of the effects of oriental civilization of centuries. With the effects of the unification of the written language with the spoken one since the Tanzimat, the aim of the approach to the people and their enlightenment would be performed. In the Republican era, modernization was on the agenda besides these aims. It should, however, be examined to what extent the intellectuals reached in its mind, in another section. First, it will be suitable to inspect the case of the Ottoman Empire, especially the desire to remove the gap[61] between the spoken language of the people and the written language of educated classes.

4. THE ALPHABET AND THE LANGUAGE REFORMS FROM THE ELITE VS. PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE

The efforts to bridge the gap between the daily speech of the people and the written language of the intellectuals have gained a speed in the late Ottoman period. It, then, continued in the Republican era and a clear effort could be seen in this era with respect to previous periods.

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[61] Heyd, *op. cit.*, p.20.

4.1. The Case in the Ottoman Era: Written Language and Colloquial Speech

The original Turkish language was demolished as in many other fields of the Ottoman Empire and it was transformed by Persian and Arabic languages. "The language used by these peasants was quite different from that spoken among the city dwellers and the educated élite. In fact, the language of the upper classes was frankly called not Turkish but Ottoman, in contrast to the peasant dialects. Thus, there was a doubly reinforced gulf between the city dweller and the peasant compounded of contempt on the part of the former as well as of the lack of a mutually understandable language."[62] Since the Ottoman language was used solely in written works, the spoken and written languages were very different from each other. The tie between the language of the state and the people was broken.[63] Lord Kinross states the same dilemma:

> The old alphabet was very far away from the assonance of Turkish. Since the mixture of the letters and the names, non-existence of enough vowels, and meaning change according to the reading, ordinary people could not read it. Even the educated Ottoman Turks made grammar mistakes. This case brought about two kinds of languages: One used by the 'Enderun' class which was spoken but not read, the other one used by the people which was spoken but not written. This caused the majority of the people to keep away from written literacy."[64]

On the other side, Sir Charles Eliot depicts the case of the people in his book of Turkey in Europe, in 1896:

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62 Tachau, *op. cit.*, p.192.
63 Özdemir, *op. cit.*, p.18.
64 Kinross, *op. cit.*, p.p. 665-666.

> None of Turks are surprised that they cannot understand written Turkish. They only respect the author on account of his good expressions. Turks do not see written works as a normal part of their life. They can easily understand when they were told a good story or job relations. However they look at the books or letters like an English man looking at a technical official paper; they are already illiterate. So they want to understand matters generally.[65]

The Ottoman literate was unable to reach the people in its age, and that did not aim to do this. Although with restricted effect, the intellectuals had discussed alphabet and language since the beginning of Tanzimat. The principal reason for that was the desire of intellectuals to rely on the people instead of the palace and the need to form 'public opinion'. For Şinasi, the people doing military service and being taxed could then express their political and social views. He wanted to shape his newspaper into something that they could understand. The handling of daily colloquial speech and public culture as the base and origin of national culture by Ziya Gökalp is closely related to the populist movement.

However, the intellectuals of the Ottoman Empire dealing with the alphabet and language demanded to direct the people to their route and be master of them, contrary to the Republican intellectuals desire to be beneficial for the people. "In Ottoman times, the alphabet was not only used by religious ones as a pressure tool. Intellectuals and all kind of occupations dominated the people by the force of writing and they became financial force."[66]

The Ottoman bureaucrats rendered the correspondence between state and citizen a secret science. The simplest example of this is the street scribes, which we can see in old engravings. In the Republican era they were replaced by petition-writers with tables and typewriters. It is still possible to find them today in front of Finance and Justice buildings.

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[65] Quoted by Dumont, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
[66] Dilmen, *op. cit.*, p.43

Another interesting point bringing about a vicious circle between the intellectuals and the people was the desire of authors to be 'mysterious', writing things in a more complex manner, trying to render things more meaningful than they actually were. Because many intellectuals resisted to presenting their opinions openly. They could not resist being different from the people. Another example of this is the general incomprehensible level of the legal language, which has been criticized since Ottoman times to the present day. Many jurist speak about this, however, no positive steps have been taken.

To see this gap clearly I'd like to narrate an event which happened to Necati Cumalı:

> I'm a lawyer in Urla, a small town in west part of Turkey near İzmir. While I was waiting my court appearance, I listened to a lawsuit. When I went out of the court, the claimant came to my office right after me. He has a small land lawsuit called 'men-i müdahale: forbid of intervention'. He told me 'Look! You haven't seen my field and you do not know it but I do. I also know to what extent they occupied my field. But I cannot understand the language of judge and he cannot understand me. So I need a lawyer. Please do not demand so much money from me, as the problem is not so big. The only problem is that I cannot understand the language of the Judge.' I have seen this many times in criminal lawsuits. The man was condemned to 15 years, and he asks 'What happened'. Or vice versa, he again asks 'what happened.' [67]

At one time, Arabic and Persian idioms were used to complicate the language; nowadays Western concepts are being used for the same end. Fashion, dressing, chemist's, all sales of consumer goods use this tactic.

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67 "Dil Devriminin Türk Yazını İçin Önemi Üzerine Sanatçılar Arasında Toplu Görüşme", *in Atatürk'ün Yolunda Türk dil Devrimi, op. cit.*, p.74.

4.2. The Intellectuals Against the Alphabet and the Language Reforms in the Republican Era

Here it is suitable to point out something in the relationship between the intellectuals and the people examined from the alphabet and the language reforms perspective. We encounter two types of intellectuals during these two reforms: The first one was 'conservative' who did not accept the break from the Ottoman Empire and was opposed to reforms. The other one was a 'revolutionary' who supported the reforms from all aspects and defended them.

The greatest quarrel of the alphabet reform broke out among these intellectuals; especially about culture and civilization. Many of the conservative intellectuals saw the Arabic letters as an unavoidable part of Turkish culture. Accepting the Latin alphabet would be treason for the culture. 'If you want Turks to be deprived of culture,' they said 'then accept the Latin alphabet!' In the same manner, Kazım Karabekir, chairman of the first National Economy Congress convened in İzmir on 21 February 1923, stated his anxiety about the Latin alphabet as follows:"We will give a weapon to the Europeans, they will spread propaganda in Islamic countries that Turks have become Christian by accepting the Latin alphabet."[68]

Ali Fuat Başgil said that "The essential thing is the meaning and aim in a speech, feeling and image. However, the word and the meaning were welded together so strongly that when you dismiss a word, the meaning, aim feeling and the image is also diminished. This causes a gap between the generations. The union of the nation is broken."[69]

Some revolutionary intellectuals were also worried about the alphabet reform. In the initial days, Prime Minister İnönü asked whether "The alphabet used for centuries, could be used onwards. The scientists, all the literate will become children educated for literacy. If the

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[68] Aydemir, *op. cit.*, p.314 and Ülkütaşır, *op. cit.*, pp.43-44.
[69] Ord. Prof. Dr. Ali Fuat Başgil,, Türk Dili İçin, Vol. II, (Ankara:TDK), p.45

alphabet was changed, how will printed and written matters be utilized?"[70] Falih Rıfkı Atay, who was with Atatürk from the very beginning, also stated his hesitations: "All difficulties were for our generations We were educated with the old Arabic letters. Every Turkish word represented a picture to us. We've read it by looking but not by spelling. We now encounter a difficulty which we will never overcome in our life time; to replace these pictures with the pictures of each word. We've read, we'll spell hereafter." He concluded, however, that: " the rate of literacy was between 5 or 10 per cent. If this rate had been over 50 per cent, the alphabet would not have been changed."[71]

Doğan Avcıoğlu also complained of the bureaucracy resisting the reforms from a different

point of view:

> Surprisingly, Atatürk was faced with resistance rather than support from the bureaucracy. The Training and Education Committee, established as a supporter of education reform opposed co-education. They even tried to prevent the Latin alphabet reform and the Village Trainers and Village Institutes movement. Atatürk performed these reforms by means of a commission which he appointed.[72]

As a last and noticeable sample: The university (Darûlfünun) did not support the language movements. In 1933, it was abolished and İstanbul University established.

It is important to stress that the intellectuals of Republican era, whether conservative or revolutionary, were more concerned about the alphabet reform than the people were. Illiterate people were far away from this anxiety. As they had no thought of losing an unknown matter, they were not frustrated so much. Above all, some intellectuals, thinking that the old written and published materials in libraries would not be able to be read and would disappear, believed that

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[70] Quoted from Ahmet Cevat Emre, İki Neslin Tarihi: Şimşir, *op. cit.*, p.83. See also Zeynep Korkmaz, *op. cit.* pp.128-129.

[71] Atay, *op. cit.*, p.443.

[72] Avcıoğlu, *op. cit.*, p.1360.

the Turkish nation would cut all ties with its past and so the Muslim world become an enemy to them. They found the adaptation of the Latin alphabet contrary to social development, in principle, and logic. They even claimed that this would not accelerate the transition to Western civilization. Some claimed that the Latin Alphabet could not be adapted to Turkish and found this very inconvenient. Some revolutionary intellectuals, handling the alphabet reform among the other reforms, reported that the reforms were accomplished 'suddenly and with pressure' and remarked that both alphabets should have been used together for some time. There were also ones who claimed these reforms were unnecessary and unplanned movements. Therefore the opposing intellectuals should have been convinced before the people.

It can be concluded that "Those who were controlled by alphabet reform were the literate. A portion the press, university, bureaucracy... this reform was a struggle undertaken against the literate."[73]

Virtually, all of the reactions to alphabet reform were encountered from the intellectuals. Objections were focused on the 'gap between the generations.

As mentioned before, some intellectuals repeated the same attitude in the alphabet and the language reforms as they did in the appropriation period of general reforms, opposing reforms instead of supporting them. When this group resisted in this way, common sense says that when the people acted with mass psychology they could not have behaved in a different manner, they acted apart from the intellectuals. This point will be studied in the following sections.

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[73] Dilmen, *op. cit.*, p.80.

5. THE PEOPLE'S RESPONSE TO THE ALPHABET AND LANGUAGE REFORMS

Although the alphabet and the language reforms were perceived as bearing high risk, a relative easiness could be observed in the appropriation of these reforms by the people contrary to the difficulties or annoyed acceptance during the general reform period. The disconnection of the people with the written word and the general low level of literacy were the principal reasons for this. Only the symbols of an alphabet that was already unknown to them were changed.

Another and second reason was the extraordinary endeavor made by Atatürk and his colleagues. The clearest example of these endeavors is the National schools. It will be appropriate to look at the National schools which played a considerable role in the adoption of reforms by the people.

On 7 November 1928, four days after the promulgation of the 'New Turkish Alphabet Law' Prime Minister İsmet İnönü declared the 'National schools' would be opened. The aim of these schools, of which Atatürk was the Head-Teacher, was to make everyone literate ranking from true illiterates to ones knowing Arabic script. Afterwards, "a national education campaign was inaugurated to disseminate the new alphabet as quickly as possible. Adults and children alike were urged to attend these special classes; in a sense, the whole nation went to school"[74]

With this campaign Prime Minister İsmet İnönü hoped that hundreds of thousands of adults would be enlightened in a few years.[75]

Atatürk's colleagues saw the new alphabet as a strong light to illuminate the whole country and as an agent which would facilitate the work of the masses. The administration started a feverish and intense campaign. They wanted to create a national level of excitement

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[74] Tachau, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

[75] "Millet Mektepleri," *Cumhuriyet* (İstanbul), 8.11.1928.

and activate the everyone. The preparation for national schools continued. These schools had a special role in propagating the new alphabet. The rigid example of the attempts of the Republican administrators to disseminate the alphabet to the people and to render them literate quickly was the national schools. İstanbul's governor Muhittin Üstündağ made an announcement to the people : "Those who do not know the new alphabet, those not attending school and all citizens between the years of 16-40 are obliged to learn the new alphabet by attending the national schools opened in their districts."[76]

These schools designed to teach the new scripts to adults were inaugurated by the government on 1 January 1929. Bilal N.Şimşir depicts the atmosphere of the people at that time:

> Truly, there was a festival atmosphere throughout the country. All schools were furnished. Town criers announced them with drums. The people came to the schools in their best clothes. Illiterate masses came to the schools. Everybody had a hope. This was the hope of being rescued from illiteracy. [77]

The founders of these schools did not want to isolate any citizen from alphabet reform, so they also wanted to teach it in the prisons. These schools reached places where the National Education Ministry could not reach. A mobile teacher network was also formed. These teachers went to the smallest places which had no schools, to teach the alphabet to the peasants. There was also perennial problem of finding teachers from the towns willing to serve in the primitive villages of Anatolia. These lacked the most basic amenities such as clean drinking water and electricity as well as roads, and very few possessed schools. Even when such teachers arrived in the village, they found a world impossible to comprehend. The gulf between town and country

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[76] *Cumhuriyet* (İstanbul). 27.12.1928.

[77] Şimşir, *op. cit.*, p.236. In the same place, the author defines these schools as an organization where the statemen and the people come together. (See p.2 37).

was vast. The peasant was suspicious and sullen, still under the influence of local men of religion who were a force to be reckoned with despite the secular regime in Ankara. They also spoke an idiom which the peasant understood and which the urban Kemalist could not match.[78]

However, not even the village in Anatolia was able to escape entirely the winds of change that swept through Turkey in the 1930s. The propaganda councils made use of every way to attract the people to the new script. Some peasant recruits who acquired literacy while in the army, and also learned the rudiments of hygiene and technology, returned to their villages and taught some of their newly-acquired skills to other villagers. Because they understood the environment and the mentality from which they themselves hailed, and communicated in a familiar idiom, such people were natural teachers for the village.

M. Ali Özder, a teacher during this campaign in the schools, depicts the position of the people in this excited campaign:

> The opening ceremonies of a Nation School in the town were full of gaiety with drums and shrill pipes. After a while, I was given the special task of teaching the new alphabet to the village İmams and headmen in the evenings. This course continued for 20 days. There were many people, long-bearded, bespectacled, over-60 years old in this course. All were successful in learning the new letters within one month.
>
> Afterwards, I taught the new alphabet to the house-wives. This also lasted for 20 days.
>
> There was also an 'evening class' for women lasting up to 11.00 o'clock. I also gave these lectures. Every kind of people other than state officers and intellectuals (such as porters, cook's apprentices, halva makers, goat's-hair weavers, linen-drapers and herbalists) attended evening courses and became literate.[79]

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[78] On village life see Mahmut Makal, A village in Anatolia, (London, 1954) written by someone who was educated in Village Institute and then tried to teach in a village.
[79] Cited in Ülkütaşır, *op. cit.*, p.71.

On 11 February 1929, during the initial years of the National schools, the People's Magazine (Halk Dergisi) published by the National Education Ministry, put forward the following claim:

> Turks are very intelligent. They joined this campaign after M. Kemal who showed the true path always. Although a short time has elapsed since opening the National schools, the number of students has reached 900,0000. 1 million Turks will be literate by May 1929. As these activities continue and the number of the people increases, there will be no Turkish people illiterate within 10 years[80]

According to the statistics, 1,124,926 people out of 2,305,924 learnt the new alphabet in 5 years. The general achievement ratio was 46 per cent in rural areas and 54 per cent in the cities.

The General Statistics for 5 Years of National schools:

Years	Class	Lecturers	Attendants	Successful	Success Ratio
1928/29	20.489	16.922	1.045.500	526.881	50.39
1929/30	12.937	11.307	544.534	245.663	45.11
1930/31	9.602	8.940	352.902	172.322	48.82
1931/32	5.915	5.437	205.349	99.491	48.44
1932/33	5.107	4.084	157.639	80.559	51.10
TOTAL	: 54.050	56.690	2,305,924	1,124,916	48.78 [81]

Including those attending the National Schools, the total number of people who learnt the new alphabet reached 3,000,000. 1.1 Million people were estimated as literate in 1927; after alphabet reform, this number reached 3 million in 5 years.

Afterwards, the National schools continued for an additional 3 years. The number of classes in the initial days was over 20,000. During the 1935-36 year, this number fell to 2,274.

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[80] *Halk Dergisi*, 11.2.1929, no. 1. See also Ülkütaşır, *Ibid.*, p.68-69.
[81] Şimşir, *op.cit.*, p.244.

The number of students decreased from 1 million to 59,206. The number of schools decreased because of general apathy.[82]

The aim was to 'render everybody literate within 10 years' by means of this rapid alphabet campaign. This goal, however, was never reached. The National schools made a great attempt and campaign to introduce the alphabet and language reforms to the people, but the impetus could not be continued. It was as if all the attempts were done with a temporary zeal. Although some old people* continue to use Arabic alphabet today,

> alphabet reform was the most fantastic reform for the young generation and awaked their patriotic feelings. It broke the ties with the past and inspired the feeling that there were something to do.
>
> The years following these reforms were an enthusiastic time as a result of these exciting, obligatory, new-look reforms for the Turkish youth.[83]

To some authors, the National schools were a nice opportunity to make use of this stimulating atmosphere and if the same zeal and excitement had continued, the desired literacy level could have been reached. Bilal N. Şimşir supports this view with the following words, and mentions other gains made by these schools.

> The beginning, indeed, was very hopeful. A 'mobility' atmosphere was seen all over the country. Peasants, citizens, male, female, everybody went to these schools. If this exuberance had continued, a great step would have been taken in the literacy problem. But the velocity of the initial days was exhausted in a short time. The National schools were extinguished with time. They only lasted for 8 years. Only 1,200,000 people were taught the new alphabet.

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82 Enver Naci Gökşen, "Millet Mektepleri", *Cumhuriyet*, Yazı Devrimi Belgeler Eki, 1 November 1978, No.II.

* Two of examples of this: Kenan Evren one of the leader of 1980 military intervention in the name of Kemalism, still uses Arabic script under the pretence that it is easier for taking notes. An other example is Aziz Nesin, a contemporary author.

83 Kinross, *op. cit.*, pp.670-671.

On the other hand, the National Schools were a great attempt from the alphabet reform point of view. All the country was motivated by these schools. The old people were enthusiastic. A new alphabet concept inspired males and females everywhere. The alphabet reform was lodged in their minds. People were awakened. Approximately 2.5 million people, of which 2/3 were peasants, joined these courses. Those who couldn't learn the new alphabet itself gained the overall reform concepts. The National schools played a great role in the application, introduction and teaching of the new alphabet. On the 10th anniversary of the Republic, the general education problem had not be solved and the literacy level was still very low. But the new alphabet was rooted. The language reform was successful. The National schools played a great part in this success. These schools were successful from the point of view of the adaptation by the people. [84]

To some authors, the reason for this relative easiness in acceptance was simply the readiness for the reforms and the keenness of the people for them. "All the street signs, billboards of ships and shops were changed as if by magic. On 1 February 1929, this new alphabet was being taught to those between 16-45 years old in 2655 schools and over 1 million people followed these courses. To many authors, the acceptance of the new alphabet on 1 November 1928 was just a formality."[85] Initially, the new Turkish script was introduced on ships, trains and stations. After that, these changes were seen in all commercial establishments. The aim of these new signs was to facilitate people's reading. In one month, the appearance of the cities changed dramatically. Even, before the alphabet reform, the Arabic script had started to disappear from the streets.

However, it was not so easy to remove the Arabic script completely. Some tradesmen were reluctant. Some used both types of scripts adjacently. They tried to present them together. There was no legal restriction but the reformers were in a hurry. They could not stand those who had not changed the signboards yet. In this atmosphere, in Istanbul, during the night of on 19 October 1928, all Arabic letters were painted over in black.

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[84] Şimşir, *op. cit.*, p.245.
[85] Köni Hasan, Harf Devriminin Önemi Üzerine," *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, No. 21, Temmuz- 1991, pp. 495-496.

> This, of course, was a suggestion to replace the old signboards with new ones. So, the tradesmen had to change their signboards.
>
> This notice motivated the more reluctant ones. The tradesmen understood that the Arabic script would not be continued and started the changes. All the signboards, notices and advertisements were changed.[86]

To Paul Dumont, the reason for the relative ease in acceptance was different: "Except for the great Kurdish rebellion, everything was good, even some decisions contrary to Islam, such as reading the *Ezan* in Turkish, and abolition of Arabic script, were accepted with a relative fatalism."[87]

Atatürk, the reform staff and authors of Republican era stressed this appropriation often. Atatürk's speech to the Mayor of Istanbul is one of the best examples of that idea: "I'm a close witness of the keenness, ardent desire and zeal of the people, the official authorities, the societies and the institutes just to learn and teach the new alphabet."[88] An author of that era, İzzet Ulvi, also shared this idea: "Surprisingly and with the common sense peculiar to Turks, they are the supporters of this reform as in the others."[89] Prime Minister İsmet İnönü mentioned this easy acceptance in his speeches: "Our nation doesn't want to see any other script any more after having the advantages of the new alphabet."[90] The chairman of Turkish Great National Assembly, Kazım Karabekir Pasha, stated that all people, male and female, from all villages had

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86 Şimşir, *op.cit.*, pp.232-233.
87 Dumont, *op. cit.*, p.134.
88 *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, Vol. II., pp.82-83. See also Zeynep Korkmaz, ***op. cit.***, p.37.
89 İzzet Ulvi [Aykurt], "Yeni Türk Harfleri Münasebetiyle," *Türk Yurdu*, Vol. XXI, no. 2090-6, June 1928, pp.1-3.
90 *Milliyet* (İstanbul), 20 Teşrin-i Evvel/ October 1928.

shown great enthusiasm for the new script.[91] Yakup Kadri speaks much more plainly: "To me, the most successful reform of all has been the language reform."[92]

Bilal Şimşir wrote:

> The Arabic script could not be seen in the streets anymore. It could only be seen in mosques, on tombs and gravestones. Turks started to use the Latin alphabet in writing their names, titles, etc. The Turkish alphabet dominated everywhere, in state offices, private shopping centers, schools and the press. The new alphabet was now the unique script of Turkey. It was national.
>
> At the beginning of 1929, the image of Turkey was completely changed. In a few months, Turkey succeed the removing its 'oriental ' appearance. Till then, Europeans assumed that the Orient started from Turkey's borders and the most significant symbol of this idea was the Arabic script. Now, a striking and surprising reform had taken place. None of the reforms, such as the hat reform, could change the image of Turkey as much as the alphabet reform had.[93]

The adoption of the Latin alphabet and the literacy ratio drive that followed led to a dramatic increase in the level of literacy. The percentage of the population that could read and write rose from around 8 per cent in 1928 to over 20 per cent in 1935, and 30 per cent at the end of the war. Most of the regime's educational effort was expended in the cities and towns, and the countryside continued to lag behind. However, "Once again, the alliance with the conservative rural notables hindered the spread of education among the peasants. The landlords were loath to see literate and politicized peasants who understood their rights and were capable of articulating their grievances."[94]

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[91] *Cumhuriyet* (İstanbul),15 October 1928.
[92] Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's words in *Dilimizin Özleşmesinde Aşırı Davranılmış mıdır?*, Açıkoturum, (Ankara:TDK, 1963), p.7.
[93] Şimşir, *op. cit.*, p.233.
[94] Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p.82

5.1. Weak Opposition to the Reforms

There were the objections to the reforms on several points. Some people claimed that since 'revolution' meant tearing down an existing order, changing it radically, and turning it upside down, these reforms were an attempt to destroy the Turkish language. The second criticism was that the movement of pure Turkish, which could be defined as replacing the foreign words with Turkish ones was merely an 'elimination'. They called the invention of new words from Turkish roots with Turkish suffixes an 'artificial' activity. Another objection of counter-reformers was that the language was untouchable, that it should develop by itself. A language could be forced. Their greatest claim was that the old and young generations would not be able to communicate with each other. "Some people objecting to the reforms make a further claim. They accuse the reformer and the ones using pure Turkish words of being the defenders of a 'foreign ideology', as communists."[95] Conservative intellectuals made these objections and they effected the people. Contrary to the relative acceptance mentioned in earlier chapters, there were intellectuals objecting these reforms.

The thoughts of the people, however, were different. The majority of counter-reforms occurred under pressure from the traditional and religious features of society. Religious motives shaped feelings and minds. They evaluated and criticized all these reforms from this perspective. They met the alphabet and language reforms with religious opinions as in other rebellions and reactions in that period.

To some people the Arabic script was sacred. They saw the replacement of the Arabic alphabet, the script of the Koran, with the Latin alphabet as sacrilegious. They claimed that

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[95] Özdemir, *op. cit.*, p.71.

writing the Koran in the Latin alphabet has been inspired by foreigners. When this new alphabet was accepted, the country would fall into anarchy, and other Muslim countries would assume that the Turks had become Christian.

All these rumors, stemming from religion, emerged from conservative intellectuals and spread out gradually. The people were worried that they would lose a holy being and that a sacred value was being demolished. Intellectuals added fuel to the flames. Literate individuals with speeches and religious men with *fetvas** joined this battle: "They believed that the Arabic script was sent by Allah and that using it was a compulsory part of the religion. They also considered that all ties with the past would be broken and Islamic culture would decline if we accepted the Latin alphabet."[96]

People who were opposed to the Latin alphabet sometimes expressed their thoughts in the press:

> We received many letters feverishly supporting our views against the alphabet reform. We offer one of them below as a response to claiming that we have no public opinion:
>
> We thank you on account of your patriotic, true, suitable and strong defense for rejecting the Latin alphabet, which made us happy, in the name of fellow townsmen and we ask you to publish our letter in a suitable place.
>
> İlbeylizade
> In the name of the people of the
> Kurb-bostancı Quarter of Gazi-ayıntab[97]

Two of the objections to the reforms, which have been summarized and sampled, are worth examining under different headings from our subject point of view. One of them is the

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* **Fetva**: Decision on a matter of Canon law (given by a Mufti).

96 Ülkütaşır, *op. cit.*, p.45.

97 *Resimli Gazete*, (İstanbul), 5 April 1924, no.310. Also see Ülkütaşır, op. Cit. p.53.

purification effort in language -or pure Turkish movement- and the other is the religious language, which was considered to be Arabic. Especially the matter of the *ezan*, the message calling people to prayer in mosques.

5.2. The Experiment of the Turkish Ezan*

One of the subjects which has brought about discussions and has been the origin of many political polemics was the experiment with the Turkish *ezan* in the Republican era.

Before this experiment, the replacement of Arabic with Turkish as the language for religious service was on agenda. This matter had been put forwarded by Ali Suavi and Ziya Gökalp in the Tanzimat Period and was put into effect right after the alphabet and language reforms during the Republican era. "In June 1928, a committee of the Theological Faculty of the University of İstanbul, headed by Professor Köprülüzade Mehmet Fuat (Fuat Köprülü), published its program for the reform of Muslim worship, suggesting, inter alia, the replacement of Arabic with Turkish as the language of religious services."[98] The translation of the Koran into Turkish was considered the first step in this field, so the people could worship easily. An example of this view is as follows: "Undoubtedly, we, the Turks, need a Koran translation suitable to its originality and fluency of speech, to understand our spiritual guide."[99] After the above-mentioned program, work to translate the Koran into Turkish quickly began.

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* *Ezan*: Call to prayer by the müezzin.

[98] Heyd, *op. cit.*, p.22.

[99] A. Hikmet Müftüoğlu, "Kur'an'ı Kerim Tercümesi Münasebetiyle", *Resimli Gazete*, No. 59; 18 Teşrin-i Evvel, 1340/1924, p.3.

> In the Thirties, the Koran was translated into Turkish several times, but this was mainly done by people who held conservative views also on linguistic questions. Moreover, since an authoritative translation will ever play a similar role in the development of modern Turkish to the one played by the Authorized Version or Luther's Bible in the growth of English or German respectively.[100]

Turkish translations of the Koran, anathema to orthodox Muslims, were written with government and recited publicly on January 22, 1932, creating a sensation among many.

In this way, the translation process of the language of religious services into Turkish, starting with the Koran, widened and soon included the *ezan*. The famous journalist Nadir Nadi supported these efforts in his articles. The news of the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* is important for our subject. This article claimed that these efforts were accepted by the people and that they enthusiastically applauded the new application:

> Over 50,000 Turkish people, gathered in the Hagia Sofia Mosque and worshipped in their own language for the first time. They prayed with their most sincere and cordial feelings. While they prayed with the great name of the God in awe, a unique voice was heard. This voice was telling that the Turkish world prayed with knowledge.
>
> After the teravih prayer*, a peerless humming noise arose. This was like loud stream or thunder. Everybody was praying. It continued for a few minutes. Subsequently 30 Hafiz** started to read the *ezan* loudly in Turkish[101]

After the translation of the Koran into Turkish, calling the *ezan* in Turkish was assumed as the next step in Turkish worship. According to the headlines of newspaper *Cumhuriyet* on 30 January 1932, the first Turkish *ezan* experiment was performed in Fatih Mosque and this was

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[100] Heyd, *op. cit.*, pp.55-56.

* A special evening prayer during Ramadan (fasting) month.

** A man who learned Koran by heart.

[101] *Cumhuriyet* (İstanbul), 4 February 1932 ; this news was published in detail in other newspapers. See also Korkmaz, *op. cit.*, pp.477-484.

approved by the people eagerly.[102] With a law passed in 1935, the announcement of *ezan* in Arabic was banned and the Turkish call made obligatory.

This prohibition continued for 15 years and was finally rescinded by the Adnan Menderes government in 1950. "Again, as in earlier periods, modern Turkish language reform underwent changes parallel to those made in the religious policy of the Government rescinded the ban on the call to prayer in Arabic and permitted Koran recitation over the Ankara radio."[103] The Menderes regime also soon extended religious instruction to all schools and required all Muslim children to receive it unless their parents specifically requested exemption. To islamist writers, the Democrat Party was not sincere in these changes: "The Arabic *ezan* compensation given by the Democrat Party to Islamists in the 1946-1950 period was, in a way, the victory of the people won by struggling. As mentioned by the Democratic Party ideologues, this party was not concerned with the Arabic *ezan*. Their target was not to scold the Islamists but just to play an Islamic role contrary to Republican People's Party's (RPP) earlier oppression. The Democratic Party did not have an Islamic view!"[104] The revocation of this ban by Parliament added to the reasons for the 1960 military coup. Even the president and the leader of this coup, Cemal Gürsel, stated his opinion on this matter as follows: "The *Ezan* and the Koran should be recited in Turkish."[105] This matter has been exploited since then and used as propaganda material by politicians.

In spite of these desires and the news, this experiment is one of the subjects on which the people attributed *de facto* against the reforms and the reform laws. The rural people acting under the drive of religious men, breached this law and insisted on announcing in Arabic. There

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102 *Cumhuriyet* (İstanbul), 31 January 1932. See also Korkmaz, *Ibid.*, p.484.

103 Heyd, *op. cit.*, p.52.

104 Hasan Hüseyin Ceylan, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Din-Devlet İlişkileri*, Vol. 2, (Ankara:Rehber, 1990), p.511.

105 "*Ezan* Türkçe, Kur'an Türkçe okunmalı", *Cumhuriyet* (İstanbul), 6 Ekim 1960.

were some individual events handled in the courts and press. The most striking example is of the recitation of *ezan* by two non-parliamentarians in the Turkish National Assembly on 4 February 1949. This was published in the foreign press and the newspapers declared it an "unprecedented event"[106] The interesting point was that the people usually involved in such kind of events were not religious men but common people.

The first serious mass reaction of the people happened in Bursa on 1 February 1933.[107] The people started to walk from the Ulu Mosque under the provocation of a *vaiz*.* The events were suppressed without dissemination so much. There were some smaller mass reactions in the period upleading to 1945. In 1935, the Sheik of Naqshibandi sect, Halid, and a year later his son, Molla Abdülkuddüs led regional reactions.[108] Some incidents were launched by Kayserili Ahmet Kalaycı, another Naqshibandi member, in Çorum and İskilip.[109] But these incidents were limited. The multi-party political era begun with the establishment of National Development Party. Opposition movements to the Turkish *ezan* and other religious applications were to spread throughout the country.[110] Finally, after all the above-mentioned applications of the Democrat Party, 1960 military coup occurred. The coup accepted throughout the country with very little opposition, even by those who continued to support the Menders regime. Thus ended the Democratic Party era that had begun optimistically just a decade before.

Perhaps, the Turkish *ezan* experiment was one of the laws that created a tremendous gap between the people and the state so that the people removed the Republican People's Party

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[106] On 5 February 1949, *Cumhuriyet, Milliyet, Kader* newspapers published this news in banner headlines.
[107] Gotthard Jaeschke, *Yeni Türkiye'de İslamlık*, (Ankara: Bilgi, 1972), p.45.
* preacher.
[108] Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler*, (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı, 1984), pp. 185-188.
[109] Muzaffer Sencer, *Dinin Türk Toplumuna Etkileri*, (İstanbul: May, 1974), p. 240.
[110] Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *İslamcılık Cereyanı*,(İstanbul:Baha, 1962), p. 191.

(RPP), which they considered as the 'state', from power. Today, the 'exploitation of "holy feelings" by politicians has made this a continuing problem.

It is possible to catch a basic clue related to these reactions to the *Ezan* prohibition of the people in a speech at Brown University given by Wallace Murray, the chief of Near East Affairs Chamber of the USA Foreign Relations Ministry on 12 March 1932. In this speech entitled 'Westernization in Turkey and Iran', he stated that since Arabic was the language of the Prophet and Koran, praying in Arabic was compulsory among Muslims and that praying in Turkish was rejected. Arabic remained the common language of prayer.[111]

Akşit Göktürk who evaluates the Turkish *ezan* issue from the contemporary point of view, not from the dimension of the people, makes a different comment and criticizes the return to the Arabic *ezan* :

> The modernization of Turkish society in the Republican era began with a new view of history. The new view appeared in a new language. Raising of old materials left from the past like antique goods and transferring them from one generation to another was not historicism, but unhistoricism in reality. In this manner, concrete result of historicism was the return to the Arabic Ezan from the Turkish, although there was no need for it. However, to make use of the past does not necessarily mean to stand out somewhere in the past. There were many differences between the position of a contemporary people and the conditions of present time and the past. Consequently, the things to be taken from the past should be in a context which will contribute to your concepts and bring a dynamism to daily life. What has the Arabic Ezan, considered as holy, contributed to the conception of present time? It has merely remained an unhistoricism and distrust of the Turkish language[112]

Nowadays, the Turkish *ezan* case is not being handled as a Turkish language matter but it has been transformed into an 'honor war' between the conservatives and the progressives, exploited by both sides. The progressives are not able to convince the opposite side that

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[111] Quoted by Köni, *op. cit.*, p.494.

[112] Akşit Göktürk, "Çağdaş Uygarlığın Türkçesi", *in Atatürk'ün Yolunda Türk Dil Devrimi, op. cit.*, pp.44-45.

announcing the *ezan* in Turkish does not mean the destruction of the religion. Islamists try to convince the progressives that the Arabic announcement of the *Ezan* does not destroy the reforms. The Turkish *Ezan* experiment, as an unavoidable result of language reform, was a natural application of the movement of pure Turkish. This movement is worth inspection as it has followed a path from the reform years to the present.

5.3 The Movement of "Pure Turkish"

The aim and the definition of the pure Turkish movement, which is defined differently by various groups, is as follows in the words of Emin Özdemir a sincere supporter of this movement:

> The movement of pure Turkish is a period after language reform like the Ottoman Language. This is the application period of language reform . The aim is not to create a new language but to develop Turkish by purifying it. This is the movement of replacement of foreign words with ones invented by Turkish suffixes and prefixes and the enrichment of Turkish and rendering it qualified in its own special facilities. However, the aim of this movement is not a complete elimination.[113]

Although, it seems that this movement was launched after the language reform of the Republican era, some authors believe that it started in the Tanzimat period.[114] After this reform, "simplification of language, the slogan of the Young Turk language reformers was superseded by the desire for the creation of a pure or pure Turkish."[115] Differently put: "A natural result of

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[113] Emin Özdemir, *Öz Türkçe Üzerine*, (Ankara:TDK, 1969), p. 12.
[114] Agah Sırrı Levend, "Dilde Özleşme Hareketinin Tarihçesi", *in Dil Devrimi Üzerine, op. cit.*, pp.16-21.
[115] Heyd, *op. cit.*, p.20.

the alphabet reform then was a renewal of demands for purification of the language. While this sort of demand had a story of its own, it now for the first time received official support."[116]

To shed some more light on the above point, Bosworth wrote:

> The strongly nationalist and Westernizing nature of the new regime favored the efforts of radical linguistic reformers who were not satisfied with the existing achievements in dealing with foreign elements. The presence of any Arabic and Persian words in Turkish was felt by these people to be a national disgrace and Atatürk himself encouraged the purists: 'The Turkish nation, which knew how to defend its country and noble independence, must also liberate its language from the yoke of foreign languages.' Whereas the slogan of the Young Turk reformers had simplification, the creation a simple Turkish, *sãde Türkche*,the Kemalist ones desired a pure, unalloyed one, *öz Türkche*."[117]

In this manner, the movement for pure Turkish as an extension of language reform "began formally in 1932 with the foundation, encouraged by Atatürk, by the Turkish Linguistic Society with the declared aim 'to bring out the pure beauty and richness of the Turkish language and to elevate it to the high rank it deserves among world languages."[118] The Society threw itself enthusiastically into the task of purification. The society began its work under the direction a Central Committee. Primary emphasis was placed on two projects: The collection of words used in the everyday speech of the people, and the search for pure Turkish equivalents of foreign words, or words of foreign origin, still in the language.

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[116]Tachau, *op. cit.*, p.195.

[117] Bosworth, *op. cit.*, pp.119. At this point, it should be added that, the most striking example of the support of pure Turkish by top level administrators is the Speech of Atatürk to Sweden Crown Prince Gustow Adolf: "Altes Ruayal! Bu gece ulu konuklarımıza, Türkiye'ye uğur getirdiklerini söylerken duygum tükel özgü bir kıvançtır. Burada kaldığınız uzca sizi sarmaktan hiç durmayacak ılık bir sevgi içinde, bu yurtta, yurdunuz için beslenmiş duyguların bir yankısını bulacaksınız. İsveç -Türk uluslarının kazanmış olduğu utkuların silinmez damgalarını tarih taşımaktadır. Süerdemliği, ona, bu iki ulus, ünlü şanlı özelerinin derinliğinde sonsuz tutmaktadır. Ancak daha başka bir alanda da onlar erdemlerini o denlü yaltırıklı yöndemle göstermişlerdir." Hakimiyet-i Milliye (İstanbul), 04.10.1934 and *Cumhuriyet* (İstanbul), 05.10.1934. For more examples of this kind, see Korkmaz, *op. cit.*, pp.406-408.

[118] Bosworth, *op. cit.*, p.120 ; For a similiar information, see also Bernard Lewis, *op. cit.* p. 428 and Heyd, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

It is worth inspecting the first aim of Turkish Linguistic Society from the acceptance of language reform by the people point of view. A great movement was launched to collect the words spoken by the people but not used in written language. "Committees for this purpose were set up throughout the country. They included local officials such as the mayor, military commander, provincial directors of education and health, and school principals and teachers. These committees supervised the collection process for which they were provided forms. These forms were then checked and sifted to avoid duplication and finally sent to Ankara."[119] The project, begun early in 1933, and saw the collection of some 130,000 items in 19 months.[120]

In addition to this activity, the society began to sift old Turkish literature written in the dialects of various countries and periods. The material collected from the spoken language of Turkey was published by the society in 1939-41 in four volumes The Collection of Words From the Spoken Language of the People in Turkey (Türkiye'de Halk Ağzından Söz Derleme Dergisi). By this work, the gap between the people and the educated élite, who had claimed to use a different language and lived a different life for centuries, would be bridged. The people would understood what the intellectuals wrote and the intellectuals would understood what the people said. Till the death of Atatürk many works were performed in a pure and genuine Turkish.

Atatürk's death (November, 1938) appears to have further weakened the momentum of the language reform. In 1939, several changes in official nomenclature from the new pure Turkish back to the old Arabic words were made. Meanwhile, many dictionaries were published and further research undertaken. Ataturk's successor, İsmet İnönü, renewed the policy of reform in 1941. A year later, the Turkish Linguistic Society published a list of philosophical,

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[119] Tachau, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

[120] Heyd, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

educational, sociological and grammatical terms which made an attack on foreign technical terms in Turkish.

The peak of this second wave of purism came with the rewriting of the Turkish Constitution in 'pure' Turkish; the new version was adapted by the Parliament early in 1945.[121] However, thereafter, Turkey entered the postwar multiparty era which brought it greater political freedom and coincidentally greater vocal opposition to the Society's reform plans. Nevertheless, the main criticism, accordingly with our section, was

> of the opinion that the Society had defeated its own purpose. Instead of developing the existing language so that it would be understood even by the common people, the society was said to have created a new artificial language, an official language very different from the language of ordinary conversation and as unfamiliar and unintelligible to the masses as the old Ottoman had been. A situation had arisen in which parents no longer understood the language of their children, nor the public the language of the authorities. Thus a new and dangerous cleavage had been created between the intelligentsia and the masses, and the gap between the written and the spoken language had widened again[122]

In the pure Turkish movement, the period between 1950-60 is of significance since it was a period that the government, alleging it acted on behalf of the people, started to criticize the Turkish Linguistic Society. Language reform was hindering state power.[123] "With the victory of the Democrats, in power till the revolution of 1960, the Linguistic Society felt for the first time the blast of official disapproval."[124] This was also a period in which the people were vocally opposed to the alphabet and the language reforms. As one researcher commented : "Kemalists have performed the reforms out of spite for the people . That is why, with the

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121 *Ibid.*, p.p. 41-43.
122 *Ibid.*, p. 47.
123 *Dil Devriminin 30. Yılı, Topluçalışım*, (Ankara:TDK, 1962), p.63.
124 Bosworth, *op. cit.*, p.124.

transition to a multi-party system, the people reacted against Atatürk principles, mainly against the secularism principle."[125]

The overthrow of the Democratic Party by the military in 1960 was followed by a new attempt to commit the nation to a reformist program, and once again, efforts to substitute "pure Turkish" words for 'Ottoman ' terms became evident.

Afterwards, a great struggle erupted between the Turkish Linguistic Society and the ones criticizing it due to its policy of inventing new words for purist ends. The Society started an accelerated word invention campaign which it defended as "not invention but creation".[126] The Society, originally launched by Atatürk, became a target as a result of this campaign.

The intellectuals objecting this movement claimed that an artificial language under the guise of 'pure Turkish' had been created; purism was changed into ' artificial movement'; so an artificial language was produced apart from the spoken language; the generations could not understand each other; the Turkish language became impoverished; relation with the old was lost; the people were integrated into different political groups; the national culture was torn down and thought ability became infertile. Even Necmettin Hacieminoğlu who had previously supported language reform and 'pure Turkish' movement now opposed it, blaming this movement since it rendered the language as incomprehensible to the people as it had been in the Ottoman Empire.[127] Adnan Ötüken went to great lengths defining this movement as an indication of *schizophrenia* and not appropriated by all the nation, used by a minor group, and understood with difficulty even by them.[128] He claimed that "this movement comes from

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125 Menter Şahinler, "Fransız Gizli Belgelerinde Menderes Dönemi," *Cumhuriyet* (İstanbul), 19 November 1995
126 Agah Sırrı Levent, *op. cit.*, p.172.
127 Quoted by Emin Özdemir, *Dil Devrimimiz, op. cit.*, p.124.
128 Adnan Ötüken,*Türk Dilinin Başına Gelenler*, (Ankara:1968), p.20.

Moscow"[129] and "all the communists and socialists in Turkey, all leftist student and teacher chambers use this language in their works. Only they esteemed this movement."[130]

On the other hand, Emin Özdemir, who is a voluntary defendant of this movement, stated in his speech in the tenth Turkish Language Congress that this movement had been appropriated by everyone: "We see that new words are being highly used by intellectuals, and mostly by young generations. It is also used by the people once accepted by them since these words have their roots in the people's language "[131]

In the 1970's, the pure Turkish movement, once supported by the military, was now taken up by the politicians. The Financial Ministry confirmed an instruction in which the usage of 'pure Turkish in all writings was advised.'[132] Bülent Ecevit, Prime Minister in that era, put forward that the desired intellectual-people convergence had succeeded. "with this movement, the gap between the language of the intellectual and of the people was filled. Written and spoken language became the same. The integration was complete to such an extent that the effort of reproducing peasant's language in scenes is not artificial any more."[133]

In the 1970's, however, the new words invented by the Turkish Linguistic Society were mostly used by leftist politicians. Conservative groups opposed this. In these years, in which almost everything was evaluated from a politic standpoint, language was also handled as a political matter. The political polarization was reflected in the language and the ideological and political thoughts of the people were determined according to the words they used. The pure Turkish movement played a significant role in this polarization.

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129 *Ibid.*, p. 30.
130 *Ibid.*, p. 30.
131 Özdemir, *Öz Türkçe Üzerine, op. cit.*, p.59.
132 "Maliye Bakanlığı Yazışmalarda Öz Türkçeye Özen Gösterilmesini İstiyor", *Türk Dili*, Vol. 37, No. 320, October 1978, p.464.
133 Bülent Ecevit, "Gelişen Türkçe", *Türk Dili*, Vol. 37, No. 437, October 1978, p.446.

This was a movement in which the people were involved or effected directly. Newly invented words reflected the daily life of the people, so they sometimes appropriated or rejected, or most times, made fun of these words. They became the object of satire and witticism in an attempt to overcome the psychological tensions of that period. An author analyzed this situation as follows: "When they found a very freshly derived word, they harped on this subject and they tried to remove it before it rooted. If they did not succeed in this, they invented new concepts, and then spread them out as if they had been derived by the Turkish Linguistic Society. They used every kind of lie and deceit."[134]

German sociologist Karl Mannheim states that: "Language is a sensitive indicator of social and cultural change... A word is a sociological fact. A minor change in the general thought pattern reflects on the words and effects them."[135]

Of course, conservative intellectuals played a considerable part in the attitudes of the people and they opposed, reacting conservatively instead of supporting the movement. Alkan, defender of the pure Turkish movement wrote: "Those who are oppose to the pure-Turkish movement claim that reforms in language cause a struggle between the generations. I would like to congratulate these men. They participated with original ideas to social science (!)"[136]

The mocking attitudes of these conservative intellectuals effected the people directly and they reacted to the pure -Turkish movement. However, it should be pointed out that sometimes the supporters of this movement had gone too far. Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu voices a similar criticism in an article to support the pure Turkish:

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[134] Mustafa Canbolat, "Özleştirme ve Yapı Bilgisi," *in Atatürk'ün Yolunda Türk Dil Devrimi, op. cit.*, p.127. The author gives some words -which cannot be translated properly- derived by the people to caricaturize the activities of TDK.

[135] Cited in Türker Alkan, " Siyasal Toplumsallaşma Açısından Dil Devrimi", *Ibid.*, p.55.

[136] *Ibid.*, p.56.

> Some authors use new words that they have derived and sometimes go beyond the bounds. However a language develops by means of these proposals. If they insisted on using concepts which are not popular and general, their works would resemble still-born children.
>
> The supporters of the Ottoman language criticize the supporters of the Pure-Turkish movement severely under cover of these extremist trends. They make fun of us by means of the words they derive.[137]

In reality, this trend of creating new words reached such a state that scientists, artists, and authors started to feel concern. "It was soon apparent, however, that this type of purism would lead to utter lingual anarchy."[138] In fact, after a while "everyone wrote with words which he found at random, and writing assumed forms which were impossible for anyone but the writer to understand."[139] When they read the articles which they had written a couple of years before, they were ashamed. "Many authors are not able to recognize their works after a few years. This kind of authorship has never been seen in other countries with a settled language."[140]

Islamist writers criticize this movement in the same manner claiming that the new language is not comprehensible to the people . "Words were invented, derived or adapted, disseminated all over the country to an extent that a Turkish citizen could not understand a newly invented word."[141] Uriel Heyd shares the same idea and says that the newly invented official language was alien to Turks [142]

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137 Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, "Özleştirme Zorunluluğunu Ne Zaman Duydum?" ***in Atatürk'ün Yolunda Türk Dil Devrimi***, op. cit., p.20.
138 Tachau, *op. cit.*, p.198.
139 Quoted by Tachau, *Ibid*, p.198.
140 Oktay Akbal's words:, "Dil Devriminin Türk Yazını İçin Önemi Üzerine Sanatçılar Arasında Toplugörüşme", *in Atatürk'ün Yolunda Türk Dil Devrimi, op. cit.*, p.71; Even Atatürk was, also, worried about the pure Turkish movement while he's alive. Atay, *op. cit.*, pp.475-480.
141 H.Hüseyin Ceylan, *op. cit.*, p.282.
142 Heyd, *op. cit.*, p.44.

Philologist Tahsin Yücel claims that, the Pure-Turkish movement provided an approach between the people and the intellectual, and makes the same observations as earlier:

> In the manner of approach to the people and usage of the language of people, great efforts have been made. However, the word field of language is very large. Medical terms are within the language. If a word could not be understood by the people and one using it cannot be assumed as apart from the people. Since the Ottoman language was diffused not only in the terms but also into the daily language, we complain about it... The simplest concepts were rendered incomprehensible. In the Pure-Turkish movement and language reform, there is no such case. On the contrary, an approach to the people can be observed. Pure-Turkish is the language that can be easily understood by the people. But if we cannot understand some special concepts, this case is not the fault of language reform. Additionally, some authors use complex language and it is considered equivalent to the Pure Turkish movement, however they are unsuccessful. This is not also a fault of this movement.[143]

Although this movement is still being criticized strongly, many new words are being used in daily life and the people accept these words. Even the opponents of reform use them whether they realize it or not. To Agah Sırrı Levend "It remains to be said, there is no need to stress whether the newly invented word is wrong or correct. There are some words which we use with love, its invention is contrary to grammatical rules, even they may be nonsense. But the people like and use them. There is no need to argue its correctness."[144]

Although the purification movement in language has lost its momentum, it will be the source of argument for a long time. Because this is a movement in which the people find themselves in the center of the arguments and affected directly whether they can understand it or not. These arguments will not end as long as interaction and education continue with the language.

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[143] Tahsin Yücel's words: "Dil Devriminin Türk Yazını İçin Önemi Üzerine Sanatçılar Arasında Toplugörüşme", in *Atatürk'ün Yolunda Türk Dil Devrimi, op. cit.*, p.89.

[144] A. Sırrı Levend. "Uydurma Nedir? Uydurmacılık Neye Derler?", in *Dil Devrimi Üzerine, op. cit.*, p.172.

CONCLUSION

Long periods of war; economic, political and social crises resulted in the downfall of the Ottoman Empire. However, nothing was finished. On the contrary, the great fight had just begun. This fight was closely related to Turks' behavior toward the Western world standing before them. Thought currents formed by centuries' old movements forced the young state to make a decision between 'the old' and 'the new.' Those who were of decision-making status had already made up their minds: the ultimate target was 'Westernization.' Reforms were the tool of this target.

In order to reach the desired level of contemporary Western civilization these reforms were seen inevitable by reform staff. This desire became the unique end of Atatürk and his supporters, and all the reforms were enacted just for this end.

A 'staff' was essential to reach a higher social and civilization plain. This staff was composed of experienced people and had been present during many of the political crises of the Ottoman Empire. They believed that they are making the best decisions for the people. This staff launched the urgent application of reforms with their experience and intelligence enacting a chain of reforms in which the people were not involved. This was a movement of intellectuals formed around Atatürk and his co-workers, trying to mold a new society from one humiliated by dependency, invasions, and backwardness.

As seen in the initial days of the alphabet and the language reforms, Atatürk's staff had to think differently from the people in order to form a new world by radical change such that had not been attempted before. The keeping of the people away from the works accomplished is one of the facts of the reforms, material to be used by counter-reforms in later years. Before making a strict

determination on the inevitability of reforms from top to bottom, the time, place, people, goals, equipment need to be evaluated together.

In this reform 'hurricane', there was an important yet disregarded element in the equation: the people

The people, who had lost their confidence in the Pashas and believed they had been dragged from one front to another and led to complete destruction in the First World War had lost all their belief in the future. They were not pleased with the victory; instead of patriotic feelings, they felt impoverished and exhausted. Some urgent measures had to be taken, as Atatürk stated in his 'Address to the Turkish Youth.' The Reform staff thought it possible to liberate the people from their traditional biases and narrow living standards by means of reforms.

Naturally, it was impossible to get rid of the ingrained habits and biases of the people completely. Some approaches which were extensions of traditional patterns, and the absence of scientific tradition, resulted in some oriental-style applications. As the extreme and negative works of ineffective traditionalists and the indulgent attitudes of sub-officers, wrong applications followed and another fact of the reforms arose: the reactions of the people to the reforms and the intense efforts exerted in the appropriation of the reforms

The people rebelled in some places and the reform staff had to deal with them. The existence of both accepting and rejecting responses to reforms is sociologically natural. "No reforms could happen easily, without disturbing the people, and even with no damage. The reforms are great proportional to the difficulties and problems. The same fact is valid for the alphabet and the language reforms."[1]

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[1] Bilal Şimşir, *Türk Yazı Devrimi*, (Ankara:TDK.,1992), p.226.

The strongest factor causing the people to resist the reforms was religion. Everything had depended on religion in the Ottoman Empire, a theocratic state in which the thought manner of the people was formed by religious laws. People who evaluated the reforms from this perspective rebelled in many parts of the country as a result of incitement by conservative intellectuals. The propaganda material was ready: 'Religion (Islam) is ceasing to exist'

The reform staff were faced with great difficulties at times. Although everything went well, reforms paid for the bill, a portion of those who could not break the traditional thought patterns reacted. These were the essential target groups which had to be dealt with by the reform staff. With the effects of the rebellions and reactions, with emotional anxiety, Niyazi Berkes defined the reforms as a victory "won as a result of severe struggles between the minor progressives and the huge amount of reactionaries."[2]. The Anatolian people watched the intellectuals of Ankara arise after the Lausanne treaty, and with defensive instinct, they began to raise the concept of the 'Anatolian people.' However, it was impossible to leave things to take their own course in reforms. Giving up because of local and partial reactions was unacceptable for the reform staff. The struggle against the counter-reforms went on either by convincing and education, or by use of force. In fact, the revolts were intercepted by the stable attitude of Atatürk and his administration, and some measures were taken immediately.

The reactions of the intellectuals, mentioned often in the thesis, were another fact of the reforms. Some intellectuals disapproved the downfall, and reacted to the reforms. They also directed the people easily.

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[2] Niyazi Berkes, *İki Yüzyıldır Neden Boğuluyoruz?*, (İstanbul:İstanbul,1965), pp.84-85.

The reactions of the intellectuals could be observed clearly in the alphabet and the language reforms. They reacted to these reforms rather than the people. The people, indeed, did not suffer from losing something which they had never known. Because "owing to this vast Arabic and Persian element, literary Ottoman Turkish was unintelligible to the overwhelming majority of the people, who were illiterate."[3]

The Pure Turkish movement and Turkish *ezan* experiment, discussed in the second part of this thesis, are both significant debates in which the people were involved and by which they were effected whether they realized it or not. Since these debates are still going on, it is very difficult to make a definite conclusion about the acceptance question of these reforms. However, intellectuals who claim that the reforms were performed from top to bottom by an élite group insist these reforms caused a 'gap between the generations'. Moreover, they often claim that these reforms were not approved of the desired amount of people. Today, they call it "reforms for the people, in spite of the people."[4]

For those who thought that "giving up the script of 1000 years history, leaving the fine arts, connected to this alphabet, seemingly decreased the ratio of literacy in 1927 to zero level, -1.1 million population, of which 8 per cent, were literate in those years- all used to criticize the reform."[5] Yücel expresses the opposite view:

> A ratio of literacy of 30 per cent in 1945 shows that the reform was approaching its target quickly in the first 15 years. Today, the literacy rate, which is not 100 per cent,

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[3] Uriel Heyd, *Language Reform in Modern Turkey*, (Jerusalem,1954), p.109.
[4] Quoted by Mithat Baydur & Lütfullah Karaman, "Türkiye ve Ortadoğu Özelinde İslam Ülkelerinde 'Siyasi Elit-Halk' Çelişkisi Üzerine Hatırlatmalar," *Türkiye Günlüğü*, No.33 (March-April 1995), p. 75.
[5] Tahsin Yücel's words in "Dil Devriminin Türk Yazını İçin Önemi Üzerine Sanatçılar Arasında Toplugörüşme," *in Atatürk'ün Yolunda Türk Dil Devrimi- Topluçalışım 17-18 Ocak 1981, Bildiriler, Toplugörüşmeler*, (Ankara:TDK, 1981), p. 89.

> proves that the acceleration of the initial days could not be kept at optimum level. This is an evidence of the lack of relationship between the regime and the people.
>
> The illiteracy of half of the people in a computer-aided century is not the fault of the present alphabet. Turkish has proved it's not an infertile alphabet. [6]

The majority of evaluations which have been made about general reforms in the macro plan are also valid for the alphabet and the language reforms in the micro plan because the Turkish have people handled these reforms as a whole. Counter-reforms of the era reacted to all reforms with no exceptions. Semih Tezcan describes this point well: "In reality, the ones opposing the alphabet and the language reforms are indeed the ones who could not digest the reforms completely. They are against the kernel of the reforms but not the mis-usage of some words." [7] The statement of Niyazi Berkes about these reforms is in a similar manner:

> The uniqueness of Atatürk's reforms lies in the fact that they prepared the field for the conditions of this century from both religious and language aspects. Today, this peak could not be reached, because, religion, language, conception and historical problems of the last century are extremely deep, comprehensive and difficult and have not been encountered by other nations.[8]

The gap between the intellectuals and the people, which started in the past and continues in the present, is one of the subjects which has been emphasized frequently in this paper, from the perspective of the alphabet and the language reforms. Today's distance between the state and the people is a natural result of this earlier split. In present times, politicians forget their promises, speeches, and attitudes right after the elections. The people are being handled as a mass remembered from one election to another; this is the fundamental policy. Although the people in

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[6] *Ibid.*, p.89.
[7] Semih Tezcan, "Atatürk Devrimi ve Tutuculuk", *Milliyet*, 18.01.1981.
[8] Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma*, (İstanbul:Doğu-Batı,1978?), p.543.

power change, the behavior does not and this afflicts the Turkish people. Consequently, social problems exist. If the necessary measures are not taken, much greater problems will arise in the future.

It is very difficult to find a definite result to the discussion of the thesis as it is a relative fact to comprehend to what extent the people accepted the reforms. Scholars, who examine this subject, approach the matter either with their political views or with their personal biases in mind. It is true, however, that today the problems which Turkish Republic faces and the constant endeavor to join the modern nations are evidence that Turks have not succeeded at Westernization (Modernization). In finding a solution to this debate, time and history will be the most decisive element.

By way of conclusion, the words of Turkish historian Halil İnalcık state the conclusion of this thesis in a striking manner:

> Modernization comes up with a gradual change in the West as a result of the force of the people by changing the society from bottom to top. In Turkey, this has been performed from top to bottom as a movement of the state and intellectuals. This case, appears to have brought about the struggles and crisis in social and political development. In a mass deprived of education, which is conservative and traditional, a resistance to modernization came about and the politicians have tried to use this during the multi-party political period. Traditionalism was encouraged and conservative feelings of the people were directed as an antagonism against the intellectuals. Turkey, now, determines these truths in its endeavors to establish a rational and modern state.[9]

[9] Halil İnalcık, "Atatürk ve Türkiye'nin Modernleşmesi," *Belleten Atatürk Özel Sayısı*, Vol. LII, No. 204 (November, 1988), p.992.

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Yayın Dünyasına Anahtar Dergisi, (İstanbul, 1990)

APPENDICES

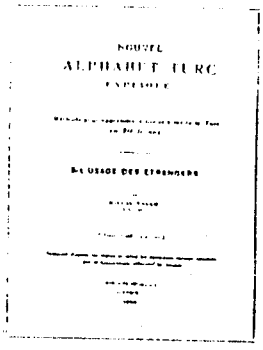
(The relation of the Alphabet and Language Reforms to daily life)

SOURCES :

Appendices No. [1-7] : Türk Tarih Kurumunca Düzenlenen Yazı Devriminin 50. Yılı Sergisi Kataloğu, (Ankara:TTK,1979)

Appendices No. [8-12] : Türk Yazı Devrimi, Bilal N. Şimşir, (Ankara:TTK, 1992)

1928 YILINDA YAYIMLANAN ALFABE, DİLBİLGİSİ, OKUMA KİTAPLARI



DİL ENCÜMENİ

ALFABESİ

Dil Encümeni tarafından tertip edilmiştir.

İmlâ Lûgati

املا لغتی

OSMAN FERİT SAĞLAMIN TÜRK TARİH KURUMUNA ARMAĞANIDIR

Yeni Türk Yazısı ile

İLK KIRÂAT

MUHTASAR

TÜRKÇE GRAMER

مختصر تدبیق خاصه

NECMEDDİN SADIK

نجم الدین صادق

TÜRK ALFABESİ

تورك آلفابه‌سی

YENİ TÜRK ALFABESİ

İmlâ ve Tasrif Şekilleri

یکی تورك آلفابه‌سی

ı sokaklar

5 —

ı erkeğin omuzuna
kolunu genc kızın
tatlı bir meltem-le
riyor-lardı ...

ı bir nimi âhengi-le
susamış bir adamın
daklrını suya doko-
duydığı rā'şalar-la,
ck de ilhamını kızın
isunu kararan gözle-
inden, ilk bayğın
or gibi-di.

kaçıyor, gölgeden
üdü-ler, yürüdü-ler
ğı tarafa saptı-lar ve
koyulaşdırdığı deh-
karışdı-lar.

an sevgililer!.. yürüye
rayâ, aşkınızı sakla-
gizleyecek karanlık
l orada, biliyor-ım-
degilsiniz, gözleri-
olerinizin ateşi, bin
rok yüzü yaratmağa

Her tarafta muhtelif kurslar açildı

چورومده آچیلان ۱۳ قورسه دوام ایدن معلملر

اوك صیراده اوطوران هیئت تعلیمیه‌دندر

بکی تورك حرفلری استانبولده اولدیغی قادار
مملکتمزك هرطرفنده عینی سرعتله تعمم ایتمکده‌در.
چوروم ولایتنده‌ده مختلف قورسلر آچیلمشدر.
معلملر ایچون چورومده آچیلان «۱۳» قورسه
یوزون معلملر اشتراك ایتمشلر ودرسلری دقتله تعقیب
اولاجقدر. قورسلر حقنده برقرار ویرمك اوزره
چارشانبا کونی ساعت اون درتده امانتده بر اجتماع
عقد ایدیله‌جکدر. بو اجتماعه یوزون امانت مدیرلری
اشتراك ایده‌جکدر.

خلق درسخانه‌لری آچیلیور

Yeni Harfler memleketin her tarafında aynı süratle öğreniliyor

Resim altı: Çorum'da kurs

Cumhuriyet, 3 Eylül 1928

Türk Harfleri kanunu çıkmadan bir ay önce Türk harfleri ile yayımlanan ilk gazete

Türkçe Gazete 1 Ekim 1928

Türkçe

Abonesi

DÜN ÇOCUKLAR OKUYORDU, BUGÜN BÜTÜN MİLLET OKUYOR

TIMIZI İDARE EDEN KAMIŞ TARİHE KARIŞIYOR

No : 8 – Yıl : 1 Fiatı 5 Kuruştur 28 Teşrini

Türkçe Gazet

Abonesi | Senelik: 500 kuruş | Altı aylık: 260 " | Üç aylık: 130 " | Perşembe | Pazartesi ve Perşembe günleri çıkar | Neşiri : Resim | Adresi İstanbul Redaksi | Telefon : İstanbul

BEN YENİ HARFLERİ ÖĞRENDİM. ŞİMDİ SIRA SENİN.

Gün geçtikçe yeni harfler her tarafa sürätle taammüm ediyor. Bu dafa hükümetin açmak teşebbüsünde bulunduğu millet mektepleri bu hareketi Türkiyenin en üç köşelerine kadar neşreden çe feyzli bir haraket olacak ve bu sü rette herkes okuyup yazmış olacakt

No : 17 – Yıl : 1 Fiatı 5 Kuruştur 30 Teşrinisani

Türkçe Gazete

Abonesi | Senelik: 500 kuruş | Altı aylık: 260 " | Üç aylık: 130 " | Pazartesi | Pazartesi ve Perşembe günleri çıkar | Neşiri : Resimli Ay | Adresi İstanbul Redaksi Ay Matbaası | Telefon : İstanbul

Birinci kânunla yeni harfler ve yeni bir medeniyet başlıyor

Umumî rağbet

Millet mekteplerinin bir kısmı şimdiden doldu - Küşat merasiminde muzika bulundurulacak

Yarın akşam Millet mekteplerinin resmi küşadı yapılacağından bütün mekteplerde hummalı faaliyetle çalışılmaktadır, bir çok yerlerde muzika bulundurulacaktır.

Vali vekili, Maarif erkanı ve sair alâkadarlar semtsemt bu resmi küşat merasiminde hazır bulunacaklardır.

Muallimler derslere eski ve yeni harfleri mukayese etmek suretile başlıyacaklardır. Millet mekteplerî hakkındaki duvar ve el ilanları tamamile tevzi edilmiştir.

Duvar ilânları şehrin her tarafında kolaylıkla okunabilecek yerlere talik edilmiş, bundan başka bir çok mahallerde resmi tebliğlerden yapıştırılmıştır.

Küşat merasimi dahilinde kadınlara tekrar edilecektir. Mektepler şimdiden dolmuştur. Bu sebeble kayıtları kapatmak mecburiyetinde kalmışlardır. Millet mekteplerini vilâyet heyeti tedrisiyesi kontrol edecektir.

Millet mekteplerinin küşadından sonra kiselerde tesadüf edilecek manzaralardan

— Efendi oğlum, bana da bir talebe bileti var kabahat!

Cumhuriyet 31 Aralık 1928

1 Ocak 1929'da açılan Millet Mektepleri'nin diploma örnekleri ve yönetmelik

10

Nor 4 — Millet Mektepleri Talimatnamesi.

11 teşrinisani 1928 — Nr: 7284

(Resmi Gazete ile neşr ve ilânı: 24 teşrinisani 1928 — Sayı: 1048)

Millet mektebi teşkilâtına dair tanzim ve Şûrayı Devlet Heyeti Umumiyesince tetkik ve tadil olunup Şûrayı müşarileyhin Riyasetinin 8/11/1928 tarih ve 9111 numaralı tezkeresile kendisi eliyle tertibi talimatnamenin mer'iyete vazı'ı İcra Vekilleri Heyetinde 11/11/1928 tarihli içtimaında tasvip ve kabul olunmuştur.

Reisicümhur
GAZİ M. KEMAL

Başvekil — İsmet
Adliye Vekili — MAHMUT ESAT
Müdafaai Milliye Vekili — M. ABDÜLHALUK

Dahiliye Vekili — Ş. KAYA
Hariciye Vekili — Dr. T. ROŞTÜ
Maliye Vekili — Ş. SARACOĞLU

Maarif Vekili — M. NECATİ
Nafıa Vekili — RECEP
İktisat Vekili — M. RAHMİ

Sıhhiye ve Muaveneti İçtimaiye Vekili
Dr. REFİK

Millet Mektebi teşkilâtı Talimatnamesi

Gaye

Madde 1 — Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi tarafından Türk dilinin lisân ve umumî, hususî ve resmî bilcümle muhaberatta Türk harfleriyle tesbiti kanunen kabul edilmiş olmasından bu kanunun müdesinden istifadeten, vesait ve veçhe kâfiyesi için yeni Türk harflerinin kısa bir zamanda ve kolay surette her ferde öğretip yazdırmak lâzımdır bahşedeceğinden mahiyetinden Türk milletini kısa surette istifade ettirmek ve büyük halk kitlelerini

MAARİF VEKÂLETİ

Adı, Sanı

İşi

Türk harfleri ile okuyup yazabilir.

Kurs Muallimi — *Daire Amiri*

Cilt — No. Umumi / Hususi

KURS

Millet Mektebi

Şehadetname

MAARİF MINTAKASI:
VİLÂYET: KAZA:
NAHİYE: ŞEHİR:
KASABA: KÖY:
Semt: Mahalle:
DERSANESİ

doğumlu dan kadar derslere devam etmiş ve yapılan imtihan neticesinde yeni harflerle Türkçe okuma ve yazmayı eyice öğrendiği anlaşılmış olduğundan kendisine bu şehadetname verilmiştir.

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Millet Mektebi

Devam vesikası

Maarif Mıntakası — Vilâyet
Kaza — Nahiye
Köy — Şehir
Kasaba — Semt
Mahalle — Vesika sahibinin adı
doğum senesi — sınıfı

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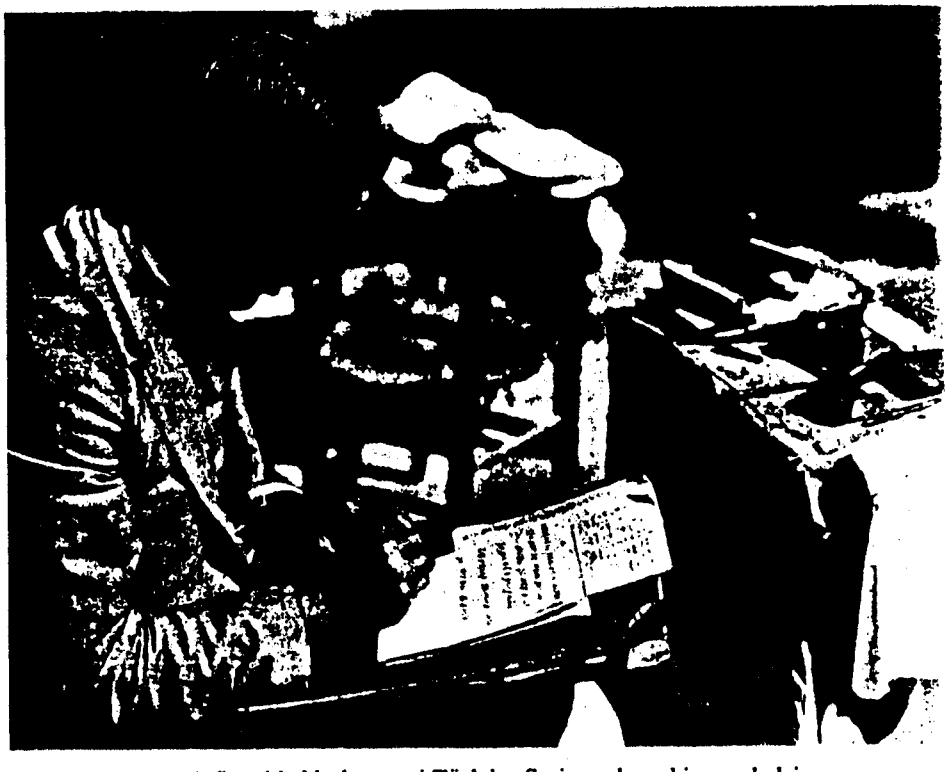
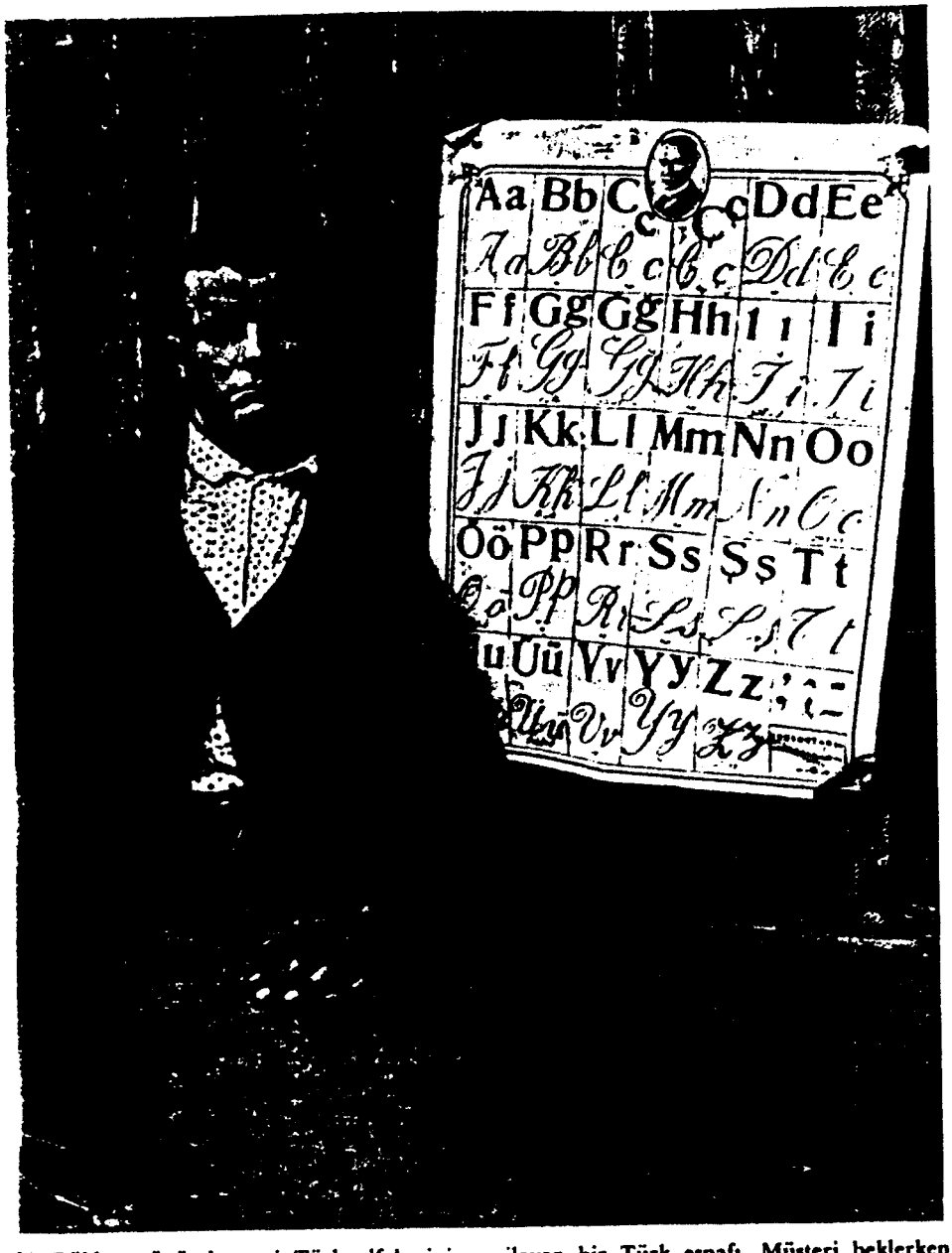
116. Millet Mekteplerine devam eden iftiyar kadınlar

29. Türk yazı devrimi, genç ihtiyar bütün milleti sardı. Fotoğrafta yeni Türk harflerini öğrenmeye çalışan yaşlı bir mühür kazıyıcı görülüyor.



30. Müşteri beklerken yeni Türk harflerine çalışan bir arzuhalci



31. Dükkanı önünde yeni Türk alfabesini sergileyen bir Türk esnafı. Müşteri beklerken yeni yazı sökmeye çalışan esnaf ve sanatkarlara bütün çarşı ve pazarlarda rastlanıyordu.

32. Yazı devrimi seferberliği başlayınca halkın görebileceği yerlere yeni alfabe levhaları asıldı. Yukarda İstanbul'da Büyük Postane önünde sergilenen Türk harfleri levhası görülüyor.

33. Türk yazı devrimi, sokağın görüntüsünü hızla değiştirdi. Şehir ve kasabalarda mağza, dükkan, banka, otel, sinema gibi yerlerin tabelaları, afişleri, reklâmları yeni yazıya çevrildi. Arap yazısı sokaktan silindi gitti. Yukarda bir dükkanın tabelasının yenilenişi görülüyor. 3 Kasım 1928'de çıkarılan Türk harfleri yasası, en geç Aralık 1928 de tabelaların, ilânların v.s. değiştirilmesi zorunluluğu getirdi.

34. Yukarda yeni Türk alfabesini satış için sergileyen bir kırtasiye dükkanı görülüyor. Dükkanın tabelası yeni yazıya çevrilmiş, ama eski tabela da hala yerinde durmaktadır.