

TURKEY'S POLICY TOWARDS MIDDLE EAST IN THE EARLY REPUBLICAN PERIOD

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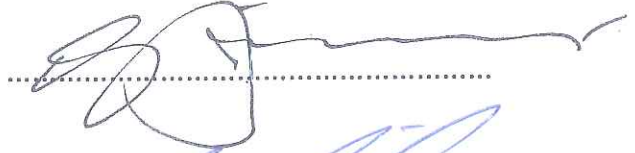
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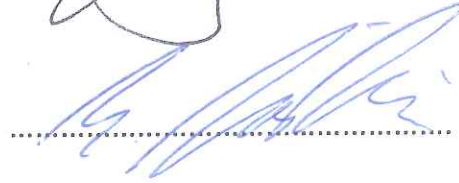
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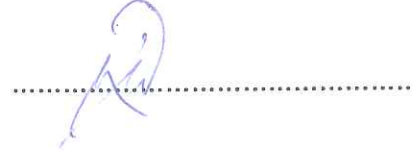
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Abstract

The studies made on the early republican Middle East policies generally state that Kemalist Turkey turned its back on the East. This claim became an axiom in our day. As a result of this, what is meant by the Turkish indifference towards the Muslim world, in which sense Turkey cut the lines, is not generally indicated or not explained in detail. The present study aims to question and analyze this perception which basically stresses that the early republic did not give enough place in its foreign policy to the Arab states. The topic will be discussed by searching the answers of the following questions; what we should understand from Turkey's indifference? What is expressed by this argument? How it was established and embraced by the society? And Is it valid or not?

Özet

Erken cumhuriyet dönemi Ortadoğu politikaları konusunda yapılan arařtırmalar çoğunlukla Kemalist Türkiye sırtını Doęu'ya döndü argümanını içerir. Bu görüş günümüzde genel geçer bir nitelik kazanmıştır. Bunun sonucu olarak da, çoęu çalışmada Türkiye'nin hangi anlamda Ortadoęu ülkeleri ile köprüleri attığı açıklanmaz veya belirtilen gerekçeler yüzeysel olarak ifade edilir. Bu tezin amacı Kemalist Türkiye'nin dış politikada Ortadoęu'ya yeterince yer vermediğine dayanan argümanı sorgulamaktır. Türkiye sırtını Doęu'ya döndü ile ifade edilmek istenen nedir? Bu algı Türk toplumunda nasıl yaratılmıştır ve kabul görmüştür? ve, Ne kadar doğrudur? sorularına cevap arayarak konular ele alınacaktır.

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INTRODUCTION

The present study deals with a widespread view of the early Republican foreign policy towards the Muslim world that is formulated as “Kemalist Turkey turned its back to the East”. The view became a commonplace and upheld by a number of influential political groups and movements of Turkish politics. Those who defend the view claimed that the early republic’s deliberate indifference towards the ex-Ottoman territories in particular was one of the outcomes of Kemalist version of nationalism which challenge traditional values of Turkish society including Islamic piety. This view is accepted and re-used in different political contexts despite the fact that it reflects only some parts of the reality.

As noted above, it is possible to find a similar claim, which argues that the alienation of young republic from other Muslim countries by the adoption of Kemalist reforms, in the words of current Turkish foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu but also in the book “L’Orient Désorienté” written by the French writer Philippe Lanlois in 1980, meaning that this view does not prevail only in Turkish or Arab societies. Like Lanlois did, it is commonly argued that Kemalist nationalism, which was influenced significantly by the West, abolishment of the Caliphate and resentment toward Arab nations, coming from the Ottoman times, made any rapprochement between the new republic and Muslim world impossible. What is underlined is that Kemalist Turkey alienated itself from the Arab world by the reforms made, especially the abolishment of the Caliphate and the Kemalist concept of nationalism which excluded Arabs and obliged them to stay out from the newly established nation. This meant that the “Ottoman” identity officially ended up and Arabs were excluded from the new entity.

The concept of Kemalist nationalism of Turks (western oriented), abolishment of the Caliphate and the memories of Ottomans rigor against the Arab nationalists at the beginning of the century, made difficult a Turco-Arab rapprochement.¹

It is useful to state that this comprehension might be invented by islamist circles and expressed most frequently by them but, as it became an axiom, it is used by people coming from different political perspectives. The best example of that is an old socialist minded Turkish ambassador, Mahmut Dikerdem. Dikerdem describes Mustafa Kemal's foreign policy towards Arab states as a "policy of coolness" and "leave alone".² Additionally, he claims that this was the dominant situation until Democrat Party, leaded by Adnan Menderes, came into power.

After giving basic information, before we deal with the alienation –i.e. turning back– issue in detail, it may be of use to touch upon the question as to how we should understand the East. It should be highlighted that the East in the Islamist circles is understood discretely. The East may refer to the ex-Ottoman territories. In its narrow sense, it is confined to Syria, Palestine and Iraq and in some cases Egypt is included. Moreover, it is interesting that the East also includes India. However, Iran, Azerbaijan, in today's terminology Turkic republics like Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, other territories like Tatarstan, Bashkortostan are interestingly excluded.

¹ "La conception kémalienne du nationalisme turc (d'inspiration fort occidentale), l'abolition du califat et le souvenir des rigueurs ottomanes contre les nationalistes arabes au début du siècle rendent difficile un rapprochement turco-arabe que pourtant l'histoire favorise." Philippe Lannois, *L'Orient Désorienté: Pétrole, Religion, Politique*, Paris: Etudes Vivantes, 1980, p.83

² Mahmut Dikerdem, *Ortaduğu'da Devrim Yılları (Bir Büyükkelçinin Anıları)*, İstanbul: İstanbul Matbaası, 1977, p.9

It is clear that the East is not geographically defined. At this point, question of “Why?” should be asked. The main reason of that is that they select certain countries which they can find incidents that can be used to support their argument. For example, in a research which discusses and supports that Kemalist Turkey remained indifferent towards the “East”, it is impossible to be informed about the alphabet reform which was occurred in Azerbaijan in 1922 and ended with the transition to the Latin alphabet from the Arab one. It is clear that before Turkish Republic, a muslim state, Azerbaijan, did what Mustafa Kemal adopted as alphabet revolution in 1928. It needs to be underlined that, a person who is not well-informed about the history of the Middle East, after reading the claim of the significant impact of alphabet reform in the process of the alienation of Turkey from the Arab world, could think that the Kemalist Republic was the first muslim state who adopted this radical change. According to simple logic, if young republic turned its back to the “East” and if one of the most significant indicator of that is the alphabet reform, then, the same thing should be discussed for Azerbaijan. However, nor in Turkish literature, neither in Arab one, there no such a comment which is interesting.

It is striking that India is considered to be part of the East where the reaction to Kemalist reforms was palpable. But on the other hand, careful observations of Kemalist reforms of the Eastern states like Afghanistan and Iran are not told in detail.

In the thesis, the East will be analyzed as it should be, as the aim is to find where does this perception of Kemalist Turkey staying indifferent towards the Muslim world came from and analyze its validity. The region called by islamist circles ex-Ottoman lands, in other words the countries located south of Turkey will be the main focus. The relations with Iran, Mustafa Kemal’s dialogue with Afghan King Amanullah Han will be also addressed.

Returning back to the alienation issue, it is obvious that the main reference is the reformation process. It is generally argued that the victory obtained in the Turkish War of Independence, showed to the Arab world that imperial states can be defeated and the young republic became a model or hero in the eyes of the Muslim world. However, by the adoption of radical reforms, Kemalist republic's good impression changed completely in that area. Propaganda arguing that Turkey became an irreligious state with the implementation of the Kemalist reforms (which aimed at creating a Westernized society) was made in the Muslim world and it was also claimed that new republic gained strength and could possibly return to the Arab lands. Due to that, Kemalist Turkey fell out with the Arab world and this became the dominant situation since 1924.

It is beyond doubt that the strongest and most frequently quoted argument of islamist circles is the abolishment of the Caliphate. Censures against this religious reform and other Kemalist reforms made in Turkey, peaked in 1924 and continued effectively in 1930s. Later on, in the Muslim region, indifference started to rise towards Kemalist Turkey and Arab states cut connections with the young republic. In other words, Early Republic cut its memory ties with the region.³ This point of view can be seen many times with different expressions in Ahmet Davutoğlu's articles which will be discussed in detail in the following parts.

Abolishment of the Caliphate could not be only analyzed as a religious reform which changed the religious tradition in Turkish society and in the Muslim world because it has also political effects as it completely changed the structure of the country's political system. That is why it is considered as a heavily radical reform. However, it is a fact that the political and religious

³Aydın Can, *Atatürk Dönemi Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu Politikası*, available at http://turkoloji.cu.edu.tr/ATATURK/arastirmalar/aydin_can_ataturk_donemi_ortadogu_politikalari.pdf, Accessed on 17th June 2012

reforms were supported by cultural reforms which aimed at alienating Turkish society from its past and Muslim world. It is claimed that the reforms such as dress code, the replacement of Arabic Alphabet with Latin one, adoption of European clock, calendar, measures and weights made difficult to create links with the Arab world and Ottoman past for the future generations without caring about public opinion. The general overview is that Kemalist nationalist reforms directly influenced the people's daily habits just to cut the links with the Islamic world and to make people forget the Ottoman culture. At this point, the statement of Falih Rıfkı Atay (1893-1971), the editor of the official newspaper *Hakimiyet-i Milliye / Ulus* (National Sovereignty, it later took the name Nation) is generally reminded; "To complete the Westernization process, leaving behind the Arab culture is an obligation and this is what Turkification means."⁴

As noted above, the aim of the thesis, which is composed of three chapters, is to answer the questions of "where does the perception of Turkey stayed indifferent towards the "East" come from", "what is meant by the alienation from Muslim world", "what are the arguments of the elites who support the claim of indifference" and "what are the weaknesses of these statements; are they valid or not". The first chapter will provide a brief description and basic information about the creation process of Turkish Republic. Reforms will be explained shortly to make the reader able to understand better the next chapters. In the second chapter, "Burning the Bridges to the Orient", the question of how the circles from Turkey and Arab world with different perspectives dealt with the alienation issue will be discussed on four grounds: political, religious, cultural and diplomatic. Last, the counter-arguments will be made to question or criticize the weak parts and misperceptions about the issue.

⁴ Umut Azak, *Myths And Memories Of Secularism In Turkey*, Doctorate thesis, Hollande: Leiden University, 2007, p.28

Chapter I: Republic of Turkey in Making

1.1 Formation of the Turkish Nation State

The mainstay of the argument that Turkey remained indifferent towards the East is the reforms which were adopted by Mustafa Kemal in the nation-creation period. It is generally claimed that, Kemalist reforms which were implemented after the Turkish War of Independence, were at contrast with Islamic values and, due to that, they alienated the young republic from the Muslim world.

It is evident that these reforms avoided all the Ottoman traditions and influence in the Turkish political and social life and cut all the lines connecting itself with the East. Due to that, the indifference policy which is the subject this study, will be discussed by referring to the Kemalist reforms and arguments and counter-arguments will be analyzed within this framework. In this part of the thesis, to make the readers know the drill, a brief descriptive information about the reformation process in Turkish Republic will be given. The reforms will be divided into three; according to their influence on the state structure, the shape of the society and the culture. Additionally, important security issues of the young republic which influenced the relations with the Eastern states will be summarized briefly in order to facilitate the follow up of the next chapters.

1.1.1 The State

1.1.1.1 Proclamation of the Republic

Decisions taken on 1 November 1922 for the abolition of the Sultanate and the transfer of power to appoint the Caliph to the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) were major

signposts in the demolition process of pillars on which the Ottoman polity had rested on. Accordingly, the abolishment of the dynasty was a kind of proclamation of the idea that the sovereignty rests on the Turkish nation and its representative body TGNA. That is to say, the first step was taken on the path of changing the ruling system.

The decision taken on the 4th November, officially ended the Ottoman empire and the Ankara government seized power over the land. Due to these developments, Sultan Vahdettin escaped to Malta island and Abdül Mejid Efendi became the new Caliph with the appointment of the TGNA. The position had been stripped of any authority, and Abdul Mejid's purely ceremonial reign would be short lived. Mustafa Kemal had been a vocal critic of the Ottoman House and its Islamic orientation. When Abdul Mejid was declared Caliph, Kemal refused to allow the traditional Ottoman ceremony to take place and declared that the Caliph has no power or position except a nominal figurehead.

It is generally known that since the years of the War of Independence, in his mind, Mustafa Kemal had decided to adopt republic for the new nation state that he was trying to establish. However, he was waiting for the right time yet, like the vast majority of the public, the deputies in the first TGNA were expecting to continue with the old regime; but the Ankara approached step by step to republic. The first article of the 1921 constitution started with the claim of "authority, without any condition or reservation, belongs to the nation". This is the main rule of the new regime which gives the right of self government to the public by avoiding monarchy.

Second term of TGNA had started on 11 August 1922 and Mustafa Kemal was elected president of the assembly again. The most important detail at this point is the lack of the

deputies who were against Mustafa Kemal in the new assembly. With this elimination, fertile environment was almost provided for the declaration of the Republic which startled even the circles that were on the side of the revolts.⁵ On the 10th September 1923, Mustafa Kemal read the first article of the constitution in the form that he wanted to change "Turkey is a people's state which is governed by the Republic".⁶

Within this period, some important events came to the scene. Turkish forces occupied Istanbul and Ankara was declared as the new capital on 13 October 1923 and Ankara came close to the proclamation of the new regime. Furthermore, the incident which prepared the most important backdrop occurred on 27 October as the cabinet of Fethi Okyar resigned and crisis arose. Assembly was not able to form a new cabinet and because of the lack of the presidency in the constitution, president of the assembly also couldn't solve the issue. This kind of deadlock gave Mustafa Kemal the chance to realize his plan. Now he had the fertile ground that he was waiting with patience. In the dinner that he had with his close friends on 28th of October, the day before the proclamation of the Republic, he said that the Republic would be proclaimed in the following day.⁷

As we all know, the Republic was proclaimed on 29 October 1923 and Turkish Republic officially established. Mustafa Kemal appointed Ismet Inonu as the prime minister. Inonu, without losing time, created his own cabinet and announced his program and started to his Office after receiving the vote of confidence. Thus, Turkish revolution came into a new phase.

⁵ Toktamış Ateş, *Türk Devrim Tarih*, İstanbul: Y.Güray Matbaası, 1980, p.267

⁶ Ibid, 269

⁷ Ibid, 270

1.1.1.2 Abolishment of the Caliphate

The principle that sovereignty belongs to the nation could not tolerate the religious domination. The abolition of the Caliphate was adopted as the third main Kemalist reform. Like he did before, Mustafa Kemal waited for right time to take action. After the abolition of the Sultanate and the proclamation of the Republic, Caliphate was no more than a historic relic. However Abdülmejid who was appointed by the TGNA, violated Turkish Government's regulations, by gathering the anti-revolutionists around him, organizing imposing ceremonies and using the the press for his interests. The last Caliph was also making provocative statements to the press [Generally Istanbul press]. He was meeting with some deputies and commanders at his palace and sending officials to the foreign diplomatic representative offices.⁸ Additionally, rumors about the Caliph's resign from his Office started to rise in Istanbul. In return of this situation, it is claimed that the Caliph was respected by all the Muslim communities in the world as he received lots of letters and telegraphs from them and this sacred he would not resign without the consent of the Muslim world. This situation led the parliament to find a permanent solution to this problem. But, the most important reason forcing Mustafa Kemal Pasha to abolish the caliphate, was the possibility of the caliph's interference to the necessary reforms.⁹

⁸ Ö.Kürkçüoğlu, G. Bozkurt, İ. Güneş, E. Taşdemirci, N. Çağan, M. Ergun, N. Genç, *Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi 1/2*, Ankara: Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu Yayınları, 1997, p.23

⁹ One of the names who visited the Caliph was Rauf Orbay. The visit that he made on 23 November 1923 initiated severe discussions in TGNA. Within the same days, two leaders of a religious sect in India, Emir Ali [advisor of the British King] and Ağa Han sent a telegraph to prime minister Ismet Inonu and they stated that the authority of the Caliph should be protected. What is interesting about the story is that the telegraph was published in some Turkish newspapers before İnönü delivered. Turkish government heavily reacted and interpreted the issue as the interference to Turkish domestic affairs and the journalists who published the telegraph were prosecuted in the Independence tribunal at Istanbul. They were not punished but this case enforced Turkish government to find a permanent solution to the problem of the Caliphate.

Despite the domestic and foreign oppositions, the National Assembly abolished the Caliphate on March 3, 1924. Abdul Mejid was sent into exile along with the remaining members of the Ottoman House, marking the official end of the Ottoman Caliphate. Thus, new Turkey took another important step. The abolishment of caliphate echoed widely in Turkey and in the world. In the date of abolishment of caliphate, March 3 1924, with another law "Seriye Evkaf Vekaleti" (Ministry of Religious Affairs) was abolished. With the result of this abolishment schools and medreses ruled by this ministry were shut down. Moreover, in the same day Erkan-i Harbiye Umum Vekaleti (Ministry of War) was abolished. So the conflict between the army and politics was prevented. In the same day Tevhid-i Tedrisat law, which was designed to form a widespread modern educational system, was accepted. Details about the education reform will be explained in the following parts.

1.1.2 The Society

1.1.2.1 Legal Reforms

The Ottoman Empire was a religious empire in which each religious community enjoyed a large degree of autonomy, Millet. Each millet had an internal system of governance based upon its religious law, such as Sharia, Catholic Canon law, or Jewish Halakha. The leading legal reforms instituted by Mustafa Kemal included a secular constitution with the complete separation of government and religious affairs, the replacement of Islamic courts and Islamic canon law with a secular civil code. The first constitution of Ankara was proclaimed in 1921 during the Turkish struggle of independence in Anatolia and this became the the new basic law for the government of the TGNA. The legal significance of this constitution was its

provision for a conventional system of government in which legislative and executive powers rested with the Grand National Assembly.¹⁰

However, after the war of independence, there was a need of a new constitution which would meet with the new requirements of the new Republic and which would accelerate the social, cultural and economic transformation. In accordance with this, 1924 constitution was put into effect. The main consequence of 1924 constitution was the secularization of the existing laws and social institutions and the abrogation of the requirement that Turkey conform with Islamic law. The office of the Caliphate was abolished, together with religious institutions, courts and schools.¹¹

Atatürk claimed that: “the laws of all civilized countries of the world bear a close resemblance. Turkish people are not inferior to any civilized people insofar as the idea and concept of justice are concerned. One cannot allow, therefore, the existing legal provisions of Turkish laws to fall below the laws of all civilized countries.”¹² As we can also understand from Mustafa Kemal’s words, new republic took the model of European laws. For instance, the civil code, code of obligations, code of civil procedure, the bankruptcy law, regulations related to the rights of individuals were taken from Switzerland. Also the commercial law transformed from French, German and Swiss commercial codes and the penal code was

¹⁰Vakur Versan, *The Kemalist Reform of Turkish Law, Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey*, Edited by Jacob M.Landau, Colorado: Westview Press, 1984, p.249

¹¹ Ibid, 249

¹² Ibid, 249

borrowed from Italy.¹³ Faculties of Law in Ankara and Istanbul trained the new judges and lawyers to replace the ones from the old regime.¹⁴

Especially, the new civil code regulation had a direct effect on the everyday life of the people in its attempt to secularize the public sphere and adopt Western civilization. For example; women gained equal rights in the inheritance law, they could apply for divorce, polygamy was banned and they could be a part of public life. It is evident that some provisions of the new civil code were resisted especially in rural areas and the most difficult one to enforce was the obligatory civil marriage.¹⁵

Mustafa Kemal transplanted Western standards into Turkish society by modernizing the Turkish law. At the same time, he lead Turkey away from the oriental concept of society.

1.1.2.2 Dress Reforms

Dresses are the most characteristic features of a society. Mustafa Kemal wanted to create a modern Turkish society from head to foot and he believed that, in the process of changing the mentality in general, some symbols were serving as an obstacle. Especially, the fez was symbolizing Ottoman and Eastern mentality. Due to that, he gave the start of the dress reform by outlawing it. He introduced western brimmed hat to the public on August 1925 and imposed the compulsory use of it on 25 November 1925. This reflected the Kemalist urge to

¹³ *ibid*, 249

¹⁴ *ibid*, 249

¹⁵ *ibid*, 250

break with the past and to change even the daily habits of people for the sake of westernization.¹⁶

In the context of dress reforms, Turkish women encouraged to use modern dresses instead of burqas and veils. There were also regulations for religious peoples. The prohibition of wearing religious uniforms in the streets and the regulations which were done in 1934, provided a secular look to Turkey in terms of general appearance.

Besides the dress code, other cultural steps were taken on the road of the modernization such as the adoption of European clock and calendar in 1926, European numerals in 1928 and European measures and weights in 1931.

1.1.3 The Culture

1.1.3.1 Education: Alphabet Reform and Unification of Education

The education was one the most important dynamic of the Kemalist reforms. Even in the period of the war, Ministry of Education was formed. However, the school system was uncoordinated at that time as there was a dichotomy between the secular and religious education, specialized military schools and variety of institutions administered by missions and other foreign bodies, minorities and private organizations.¹⁷ To end this disorganization, Atatürk, unified the system of education by the Law for the Unification of Instruction [Tevhid-i Tedrisat] in 1924. All education institutions gathered under the control of Ministry

¹⁶Umut Azak, *Myths And Memories Of Secularism In Turkey*, Doctorate thesis, Hollande: Leiden University, 2007, p.28

¹⁷Michael Winter, *The modernization of Education in Kemalist Turkey*, Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey, Edited by Jacob M.Landau, Colorado: Westview press, 1984, p.185

of Education by the enactment of this law. In the same year, the efkav ministry and medresses was closed and foreign schools were put under the inspection of the Ministry of Education.¹⁸ This law should be regarded as an attempt to establish a unified, modern and secular and egalitarian national educational system with a centralistic character. It was effective in transforming the existing Islamic identity with the national one.

Religious education was another subject of the reform. The popular Kemalist attitude towards religious education was that it should be private and given at home, but the authorities reacted to that. Furthermore, religious courses did not immediately dropped from the curriculum. At the beginning, they continued on a voluntary basis but then discontinued in the middle high schools and later in the secondary schools. Finally, it was withdrawn from the curriculum of the primary schools.¹⁹

Educational transformation in Kemalist Turkey was supported with the alphabet reform which adopted Latin scripts and replaced the Arab alphabet in 1928. Besides this, Turkish language was purified from the persian words. The change of alphabet was a good thing and essential step for the modernization of Turkey. By nationalization of the language and making such a transformation, a symbolic rupture with traditional daily habits took place.

1.2 Turkey's Policies Towards the "East"

1.2.1 Turkey and Its Own "East"

1.2.1.1 Kurdish Separatist Movements

Kurdish population was living in the form of tribes in the Eastern part of the Turkish Republic since the Ottoman times. Under the multinational Ottoman Empire, Kurdish tribes were

¹⁸ Ibid, 186

¹⁹ Ibid, 187

continuing their lives like other minorities which means they were living with their own culture and stayed obedient to their traditions. Due to that, they had a free spirit character. However, new republic's project of establishing a nation state brought about a clash between Kurds and Turks, as the first were asking for an autonomous government in the Eastern parts of the republic. Historically speaking, it is true that they fought against imperial powers during the Turkish War of Independence but the main reason of that was propaganda, claiming that the aim of the occupation was to give Izmir to Greece and Eastern Anatolia to Armenia. That's why they participated to the war. So the basic reason was to save their lands.

However, after the war, during the period of Lausanne, problems arose between the Kurds and Kemalist ideology. They were strictly resisting against the idea of a nation state and insisted on the autonomy. Because of this they rebelled several times. This situation had important consequences for Kemalist Turkey. For instance, in the case of Mosul [will be explained in detail later], the most bloody rebellion of Kurds, Shaykh Said, played an important role in Turkey's lack of success.

1.2.1.1.1 The Shaykh Said Rebellion

In the context of nation creation, the only unifying common element in the society should be the identity of Turk and Turkism. As noted above, this objective was totally against the interests of the Kurds who were living in the Misak-ı Milli borders. Like the other Kurdish rebels, the main reason of Shaykh Said rebellion was based on that. However, it is analyzed as a rebellion with a twofold character.

The first point of origin is said to be the religious. In the name of saving the Caliphate, Kurds rose against the new organization of the republic. The abolishment of the Caliphate in 1924,

encouraged them to fight against the new structure of Kemalist Turkey. This is why it is called as a feudal reactionary movement. But the main objective was to deliver the Kurds from Turkish oppression; to give Kurds freedom and opportunity to develop their country. Due to that it can also be defined as a Kurdish movement which is based on nationalism.

It was a rebellion of a Kurdish cleric Sheikh Said and a group of former Kurdish Azadî group in 1925. It was planned to rise in the second half of March. However, on 8 February, a clash occurred at Piran between Shaykh Said's retainers and Turkish gendarmes seeking the surrender of a group of outlaws who had sought the shaykh's protection. Shaykh Said could not hold back and disorder spread quickly.²⁰

Lijja, Hani and Chabaqchur fell respectively. Troops sent to confront the rebels either defected or fled. The forces of Sheikh Said laid siege to the city of Diyarbakır with 5.000 rebels at the end of February. The Kurds attacked the city at all four gates simultaneously. All of their attacks were repelled by the numerically inferior Turkish garrison, with the use of machine gun fire and mortar grenades. When the Kurds retreated the next morning, the area around the city was full of dead bodies. When a second wave of attacks failed, the siege was finally lifted on 11 March. By the end of March, most of the major battles of the Sheikh Said rebellion were over.²¹

Ankara declared martial law during the revolt. Prime minister Ismet İnönü announced draconian measures on 4 March. Two "Tribunals of Independence" were formed: one of them was located in the east and the other one was in the capital, Ankara. The eastern tribunal was

²⁰ David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1994, p. 194

²¹ *Ibid*, 194-195

empowered to apply capital punishment without reference to Ankara. This was justified by a Law for the Restoration of Order which lasted for two years.²²

By 26 March people who participated to the rebellion were encircled. Some rebel groups managed to escape but most of them were killed or taken prisoner. Sheikh Said was caught crossing the Murad River on about 14 April.²³

1.2.1.1.2 The Ağrı Rebellions

Rebel bands of Sheikh Said rebellion that could escape from Turkish forces fled to the Ağrı mountain and reorganized. In a short period of time, on May 1926, Kurdish rebels rose again and the clash lasted until June. However, it was impossible to fight to a finish for the Turkish side as the rebel groups were escaping to Iran, to the mountain of Küçük Ağrı, when they were stalemated. After a year, in 1927, a second Ağrı rebellion occurred but the clashes remained inconclusive for the same reason.

Kurdish elites of the Sheikh Said who could escape formed a group with the leader of the Association of Hoybun, Captain İhsan Nuri in Lebanon in 1927 joined the rebel camps at Ağrı. This development made clear that the movement nationalized and became a serious threat. Due to that, in 1930, a third Ağrı rebellion had started. But this time Turkish forces intervened to the Iranian lands and occupied the mountain of Küçük Ağrı to end the problem. In that

²² Ibid, 195

²³ Ibid, 196

way, rebel groups' method to survive disappeared. Furthermore, it was vital for Turkey to solve the demarcation of the borders issue with Iran.²⁴

1.2.2 The Case of the 150s

The case of the 150s was an important issue which obliged Ankara to keep an eye on Middle Eastern countries. A large number of 150 people who opposed to the War of Independence and cooperated with the occupation forces, fled to Egypt, Syria and Jordan.²⁵ Those people who were condemn to death, were reorganized in these states and they were continuing to their strong opposition by making publications against the Kemalist Turkey and addressing Mustafa Kemal as a traitor.²⁶ For his personal security and the potential of the threat for the reformation process in the new republic, Atatürk needed to gain the ability of keeping them under control. The only way for that, was simply keeping touch with these countries.

1.2.3 Making the Eastern Borders of the Republic

1.2.3.1 Küçük Ağrı

Since 1923, Kurdish rebellions caused security problems in the borders both for Turkey and Iran. Simko Ağa rebellion in the western part of Iran and the process which started with the bloody Shaykh Said and continued with Ağrı Rebellions in Turkey made clear that this problem needed a permanent solution. For Turkey, it was including Küçük Ağrı mountain to

²⁴ Atay Akdevelioğlu, *Ağrı isyanları*, quoted by Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p.362

²⁵ Şaduman Halıcı, *Yüzellilikler*, MA Thesis, Eskişehir Anadolu Üniversitesi, 1998, p.16-17

²⁶ For further information see Murat Yümlü, *Yüzellilikler Meselesi, Mesud Fani ve Risalesi Üzerine Bir İnceleme*, History Studies, Volume 2/ 3/ 2010

its national borders so that the Kurd rebels who escape to there at every return could be kept under the control.

After the Last Ağrı rebellion in 1930, Ankara asked for an alteration in the Turkish-Iranian border and offered fertile lands from Qotur region to Iran in return of Küçük Ağrı. This was rejected by Iran. Iranian officials wanted to stay obedient to the 1913 Agreement as they had concerns about losing the advantages that they obtained in the line of Şatt'ül-Arab. This proposal was unacceptable for the Turkish side. The border problem between Iran and Turkey was solved with the Treaty signed on 23 January 1932. Turkey received total control over Ağrı mountains and Iran gained ninety square miles in the province of Qotur.

1.2.3.2 Mosul Problem

Mosul problem is an issue which could not be solved in the Lausanne Peace Conference. Ankara wanted to annex the village by using diplomatic methods because the Turkish government knew that the army was tired enough and not ready for another war.

Turkish delegation at Lausanne was claiming that the Grand National Assembly was the common government of Turks and Kurds, Mosul was occupied after the armistice and it is under the control of Turks since XI century, the hinterland of Mosul is Anatolia, and the village is important for the security of Turkey. On the other hand, British officials stated that Kurds and Turks come from different races, Turkish population in the region is only 1/12, Turks maltreat others and Mosul is a historical part of Iraq. By referencing the 7th article of

the Armistice of Mudros, UK also stated that territorial integrity of Iraq was under threat and gave the light to war as it was the mandatory power in Iraq.

The following step after the Lausanne Peace Conference was the Conference of Haliç which took place on 19 May 1924. Turkey offered to pay share of the oil in return of Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk and Mosul but of course it was not accepted by the British committee. The Conference was closed on 5th of June. The main reason of the deadlock of the Haliç Conference is British commander of Iraq Percy Cox's demand of annexing Hakkari to Nesturies.

To solve the issue, League of Nations step in the problem. Turkey was in favor of a plebiscite but UK was opposing strictly by stating that the public was uneducated and due to that they could not decide the future of the region. The only thing to do was establishing a committee of LoN and giving it the full authority. On 29 December 1924, LoN declared the line of ceasefire. Another area of contention between Britain and Turkey was the actual boundary line. There was a Brussels Line which had been decided by the League of Nations as the true border of Iraq, and a British line which was the division line the Britain had used as reference in the past.

The commission had decided on 16 July 1925 and gave Mosul to Iraq. Of course UK enjoyed the advantages of being an influential member state of LoN during this process. The other reason of the unsuccessful attempts of Ankara is the Shaykh Said rebellion which occurred in 1925. It was that important because it created a western perception that "Turks cannot control the Kurds in their national borders. How could they live in peace with the Kurds of Mosul? Ankara did not recognize the decision and declared that its sovereignty rights were still valid. Moreover, Mosul question was solved in 1926 with the Treaty of borders which was signed

between Iraq and Turkey. According to the provisions of this agreement, changes made in the Brussels line and Iraq would pay 500.000 pounds to Turkey and also give the 25% of the oils shares to Ankara for a period of 25 years but this article was never applied.

1.2.3.3 The Case of Alexandretta

According to the 21 March 1921 agreement which was approved in Lausanne Peace Conference, Alexandretta was in the status of *entité distincte*. It was included in Misak-ı Milli borders but Ankara's priority was the case of Bosphorus as it was even unable to pass Turkish military forces to Anatolia from European side. Due to that Turkey focused on obtaining the full control over the Bosphorus straits and the Dardanelles. This issue solved with the Montreux Convention which was signed in 1936.

The support of the Western powers was necessary for Turkey to solve the Bosphorus case. Due to that Ankara stayed quiet about the Alexandretta until Montreux as the mandatory power in Syria was France and Turkey couldn't confront this Western state at that time. Because of this, the case of Alexandretta was postponed.

Turkey step up to the plate in 1936. With the agreement which was signed on 9 September 1936, French mandate in Syria was over and the control transferred to Syria [the Lebanese lands were excluded]. Ankara reacted against this decision because according to Turkey, the Sanjak of Alexandretta should have stayed as an *entité distincte* and Syria cannot enjoy the full control over this land. On the other hand, France was afraid of alienating Arabs from the West and due to that was trying to prevent any possible Turkish influence on this region.²⁷

²⁷Baskın Oran, p.284

In his speech done on 1 November 1936 in Grand National Assembly, the tone of Atatürk was tough. He claimed that the issue of Alexandretta is a national problem and it would determine the future of Franco-Turkish relations.²⁸ The region was valuable at that time as it was a strategic port, lands were fertile [plain of Amik] and the railroad was passing through. Moreover, compared to the other regions of Syria, it had the most fertile lands.

Because of the disagreement between France and Turkey, LoN became a part of the issue and Swedish representative Sandler was appointed as a rapporteur. According to the report which took his name, Sandler, and which was approved by LoN on 27 January 1937, the Sanjak of Alexandretta would stay as an *entité distincte* and would be independent in its domestic affairs but its foreign affairs would be under the control of Syria. The immunity of borders which was against the interests of Turkey was also included in the report. However the article about the *entité distincte* shows that some of the Turkish claims were accepted and legitimized. But Sandler report was a *modus vivendi* which means that it was temporal.²⁹

Ankara rejected the 1937 documents and annulled the agreements of friendship with Syria [1926] and with France [1930]. Additionally, the election law that was prepared for Sanjak by the LoN was not recognized as it gave quota for 40 Turks. Due to these developments, Turkey massed troops along the border.

It is noteworthy that at that time, international situation was deteriorating and the League's prestige was undermined. France, the mandatory power for Syria, like many other revisionist

²⁸TBMM Secret Session Records, 1 November 1936, p.6 Birinci Celse available at <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d05/c013/tbmm05013001.pdf> [accessed on 28.09.2012]

²⁹ Baskin Oran, p. 284

Western states who were looking for an ally in the Mediterranean region, was in need of Turkey's friendship and her bargaining position was weaker and because of this it retreated.³⁰

The Council of LoN made the changes in the election law with regarding the claims of Turkey and election process restarted. However, Ankara was dissatisfied and applied to LoN with France and wanted the commission to stop its efforts. On 29 June, the commission left the Sanjak and the international supervision was over in the region.³¹

The elections were made on 24 August in the way that Turkey wanted. On 2 September 1923 the Sanjak declared its independence and Tayfur Sökmen became the president. In 1939, Sökmen was elected as the deputy of Antakya and Ankara annexed Hatay to Turkey with the agreement which was signed on 23 June 1939.³²

³⁰ Ibid, 288

³¹ Ibid, 288

³² Ibid, 289-290

Chapter II: “Burning the Bridges to the Orient”

The events unfolded between October 1918 and January/March 1920 indicated that the Ottoman Empire doomed to be partitioned. The political power mustered on and Ankara displayed the will that the new state will be geographically confined to the borders defined by a document, Misak-ı Milli endorsed by the last Ottoman Assembly convened on 12th January 1920. The Misak-ı Milli made it very clear that the Ankara Government was not interested in restituting the Ottoman Empire and, therefore, was not having any territorial claims on the ex-imperial lands. In his early speeches, Mustafa Kemal highlighted that the Ankara government would not follow an irredentist policy, and avoid stirring trouble in Syria and Iraq. He underlined that Arabs regretted “cooperation with the enemies”, considered to form sort of “autonomy” within the empire, even contemplated “to join the Ottoman back”. M. Kemal reminded this evidence in his speech and explained the reason why Turkey kept at arms length and cannot respond to what Syria asked.

We don't want to waste our national human sources and public benefits out of our borders. Union will bring power and we welcome the world of Islam to be spiritually and materially allied and combined, thus as we reside in our own borders, Syrians as well may be free and may reside in their borders based on national sovereignty. We may constitute a connection with a form higher than entente or alliance –which may be federative or confederative.³³

³³“ ...Artık hududu millimiz dahilinde bulunan menabii insanıyeyi ve menafii umumıyeyi hududumuzun haricinde israf etmek istemeyiz. Fakat ittihat, kuvvet teşkil edeceğinden bütün âlemi islâm manen olduđu gibi maddeten de müttefik ve müttehit olmasını şüphe yok ki büyük memnuniyetle karşılarız ve bunun içindir ki bizim kendi hududumuz dahilinde müstakil olduğumuz gibi, Suriyeliler de hududu dahilinde ve hâkimiyeti millıye esasına müstenit olmak üzere serbest ve müstakil olabilirler. Bizimle itilaf veya ittifakın fevkinde bir şekil ki federative yahut konfederatif denilen şekillerden birisi ile irtibat peyda edebiliriz”

T.B.M.M Secret Session Records , 24 April 1336, Volume : 1, 2nd meeting – 4. session, available at <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001002.pdf> [accessed on 7 January 2011]

The following parts of the speech raised similar points for Iraq. Referring to his dialogue with Iraqi delegates, Mustafa Kemal told his audience that Iraq should rely on its own capacity and gain its independence. The genuine cooperation between the two states, he emphasized, could be only possible after achieving the goals.

Regarding Iraq; attitudes of the English in Iraq offended Muslims very much. Before our contact, they contacted to us and accepted that it wasn't a part of Ottoman region generally as it had been once. However, we did nothing except stating them the point-of-view we had already mentioned to Syrians. Become an independent state within yourself, with your own forces and your presence. We, before all, are trying to safeguard our independence. Then there will be no obstacle against our union and around Mosul, at Baghdad and various places there would be a lot of events and even today the enemies –whoever they are- who struggle to destroy us were forced to reduce the power that they directed towards us with national activities in Syria and Iraq and even today our coreligionists whoever they are whether Iraqi or Syrian support us by heart. And if reasons are resorted to, it is possible to gain maximum benefit from these³⁴

This perspective has a strong realist character. The resources depleted by constant warfare of the last four years were also compelling the Ankara Government to follow a realist policy and this realist prospect of international relations has been considered as a sign of indifference and intention to break with the ex-Ottoman peoples which became visible during the early days of TGNA and gained further speed after the promulgation of the Republic. It is argued that the rupture seemed to have four discernible paths which are political, religious, cultural and

³⁴ Irak'a gelince; Irak'ta İngilizlerin muamelâtı aha-li islâmiyeyi fevkalâde dilgir etmiş oldu. Biz kendilerine temas aramadan evvel onlar bizimle temas aradı ve alelilâk eskisi gibi bir Osmanlı memleketinin cüz'ü olmağı kabul ettiler. Fakat biz onlara karşı Suriyelilere söylediğimiz noktai nazarı söylemekten başka bir şey yapmadık. Ettiğimiz kendi dahilinizde kendi kuvanızla kendi mevcudiyetinizle (müstakîl bir Devlet olunuz. Biz, her şeyden evvel istiklâlimizin teminine çalışıyoruz. Ondan sonra birleşmemiz için hiçbir mani kalmaz ve Musul havalisinde Bağdatta ve sair bir çok yerlerde vak'a olarak bir çok hadisat zuhur edecekti ve bu gün dahi, -eşkâli zahiriyesi ne olursa olsun, bizim imhamıza çalışan düşmanlar, Suriye ve Iraktaki (vakayı muvacehesinde milli faaliyetlerle bize tevcih ettikleri kuvvetleri tenkise mecbur olmuşlardı ve bu gün dahi eşkâli zahiriyesi ne olursa olsun gerek Iraklıların ve gerek Suriyelilerin bu iki mıntakadaki dindaşlarımızın kalpleri bizimle beraberdir. Eğer bundan sonra esbabına tevessül edilirse bunlardan azamî istifade etmek mümkündür.

T.B.M.M, Secret Session Records, 24 April 1336, Vol : 1, 2nd meeting- 4 session, available at <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001002.pdf> [accessed on 7 January 2011]

diplomatic. In this chapter; what do these ways of ruptures mean and how they were argued and supported, will be analyzed chronologically.³⁵

2.1 On the Political Ground

2.1.1 Turkey's Indifference towards Arabs in the Lausanne Peace Conference

As stated above, Kemalist Turkey strictly refused to fight for the Muslim lands that were excluded in Misak-ı Milli and it was clearly stated in the early days of TGNA by Mustafa Kemal. These speeches gave the signals about the character of the bargains which would be made in Lausanne Conference by the Turkish representatives and the policy that would be followed. It was obvious before the Conference that Ankara government was totally opposed to Pan-islamist and Pan-turanist aims. In his speech done in 1921, Mustafa Kemal defined these two policies which were intended to the rebirth of the Ottoman Empire as dreams which will never become true and expressed that they caused painful results for Turkish society in the past. To him, the only aim that Turkey should fight for is her own liberation. It is clear that the main reason of Kemal's rejection of the unification with the Arab world was simply he was judging them as the reason of Ottoman defeat and failure. By making such a speech, Atatürk, in a way, separated Turkey from the Muslim world. However, it shouldn't be

³⁵The only exception in the chronological order would be the issue of dynasty which was abolished in 1922, before the subjects that were placed under the political breaking such as the indifference of Turkey towards Arab states in the Lausanne Peace Conference and the proclamation of the republic which were both occurred in 1923. The reason of that is simply because the effects of the abolishment of dynasty and Caliphate are not separately discussed in the arguments of the peoples who agree with the claim of Early Republic's indifference towards Muslim world.

forgotten that in the following speech of Mustafa Kemal, he implies that the time conditions obliges to abandon Pan-Turanist and Pan-Islamist policies.

Gentlemen, we are not the ones who run after a giant dream. Because of this, we drew the grudge of the whole world on our people. We did not use Pan-Islamism. Maybe we told that we were seeking for it or would use it and our enemies decided to annihilate for prevention. We didn't seek for Pan-Turanism. We told that we did, we were doing, we would do and they again decided to destroy. We shouldn't run after the concepts that we will not/could not perform, this only increases our enemies, and we should know our place. We are a nation seeking for life and independence. We spend our lives just for these.³⁶

It is actually possible to say that Mustafa Kemal's political will became already visible even before 1920s, during the late WWI period, when imperial states were aimed at manipulating the institution of Caliphate for their own interests. Great Britain, France and Italy were the main Western powers that wanted to use Caliphate and the Muslim peoples against Ottoman forces. What Italy was planning, was simply addressing Shaykh Ahmed Sunnisi³⁷ as the Caliph for the Muslims in Tripoli and cutting their lines with Istanbul. Referring to the memoirs of Count Sforza, who was the Italian High Commissioner in Istanbul during the Armistice period, Bilal Şimşir quotes that Sforza reported to Mustafa Kemal their plans to see whether he would oppose or not. The answer of Kemal was clear. He stated that he was very happy to hear the news and gave Sforza a carte blanche. Mustafa Kemal also expressed that

³⁶"Efendiler, büyük hayaller peşinden koşan insanlardan değiliz. Koşmak yüzünden bütün dünyanın garazını bu milletin üzerine celbettik. Biz Panislamizm yapmadık. Belki yapıyoruz, yapacağız dedik. Düşmanlarımız da yaptırmamak için bir an önce öldürelim dediler. Panturanizm yapmadık. Yaparız, yapıyoruz dedik, yapacağız dedik yine öldürelim dediler. Biz böyle yapmadığımız ya da yapamadığımız kavramlar üzerinde koşarak düşmanlarımızı çoğaltmak yerine haddimizi bilelim. Biz hayat ve istiklal isteyen milletiz. Ve yalnız ve ancak bunun için hayatımızı harcarız."

Compiled by Nîmet Arsan, *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, Vol:1, 2nd edition, Ankara: Ankara Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü, 1961, p.201 narrated by Baskın Oran, "Türk Dış Politikasının Kuramsal Çerçevesi", *Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar*, Baskın Oran (der.), Vol: 1, İstanbul:İletişim, 2001, p.47.

³⁷ Shaykh Ahmed Sunnisi came to Turkey after the Tripoli War and was living in Bursa. Italians who were planning to connect muslims society in Tripoli to Sheik wanted him to go back and they made bargain and induced him.

he did not even want to talk about the Arabs anymore and explained the reason of the Ottoman failure with the Turkish domination over the Arab lands.³⁸ These words of Mustafa Kemal makes the political slogan of Ankara government very clear; not interested in what was happening in the “East”. The political will of Ankara government will be discussed in the next chapter and the counter argument will be explained in detail. However, to make a brief analysis, it should be noted that these words of Mustafa Kemal should not be seen or accepted as an affirmation which shows the validity of the Early Republic’s indifference towards the Muslim world. The point to go about would be disinterest rather than indifference towards ex-Ottoman territories. And it should be also useful to remember that Mustafa Kemal often underlined that Turkey’s independence relies on non-interventionist policies in the Middle Eastern region. Related to that, the conversation of Mustafa Kemal and Count Sforza can be accepted as Kemal’s announcement of his non-irredentist policy vision for Arab lands rather than an indicator of Kemalist Turkey’s aim of alienating from the mentioned region. This was actually what was followed as a policy in Lausanne Peace Conference.

It was of course not surprising that Mustafa Kemal did not change his tone towards Arab states in Lausanne Peace Conference and Early Republic’s first “rupture” from the Muslim world is said to arise at this point. One of the claims that Turkey remained indifferent at Lausanne towards calls from various Arab leaders of solidarity. While formulating its foreign policy, Turkey did not give any consideration to the demands put forward by various Arab representatives during the Lausanne Conference. In other words, Turkish delegation at Lausanne displayed indifference towards Arab delegates who were seeking for diplomatic and

³⁸ “Hareketime Kemal’in engel olmayacağından emin olmak istiyordum. Kemal bana Şöyle cevap verdi: “İstediğinizi yapınız; görüşmelerinizin başarısından pek memnun oldum; artık Araplardan söz etmek istemiyorum; Araplar üzerinde Türk hakimiyetini sürdürmek, bizim zayıf düşmemizin nedenlerinden biridir.” Bilal Şimşir, *Doğunun Kahramanı Atatürk*, Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1999,p.112

political support from the Ankara government. This meant that the Ankara government missed the first opportunity to establish relations with the Arab peoples and so put the first stumbling block on the road to the formulation of good relations.³⁹

For the sake of its own interests and aims, that is to promote good relations with United Kingdom, the Kemalist government did not consider the Egyptian demands that Turkey forsake all legitimate rights and titles over the country in the interest of Egyptians. Such a claim was raised by Mustafa Bıyıklı who argued that Ankara government's indifference caused great deal of disappointment among the Egyptian nationalists who supported the National Liberation struggle in Anatolia for three years. Bıyıklı contends that this severed Turkey's relations with Arab countries and was followed by painful, hard and abrupt separation.

Egypt and Arab countries were under the Ottoman governance until the World War I. Consequently, at Lausanne, Turkey was expected to confess its sovereignty on Arabian lands. Such a confession would be a very meaningful legal support which allows nations that struggle for freedom and independence to achieve their desires. This support would open the path of victory for these people. Considering this fact, Egyptian committee went to Lausanne and demanded Turkey to abdicate from its sovereignty rights in favour of Egypt. Such an abdication would be a witness, evidence against English claims on Egypt. Egyptians –giving moral and material support to Kemalist movement for three years- expected this. However, Turkish committee deprecated the desires of Arabians and Egyptians, and abdicated from its sovereignty, not in favour of, but in the rulership of Egyptians and Arabians. Occupying Egypt, England accepted that Turkey recognized them in a way. Thus, England began to assert their ownership in Egypt as a result of their occupation for 41 years. Turkey's abdication from sovereignty not in favor of Egyptians and Arabians, but as a complete abdication from sovereignty caused this. This action caused a political disengagement between Turkey and Arab countries for the first time. This had been followed by more severe splits.⁴⁰

³⁹ For the telegraphs written by Arab representatives including Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Palestine to Mustafa Kemal to save their rights against imperial states see Bılal Şimşir, *Atatürk ile Yazışmalar*, Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1981, p.437-441, p.475, p.102-104, p.426-427 respectively

⁴⁰ "Birinci Dünya Harbi'ne kadar Mısır ve Arap ülkeleri Osmanlı idaresi altında idi. Dolayısıyla Lozan'da Türkiye'den beklenen, Arap toprakları üzerindeki hakimiyetini itiraf etmesiydi. Böyle bir itiraf, hürriyet ve istiklal mücadelesi veren halkların isteklerinin gerçekleşmesi için büyük mana ifade eden kanuni bir destek olacaktı. Bu destekle bu

Bıyıklı gives the example of Egypt but it is possible to increase the number of the Muslim countries that asked Turkey to defend their rights against imperial states. Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Tunisia can be added to the list. As a result of this process, it is frequently expressed that, in addition to the rejection of military support, Kemalist Republic did not hold brief for Arab states also in political terms at Lausanne Peace Conference.

2.2.1 Alienation Invoked by Political Reforms: Proclamation of the Republic and Secularism

When we look at world history, we see that the common basic reason of the revolutions is simply the pressures made on the public structure by a newly emerging class or an existing waxing group. It is bourgeoisie for French and American revolutions and organized proletariat for Russian revolution. In other words, revolutions are generally made by the public.

However, Kemalist revolutions are not demanded by public; they were dictated by the heads of Turkish Republic. Society was not even aware of the concepts of Republic and secularism. They were fighting just to save the country or save the borders and expel imperial states from Turkish lands. Furthermore, what they had in their mind was to continue their life just like in

halkların muzaffer olma yolları açılacaktı. Bunu dikkate alan bir Mısır heyeti Lozan'a gidip, Türkiye'nin hükümlerinden Mısır lehine feragat etmesini talep etmiştir. Böyle bir feragatin gerçekleşmesi, İngilizlerin Mısır üzerindeki hak iddialarına karşı bir hüccet, delil olacaktı. Üç seneden beri Kemalist harekete maddi ve manevi destek veren Mısır halkı bunu beklemiştir. Ancak Türk heyeti Mısır ve Arap halkının bu arzularını şiddetle reddetmiş ve Mısır ve Arap halkları lehine değil de, hükümlerinde mutlak bir feragatte bulunmuştur. Mısır'ı işgal altında tutan İngiltere, Türkiye'nin kendisini bir nevi tanıdığını kabul etmiştir. Böyle olunca 41 senedir işgal ettiği Mısır'ın kendisine ait olduğunu iddia etmeye başlamıştır. Buna sebep olarak da Türkiye'nin hükümlerinden Mısır ve Arap hakları lehine değil, hükümlerinden mutlak feragat etmesi olmuştur. Bu hareket, Türkiye ve Arap ülkeleri arasında ilk defa siyasi ilişkinin kesilmesine sebep olmuştur. Sonra bunu daha acı ve sert ayrımlar takip etmiştir." Mustafa Bıyıklı, *Batı İşgalleri Karşısında Türkiye'nin Ortadağı Politikaları*, İstanbul: Gökkuşbu, 2006, p. 351.

the past after the war, so, it would not be wrong to say that they fought to achieve peace, they were not even thinking the possibility of the regime change. They were actually right about that as Mustafa Kemal, to gain the support of the Muslim world, was declaring that Ankara's aim was to save Caliphate.

Today, the Turkish nation is called to defend its civilization ability, right to live and independency and its future. Humanity depends on the world's regard, realization of the independence wishes of the Islamic world, saving the caliphate and defense and realization of our national independence with a belief that fits our luck at the past times.⁴¹

As it is clearly stated in Kemal's words, institution of Caliphate was used by Ankara Government in the war time and Turkish society was not ready for the declaration of the Republic. Even in the first TGNA, the word "republic" was frightening and was not mentioned.⁴²

It needs to be underlined that while its own society was not expecting a radical regime change called Republic which means a form of government where the head of state is not a monarch, it was not surprising that Muslim world was astonished and felt uneasy as the nature of the traditional political structure changed completely by the proclamation of the Republic on 29th October 1923. This political reform gave the signal for the next ones; which are the birth of the concept of secularism in Turkey and ofcourse the abolishment of the Caliphate as secularism separate government institutions from religion.

These developments were something new for the Arab world. It is possible to see and understand the reactions of Muslim world from the words of the founder and the first

⁴¹"Bugün Türk Ulusu uygarlık yeteneğini, yaşama ve bağımsızlık hakkını ve bütün geleceğini savunmaya çağıldı. İnsanlık dünyasının beğenisi, İslam dünyasının kurtuluş dileklerinin gerçekleşmesi, yüksek halifeliğin kurtarılmasına ve ulusal bağımsızlığın geçmişteki şansımıza yaraşır bir inançla savunulup saplanmasına bağlıdır"

Toktamış Ateş, *Türk Devrim Tarihi*, İstanbul: Güryay Matbaası, 1980, p.266

⁴² For further information see Ibid, 268

president of Tunisia Habib Burgiba who was a great fan of Mustafa Kemal and his reforms. Even Burgiba confessed that the developments occurring in Kemalist Turkey were unacceptable for Arabs as they were not corresponding to Islamic rules.

It shouldn't be forgotten that religion precedes the state for Arabs. The religious administration had legislated and governed before the state. Now, religion stands by the state and is capable of governing with the state, inspiring and establishing harmonious relations, that is what it should do. We don't regard these two entities as contradictory but as complementary, and think that combining them is better and reasonable rather than separating them. Establishment of a secular state in Muslim land was an astonishing reform for most of the Arabians. Beginning from this time, a kind of embroilment arised between Turkey and countries located in the east and west, and both of us stayed out of the approach based on our interests and its providence.⁴³

2.2 On the Religious Ground

2.2.1 Effects of Abolishment of Dynasty and Caliphate

To many Arab and Muslim societies, political reforms and modernization efforts meant that Kemalist Turkey was determined to burn its bridges with the rest of the East. According to the research made for the thesis, the role of the abolishment of dynasty and especially the Caliphate had a lasting impact on the Muslim peoples. The abolition played important role in the shaping of the perception among the Muslim peoples that early republic displayed indifference towards the Arab World in which Turkey had played important role beforehand.

It is also possible to make such a comment that this religious change which had a direct effect on the ruling system of the country was an attitude which was hard to apply to the Muslim

⁴³ "Unutmayalım ki Araplarda dini devlete takaddüm etmiştir. Din müessesesi devletten evvel kanun yapmış ve yürütmüştür. Şu halde din devletin yanında ve devletle beraber, yönetmeye, ilham vermeye, ahenk kurmaya muktedirdir ve öyle olmalıdır. Biz bu iki varlığı, mütanakız değil de, birbirlerini tamamlayıcı olarak görüyoruz, onları ayırmaktansa birleştirmenin daha doğru ve haklı olduğunu zannediyoruz. Müslüman toprağında laik bir devletin kurulması münakaşa götürmeksizin Arapların çoğu için şaşırtıcı bir yenilik idi. Bu zamandan itibaren ki Türkiye ile mağrip ve maşrik ülkeleri arasında bir günüz zuhur etti ve hem siz hem biz bütün menfaatlerimizin icab ettirdiği bir yaklaşmanın ve onun ilahi takdirinin dışında kaldık."

TBMM Secret Session Records, 25 March 1965, Vol:37, 4th session, available at http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/MM_d01/c037/mm_01037081.pdf accessed on 07.08.2012, [accessed on 05.07.2012]

world. Taking into consideration to this point, it was not striking that the reactions of the Arabs against the decision of the abolishment of dynasty and caliphate, which had a sacred role for Muslims, were in negative form.

Having emphasized the significance of Islamic identity, Ahmet Davutoğlu defines the new Republican elite as follows: "While Iran and Afghanistan were coping with a semi-colonial structure, Turkey was being governed by a political elite which was trying to isolate Turkey from its own Islamic identity and history."⁴⁴ He argued that the abolition of the Caliphate, caused a two-pronged marginalization; a marginalization from the international system and a marginalization from the Islamic world.

Abolition of the caliphate introduced the fact that Islamic policy was moving toward a two-aspect hypothetical marginalization both within the international system and within the world of Islam. World of Islam concept, which associates a different world system in other political systems was losing its main support point with the abolition of caliphate. This, in a sense, meant the fall of the most important resistance point against modernism and imperialism that dominated the international system. Thereby, the world of Islam was degraded to a status of unassertive element in the international policy for the first time. The strong sense of identity that Islamic belief provides in individual level and this unassertive and marginalized status in the international system underlies the psycho-social tension that will impact the future times. Especially, it is not very hard to observe the reactionary reflexes of this psycho-social tension of the Turkish nation as the last representative and loser of this assertion. The second aspect of the marginalization was experienced in the internal structure of Islamic communities. In this period, the role of Islam in colonies and in other Muslim countries seriously eroded not only in terms of its status in the general policy but also in every phase of daily life. Islamic belief which had been at the center of public life and relations throughout history entered into a marginalization period suddenly. Education institutions and bureaucratic system established by imperialist governments in colonies were forming the center of political and public life to train the elites who would govern these communities in new-imperialist structures in the future.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *20. Yüzyılda İslam Siyasetinin Temel Nedenleri*, İlim ve Sanat, 1999, No:32, p.7

⁴⁵"Hilafet kurumunun ilgası İslam siyasetinin gerek uluslararası sistem içinde gerekse İslam dünyasının iç bünyesinde iki vechei bir kavramsal marjinalleşmeye doğru seyretmekte olduğunu ortaya koymaktaydı. Diğer siyasi sistemler içinde farklı bir dünya sistemini çağrıştıran Dar ül-İslam kavramı hilafetle birlikte temel dayanak noktasını yitiriyordu. Bu bir anlamda uluslararası sisteme hakim olan modernizm ve sömürgecilik karşısındaki en önemli direnç noktasının düşmesi demekti. Böylece İslam dünyası ilk defa uluslararası siyaset içinde iddiasız bir

The inevitable result of the abolition of the Caliphate for Turkey was its marginalization to international system and its marginalization to Islam world. Furthermore, the degree of marginalization that Turkey faced was stronger than that of marginalization that colonies did.

The marginalization in Turkey was stronger than the colonial countries. Upon the abolition of the caliphate, political/cultural elite, who declared that they were abstracted from all international claims and who held the new political regime, had formed a total monopoly of intelligentsia and took control of all channels that provided public communication.⁴⁶

The main assumption of Davutoğlu is based on Turkey's political power and prestige in Muslim world were coming from the existence of the institution of Caliphate. At this point, there are two questions to be raised: first; Can one argue that was the Caliphate was strong enough to exert power in international relations in the wake of the Great War? And the second one is; What was the source of Kemalist Turkey's prestige? The answers of the questions will be discussed in detail as the counter-arguments in the following chapter but to make a brief explanation, it would be useful to remind that during the WWI, Muslim world did not care for the jihad calls which were coming from the Caliphate against Western powers. Arabs

çevre unsur konumuna indirgeniyordu. İslam inancının ferdi düzeyde sağladığı çok güçlü kimlik duygusu ile uluslararası sistem içinde söz konusu olan bu iddiasızlaşma ve marjinalleşme sonraki dönemleri de etkileyecek olan psiko-sosyal gerginliğin temelini oluşturmaktadır. Özellikle bu iddianın temsilcisi ve kaybedicisi konumundaki Türk toplumunda bu psiko-sosyal gerginliğin tepkisel akislerini müşahade etmek güç değildir. Marjinalleşmenin ikinci vechesi ise İslam toplumlarının iç bünyelerinde yaşanmaktaydı. Bu dönemde gerek sömürgelerde gerekse diğer Müslüman ülkelerde İslam'ın rolü sadece genel siyaset içindeki konumu itibarıyla değil aynı zamanda günlük hayatın bütün cephelerinde ciddi bir yıpranmaya uğramıştır. Tarih boyunca toplumsal hayatın ve ilişkilerin merkezinde bulunan İslam inancı birden ciddi bir çevreselleşme sürecine girmiştir. Sömürge ülkelerde sömürgeci idareler tarafından oluşturulan eğitim kurumları ve bürokratik sistem daha sonraki dönemlerde de bu toplumları yeni-sömürgeci yapılar içinde idare edecek eliti yetiştirmek üzere siyasi ve toplumsal hayatın merkezini oluşturmaktaydı."

Ibid, 7

⁴⁶"Türkiye'de sömürge ülkelerden daha şiddetli bir marjinalleşme söz konusu idi. Hilafetin ilgası ile uluslararası bütün iddialardan soyutlandığını deklare eden yeni siyasi rejimi elinde bulunduran siyasi/kültürel elit her konuda tam bir aydın tekelciliği oluşturmuş ve toplumsal iletişimi sağlayan bütün kanalları denetim altına almıştı."

Ibid, 7

preferred to fight with the imperial states against Ottoman Empire despite the declaration of Jihad by the Caliphate. It is clear enough that the authority of the Caliphate could not be used for the interests of the Ottoman Empire, it did not increase Ottoman power and could not unite Muslims against common enemy. Taking into consideration to this point, how can Caliphate be a source of power for Turkey? Its dysfunctionality was proven in the war time.

The answer of the second question is related to the first one. It is clear that the source of power of Turkey was not and cannot be the institution of Caliphate. The only answer of this question is Kemalist reforms and the process of modernization which were observed very carefully and tried to be adopted in some states in the Muslim world. It is impossible to deny that Kemalist Turkey was representing an increasing regional power for the rest of the world. A Muslim state with close ties to Western powers with full independence was certainly something new and admirable for Arabs. As noted before, this argument will be criticized in detail in the next chapter by referring to Mustafa Kemal's close relations with Middle Eastern leaders and their efforts made to implement Kemalist reforms in Muslim states.

Also, Davutoğlu reiterates that the abolition of the Caliphate was a declaration of Turkey's isolation from the pretension in the international system and criticizes Kemalist foreign policy with being very local and pro-status quo.

Foreign policy initiative of Turkey, which declared its abstraction from all international claims and took extremely local and status quoist foreign policy tradition as basic principle in later periods, set a typical example about this matter. Real and dynamic power of history rebels to this declaration. Nation-state borders of Turkey have been under pressure for the last six-seven years, as if objecting the artificial atmosphere that has provided the formation of these borders. Political authority cannot sustain introverted foreign policy principles of 1930s and ideological bases of these principles in a dogmatic manner against pressure of Bulgaria on Turkish border, secret and clear migration from Western Thrace, Iraqi Kurds' trials to run over the border-which is inured to at every pressure, Nakchevan's decision to unite with Turkey after

crisis with Armenia, Azeri-Armenian conflict which embodies new migration waves and Bosnia and Macedonia's support call from Turkey.⁴⁷

Ahmet Davutoğlu argues that talking about Central Asia was accepted as a backward act of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turanism ten years ago. And it is late for Turkey to create good relations in the name of amity as Turkey could not protect the institutions and culture which come from Ottoman heritage and gave away their possible international advantages.

Those who ridiculed any mentions about Central Asia and thought it was old-fashioned Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism just ten years ago now launch expedition to those countries with friendship and brotherhood mottos; it is nothing else than history's compelling that overwhelms human will. However, the case that elaborates the issues about this subject is the fact that Turkey –under this indispensable pressure of Ottoman heritage- has abandoned the political institutions and culture that would turn this pressure into an international advantage.⁴⁸

There are other scholars and analysts who claim that the abolition of Caliphate led to the isolation of Turkey from its East like Graham E. Fuller,⁴⁹ who also focuses on the role of the abolition of the caliphate in Early Republic's rupture from the "East". He argues that the

⁴⁷"Hilafetin ilgası ile bütün uluslararası iddialardan soyutlandığını deklare eden ve sonraki dönemlerde son derece yerel ve statükocu bir dış politika geleneğini temel prensip edinen Türkiye'nin bugünkü dış politika açılımı bu konuda en tipik misali oluşturmaktadır. Tarihin reel ve dinamik gücü bu deklarasyona isyan etmektedir. Son altı-yedi yıl içinde Türkiye'nin ulus-devlet sınırları bu sınırların oluşumunu temin eden suni atmosferi reddencesine baskı altında kalmıştır. Bulgaristan Türklerinin sınıra dayanması, Batı Trakya'dan gizli ve açık süren göç, Irak Kürtleri'nin artık her baskıda kanıksanan sınırı aşma çabaları, Nahcivan'ın Ermenistan krizi ile birlikte Türkiye'ye bağlanma kararı, Azeri-Ermeni çatışmasının yeni göç dalgalarını bünyesinde barındırması, Bosna ve Makedonya'nın öncelikle Türkiye'den destek arayışları karşısında siyasi otoritenin otuzlu yılların içine kapanık dış politika prensiplerini ve bu prensiplerin ideolojik temellerini dogmatik bir tarzda sürdürmesi söz konusu olamaz."

Ahmet Davutoğlu, *20. Yüzyılda İslam Siyasetinin Temel Nedenleri*, İlim ve Sanat, 1999, No:32, p.11

⁴⁸"Daha on yıl öncesinde Orta Asya'yı herhangi bir şekilde söz konusu etmeyi bile çağdışı Pan-İslamizm ve Pan-Türkizm olarak alaya alanların bugün dostluk ve kardeşlik sloganlarıyla bu ülkelere sefer düzenliyor olması tarihin insan iradesini aşan zorlamasından başka bir şey değildir. Fakat bu konuda meseleleri daha da karmaşıklaştıran olgu, Osmanlı mirasının bu kaçınılmaz baskısına maruz kalan Türkiye'nin bu baskıyı büyük bir uluslararası avantaja dönüştürecek siyasi kurumları ve kültürü terk etmiş olmasıdır." Ibid, 11

⁴⁹Graham E. Fuller is an author and political analyst, specializing in Islamic extremism. Formerly vice-chair of the National Intelligence Council, he also served as Station Chief in Kabul for the CIA. After a career in the United States State Department and CIA lasting 27 years, he joined Rand Corporation as senior political scientist specializing in the Middle East.

institution of Caliphate was not concerning only Turkish society but the whole Muslim world and by abolishing it, Mustafa Kemal did not only make a decision for Turkey, so did he in the name of the Muslims all over the world which he did not have the right to. To make clear his argument, Fuller compares the role of papacy and caliphate and discussed that there is no difference between abolishing the caliphate and papacy. Both of them are important and meaningful for religious communities which exist outside the national borders. The weak point of this argument is that these two institutions differ from themselves in terms of their role. Both of them are religious figures but they do not enjoy common authority. While papacy was effective in religion and politics, at the same time, caliphate was in charge of continuing Mohammad's earthly responsibilities and could not take religious decisions without the consent of shaykh al-islam and ulama. In other words, shaykh al-islam and ulama were the two main authorities in religious representation, not caliphate.⁵⁰

Turkey delivered the most significant blow of all to its relationship with the Muslim world in 1924 when Atatürk abolished the very institution of the caliphate itself, the supreme religious Office of the entire Sunni world. This was an act of extraordinary importance. While Atatürk certainly was free to implement reforms within Turkey, the abolition of the caliphate was an act that affected Muslims everywhere. It was roughly akin to a snap decision by an Italian prime minister to abolish the papacy without consultation with the worldwide Catholic community.⁵¹

Fuller addresses the religious reforms which were made in Kemalist Republic as the representation of Young Republic's rupture from Muslim world, especially from Arabs, and describes them a method of extinguishing all the common ties with them. He also blames Kemalist Turkey for approaching Western powers and leaving behind Arabs strategically in

⁵⁰Bilge Criss, *Bir Kitap ve Düşündürdükleri*, p. 78, available at <http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/42/465/5315.pdf>, [accessed on 03.08.2012]

⁵¹ Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008, p.26

the times when they needed a lot Turkish support to succeed in their struggle against imperial states.

For Muslims, especially Arabs, Kemalist Turkey represented a total rejection of Islam, of the Arab and broader Muslim world, of their long-standing ties with the Turks, and of their shared culture. Furthermore, it represented a denigration of Islam as a religion, a strategic abandonment of the Arabs to imperialist powers with whom Turkey quickly fell in league, and an overall sapping of Muslim power at a time when Turkish power had never been more needed to face growing Western threats.”⁵²

The reasons of Kemalist Turkey’s rupture from the “East” is analyzed under four main points by Graham Fuller. The first one claims that Arab lands were excluded in Turkish national borders which is definitely true and legalized by Misak-ı Milli.

After the World War I, the Arab world lay well outside Turkish foreign policy thinking for multiple reasons: (1) the Arab world has ceased to be part of the Turkish states⁵³

Secondly, he states that most of the Arab states were under the domination of mandatory powers and due to that they could not be influential in international arena and accordingly they couldn’t be a threat for Turkey.

(2) neighbouring Arab states were under European mandate control and could not therefore play no real role on the international scene or pose any threat to Ankara⁵⁴

This argument also reflects the truth but Fuller’s interpretation need to be questioned. First of all, if the state A does not pose as a threat for the state B, then there would be no reason to develop good relations. But if there is a conflict of interest between the two states, then, hostile feelings would start to rise in politics, the tone would become tough and even all the lines could be cut down and as a result of this a kind of isolation might come into scene. But if there is no such thing, there would be no obstacle to create good diplomatic ties. Second critic

⁵² Ibid, 27

⁵³ Ibid, 28

⁵⁴ Ibid, 28

of the argument would be related to the dominance of the mandatory systems in Arab world. It is true that this situation decreased Arab states' role in international system but at this point "Was Kemalist Turkey able to regulate its relations with the mentioned states directly?" should be asked. The answer is no. Due to the mandatory governance, any kind of diplomatic or political relations could be provided through mandate states which Fuller describes as Western and imperial.

The third reason of the rupture of Turkey from Arabs, according to Fuller, is based on its focus on nation building process. And the last one is Kemalist Republic's priority to create good diplomatic ties with her old Western enemies. This argument is important in terms of expressing the second part of the perception of Turkey's indifference towards the "East" which is "Kemalist Republic turned her face to the West". Additionally, to Fuller, a dominant insolence towards Arab culture and Islam was visible in Ankara's policy. It is argued that culture of Islam was seen as the main reason of Turkish backwardness and it was believed that the only way for the growth was leaving it behind.

(3) Turkey was internally absorbed with its new nation-building tasks; and (4) Turkey's priority was to build new ties with its erstwhile European enemies. Additionally, a pronounced Kemalist denigration of Arab and Islamic culture dominated Ankara's thinking. Islamic culture was seen as the source of Turkish backwardness and weakness, the "other" out of which an enlightened new Turkey would arise. As a result, study of Arabic and Arab culture nearly disappeared within Turkey, except among a small minority engaged in religious studies.⁵⁵

Due to the points listed previously, it is argued that the East stayed outside from Turkish foreign policy and it is possible to talk about the existence of Turkish denigration of Arab world. However, the Kemalist denigration did not mean Turkey's isolation from the "East". Contrarily, the Arabs and the rest of the Middle East carefully observed the Kemalist

⁵⁵ Ibid, 28

reformation. On the other hand, the reference which is frequently given implies that isolation from the Muslim world started with the reforms as they were aimed at destroying Ottoman tradition in Turkey. It is not wrong but what is generally forgotten is that all the Middle East tried to overcome its past. For Turkey, and the rest of the Middle East, it was Ottoman. These counter-arguments will be discussed lately under the title of “Turkey as a Model in the Region”.

Like many people who criticizes the impact of the abolishments, Mustafa Bıyıklı, in his book “Batı İşgalleri Karşısında Türkiye’nin Ortadoğu Politikaları: Atatürk Dönemi” [Turkey’s Policies Towards the Middle East In Front of Western Occupation] argues that Kemalist Turkey cut its last memory ties and demolished the bridges with the Muslim World.

Mustafa Kemal abolished the Sultanate granted that Sultan Vahdettin had hostile actions against him and forces under his command. He proclaimed republic at October 29, 1923 and immediately after, at March 3, 1924, abolition of Caliphate was decided. With this decision Turkey cut its last connection with Muslims living around the world. Kemalists targeted to be closer to European countries through reforms by ignoring the past of Turkish nation.⁵⁶

To support his argument Mustafa Bıyıklı gives the examples of the Arab nationalists such as Şekip Arslan’s⁵⁷ attitude toward Kemalist reforms. He refers the letter of Enver Pasha written

⁵⁶ “Mustafa Kemal, Sultan Vahdettin’i, kendine ve emrindeki kuvvetlere düşmanca davrandığını varsayarak, saltanatı ilga etmiştir. 29 Ekim 1923’te cumhuriyeti ilan etmiş ve hemen arkasından 3 mart 1924’te hilafetin ilgası kararı alınmıştır. İşte bu kararlar Türkiye, yeryüzünün çeşitli yerlerinde yaşayan Müslümanlarla arasındaki son bağı da kesmiştir. Kemalistler, yaptıkları inkılablarla, Türk milletinin mazisini hiçe sayarak, Avrupa devletlerine yakın olmayı hedeflemişlerdir. ”Bıyıklı, p.351

⁵⁷ Şekip Arslan (1869-1946) is an Arab enlightened, intellectual and politician. He was born in Lebanon and came from esteemed Druze family. However, he left druze identity and converted İslam and preferred to be obedient to Ottoman identity as he described himself as the supporter of Ottomanism. He supported Young Turks’ efforts for the adoption of the constitution. He served as a head official of Chouf district in Lebanon between the years 1902-1907 and 1908-1910. He was not in favor of dethronement of Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamit but supported the new regime and the Ottoman struggle against the imperial states as he aimed at rebirthing Ottoman Empire. Arslan fought in Libya against Italian forces in 1911, served in red crescent in Egypt in 1912 and created close relations with Egyptian political elites such as Hidiv Abbas Hilmi. He had also been in Tripoli. It is the place where he met

to Atatürk in 1921 which claims that his dream and aim is to save Islam and Muslim World and retaliate with European countries. It is also reminded that Arslan was a great supporter of Enver Pasha and during the national liberation struggle he was impressed by Turkey's struggle. To save Syria, his solution was Turkish – Arab cooperation and after the Turkish War of Independence, in 1923, he made his first visit to İstanbul and asked Atatürk if it is possible to save Syria and expell France from Syrian lands but he was refused.

It is also underlined that with the rejection of his demand, he came to realize that Kemalist reforms was totally against the interests of the Arab world as they were aimed at destroying the soul of Islam. In his articles, Şekip Arslan described Kemalist reforms as the revolts against Caliphate, rules of Islam, Eastern values and traditions and even against the God.

Another prominent figure in Caliphate crisis was Şekip Arslan. He was a fan of Enver Pasha. Enver Pasha had told in a letter he wrote to Kemal Atatürk that: "as for me, I only pursue an ideal. That is to awake Muslims and settle old scores with European evils who holds Islam in its clutches." This was also Arslan's goal for his entire life. His reaction against Kemal Atatürk's revolutionary changes in Turkey after 1922 pushed him into a struggle about European occupation of Arabic lands and he focused his hopes on Turk-Arab cooperation argument. After the war, at his first visit to İstanbul in 1923, Atatürk had mentioned his aim as to remove French from Syria and to achieve this a Turk-Arab front should be formed, however he had denied all demands except National Oath (Misak-ı Milli). Arslan, as an impact of this denial, had considered "Kemalist Turkey" as the most dangerous fan of secular westernization. According to him, mistakes of Ankara had made the mistakes of liberal nationalists in Cairo unimportant. Arslan's writings were now full of statements as "Kemalists are destroying the basis of Islam", "Ankara murders Islamic spirit in Turkey" and "Kemalists are removing the backbones of religion!" The threat of those actions and

with Enver Pasha (who influenced a lot his opinions) and became a close friend of him. In 1911 and 1912 he wrote for Al-Mueyyed newspaper printed in Cairo and in his articles, he drew attention to his obedience to the Ottoman Empire and underlined his hostile sentiments against Western imperialism. Arslan was also a great supporter of the new regime established after the "Babiali irruption", he served as a spokesman. He was responsible from explaining the aims of the new regime to the Arab society. Briefly; he was not Pan-Islamist, nor Pan-Turkist. Arslan was supporting the idea of Ottomanism and argued that nationalist movements were sinking the Ottoman Empire but Ottomanism had a unifying character. After the first World War, Arslan accepted that Ottoman defeat and focused to save Syria from the invasion of France. To avoid the French mandate which was taking place in Syria his solution was Turco-Arab cooperation but Mustafa Kemal Atatürk did not accept his suggestion.

policies were so high for Arslan that he had even described them as “the rebel of Ankara against caliphate, Islamic principles, Eastern traditions and even God.”⁵⁸

Another important argument which is raised related to the negative effects of the abolishment of the Caliphate in Kemalist Turkey is its impacts on the relations with Egypt. It is argued that the relations with that country in Early Republican period was at minimum level and it was purely the result of Kemalist reforms. Moreover, they did not only alienate Turks but also cut the lines with the Arab countries and even most of the Egyptians thought that the religion of Turkey was not Islam but Christianity.

New Turkey has stood apart from Egyptians and Arabs. Reforms in Turkey told us apart and caused a rift between us. Moreover, there have been lots of people in Egypt who think the Turks are Christians.⁵⁹

What is frequently reminded in the books that were aimed at analyzing the Early Republican Middle East policies, is Mustafa Kemal’s incompatible attitude towards Islam and Muslim world after the Turkish War of Independence. Such a point is underlined by Mustafa Bıyıklı. He illustrates the exprobatons made in Egypt against the abolishment of the Caliphate. He shares the critic of El-Ezher’s deputy premier stating that it is weird that during the War of

⁵⁸“Hilafet buhranı içinde dikkat çeken bir diğer isimde Şekip Arslan’dı. Arslan Enver Paşa’nın da hayranlarındandı. Enver Paşa 16 Temmuz 1921’de Kemal Atatürk’e yazdığı bir mektupta şöyle demişti: “ bana gelince, ben sadece bir idealin peşinden giderim. O da Müslümanları harekete geçirmek ve İslam’ı pençesine almış Avrupalı canavarlarla hesaplaşmaktır. “ Arslan’ın da ömür boyu ideali bu olmuştur. Arslan’ın 1922’den sonra Türkiye’de Kemal Atatürk’ün inkılâpçı değişikliklerine olan tepkisi, onu Osmanlı eyaleti olan Arap topraklarının Avrupalılarca işgali konusunda mücadeleye sevk etmiş ve ümitlerini Türk-Arap işbirliği tezinde yoğunlaştırmıştır. Harpten sonra 1923’te İstanbul’u ilk ziyaretinde Atatürk’, gayesinin Fransızları Suriye’den atmak olduğunu ve bunun için bir Türk-Arap cephesi kurmak gerektiğini söylemiş ancak Kemal Atatürk, Misak-ı Milli haricindeki talepleri reddetmiştir. Bu reddedilmenin de etkisiyle Arslan, laik batılılaşmacılar arasında en tehlikelisini “Kemalist Türkiye” olarak görmüştür. Ona göre Ankara’da yapılan hatalar Kahire’deki liberal milliyetçilerin hatalarını hiç kılmıştır. Arslan’ın yazıları artık, “Kemalistler, İslam’ın temellerini tahrip ediyor!”, “Ankara, Türkiye’deki İslami ruhu katlediyor!” ve “Kemalistler dinin direklerini ortadan kaldırıyor!” gibi ifadelerle dolmuştu. Arslan için bu icraat ve siyasetlerin teşkil ettiği tehdit o dereceydi ki bunları “ Ankara’nın hilafete, İslam ilkelerine, Doğu geleneklerine, hatta Allah’a isyanı olarak tarif etmişti.” Bıyıklı, p.345.

⁵⁹“Yeni Türkiye Mısırlılardan, Araplardan uzak olmuştur. Türkiye’deki inkılaplar, bizden bizi çok uzaklaştırmış ve aramızı açmıştır. Hatta ve hatta Mısır’da Türklerin hristiyan olduklarını zanneden çok insanlar olmuştur.” Bıyıklı, p.353

Independence certain peoples were in favor of Islam and used religion as a tool for obtaining support and after reaching the victory, they turned their back on to Islam by attacking its sacred institution which is Caliphate. This changing Kemalist policy towards Arab states created a perception which was based on Early Republic's betrayal on Muslim states and caused painful results in Turkish-Arab relations.

Abolition of caliphate institution gave a deep shock to Egyptians, too. This event was condemned both by modernists and traditionalist organizations. Vice-minister of El-Ezher, who supported the abolition of sultanate, reacted to abolition of caliphate and stated that "Ironically, these people sang for Islam until the victory, and when they won the war turned their back to Islam by attacking its most glorious institution."⁶⁰

Another claim which states that the abolition of the Caliphate cut the lines between Turkey and the Middle Eastern states is made by Prof. Dr. Tayyar Arı. In his book "Geçmişten Günümüze Orta Doğu" Arı argues that the abolishment of Caliphate in 1924 had a huge impact from North Africa to India and disappointed Muslim people all over the world. It also created a bad image for Turkey in the Middle East and it was a kind of a breakaway point between Muslim states and new republic.

Abolition of caliphate on March of 1924, which indicated the separation of Turkey from Middle East countries, caused a disappointment for all Muslims living in a region from North Africa to India, and from then on, negative view on Turkey in Middle East.⁶¹

⁶⁰ "Hilafet müessesesinin kaldırılması Mısır kamuoyunu da sert bir biçimde sarsmıştır. Bu hadise hem modernleşmeci, hem de ananevi teşekküller tarafından kınanmıştır. Saltanatla ilgili kararı destekleyen El-Ezher'in bakan yardımcısı da Hilafetin kaldırılmasına büyük tepki göstermiş ve "Ne gariptir ki bu kişiler zafere kadar İslam adına şakımış ve zafere ulaşınca da onun en aziz müessesesine saldırmak suretiyle İslam'a sırt çevirmişlerdir" demiştir."

Bıyıklı, p.341-342

⁶¹"Türkiye ile Ortadoğu ülkeleri arasında yolların ayrıldığını gösteren Halifeliğin 1924 Martında kaldırılması, Kuzey Afrika'dan Hindistan'a kadar olan bölgede tüm Müslümanlar için hayal kırıklığına ve bundan sonra Ortadoğu'da Türkiye'nin olumsuz biçimde nitelenmesine yol açmıştır."

Tayyar Arı, *Geçmişten Günümüze Orta Doğu Siyaset, Savaş ve Diplomasi*, İstanbul: MKM, 2008, p.202

The abolishment of Caliphate is undoubtedly the most popular reference of the perception of Kemalist Turkey's indifference towards Arab world. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu is another important name who focuses on this issue. In his book "İki Tarafın Bakış Açısından Türk-Arap Münasebetleri", he cites his conversation with ex-president of Algeria, Haouri Bumedian, in the years of 1965-69. According to that; Haouri confessed that Turkish Independence War under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal and which challenged the Western imperialist powers, served as a model in Algeria. He claimed that Algerians were carrying Atatürk's photos in the hidden pockets of their jackets despite the prohibition of the France Mandate. However, according to Haouri, just after the Liberation War, Atatürk left Islam and made Turkey a part of the West.

Up to there; it is clear that Algerian president was disappointed with the new developments and Kemalist reforms which were especially related with the religion such as the abolishment of the Caliphate. He interpreted the reforms as Turkey's abandonment of Islam and implicitly the Muslim world.

In the following part of the conversation, İhsanoğlu reminded Haouri that Turkey, officially, stayed obedient to Islam as a religion but Algerian president's answer was explicit enough; "You cannot divide Islam into two as it is not only a religion but also a way of life which shapes social order in the societies." He also drew attention to the anti-Kemalist movements in Turkey against the reforms arguing that if the Kemalist model in Turkey was accepted and adopted in all the Islamic countries there would be nothing left from Islam.

Known as an Islamist leader, former President of Algeria Haouri Bumedian had told me these while I was about to retire from my embassy duty in Algeria between the dates of 1965-1969: "Mustafa Kemal's Independence Movement that challenged the West set a model for us. We used to hide Atatürk's photos –banned by the French in

those times- in secret places of our jackets. However, after the end of Independence War, Atatürk abandoned Islam and turned Turkey into an extension of West.” Upon his words, I mentioned him that Turks are still faithful Muslims; he stressed that “Islam is not only a religion, but also social order, a civilization. You cannot part it into two. Thus, reactions against Atatürk reforms began in Turkey. If Atatürk’s model was adopted by other Islamic countries, what was to be left of Islam?⁶²

The abolition of dynasty gave the signals of the second and final stage of the religious reform; abolishment of the Caliphate which caused eyebrows to raise in the East to Kemalist Turkey. Muslim states which gave economic and moral support to Ankara government in its national struggle were disappointed. At this point, Indian Muslims can be given as the best example as their anger to Mustafa Kemal was clear and they were even describing him as being ungrateful.

The sharpest reaction came from Indian Muslims. As we had seen beforehand, leaders of the Caliphate movement had drawn their strategies around Pan-Islamism as from the end of the war, and they were suggesting that they would perform the mobilization of Muslims in India around Caliphate concept. Whereas Turks abolished the Caliphate and “demolished the basis of their political structures.” As Gail Minault expressed “Icons, in other words Caliphate, was destructed and Mustafa Kemal, who was their idol, has been turned into someone who broke the icons and cult figures. Most leaders of Caliphate movement saw Mustafa Kemal as an ungrateful man and betrayer of Islam, who forgot the help of Indians at the war against Greeks.⁶³

⁶²“İslamcı bir lider olarak tanınan eski Cezayir Cumhurbaşkanı Haouri Bumedian, 1965-1969 yıllarında Cezayir’deki büyükelçilik görevimden ayrılırken bana şunları söylemişti:” Mustafa Kemal’in Batı’ya meydan okuyan Kurtuluş Hareketi bize örnek oldu. O dönemde Fransızların yasakladığı Atatürk’ün resimlerini biz ceketlerimizin gizli yerlerinde saklıyorduk. Ama Kurtuluş Savaşı bitince Atatürk İslam’ı terk etti ve Türkiye’yi Batı’nın bir uzantısı durumuna getirdi.” Bu sözleri üzerine kendisine, Türklerin İslam dinine bağlı kaldığını belirtince de: “ İslam yalnız din değil, bir toplum düzeni, bir uygarlıktır. Onu ikiye bölemezsiniz. Nitekim Türkiye’de Atatürk reformlarına karşı tepkiler başladı. Atatürk’ün ortaya koyduğu model öbür İslam ülkelerince kabul edilseydi, İslam’dan ne kalırdı” Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, *İki Tarafın Bakış Açısından Türk-Arap Münasebetleri*, Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, İstanbul: IRCICA, 2000, p. 124.

⁶³ “En şiddetli tepki Hindistan Müslümanlarından geldi. Daha önce gördüğümüz gibi savaşın sonundan itibaren Hilafet hareketinin liderleri stratejilerini Panislamizm etrafında çizmişlerdi, ve Hindistan’daki Müslüman kitlelerin seferber edilmesini Hilafet teması etrafında gerçekleştireceklerini öne sürüyorlardı. Oysa Türkler, Hilafeti kaldırarak, onların “siyasal yapılarının temellerini yerle bir etmişlerdi.” Gail Minault’un deyişiyle, “dini resimler, yani hilafet kırılmış ve onların gözbebeği Mustafa Kemal dini resimleri ve putları kıran biri olmuştu. Hilafet hareketinin liderlerinin büyük çoğunluğunun gözünde Mustafa Kemal, Yunanlılara karşı savaşta Hindistan Müslümanlarının Türklere yaptığı yardımı unutan bir nankör, İslam’a ihanet eden biriydi.” İskender Gökalp-François Gerogeon, *Kemalizm ve İslam Dünyası*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1990, p.39-40

2.3 On the Cultural Ground

2.3.1 Cultural Reforms as the last Breakaway Point with the Arab World

Another claim which underlines Kemalist Turkey's indifference towards Muslim world focuses on the impacts of the cultural reforms such as the dress reform, abolishment of the islamic monasteries, hat reform, adoption of European clock, calendar, measures and weights and weekend change. It is argued that these stages of Kemalist revolutions analyzed as cultural reforms are considered as the last breakaway point with the Arab world and the alienation of Turkey to its own tradition and culture.

For the critics of the impacts of cultural reforms, a nationalist and conservative voice, Ahmet Kabaklı's opinions are needed to be analyzed.⁶⁴ To him, Kemalist reforms was a replacement of Turkish and Islamic traditions (which he does not separate from each others) with Christian codes. What Kabaklı meant by Christian codes is simply the reforms.

Our law, shaped in two thousand years with Turkish and Islam traditions, was changed by Codes engaged with Christian traditions. Our amusement, taste, architectural spectacle, etiquette, belief in God and manners against elders, and even our language, were alienated to us; our national anthem and flag were meant to be changed.⁶⁵

⁶⁴Ahmet Kabaklı is a nationalist and conservative Turkish writer and poet. He was columnist in daily Tercüman between 1957 and 1990. He was popular in islamist circles. He participated to the 14th general assembly of Nationalist Movement Party with Necip Fazıl Kısakürek in 1979. He was also close to right wing minded politicians. He was born in 1294 and died in 2001. His funeral hosted famous right wing politicians such as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Abdullah Gül, Recai Kutan, Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu, Mehmet Ağar, Nazlı Ilıcak and so on...

⁶⁵ "Türk ve İslam gelenekleri ile iki bin yıl içinde teşekkül eden hukukumuz Hristiyan geleneğine bağlı Kod'larla değiştirilmiştir. Eğlence, zevk, mimari temaşa, oturup kalkma, Allah'a inanma, büyüğe saygı tarzlarımız hatta dilimiz, bize yabancılaştırılmış, İstiklal Marşımız ve bayrağımız bile değiştirilmek istenmiştir." Ahmet Kabaklı, *Kültür Emperyalizmi Manevi Sömürgecilik*, İstanbul: Türk Edebiyatı Vakfı Yayınları, 2002, p. 57

A popular islamist-nationalist approach to the Kemalist reforms generally describes the objective of the reformation process as an apery of the European values completely. Ahmet Kabaklı is one of the names who agrees with this point of view. According to him, Turkish revolutionists who occupied and changed education system and raised rootless generations, were aimed at taking off the West, and the roots of Central Asia, Islamic values and Anatolian (Empire) history should be despised and forgotten.

Two groups against nationalism –rootless (colorless) revolutionists and Marxists-however carrying different meanings, are sustaining their modernist Constitutional Monarchy view today. The former group (unfortunately they have captured our education system and have raised rootless generations) suggests that Europe should be imitated as it is, and all values regarding our Central Asian origin, Islamic values and Anatolian (empire) past should be despised and forgotten.⁶⁶

One of the names who goes about this point of view is Mustafa Bıyıklı. In his doctorate thesis, he discusses that to avoid its loneliness Kemalist Turkey preferred to act with Western states despite the fact of cutting down traditional Turkish values and religion. And this shows that new Republic's slogan in his foreign policy was "farewell to East". Dress reform, abolishment of the islamic monasteries, hat reform and weekend change (it was friday but changed to Sunday) were the revolutions made to be a part of the West and was the last breakaway point with Muslim world.

Bıyıklı also indicates that celebrations of the feast of sacrifices and ramadan were also prohibited however the prohibition was not applied. The usage of the Mohammedan calender in Turkey was also forbidden. Bıyıklı also mentions the change in the law system and argues

⁶⁶ "Bugün milliyetçiliğin karşısındaki iki grup, köksüz (renksiz) devrimciler ile Marksistler, birbirlerinden apayrı manada olmakla birlikte, Meşrutiyet asricilerini devam ettiriyorlar. Bunlardan birincilere göre (ki eğitim sistemimizi ele geçirerek maalesef bu görüşe bağlı ve köksüz nesiller yetiştirmişlerdir!) Avrupa, olduğu gibi taklid edilmeli, Orta Asya köküne, İslami değerlere ve Anadolu (imparatorluk) mazisine bağlı bütün değerler horlanmalı, unutulmalıdır." Ibid, 55

that the reforms especially related to the heritage law was totally against the Islamic rules described in Quran. It is claimed that this was a kind of alienation process and even the change of the capital (from İstanbul to Ankara) must be considered in this context as the atmosphere in İstanbul reminds Islam but contrary to that Ankara was in the form of “European city” and establishing mosques was only allowed in the skirts.

All these reforms are considered as a result of secularism process and they caused pain in the hearts of Muslim peoples around the world. Bıyıklı comments that ties of affection of Turks’ and Muslim World was destroyed and the positions of New Turkish Republic and Arab World completely differentiated.

Thus, it all began with the “Farewell to East” motto. The Dress Act, Abolition of Lodges and Monasteries, the Hat Act had been actions performed to win Western countries’ favor. Lastly, changing the weekend holiday from Friday to Sunday, Turkey cut all its connections with the world of Islam. Going further, Turkey had a manner that defied the Islamic beliefs and banned the celebrations of the Feast of Sacrifice and the Feast of Ramadan. However, they gave up this idea later on. Islamic calendar was abolished, heritage provisions were changed, and man and female were considered equal. The rights of those who had shares in heritage according to Islamic law were abolished. These changes invalidated the clear judgments of the Koran. Even civil status was changed in accordance with European laws. Every reminder of Islam was alienated, even the capital city was moved from İstanbul, which is reminiscent of Islam with its thousands of mosques, to Ankara. That is because, Ankara was a city of European style, such that, constructions of mosques in Ankara were allowed just in suburbs. These actions, applied as a result of Secularism, hurt the Muslims all around the world. New Turkish Republic cut its love bonds with Muslims of other countries. Now, the status of new Turkish Republic is different from the status of Muslims of the world.⁶⁷

⁶⁷“ Onun için artık “Şark’a veda” sloganı ile yola çıkmıştır. Kılık kıyafet kanunları, tekke ve zaviyelerin kapatılması, Şapka kanunu batı devletlerin safına girmek için yapılan şeyler olmuştur. Son olarak hafta tatilinin Cuma yerine pazara alınmasıyla Türkiye İslam âlemiyle olan irtibatını tamamen kesmiştir. Daha da ileri gidip İslam inançlarına meydan okuyan bir tavır sergileyerek kurban ve Ramazan bayramlarının kutlanması yasaklanmıştır. Fakat daha sonra bu karardan vazgeçilmiştir. Hicri takvim kullanılması ilga edilmiş, miras hükümleri değiştirilerek, mirasta kadın ve erkek musavi hale getirilmiştir. İslam hukukunda mirasta hak sahibi olanların hakları ilga edilmiştir. Bu değişikliklerle açıkça Kur’an-ı Kerim’in sarîh nassları geçersiz kılınmıştır. Ahvali şahsiye bile Avrupa kanunları ile değiştirilmiştir. İslam’ı hatırlatan her şeyden uzaklaşmış, Başkent bile binlerce mescitle İslam’ı hatırlatan İstanbul’dan Ankara’ya taşınmıştır. Çünkü Ankara, Avrupa tarzı bir şehir idi. Öyle ki Ankara’nın ancak kenar

Alphabet reform is told to be another breakaway point between Kemalist Turkey and the Arab World. What is mostly underlined is that by adopting Kemalist reforms Turkey turned its back on to its own history and cut the lines with its own past which is totally inter-related with Arab culture. It needs to be noted that transition to Latin script from Arab alphabet is referred frequently in these discussions. We can see that in the example of Ahmet Kabaklı. After quoting İsmet İnönü's declaration which confesses Turkish rupture from Arab culture and the role of the alphabet reform on that, he strictly criticizes that its not only Arab culture which Turkey alienated from but also its own civilization. Kabaklı also gives the examples of Japan and China to show the way they modernized without alienating from their own values and language.

Impact and the most important benefit of the Alphabet Revolution was the easiness of cultural change. Necessarily, we disjoined from the Arabic culture... Adoption of Latin alphabet in our period had formed an essential factor to save the Turkish language and national culture" he says. Mr. İnönü knows that we disjoined not only from Arabic culture but also from Turkish culture, art and civilization of a thousand years, we lost the opportunity to be heir of our rich wisdom, we began from the very beginning as African tribes, the leftist and cosmopolitan trends spread in this cultural lag and we wander in our own country as tourists... He well knows that, because of this we haven't developed a national art and intellectual product for forty years.⁶⁸

mahallelerine meşcit yapılmasına izin verilmiştir. Laikliğin sonuçları olarak Mustafa Kemal'in uygulamaya koyduğu bu icraatlar dünyanın çeşitli yerlerindeki Müslümanların gönüllerinde derin acılar uyandırmıştır. Yeni Türk Cumhuriyetiyle dünyanın sair yerlerindeki Müslümanların gönül bağları kesilmiştir. Artık yeni Türk Cumhuriyetinin konumu ile dünyadaki Müslüman hakların konumu farklılaşmıştır."

Bıyıklı, p.175

⁶⁸"Harf inkilâbının bizde tesiri ve büyük faydası, kültür değişmesini kolaylaştırmasıdır. İster istemez Arap kültüründen koptuk... Bizim devrimizde Latin harflerine geçmek, Türk dilini ve milli kültürü kurtarmak için esaslı bir etken oluşturmuştur." diyor. Sayın İnönü bu etken ile Arap kültüründen değil, bin yıllık Türk kültür, sanat ve medeniyetinden koptuğumuzu, bin yıllık zengin irfanımıza mirascılık vasfını kaybettiğimizi, işe Afrika kabileleri gibi yeniden başladığımızı, bugünkü sol ve kozmopolit akımların bu kültür boşluğu içinde yayıldıklarını, yurdumuzda bir turist gibi dolaştığımızı... Bu yüzden kırk yıldan beri milli bir sanat ve fikir meyvesi çıkaramadığımı pekâlâ bilir."

Ahmet Kabaklı, *Müslüman Türkiye*, İstanbul: Toker Yayınları, 1970, p.84-85

The most significant problem which alphabet reform is said to be its impact on the contacts with the Turks outside the national borders which were used to use Arab script. It would be impossible to read understand the works of Turks in Iran, Iran, Syria, Russia, Balkans and China and unfortunately there would be the same for them.

Our ties with exterior Turks, (Iran, Iraq, Syria, Russia, Balkans and kins in the grip of China) who use Ottoman script and common words, will be lost. We are, by our own hands, sabotaging opportunity to make our works of art read by them and to read theirs.⁶⁹

In his book “İki Tarafın Bakış Açısından Türk-Arap Münasebetleri” Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu tried to illustrate the comments of the Arab countries about Ankara government’s reforms. He states that transition to Roman letters in Turkey was one the reforms which had a disturbing effect on Muslim World. İhsanoğlu stresses that the general view of these countries was on the axis of Turkey started to act like a part of the Western World which Arap countries were in struggle with and left Islamic civilization.

Another event that especially disturbed Islamists in Arab world was the adoption of Latin alphabet instead of Arabic alphabet. General opinion of these communities was that Turkey was becoming an extension of Europe and abandoning Islam or at least Islamic civilization.⁷⁰

Alphabet reform is considered as the new sign of Mustafa Kemal’s break off Turkey from Islam. At the present time, the perception existed on this Kemalist reform is still negative in the eyes of Muslim and especially Arab people. However, it is accepted as the most

⁶⁹“Hepsi eski yazıyı ve müşterek kelimeleri kullanan dış Türkler ile (İran, Irak, Suriye, Rusya, Balkan, Çin boyunduruğundaki soydaşlar) bütün ilişkimiz kopacaktır. Eserlerimiz onlara okutmak ve onlarınkini okumak imkânlarını kendi elimizle baltalıyoruz.” Ibid, 83

⁷⁰“Arap Dünyasında İslamcıları özellikle tedirgin eden bir olgu da Türkiye’de Arap harfleri yerine Latin alfabesinin kabul edilmesiydi. Bu çevrelerde genel kanı Türkiye’nin Avrupa’nın bir uzantısı olmaya başladığı, hatta İslam’ı ya da en azından, İslam uygarlığını terk ettiği yolunda idi.”

Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, *İki Tarafın Bakış Açısından Türk-Arap Münasebetleri*, İslami Tarih, Sanat ve Kültür Araştırma Merkezi, İstanbul, IRCICA, 2000, p.123

significant acquisition of Kemalizm in Turkey. This incompatible feelings, in fact, revive the the discussion of whether the rejection of Arab culture was an obligation for the success of the modernization process or not.

Considered as a whole, the alphabet change in Turkey was commented as a new sign of Turkey's being separated from Islam by Mustafa Kemal. This reform is still the least accepted reform of Kemalist reforms according to Muslims and especially Arabs. Whereas, the very same reform was considered as one of the basic gains of Kemalism in Turkey.⁷¹

Hat reform is another matter of debate. A figure who represents Egyptians' hunger of independence, Saad Zaglul's words on banning fez in Kemalist Turkey need to be mentioned to see how the reform seriously provoked reaction in Egypt. In the statemen that he made on 12th March 1926, Zaglul did not seperate dressing and tradition as they both create the roots of the societies which descend from father to son. However, if any kindof change was accepted to happen in traditional values, then that would be described as an act which was aimed at alienating from its roots to obtain another identity.

Wearing hat has opponents among the nationalists. Saad Zaglul prefers fez. According to him "dresses and traditions of every community arise from their own roots and descend from father to son... Those who accept to change their traditions, are like the ones who deny their origins to be somebody else. But in fact, they only draw the curse of their ancestors."⁷²

⁷¹"Bir bütün olarak ele alındığında, Türkiye'deki alfabe değişikliği Mustafa Kemal'in Türkiye'yi İslam'dan koparmasının yeni bir işareti olarak yorumlandı. Günümüzde bu reform, Kemalist reformlar arasında Müslüman ve özellikle Arap kamuoyu tarafından en az kabul gören reform olma özelliğini korumaktadır. Oysa aynı reform Türkiye'de Kemalizmin en temel kazanımlarından biri olarak görülmektedir."

İskender Gökalp-François Georgeon, *Kemalizm ve İslam Dünyası*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1990, p.44

⁷² "Şapka giyilmesi milliyetçiler arasında da hasımlar bulur. Saad Zaglul fesi seçer. Ona göre "her halkın giyimi ve gelenekleri kendi kökünden çıkar ve babadan oğula geçer... Geleneklerini değiştirmeyi kabul edenler, başka bir kimliğe bürünmek için köklerinden kopanlara benzerler. Ama aslına bakılırsa yalnızca atalarının lanetlerini üzerine çekerler."

Maged Mansy-Paris, edited by İskender Gökalp-François Georgeon, *Kemalizm ve İslam Dünyası*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1990, p.118

To conclude, it is true that during the Turkish War of Independence Atatürk used religion as a unifying factor (aim of the protection of the Caliphate) to combat imperialist powers. The strict change in his policy just after the war is interpreted as Kemalist Turkey's rejection of Eastern civilization and values as Young Republic was concentrating more on modernization which was aimed at integrating Turkey to the West and alienating the country from Arab world. Regime change and cultural reforms should be seen as the efforts to take place in the European civilization which indirectly results with the rejection of the Arabic civilization.

2.2.2 Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and *Büyükdoğu*

Research showed that the perception of the alienation of Turkey from Eastern values does not only related with political, economic and diplomatic terms but also in terms of culture. At this point; Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and the newspaper called "Büyük Doğu" which was printed almost by himself and which played an important role on the creation of the perception of "Turkey turned its back on to East", becomes important as Kısakürek and his opinions had significant influence on the conservative elites in Turkey.⁷³

As noted before, Necip Fazıl was very influential in affecting public opinion. In his newspaper "Büyük Doğu", he described the followers of the newspaper and people who were sharing the same ideas as a population who were aware of the important historical stages in Turkish history. He addressed the rise of the Ottoman Empire, reminded that the roots of the Empire are Eastern and stressed that during the growth period, Eastern soul was achieved and was serving as a model or idol. He reminded Empire's increasing power and capacity to beat

⁷³For the influence of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and *Büyük Doğu* on Islamist, nationalist and conservative elites in Turkey, see Technology and energy minister Taner Yıldız's interview, Daily Radikal, 03.06.2012. See also "*Abdullah Gül'ün Necip Fazıl'a Mektubu*", Daily Sabah, 15.08.2011

West in this period but with the unproductive period, according to Kısakürek, Ottoman Empire started to move away from its roots and lost its soul and later, could not resist against the developments which were taking place in the West and attacks coming from there. As a result of this; Empire started to decline with the East. Necip Fazıl described “Tanzimat” period and modernization efforts in Ottoman Empire as a ridiculous and imitated liberation attitudes. He then mentions the decline period and does not see Turkish Liberation War as a total salvation. According to Kısakürek; Turkish War of Independence should be accepted as a liberation of land, the rest is full of apishness of West and alienation from its roots which were based on Eastern values. This perspective was repeated several times in *Büyük Doğu*.

We are strictly attached to the conscious of being a nation who sprang from the East, reached the real spirit of the East, made it an example, tied it in its essence, made it walk towards the West, reached a status to absorb the West; then petrified, lived far from absorbing the root advance that would give life to modern fruits, got lost in circles of procreator love and suffering, hugged as oyster shells to shapes of which spirit it missed, regressed against the attacks of the born and developed West, dragged from one rift to another, but didn't fall down completely, was baffled, launched ridiculous and fake independence movements from time to time, at last encountered a full clearance status, saved itself just in the frame of place with a rear up, suddenly adopted an uncontrolled West imitation on surface and item and a manner indifference for original roots and couldn't find its savior somehow.⁷⁴

In 1940s, *Büyük Doğu* was printed as a weekly journal and almost in every copy, there was a column named “Poor Turkish” (Zavallı Türkçe) which was aimed at criticizing current position

⁷⁴“Doğudan fıskırması, Doğunun gerçek ruhuna ermiş, onu örnekleştirmiş, nefisinde halkalmış, Batıya doğru yürütmüş, Batıyı yutacak hale gelmiş; sonra kabuküstü donup kalmış, yeni zaman yemişlerine can verecek kök feyzini emmekten uzak yaşamış, doğurucu ve yaşatıcı aşk ve çile dairesinden kayıp çıkmış, ruhunu kaçırdığı şekillere incisiz istirdide kabukları gibi sarılmış ve sonra doğan ve gelişen Batının karşı saldırıları önünde topyekun Doğuyla beraber gerilemiş, geriledikçe gerilemiş, bir uçurumdan öbür uçuruma sürüklenmiş, fakat tam yuvarlanmamış, apışıp kalmış, devir devir gülünç ve sahte kurtuluş hareketlerine girişmiş, nihayet büsbütün tasfiye vaziyetine düşmüş, bir şahlanışta kendisini yalnız mekan çerçevesinde kurtarabilmiş, derken işi satih ve maddede en dizginsiz Garp taklitçiliğine ve özkök alakasızlığına dökmüş, zaman çerçevesindeyse bir türlü kurtarıcısını bulamamış bir millet olma şuuruna sınırsız bağlıyız.”

Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *Ideolocya Örgüsü*, *Büyük Doğu*, 02.11.1945, p.2

and structure of Turkish language. Necip Fazıl believed that the language of Turkish nation was dishonored by the reforms. He explained the process of corruption in four stages; the first one is the invented language movement. Second process named as hidden microbes piled on the language. Third one is directly related to the Kemalist Alphabet reform; the discharge of the Arab and Persian influence and adoption of Latin Alphabet. Kısakürek claimed that this movement killed “Turkish soul”. Lastly, he addresses other reforms and describes them as the disaster of reforms.

Our language country which had been destructed in dust and dirt, burned up, broken, robbed and of which honor and pride had been given to anyone else but itself may collect the hits it took under four essential and free factors:

- 1-) Artificial language movement
- 2-) Hidden microbes piled on grammar and syntax, in other words on the structure of concept and expression.
- 3-) Despite dismissing Arabic and Persian words, calling for the Western words and pecking the soul of language.
- 4-) Calamity of reforms...⁷⁵

Although Kısakürek was not directly refer to the perception of “Turkey remained indifferent to the Arab World”, he implies the message of Early Republican reforms destroyed our soul or our

⁷⁵ “Toz, duman içinde yıkılan, alev alev yakılan, kırılan, dökülen, talan edilen, ırz ve haysiyeti kendisinden başka her el uzatana ait bırakılan dil vatanımız, içli dışlı binbir istikametten yediği darbeleri, tam dört esaslı ve istiklalli felaket müessirinde toplıyabilir:

- 1-)Uydurma dil hareketi.
- 2-) Sarf ve nahiv, yani mefhum ve ifade mimarisine üşüşen gizli mikroplar.
- 3-) Arab ve Fars kelimelerinin kış kış koğulmasına karşılık, Garp kelimelerinin bili bili çağırılması ve ruhun didik didik gaganması.
- 4-) Islahatlar faciası...”

Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *Zavallı Türkçe*, Büyük Doğu, 02.11.1945, p.16

origin which is Eastern in nature and cut our lines from our past and to where Turkey truly belongs.

The only thing should be done, according to Kısakürek, is to criticize what is called “reforms” and the people who participated to the adoption process of them during 25 years and leave them behind.

The only thing to do in terms of the main principle is to review the event that we call reform and its work and worker staff of 25 years in front of all historical and actuality scales and to be able to say "Boo!" in the frame of false consolations.⁷⁶

As it is noted in the previous paragraphs and quotations, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek was describing modernization efforts as “apishness” and argued that they started an alienation process. The cover page of *Büyük Doğu* which was printed on 9 October 1945 tells the story very well. There is a women wearing Western style mini revealing dress with a cleavage, a bottle of french wine, smoker men wearing black tie, music instruments, people dancing and drinking in the party and the question is: “Dear youth; what is given to you except these components?”⁷⁷ It is obvious that according to Kısakürek, modernization or Westernization was a kind of degenerateness but nothing more.

We see another sign of that in the cartoon named “Three-storey House’s Contradiction” (Üç Katlı Evimizin Tezadı). On the third floor, grandparents live and they are described as “salaah generation” as grandfather is praying in the cartoon. On the second floor children of “salaah generation” live and they are punting, playing poker. Lastly, on the first floor grandkids live and they are hippy. What is expressed in the cartoon is that these three generations are totally

⁷⁶ “Ana prensip bakımından yapılacak tek şey, şu ismine inkılap dediğimiz hadiseyi ve onun 25 senelik iş ve işçi kadrosunu, bütün tarih ve hakikat ölçüleri önünde erkekçe bir nefis muhasebesinden geçirmek; ve sahte teselliler devresinde “Paydos!” diyebilmektir.”

Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *Çabucak Değişiniz*, *Büyük Doğu*, 29.03.1946, p.3

⁷⁷ Cover page, *Büyük Doğu*, 09.11.1945

alienated from each other. Grandparents symbolize the old Turkish tradition or culture before the Kemalist reformation process. Children are the products of the reforms and they are retrograded as their way of life is completely opposite to Islamic values. And finally, grandkids who were described as hippy, lost their “souls” totally, alienated from their values and driveled.⁷⁸ It should also be noted that when Kısakürek was sent to prison after 1960 coup wrote his stage play book “Wooden Mansion” (Ahşap Konak), and narrated what is expressed in the cartoon of “Üç Katlı Evimizin Tezadı” in detail.

The comments in one of the articles written in Büyük Doğu directly adress Mustafa Kemal and reforms. Atatürk and CHP were blamed of cheating Turkish society as it is argued that they spent government’s money freely. They owned personal wagon, yacht and lived luxury life in palaces of Sultan’s. It is noted that while they were enjoying their lives public was facing with poverty but no one cared. Kemalist reforms caused a deep gap between the new generation and old one as they destroyed Turkish soul. It is also stated that they had hostile character towards history and alienated Turkish society.

They talked like Gods for thirty years. They reigned like pharaohs. They ate, drank, vomited... Huge allowances, private wagons, yachts, imperial lives in the palaces of sultans who they rooted away... The primrose paths... Somebody did something; let’s have a festival. Somebody undid it; let’s have a carnival. Festivity everyday. Live it up all the day! Who was suffering? People, community, villagers. They used to say “villagers are the master of the nation.” They robbed the people and villagers by saying “you are the master, master, master”. They never gave up, they weren’t ashamed, and they never got enough. Nevertheless, the good-for-nothing who were put into power were drying all of our national and moral sources; fake revolutions were causing a fit between generations through a continuous spirit and history hostility and shocking the familial and national integrity.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ *Üç Katlı Evimizin Tezadı*, Büyük Doğu, 16.11.1945

⁷⁹ “Tam otuz yıl tanrılar gibi konuştuılar. Firavunlar gibi saltanat sürdüler. Yediler, içtiler, kustular... Bol harcırahlar, hususi vagonlar, yatlar, kökünü kazıdıkları sultanların saraylarında şahane hayatlar... Zevk, eğlence âemleri... Falan filan yere ayağını bastı bayram. Falan filan yerden ayağını çekti şenlik. Her gün bayram her gün seyran! Vur patlasın, çal oynasın! Altta kalanın canı çıksın... Altta kalan kimdi? Milletti, halktı, köylü idi. Onlar nutuklarında “Bu

Kısakürek was not alone in refuting the Kemalist reformation. Cemal Reşit Rey underlines the degree of alienation by giving the example of music in his article written in *Büyük Doğu*. Rey, argues that new republic's roots belong to the East. What he basically means is that Turkey and Turkish culture are, in nature, oriental but imposed to be "Western" and this is what actually happens in music. In his article, Rey says that in early 1920s in music, Turkey turned her face to the West and started to adopt Western techniques and styles to itself. He states that during the Ottoman period there was also Western influence on music but it was in the status of "bon pour l'Orient".

As the case in most fields, there is a remarkable view about music in our country: Trying to be a Westerner when you are still Oriental... Approximately 25 years ago our country set its eyes -or rather its ears- to Western music. Don't misunderstand; was the Western music totally foreign for us beforehand? No! Melodies (polyphonic) of the West had been going through in the main science and art centers of our country and was arousing interest. However, the music which had been brought up to here was a sort of < Bon pour l'Orient > in terms of performance.⁸⁰

Before the Cold War, there was no article or news related to foreign states or foreign policy in *Büyük Doğu*. It would not be wrong to say that it was full of domestic issues. However, since 1945, presentation of United States started to take place in the journal. Dresses of American children made from the material which was used in the mining of coke,⁸¹ photos showing the

milletin efendisi köylüdür" diyorlardı. Halk ve köylüyü "efendimiz sensin, efendimiz, efendimiz" diye soydular. Ne usandılar, ne utandılar, ne doydular! Maamafih, başına getirdikleri solda sıfırlar, bütün milli ve manevi kaynaklarımızı kurutuyor, sahte inkılaplar devamlı bir ruh ve tarih düşmanlığı ile nesiller arasına nifak sokuyor, aile ve millet bütünlüğünü derinden derine sarsıyordu"

O. Yüksel Secdengeçti, *Yıkıldılar*, *Büyük Doğu*, 15.03.1952, p.2

⁸⁰ "Birçok sahada olduğu gibi, musıkide de memleketimiz, dikkat çekici nazik bir manzara arz ediyor: Şarkı iken Garp olmaya çalışmak... Memleketimiz takriben 25 sene evvel, gözlerini – kulaklarını demek daha doğru olur- Garp musıkisine doğru çevirdi. Yanlış anlaşılmasın; ondan evvel Garp musıkisi bize tamamen yabancı mıydı? Hayır! Bir aşırıdan beri Garbın nağmeleri (polifonik) terkibleriyle birlikte- memleketimizin başlıca ilim ve sanat merkezlerini dolaşmakta ve alaka uyandırmaktaydı. Fakat buraya kadar getirilen musiki, bilhassa icra bakımından daha çok < Bon pour l'Orient > nev'indendi."

Cemal Reşit Rey, *Musikimiz*, *Büyük Doğu*, 25.11.1945, p.13

⁸¹ *Yeni İnsanın Giyimini*, *Büyük Doğu*, 16.11.1945

hunger and poverty of Europeans and American soldiers helping them,⁸² rural schools in United States and their luxury, comfortable classes, the quality of education, were tried to be documented with photos.⁸³ Statues of Lincoln and Jefferson who is presented as one of the liberator of USA, Lincoln's grave, courthouse building are also documented.⁸⁴ *Büyük Doğu* describes the best policy to follow for Turkey during the Cold War is the cooperation with Islam world which Turkey has historical ties. If so, young and strong USA will also support this new association composed of Turkey and Arab states. *Büyük Doğu* states that only in that way threat of communism could be avoided.

There have been many traditional, materialistic and spiritual connections between Turkey and world of Islam, because they have lived under unique supervision of Islam for centuries. Then, we may state under the light of these facts that Turkey may not appeal to totally ruined European countries –including England- but should immediately cooperate with world of Islam which Turkey had guided for centuries and which rises as a complete political power. There is no doubt that such a powerful political unity will be assisted on a large scale by young and powerful American republic. It is even possible to suggest that Americans will prefer to help this unity which is very powerful and profitable. And thus, their supports will be in huge amounts. Then, the horrible Russian Red phantasm, which aims to clear off all material and spiritual values that humanity have gained thus far, will not be able to find strength even to move. There is no other political cure for the incomparable danger that humanity is face to face.⁸⁵

⁸² *Avrupa Açtır*, *Büyük Doğu*, 01.03.1946

⁸³ Prof. H. H. , *Amerikada Köy Okulları*, *Büyük Doğu*, 01.03.1946, p.7

⁸⁴ Prof. H.H., *Amerikada Abideler*, *Büyük Doğu*, 22.03.1946, p.7

⁸⁵ "Tek vücut halini alan bu İslam dünyası ile Türkiye arasında ötedenberi ananevi, maddi ve manevi birçok bağlantı vardır. Çünkü asırlarca tek bir İslam müessesesinin mürakabesi altında yaşamışlardır. Şu halde bütün bu yukardaki fikirlerimi hulasa edersek diyebiliriz ki artık tamamiyle mahvolmuş Avrupa devletlerinden –İngiltere dahil- hiçbir medet umulamayacağına göre Türkiye, birçok asırlar rehberliğini yaptığı ve halen İstiklalini elde ederek ufukta muazzam siyasi bir kuvvet halinde doğmakta olan İslam alemiyle bir an evvel işbirliği etmelidir. Böylece meydana gelecek olan kuvvetli siyasi birliğe genç ve kuvvetli Amerikan cumhuriyetinin de geniş ölçüde müzaheret edeceğine şüphe edilmez. Hatta denilebilir ki, Amerikalılar asıl böyle kuvvetli ve kendisinden fayda umulabilecek bu birliğe yardım etmeyi tercih edeceklerdir. Ve bu takdirdedir ki, yardımları çok muazzam yekûnlara balığ olacaktır. Ancak işte o zaman, beşeriyetin şimdiki kadar edindiği bütün maddi ve manevi kıymetleri yok etmeğe kasdeden korkunç Rus Kızıl heyulası, yerinden kıpırdamağa bile kendinde mecal bulamaz. İnsanlığın maruz kaldığı misilsiz tehlikeye karşı bundan müessir siyase çare yoktur.

Muharrem Feyzi Togay, *Kızıl Tehlikeye Karşı Müttfikimiz*, *Büyük Doğu*, 23.03.1947

When we come to 1950s we see that the atmosphere of Büyük Doğu started to change as more news especially related to the developments in Middle Eastern region and Turkey's relations with Arab states took place in the newspaper such as "Border Conference Between Turkey and Syria"⁸⁶, "Tunisia Needs Turkey's Help"⁸⁷, an article named "Egypt" which explains the bargains between United Kingdom and Egypt⁸⁸, "Turkey Protects Muslim States Against the Threat of Communism"⁸⁹, "Tunisia Will Avoid Cruelty"⁹⁰, "Amity of Egypt and Turkey"⁹¹, "Pakistan and Communism"⁹², "Efforts Made to Annul Arab-Israeli Agreement"⁹³. Maybe the most remarkable headline was "Turkey As The Leader of The East"⁹⁴

By giving place to the developments which were taking place in the Muslim World, Necip Fazıl and Büyük Doğu team, want to confirm themselves. As noted before; Kısakürek's ideology is simply based on the creation of Muslim Empire including the Arab states and Turkey would be the dominant or leader state.

⁸⁶ *Türkiye-Suriye Hudut Konferansı*, Büyük Doğu, 15.03.1952, p.2

⁸⁷ It is stated that Tunisian authorities declared Turkey as the only state that they could trust in UNSC for avoiding French occupation their lands. See *Tunus Türkiye'den Yardım İstiyor*, Büyük Doğu, 19.03.1952, p.1

⁸⁸ *Mısır*, Büyük Doğu, 21.03.1952, p.1

⁸⁹ In this article, the speech of the ex prime minister of Indonesia Mohammed Nasser was written and it is underlined the part which he described Turkey like a castle standing erect against communism and also protecting Muslim world. See "Türkiye Komünizme Karşı İslam Ülkelerini Koruyor", *Büyük Doğu*, 22.03.1952, p.1-6

⁹⁰ *Tunus Zulümden kurtulacaktır*, Büyük Doğu, 23.03.1952, p. 1

⁹¹ The article focuses on another article which was published in Egyptian newspaper "Al-Ahram". In that article, the common history, culture and religion which Turkey and Egypt share is underlined and Turkey's efforts for improving the friendship were appreciated. It is stated that Turkish government ordered works of some important Egyptian enlightened to adopt them in Turkish curriculum. See "Türk-Mısır Dostluğu", *Büyük Doğu*, 26.03.1952, p.3

⁹² *Pakistan ve Komünizm*, Büyük Doğu, 26.03.1952, p.3

⁹³ *Arap-İsrail Anlaşmasının Feshine Çalışılıyor*, Büyük Doğu, 26.03.1952, p. 3

⁹⁴ Article named "Does Turkey Really Give Importance to Turkish-Arab Amity?" and pressed in the famous Lebanese newspaper "Al-Nehar" was reported. It is noted that Arabs do not have any doubt about Fuat Köprülü's sincerity. It is also stated that Arab nations were suffering (examples of Palestine, Tunisia, Israel's declaration of Jerusalem as its capital given) and Turkey as a country which has close relations with the West and member of North Atlantic Treaty, can be the mediator between the Arab World and Western World to solve the problems of Muslim world. It is stated that when Köprülü take such a step, then, Arab world would declare Turkey as the leader of the East. See *Türkiye Şark'ın Önderi*, *Büyük Doğu*, 01.06.1952, p. 1-6

2.1 On the Diplomatic Ground

2.1.1 Historical Conditioning of the First Republican Elite

The separation took place many times in Turkish foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's book called *Stratejik Derinlik*. In his book, Davutoğlu discusses that after the first World War, Turkey demolished the bridges in terms of politics, culture and strategic relations and as a matter of fact, could not enjoy the advantages which come from its dominance lasted five hundred years in the period of partition of Middle Eastern natural resources which were very influential for determining global relations of the region and the only exception of that is Atatürk's Alexandretta policy.

At the end of the World War I, Turkey burned down all the political, cultural and strategic bridges with Middle East and turned its back; and in the period sharing the natural sources that may determine all the global relations of the region, Turkey couldn't use the opportunity of reigning the region for more than 500 years. The main exception is Hatay policy of Atatürk who, with a good timing, made use of the gap in the region after the leave of France and obscurity conjuncture before the World War II.⁹⁵

Davutoğlu also explains why Middle Eastern image has to be forsaken according to Turkish elites. His main answer to the question is elites' common beliefs which state that Arab culture is an obstacle for the modernization and it is impossible to complete the modernization process without abandoning the influences of this region. Ahmet Davutoğlu underlines that what appears in the perceptions of Turkish political elites of the time such as Falih Rıfki Atay, is also valid for policy makers. At this point, Davutoğlu addresses first World War and defines the cooperation of Arab states with the enemies of Ottoman Empire as bad

⁹⁵"Birinci Dünya Savaşı sonunda Ortadoğu ile bütün politik, kültürel ve stratejik köprüleri atarak sırtını dönme politikası uygulayan Türkiye bu bölgenin bütün küresel ilişkileri belirleyecek güçteki tabii kaynaklarının paylaşım sürecini içinde orada beş yüz sene süren hakimiyetinin getirdiği avantajları yeterince kullanamamıştır. Bunun tek istisnası Fransa'nın terki ile ortaya çıkan boşluğu ve II. Dünya Savaşı öncesi belirsizlik konjonktürünü iyi bir zamanlama ile değerlendiren Atatürk'ün Hatay politikası olmuştur."

Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001, p.56

experiences of Turks with Muslim world. Related to that, for that period of time, what should be done also in terms of politics and military is again to stay away from the “East”. The inevitable impact of these perceptions which took the form of prejudice by the time is Turkey’s alienation and separation from the Arab culture, politics and domestic balances of the region. This rupture destroyed the chance of catching the rhythm of the changes in the region for Turkey and prejudices related to Arab image played an important role, even became the main concentration in Turkish foreign policy making.

The main obstacle for non-modernization of Turkish elites is the cultural background under the influence of Arabic styles. Thus, there will be no modernization without getting over the geography representing this background. Therefore, the Middle East image for Turkish elites represents the underdevelopment that should be abandoned in terms of culturally and also a military/political risk area to be avoided in terms of political views fed by experiences of World War I. This conception finds its literal form in *Zeytindağı* novel by Falih Rıfki Atay and in some idioms, and has affected Turkish diplomats, researchers and politicians so much that analyses of the region have been fed on external sources. Alienation of Turkey from culture, policy and internal balances of the region, and its separation to a certain extent, have destroyed the possibility of catching the change rhythms in the region and biases about Arabic image has placed in the center of foreign policy making.⁹⁶

The separation from the Muslim world can also be seen in terms of diplomacy. It is argued that Early Republic did not make efforts to create strong diplomatic ties with the Arab states. Kemalist Turkey was obedient and did not make compromises about the reforms. At this point, alienation which has started especially with the cultural reforms played an important

⁹⁶“Bu dönem Türk seçkinleri için modernleşememenin önündeki engel Arap etkisindeki kültür birikimidir, dolayısıyla da bu birikimi temsil eden coğrafyanın tesirinden kurtulmadan modernleşmek mümkün olmaz. Bu nedendir ki, genelde Türk seçkinlerindeki Ortadoğu imajı kültürel yönüyle terk edilmesi gereken geri kalmışlığı temsil ederken, I. Dünya Savaşındaki tecrübelerden beslenen siyasi yönüyle de mümkün oldukça uzak durulması gereken bir askeri/siyasi risk alanıdır. Edebi formunu Falih Rıfki Atay’ın *Zeytindağı* romanında, popüler formunu *ne Arabın yüzü ne Şam’ın şekeri* deyişinde bulan bu algılama biçimi Türk diplomatlarını, araştırmacılarını ve siyaset yapımcılarını öylesine etkilemiştir ki, bölgeye dönük tahliller hemen hemen tümüyle dış kaynaklardan beslenir olmuştur. Türkiye’nin bölgenin kültürüne, siyasetine ve iç dengelerine yabancılaşması, hatta bir ölçüde kopuşu, bölgedeki değişmelerin ritmini yakalama imkanını yok etmiş ve Arap imajı ile ilgili oluşan genel önkabuller dış politika yapımının merkezine yerleşmiştir.”

Ibid, 56

role in the diplomatic separation from the Arab nations. The example of fez crisis between Turkey and Egypt is given frequently to explain the situation better and to show Mustafa Kemal's sardonic attitude towards muslim representatives.

The crisis emphasized previously occurred between Kemal Atatürk and Egyptian ambassador Abdülmelik Hamza Bey in 1932 left behind a mark in terms of diplomatic relations of young Republic with Egypt. Celebration of the 9th anniversary of the proclamation of the republic in Turkey, had three stages; firstly Atatürk accepted the congratulations. Second stage was the view of the parade which was taking place in Ulus, in front of Turkish National Assembly and the last stage was the dinner at Ankara Palas which is followed by the ball at the same place.

According to the eye witnesses, Egyptian ambassador participated to all of the celebrations without removing his fez despite the existing prohibition of wearing it since 1925. In the book of "Bizim Diplomatlar" written by retired Turkish diplomat Bilal Şimşir, it is noted that Hamza Bey was on duty in Turkey since 1930 and did not give a hoot to the fez prohibition and according to the Turkish officials it was a kind of provocative attitude. No one reported him before, however; it was his first encountering with Kemal Atatürk.

After the dinner, before passing to the ball, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk went to talk to Hamza Bey. He objected to the fez that Egyptian ambassador was wearing and asked him to remove it. At the same time, Atatürk called the waiter to put Hamza Bey's fez on the salver. All the participants in the saloon were surprised and Egyptian leader had to leave.

This is the whole story. According to Şimşir's book, the crisis did not infiltrated the media and thought to be forgotten but on 11 November, English newspaper Daily Herald's headline was "A fez will cause a diplomatic break out". Another English newspaper "Evening

Standard” was also writing that tension increasing between Turkey and Egypt because of the fez of Egyptian ambassador.⁹⁷

After the announcement of the crisis by the English newspapers, the reaction in Egypt was very severe. Egyptian press was full of this issue and El-Belag newspaper reminded that fez was a national symbol of the country and was blaming Atatürk for insulting Egypt and call Turkish president

It is the 29th of October 1932, the Republic Day. President Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) is receiving foreign chiefs in Ankara, shaking hands with them one by one. Abdülmelik Hamza Bey, Ambassador of Egypt, comes to the ceremony wearing a fez and congratulates the President. Fez was banned 7 years ago in Turkey. The ambassador of Egypt does not care; he has been wearing a fez since he arrived in Ankara 2 years ago. Turkish authorities sense a provocation in this; but they don't take action. And now Hamza Bey with his fez is before Atatürk.

After the ceremony there is a parade, which takes place in front of the Turkish National Assembly of the time. Ambassadors of foreign countries are present. The Ambassador of Egypt watches the parade wearing his fez.

In the evening Atatürk has 200 guests for dinner. Soldiers, prominent Turkish citizens as well as ambassadors of foreign countries in Ankara are invited. The dinner will be followed by a ball prepared by Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party). Ambassador of Egypt attends the dinner with his fez, never to take it off during the dinner. Then the guests make it to the ball.

It all happens at that time. According to Sir George Clerk, Ambassador of England, Atatürk says “Tell your king that I, Mustafa Kemal, ordered you to take off your fez” to the Ambassador of Egypt. And he calls a waiter to whom the ambassador gives his fez. The waiter takes the fez away on a silver tray and disappears under amazed looks of the guests. The Ambassador of Egypt leaves the place disillusioned⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Bilal N. Şimşir, *Bizim Diplomatlar*, Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1996, p.273

⁹⁸“Tarih, 29 Ekim 1932, Cumhuriyet Bayramı. Cumhurbaşkanı Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), kutlamaları kabul ediyor. Ankara'daki yabancı misyon şefleri sırayla Atatürk'ün elini sıkıyorlar. Bu arada Mısır Elçisi Abdülmelik Hamza Bey fesli olarak törene geliyor ve Cumhurbaşkanı'nı kutluyor. Fes, Türkiye'de yedi yıldır yasak. Mısır Elçisi, aldırıyor; iki yıl önce Türkiye'ye geldiğinden beri Ankara'da hep fesle dolaşiyor. Türk yetkililer elçinin bu tutumunda biraz kıskırtma niyeti de sezinliyorlar, ama ses çıkarmıyorlar. Ve Hamza Bey şimdi Atatürk'ün huzuruna da fesle çıkıyor.

After the announcement of the crisis by the English newspapers, the reaction in Egypt was very severe. Egyptian press was full of this issue and Al-Belag newspaper reminded that fez was a national symbol of the country and was blaming Atatürk for insulting Egypt and stated that Turkish president should apologise.

Fez was the national head dress of Egypt, and removing it was an insult to Egypt. This insult could not have been corrected even if Mustafa Kemal had apologized.⁹⁹

Cairo government sent a diplomatic note to Turkey and repeated Egyptian demand of "apology" but it did not reduce the tension in the country as Ankara declared that Turkey would not retreat by sending a reply note. Press continued to criticise Mustafa Kemal and event talked about cutting down all the diplomatic ties with Turkey.

In the days of the Turkish diplomatic note was sent to Cairo, English newspapers wrote, "Mustafa Kemal will never apologize". Egyptian press was enraged by this again. Let's halt diplomatic affairs if he does not apologize, they would say.¹⁰⁰

As a result; Turkey did not make an excuse and in the second diplomatic note that Egypt sent to Ankara, it is claimed that Turkish protocol and Egypt's uniform with fez would not

Kutlamalardan sonra, geçit töreni izleniyor. Tören, Ulus'ta, o zamanki Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi önünde yapılıyor. Yabancı elçiler de törenedirler. Mısır Elçisi, geçit törenini de fesli olarak izliyor.

Akşam, Atatürk, Ankara Palas'ta, iki yüz kişilik resmi bir yemek veriyor. Asker, sivil ileri gelen Türklerin yanı sıra Ankara'daki yabancı elçiler de davetli. Yemeği, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisinin vereceği balo izleyecek. Mısır Elçisi, akşamki yemeğe de fesli olarak gelmiş ve yemek boyunca masada fesli oturmuştur. Yemekten sonra baloya geçilmiş.

Ne olmuşsa işte o zaman, yemekten baloya geçerken olmuş. Yemekte hazır bulunan İngiliz Büyükelçisi Sir George Clerk'e göre, Atatürk, Mısır Elçisinin yanından geçerken: "Kralınıza söyleyiniz, ben, Mustafa Kemal, size bu akşam fesinizi çıkarmanız talimatını verdim." Demiş ve bir garson çağırmış. Elçi, uysallıkla fesini çıkarıp garsona vermiş. Garson kalabalık davetlilerin şaşkın bakışları arasında, bir gümüş tepsi üzerinde fes salonun öbür ucuna doğru götürüp gözden kaybolmuş. Mısır Elçisi, üzüntüyle hemen oradan çekilmiş." Ibid, 270-271

⁹⁹ "Fes Mısır'ın ulusal başlığıydı. Fesi çıkartmak, Mısır'a hakaretti. Gazi'nin Hamza Bey'den özür dilemesi, bu hakareti temizlemeye yetmezdi."

Ibid, 274

¹⁰⁰ "Türk notasının Kahire'ye gönderildiği günlerde, İngiliz gazeteleri, "Mustafa Kemal asla özür dilemez" diye yazmışlardı. Bunun üzerine Mısır basını, yeniden ayağa kalkmıştı. Özür dilemezse Türkiye ile diplomatik ilişkileri hemen keselim diye yayın yapıyor, ateş püskürüyordu."

Ibid, 275

confrontate. Turkey should organize its own protocol but Egyptian diplomatic representatives should wear traditional official dress.¹⁰¹

This crisis had a broad repercussion as even in 2003, it took place in Egyptian newspaper called "Al-Ahram". In the article written by Professor Yunan Labib Rizk, it is stated that wearing of a fez caused a diplomatic crisis between Turkey and Egypt and the relations were severed but the incident must be taken into consideration in the context of the dramatic change in the relations of Turkey and Egypt after the Kemalist reforms such as the abolishment of the Caliphate and proclamation of the Republic in young Turkey.

Relations between Egypt and Turkey descended so low in 1932 that the wearing of a tarboush managed to cause a diplomatic row between the two countries... The "incident of the tarboush" must be seen against the background of the steadily worsening relations between Egypt and Turkey since the declaration of the Turkish Republic and that government's abolition of the Caliphate in 1924.¹⁰²

2.1.2 Lack of Bilateral Relations

Lack of bilateral relations with the Muslim states is another claim which is given when promoting Turkey's indifference. It is argued that Kemalist Turkey did not form official relations and hence signed no bilateral agreements with the Arab countries. It is also discussed that up to 1938, there was 42 Muslim states but Kemalist Turkey only made efforts to create relations aimed at providing peace, amity, good neighbour relations and signed limited agreements related to customs regulations and demarcations with only 8 Arab states which were Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Syria and Hejaz, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 276

¹⁰² Yunan Labib Rizk, *The Ambassador's Tarboush*, Al-Ahram Weekly, 2003, available at <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2003/650/chncls.htm> [accessed on 15.07.2012]

Mustafa Bıyıklı states that because of the political zionism and emperialist connections of the young Turkish Republic, up to 1938 even with the 8 Muslim states stated previously, did not establish economic, cultural, industrial, agricultural and commercial relations and did not cooperate with Arab states in health, tourism, judiciary, construction and transportation sectors.

By 1938, Turkey had concluded an agreement with 42 Islamic countries, with only 8 Middle Eastern countries included therein (Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria and Hejaz, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen), in fields of customs, borders, nature, peace, brotherhood, and neighborhood. It is interesting that no agreements were made between Turkey and these countries in the fields of economy, industry, petrol, technology, transportation, agriculture, tourism, culture, construction, healthcare, law, and commerce between the foundation of Turkish Republic and 1938, partly due to relation and driving motive of political Zionism and imperialism. This could not have resulted from resentment caused by the imperialist propoganda of "they betrayed us" in order to separate Turks and Arabs, disregarding the economic, strategic and cultural concerns of a nation and a country. This is because unforgivable intentions and catastrophes of the Greeks and the Armenian, who slaughtered the Turks, and the English, who wanted to disintegrate Turkey and destroy the Turks, were not taken as obstacles for the new Turkey to be friend and cooperate with these countries. The new Turkey might have abstained from accusations for having imperialist intentions and from getting in touch with imperialist interests of England and France, which kept the Middle East under strict control both economically and politically by local authorities under mandate.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ "1938'e kadar 42 İslam ülkesi ve bunun içerisindeki Ortadoğu ülkelerinden sadece 8 ülkeyle (Afganistan, Irak, İran, Lübnan, Mısır, Suriye ve Hicaz, Necid ve Mülhakatı Hükümeti (Suudi Arabistan) ve Yemen ile), gümrük, hudut, tabiyet, barış, dostluk ve iyi komşuluk antlaşmalarıyla sınırlı antlaşmalar yapabilmışti. İlginçtir ki bu belirtilen devletler ve diğer İslam ülkeleriyle yeni Türkiye'nin kuruluşu ile 1938 arasında, biraz da politik Siyonizm ve emperyalizm ilişkisi ve güdücü etkisiyle hiçbir ekonomik, sanayi, petrol, teknik, ulaşım, tarım, turizm, kültür, inşa, sağlık, adli ve ticari yönde hiçbir işbirliği ve antlaşma yapılmamıştır. Bu bir milletin ve devletin ekonomik, stratejik ve kültürel hayati çıkarlarını hiçe sayarak, Türklerle Arapları birbirinden ayırmaya yönelik "arkadan vurdu" emperyalist propogandasına dayalı kırgınlıktan dolayı olamazdı. Çünkü Türkiye'yi parçalamak ve Türkleri yok etmek niyet ve isteğinde olan İngiltere'nin, Türkleri katliamdan geçiren Yunanlıların ve Ermenilerin bu affedilmez niyet ve fecaatleri yeni Türkiye'nin onlarla dostluk ve işbirliği kurmasına mani görülmemişti. Bu belki de yeni Türkiye, manda altındaki yerli idarecilerle Ortadoğu'yu ekonomik ve politik abluka, sömürge ve manda altındaki yerli idarecilerle Ortadoğu'yu ekonomik ve politik abluka, sömürge ve manda idaresi altına almış olan İngiltere ve Fransa ile bu durumda karşılaşma, beraber antlaşma yapma zorunluluğu duyacağından onların emperyalist çıkarlarına dokunmaktan ve tarihi mücadele sürecinin ruhlar üzerinde sindirdiği emperyalist emel besleme suçlamasından çekinmekteydi."

Mustafa Bıyıklı, *Batı İşgalleri Karşısında Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu Politikaları*, İstanbul: Gökkuşbu, 2006, p.174.

This assumption of Bıyıklı will be analyzed in detail in the following part of the thesis but it would be useful to highlight that there was no such thing like a tourism at this period of time. Even the heads of the states could not make international visits like they do nowadays due to the security reasons. It seems like Bıyıklı did not consider conditions of that time and simply compared the situation existed in the Early republican period with today and added tourism as an indicator which helps him to come up with a conclusion of Kemalist Turkey's lack of bilateral relations with the East. As noted before, counter-argument against Bıyıklı's claim related to Young Republic's insufficient diplomatic representation will be criticized in the following chapter in depth, (by referring the Turkish representatives state by state), however there is one more question to ask at this point; How was the political, economic, cultural, industrial, agricultural and commercial relations with the Arab states during Ottoman period? Can one say that there is a dramatic decline in the number of the cooperations provided with Muslim states in tourism, health, judiciary, construction and transportation sectors between Ottoman times and Early Republican period? The answer is simply no. As noted above, there was no such thing like tourism at that time and it's the same for the construction, transportation and so on... So, if one state turned its back on to a region or a state, there should be an observable dramatic change in the relations. However, there is no such thing in this case, thus we cannot talk about the existence of Turkey's isolation.

It needs to be highlighted that Turkey's indifference to the Arab world is accepted as an a priori and while talking about Turkish alienation from Muslim states, generally, what is meant by the alienation is not explained just like in the foreign policy report of Virtue Party which was closed in 2001.

Middle-East policy of Turkey has to be reviewed. Turkey has been trapped between alienation to Middle-East's geo-cultural structure due to its Western block based Middle-East policy and exclusion from profits that bare the costs of Western block's foreign policy strategies.¹⁰⁴

Despite being geographically European, it is impossible for Turkey to stay away from Middle Eastern politics due to its location. However, since the early days of the republic, Kemalist Turkey restricted its relations with the region and it was the dominant situation until JDP came to power.

Even if Turkey is a part of Europe, its geographical location in the Middle East invariably thrusts it into the heart of Middle Eastern politics, whether the Turks like it or not. But from the founding of the modern Turkish Republic in 1923, its relations with the most former Muslim regions of the Ottoman Empire have been limited and strained. Only relatively recently has Turkey's involvement in the Middle East begun to change course dramatically.¹⁰⁵

Smilar point was raised by Mustafa Bıyıklı. He argued that in 20th century, Turkey's relations with Arab states was at minimum. To support this pretence Turkey's relations with Egypt is given as an example. It is stated that Ankara government created military relations for some little issues with Egyptian government but it was not enough as commercial and cultural relations were lacking.

Government relations between Arabs and Turks in the 20th century took place in a completely lower level. Egypt-Turkey relations were very weak. Turkey and Egypt had some minor cooperation in military fields. Relations in commercial and cultural life were very limited.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴“Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu politikası da ciddi bir revizyondan geçirilmek zorundadır. Türkiye geçmişteki Batı bloğuna endeksli Ortadoğu politikası ile hem Ortadoğu'nun jeo-kültürel yapısına yabancılaşmış hem de Batı bloğunun dış politika stratejilerinin maliyetlerini üstlenen karlarına ise ortak edilmeyen bir kıskaç içerisinde kalmıştır.”

Fazilet Partisi Dış İlişkiler Başkanlığı, GİK raporu, 30 Temmuz 2000, p.47

¹⁰⁵ Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008, p.4

¹⁰⁶“20.Yüzyılda Araplarla Türkler arasındaki ilişkiler tamamen alt bir seviyede olmuştur. Mısır-Türkiye arasındaki ilişkiler çok düşük bir durumda olmuştur. Askeri alanda Türkiye-Mısır bazı küçük şeylerde işbirliği içerisine girmiştir. Ticaret ve kültür alışverişi ise çok az olmuştur.”

What was dominant in Turkish Foreign Policy was its concentration to the West and efforts to adopt itself to the Western values. This political vision affected significantly Early Republic's Middle East policies as Graham Fuller defines it as a political coolness. It is argued that there is a kind of cause and effect relationship between Turkish extreme modest role in the "East" and its will of approaching to the West. The first one was an inevitable result of the second one as most of the states in Middle Eastern region were under the control of mandate powers which Turkey was aimed at developing good relations. It was not possible to have good relations with both sides and Kemalist Republic, without any hesitation, cut the lines with Arab world and rejected Muslim culture to make easy the reformation process.

Up until World War II, the Muslim world played an extremely modest role in Turkish foreign policy calculations. The new republic remained preoccupied with the more urgent issues of European imperial politics, while most of the Arab world lay under European imperial mandate. As a result, Ankara showed a distinct political coolness if not disdain toward the region and a cultural rejection of it.¹⁰⁷

The most common approach to Kemalist Republic's Middle Eastern attitude is generally described as indifference and arguments which were given to validate it and which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter as a counter argument, focus on 1920s and the reformation process and disregard the developments in 1930s. However, a Turkish academic Bezen Balamir Coşkun criticizes one of the most important incident in 1930s as a proof of Kemalist Turkey's indifference policy toward the Arab world. According to Coşkun, Sadabad Pact which was signed in 1937 between Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan cannot be described as a regional cooperation, it was a product of Kemalist policy of "leaving Arabs alone". It is claimed that, contrary to popular belief, Sadabad Pact was aimed at ignoring any

Bıyıklı, p.353

¹⁰⁷ Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008, p.30

kind of intervention to the domestic affairs of the countries that were a part of the treaty. By signing this pact, Turkey stabilized her indifference policy by avoiding any possible confrontation with Arab states.

Turkey's Middle-East policy up to the end of 1930s was based on non interfering to Arabs' domestic affairs. Despite the bilateral relations with some of the Middle-East countries, the main idea was to leave the Arabs alone. Sadabad Pact, which was signed in 1937 with Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan is an obvious example indicating how Kemalist foreign policy have located itself with Middle-East. Sadabad Pact wasn't signed for regional collaboration but to prevent the intervention of the parties into internal affairs of one another. Turkish governments preferred not to concern about Middle-East throughout this period and avoided any situation that may place themselves anywhere against Middle-East countries.¹⁰⁸

Kemalist Turkey refused to give economic support to Muslim nations during their struggle of liberation despite the fact that they helped her substantially and morally during Turkish War of Independence is another argument that we face. It is argued that due to the psychological factors such as the lack of trust between Turks and Arabs which came from the feeling of "Arabs betrayed Ottoman Empire during WWI", Turkey did not provide economic assistance to Muslim world.

Turkey was in a way indifferent to Middle-East after 1924. It did not provide financial aid to them whereas it gave support in state level. The reason for not giving financial support is psychological. Betrayal of Arab authorities in the First World War had not been forgotten by the new Turkish governors yet. In addition, Turkey did not dare to have a clash of arms with England or France since it could not protect the straits well enough. Anti-Westernism that initiated in the Arab world was accompanied with anti-

¹⁰⁸"1930'ların sonuna kadar Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu politikası Arapların işlerine müdahale etmemek üzere kuruldu. Ortadoğu ülkelerinin bazıları ile kurulan ikili ilişkilere rağmen ana fikir Arapları kendi hallerine bırakmaktı. 1937 yılında Irak, İran ve Afganistan ile imzalanan Sadabad Paktı, Kemalist dış politikanın Ortadoğu ile kendini nasıl konumlandığının en net örneğidir. Sadabad Paktı, sanılanın aksine bölgesel işbirliği amacıyla değil tafraların birbirlerinin işlerine müdahalelerini engellemek amacıyla imzalanmıştır. Bu dönem boyunca Türk hükümetleri Ortadoğu'da olan bitenle ilgilenmemeyi terhid ederek, kendilerinin Ortadoğu ülkeleri ile karşı karşıya getirecek herhangi bir durumdan kaçınmışlardır."

Bezen Balamir Coşkun, *Ortadoğu ve batı arasında Türkiye:sınırlar, köprüler, dönüşümler* edited by Sedat Aybar in *Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu Politikası 4. Kadir Has Ödülleri Kitabı*, İstanbul: Kadir Has Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2008, p.290

Turkism. The Arab world was not welcoming Turkey getting closer to the West. Therefore, Turkey did not venture the Arabs and opt for staying indifferent to the Middle-East for a long time.¹⁰⁹

It is a historical fact that Turkey did not give economic aid to Arab states but here is the question to ask: “How was the Turkish economy at that time?” or “Was Turkey able to draw up such a budget?” The answer is simply “no”. It would be useful to remind that at that time, Young Republic had just came out of war and it was composed of dilapidated lands. The public was poor, there was even no cash in the treasury coffers of the Republic. If we put it in a different way, we can say that the military and economic supports which came from Soviet Union and Eastern states played an important in the success reached in Turkish War of Independence. During the nation creation process, Turkey was aimed at ameliorating its economic conditions and putting off its aidless situation. Additionally, time conditions is the most important point for the evaluations that are made for academic purposes and for this case, 1930 Great depression should be comprised into account. At that time, not only Turkey but the whole world was struggling with economic problems and the main focus was to be afloat. Thus, apart from giving economic help to the others surviving the national economies was what the world was trying to do. Despite all these facts, Ankara government, in 1921 signed a treaty of friendship with Afghanistan in Moscow and both sides recognized their sovereignty. In terms of this treaty Turkey would send teachers and army officers to

¹⁰⁹ “Türkiye 1924’den sonra Ortadoğu’ya karşı bir bakıma kayıtsız kalmıştır. Onların mücadelelerine resmi düzeyde destek verirken, maddi yardımda bulunmamıştır. Türkiye’nin bu ülkelere maddi yardım yapmamasının temel nedeni psikolojik faktördür. Birinci Dünya Savaşındaki Arap ihaneti Türkiye’nin yeni yöneticilerinin hafızalarından henüz silinmemiştir. Bunun yanında Türkiye Boğazlarda güvenliğini tam sağlayamadığı için, gerek İngiltere, gerek Fransa ile silahlı bir çatışmayı göze alamamıştır. Arap dünyasında başlayan anti-batıcılığın yanı sıra anti -Türkçülük de vardır. Türkiye’nin batıya yaklaşması Araplar arasında hoş karşılanmamıştı. Dolayısıyla da Türkiye bölgede Araplar lehine riske girme gereği duymadı ve uzun süre Ortadoğu’ya karşı kayıtsız bir politika izledi.”
Aydın Can, *Atatürk Dönemi Türkiye’nin Ortadoğu Politikası*,
[http://turkoloji.cu.edu.tr/ATATURK/arastirmalar/aydin can ataturk donemi ortadogu politikalari.pdf](http://turkoloji.cu.edu.tr/ATATURK/arastirmalar/aydin%20can%20aturk%20donemi%20ortadogu%20politikalari.pdf), [accessed on 17th June 2012]

Afghanistan in the framework of cultural aid. Besides this, both countries established education and cultural exchange programs. Inside Afghanistan Turkish schools were established. Furthermore, Turkish army officers assisted or even commanded the training of Afghan military members and by the treaty which was signed on May 1928 the number of the exchange Turkish officials increased. This cooperation answers the question of “ How could Ankara may help another region?” Instead of going to war with imperial powers because of the worse economic and military conditions as the country got just out of battle and even abandoned its claims over Mosul area due to that, the only thing that it could do was to interpret good relations and significant cooperation which would play an important role in the development of the state of relief. So it would be nonsense to talk about the lack of economic support of Turkey to the Arab states in the period of early republic.

Chapter III: Counter Arguments

It is striking that Islamist arguments emphasize what the young republic did to transform social and political conditions in Turkey in the 1920s. The abolishment of the Ottoman dynasty and of the caliphate were often criticized as a deliberate severance of ties with the Muslim World that Turkey inherited from the Ottoman Empire. However, Islamist circles seem to have overlooked the impact on the East of these reforms. Critics focused on the first phase of the reforms and somehow ignored what many in the East would come to consider as the achievements of the new Republic. In other words, critics seemed to have turned deaf ears to the expressions of admiring respect for these aired by influential quarters in respective “Eastern” countries. At this point attention should be paid to Mohammed Iqbal’s changing views about Turkey’s efforts towards Westernization. Islamist views of Iqbal highlight his earlier criticism of the Westernization that Ankara tried to practise, yet ignores the way Iqbal changed his views on Kemalist Turkey. Impressed by Turkey’s republican experience, Iqbal appears to have revised the criticisms he put forward in the 1920s. With regard to the abolition of the caliphate *Khilafat*, he later finds the Turkish view “perfectly sound”.

Let us now see how the Grand National Assembly has exercised this power of *Ijtihad* in regard to the institution of the Caliphate. According to Sunni Law the appointment of an Imam or Khalifa is mandatory. The first question that arises in connexion with this is: should the Caliphate be vested in a single person? Turkey's view of *Ijtihad* is that, according to the spirit of Islam, the Caliphate or Imamate can be vested in a body of persons, or in an elected Assembly. The doctors of Islamic Law in Egypt and India, so far as I know, have not yet expressed themselves on this point. Personally, I believe the Turkish view is perfectly sound. It is hardly necessary to argue this point. The republican form of government is not only thoroughly consistent with the spirit of

Islam, but has also become a necessity in view of the new forces that are set free in the world of Islam.¹¹⁰

In the following part of the quotation, Iqbal underlines the epochal meaning that Turkey's experiment has for other Muslim states. He argues that the Turkish experiment sets a precedent for future evolution in Islamic law. For the Turk, he claims, "life has begun to move, change, and amplify, giving birth to new desires, bringing new difficulties and suggesting new interpretations". He openly invites Muslims of the world to scrutinize what Republican Turkey had done to interpret Islamic institutions. A longer quotation may be necessary, lest the integrity of his views be distorted.

The truth is that among the Muslim nations of today, Turkey alone has shaken off its dogmatic slumber, and attained consciousness of self. She alone has claimed the right to intellectual freedom; she alone has passed from the ideal to the real - a transition which entails keen intellectual and moral struggle. To her the growing complexities of a mobile and broadening life are sure to bring new situations suggesting new points of view and necessitating fresh interpretations of principles which are only of an academic interest to a people who have never experienced the joy of spiritual expansion. It is, I believe, the English philosopher, Hobbes, who makes the acute observation that to have a succession of identical thoughts and feelings is to have no thoughts or feelings at all. Such is the lot of most Muslim countries today. They are mechanically repeating old values, whereas the Turk is on the way to creating new values. He has passed through great experiences which have revealed to him his deeper self. In his life has begun to move, change, and amplify, giving birth to new desires, bringing new difficulties and suggesting new interpretations. The question which confronts him today, and which is likely to confront other Muslim countries in the near future, is whether the Law of Islam is capable of evolution - a question which will require great intellectual effort, and is sure to be answered in the affirmative; provided the world of Islam approaches it in the spirit of Omar - the first critical and independent mind in Islam who, during the last moments of the Prophet, had the moral courage to utter these remarkable words: "The Book of God is sufficient for us."¹¹¹

Just as in the case of Iqbal, the criticisms which were raised in the East towards Kemalist reforms in the 1920s and 1930s differed from each other, a fact some scholars disregard. This chapter will start with a discussion of the republican reforms and a consideration of these in

¹¹⁰ Muhammad Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore: 1960, p.157 quoted in Fazlur Rahman, "Muhammad Iqbal and Atatürk's Reforms", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (April 1984), p.161.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 162

the light of their long term implications. In accordance with their order of importance, the strongest argument in Islamist circles - that the abolishment of the Caliphate severed relations between Turkey and the Muslim World will be the looked at first in this discussion. Other aspects of the argument, such as the idea that the Khalifate had already lost its weight and functionality as a religious and political institution, will be considered. Thirdly, focus will be placed on the diplomatic activities of Kemalist Turkey in the "East". This section will highlight some examples of Ankara's diplomatic endeavours in the Middle and Near East so as to give a comprehensive illustration of what Turkey achieved in the diplomatic realm. In this regard, it is important to note that Islamist argumentation is mostly confined to the Muslim World in general and to the ex-Ottoman parts of the Muslim World in particular. It is evident, however, that the area where the impact that the Kemalist experience was received and taken as a model was far greater than the extent of the Middle East as we understand it to day.

3.1 Disregard of the Outcomes of the Reforms

Generally speaking, in the first half of the 1920s, the reaction of the Arab world to Kemalist reforms was negative. However, the criticisms emanating from Arab states had already started to change by the 1930s. This is true even for the first negative reactions against the abolishment of the Caliphate, which was, and still remained, part and parcel of the Islamist criticisms of Kemalist Turkey. Related to that, it cannot be a coincidence that most of the quotations concerning the reactions of the Muslim world to Kemalist reforms deal with those of the 1920s.

In the 1930s, the religious institution known as the Caliphate was accepted as a thing of the past in the Arab world as it was not re-instituted in any Muslim state. Quite apart from this, the reaction in the East divided Muslim society into two, even in the 1920's. One group was in favour of the abolition and the other was against it. For instance, an Egyptian Islamic scholar, Ali Abdel Raziq, in an article written in 1928, almost repeats verbatim the words of the Turkish Minister of Justice, Mahmut Esat [Bozkurt] Bey. To him, the separation of government institutions from the persons mandated as religious dignitaries to represent the state in religious institutions would not affect the religious beliefs of the people. Raziq based his argument on the fact that "religious figures always saw religion as a source of power and used it for their own interests."¹¹²

It is evident that reactions of Islamists to Kemalist reforms such as the Dress Code, considered the most infamous, were far from being universal in the Middle East and thus can not be generalized. Reactions differed from one country to another and displayed further differences within respective countries. In the case of Egypt, for instance, Liberal Constitutionalists in their publication, *El Siyasa*, expressed "admiration and support for the Kemalist reforms in the 20s". It is understood that, with the exception of some influential parties such as *Ihwan* and *Young Egypt*, political parties approved of the Kemalist reforms.¹¹³ When the Dress Code was put in effect, discussions related to outlawing the fez began among the Egyptians. Although the obligation to obey the reform was criticized, a group of enlightened people and liberal political elites supported the abolishment of the fez in Turkey. In other words, the reform which outlawed the fez in Turkey raised a question in Egyptian

¹¹² Maged Mansy Paris, *Mısır ve Kemalist Türkiye*, quoted in İskender Gökalp and François Georgeon, *Kemalizm ve İslam Dünyası*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1990, p.125

¹¹³ *Ibid*,107

minds; “Is the fez part of a national costume for us?” For some, like Mahmud Azmi, a leading journalist, the answer to the question is “no” since it was the symbol of despotism.¹¹⁴

It is necessary to remember that during the consolidation of nation states in the Middle East, the implementations that were adopted in the Turkish Republic set a precedent and were observed with interest in the East. This is especially true for Egypt as many Egyptian reporters from different newspapers and magazines came to Turkey to take a closer look at the transformation Turkey was going through.¹¹⁵ In this regard, one can now take up the debates and controversies concerning the alphabet reforms and its effects on the East.

Generally, Arabs from traditionalist background were opposed to the adoption of the alphabet reform in Turkey. As Muhib El Din El-Katip claims, the Arabic alphabet plays two main roles for Muslims: increasing the connection between Arabs, and teaching the alphabet of the Qoran to Muslims, thus, making them familiar with Islam. Therefore, it can be said that Mustafa Kemal aimed at abolishing these advantages of the Arabic script. According to some traditionalists, the main actors behind the alphabet reform in Turkey and the abolition of the Caliphate were the Western powers because the two reforms severed the early Republic’s connections with the East and pushed it in the the opposite direction towards the West.¹¹⁶

It is noteworthy that the claim above was also raised frequently by the Islamist circles in Turkey. However, in order to question its validity, it is necessary to look at the developments in the East in the 1930s. For Turkey, the Arabic alphabet was merely one of the several alphabets the Turks had used, such as the Gokturk or Uighur alphabets. The impossibility of

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 116

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 108

¹¹⁶ Maged Mansy-Paris, *Mısır ve Kemalist Türkiye*, quoted in İskender Gökalp-François Georgeon, *Kemalizm ve İslam Dünyası*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1990, p.120-121

pronouncing some Turkish phonics when using the Arabic alphabet is a good indicator of the fact that this alphabet was not native to the Turks¹¹⁷. But the conditions are different for the Arab world as the Arabic alphabet has a national meaning in this area. In other words, it is inherently “Arab”. And to be able to comply with developments in the world at large, they could not throw away one of the most important parts of their identity. However, they took different steps.

If we look from this perspective, the establishment of the Academy of the Arabic Language by King Fuad in Egypt in 1938 just after the creation of the Turkish Language Association (TLA) in 1932 is also worth noting. The aim of the academy was to facilitate the use of the Arabic language and adapt it to the modern world.¹¹⁸ It is possible to give several examples. For instance, the Jordanian Academy of Arabic was established in 1924, even before the alphabet reform in Turkey, and the creation of TLA had the same aim as that in Egypt. The former was short-lived due to the scarcity of financial, scientific and human resources but it is still an important indicator for us.¹¹⁹

It would be useful to emphasize the fact that, over time, these strong reactions against Kemalist reforms softened in the East. We have already emphasized the actions made to facilitate the use of Arabic and the efforts made for the modernization of the language in order to adapt to modern trends. In this period of the 30s, it is impossible to find anyone in this region one proposing a transition from Arabic script to Latin. However, in the 40s things started to change. One of the leading Liberal constitutionalists in Egypt, Abdel Aziz Fehmi, in his report prepared for the Academy of the Arabic Language, recommended the adoption of

¹¹⁷ Georges Durhamel, translated by Can Yücel, *Yeni Türkiye Bir Batı Devleti*, İstanbul: Cumhuriyet, 1998, p.30

¹¹⁸ İskender Gökalp-François Georgeon, *Mag Kemalizm ve İslam Dünyası*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1990, p.124

¹¹⁹ Available at http://www.majma.org.fo/majma/res/data/en/en_index.htm [accessed on 17.09.2012]

the Latin alphabet. In his report, which was written in 1944, Fehmi notes his positive impressions about the Kemalist reform of the alphabet and its significant and striking impact in increasing the number of literate people in Turkey. He also commented that the alphabet change had had a direct effect on the education system as it helped Turkish students to understand the texts more immediately.¹²⁰

3.2 The Dysfunctionality of the Caliphate

The perception of Turkey as remaining indifferent to the Arab world found voice in many of the statements by political figures such as the first Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Democrat Party which came to power in 1950. In his first declaration, Fuat Köprülü stated that his party would not continue the coldness in Turkish foreign policy adopted in the times of Atatürk and İsmet İnönü. He added that the Democrat Party considered it a big mistake and one of their primary goals in foreign policy was to end it.¹²¹ It may be observed that the most significant determinant of this popular a priori belief is, as noted before, the abolishment of the caliphate.

The circles that agreed with this perception analyzed abolishing the caliphate as unassertiveness. In other words, it was an act of losing the only point of resistance in the Muslim world against the colonial powers. Thus, for Turkey, in a way, it was a declaration to desist from all international allegiances. At this point, it would be useful to remind ourselves what was happening in the Muslim world after the decision to abolish the caliphate.

¹²⁰ İskender Gökalp-François Georgeon, Maged Mansy-Paris, *Kemalizm ve İslam Dünyası*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1990, p.122-123

¹²¹ Dikerdem, p.15

Of course, it created reaction in the Arab states that had given their support to the Ankara government during the Turkish Independence War.¹²² Abolishing a religious institution that was important for all the Muslim peoples was unacceptable in the Arab world. But did they really try to save this sacred institution? If it was so vital and the only card in the hands of Arab states to be played against imperial powers, why was it not protected by any Muslim state? It is argued that the abolition of the caliphate created an institutional deficiency for Muslims but, if this was the case, why couldn't they have appointed a new caliph? It is known that King Hussein was supported as a candidate for this by Palestinian, Lebanese and Iraqi authorities but firmly rejected by Egypt and India so his bid did not succeed. There were also other candidates such as the Moorish Sultan, the King of Egypt and the Afghan King, Amanullah. Arab circles organized meetings to solve the problem in Cairo in 1925, in Mecca in 1926 and in Jerusalem in 1931 but they did not resuscitate the institution.¹²³ If the religious order [caliphate] was broken and Mustafa Kemal was the guilty perpetrator as Gail Minault claims¹²⁴, they could still have agreed on appointing some person as caliph and saved their political and religious tradition which had been done away with by the Turkish authorities. The fact that they did not find a way to solve the problem raises a big question mark.

When we look at the issue from an Arab perspective, we find a dominant viewpoint in the words of Jordanian Emir Abdullah which appeared in the Manchester Guardian daily newspaper for 13 March, 1924.

I'd like to thank Mustafa Kemal by sending a telegraph. Caliphate belongs to the Arab. The prophet was an Arab; The Koran is in Arabic; and the caliph will be an Arab from

¹²² See chapter II, on the religious ground for the reactions

¹²³ Georgeon, p.39

¹²⁴ Georgeon, p.39

the Quraish tribe. We have never taken the Turkish Sultan as the caliph, but the Emperor. Now the caliphate belongs to Arabia.¹²⁵

In its words, it is clear that Abdullah was grateful to Mustafa Kemal for the decision to abolish the Caliphate. It is also interesting that, to him, the institution of the Caliphate is Arab in its origin as the Prophet was Arab and the Koran was written in Arabic script. Correspondingly, the Caliph must be from the Quraysh tribe. The Jordanian Emir also emphasized that the Arab population had never accepted the Turkish Sultan as the Caliph; in their eyes he was only a padishah and it was thanks to Mustafa Kemal that the Caliphate had been given back to Arabia. This statement actually made very clear that the Arab people never did adhere to the idea of a Turkish caliphate and therefore we cannot argue that it represented a political authority. It only had historical and religious meaning. We saw it in the case of the Jihad which was declared by the Turkish Caliphate during the first World War.¹²⁶ Moreover, the abandoning of this tradition by the Turkish Republic cannot be given as a claim to support the validity of Turkey's indifference towards the Arab world. On the contrary, as Turkish authorities gave up the power that Muslims believed belonged to them, in simple logic, this should have enhanced Kemalist Turkey's relations with this region. In other words, Mustafa Kemal removed this element of competition and conflict between Turkey and the Muslim states.

On the other hand, if we come to the argument that Turkey left Islam by abolishing the Caliphate, the first constitution of the Republic would be a good guide. In the second article of the constitution, it is stated that the religion of the Turkish Republic is Islam. Kemalist

¹²⁵“Mustafa Kemal'e bir teşekkür telgrafı çekmek isterdim. Halifelik bir Arap müessesesidir. Peygamber Araptı, Kur'an Arapçadır, Halife de Kureyş kabilesinden bir Arap olacaktır. Biz Türkiye Sultanını hiçbir zaman Halife kabul etmedik, sadece Padişah olarak kabul ettik. Şimdi Halifelik Arabistan'a geçti.”

Bilal Şimşir, *Doğu'nun Kahramanı Atatürk*, İstanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1999, p. 152

¹²⁶ See p. 15

Turkey declared its obedience to Islam by including it in the constitution. However, it is true that some remarkable changes were made in the traditional way of worship in this country. The most radical change was the Turkification of the azan and the translation of the Qoran in 1932 which was criticized a lot by Islamic circles. It needs to be underlined that this type of exercise in the religion of Islam was something new for all the Muslim world. So the effect it had was understandable but what shouldn't be forgotten is that even if the azan was sung and the Koran read in Turkish the meaning was the same and the only difference was the language. Thus, considering the main argument (by abolishing the Caliphate Turkey cut its ties with the East on religious grounds) this evidence is not enough to validate our a priori argument as it has neither academic nor scientific meaning. These statements remained at hearsay level. The case for Kemalist Turkey was simply that it left behind Pan-Islamist minded politics which had not succeeded before, and it reformulated Islam for a Turkish society and this was typically what was adopted in other areas of daily life such as education, the legal system and so on...

It is also claimed that the abolishment of the Caliphate was an important step which was taken to formulate a local foreign policy according to the status quo. As a result of this it remained under pressure of the Sunni tradition present within its national borders. Thus, this on-going situation deadlocked Turkish foreign policy; for example, in the developments in the 1990s such as the migration from the Western Thrace, the decision to join Nakhchivan to Turkey, the attempts of Iraqi Kurds to slipover the Turkish border, the wave of migration which

occurred after the Armenian-Azeri conflict and so on...¹²⁷ Let's analyze these events one by one.

It is true that in recent history, after the invasion of Cyprus in 1974, a migration into Turkey from Western Thrace started and continued until 2000. However, most of the migrants returned for several reasons, such as the desire of having a European passport. Therefore, it is not possible to talk about the existence of a huge mass of immigrants which led Turkish foreign policy towards a stalemate. If we come to the issue of Nakhchvan, it never did join Turkey but became an autonomous state. Moreover, historically speaking, the claim which was made for the Kurdish population of Iraq is true but there is a lack of information as, following the 1991 uprising of the Iraqi people against Saddam Hussein, many Kurds were forced to flee the country to become refugees in the bordering regions of Iran and Turkey. Those who came to Turkey were welcomed and housed in the refugee camps and used Turkish passports when they went abroad until Saddam lost power. So, in the face of these developments it is obvious that the so called dogmatic principles of Turkish foreign policy which come from the period of the Early Republic were not seen here.

The assumption that Kemalist Turkey lost blood in the international arena and turned its back on the East by the abolishment of the Caliphate and that, due to the subsequent ossification in Turkish foreign policy, Ankara failed in solving the international problems that it faced not only in the early period of the Republic but also in the following era, does not, it seems, reflect the reality. There is no doubt that the Caliphate had lost its function before its abolishment and, as İsmet İnönü said, if the Muslim world approached Turkey in a friendly manner, it was not because the institution of the Caliphate was in Turkish hands but because

¹²⁷ See p.16

of Turkey's increasing power.¹²⁸ It is possible to come to the conclusion that as, the abolishment of the Caliphate did not cause any dramatic changes between Muslim societies then, it remained a domestic matter within Turkey.

3.3 Diplomatic Ties between the Young Republic and the "East"

The perception that "the young Republic turned its back on the East" has diplomatic aspects as explained in the previous chapter. The lack of bilateral relations between Kernalist Turkey and Eastern states is given as a strong argument for this by Islamist circles. For example, Mustafa Bıyıklı argues that among all of the 42 Muslim states¹²⁹, the young Republic established relations with only 8 of them and these were limited.¹³⁰ It might be worthwhile to stress that there were only about 50 independent states in the early days of the Republic and the number of Turkish embassies was at most 26. These included the embassies in Baghdad, Cairo, and Kabul, and also Tokyo in the Far East. There were diplomatic representatives in Baku and Tbilisi between 1920 and 1923 until Azerbaijan and Georgia lost their independence. Furthermore, three charges d'affaires were appointed, one of them in the capital of Abyssinia (Ethiopia), Addis Ababa. If the number of Turkish charges d'affaires and permanent diplomatic representatives is included in the list, then there were around 31 Turkish institutions which had diplomatic missions (the number of consulates is excluded).¹³¹

¹²⁸ Ahmet Şükrü Esmel and Oral Sander, *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası*, Ankara:Sevinç Matbaası, 1969, p.96

¹²⁹ His claim of the number of Muslim states is debatable as far as the number of the independent states are concerned. If we make a simple calculation, we would see that it is not possible to have 42 independent Muslim states as there was only 50 states in the world. Bıyıklı probably give the number 42 according to today's data or includes non-independent states. Both of them are unacceptable.

¹³⁰ See p.41

¹³¹ Bilal Şimşir, *Bizim diplomatlar*, Ankara:Bilgi Yayınevi, 1996,p.18-19

If we look at the details, we see the first Turkish counsellor in Yerivan was Ali Kemal Yağun who held this post between 1924 and 1925. This means that Kemalist Turkey was represented diplomatically there also. Then, 'in March, 1921, the Ankara government opened a Turkish consulate in Gyumri, Armenia.¹³² In Baghdad, the first ambassador, Tahir Lütfü Tokalp, was appointed in 1929 and kept this post until 1939.¹³³ So despite the existence of a mandate system of government in Iraq, Turkey had diplomatic representation in the country. It is possible to say the same for Syria as the Turkish consulate general in Aleppo was first opened in 1925, again despite the mandate there.¹³⁴ In the first years of the Republic, Turkey was also represented diplomatically in Iran as in 1923 a Turkish consulate was opened in Khorasan. It was followed by those in Jolfa, Hamedan, Kermansah and Rasht provinces in 1925; and in 1930 a Turkish consulate was opened in Mashhad.¹³⁵ To complete the picture, it should be noted that since the beginning of the Republic, Kemalist Turkey had given importance to creating diplomatic relations with the neighbouring Muslim states especially, without taking any notice of the dominance of the powers holding the mandate; however, it did not limit itself to these.

On 7 February, 1924, Nesib Tulgay was sent to Cairo to represent Turkey under the aegis of the Swedish Embassy in Cairo. He was given the rank of Vice Consul as relations could only be maintained indirectly due to the strength of British control in Egypt and the nationalist opposition to King Fuad. However, after the arrival of Egyptian Mohammed Heddaya Pasha in Ankara as a diplomatic representative in 1925, it became possible to open a Turkish

¹³² George Harris, *Ataturk's Diplomats and Their Brief Biographies*, Istanbul: Isis, 2010, p.94

¹³³ Turkish Embassy of Baghdad, available at <http://www.baghdad.emb.mfa.gov.tr/MissionChiefHistory.aspx> [accessed on 04.09.2012]

¹³⁴ Turkish Embassy of Aleppo, available at <http://halep.bk.mfa.gov.tr/MissionChiefHistory.aspx> [accessed on 04.09.2012]

¹³⁵ Turkish Embassy of Tehran, available at <http://tehran.emb.mfa.gov.tr/MissionChiefHistory.aspx> [accessed on 04.09.2012]

embassy in Cairo in August of that year. It is known that Muhiddin Akyüz, diplomatic in Cairo between 1926 and 1931, was witness to King Fuad's efforts to gain Turkey's support for Egypt's membership of the League of Nations.¹³⁶ This gives us a clue as to how Kemalist Turkey was perceived in Egypt. If all diplomatic ties connecting the young republic with Egypt had been cut would the Egyptian authorities have come knocking on the door of Kemalist Turkey to obtain its support? Under normal conditions, the answer is no. In the period when Egypt made efforts to gain Turkey's support, the reformation process in Turkey had almost been completed. If the Kemalist Republic had been totally alienated from Egypt and had cut all ties with this country, as it claimed it did with all the other Muslim states, there would not have been any competent authority to negotiate such issues. It is obvious that the new Turkey was gaining increasing power with the reforms that it implemented and it was believed to be gaining influence in world politics through these. It would not be wrong to conclude that this respectful image of the Turkish Republic was the product of the success obtained through its diplomatic offices.

Another significant example which shows that Turkey closely followed what was happening in the region is the attempt by the general staff to send two reporters to Abyssinia during the Italian invasion. Although the general staff could only afford to pay for one reporter who was responsible for observing both sides during the war, Ankara's interest in the developments that involved Abyssinia is worth noting.¹³⁷

To get some idea about Ankara's Middle Eastern policies during the period when government by mandate ceased to exist, there is no better indicator than the Saadabad Pact as it broadened

¹³⁶ George Harris, *Ataturk's Diplomats and Their Brief Biographies*, Istanbul: Isis, 2010, p.96

¹³⁷ Dilek Barlas and Serhat Güvenç, *Turkey in the Middle East during the Interwar Era: The Pradox of Middle Power Diplomacy and Minor Power Naval Policy*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010, p.170-171.

Turkey's presence in the region alongside Iran and Afghanistan. This pact was more than one of non-aggression as the main objective for the four participant states was simply to solve their problems among themselves and act together on regional issues after coping with bilateral problems. The Saadabad Pact should not be considered as an effort made with the intervention or at the dictation of an imperialist power. On the contrary, it was totally in line with the priorities of the signatory countries. The striking point of the pact is that it was signed under the leadership of Turkey, as the problems which were seen as obstacles for bringing the parties together were solved or overcome through the good offices of Turkish diplomatic representatives. The most important problem was the border dispute between Iran and Iraq. The dispute between the two states over Shatt-el Arab was arbitrated under the guidance and through the diplomatic efforts of Turkey, following in the footsteps of the Ottoman Empire which had resolved the same problem by the Treaty of Istanbul in 1913. In the process of establishing the Saadabad Pact, the young Republic also acted as mediator in the border conflicts existing between Iran and Afghanistan. Both of these Muslim states accepted the arbitration of the appointed Turkish representatives regarding the demarcation of the border. The committee under the leadership of Fahrettin Altay found a way to satisfy both sides and completed their mission successfully.¹³⁸

During the decades following the Saadabad Pact, no common formula was found to solve border security issues and promote a common understanding between either Turkey, Iran and Iraq, or between Iran and Afghanistan. It would be useful to stress that in the process of negotiations, Turkish Foreign Minister Tevfik Rüştü Aras performed a remarkable feat of

¹³⁸ Tevfik Rüştü Aras, *Atatürk'ün Dış Politikası*, İstanbul: Kaynak, 2003, p.110.

shuttle diplomacy as he was rarely in Ankara in the course of the marathon he was running between Tehran, Baghdad and Ankara.¹³⁹

Considering the information cited above, it is obvious that the primary objective behind the Saadabad Pact for Kemalist Turkey cannot be defined as “leaving the Arabs alone and preventing any possible intervention of the party states in domestic affairs”. The aim was to control the signatory countries and stabilize its neutral policy towards the Arab states by preventing any possible confrontations between them. It would be reasonable to argue that the pact was a good example of regional cooperation and the role that Turkey played should not be forgotten.

As well as the Saadabad Pact, the good work done by Turkish diplomats in the problems which existed between Iran and the Soviet Union is another significant issue. It is an undeniable truth that Turkey played a facilitating role in solving these problems and in achieving a peaceful atmosphere between the two states. For that purpose, Mahmut Şevket Esenalı, who was serving as the ambassador of Turkey in Teheran, together with the Iranian Foreign Minister Timurtash, paid official visits to Moscow. These negotiations remained inconclusive but instead of returning to his own country, Timurtash decided to go to Turkey and stayed 15 days in Ankara.¹⁴⁰

The picture above tells us that instead of isolating itself from the East, Ankara preferred to observe carefully the developments in the region and did not remain indifferent to the political and diplomatic problems, even those which did not concern it directly. Another point which needs to be highlighted is the perception of Kemalist Turkey by the Muslim states. It is clear

¹³⁹ Ibid, 109-111

¹⁴⁰ Baskın Oran, p.104

that Turkey was accepted as a regional power as it was believed that it could play an important role in the specific vital problems existing between the countries as cited above.

In short, if Turkey had burned its bridges and isolated itself from the Orient diplomatically and turned her face to the West, the picture in front of us would then describe a state which is busy adapting its domestic system to Western values in the name of establishing good relations with the Imperial World. It would be seen as refusing to get involved in any kind of regional issues (especially bilateral ones) and making no attempts to arbitrate. Furthermore, especially for that period of time, the number of Turkish diplomatic representatives is remarkable. In the Eastern states, from which Turkey isolated itself according to popular claims (these states are generally given as Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Iran) Kemalist Turkey had diplomatic representation which was important for the regulation and organization of inter-state relations, despite the domination of a mandate in certain of these states. Moreover, as noted before, Turkey's interest was not limited only to its neighbour states as it had a charge d'affaires even in Abyssina. All of these facts are enough to bore a hole in the argument which claims that Turkey remained diplomatically indifferent to the East.

3.4 Turkey as a Model in the Region

In the interwar period, Turkey followed carefully the developments in the Muslim lands and, while intervening in some specific cases when needed, it gained the ability to orientate them. Ankara supported Reza Pahlavi in his struggle for the throne with Ahmad Shah Qajar, who was deposed at the end.¹⁴¹ It is noteworthy that these events coincide with the proclamation of

¹⁴¹To celebrate the great victory Iran sent Salar Nizam Han as a representative to Ankara. Ankara followed carefully the developments in the Middle East since the beginning of 1923. During the Izmit meetings on 16-17 January 1923, Mustafa

the Republic in Turkey. Moreover, Mustafa Kemal's advice to Pahlavi about adopting a republic as the political system in Iran is remarkable in showing the self-confidence of Ankara. On the other hand, clarification of the reasons why the Shah preferred to declare a monarchy and what this did for Mustafa Kemal is very important in terms of bringing to light the degree of influence Turkey had in the eyes of its neighbour. On 7 November, 1925, Mustafa Kemal asked Ambassador to Tehran Mahmut Şevket Esendal to talk to Reza Shah and strongly advise a republic as a form of government in Iran instead of a monarchy. However, Esendal couldn't find a chance to share Kemal's advice with Reza Pahlavi who was appointed as the new Shah of Iran on 15 December, 1925. The interesting point about the story is that on 27th December, just after his accession to the throne, Pahlavi expounded to the Turkish ambassador the reasons why he had not declared a republic in Iran. The Shah also underlined in his explanation that this decision should not be considered as laying aside his desire to follow a reformist policy.¹⁴² It is also known that in the following years Atatürk supported Reza Pahlavi in terms of upholding his authority in the country and participated in his coronation ceremony by sending two Junkers airplanes.

We noted that the relations of Turkey and Iran had been severed temporarily in 1930 with the Ağrı rebellion. However, when the agreement fixing the frontiers between Iran and Turkey ("Accord relatif à la fixation de la ligne frontière entre la Perse et la Turquie") was signed in 1932, the problems between these two states were solved. This agreement can be seen as a turning point in the relations between Turkey and Iran. Shah Pahlavi's visit to Ankara in 1934 is a good indicator showing us that the aggressive attitude of each had ceased and a period of

Kemal expressed his negative views about Reza Shah. Bilal Şimşir, *Atatürk ve Yabancı Devlet Adamları*, Vol: I, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1993, p. 415, 420-433.

¹⁴²Secret telegraph 7.11 341 (1925) from Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Tehran Embassy, No.46907/241 narrated by Bilal Şimşir, *Bizim Diplomatlar*, Ankara: Bilgi Yayınev., 1996, p.87-88

amity had started. In his speech in the Grand National Assembly, the foreign minister of Iran stated that the Shah's visit had been planned to last for 15-18 days but was extended to 27 days due to the warm hospitality of Turkey.¹⁴³ Reza Pahlavi's aim was simply to examine closely the Turkish experience of a republic. Within this scope, he made observations about the evolution of the Turkish military forces, economic development and the impact of the educational reforms on the country. The importance of this visit for Atatürk was just as great as it was for the Iranian Shah. In the dinner given for Pahlavi, Atatürk pointed out that the "friendship between Turkey and Iran had become a main principle of Turkish foreign policy".¹⁴⁴ It is worthwhile stressing that during the early Republican period, treaties of commerce, mutual legal assistance, agreements concerning residence and border security, mutual agreement on the building of custom houses at the borders, as well as those concerning telegraph and telephone, veterinary services, air flights, and the Trabzon to Tabriz highway were signed in Tehran.¹⁴⁵

Relations with Afghanistan in the early Republican period and Turkey's deep interest in developments within this country are other points to underline. Afghan King Amanullah Han's efforts to adopt changes similar to Kemalist reforms are remarkable. Some Afghan tribes described the attempts of their king as anti-religious and there were strong reactions. In the face of this danger to Amanullah Han, Atatürk gave the Turkish troops the mission of protecting the king. These troops were the ones responsible for the training of the Afghan military forces under the leadership of Rauf Orbay. The instruction which was sent to Kabul ambassador Yusuf Kemal Bayur reads: "Turkish forces are asked to protect the king

¹⁴³ Aptülahat Akşin, *Atatürk'ün Dış Politika İlkeleri*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, p.196

¹⁴⁴ *ibid*, 195

¹⁴⁵ *ibid*, 196

against the reactionary movements in the same way as they would defend their own country”.

Mustafa Kemal personally informed Amanullah Han about this decision.¹⁴⁶

An interesting statement which shows implicitly the impact of Turkey on Afghanistan or, in other words, the importance which was given to Turkish opinion by the Afghan political elite, is seen in the memoirs of the Turkish ambassador to Tehran, Mahmut Şevket Esendal. He stated that he was the most respected and esteemed diplomatic representative in the history of Iran. In his conversation with Aptülaha Akşin, Esendal told him that he was welcomed to the palace of the Afghan leader every Friday. The Turkish ambassador also stated that diplomatic representatives from several nations in Tehran, frequently came to his office and asking his opinions on some issues relating to the Afghan government.¹⁴⁷ This is important in showing the level of early Republic’s reputation, not only in Afghanistan but also in other foreign states that seemed to accept Turkey’s influence in this region.

Beside the Afghan King and Reza Khan, another important figure who held up as an example the Kemalist reforms is Mohammed Fazıl Al Cemali who is known to have been an admirer of Atatürk. While he was continuing his studies at Beirut American University in 1927, Cemali was influenced by the educational reforms which took place early in the Republic.¹⁴⁸ After he took office, he visited Turkey several times and was especially impressed by the role of the military in the national education process.¹⁴⁹

The effect of the Republic was not limited to ex-imperial lands. India, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Egypt are Muslim states that observed carefully the experiences of the Republic in

¹⁴⁶ Secret Telegraph 21/22. 11 1928 from Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Kabul Embassy, No.53063/117 narrated by Bilal Şimşir, *Atatürk ve Yabancı Devlet Adamları*, Vol. I, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1993, p. 46-47.

¹⁴⁷ Aptülaha Akşin, p.192

¹⁴⁸ Reeva Spector Simon, *Iraq between the Two World Wars*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2004, p.79.

¹⁴⁹ Simon, *Iraq between the Two World Wars*: p.80.

Turkey. Political elites of that time found the developments which were taking place in Ankara inspirational. This inspiration had begun to be felt with the modernization which took place during the late Ottoman Empire.¹⁵⁰

It is known that the Free Officers Movement in Egypt was influenced by the members of CUP and this influence lasted into the Republican period.¹⁵¹ In his autobiography, Enver Sedat states that his father brought home a picture of one of the idols of his childhood, Atatürk. As a successful commander and political leader, Mustafa Kemal's influence on young Egyptian officers is not surprising. Accordingly, Enver Sedat's admiration and his efforts to be informed of Kemalist reforms during his military school days is a normal attitude for this period.¹⁵² When he was arrested on suspicion of having helped Aziz Al Mısri in his escape to Iraq in 1944, Sedat indicated that he had read H. C. Armstrong's biography of Atatürk , "*Grey Wolf*". Enver Sedat also noted that, during this inquiry, he told the chief of defence, Ibrahim Atallah Pasha "if he had been interested in this book he could have learned a lot." These words of Sedat explains clearly his opinions of "*Grey Wolf*".¹⁵³

Gamal Abdel Nasser Hussein's memoirs relating to the period of revolution shows that Atatürk's influence on young officers was not limited to Enver Sedat. Moreover, it is a sign of

¹⁵⁰ For Mustafa Kemal's words on the comparison with Iran see: *Atatürk'ün Bütün Eserleri* Vol. 17, İstanbul: Kaynak, p.225 and for Shah's words of "Top atılar Cumhuriyet ilan oldu" (they shot and republic was proclaimed) Barış Cin, *Türkiye İnan İlişkileri (1923-1938)*, İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü, MA Thesis, 2006. Yann Richard, *Kemalizm ve İran*, quoted in İskender Gökalp and François Georgeon, *Kemalizm ve İslam Dünyası*, İstanbul: Arba, 1990.

¹⁵¹ Sacit Kutlu, *Genç Subaylar Fenomeni İttihatçılık ve bir Portre: Aziz el Mısri*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, January 2007, no.157

¹⁵² *Ibid*, 28-30.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 43

their embracement of Atatürk as a role model. Nasser's story which he related to Oğuz Gökmen in 1958 gives us an idea about the level of this influence.

Our generation was raised with the principles of Atatürk. Books on Atatürk's life and his achievements have been our bedside books. Even when we were school kids, we used to think to ourselves how and when we could achieve what he had already done. Finally when the day came, Necip and I were exhausted in a jeep on the way back to Cairo. We hadn't slept for the last 3 days. We had even forgotten to eat or drink meanwhile. While dreaming of going home and taking a shower, we decided to go to the Turkish Embassy first. We just wanted to have a coffee to relieve our fatigue, and to say that we did at last what Atatürk had already done before. Instead of the coffee that we hoped for, we were given a shock by the Turkish Embassy. They took us as if we were brigands. We left there downhearted and disappointed. To tell the truth, we had forgotten about the family ties between the ambassador and the dethroned emperor.¹⁵⁴

Modernization efforts in Turkey were observed carefully and enviously especially in Iran and Afghanistan and set a precedent in those countries. However, their impact on the Middle East was not limited to Muslim states and societies. Before the creation of the state of Israel, newspapers printed in Hebrew in Palestine, showed a close interest in Turkey. Additionally, a book which aimed at analyzing Kemalist reforms was printed with a long preface by Ben Gurion.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴"Bizim neslimiz Atatürk idealleri ile yetişmiştir. Atatürk'ün hayatı, yaptıklarını anlatan kitaplar bizlerin yastık altı kitabımızdı. Daha okul sıralarında iken düşünür, Atatürk'ün yaptıklarını bizler nasıl ve ne zaman yapabileceğiz diye kendi kendimize sorardık. Nihayet beklediğimiz gün gelip Necip ile birlikte bir jeep içinde Kahire'ye dönerken yorgunluktan ölüyorduk. Tam üç gündür hiç uyumamıştık. Bu süre içinde yemeyi içmeyi bile unutmuştuk. Evlerimize gidip bir duş almak biraz dinlenmeyi düşlerken, haydi dedik önce Türk Büyükelçiliğine gidelim. Bir yorgunluk kahvesi içelim ve yıllarca sonra nihayet bizlerin de Atatürk'ün yaptığını yaptığımızı söyleyelim istedik. Lakin umduğumuz yorgunluk kahvesi yerine Türkiye Büyükelçisinden adeta bir tokat yiyerek kendimize geldik. Adam bizleri sanki birer eşkıya imişiz gibi kabul etti. Meyus ve münkesir ayrıldık. Sefirin devrik kralla ailevi yakınlığını doğrusu düşünmemiştik."

Oğuz Gökmen, age., p.348 narrated by Rasim Koç, *Fatin Rüştü Zorlu'nun Hayatı ve Siyasi Faaliyeti*, İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, doctorate thesis, İstanbul: 2009, p. 56

¹⁵⁵ Jacob M. Landau, "Atatürk's Reforms in Turkey: Preliminary Notes about Their Impact on Some Other Countries in the Middle East" *Jews, Arabs, Turks*, Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1993 p. 195-207.

When Falih Rifkî Atay shared his impressions of his visit to Israel in the 1960s, he stated that the communication between the Israeli president and himself was in Turkish.

We have learned a lot from Atatürk in order to advance an underdeveloped community towards the western civilization at once, he said. (Alas, even his own party diverged from his way in our country and left this unenlightened community to a group of bigots who will make it even worse.) We are experienced; there are things you can learn from us. I wonder why Celal Bayar provoked our foes saying “our army is at your side”. What does he want from us?¹⁵⁶

Among the Eastern states, India is the state most frequently referred to with the aim of showing the indifference of Turkey towards the Muslim world. However, if we scrutinize developments in this country, Atatürk’s influence on young Indians can be observed. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose are two important figures of that generation. After the 1920s, both of them took their cue from Mustafa Kemal and praised his victory obtained against imperialist powers. The impact of Kemalist ideology on Nehru and Bose becomes visible in their struggle for full independence against British rule in India. The preeminent leader of India took the lead with them in this fight against the colonial system. Gandhi observed silently and carefully the doings of Mustafa Kemal between 1924 and 1928. Like many Eastern leaders, he was influenced by Kemalist reforms and tried to reformulate and adopt them in India by following different paths. He says “My objective is not only to clear out the British but also every kind of oppression that exists in India”. What Gandhi tried

¹⁵⁶Biz dedi, geri bir topluluğu batı medeniyetine doğru sür’atle götürmek için Atatürk’ten çok şey öğrendik. (Heyhat, bu yoldan memleketimizde kandi partisi bile ayrılmıştır ve geri topluluğu daha da geriletici yobazlar takımına teslim etmiştir.) Çok tecrübelerimiz var. Sizler de bizden bir şeyler alabilirsiniz. Acaba Celal Bayar Ürdün’e geldiği zaman neden, ordumuz sizinle beraberdir diye bizim hasımlarımızı tahrik etti? Ne ister bizden?”

Falih Rifkî Atay, *Batış Yılları*, İstanbul, Bateş Yayınları, 2000, p.102.

to do in the fields of women's rights, education, secularism, nationalism, economic development, religion and so on shows much similarity with Kemalist reforms.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ Bülal Şimşir, *Doğu'nun Kahramanı Atatürk*, Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1999, p.232-233

CONCLUSION

It is argued that since 2002, Turkey became a regional power and global actor in international arena. According to this claim which is mostly raised by the Islamist circles, Turkey started to follow an active foreign policy in the Middle East and as a result of this became “the old man” and the model state since 3 November 2002.¹⁵⁸ It is widely accepted that this new vision of Turkish foreign policy which dramatically increased its reputation in the ex-Ottoman territories has a new-Ottomanist perspective. It is observable that these claims are reciprocated in the Middle East. Especially, after the “one minute” crisis of Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at Davos Summit, Turkey became a hero in the eyes of the Muslim world.¹⁵⁹ So that, Erdoğan’s reaction against Israeli president Shimon Peres and the moderator who governs the panel of Gaza was interpreted as “Turkey’s return to Arab lands”. Moreover, the Arab media wrote that the Ottoman Empire should come back and Erdoğan should be appointed as the new Caliph.¹⁶⁰ This situation is also observed during the Arab spring trips of Erdoğan in 2011.¹⁶¹

After pointing out these statements, it is possible to question the source of power of the regional policies that makes Turkey influential since the early republican period. The first thing that comes to mind is the historical, cultural and religious factors. There is no doubt that

¹⁵⁸ Meliha Altunisik, *The Turkish Model and Democratization in the Middle East*, Arab Studies Quarterly, 27 (1/2) 2005, p.45-63.

¹⁵⁹ *Erdoğan Ortadoğu’da seçime girse kazanır* available at <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/474456.asp> [accessed on 29.09.2012]

¹⁶⁰ *Erdoğan Ortadoğu’da seçime girse kazanır* available at <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/474456.asp> [accessed on 29.09.2012]

¹⁶¹ *Bingazi’de Erdoğan Coşkusu* available at <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/planet/18755405.asp> [accessed on 29.09.2012] see also *Arap Baharı Turunun İlk Durağında Sevgi Seli* available at <http://www.sabah.com.tr/Gundem/2011/09/13/arap-bahari-turunun-ilk-duraginda-sevgi-seli> [accessed on 29.09.2012]

being the precursor of a sunni empire which governed the region for centuries is an important source of power. However, if we scrutinize the Early Republican period, we would see that it is only the historical and religious factors but also the Kemalist reforms which significantly increased the power of Turkey in the world so that in the eyes of the Muslim states.

However, it is mostly argued that Turkey started to follow an active policy towards the East for the first time after the Ottoman Empire by the AKP government and burned the bridges with the region in the Early Republic. The basic reason of the coldness between the young republic and the East is said to be the Kemalist reforms which were adopted in the Turkish nation building process. It is generally accepted that political, social and the religious reforms cut all the diplomatic lines with the East. Today, this point of view became a priori and not only raised by the Islamic circles but also by the peoples who come from different political backgrounds.

It is evident that Kemalist reforms avoided Islamic traditions in the new republic and in this sense, differentiated Turkey from the other Muslim nations. However, this process should not be described as an alienation. The correct analyze would be the differentiation. Declaring the republic and adopting Western style reforms did not obliged to cut the lines with the East. The myths of indifference and alienation which strengthened in 1970s should analyzed as a critic of Islamic circles towards Kemalism.

During the research process of this study, it is undertood that the alienation from the East materialized mostly on the religious ground. Accordingly, the abolition of the Caliphate is the strongest argument of the Islamic circles as it means turning down the authority which gives the ability to govern the Muslim world. Due to that, the abolishment of the Caliphate is a loss

of regional power for Turkey. By making such a reform, Kemalist Turkey preferred to isolate itself from the East instead of cooperating with them under the common institution.

However, when we scrutinize the impact of the abolition, we would see that it did not have any negative result for Turkey. Au contraire, like the other Kemalist reforms did, it provided an increase in the reputation of Kemalist Turkey in long term. As we can see in the example of the Ottoman experience, the institution of the Caliphate had never been a source of power and became dysfunctional since the WWI. Turkey's decision of abolition ended with the death of the institution of the Caliphate in the world. Although some efforts made by Arab states to rebirth this sacred institution for Muslims, the last Caliph remained Turkish. By following the policies which are far away from pan-Islamist aims, Mustafa Kemal established a nation state. He adopted Western oriented reforms and created a republic which is respected by the West. This type of the model of a Muslim state was regretted by other Muslim nations. In other words, an independent and strong Muslim state which is valuable in the eyes of the Western powers is exactly what the Eastern countries was dreaming for themselves for decades. That is why they observed Turkish reformation process carefully and took the Kemalist model.

Another important point to mention is about Turkey's attitude towards the Muslim states that were fighting for their independence. Mustafa Kemal strictly refused to provide military assistance to these countries and this is considered as a part of early republic's indifference policy. However, for this case, it would be better to use the term of disinterest rather than indifference. Because, it is known that Atatürk cared about the struggle of independence of the Muslim nations and stated many times that a healthy relationship can only be established at the bilateral level which means without the mandatory powers. This meant that he was not in favor of cutting all the lines with these states, conversely, he wanted to establish sustainable

relations with them and to be able to that they should gain their independence. Shortly, Mustafa Kemal refused to fight for the Muslim lands which were excluded from the Misak-ı milli borders and after the war of independence, he gave his interest to the process of nation building. At this point, by refusing to join to the liberation struggle of the Muslim states, it is possible to say that he showed an example of disinterest.

I would like to end up by stating that the popularly embraced perception of “Kemalist Turkey remained indifferent towards Arab world and cut all the lines with this region in the name of becoming a Western state” does not reflect the reality. It is true that it had turned its face to the West and adopted Western oriented reforms but this does not mean that it isolated itself from the East. Conversely, it became a model state for the Muslim world as explained in detail in the previous part, it is evident that most of the Arab states observed carefully Turkish Westernization and tried to adopt similar reforms for their lands.

Lastly, Mustafa Kemal’s close relationship with the Iranian Shah and the Afghan King Amanullah Han, his interest on the reformation processes of these two countries, the number of the Turkish diplomatic representatives in the East, Sadabad Pact and Turkey’s leading mission, Turkey’s arbitration for the disputes between the Eastern states are enough to see that there is no such thing like turning its back on the East.

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