

March on the West: Turkish and Italian Perceptions of Fascism and Kemalism, 1919-1938

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“March on the West: Turkish and Italian Perceptions of Fascism and Kemalism, 1919-1938,” a dissertation prepared by Buğra Can Bayçifci in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University, has been approved on 24 September 2024 by:

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The intellectual content of this dissertation, which has been written by me and for which I take full responsibility, is my own, original work, and it has not been previously or concurrently submitted elsewhere for any other examination or degree of higher education. The sources of all paraphrased and quoted materials, concepts, and ideas are fully cited, and the admissible contributions and assistance of others with respect to the conception of the work as well as to linguistic expression are explicitly acknowledged herein.



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Abstract

March on the West: Turkish and Italian Perceptions of Fascism and Kemalism, 1919-1938.

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Professors M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu and Riccardo Bavaj, Dissertation Advisors

This study investigates the various ways in which Italian and Turkish actors perceived Kemalism and fascism in the interwar era. As an intellectual history, it focuses on contemporary sources, including manuscripts, published books and articles, private papers, and Turkish and Italian state archives. For the first time in the literature, it offers a detailed, contextual analysis of Italian perceptions of Kemalism. Studies on Turkish perceptions of fascism have often suffered from reification and limitations of certain research programmes. Focusing on contemporary perceptions rather than abstract comparisons between ideologies construed as agents on their own, the study uses perceptions of fascism and Kemalism as leverage to uncover various contemporary factions. Perceptions of fascism and Kemalism were closely related to individuals' beliefs about Europe, the West, and democracy. In Turkey, figures who saw Westernisation as entailing democratisation tended to perceive fascism as an 'unnatural' anachronism. In Italy, Kemalist authoritarianism attracted the attention of the universalist fascists who sought examples abroad that proved fascism's 'universal' applicability. In contrast, a faction this thesis has dubbed 'the radical Kemalists' saw fascism as the newest iteration of the Western civilization and drew from it. Italian anti-fascists, especially the socialists, instead embraced the goals of Kemalism, such as secularisation and female emancipation. The study focuses on specific cases to investigate how historians can understand contact and influence between agents. It argues that historians have tended to underestimate the importance of the background of the agents and excessively focused on contact itself as a transformative factor.

Keywords: Fascism, Kemalism, Westernisation, the Republican People's Party, the National Fascist Party, Intellectual History.

102,000 words

Özet

Batı'ya Yürüyüş: Türk ve İtalyanların Faşizm ve Kemalizm Algıları, 1919-1938

Buğra Can Baycıfci, Doktora Adayı, 2024

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Bu çalışma, iki dünya savaşı arası dönemde İtalyan ve Türk aktörlerin Kemalizm ve faşizmi algılama biçimlerini incelemektedir. Bir düşünce tarihi olarak, el yazmaları, ilgili dönemde basılmış kitap ve gazete makaleleri, kişisel evraklar ve Türk ve İtalyan devlet arşivleri dahil olmak üzere çağdaş kaynaklara odaklanmaktadır. Tez, literatürde ilk kez, İtalyanların Kemalizm'i nasıl algıladıklarının ayrıntılı ve bağlamsal bir analizini sunmaktadır. Türkiye'deki İtalyan faşizmi algısı üzerine yapılan araştırmalar, genellikle araştırma konusu olan ideoloji ve hareketlerin başlı başına birer özneymiş gibi irdelenmesi ve belirli araştırma programlarının getirdiği sınırlılıklar gibi sorunlardan muzdarip olmuştur. Kendi başlarına birer aktör olarak değerlendirilegelen bu ideolojileri soyut bir biçimde karşılaştırmaktansa ilgili dönemdeki aktörlerin algılarına odaklanan bu çalışma, faşizm ve Kemalizm algılarını çeşitli fraksiyonların varlığını tespit etmek için bir fener olarak kullanmaktadır. Çalışmada, faşizm ve Kemalizm algılarının, ilgili düşünürlerin Avrupa, Batı ve demokrasi hakkındaki inançlarıyla yakından ilişkili olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Türkiye'de Batılılaşmanın demokratikleşmeyi gerektirdiği fikrindeki düşünürler faşizmi “gayrıtabii” bir “irtica” olarak algılama eğiliminde olmuştur. İtalya'da Kemalistlerin otoriterliği, yurtdışında faşizmin “evrensel” geçerliliğini kanıtlayan örnekler arayan evrenselci faşist fraksiyonun dikkatini çekmiştir. Buna karşılık, bu tezde “radikal Kemalistler” olarak adlandırılan bir grup, faşizmi Batı medeniyetinin en yeni versiyonu olarak görmüş ve bir örnek olarak değerlendirmiştir. İtalyan anti-faşistler, özellikle de sosyalistler, bunun aksine Kemalizm'in laikleşme ve kadınların özgürleşmesi gibi hedeflerine odaklanarak hareketi olumlu karşılamışlardır. Bu çalışma, tarihçilerin aktörler arasındaki temas ve etki olgusunu nasıl açıklayabileceğini araştırmak için belirli düşünürlerin tarihlerine özel olarak odaklanmaktadır. Tez, bugüne kadar aktörlerin arka planlarının öneminin azımsandığını ve dönüştürücü bir faktör olarak temas ve etkileşim olgularına fazlaca odaklanıldığını savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Faşizm, Kemalizm, Batılılaşma, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, Ulusal Faşist Parti, Düşünce Tarihi.

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- Italian – Advanced
- French - Beginner



To my family



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACS	Archivio centrale dello stato
AP	Affari Politici
ASDMAE	Archivio Storico Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri
b.	Busta
BCA	Başkanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi
BOA	Başkanlık Osmanlı Arşivi
C.O.	Carteggio Ordinato
CUP	The Committee of Union and Progress
DGSE	Direzione Generale per la Stampa Estera
DP	The Democrat Party
f.	Fascicolo
FRP	The Free Republican Party
HR. İM.	Hariciye Nezareti, İstanbul Murahhaslığı
HR. SYS.	Hariciye Nezareti, Siyasi
IPOCAN	Istituto per l'Oriente Carlo Alfonso Nallino
Minculpop	Ministero della cultura popolare
PCI	Partito Comunista Italiano
PNF	Partito Nazionale Fascista
PRP	The Progressive Republican Party
PSI	Partito Socialist Italiano
RPP	The Republican People's Party (also CHF and CHP in Turkish)
St.	Stampa

A Note on Transliteration

As the surname law did not come into effect until 1934, Turkish names cited in this study until then are followed by their surnames in square brackets if available. Italian abbreviations and words frequently used in the international literature, such as the PNF, are preferred over English translations.

Some Notes on the Citation of Archival Sources

To facilitate access to the archival documents contained in the thesis, titles (online in the case of Turkish archives, on-paper in Italian documents) or descriptions (as in Faik Kurtoglu to Recep Peker, or Aloisi to Mussolini) of the relevant files are provided before the regular full citations of file locations. Scholars should be able to locate these files using the full citations, searching online for the relevant title on the Turkish archival website, or using the Italian title or description as an indication of the particular document in a *fascicolo*. It is also for this reason that Italian is preferred in citations to *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, which is available online and from which scholars can locate the relevant file through a simple search for the Italian description in the cited volume and series.



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Access to Turkish archival sources is relatively uncomplicated for a Turkish researcher. Coming from Istanbul, the same is not necessarily true of access to Italian archival sources. Professor Fabio L. Grassi very kindly agreed to send me a formal invitation for the Erasmus+ staff exchange at Sapienza University, which allowed me time and funds to do research in Rome. The Üsküdar University Erasmus+ staff, Gürkan Dinçer in particular, worked very hard to materialise the arrangement. In the *Archivio Storico Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (ASDMAE)* in Rome, Riccardo Andreozzi and Antonio Freddi guided me through the sources, generously tolerated my rookie mistakes, and patiently responded to my queries and demands.

Claudio De Luca quite literally went down the basement to find the correct set of files that I needed on a particular day. The Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye in Rome rapidly and very generously provided the necessary documents that allowed me to carry out research in the *ASDMAE*. The staff at the *Archivio centrale dello stato*, especially Ms Giulia whose surname I should have asked, patiently walked me through the process of requesting documents. Special thanks are due to Veronica Muoio of the *Archivio Storico 'Ivan Tognarini' di Piombino*. She not only explained to me the content of the archives pertaining to Ezio Bartolini but selflessly scanned, sometimes with a cell phone when the scanner was unavailable, an immense number of files for my consultation.

Both in Istanbul and Rome, I have had the chance to work with excellent librarians who provided me with access to some rare source materials. The staff at the *İBB Atatürk Kitaplığı*, *Beyazıt Devlet Kütüphanesi* and the Boğaziçi University Library deserve thanks for their patience with my endless requests. In Rome, Fabio Pietro Barbaro, the general secretary of the *Istituto per l'Oriente Carlo Alfonso Nallino (IPOCAN)* and Damiano Derina allowed me to set camp in one of the institute rooms, browsing through a sea of books they generously kept on bringing to my table. My visits to the *Biblioteca Universitaria Alessandrina* have been extremely fruitful thanks to the efforts of the staff and, in particular, Valentina Corridori, who guided me through the opening hours and the ways of the library. The *Biblioteca centrale nazionale* proved quite a baffling experience with its high-tech and sheer size, but a certain Ms Arianna, whose surname I was foolish enough not to ask, masterfully guided me through the sections. Finally, at the wonderful *Fondazione Ugo Spirito e Renzo De Felice*, Alessandra Cavaterra not only provided me with the material I specifically requested but also brought to my attention further issues of *Antieuropa* and studies on universalist fascism. In England, Zehra Ipek Williamson kindly responded to my online queries about the biography of his late father, Şemseddin Talip Diler. I thank them all for their immense contributions to this study.

Had it not been for an exchange of emails with the late Zafer Toprak, I could perhaps end up pursuing another PhD project. Professor Toprak, who passed away in 2023, bolstered my belief in this study.

I would like to thank my colleagues at the Üsküdar University, Department of History, and my fellow research assistant denizens of room 202. For years, they put up my numerous, furious typing spells and musings on my arguments.

My parents, Safiye and Semih, made me who I am. Words cannot suffice to explain my gratitude to them for being my family. My dear wife and fellow historian, Vuslat, always stood by my side and provided me with feedback on my findings and arguments. My mother and wife accompanied me on several library trips around

Istanbul. I hope I have not neglected them as much as I fear I did when working on this study.

NOTE: The in-house editor of the Atatürk Institute has made detailed recommendations with regard to the format, grammar, spelling, usage, syntax, and style of this dissertation.





It is, I am taking for granted, the historian's function to insist that there are always exceptions.

– J. G. A. Pocock, 'The Politics of History: The Subaltern and the Subversive', *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 6.3 (1998), pp. 219-234 (p. 229).

Introduction

'We do not want freedom but an administration like fascism.' – Ali Naci [Karacan], *İnkılap*, 11 October 1930

'(...) Mustafa Kemal has a place in the history of humanity's progress and should be considered among the great revolutionaries of our time.'

– Tirreno [Emilio Lussu], *Giustizia e Libertà*, 18 November 1938

The relationship between fascism and Kemalism has featured prominently in public debates and attracted much scholarly attention. Clarifying the relationship has been of utmost importance to two main research programmes for interpreting Kemalism: what we may call the 'tutelage theory', according to which Kemalism intended to democratise Turkey, and post-Kemalism, which saw Kemalism as anti-democratic. Scholars often responded to their sociopolitical contexts, with the question of whether the Kemalists ever wanted 'freedom', as put by Ali Naci, often becoming pressing. Regrettably, discussions have been dominated by merely the Turkish side of the story, and indeed, by comparisons of fascist

and Kemalist ideologies, rather than an investigation of contemporary perceptions. To borrow from the British intellectual historian J. G. A. Pocock, scholars have largely sought not to study these contemporary interpretations ‘with a history of their own’ but investigate Kemalism and fascism in abstract.¹ While such studies have their value in, for example, comparable histories of regimes or sociological investigations into root causes of given phenomena, they do not respond to research questions on what the contemporaries thought of these regimes. This study intends to address this lacuna in the literature by directly focusing on what Italian and Turkish contemporaries thought about Kemalism and fascism in the interwar era. As the world wars constituted rather different contexts, as well as the changes fascism and Kemalism underwent in the late 1930s, the study limits itself to the intellectual history of the relationship between fascism and Kemalism between the early 1920s to the late 1930s.

For reasons to be discussed below, this chapter will mainly engage with research on Kemalism, though this asymmetrical focus will remain limited to the introduction. A novelty of this study vis-a-vis the literature will be the devotion of equal space and attention to both Turkish perceptions of fascism and Italian perceptions of Kemalism. The cases to be discussed will not only involve the often-discussed cases such as Yunus Nadi’s [Abalıoğlu] overtures to fascism in *Cumhuriyet* in 1932, which heavily featured in public debates. Kemalist, non-Kemalist, fascist, and indeed, anti-fascist voices will feature in the study, such as that of the anti-fascist Emilio Lussu quoted above. The hope is that this study of Kemalism and fascism *sine ira et studio* should not only lead to a more balanced and detached analysis of this contentious subject but also address certain shortcomings in the literature with its wide scope.²

¹ J. G. A. Pocock, *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 52.

² The famed statement of Tacitus in his *Annals* 1.1 is often translated as ‘without anger or partiality’.

§ 1.1 Kemalism and Fascism: A History of Histories

The production of scholarly studies on fascism and Kemalism began contemporaneously with these ideologies. In writing about the history and prospects of these movements, many authors felt a need to voice their opinions concerning the relationship between the two. One example was Ettore Rossi, a prominent Turkologist in Italy who wrote extensively on Kemalism and fascism in the 1920s and 1930s and drew the Turks' ire for his remarks on the similarity of fascism and Kemalism. Time and again, the studies on fascism and Kemalism became relevant to given social and political issues of the day. Thus, to appreciate Rossi's views of Kemalism, and the views of fascism and Kemalism found in many other texts, we must take into consideration both the scholarly and contemporary sociopolitical contexts.

While the question of Kemalism and fascism was addressed by contemporary literature as well – most prominently in the Soviet literature, with scholars generally emphasising Kemalism's differences to fascism³ – it would be the post-Second World War era to truly kickstart academic debates on the subject. In the meantime, Turkey became a multiparty democracy with the rise and victory of the Democratic Party (DP) in 1950, and the Cold War emerged as the era-defining sociopolitical conflict. Along with the Cold War came the modernisation theory that postulated 'stages' towards modernity, at the zenith of which most scholars placed Western liberal democracy.⁴ As Kemalism was perceived to be a movement for modernity and fascism as an anachronism, discussions of

³ Stefan Plaggenborg, *Tarihe Emretmek: Kemalist Türkiye, Faşist İtalya, Sosyalist Rusya*, 2nd edn (İletişim, 2015), pp. 72–73.

⁴ On the place of Turkey in the wider modernisation theory, see İbrahim Saylan and İlkin Özdikmenli Çelikoğlu, 'The Significance of the Kemalist Modernization for Modernization Theory', *Uludağ University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Journal of Social Sciences*, 22.40 (2021), pp. 663–703.

Kemalism and fascism revolved around these concepts.⁵ The priorities brought forward by the Cold War included not only increased emphasis on development but frequent comparisons between the Soviet and other political systems.⁶ The context was influential in the forging of what is described in the literature as ‘Cold War liberalism’.⁷ Sometimes with the direct involvement of the American state, Cold War liberals like Raymond Aron merged their interjections to public debate with their scholarly commitments.⁸ Much as them, the non-communist left-wing intellectuals and modernisation theorists in general, the literature on Kemalism tended to pay particular attention to aspects of Kemalism that seemed to anticipate Turkey's joining of the Western bloc in the 1950s, just as many Turkish political and intellectual figures themselves began to define Kemalism in novel, Cold War-informed ways.⁹

A cornerstone in this literature was Maurice Duverger's *Les partis politiques*, published in 1951. In his attempt to explain how there could be totalitarian parties within a competitive party political system and how single parties could well be democratic, Duverger referred to Turkey's

⁵ Researchers would later problematise the idea that fascism was not modern. For example, see Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities: Italy, 1922-1945* (University of California Press, 2001).

⁶ On the global nature of the Cold War, see Federico Romero, ‘Cold War historiography at the crossroads’, *Cold War History*, 14.4 (2014), pp. 685-703.

⁷ Daniel Bessner, Michael Brenes and Michael Franczak, ‘A Brief History of Cold War Liberalism’, *Cold War History*, 24.2 (2024), pp. 299-308.

⁸ On Aron and a nuanced interpretation of his relationship with the US, see Paul Mazgaj, ‘Raymond Aron, the United States, and the Early Cold War, 1945-1953’, *The International History Review*, 43.4 (2021), pp. 796-814.

⁹ The Cold War also induced a general right-wing shift in the Turkish politics, both altering the relations between the Kemalists and other nationalist groups in Turkey and giving increased prominence to the latter. See İlker Aytürk, ‘Nationalism and Islam in Cold War Turkey, 1944-69’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 50.5 (2014), pp. 693-719. On Kemalists changing perceptions of Islam in light of the Cold War, see Ceren Kenar and Doğan Gürpınar, ‘Cold War in the Pulpit: The Presidency of Religious Affairs and Sermons during the Time of Anarchy and Communist Threat’, in *Turkey in the Cold War: Ideology and Culture*, ed. by Cangül Örnek and Çağdaş Üngör (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 21-46 (p. 22).

Republican People's Party (RPP) as his paradigmatic case.¹⁰ As the RPP paved the way for democracy by holding elections as in 1930 – which Duverger likened to teaching someone how to swim by making them swim aground first¹¹ – parties of the 'Kemalist sub-type' were not totalitarian, while the French Communist Party was totalitarian due to its goals and party structure.¹² Due to its democratic orientation, Kemalism did not have any similarities with fascism besides the superficial commonality of the single-party state, of which, Duverger noted, the RPP was 'ashamed' anyway.¹³ As for many pro-fascist perceptions that we will discuss in this thesis, Duverger's did not address them. The eminent historian Bernard Lewis, who was decisively less of a socialist than Duverger, still agreed with the thesis that the RPP was ultimately democratic in its orientation.¹⁴ Lewis granted that the RPP had certain resemblance to other single parties such as Italy's *Partito nazionale fascista*.¹⁵ But Kemalism and fascism differed in the former's avoidance of 'ringing doorbells at night', concentration camps, and with its limited recourse to force.¹⁶ *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* in 1961 thus reinforced the notion that any similarities between Kemalism and fascism were superficial.

While Lewis exercised unrivalled influence on Middle Eastern historiography, it was Duverger's work that dominated the early debate. Duverger's Turkish connections likely played a role in this. Duverger

¹⁰ Maurice Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, trans. by Ergun Özbudun (Bilgi Yayınevi, 1974 [1951], pp. 359–60.

¹¹ Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, trans. by Ergun Özbudun (Bilgi Yayınları, 1974), p. 475. Importantly, Duverger regarded Turkey's shift to multiparty politics as evidence for his theory.

¹² Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, pp. 359–60.

¹³ Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, pp. 359–62.

¹⁴ Maurice Duverger's left-wing stance was well-known in the academia, and he later became a Member of the European Parliament for the *Partito comunista italiano*, the Italian Communist Party. Given Duverger's embracing of *Eurocommunism*, his interest in Kemalism's differences from Soviet Bolshevism likely stemmed from this political vision of a non-Soviet left.

¹⁵ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 2nd edn (Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 383.

¹⁶ Lewis, *The Emergence*, p. 290.

thanked two Turkish scholars, İlhan Arsel and Tarık Zafer Tunaya, for their contributions to his work.¹⁷ In the 1960s, international scholars tended to agree with the thesis that Kemalism was a movement for modernisation and had only superficial similarities with fascism. In the edited volume *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, which first appeared in 1964 and counted Dankwart Rustow, the worldwide leader of modernisation theory, among its editors, the word fascism never appeared in a Turkish context: all uses were related to European and Japanese fascisms.¹⁸ But it was in Turkey in the 1960s that more effort was dedicated to unearthing the democratic orientation of Kemalism. The DP that arrived with the promise of democratisation had become the *bête noire* of much of the Turkish intelligentsia by the late 1950s; the party's authoritarianism led to much criticism and culminated with a coup d'état of 1960.

Among the scholars who drafted a more liberal constitution after the coup were commentators on Kemalism's ultimate goals. One such scholar was Tunaya, who critically reviewed Duverger's work on Kemalism and totalitarianism.¹⁹ Responding to the context of the 1960s, Tunaya felt that Kemalism intended to democratise and Westernise Turkey, but both goals were misunderstood by the authoritarian DP.²⁰ In determining whether a country was democratic or not, Tunaya prioritised certain background factors, primarily whether the country in question was 'Western or Eastern'.²¹ In this picture, Kemalism emerged as a movement that sought to eliminate the obstacles before democracy in an Eastern setting.²² Fascism, instead, was a Western movement that toppled democracy. In a similar vein, Turkish social scientist Niyazi Berkes sought

¹⁷ Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, p. 12.

¹⁸ *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, ed. by Robert E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow (Princeton University Press, 1964).

¹⁹ Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Devrim Hareketleri İçinde Atatürk ve Atatürkçülük* (Baha Matbaası, 1964), pp. 102–3.

²⁰ Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'nin Siyasi Hayatında Batılılaşma Hareketleri* (Yedigün Matbaası, 1960), pp. 188–89, p. 196.

²¹ Tunaya, *Devrim Hareketleri İçinde*, pp. 102–3.

²² Tunaya, *Devrim Hareketleri İçinde*, p. 124.

to defend Kemalism against what he perceived as its 'hijacking' by individuals like the Democrats or Hüseyin Nihal Atsız ('racist high school teachers'), whom he thought to be inspired by fascist or other right-wing inspirations. Against them, though without directly considering the question of Kemalism and Italian fascism, Berkes strove to illustrate what he saw as the original social democratic tendencies of Kemalism.²³

Tunaya also touched upon contemporary Kemalist perceptions of fascism by referring to *Kadro's* (1932-34) explanations of the differences between fascism and Kemalism.²⁴ The chief theorist of the *Kadro* movement, Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, also contributed to the historiography of Kemalism with biographies of the leading figures of the Kemalist regime. Much as in the 1930s, Aydemir explained that Kemalism intended to modernise Turkey and create national unity and an equality-based, thriving economy. As the first successful 'national liberation movement', Turkey was the example the countries 'oppressed' by the West would follow.²⁵ Citing *Kadro*, Aydemir explained how the differences between fascism and Kemalism had already been clarified in the 1930s. In addition to background divergences, as noted by Tunaya, Aydemir also insisted that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk thought poorly of fascism and Mussolini, whom he reportedly called a 'terrible statesman'.²⁶ Importantly, Aydemir also recognised that in the interwar era, some Kemalist revolutionaries, including himself, showed undue vehemence against those who rallied around the concept of democracy; it was then believed that democracy and revolutionary order could not coexist.²⁷

²³ Niyazi Berkes, *Batıcılık Ulusçuluk ve Toplumsal Devrimler: 2* (Cumhuriyet, 1997 [1965]), p. 195.

²⁴ Tunaya, *Türkiye'nin Siyasi Hayatında Batılılaşma*, pp. 178–79.

²⁵ Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Tek Adam 3: 1922-1938*, 11th edn (Remzi, 1992 [1963]), pp. 460–62.

²⁶ For examples ranging from differences of Mussolini's and Atatürk's personalities to Atatürk being suspicious of fascist foreign policy, see Aydemir, *Tek Adam 3*, p. 507, p. 333, p. 414, pp. 511–12, p. 527.

²⁷ Aydemir, *Tek Adam 3*, p. 189.

While the Turkish historian Kemal Karpaz disfavoured the *Kadro* movement and what he saw as its contemporary iterations²⁸ to such an extent as to refer to *Kadro's* ideology in an academic work as 'a superficial shuffling of Marxism, nationalism, and corporatism', he, too, agreed that Kemalism was ultimately democratic.²⁹ While the Kemalist regime took an 'authoritarian turn' in the 1930s following the closure of the Free Republican Party [FRP]. Karpaz attributed the establishment of the FRP to Atatürk's desire to provide competition to and rejuvenate the RPP. A party loyal to the revolution would both achieve this end and bring about competitive party politics, to which Atatürk was committed.³⁰ For Karpaz, actors responsible for the closure of the FRP and return to the single party system included Recep Peker and his circle as well as the unspecified 'RPP'. Peker and his circle were also responsible for the pro-fascist perceptions within the RPP.³¹

In the late 1960s, the focus turned away from the sins of the DP and research on political culture and party structures. The new trend was a focus on socioeconomic and class-related phenomena. While Aydemir, too, observed that Kemalism had failed in its socioeconomic goals, certain developments brought this aspect of Kemalism much more to the forefront. The rise of the socialist opposition in Turkey in the form of Workers' Party of Turkey [*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*], the global protests of 1968, the conflicts in Vietnam and Cuba, and the confrontation between the US and Turkey over Cyprus in the mid-1960s all contributed to a leftward shift in university youth and academia. In many interpretations, though Kemalism did not yet become 'fascism-like', it certainly became more 'bourgeois', something the 'progressive' moves of which were as undeniable as they were limited.

²⁸ Karpaz wrote in the liberal democratic journal *Forum* and argued against the left-wing *YÖN* circle. See Tanıl Bora, *Cereyanlar: Türkiye'de Siyasi İdeolojiler* (İletişim, 2017), p. 542.

²⁹ Kemal Karpaz, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi* (İstanbul: Timaş, 2010 [1967]), pp. 156–57.

³⁰ Karpaz, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi*, pp. 150–51.

³¹ Karpaz, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi*, pp. 153–54.

Suna Kili's and Kurt Steinhaus's studies published in 1969 independently exemplify this new trend; both concurred Kemalism was not similar to fascism and both noted the failure of Kemalists to transform Turkey socioeconomically, though Kili was ultimately more positive towards the Kemalist legacy overall.³² Kili's normative engagements were more explicit than Steinhaus's; even if Atatürk had to exercise 'dictatorial powers' in the service of his programme, his goal was modernity and democracy for Kili. Instead, a 'reaction' to Kemalism arose, and Turkey was troubled after the Second World War.³³ A study even more clearly oriented towards socioeconomic analyses was authored by Taner Timur. Timur saw opposition to Kemalism in the 1920s as unintentionally defending the class interests of the conservatives in Turkey while proclaiming liberal democracy.³⁴ He was quite explicit with his political engagements: he targeted the 12 March military coup in Turkey, various non-left-wing variants of Kemalism, and the pro-NATO circles in Turkey.³⁵ While Kemalist authoritarianism was a fact, it was not totalitarian but a 'democratic dictatorship'.³⁶ Timur interpreted Kemalism as open to a democratic regime despite its socioeconomic shortcomings. There were 'fascistic' (*faşizan* in Turkish) tendencies within the party. Much as Kili, Steinhaus, and many others in the literature would later do, he attributed such tendencies to Peker and his faction.³⁷ However, beyond Peker's 'fascistic' stance, neither the RPP nor its organs like the People's Houses resembled fascism or its institutions.³⁸

Before turning to the 1980s and the rise of a different research programme, let us briefly consider an exceptional study from 1977. An article

³² Suna Kili, *Kemalism* (School of Business Administration and Economics, Robert College, 1969), p. 125, p. 91; Kurt Steinhaus, *Atatürk Devrimi Sosyolojisi 2* (Cumhuriyet, 1999 [1969]), p. 34.

³³ Kili, *Kemalism*, p. 1, p. 125.

³⁴ Taner Timur, *Türk Devrimi ve Sonrası, 1919-1946* (İmge, 1993 [1971]), pp. 220-221.

³⁵ Timur, *Türk Devrimi*, pp. 228-29.

³⁶ Timur, *Türk Devrimi*, p. 164.

³⁷ Timur, *Türk Devrimi*, p. 160; Kili, *Kemalism*, p. 161; Steinhaus, *Atatürk Devrimi Sosyolojisi 2*, p. 66.

³⁸ Timur, *Türk Devrimi*, p. 157.

by the Italian Turcologist Giacomo E. Carretto was published in the *Storia contemporanea* and translated into Turkish in the 1980s.³⁹ In contrast with the literature cited thus far, Carretto shunned normative arguments and avoided providing a general theory of Kemalism and democracy. Where Carretto's work stands in starkest contrast with preceding literature was its direct focus on contemporary perceptions of Kemalism and fascism. Tapping into sources in both Italian and Turkish for the first time in the literature, Carretto discussed perceptions of fascism in *Kadro*, of Kemalism in the work of Rossi, as well as fascist thinkers such as Francesco Coppola and Asvero Gravelli.⁴⁰ As Stefan Plaggenborg notes, Carretto's study remains an exception in the dearth of studies on fascist perceptions of Kemalism.⁴¹ Marco Cuzzi's studies on internationalist fascism contain references to perceptions of Turkey, but, as emphasised by Cuzzi, it would be wrong to consider his books as doing anything more than 'touching upon' (*'sfiorare'*) perceptions of Kemalism.⁴² Francesco Pongiluppi did groundbreaking research on Turkey's Levantine community, Ezio Bartalini's career and Izmir's role in Turco-Italian relations, but there is as yet no detailed effort to directly analyse Italian perceptions of Kemalism.⁴³

³⁹ Giacomo Carretto, '1930'larda Kemalizm-Faşizm-Komünizm Üzerine Polemikler: I', trans. by Durdu Kundakçı, *Tarih ve Toplum*, 17 (1985) [1977], pp. 56–60; Giacomo Carretto, '1930'larda Kemalizm-Faşizm-Komünizm Üzerine Polemikler: II', trans. by Durdu Kundakçı, *Tarih ve Toplum*, 18 (1985) [1977], pp. 422–32.

⁴⁰ Carretto, '1930'larda Kemalizm-Faşizm-Komünizm Üzerine Polemikler: I', p. 346, p. 348.

⁴¹ Stefan Plaggenborg, *Tarihe Emretmek: Kemalist Türkiye, Faşist İtalya, Sosyalist Rusya*, 2nd edn (İletişim, 2015 [2012]), pp. 61–62.

⁴² Marco Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle Camicie Nere: I CAUR 1933-1939* (Mursia, 2005); Marco Cuzzi, *Antieuropa: Il Fascismo Universale di Mussolini* (M&B, 2006). The observation and the wording of 'touching upon' perceptions of Turkey by fascists belongs to Professor Cuzzi, who kindly informed me in personal correspondence that Italian archives likely yielded further information on the subject.

⁴³ Francesco Pongiluppi, *La Rassegna Italiana Organo degli Interessi Italiani in Oriente. Giornale Ufficiale della Camera di Commercio Italiana di Costantinopoli* (Edizioni Isis, 2015); Francesco Pongiluppi, 'Tra Fede Cattolica e Legame Nazionale: L'identità Degli Italo Levantini di Turchia negli Anni 1923-1933', *Storia e problemi contemporanei*, 72

Studies from the 1950s to the late 1970s considered in this chapter lend support to the ‘tutelage theory’ of Kemalism, according to which the Kemalist single party regime was a temporary phenomenon. Upon the flourishing of the political culture of the Turkish people, a liberal democratic system would replace the single party regime. The tutelage theory often co-existed with modernisation theory, though this connection was not a necessary one. As we will see, both came under attack in academia and the political sphere in the 1980s, with Kemalism increasingly associated with fascism.

§ 1.2 Enter Post-Kemalism: Kemalist Authoritarianism Under Scrutiny

The global context of the 1980s engendered much change in left-wing thought, as intellectuals were forced to reckon with ‘neoliberalism’, globalism, and the rise of a monopolar geopolitics. In Turkey, the ‘neoliberal’ economics of the Homeland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*) followed the 1980 coup d’état. With the military in charge in the name of what they saw as the Kemalism, a reaction to Kemalism and its potential to ‘engender anti-democratic regimes’ became imminent. Losing colleagues and students to the military regime, at least in this occasion the personal was indeed political for many academics.

The trendsetter of the 1980s was Mete Tunçay’s comprehensive study of the development of Kemalist single party regime, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Tek-Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması* (The Establishment of the Single-Party Regime in the Republic of Turkey). Tunçay revisited the ‘authoritarian turn’ of the 1930s by arguing that the Kemalist regime became

(2016), pp. 63–77; Francesco Pongiluppi, ‘The Foundation of the Italian Worker Mutual Aid Society in Constantinople: Exile and Transnational Mutualism’, in *Exile and the Circulation of Political Practices*, ed. by Catherine Brice (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020), pp. 151–69. I would like to thank Dr. Pongiluppi for our fruitful discussions on Ezio Bartalini’s career in Turkey, too.

clearly authoritarian as early as the mid-1920s.⁴⁴ Tunçay sought to avoid reification but did not specify which agents made part of the ‘interest groups’ he identified within the RPP.⁴⁵ While discussing certain positive perceptions of fascism among some Kemalists, Tunçay traced back the suppression of the opposition to personal interests of a faction within the RPP rather than given ideological leanings. What best characterises the new trend from the 1980s onwards was the normatively loaded final chapter of the book, where, drawing from Arnold Toynbee’s work on political regimes and ideologies, Tunçay lamented the missed opportunities for democratisation in Turkey.⁴⁶

In 1990, Levent Köker published *Modernleşme Kemalizm ve Demokrasi* (Modernisation, Kemalism, and Democracy). Though only published in 1990, the book was Köker’s ‘doctoral thesis written between 1983-87, with only minor changes’.⁴⁷ Köker criticised tutelage theorists such as Tunaya and argued that Kemalism was an obstacle before democracy in Turkey.⁴⁸ Köker’s critique zeroed in on modernisation theory, which he found unacceptable analytically and for its real-life consequences, including the justification of Kemalism.⁴⁹ In *Modernleşme Kemalizm ve Demokrasi*, Köker neither dwelled on Kemalist factions nor perceptions of fascism. He was convinced that Kemalist authoritarianism stemmed from local sources rather than imitation of European developments, Kemalism and fascism were both totalitarianisms, and the scholars could study Kemalism as an ‘abstract, unchanged’ ideology.⁵⁰ Another work informed by a sociological outlook appeared in 1989: Çağlar Keyder’s *State and Class in Turkey*. While Keyder clarified that Kemalism was not a sub-type of fascism, with which he meant ‘generic fascism’, the

⁴⁴ Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Tek-Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması* (Yurt, 1981), p. 117, pp. 139-44.

⁴⁵ Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Tek-Parti*, p. 129, p. 247.

⁴⁶ Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Tek-Parti*, pp. 335-337.

⁴⁷ Levent Köker, *Modernleşme Kemalizm ve Demokrasi*, 2nd edn (İletişim, 1993), p. 8.

⁴⁸ Köker, *Modernleşme Kemalizm ve Demokrasi*, p. 218.

⁴⁹ Köker, *Modernleşme Kemalizm ve Demokrasi*, pp. 72-91.

⁵⁰ Köker, *Modernleşme Kemalizm ve Demokrasi*, p. 8.

zenith of tutelage theory was bygone: the reason for this was not the Kemalists intentions but the socioeconomic factors.⁵¹ Keyder also explained that the fascist example exerted a clear influence on the RPP, though he too sought no further identification of factions beyond 'bureaucracy' or 'bourgeoisie'.⁵² He noted that the Kemalist regime had a 'corporatist' outlook strongly reminding one of the European fascist regimes.⁵³ Tunçay, Köker and Keyder all observed that Kemalism was not fascism, but both the 'influence' of fascism and the anti-democratic character of Kemalism – and thus, its similarity to fascism – increasingly came to the fore.

In keeping with this trend, Taha Parla published his *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları* (The Official Sources of the Political Culture in Turkey) in the early 1990s. The volumes focused on central texts of Kemalism to illustrate the 'problems' such a political culture created for Turkey and 'the mentality that should by now take root in Turkey'.⁵⁴ Parla tracked back the Turkish coups' legitimacy claims to the 'progressive' role Kemalists and Atatürk attributed to the army.⁵⁵ Parla even argued against historical figures under study such as Recep Peker, whose understanding of democracy adapted to local circumstances Parla criticised as ignoring universal norms.⁵⁶ The conclusion was that while Kemalism was not exactly corporatist or fascist *per se*, it was a 'Bonapartism' that denied the 'reality' of class struggle, embraced a philosophy of history resembling the fascist one with its emphasis on ruptures as opposed to a liberal or Marxist philosophy, and had a social outlook strongly reminiscent of European integralism and fascism.⁵⁷ Parla also argued that Kemalists

⁵¹ Çağlar Keyder, *Türkiye'de Devlet ve Sınıflar* (İletişim, 2014 [1987]), p. 140.

⁵² For a characteristic example of this approach, see Keyder, *Türkiye'de Devlet*, p. 111.

⁵³ Keyder, *Türkiye'de Devlet*, pp. 137-138.

⁵⁴ Taha Parla, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları 1: Atatürk'ün Nutuk'u* (İletişim, 1991), pp. 174-75, p. 178.

⁵⁵ Taha Parla, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları 2: Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri* (İletişim, 1991), p. 176.

⁵⁶ Taha Parla, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları 3: Kemalist Tek-Parti İdeolojisi ve CHP'nin Altı Ok'u* (İletişim, 1992), pp. 146-47.

⁵⁷ Parla, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları 2: Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, pp. 11-12, p. 121, pp. 185-86.

borrowed much ideological content from fascism. Positive perceptions of fascism by the Kemalists went much beyond diplomatic niceties for not just Peker but the Kemalist leadership at large.⁵⁸ Importantly, Parla thought Peker necessarily reflected the opinion of the wider leadership.⁵⁹

Normative engagements of the scholars were not difficult to decipher in these studies, especially in Köker and Parla. But a volume specifically dedicated to the left-wing understandings of Kemalism published in 1991, titled *Sol Kemalizme Bakıyor* (The Left is Looking at Kemalism) gave the duo and Tunçay more space to spell out their visions of Kemalism. Benefitting from the less academic environment of the interviews, Tunçay defined any form of Kemalism as anti-democratic and called on a non-authoritarian new left to ‘settle accounts with the question of Kemalism’.⁶⁰ Köker reiterated the problems he identified in modernisation theory and its use in legitimising Kemalism, as well as his observation of Kemalism’s unchanging nature: ‘I do not think that Kemalism underwent very important changes’.⁶¹ Once the veil that was the belief in modernisation were lifted, the left could see how pro-fascist and pro-Nazi texts dominated the interwar era Turkish discussions.⁶² Parla argued that fascism influenced Kemalism: a particular case of inspiration was the belief that the main global contradiction was the clash between oppressing and oppressed nations and not between classes, which, Parla thought, came directly from fascism.⁶³ He regretted that criticism of Kemalism appeared

⁵⁸ Parla, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları 2: Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, p. 230.

⁵⁹ Parla, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları 3: Kemalist Tek-Parti İdeolojisi ve CHP’nin Altı Ok’u*, p. 150.

⁶⁰ Mete Tunçay, ‘Mustafa Suphi Öldürülmeseydi Muhtemelen Bakan Olurdu’, in *Sol Kemalizme Bakıyor*, ed. by Levent Cinemre and Ruşen Çakır (Metis, 1991), pp. 13–26 (pp. 23–25).

⁶¹ Levent Köker, ‘Sol, Çağdaşlaşma Adına Kemalizm’i Hep Olumladı’, in *Sol Kemalizme Bakıyor*, ed. by Levent Cinemre and Ruşen Çakır (Metis, 1991), pp. 27–46 (p. 31).

⁶² Köker, ‘Sol, Çağdaşlaşma’, p. 39.

⁶³ Taha Parla, ‘Asıl Hayret Edilecek Şey Yetmiş Yıl Sürebilmiş Olması’, in *Sol Kemalizme Bakıyor*, ed. by Levent Cinemre and Ruşen Çakır (Metis, 1991), pp. 47–60 (p. 47). This idea

to be the monopoly of the right: the left ‘can and should’ provide such criticism, too.⁶⁴

The work of the prominent historian of Turkey Erik-Jan Zürcher is occasionally interpreted as falling under the umbrella of post-Kemalism, too.⁶⁵ In his *Turkey: A Modern History* published in 1993, Zürcher emphasised how the perceived success of totalitarian regimes in dealing with the global economic crisis of the 1930s, the ‘sobering’ experiences such as the revolt in Menemen in 1930, and the unexpected popularity of the FRP led portions of the Kemalist intelligentsia to authoritarianism.⁶⁶ Atatürk’s public speeches typically addressed ‘party caucuses at indoor venues’ in the 1920s and the public speech in 1933 ‘clearly resembled similar

was first formulated in Italy by the nationalist Enrico Corradini by merging nationalism with a Sorelian outlook: without colonies, Italy belonged to ‘proleterian nations’. Similar views were later made popular by the *Kadroists* in Turkey but with the crucial difference that ‘oppressed nations’ were those in the East, whereas the oppressor was Europe including Italy. *Kadroist* terminology (the terms ‘national liberation’ and ‘contradiction’ were directly taken from Leninism) and ideology clearly drew from Leninist sources in this formulation and not from Corradini or fascism.

⁶⁴ Parla, ‘Asıl Hayret’, p. 59.

⁶⁵ İlker Aytürk, ‘Post-Post Kemalizm: Yeni Bir Paradigmayı Beklerken’, *Birikim*, 319 (2015), pp. 34–48 (p. 35).

⁶⁶ Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 3rd edn (I.B. Tauris, 2004), pp. 179–80. Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building* (I. B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 255–56. Following the establishment of the FRP, Turkey witnessed pro-FRP and anti-RPP mass gatherings in the build-up to the 1930 elections. Some of these gatherings turned violent, as in İzmir, a large city hit hard by the global economic crisis. There were even unconfirmed reports of attacks on the posters of Atatürk in the RPP buildings. The incidents in the country did not wholly subside after the closing of the FRP in November 1930. In the town of Menemen in İzmir, a group apparently united under a man who claimed to be the Messiah killed and beheaded a young reserve officer, Mustafa Fehmi Kubilay, before parading around the town with Kubilay’s head on a spike. Support units shot and arrested the members of the group, but the RPP leadership and Atatürk, in particular, were furious that it took these units to suppress a blatant act of rebellion against the regime. The Menemen incident was instantly linked to the FRP and claimed to be a machination by the frustrated FRP circles to destabilise the country by some pro-RPP figures.

occasions in Fascist Italy in its imagery and choreography'.⁶⁷ The merging of the state and party in Turkey in the late 1930s also 'owed a great deal to the authoritarian examples in Europe'.⁶⁸ Noting these similarities, Zürcher also observed differences: the RPP never formulated a 'leader principle' that would indefinitely legitimise the single party regime.⁶⁹ Atatürk 'intensely disliked being called a dictator', and the Kemalists never tried mobilising the masses in the way fascists did.⁷⁰ Zürcher never argued that Kemalism was fascism, but in his work, too, steps away from tutelage theory were visible.

While tutelage theory came under intense fire in the 1980s and 1990s, it was not completely abandoned. For example, Sina Akşin noted that 'democratic opposition' to Kemalism was not democratic at all as they rejected gender equality and freedom of conscience.⁷¹ Defending Kemalism as 'more democratic' than contemporary European regimes, Akşin noted Peker and others, but not the entirety of the RPP, were impressed with fascism.⁷² Feroz Ahmad's interpretations of Kemalism have remained closer to the tutelage theory as well, as is apparent from his studies from the 1980s to the 2000s.⁷³ Ahmad's doctoral thesis supervisor in the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, was Bernard Lewis. Like Lewis, Ahmad believed that the Kemalists' was a 'regime of transition' intended to be replaced eventually by a more liberal system. Ahmad noted the importance of certain perceptions of fascism in the closing of the FRP,

⁶⁷ Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building* (I. B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 256–57.

⁶⁸ Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building*, pp. 255–56.

⁶⁹ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 186.

⁷⁰ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 186.

⁷¹ Sina Akşin, *Ana Çizgileriyle Türkiye'nin Yakın Tarihi* (Cumhuriyet, 1997), p. 48.

⁷² Akşin, *Ana Çizgileriyle Türkiye'nin Yakın Tarihi*, pp. 95–96; p. 82.

⁷³ Studies considered here in this context include *İttihatçılıktan Kemalizme* (from Unionism to Kemalism; first published 1987), the article 'Progressive Republican Party, 1924–25' published in 1991, his *The Making of Modern Turkey* published in 1993, his *Turkey: The Quest for Identity* that appeared in 2003, and his contribution to the *Cambridge History of Modern Turkey IV: Turkey in the Modern World*, titled 'Politics and Political Parties in Republican Turkey' from 2008.

counted Peker among those influenced by ‘the successes of fascism in the 1930s’, but insisted Kemalists’ perceptions of fascism overall as an imperialist ideology remained negative. Instead, Kemalists were globally perceived as allies against the global offensive of fascism.⁷⁴ Similarly, in his biography of Atatürk, Andrew Mango noted the presence of positive perceptions of fascism among the likes of Yunus Nadi [Abalıoğlu] even in the early 1920s, but maintained that Kemalists’ ends were incomparable to those of fascists.⁷⁵ Reiterating a common argument in tutelage theory, Mango noted that Peker was dismissed from the general secretariat of the party in 1936 for his excessive appreciation of totalitarianism.⁷⁶ Unlike totalitarian regimes, ‘the Kemalist regime in Turkey did not lend itself to national, racial or class-based animosities’.⁷⁷ Atatürk was an ‘enlightened despot’ who ‘left behind not a dictatorship but the structure of a democracy’.⁷⁸

Even though the intellectual relationship between fascism and Kemalism occupied a central position in texts discussed above, most scholars avoided directly investigating contemporary perceptions of fascism among Kemalists. In 2001, Cennet Ünver wrote her *Images and Perceptions of Fascism Among the Mainstream Kemalist Elite in Turkey, 1931-1943*, which was the first study specifically dedicated to Kemalist perceptions of fascism. Ünver sought to avoid reification by positing factions and declared herself dedicated to ‘neither whitewashing nor legitimising’.⁷⁹ One shortcoming of Ünver’s work was the particular factions she posited: Falih Rifkî Atay was grouped together with others among ‘mainstream Kemalists’. She deemed the *Ülkü* circle to have a ‘limited rhetoric of democracy’, which unintentionally obscured how the perceptions of

⁷⁴ Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (Routledge, 1993), pp. 67–68. Feroz Ahmad, *İttihatçılıktan Kemalizm’e*, trans. by Fatmagül Bertay (Baltalı), 3rd edn (Kaynak, 1996), p. 171; Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: The Quest for Identity* (Oneworld, 2003), p. 92.

⁷⁵ Andrew Mango, *Atatürk*, trans. by Füsün Doruker (Sabah, 1999), p. 357.

⁷⁶ Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 483.

⁷⁷ Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 514.

⁷⁸ Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 515, pp. 512–13.

⁷⁹ Cennet Ünver, ‘Images and Perceptions of Fascism Among the Mainstream Kemalist Elite in Turkey, 1931-1943’ (unpublished master’s thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2001), p. vii.

democracy in *Ülkü* really interacted with interpretations of fascism.⁸⁰ The *Kadroists* were deemed receptive towards fascism and this was explained with reference to the *zeitgeist* of the era.⁸¹ Another issue was the timeframe under study. By limiting her study to the period between 1931 and 1943, Ünver followed the literature in ignoring Kemalist perceptions of fascism in the 1920s. With the focus away from what this thesis will call the 1930-1931, surrounding the rise and fall of the FRP, the study also missed an opportunity to causally relate perceptions of fascism to the downfall of the opposition. Despite such limitations, Ünver's study differed from both the wider post-Kemalist literature and the tutelage theory with its much-needed direct focus on contemporary perceptions. Compared to Ünver's work, for example, Fikret Adanır's 'Kemalist Authoritarianism and Fascist Trends in Turkey during the Interwar Period' that also appeared in 2001 continued with an analysis of monolithic Kemalism and comparisons between fascism and Kemalism. Adanır concluded that 'the political system in Turkey during the interwar period had a strong fascist content, albeit differing in many respects from Italian Fascism'.⁸²

Recent decades have produced more examples of attempts to divide Kemalism into factions. In his doctoral thesis on *Ülkü's* Kemalism defended in 2003, Ertan Aydın focused on three groups that he found most prominent: the 'conservatives' such as Ağaoğlu, İsmayil Hakkı Baltacıoğlu and Mustafa Şekip Tunç, the *Ülkü* circle, and the *Kadro* circle.⁸³ Aydın addressed the question of fascism and the *Ülkü* circle led by Peker. While normatively engaging with their 'anti-clericalism' and consequences of their Kemalism for Turkey's democracy, Aydın concluded that *Ülkü*

⁸⁰ Ünver, 'Images and Perceptions', p. 53, p. 111.

⁸¹ Ünver, 'Images and Perceptions', p. 138.

⁸² Fikret Adanır, 'Kemalist Authoritarianism and Fascist Trends in Turkey During the Inter-War Period', in *Fascism Outside Europe: The European Impulse against Democratic Conditions in the Diffusion of Global Fascism*, ed. by Stein Ugelvik Larsen (Social Science Monographs, 2001), pp. 313–61 (pp. 360–61).

⁸³ Ertan Aydın, 'The Peculiarities of Turkish Revolutionary Ideology in the 1930s: The *Ülkü* Version of Kemalism, 1933-1936' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Bilkent University, 2003), pp. 102–15.

generally rejected fascist theses.⁸⁴ Aydın's more extensive focus on *Ülkü* threw light on what Ünver, too, noticed but made do with calling a 'limited rhetoric of democracy': *Ülkü* defended democracy, albeit understood in a way that meant Turkey could be a democracy without being a parliamentary regime.⁸⁵

The focus on Peker was also at the forefront of two other recent studies. Murat Yılmaz's chapter in the *Festschrift* for Tunçay from 2007 analysed Peker, his 'fascist project' and Kemalist authoritarianism. Arguing against a sizeable literature, Yılmaz thought that Peker was dismissed from the general secretariat of the RPP not due to an outlandish fascist project but a personal conflict with Kazım Dirik, a governor close to Atatürk.⁸⁶ He noted that arguments on Peker's 'fascism' typically relied on the memoirs of Hasan Rıza Soyak, a personal friend of Dirik.⁸⁷ Much of what Soyak listed as the contents of the 'fascist project' was already part of the 1935 programme of the RPP anyway.⁸⁸ While Peker was not a fascist *per se*, Yılmaz argued the focus on him functioned to downplay the Kemalist leadership's unity of opinion. Burak Özçetin offered a more polemical perspective, at times arguing against Peker's view of democracy as Parla did.⁸⁹ Özçetin confronted the notion that Kemalism was too pragmatic to be an ideology; it was indeed an ideology 'that guided action'.⁹⁰ Though scholars like Karpas thought Kemalists inherited notions of democracy and individual rights from the French revolutionary tradition, the relationship between Kemalism on the one hand and parliamentary democracy and individualism on the other was 'highly problematic'.⁹¹ In

⁸⁴ Aydın, 'The Peculiarities', p. 5, p. 117.

⁸⁵ Aydın, 'The Peculiarities', p. 273.

⁸⁶ Murat Yılmaz, 'Recep Peker, CHF ve Bürokrasi: Kazım Dirik Örnek Olayı Üzerinden "Parti Devlet" Uygulaması ve "Faşist Proje"', in *Mete Tunçay'a Armağan*, ed. by Mehmet Ö. Alkan, Tanıl Bora, and Murat Koraltürk (İletişim, 2007), pp. 683–705 (p. 696).

⁸⁷ Yılmaz, 'Recep Peker', p. 696.

⁸⁸ Yılmaz, 'Recep Peker', p. 698.

⁸⁹ Burak Özçetin, 'Zigana Dağındaki Portakal Ağacı: Recep Peker ve Kemalizm', *Akdeniz İ.İ.B.F. Dergisi*, 20 (2010), pp. 167–87 (p. 174).

⁹⁰ Özçetin, 'Zigana Dağındaki Portakal', p. 169.

⁹¹ Özçetin, 'Zigana Dağındaki Portakal', p. 170.

Özçetin's analysis, Kemalism again appeared rather monolithic and unchanging, synchronically and diachronically.

That Özçetin's conclusion resembles previous works in the post-Kemalist research programme is not a coincidence. Studies that cement the dominance of this research programme on Kemalism and fascism continue to appear. Hamit Bozarslan published his article 'Kemalism, Westernisation and Anti-liberalism' in 2006, which was translated into Turkish in 2020. Bozarslan made the crucial observation that there were multiple models of Western modernity before Kemalism: one was the decisively more authoritarian version represented by Italy, among others, and the other the liberal democratic tradition.⁹² In the troubled 1930s, Kemalists drew from the authoritarian West. Kemalism presented itself in the 1930s as 'a third anti-democratic way' distinct from Bolshevism and fascism, according to Bozarslan.⁹³ Similar to Köker, Bozarslan also criticised how certain understandings of modernity led to legitimisation of Kemalism.⁹⁴ Bozarslan did not detail which Kemalists sought to draw strength from which West, tending to portray 'the Kemalists' as the agent. In 2012, Erhan Berat Fındıklı published his study on the People's Houses in Turkey and the influence the fascist *Dopolavoro* exerted on its creators.⁹⁵ Fındıklı's study differed from much of the literature with a focus on Turkish as well as Italian sources. Fındıklı argued that not only Kemalism and fascism had certain similarities but also that the Italian diplomatic personnel in Turkey at the time were aware of these. Such was the congruency between the 'languages' of Kemalism and fascism that the Italian ambassador in Turkey at the time, Carlo Galli, found it very easy

⁹² Hamit Bozarslan, 'Kemalizm, Batılılaşma ve Anti-Liberalizm', trans. by Tuncay Şur, *Birikim*, 371 (2020), 48–54 (pp. 50–51).

⁹³ Bozarslan, 'Kemalizm, Batılılaşma ve Anti-Liberalizm', p. 49.

⁹⁴ Bozarslan, 'Kemalizm, Batılılaşma ve Anti-Liberalizm', p. 48.

⁹⁵ The People's Houses (*Halkevleri*) were established in 1932 by the RPP to educate the masses. As will be discussed in the thesis, a number of European institutions were studied by the party officials in the establishment of the People's Houses, including fascist institutions.

to translate Kemalist concepts into Italian.⁹⁶ Kemalism was not a copy of fascism but, in Fındıklı's work, it appeared to be a kindred movement. While noting that scholars had to focus on Kemalism and fascisms instead of reifying these, Fındıklı's article did not include any attempt at differentiating between different Kemalist interpretations of fascism or different Italian perceptions of Kemalism.⁹⁷

The German historian Stefan Ihrig published his *Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination* in 2014. While dedicated to Nazi perceptions of Kemalism, the book contains observations about fascist and Kemalist perceptions of one another, as well as on the similarity of these three ideologies. Ihrig noted that contrary to Nazis, Italian fascists' perceptions of Kemalism were not always passionately pro-Kemalist.⁹⁸ Nearly all cases Ihrig discussed in his book pointed to pro-Kemalist remarks by fascists or pro-fascist stances by Kemalists, however. Ihrig observed that Mussolini's daily *Il Popolo d'Italia* closely followed the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923). He called attention to the similarity of vocabulary between *Il Popolo d'Italia*'s report when discussing the capture of Izmir by the Turks ('*La marcia di Kemal su Smirne*', meaning the March of Kemal on Izmir) and the fascist March on Rome [*La marcia su Roma*] about one month and a half later. Citing a secondary source from the Second World War, Ihrig noted that before his March on Rome, Mussolini came to be known as 'Mustafa Kemal of Milano'.⁹⁹

Ihrig's discussion lends itself to the conclusion that early fascism was significantly influenced by the Kemalists, to the extent of Mussolini posing as an Italian Mustafa Kemal. As for the latter claim, it appears that Ihrig, or the source he cites, placed something Mussolini may have truly

⁹⁶ Erhan Berat Fındıklı, 'Tek Parti Döneminde Türkiye'de Halkevleri ve İtalya', *Arredamento*, 263 (December, 2012), pp. 100–111 (p. 108).

⁹⁷ Fındıklı, 'Tek Parti Döneminde Türkiye'de Halkevleri ve İtalya', p. 110. As for fascist perceptions of Kemalism, Fındıklı did not detail whether Galli's views were widely shared by other fascists. In Chapter Five, we will see that Fındıklı's interpretation of Galli's remarks may not be the best explanation either given the diplomat's explicit observation of key organisational and ideological differences between Kemalism and fascism.

⁹⁸ Stefan Ihrig, *Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination* (The Belknap Press, 2014), p. 226.

⁹⁹ Ihrig, *Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination*, pp. 105–6.

uttered out of context. In the November 1934 edition of the fascist journal *Costruire*, Oreste Mosca referred to words of Mussolini describing the situation of Italy in the summer of 1922 (and not in 1919, as reported by Ihrig or his source), just before the rise of fascism to power. In the piece, Mosca related that Mussolini had observed the existence of two states within Turkey: the ‘rapid, irregular, victorious’ Ankara and the ‘weak and paralysed’ Istanbul governments. In this context, Mussolini was ‘Mustafa Kemal Pascià of Milano-Angora’ against corrupt Rome-Istanbul.¹⁰⁰ Clearly, this was the expression of a general fascist and nationalist appreciation of the Kemalists’ uprising. But Mussolini was establishing an analogy between not two ideologies and their goals but portraying the government in Rome as ‘feeble’ by establishing an analogy with the hapless Istanbul government. Positive perceptions of aspects of Ankara’s approach certainly do not mean an adoption of action plans from Turkey in the absence of further documentation. Without directly arguing that Kemalism was ‘fascism-like’ or criticising the tutelage theory, therefore, Ihrig presented a picture of Kemalism that was, in important ways, close to Nazism and fascism.¹⁰¹

The literature continues to present examples of post-Kemalism, tutelage theory, and ideology comparisons. Onur Atalay’s 2018 monograph *Türk’e Tapmak: Seküler Din ve İki Savaş Arası Kemalizm* follows a rich literature, partly built on analyses of fascism, to argue that Kemalism resembled fascism as a ‘secular religion’ that sought to replace Islam in Turkish minds.¹⁰² In 2023, Lemi Atalay published a critique of the similarity certain scholars seek to establish between corporatism and Kemalism. Atalay argued that this attempt was a key ‘post-Kemalist thesis’ and he

¹⁰⁰ Oreste Mosca, ‘Venti anni di giustizia sociale nel pensiero e nell’azione del Duce’, *Costruire*, November 1934, pp. 35-51 (p. 50).

¹⁰¹ Ihrig made his political stance more explicit in a piece for the Huffington Post in November 2015, where he argued that Erdoğan [Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the president of Turkey] can run and scream all he wants, he is Atatürk’s kid’, as the two leaders shared ‘tools and perhaps even scope’. See Stefan Ihrig, ‘Erdoğan’s New Turkey: Goodbye Atatürk, Hello Atatürk’, *Huffington Post*, 3 November 2015 <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/erdogan-new-turkey-ataturk_b_6831206> [accessed 13 May 2024].

¹⁰² Onur Atalay, *Türk’e Tapmak: Seküler Din ve İki Savaş Arası Kemalizm* (İletişim, 2018).

proceeded to defend Kemalism from this.¹⁰³ That Kemalism and fascism were not similar was the conclusion reached by Stefan Plaggenborg in his 2012 comparative study of the Bolshevik, fascist and Kemalist ideologies as well, who attached much less a normative importance to the question.¹⁰⁴ Studies on certain developments in fascist Italy have come from the pen of Ramazan Erhan Güllü, who largely refrained from pro- or post-Kemalist camps, focusing on the particular question at hand such as the Turkish perceptions of the emergence of Vatican as an independent state.¹⁰⁵ Güllü's study on Turkish perceptions of Mussolini's rise to power in 1922 contain important findings such as how Hüseyin Cahit [Yalçın] perceived this as a positive development at the time, compared to his later coverage of fascism.¹⁰⁶

In this review, I have focused only on studies that related to the perceptions of or ideological relationship between fascism and Kemalism. Much excellent work in the literature addresses Turkish-Italian relations from the perspective of international relations and diplomatic history. Examples here include articles by Dilek Barlas,¹⁰⁷ the work of Hazal

¹⁰³ Lemi Atalay, 'Post-Kemalist Bir Tezin Kritiği: Korporatizm-Kemalizm Tartışması', *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 42.75 (2023), pp. 23–42.

¹⁰⁴ Plaggenborg, *Tarihe Emretmek*, pp. 312–16.

¹⁰⁵ Ramazan Erhan Güllü, 'Benito Mussolini'nin İtalya'da İktidara Gelişinin Türk Kamuoyuna Yansıması', *Cumhuriyet Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 22 (2015), pp. 305–29; Ramazan Erhan Güllü, 'Vatikan'ın Devletleşmesi ve Türk Kamuoyu', *Yakın Dönem Türkiye Araştırmaları*, 36.1 (2019), pp. 1–28.

¹⁰⁶ Güllü, 'Benito Mussolini'nin İtalya'da İktidara Gelişinin Türk Kamuoyuna Yansıması', p. 326.

¹⁰⁷ Dilek Barlas and Serhat Güvenç, 'To Build a Navy with the Help of Adversary: Italian-Turkish Naval Arms Trade, 1929–32', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 38.4 (2002), pp. 143–68; Dilek Barlas, 'Friends or Foes? Diplomatic Relations Between Italy and Turkey, 1923–36', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 36 (2004), pp. 231–52; Also relevant is Dilek Barlas and Serhat Güvenç, *Türkiye'nin Akdeniz Siyaseti (1923–1939)* (Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2014).

Papuççular,¹⁰⁸ an edited volume compiled in Italy,¹⁰⁹ the studies by Fabio Grassi,¹¹⁰ and the articles and a nearly seven-hundred-pages-long book by Mevlüt Çelebi.¹¹¹ Each of these works marks significant contributions to the history of Turkish-Italian relations in the interwar period. Studies on the Italian fascist foreign policy towards the Middle East also provide important insights despite typically focusing on the Arab Middle East.¹¹² Fascism's role as an example against liberalism in the region has been explored by scholars.¹¹³ Scholars also shed light on the material involvement of Fascist Italy in anti-British movements in the Middle East and the dynamics of fascination and rejection exerted by fascism on the youth in

¹⁰⁸ Hazal Papuççular, 'Fragile Balances: Turkish Foreign Policy on the Sovereignty of the Dodecanese Islands (1940-1947)', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 20.5 (2018), pp. 405–19; Hazal Papuççular, *Türkiye ve Oniki Ada: 1912-1947* (Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2019).

¹⁰⁹ *Italia e Turchia Tra Passato e Futuro: Un Impegno Comune, Una Sfida Culturale*, ed. by Esra Danacioglu Tamur and Fabio L. Grassi (Nuova Cultura, 2009).

¹¹⁰ Fabio L. Grassi, 'Il Kemalismo: Un'esperienza Fuori Dagli Schemi', *Annali Dell'Istituto Ugo La Malfa*, 6 (1990), pp. 203–83; Fabio L. Grassi, *İtalya ve Türk Sorunu: 1919-1923 Kamuoyu ve Dış Politika*, trans. by Nevin Özkan and Durdu Kundakçı (Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003); Fabio L. Grassi, *Türk-İtalyan İlişkilerinde Az Bilinenler* (Tarihçi, 2014); Fabio L. Grassi, *Atatürk: Il Fondatore Della Turchia Moderna* (Salerno Editrice, 2020).

¹¹¹ Mevlüt Çelebi, 'Milli Mücadele Döneminde Türk-İtalyan İlişkileri', *Belleten*, 62.233 (1999), pp. 157–206; Mevlüt Çelebi, 'Başvekil İsmet Paşa'nın İtalya Seyahati', *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 22.2 (2007), pp. 21–52; Mevlüt Çelebi, 'Bir İtalyan Milletvekilinin Yeni Türkiye Hakkında Fikirleri (1925)', *Belgi Dergisi*, 2.15 (2018), pp. 610–33; Mevlüt Çelebi, *Türkiye-İtalya Siyasi İlişkileri (1923-1939)* (Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2020).

¹¹² Renzo De Felice, *Il Fascismo e l'Oriente: Arabi, Ebrei ed Indiani nella Politica di Mussolini* (Il Mulino, 1988); Nir Arielli, *Fascist Italy and the Middle East, 1933-40* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

¹¹³ Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Confronting Fascism in Egypt: Dictatorship versus Democracy in the 1930s* (Stanford University Press, 2010); Israel Gershoni, 'Egyptian Liberalism in an Age of 'Crisis of Orientation': Al-Risālas Reaction to Fascism and Nazism, 1933-39', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 3.1 (1999), pp. 551-576; Joachim Scholtyseck, 'Fascism—National Socialism—Arab "Fascism": Terminologies, Definitions, Distinctions', *Die Welt des Islams*, 52.3/4 (2012), pp. 242-89; Peter Wien, 'Arabs and Fascism: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives', *Die Welt des Islams*, 52.3/4 (2012), pp. 331-50; Peter Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism: Authoritarian, Totalitarian and Pro-Fascist Inclinations, 1932-1941* (Routledge, 2006).

the region.¹¹⁴ These illuminative accounts tend to focus on either the Middle East without Turkey or investigate the actions of state-level actors. The thesis will draw from these insightful discussions since politics and intellectual life never exist in a vacuum. While not necessarily piggy-backing state policy, intellectuals often responded to political events, offering their ideas as solution proposals or diagnoses of problems surrounding politics. Politics, in turn, is never conducted independently of political ideas. Even the most shrewd and pragmatic politician cannot but carry some ideological baggage that shapes how she interprets the world.¹¹⁵ Therefore, this thesis will benefit from the insights provided by these works and intends to complement this line of scholarship with a focus on a wider array of actors beyond the state-level relations.

§ 1.3 Reviewing Trends in the Literature, or Why Not Italian Perceptions of Kemalism?

After contextually reviewing the literature, a systematic discussion of the trends and shortcomings will pave the way for discussing how this thesis can differ from the literature. The trends to be analysed will include the lack of focus on Italian perceptions of Kemalism, other issues with case selection, problems with dating and explaining Kemalist perceptions of fascism, reification, and related to all these as a root problem, the prominence of normative concerns in the literature.

¹¹⁴ Nir Arielli, 'Italian Involvement in the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936-1939', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 35.2 (2008), pp. 187-204; Haggai Erlich, 'Periphery and Youth: Fascist Italy and the Middle East', in *Fascism outside Europe: The European Impulse against Domestic Conditions in the Diffusion of Global Fascism*, ed. by Stein Ugelvik Larsen (Columbia University Press, 2001) pp. 393-423 (esp. 407-421.)

¹¹⁵ On how perceptions and ideological concerns play crucial roles, see, for example, how Nicholas II and many Russian elites' perceptions of the Japanese as a race of 'little yellow monkeys' led to their underestimation of the Japanese power and harmed Russian preparedness for the 1905 Russo-Japanese war. See Rosamund Bartlett, 'Japonisme and Japanophobia: The Russo-Japanese War in Russian Cultural Consciousness', *The Russian Review*, 67.1 (2008), pp. 8-33 (p. 23); Geoffrey Jukes, *The Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905* (Osprey, 2002), p. 21, p. 31.

The question of to what extent Kemalism was fascism-like appears in most textbooks of modern Turkish history, whereas the question of to what extent fascism resembled Kemalism has barely received any attention, whether in Italy or Turkey. Several factors could explain this, from the prominence of fascism as a global ideology, which is indeed an important factor, to the lack of language skills of scholars. Most historians of Turkey indeed do not read Italian, and most historians of Italy do not speak Turkish. However, even researchers with the language skills, as with the rest of the Western and Turkish academia, tended to ignore Italian perceptions of fascism. The prominence of the question of fascism in research on Kemalism stems from its ties with given normative agendas. The wider public overwhelmingly perceives fascism as something bad in itself, and normative debates in Italian historiography continue without resort to likening fascism to other ideologies.¹¹⁶ To the contrary, because fascism has acquired such a clear pejorative meaning after Second World War, Kemalism's relationship to fascism has been crucial to legitimise or illegitimise it.¹¹⁷ Tutelage theory often evolves into a defence of Kemalism, and post-Kemalism, with its insistence on the fascist-Kemalist connection, becomes a refutation.

The lack of attention on the Italian perceptions of Kemalism represents a significant limitation in the literature, but this is by no means the only case selection-related issue. Whether in tutelage theory or post-Kemalism, the discussions revolve mainly around the same individuals and outlets, with Recep Peker and *Kadro* receiving disproportionate attention. Tutelage theory tends to overlook positive perceptions of fascism or attribute these to Peker. Post-Kemalist research is typically silent over the presence of positive perceptions of 'democracy' and negative responses to fascism. An individual who will be considered more in-depth vis-à-vis

¹¹⁶ There have been attempts to link fascism to other political phenomena to claim a return of fascism, though Kemalism has not thus far figured among them. Francesco Filippi, *Ma Perché Siamo Ancora Fascisti?* (Bollati Boringhieri, 2020). Emilio Gentile's *Chi è fascista* [Who is Fascist] is largely dedicated to countering such an approach and the related thesis of Umberto Eco on 'eternal fascism'.

¹¹⁷ Emilio Gentile, *Chi è fascista* (Laterza, 2022), p. 36.

his specific interpretations of Kemalism in this thesis, Falih Rifki Atay appears in much of the literature as a mere foot soldier of the Pekerist camp. Even these rare forays into contemporary perceptions are typically related to cases that acquired canonical status, such as Peker or Yunus Nadi's praises of the fascist regime.¹¹⁸

A tendency to prioritise abstract ideology comparisons exacerbates limitations in case selection. Most scholars proved interested in explaining whether Kemalism was *really* similar to or a type of fascism. Comparing the ideologies, socioeconomic backgrounds, legacies, or practices promised to be a shortcut to answering this question. The tendency towards comparison was also strengthened by the occasional focus on 'generic fascism' rather than Italian fascism. One result of these has been a Turkish iteration of what Emilio Gentile has called the 'game of analogies', whereby scholars try to identify what they deem to be commonalities between different regimes to decipher how they can define 'generic fascism'.¹¹⁹ Another consequence has been reification. The tendency to reify Kemalism is present in both sides indeed, though the works of Parla and Köker present extreme examples. Until recent decades, the kind of factions-based readings of Kemalism that the likes of Ünver and Aydın attempted were much less common. As the work of Onur Atalay attests, factional analyses are far from the consensus. Reification clouds the complex dynamics of persuasion, negotiation, and conflict within Kemalism and

¹¹⁸ Quentin Skinner has called attention to the dangers of such a focus on canonisation and a select few in intellectual history. Even when we may legitimately wish to limit our attention to understanding a select few, ignoring the wider context and 'minor' authors may lead us to miss out interactions and debates involving the very authors we wish to understand. Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics I: Regarding Method* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 42-43.

¹¹⁹ Gentile, *Chi è fascista*, p. 6, p. 76. A particularly amusing toy example Gentile provides against this line of thinking is his definition of the Catholic Church as reliant on a charismatic leader and a strict hierarchy. By standards of certain 'generic fascisms', Gentile observes, this would require scholars to group the Catholic Church as a sub-type of fascism, which he finds a non-sensical thesis, as he does the lumping together of figures such as Marine Le Pen or Viktor Orban under the umbrella of fascism. See Gentile, *Chi è fascista*, p. 6, p. 37.

fascism. It leads to a misleading picture of Kemalism, or any other ideology, as an individual capable of making decisions, forming beliefs and intentions, and passing value judgments by itself. As we shall see, reification also caused much trouble in misinterpreting a series of overtures by Yunus Nadi in 1932 towards fascism; his moves were interpreted as signs of a broader Kemalist infatuation with fascism. This study will strive to show how, on a reading of documents in Italian state archives, Yunus Nadi appears interested much more in personal financial gains.

Problems with dating the onset of certain, typically positive, perceptions of fascism among the Kemalists and the broader Kemalist authoritarianism persist. Much of the literature concentrates on the 1930s as the onset of Kemalist authoritarianism, with the likes of Tunçay remaining as exceptions to the rule. From Zürcher to Bozarslan, from Ahmad to Lewis, it is generally argued that the global economic crisis of the 1930s and the perceived success of totalitarian regimes convinced the Kemalist leadership to turn more authoritarian. Already limited, the discussion of contemporary Kemalist perceptions of fascism smoothly fits into this picture as exclusively belonging to the 1930s. Fascism was part of the political ‘fashion’ of the time or of the *zeitgeist*, to which the Kemalists were accordingly receptive.¹²⁰ There is not much research on Kemalist perceptions of fascism in the 1920s, which could have a bearing on the theory that Kemalist authoritarianism must be explained by the global context of the 1930s or, indeed, the ‘shock’ and ‘trauma’ of the FRP’s rise and fall. These issues all speak to an overarching problem in the literature, which is the prevalence of normative engagements on the part of scholars. The two alternative approaches to the question of the relationship between Kemalism and fascism are typically presented in company with normative arguments. Logically, the connections between these arguments and theories about Kemalism and fascism are not inevitable. One can well embrace the tutelage theory and regret that Kemalists wished to

¹²⁰ For some examples of the idea of *zeitgeist* appearing as part of explanation as in a direct influence of ‘the period’, see Ünver, ‘Images and Perceptions’, p. 138; Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Tek-Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması*, p. 328; Bozarslan, ‘Kemalizm, Batılılaşma ve Anti-Liberalizm’, p. 52; Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 186.

democratise Turkey, or one may find Kemalism to be fascism-like and rejoice as a Kemalist who dislikes liberal democracy. Historically, however, tutelage theory tended to go hand in hand with a pro-Kemalist outlook, whereas post-Kemalism was accompanied by anti-Kemalism from its genesis. Scholars whose works have been criticised here have not wilfully fell into the pitfalls of research identified here. They did not intentionally limit their cases to certain journals or ignore the Italian perceptions of Kemalism. As with all research programmes, both the tutelage theory and post-Kemalism come with a set of priorities and criteria of relevance. Significant portions of the literature have lost the much-needed calmness and nuance in pursuit of these.

In recent years, İlker Aytürk's identification and criticism of post-Kemalism has become a major talking point in social scientific research on Turkey.¹²¹ Scholars such as Köker who appeared in this chapter in connection with their work on Kemalism, democracy and fascism were among the targets of Aytürk's criticism.¹²² Aytürk identified a number of problems engendered by what he called post-Kemalism in research on and politics in Turkey. One was the legitimisation of Erdogan's rule through post-Kemalism.¹²³ Another problem was the shadowing of the Cold War-era Turkish right, to which the primary role in creating modern Turkey had to be given instead of attributing this to Kemalism, Aytürk argued.¹²⁴ Finally, post-Kemalism also hampered research on Kemalism and the Kemalist era.¹²⁵

Criticism of Aytürk's work on post-Kemalism included Ömer Turan's observation that the scholars unified under this umbrella did not have much in common and that Aytürk attributed excessive influence to post-

¹²¹ İlker Aytürk, 'Post-Post Kemalizm: Yeni Bir Paradigmayı Beklerken', *Birikim*, 319 (2015), pp. 34-48; İlker Aytürk, 'Post-Kemalizm Nedir? Post-Kemalist Kimdir? Bir Tanım Denemesi', *Varlık*, 1337 (2019), pp. 4-7; İlker Aytürk, 'Bir Defa Daha Post-Post-Kemalizm: Eleştiriler, Cevaplar, Düşünceler', *Birikim*, 374/375 (2020), pp. 101-19.

¹²² Aytürk, 'Post-Post-Kemalizm', p. 35.

¹²³ Aytürk, 'Post-Post Kemalizm', p. 37.

¹²⁴ Aytürk, 'Post-Post Kemalizm', pp. 46-47.

¹²⁵ Aytürk, 'Post-Post Kemalizm', pp. 43n18, 45.

Kemalist scholars in the justification of AKP rule.¹²⁶ Interestingly, criticisms of Aytürk did not problematise normative aspects of his approach. This thesis will follow Aytürk's observations on post-Kemalism vis-à-vis its methodological aspects, especially regarding post-Kemalism's impact on research on Kemalism. As for the normative reasons to reject post-Kemalism offered by Aytürk, it will not take a side. Due to the remaining popularity of post-Kemalism as a research programme in contrast with tutelage theory, which retains its defenders but decisively appears outdated to most scholars, the thesis will mostly engage with post-Kemalist arguments. This shall not be taken to be a defence of tutelage theory in its entirety, since the thesis shall not lend support to any reified approach to Kemalism: there were simply too many different types of Kemalists to speak of a singular orientation of 'the Kemalists' towards fascism or democracy.

§ 1.4 Methodology

This brings us to a clarification of the alternative this thesis will seek to propose to the literature. The section will explain the methodologies to be used and theories to form the background of the theories in the coming chapters. The reader will find that the discussion closely mirrors the trends in the literature discussed in Section 1.3. A clarification of the approach to fascism to which the thesis will submit and how it can contribute to the wider field of modern Italian history will also appear.

In its bid to tell a balanced and as detached as possible story of Kemalism and fascism, the thesis will find a boost in its inclusion of the Italian perceptions of Kemalism to the analysis. The discussion will include not only perceptions of Kemalism among certain fascists. It will encompass a more factions-based reading of fascism and anti-fascism; accordingly, the thesis will likely be the first systematic and detailed study of

¹²⁶ Ömer Turan, 'Yeni Bir Paradigmayı Beklemek ya da Tarihsel Sosyolojinin İlhamı', *Birikim*, 366 (2019), pp. 67–79 (pp. 68–69, p. 75). For a review of other criticisms and Aytürk's responses, see Aytürk, 'Bir Defa Daha'.

both fascist and anti-fascist perceptions of Kemalism in the interwar era. In addition to adding an important international dimension to the thesis, this will also throw new light on all the ideologies involved. Much as how perceptions of fascism can serve as a key to unlock a more accurate analysis of Kemalist factions, analysing which fascist or anti-fascists thought in what manner about Kemalism can tell us immensely more about their overarching worldviews. In connection with this, the thesis will aim to contribute to the literature on the history of the concepts 'the West' and 'Europe', as these were constantly used in the contemporaries' evaluation of Kemalism. Studies on the use of these concepts in Italian history are limited and thus, the thesis will aim to make a novel contribution to the Italian historiography.¹²⁷

In keeping with the practices of the Cambridge School of Intellectual History, the thesis will operate with a particular notion of context and specific method of contextualisation.¹²⁸ As Quentin Skinner, one of the leading figures of the school, has put it, the key to intellectual history is understanding and explaining what agents in question were doing in saying and doing the things they said and did.¹²⁹ This means that, as R. G. Collingwood wrote, historians need to understand the 'logic of question and answer' inherent in history.¹³⁰ Sometimes, this logic of question and answer shall lead the historian to cases that have been decisively overshadowed by the more popular or canonical ones. To understand perceptions of fascism among Turks, for instance, I will not only consider Recep Peker, but seek to reconstruct the debate around democracy, fascism and the West between him, Falih Rifkî Atay, and Hüseyin Cahit [Yalçın]. Similarly, to understand why *Giustizia e Libertà* continuously talked about the

¹²⁷ For an exception from which this thesis will draw, see Simona Giustibelli, 'L'Europa nella Riflessione del Convegno della Fondazione Volta (Roma, 16-20 Novembre 1932)', *Dimensioni e Problemi Della Ricerca Storica*, 1 (2002), pp. 181-234.

¹²⁸ For a brief critical history of intellectual history with a particular focus on the Cambridge School, see Richard Whatmore, *What Is Intellectual History?* (Polity, 2015).

¹²⁹ Skinner, *Visions of Politics I: Regarding Method*, p. 3.

¹³⁰ R. G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography* (Oxford University Press, 1939), pp. 29-43; Skinner often quotes this insight of Collingwood: Skinner, *Visions of Politics I: Regarding Method*, p. 88, p. 116.

failed efforts of international fascism, one must know how this was important to certain fascist circles. This will mean that the thesis will seek to address the shortcomings of the literature by a more thorough case selection. Individuals will not be analysed in isolation through their texts but together with the issues they considered and the authors to whom they responded.

Contextualism will also play an important role in this thesis's attempt to revise the onset of the Kemalist perceptions of fascism. The thesis will emphasise important local and global contexts, from the rise of the parliamentary opposition to Kemalism in late 1920s, the global crisis of democracy in the 1930s, or the rise of a younger, more revolutionary generation of fascists in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Seeing texts on fascism and Kemalism as moves in given argumentative contexts, the thesis will seek to throw light on the causal dynamics between perceptions of fascism and Kemalism and political actions. This study will also seek to remedy the literature's excessive focus on the 1930s by investigating perceptions of fascism and Kemalism in the 1920s. This will provide us with an opportunity to test the argument that a 'trauma' induced Kemalists to appreciate authoritarianism. While the number of materials pertaining to the subject and available from the 1920s is indeed less than the 1930s, an analysis of these will throw light on significant factional and individual interpretative continuity.

Combining these perspectives, the thesis will seek to refrain from referring to the *zeitgeist* as the cause of given perceptions of Kemalism or fascism. It will argue that only by focusing on the specific place such perceptions occupied in the wider panorama of the given individuals' beliefs and desires can we identify what they meant by their utterances.¹³¹ While

¹³¹ This study's understanding of meaning will be significantly shaped by the work of the British analytic philosopher and a founding father of the modern discipline of pragmatics, Paul Grice. Grice's analysis of the difference between saying and meaning, as well as the role intentions and mental states play in creating meaning will be foundational to analysis. See Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words* (Harvard University Press, 1989). For an accessible introduction to his thought and a biography, see Siobhan Chapman, *Paul Grice, Philosopher and Linguist* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

it is true that authoritarianism was in vogue in the interwar era and this made authoritarians much less eccentric and, indeed, defensive about their views, the likes of *Kadro* did not reach the conclusions they did *because* of fascism. A closer look will suggest that for *Kadro*, fascism was an important example to illustrate their point and not a phenomenon the observation of which transformed them into who they were *ex nihilo*.

This study will often refer to concepts such as ‘web of belief’ or ‘prior beliefs and desires’. The philosophical underpinnings of these terms will be mental holist or molecularist. Accordingly, either some (molecularism) or all (holism) beliefs of individuals are connected in a robust and non-trivial way. While remaining agnostic as to which one of holism or molecularism better captures the reality of how human brains function, the thesis will draw from their theorists’ insights to identify individuals’ webs of belief.¹³² Practically, this will mean that the thesis will seek to enlighten the connection between, say, beliefs about ‘European civilisation’ and interpretations of Kemalist Turkey. Likewise, beliefs about democracy will often prove key to understanding why a given individual such as Nusret Kemal [Köymen] retained a particularly negative conceptualisation of fascism.

Another set of concepts that will appear frequently throughout the thesis is ‘individual’ and ‘faction’. Opting for methodological individualism, the thesis will interpret factions as nothing beyond individuals, which can be analysed in terms of the beliefs and values that separated and united individuals along the faction lines.¹³³ The conceptual history of methodological individualism is a contentious field, but for our present

¹³² I loosely borrow the term ‘web of belief’ from a book by Willard Van Orman Quine and J. S. Ullian. See Willard Van Orman Quine and J. S. Ullian, *The Web of Belief* (Random House, 1970).

¹³³ On the theoretical underpinnings of this study’s methodological individualism, see the work of Kirk Ludwig and Michael Bratman. In particular, Kirk Ludwig, ‘Methodological Individualism, the We-Mode, and Team Reasoning’ in *Social Ontology and Collective Intentionality: Critical Essays on the Philosophy of Raimo Tuomela with His Responses*, ed. by Gerhard Preyer and Georg Peter (Springer, 2017), 3-18; Michael E. Bratman, ‘The Intentions of a Group’, in *The Moral Responsibility of Firms*, ed. by Eric W. Orts and N. Craig Smith (Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 36-52.

purposes, it suffices to say that the variant of methodological individualism in this thesis is neither solipsism nor psychological egoism.¹³⁴ Accordingly, the thesis will not subscribe to the idea that individuals cannot influence one another or that all individuals must be motivated by maximisation of self-interest.¹³⁵ Against the literature's tendency to reify, it will remain suspicious towards concepts and explanations difficult to translate into individualistic terms and will continuously strive to explain which individuals and the factions that they constituted were responsible for given moves, actions, or perceptions. Certainly, the factions posited in this study will not be exhaustive: they will mainly be the factions of interpreting Kemalism, fascism, and as relating to this, issues such as revolutionary techniques or, indeed, democracy. Another study may find in their approach to urbanism, fascists of different factions identified in this study as belonging to separate camp were united: precisely because of the non-exhaustive nature of the factions to be posited, this shall not present a counter-finding to this study. Perceptions of Kemalism is a key that explains much about the web of beliefs of a given anti-fascist, for example, but it is not the panacea through which we can understand quite literally everything.

With a subject that inescapably extends beyond borders, the study will seek to contribute to and draw from the insights of the burgeoning field of transnational history. However, it will also critically engage with some of the field's prevailing assumptions and practices. One is the privileging of the global and transnational contexts and subjects, with the domestic context often appearing only as recipients of transnational dynamics.¹³⁶ Instead, the thesis will seek to show much transnational

¹³⁴ For a history of methodological individualism see Lars Udehn, *Methodological Individualism: Background, History and Meaning* (Routledge, 2001).

¹³⁵ The most prominent examples I have in mind are the Austrian and Neoclassical schools of economics. While certain members of these schools avoided the crude 'homo economicus' view, others did not, thus helping to create the confusion between egoism and individualism

¹³⁶ For specific criticism of the focus on the global to the detriment of the 'small spaces', see the views of David A. Bell in Richard Drayton and David Motadel, 'Discussion: The

contact under study stemmed from domestic concerns primarily. Relatedly, Chapter Six will question the tendency to think of the moment of transnational contact as generally and positively transformative. These considerations will be intended as contributions to the broader debate on transnational history, rather than an advocacy for a return to an exclusively nation-centred historiography.

The prominence of normative concerns on the question of how similar Kemalism was to fascism has had the specified negative impacts on the literature. It has also had the singular positive effect of creating a multitude of studies dedicated to the subject. As fascism's deemed similarity or differences from Kemalism have not acquired the same normative importance, the subject has been regrettably ignored in the literature. Fortunately, this will not prevent the thesis from the insights of an excellent literature on analysing fascist-era intellectuals and culture. The volumes of Renzo De Felice on Mussolini's biography that grew into a comprehensive history of the *ventennio fascista* [the twenty years under fascism] will inform the discussion throughout the thesis.¹³⁷ The work of Gentile on the intellectual history of fascism, the roots of fascist ideology, as well as the fascist architecture and grand projects will likewise serve in many places as the foundations of this study.¹³⁸ Alessandra Tarquini's history

Futures of Global History', *Journal of Global History*, 13 (2018), pp. 1–21 (p. 17); David A. Bell, 'This Is What Happens When Historians Overuse the Idea of the Network', *The New Republic*, 26 October 2013 <<https://newrepublic.com/article/114709/world-connecting-reviewed-historians-overuse-network-metaphor>> [accessed 16 September 2021].

¹³⁷ Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini Il Rivoluzionario: 1883-1920* (Einaudi, 1965); Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini Il Fascista: La Conquista del Potere, 1921-1925* (Einaudi, 1966); Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini Il Fascista: L'organizzazione dello Stato Fascista, 1925-1929* (Einaudi, 1968); Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini Il Duce: Gli Anni del Consenso, 1929-1936* (Einaudi, 1974); Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini Il Duce: Lo Stato Totalitario, 1936-1940* (Einaudi, 1981); Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini l'alleato: 1940-1945. I: L'Italia in Guerra 1940-1943, 1: Dalla Guerra Breve alla Guerra Lunga* (Einaudi, 1990); Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini l'alleato: 1940-1945, I: L'Italia in Guerra 1940-1943, 2: Crisi e Agonia del Regime* (Einaudi, 1990); Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini l'alleato: 1940-1945, II: La Guerra Civile, 1943-1945* (Einaudi, 1997).

¹³⁸ Especially relevant to this thesis will be Emilio Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista: 1918-1925* (Il Mulino, 2011); Emilio Gentile, *Fascismo di pietra* (Laterza, 2007); Emilio Gentile, *25 luglio 1943* (Laterza, 2018).

of fascist culture will be as important for specific issues under discussion as it is for the way her and Gentile's work helped counter the previously prevalent notion that fascism did not have a culture or intellectuals.¹³⁹ Work on internationalist fascism by Michael A. Ledeen and Marco Cuzzi will inform the chapters dedicated to this movement and its participants' perceptions of Kemalism.¹⁴⁰ Ledeen was also a participant in the debates following De Felice's biography of Mussolini, as he defended De Felice from accusations by Marxist-leaning scholars that he was rehabilitating Mussolini and fascism.¹⁴¹ It is through the work of these historians that what we may call a new consensus on fascism emerged.

This consensus did not emerge solely through the work of Italian scholars, of course. Gentile has never hidden his appreciation of the influence of the German-born historian George Mosse, who was a pioneer of the cultural history of fascism.¹⁴² Zeev Sternhall's studies on the 'roots' of fascist ideology in late 19th century France were important for challenging the old consensus on the non-existence of fascist ideology.¹⁴³ A. James Gregor has been instrumental in investigating the intellectual history of fascism and factions within fascism, especially vis-à-vis their economic visions.¹⁴⁴ Roger Griffin has also contributed to the more culturally and intellectually rich interpretations of fascism and tried to find a definition

¹³⁹ Alessandra Tarquini, *Storia della cultura fascista* (Il Mulino, 2011).

¹⁴⁰ Michael A. Ledeen, *L'internazionale fascista*, trans. by Jole Bertolazzi (Laterza, 1975); Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle camicie nere*; Cuzzi, *Antieuropa: Il fascismo universale*.

¹⁴¹ Renzo De Felice, *Intervista sul Fascismo; Un Monumento al Duce: Contributo al Dibattito sul Fascismo con i Testi Originali della Polemica Mack Smith-Ledeen*, ed. by Michael A. Ledeen, trans. by Gualberto Ranieri (Guaraldi Editore, 1976).

¹⁴² For one example among many of Mosse's studies on the subject, see George L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (H. Fertig, 1999).

¹⁴³ For example, see Zeev Sternhall, 'Fascist Ideology', in *Fascism: A Reader's Guide. Analyses, Interpretations, Bibliography*, ed. by Walter Laqueur (University of California Press, 1976), pp. 315-76.

¹⁴⁴ A. James Gregor, *Mussolini's Intellectuals: Fascist Social and Political Thought* (Princeton University Press, 2005).

of fascism that could incorporate different ‘fascisms’ while respecting the historical uniqueness of Italian fascism.¹⁴⁵

§ 1.5 The Outline of the Study

Different chapters of this thesis will delve into varying sources to tell interrelated stories of how Italians and Turks perceived each other’s political culture and ideologies in the interwar era. The subjects will be intellectuals without a capital I, in the sense that both the leading figures of the era such as Giuseppe Bottai or Ahmet Ağaoğlu and much more ignored figures like Dario Lischì or Şemsettin Talip Diler will appear in the thesis. Though there will be inevitable references to the roles and views of the leaders, Mussolini in Italy and Atatürk and İnönü in Turkey, the study will not focus on their cases, in part due to issues with the sources, and relatedly, because clarifying their views amongst such a rich but contested body of memoirs by contemporaries would require space and effort that goes beyond the scope of this work. They will therefore appear as leaders of their respective countries and movements, rather than individuals genuinely embracing one or another way of thinking identified in the study. Chapters will proceed in a quasi-chronological order, in the sense of being mostly but not exclusively chronological, until Chapter Six, which will review a specific theoretical question.

Chapter Two will mainly draw from newspapers such as *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* and *Vatan*, journals like *Hayat*, and other publications and documents in the Turkish state archives (the *Başkanlık Osmanlı Arşivi*, the *Başkanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi*, and the *Dışişleri Bakanlığı Türk Diplomatik Arşivi*) in Ottoman Turkish to analyse Turkish perceptions of fascism in the 1920s. The chapter will consider how the rise and fall of the Progressive Republican Party in 1924-25 was a key turning point and how it related to perceptions of fascism. It will investigate the weaponisation of the expected ‘downfall’ of fascism in 1924 by the opposition against the RPP and the different defences of the RPP formulated by individuals such

¹⁴⁵ Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (Routledge, 1991).

as Ağaoğlu, Recep [Peker] and Falih Rıfkı [Atay]. In addition, the chapter will also introduce the term *inkılap memleketleri* [countries that have undergone revolutions] into the literature to distinguish between a separate way of thinking on fascist practice prevalent in Turkey.

The discussion will serve as the foundation for Chapter Three, where much continuity in the perceptions of fascism by certain factions will be revealed. The chapter will shift the focus to Turkish perceptions of fascism in the 1930s. Publications in Turkish from *Kadro* to the much less discussed *İnkılap* will form the backbone of the discussion, together with archival documents from the Turkish state archives. The discussion will reveal how factions on interpretations of Kemalism, democracy and fascism that began to emerge in the 1920s crystallised in the 1930s, with the 1930-31 economic and political crisis in Turkey exacerbating a need for clarifying the way forward.

Chapter Four will shift the discussion to Italy. Publications in Italian from the *Gerarchia* of Mussolini to relatively less explored outlets like *Costruire*, from works by Francesco Coppola to observations from Anatolia by Biagio Pace will form the basis of the analysis, as well as documents from Italian state archives (the *Archivio centrale dello stato* and the *Archivio storico diplomatico* of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The chapter will explore a range of Italian interpretations of Kemalism, from the early days of fascist rejoicing at Greek defeats and anti-fascist interpretations of Kemalist victory over the West to the late 1920s and the rapprochement between the Italy and Turkey. Much as chapters mainly focusing on Turkey, this chapter will seek to distinguish not only between fascist and anti-fascist views but also between different versions of fascism and anti-fascism.

Chapter Five will continue with analysing Italian perceptions of Kemalism in the 1930s. In addition to the fascist and anti-fascist publications and the Italian state archives identified above, this chapter will also draw from personal papers of individuals like Asvero Gravelli. The cases to be discussed will range from internationalist fascists and their enthusiastic reception of Kemalism and a debate between the German Anton Hilckman and his objection to his fellow internationalists to anti-fascist

yearnings for ‘a leader like Kemal’ in the late 1930s. The chapter will conclude the quasi-chronological narrative of the thesis.

Chapter Six will tackle a specific question that will appear in other chapters as well but will be analysed here in more depth. This will be the question of whether transnational contact positively changed the perceptions of the other side. Drawing from publications, state archives, and private papers in several languages such as Turkish, Italian and French, the chapter will analyse the cases of Turkish visitors to Italy, and in particular the career of Hüseyn Cahit Yalçın, Nüzhet Haşim Sinanoğlu, Cornelio di Marzio, Ettore Rossi, and Ezio Bartalini. These individuals either spent considerable time in Italy if Turkish or in Turkey if Italian and gained extensive first-hand experience of one another’s cultures. Most of them spoke the language of the other side. Their cases will form the basis for the chapter which will argue that transnational contact is best conceptualised as shaped by not just contact itself but equally, if not more, by the prior beliefs and values of the agents in question. It will become apparent that in most cases, transnational contact did not lead to change of opinion but to strengthening of prior stances. The chapter will be followed by the conclusion which will revisit key themes of the study and reconsider the question of Kemalism and fascism.

From Adversary to an '*İnkılap Memleketi*' – Turkish Perceptions of Fascism in the 1920s

Crisis both perceived and actual defined the interwar era. With capitalism and liberal democracy seemingly coming crushing down, revolutionary socialists and communists saw their predictions of the violent downfall of capitalism vindicated, fascists rejoiced at their emergence as the saviours of the order, and liberals trembled at the apparently daily downfall of democracy. Worse, the decisions of the elites under the 'short war illusion' had led to the First World War, which significantly boosted the fears that if one world war was possible, another could well be.¹

While the global economic crisis of 1929 and its aftershocks in the 1930s were crucial, as Renzo De Felice observed, a deeper, more acute, and global crisis of democracy accompanied this.² Contemporaries observed the destructive impact of the First World War. In the succinct

¹ On this subject more broadly, see Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (Allen Lane, 2012). Also see Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914: The Ottoman Empire and the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 93. I borrow the term 'short-war illusion' from the work of Lancelot L. Farrar. See Lancelot L. Farrar, *The Short-War Illusion: German Policy, Strategy & Domestic Affairs August-December 1914* (ABC-Clio, 1973).

² Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini Il Duce: Gli Anni Del Consenso, 1929-1936* (Einaudi, 1974), pp. 540–44.

words of a contributor to the *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 'First World War shook the social structure of all nations'.³ Many more local crises accompanied the global crisis, making matters even more complicated and intertwined. If one wished to have a democratic regime at home, what 'fascists' in Britain were doing could well be important. Relief could follow the observation from a Turkish official in London that the men of Sir Oswald Mosley were no more than riffraff (*döküntüler*) unfit for any other political party in the UK.⁴ This chapter will navigate through perceptions of fascism in Turkey in the 1920s to illustrate how, in many cases, perceptions of fascism were part of varying solution proposals for the crisis Turkey was undergoing years before the 1930s, the zenith of the literature on Kemalism and fascism.

One of the key developments that influenced the perceptions of fascism was the First World War and the *biennio rosso* that followed in Italy. Section One will investigate the accounts of Ottoman diplomats on active duty in Italy at the time of fascism's rise, as well as views of intellectuals in Turkey, such as Ahmed Emin [Yalman], among others, to investigate Turkish perceptions of fascism in the early 1920s. The section will link these views to the atmosphere of mutual distrust between the two states, the recent memories of the failed colonisation of southern and western Anatolia, which came under Italian invasion for a couple of years in the aftermath of the First World War, and the Matteotti crisis in Italy. The analysis will illustrate how Turkish diplomats thought that fascism was backed by the Italian government against the socialists. It will also shed light on the widespread conviction among Turkish intelligentsia that the fascist regime would prove ephemeral. The chapter will relate the Italian support for the Turkish side in the Turkish War of Independence (1919-23) and explain the diversion of both sides' expectations, leading to mutual distrust and suspicion, and then various claims of an impending Italian invasion of Turkey in the first half of the 1920s. Dr Ferruh Niyazi in Antalya and *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*'s Ahmed Ağaoğlu will feature with their

³ 'İtalyan Buhranı', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 24 June 1924, p. 1.

⁴ 'Faik Kurtoğlu to Recep [Peker]', 25 September 1933, *Başkanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi [BCA]*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 490-1-0-0, 567-2259-3.

defences of Turkey against 'fascist aggression' and the fascist deputy Orazio Pedrazzi in the mid-1920s.

The following section will delve deeper into the uses of fascism in political and intellectual debates within Turkey. Turkish perceptions of the killing of the anti-fascist deputy Giacomo Matteotti by fascists in June 1924 will illustrate how most actors perceived fascism as a dangerous example for Turkey. Regime opponents like Ahmed Emin and *Tevhid-i Efkar's* contributors thought fascism was doomed to fail, and this was a lesson for the Kemalist leadership so that they would refrain from exercising a dictatorship. The section will also throw light on various responses from Kemalist intellectuals, from Ahmed Ağaoğlu and his insistence that Kemalism had nothing to do with fascism to Falih Rıfkı [Atay] and his early forays into the realm of alternatives to liberal democracy, which he increasingly saw as detrimental to the goals of the revolution.

Section Three will explore a way of thinking that has not been explored in the literature thus far. Fascism was sometimes perceived and appraised 'selectively', in a compartmentalised manner, by Kemalist intellectuals. The crucial concept here will be *inkılap memleketleri*, a term taken from contemporary works which means 'countries that have recently undergone revolutions', whether the Russian, Turkish, Italian, or even Czechoslovakian (transformation from the rule of Habsburgs into a nation-state) sorts. The section will investigate the idea of *inkılap memleketleri* in official reports on fascist youth organisations, the works of a social scientist like Zeki Mesud [Alsan] or philosophers writing for the *Hayat* journal like Mehmed Emin [Erişirgil]. It will become apparent that in the interwar era, it was very much possible for some intellectuals to both value democracy as a goal and appreciate the methods of fascism in propaganda and public education. As paradoxical as it may seem, Mehmed Emin, for example, thought fascist organisations could be an instrument for democratising the Turkish masses.

§ 2.1 Italy and Turkey in the Early 1920s: Through Chaos and Reciprocal Suspicion

The clouds of uncertainty and chaos set upon Turkey well before much of the rest of the world. The country was effectively at war from 1911 to 1923, from the Turco-Italian War of 1911-12 to the Turkish War of Independence. The Italian attack on Tripolitania turned a generation of Turkish literati against Italy, as observed by the Turkish hero of the War of Independence, Ali Fuat Cebesoy.⁵ Close contact with the Italian *mission civilisatrice* led a group of volunteer officers, including stellar names of the coming decades, such as Enver Bey (later, Enver Pasha) and Mustafa Kemal Bey [Atatürk], boost the local resistance led by the Senussi sheikh Ahmad Sharif. Meanwhile, a young socialist named Benito Mussolini was busy protesting against the ‘imperialist’ war.⁶

The hostilities between Italy and the Ottoman Empire ended with the Ouchy Treaty of 1912, though Italy ‘pacified’ the Tripolitania only by the 1930s. The violent resolution of the Tripolitanian question did not placate mutual suspicions between Turks and Italians. In the early to mid-1920s, Italians repeatedly suspected that Turkey aided the resistance in Tripolitania; Ahmed Sharif as-Senussi’s residence in Turkey until 1926 particularly piqued suspicion.⁷ Another legacy of the war for Tripolitania was the Italian occupation of the Dodecanese islands. This meant that from 1912 to 1945, Turkey and Italy were maritime neighbours, which bolstered commercial opportunities and arose Turkish suspicions that the islands could serve as a stepping stone for invading Anatolia. In any case, the newly unified and industrialised Italy without colonies soon turned its eye towards the Balkans and Anatolia and pitted itself against the Ottoman Empire in the First World War. Following the Allied victory, Italians

⁵ Mevlüt Çelebi, *Türkiye-İtalya Siyasi İlişkileri (1923-1939)* (Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2020), p. 1.

⁶ Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini Il Rivoluzionario: 1883-1920* (Einaudi, 1965), pp. 103–11.

⁷ Azamat Nihat, ‘Ahmed Şerîf Senûsî’, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* (2009), pp. 527–29 <<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/senusi-ahmed-serif>> [accessed 16 October 2022]. Also see Çelebi, *Türkiye-İtalya Siyasi İlişkileri (1923-1939)*, pp. 45–48.

duly moved forces into Anatolia, occupying cities such as Antalya and Konya in Southern Anatolia. The post-war settlement did not work to the advantage of Italy as was hoped. Backed by Britain, Greece captured significant portions of Western Anatolia, including Izmir, a city Italians coveted. Nor were the terms of peace in the Balkans deemed advantageous to Italy; hence, the nationalist and fascist idea of the First World War being a 'mutilated victory' (*la vittoria mutilata*).

Disappointed with the results of the war, Italian officials were more eager than their allies to take note of the burgeoning Turkish resistance in Anatolia. As Carlo Sforza met numerous pro-resistance figures in Istanbul, including Mustafa Kemal and Fethi Bey [Okyar], the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tommaso Tittoni, ordered diplomats to establish contact with and understand the goals of Mustafa Kemal's movement as early as August 1919.⁸ Tittoni also instructed the Italian command in Konya to 'eventually provide the financial means to Mustafâ [Mustafa Kemal]' and establish 'as cordial relations as possible, without compromising themselves to the British authorities'.⁹

As Grassi's overview of the contemporary Italian press illustrates, despite their differences, most Italian outlets adopted a *vae victis* approach

⁸ 'Il Ministro Degli Esteri, Tittoni, All'alto Commissario a Costantinopoli, Maissa. T. Personale 1230.', 29 August 1919, *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, Sesta Serie, Volume IV <<https://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/series/SESTA%20SERIE/volumi/VOLUME%20IV/full#AVVERTENZA>> [accessed 16 October 2022]. On the meeting between Sforza and Mustafa Kemal, see Mevlüt Çelebi, 'Mütareke Döneminde Mustafa Kemal Paşa-Kont Sforza Görüşmesi', *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, 15.45 (1999), pp. 791–800. Interestingly, in an early report of a meeting with Fethi Bey [Okyar] and Mustafa Kemal, Sforza mistakenly referred to the latter as 'İsmail Kemal Pasha, the hero of the Dardanelles War'. 'L'Alto Commissario a Costantinopoli, Sforza, al Ministro Degli Esteri, Sonnino, T. GAB. 3394/33', 17 December 1918, *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, Sesta Serie, Volume I <<https://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/series/SESTA%20SERIE/volumi/VOLUME%20I/full#AVVERTENZA>> [accessed 16 October 2022].

⁹ 'Il Ministro Degli Esteri, Tittoni, al Comandante Delle Forze Italiane Nell'egeio, Elia. T. Riservato Personale 1425.', 24 October 1919, *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, Sesta Serie, Volume IV <<https://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/series/SESTA%20SERIE/volumi/VOLUME%20IV/full#AVVERTENZA>> [accessed 16 October 2022].

to the impending Greek defeat in Anatolia.¹⁰ Beyond calculations of interest, it appears nationalists and fascists enjoyed the indirect avenging of their *vittoria mutilata* by the Turks. Writing on the storming of Izmir by Turkish forces in September 1922, Mussolini joined the trend by pointing out the ‘opportunistic’ land-grabbing by the Greeks. A ‘pawn’ of the French at first and then the British and having ‘suffered the loss of only a few hundred soldiers, Greece obtained everything she desired with the peace.’¹¹ Noting that the Turkish victory would have serious repercussions for world order, Mussolini still felt that perhaps there was not much to fear: all ‘the mediocre literature on Turkey and her inability to develop civilisation’ was, after all, rather exaggerated. With this, Mussolini had in mind a sizeable literature in Europe that portrayed the Turkish resistance as a destroyer of civilisation bent on hardcore Islamism and anti-European, anti-Christian sentiment.¹² As all efforts to suppress the Turks failed, it was now time to try and reach an agreement.¹³

By 1921, Italy elected to have Ankara as an ally rather than dealing with the armed Turkish resistance. Accordingly, Italian troops in Konya retreated as early as March 1920, and Antalya returned to Turkish control in June 1921.¹⁴ Italy provided diplomatic and material support to Turkey during the war, with the underlying hope that the Turks would return the favour with post-war economic advantages, including allowing migration

¹⁰ Fabio L. Grassi, *İtalya ve Türk Sorunu: 1919-1923 Kamuoyu ve Dış Politika*, trans. by Nevin Özkan and Durdu Kundakçı (Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), p. 219.

¹¹ Benito Mussolini, ‘La Luna Crescente’, in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, ed. by Edoardo Susmel and Duilio Susmel (La Fenice, 1956), XVIII, pp. 425–27 (p. 425).

¹² For some examples of the coverage of the ‘barbarity’ of the Turks during the War of Independence in the Italian press, of which there were relatively few examples in Italy when compared to the UK or France according to Grassi, see Grassi, *İtalya ve Türk Sorunu*, p. 168.

¹³ Mussolini, ‘La Luna Crescente’, p. 426.

¹⁴ Tuncer Baykara, ‘Konya’, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* (2002), pp. 182–87 <<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/konya>> [accessed 16 October 2022]. Feridun Emecen, ‘Antalya’, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* (1991), pp. 232–36 <<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/antalya>> [accessed 16 October 2022]. The reason for the delayed retreat from Antalya may be the perception of the city as a more valuable maritime possession or a significant bargaining chip.

from Italy to southern Anatolia. As it became clear the Turks did not see their wartime dealings with Italians as entailing such favours, the post-1911 atmosphere of suspicion returned.¹⁵

At home, the post-war economic conditions transformed thousands of soldiers into hordes of the unemployed. The discontent and the Bolshevik success in Russia led to the '*biennio rosso*', the two red years of 1919-20 characterised by violence and the rise of revolutionary socialism. Strikes and protests shook the country while the *Partito socialista italiano* won the elections of 1919. Socialists and radicals extended their hold over rural areas of northern Italy through organisations such as *Confederazione Generale del Lavoro* (CGdL) and municipalities. While the seasoned liberal Giovanni Giolitti's government sought to integrate socialists within the system, groups from landowners in northern Italy to students, ex-soldiers and others joined another man in his bid to repulse socialism. As the socialist party divided in 1921-1922, the ex-socialist Mussolini overcame the challenge of the local *ras*¹⁶ in 1921, became the leader of the new *Partito nazionale fascista*, and became the definitive alternative to 'the red menace', which his *squadristi* suppressed with increasing violence.

Turkish diplomats in Italy were uniquely positioned to observe this violence and the burgeoning fascism. The diplomats pondered fascism's significance for Turkish policy as well as its global meaning. Earlier in 1921, Osman Nizami Pasha [Doğancı]¹⁷ anxiously reported on Italian politicians' repeated failures to establish a stable government.¹⁸ On 8 August 1921, Cevad, a consular official, reported to Istanbul on the mayhem in Italy and the ongoing truce talks between fascists and socialists.¹⁹ As the truce failed, Cevad laid the blame squarely on provincial fascist *squadristi*

¹⁵ Grassi, *İtalya ve Türk Sorunu*, p. 219.

¹⁶ *Ras*, originally an Amharic royal title, is a term used in reference to local fascist leaders who led *squadristi* in the early years of fascism.

¹⁷ Osman Nizami Pasha was in Italy as, first, a diplomat of the Ottoman Empire and then of the nationalist government in Ankara.

¹⁸ 'Osman Nizami Pasha, the Ambassador in Rome, to Ahmed İzzet Pasha, the Minister of Foreign Affairs', 18 February 1922, *Başkanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [BOA]*, HR. SYS., 2470-17.

¹⁹ 'Cevad to Ahmed İzzet Pasha': "L'accord Entre Les Fascistes et Lrs [*Sic*] Socialistes", 8 August 1921, *BOA*, HR. SYS., 2467-55.

in his follow-up report. While socialists kept their word, ‘certain fascist factions’ persisted with violence. Cevad reported that, faced with such blatant indiscipline, Mussolini left the leadership of the fascist movement. Such ‘unjustified reprisal against the proletariat, and often, the petit-bourgeoisie’ was bad for public order and could haunt fascism’s public relations as well. As of August 1921, fascism was ‘reduced to the excesses of a similar kind [similar to previous, socialist violence] and often represents a true danger to the public order’. Cevad concluded with the hope that the coming fascist congress would put an end to the chaos.²⁰ Later consular reports from November 1921 clarified that this did not turn out to be the case, portrayed Roman citizens terrorised by the clashes and strikes, and also explained the exponential growth of fascism as at least partially deriving from the Italian government’s support for fascism against the socialists.²¹

Fascists rose to power in October 1922 following their March on Rome, *Marcia su Roma*.²² In the early agenda of Mussolini, the disciplining of the *squadristi* through the establishment of the *Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale* (Voluntary Militia for National Security) figured high. The economy was another priority, and it was initially entrusted to the liberal economist Alberto de’ Stefani. Having written much on foreign policy in *Gerarchia*, Mussolini was also eager to make his mark in this sphere. He made his diplomatic debut at the Lausanne Conference of 1922-23, where he negotiated peace terms with Turkey. While the Allies and Turks agreed in Lausanne in July 1923, the seeds of renewed suspicion were already sown between Italians and Turks as expectations continued to diverge.²³ Rumours about Italian military movements in

²⁰ ‘Cevad to Ahmed İzzet Pasha’: “Luttes Entre Les Fascistes et Socialistes En Italie”, 24 August 1921, *BOA*, HR. SYS., 2468-5.

²¹ ‘From the Special Envoy in Rome to Ahmed İzzet Pasha: “Roma’da (Faşist) Kongresine Dair”’, 14 November 1921, *BOA*, HR. SYS., 2469-23.

²² On the *Marcia su Roma* and the early days of the Mussolini government, see Emilio Gentile, *E fu subito il regime. Il fascismo e la marcia su Roma* (Laterza, 2012).

²³ On Italy’s role in the Treaty of Lausanne, see Maria Antonia Di Casola, ‘Italy and the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923’, *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, 23 (1993), pp. 61-78.

Tripolitania, Sicily and Rhodes aroused suspicion in the Turkish press and government circles.²⁴ Between 1924 and 1928, we can refer to at least three cases of suspicion that reveal how perceptions of fascism and Kemalism were influenced by such mutual distrust.

Though steps towards totalitarianism were evident from early on, the fascists were yet to establish full control over the parliament by 1924. The Socialist deputy Giacomo Matteotti was particularly vocal with his criticism of fascism. In June 1924, Matteotti mysteriously disappeared and was suspected of being assassinated. Despite Mussolini's promises to investigate and punish anyone culpable, it emerged in August 1924 that Matteotti had been kidnapped and murdered by a group well connected to Mussolini, known as 'the fascists' Cheka'.²⁵ As tensions rose, Mussolini overcame his hesitations, decided to take on the opposition head-on in the parliament, declare himself as the chief responsible for any 'crimes' of fascism, and launch a series of legal arrangements – *le leggi fascistiche* – that laid the foundations of the fascist regime.²⁶ By the late 1920s, even hopeful opponents of the fascist regime like Antonio Gramsci begrudgingly admitted that fascism would not crumble under its internal contradictions any time soon.²⁷

Much like the European press, the Turkish press followed the Matteotti case closely. The typical coverage portrayed fascism as on the brink of dissolution. The semi-official *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* amply reported claims about Matteotti's body being found and Italian authorities' responses, country-wide clashes, and arrests by the police.²⁸ *Hakimiyet-i*

²⁴ Çelebi, *Türkiye-İtalya Siyasi İlişkileri (1923-1939)*, pp. 79–80, pp. 84–85.

²⁵ On the fascists' Cheka and the assassination of Matteotti, see Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini Il Fascista: La Conquista del Potere, 1921-1925* (Einaudi, 1966), pp. 618–24. The 'Cheka' is a reference to the early Soviet secret police organisation Cheka, also known as VChK.

²⁶ Benito Mussolini, 'Discorso del 3 Gennaio', in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, ed. by Edoardo Susmel and Duilio Susmel (La Fenice, 1956), XXI, pp. 235–41.

²⁷ See Gramsci's initial views in Antonio Gramsci, 'I Due Fascismi', in *Il Fascismo: Le Interpretazioni dei Contemporanei e degli Storici*, ed. by Renzo De Felice (Laterza, 1970), pp. 36–38.

²⁸ 'En Nihayetinde Cesedi Bulundu', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 15 June 1924, p. 2. 'İtalya'da Büyük Bir Buhrana Doğru', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 18 June 1924, p. 1.

Milliye's reports in June included details of the kidnapping of Matteotti, the possible emergence of a coalition government to be led by veteran politicians Vittorio Emmanuele Orlando, Giolitti, and Antonio Salandra, and draconian measures to suppress opposition.²⁹ In late June, this was followed by a more lengthy analysis. The reporter found that the reason for such crises in Italy was how deeply it was shaken by the First World War. The country was hit hardest by the war due to its 'weak social structure'. The analyst observed that Italy was in chaos from the end of the war to the *Marcia su Roma*. As the government failed to check the advance of the disrupting forces itself, it supported fascism, which was joined by 'the bourgeois people, students, shop owners, etc.' Noting that Mussolini ruled as a 'dictator' above the parliament and country, the analyst concluded that fascism was facing a dead end: 'introducing law and order ... is one thing, tackling the real underlying problems is another'. As fascism lost its moral strength, Mussolini would soon see how 'in places like Italy', such dictatorships were 'doomed to fail, sooner or later'. He would either comply with parliamentary methods or face his downfall.³⁰ Such a portrayal of fascism as on the brink of crushing defeat permeated other papers such as *Tevhid-i Efkar* and *Vatan*. The Italian ambassador to Turkey, Giulio Cesare Montagna, made complaints to Dr Adnan Bey [Adıvar], the envoy of the Turkish government for engagements with the European states.³¹ Turkish state archives reveal that this was only one of many occasions when, outraged by the coverage of Italian news by the Turkish press, Montagna complained to the Turkish authorities.³²

²⁹ 'İtalya'da Vaziyet Buhranlı Bir Safhada', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 19 June 1924, p. 1.

³⁰ 'İtalyan Buhranı', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 24 June 1924, p. 1.

³¹ 'İtalya'da Mühim Hadiseler Cereyan Ediyor', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 20 June 1924, p. 1.

³² For some examples, see 'İtalya'daki Buhrana Dair Gazetelerde Çıkan Haber ve Makaleler Hakkında İtalya Mümessili Mösyö Montagna'nın Şikayeti', 19 June 1924, *BOA*, HR. İM., 241-76; 'Mösyö Montagna, Antalya'daki Mekteple Hastahanenin Kapatılması, Doktorun Bilmuhakeme İcra-yı Sanattan Menedilip Tecziye Edilmesi ve Antalya Gazetelerinin İtalyanlara Karşı Tahrik Edici Neşriyatta Bulunmaları Keyfiyetinin Roma'da Endişeyle Karşılandığını İfade Edip İtalyanların Anadolu Mücahedatını Hayır-Hah İle Karşıladıklarından Bahisle Türk Hükümetinin "Antalya Meselesi"nde Müsaadekar

Until the end of July 1924, news about the Matteotti crisis was typically reported on the first page in *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* as in *Vatan*, illustrating the attention paid to such news. Towards the end of the month, with the much-expected downfall of fascism or the corpse of Matteotti nowhere to be seen, the newspapers began to gradually lose interest. By the end of the month, events from Italy were relegated to the second or third page of *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* or, if on the first page, to a miniscule corner at the bottom.³³ The majority of Turkish observers condemned the kidnapping and murder of Matteotti. Fascism was perceived to have taken a step too far; restoring order against the 'Bolshevik' menace was one thing, toppling the parliamentary order another. *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* and much of the Turkish press tended to be selective in their coverage since negative rumours on fascism found more echo in the Turkish press. As it became gradually clear that this was not to be the case, Turkish interest drifted away from the 'Italian crisis'.

If the newspapers lost interest in Matteotti and 'the Italian crisis' in a while, a man in Antalya was much more persistent with his fury towards the Italians in Turkey. Dr Ferruh Niyazi's activities in Antalya in the early and mid-1920s revolved around the call to kick Italians out of Anatolia. In a newspaper article-cum-manifest titled 'The Peril is Great', Ferruh Niyazi identified Italian hospitals as a supposedly humane form of infiltration. Though he was 'not a man to feel grudge for no reason', he had 'great rancour for the Italians'. Italians could hope to soften the public with their hospitals, but he did not forget their machinations for Anatolia, and he would pass this suspicion and rancour 'onto my offspring'. He concluded by noting that Italians waited for signs of Turkish weakness to attack

Davranmasını İstemesi', 11 March 1924, *BOA*, HR. İM., 239-39; 'İtalya Mümessili Montagna'nın İtalya Seyahatı Öncesi İtalyan Askerinin Tahşidatı ve Gazetelerin İtalya Aleyhindeki Neşriyatı Konusunda İstanbul Murahhası Adnan Bey ile Mülakatı', 27 May 1924, *BOA*, HR. İM., 240-148.

³³ 'İtalya Kralı Bir Beyanname Neşredecektir', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 26 June 1924, p. 1. 'İtalyan Hadisesi', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 26 June 1924, p. 2. 'İtalyan Hadisesi', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 27 June 1924, p. 1. 'İtalya Parlamentosu Mussolini'ye İtimad Etti', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 29 June 1924, p. 2. 'İtalya Parlamentosu', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 30 June 1924, p. 1. 'İtalya'daki Hadise', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 3 July 1924, p. 3. 'İtalyan Ahvalı', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 6 July 1924, p. 3.

Anatolia once more, and in this attack, the Italian hospital would be 'a branch of the Italian general staff'.³⁴ He wanted the Italian hospital to be closed, along with every reminder of the short-lived Italian colonial enterprise in Anatolia.

Such anger alarmed the Italian diplomats in Turkey, who repeatedly lodged complaints with the Turkish authorities. They warned that such incendiary pieces could lead to a total breakdown of law and order in Antalya. The Italians feared the doctor's impact, particularly as he propagated his views not merely through a newspaper but also through posters of the article affixed across the city.³⁵ In response, the Turkish authorities variously noted that they could not interfere with the freedom of the press and downplayed the Italians' fears.³⁶ We do not know if the doctor's pieces were as influential as feared, though violent incidents between Italians and Turks in the region and its surroundings occasionally occurred in the 1920s. The doctor's interest in closing the hospital may relate to personal interest as much as ideological hatred, but in any case, others in the region shared his anti-Italian sentiments.

The suspicion towards and violent reactions to Italian presence in Anatolia was more than expected by certain fascists. In 1924 and 1925, the fascist deputy Orazio Pedrazzi observed on numerous occasions that the Turks were 'closing their doors' to European civilisation. Pedrazzi interpreted Kemalism as a curiously double-sided ideology. Though bent on destroying remnants of Europe in Turkey, the Kemalists also severed

³⁴ 'İtalyan Mümessilliği'nin; Antalya Gazetesinde Dr. Ferruh Niyazi'nin Tehlike Büyüktür Başlıklı Makale Dolayısıyla Şikayeti', 26 January 1924, *BOA*, HR. İM., 48-282.

³⁵ 'Antalya [Adalia] Consulate to the Embassy, Constantinople', 19 April 1925, *Archivio storico diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri* [*ASDMAE*], DGSE, b. 735, stampa 1.I.47.

³⁶ 'İtalya'daki Buhvana Dair Gazetelerde Çıkan Haber ve Makaleler Hakkında İtalya Mümessili Mösyö Montagna'nın Şikayeti', 1924, *BOA*, HR. İM., 241-76. 'Antalya'da Yayınlanan Türkçe Gazetelerin İtalya Aleyhinde Yayın Yaptıkları Hakkında Mösyö Mantonya'nın [*Sic*] Şikayeti', 1925, *BOA*, HR. İM., 141-13. 'Antalya'da Yayınlanan Türkçe Gazetelerin İtalya Aleyhinde Yayın Yapmadığı ve İtalya Konsolosunun Vilayete Atfettiği Beyanatın Hakikate Uygun Olmadığının İtalya Sefareti'ne İletilmesi', 1925, *BOA*, HR. İM., 151-14.

links to the Muslim Middle East out of infatuation with certain Western trends. It did not take long for Pedrazzi to uncover the influence of 'Parisian freemasonry' on the Kemalist leadership.³⁷ The cadres 'educated in Paris and Berlin' failed to see that the failing ideology of secularism was losing out in Europe and destroying their own country.³⁸ Therefore, the Kemalists were leading Turkey to a doubly certain deprivation: the Caliphate, the spiritual strength of the Turks, was abolished, and Christian capital and expertise, the economic motor of the country, was kicked out. Pedrazzi predicted that such 'barbarism' would deprive Anatolia of civilisation.

The Christian capital and expertise in Pedrazzi's eyes included the local Greeks, too. With the memories of the *la vittoria mutilata* fresh in mind, however, he was not eager to portray Greeks or Armenians, whom he deemed to be Greek allies, as mere passive victims. While he sympathised with their cause, Pedrazzi explained that the Greeks had carved themselves up a 'world of Orthodoxy' at the heart of the Ottoman Empire. They dominated commerce, and 'Izmir was a Greek city before the Turks burned it and thousands of Greeks perished there'.³⁹ While the Greeks were biding their time and boosting their population figures in Anatolia, the Turks finally took notice, and the result was the 'barbarism' of the day. Lament for the fate of this Christian people was mixed with the *vae victis* sentiments of 'Greek betrayal' and 'short-sightedness' in Pedrazzi's work.

Pedrazzi then reviewed what these meant for Italy. As Italy and other Westerners were pushed out, 'the Germans returned'. Reviewing the decades-long links between the Turks and Germans, Pedrazzi surmised that the Turks intended to use German expertise and capital to fill in the void left by the Greek exodus.⁴⁰ Such a policy would eventually create a Europe-wide coalition against the Turks, creating a stand-off from which Italy could profit.⁴¹ Pedrazzi apparently believed the Kemalist regime was

³⁷ Orazio Pedrazzi, *Il Levante Mediterraneo e l'Italia* (Alpes, 1925), p. 82.

³⁸ Pedrazzi, *Il Levante*, pp. 82-83.

³⁹ Pedrazzi, *Il Levante*, p. 85.

⁴⁰ Pedrazzi, *Il Levante*, p. 90.

⁴¹ Pedrazzi, *Il Levante*, pp. 92-93.

a fragile house of cards that could crumble under external pressure combined with popular reaction to secularism. To avoid confrontation was in everyone's best interest, however, and it had to be impinged on the Turks' minds that they needed European civilisation more than Europe needed them.⁴²

As Mevlüt Çelebi notes, Pedrazzi voiced such views already in 1924 but did not attract much attention in Turkey at that time.⁴³ In 1925, the reaction was much stronger in the Turkish press and the parliament. Newspapers translated Pedrazzi's book chapter on Turkey and penned up responses, while a parliament session questioned the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Italy's intents. *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* responded with an essay by Ahmed Ağaoğlu on 20 April 1925.⁴⁴ Ağaoğlu's regarded Pedrazzi as not just one deputy among others but as the voice of Mussolini. In the land of 'the Italian dictator', he explained with thinly disguised pejorative use of the term 'dictator', deputies did not speak their minds freely without government guidance. The truth of Pedrazzi's piece was that 'the Italians have set their gaze upon' Turkey. As pro-opposition newspapers had

⁴² Pedrazzi, *Il Levante*, p. 92.

⁴³ Çelebi, *Türkiye-İtalya Siyasi İlişkileri (1923-1939)*, pp. 132-33.

⁴⁴ Ağaoğlu was born in 1869 in Karabakh, then part of the Russian Empire. The young Ağaoğlu received a classical Islamic education, mastering Persian and Arabic. He later went to Paris to study at Sorbonne, where he met fellow Turks from the Ottoman Empire. His studies in Paris exposed him to ideas of liberalism and democracy, whereas contacts with fellow Turks led him to contemplate Turkic as well as Islamic identity. In the early 20th century, he was politically active in the Russian Empire, advocating for the rights of the Turkic peoples of the Empire. As the brief period of freedom surrounding the introduction of constitutional monarchy in Russia in 1905 came to an abrupt end, Ağaoğlu moved to the Ottoman Empire. He was influential in the publication and direction of *Türk Yurdu*, the leading journal of the Turkish nationalists. In the meantime, he drew closer to the Committee of Union and Progress, becoming a professor at İstanbul Darülfünun (the predecessor of today's Istanbul University) and a member of the parliament. After the First World War, the final months of which he spent in Azerbaijan accompanying the Ottoman Army, he went to Ankara and joined the resistance movement. Soon, with his pro-Westernisation and nationalist stance, he emerged as a leading Kemalist intellectual and occupied important roles in the RPP and its *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* until a falling off around 1927.

clarified in previous contexts, Ağaoğlu, too, emphasised the unity of the Turks against any potential invader.⁴⁵

On a more theoretical plane, Ağaoğlu set out to refute Pedrazzi's claims of Turkish barbarism and anti-Europeanism. He explained that '...Westernisation, that is, Europeanisation, gaining our place among European nations by entering the sphere of European civilisation, is something for which we daily strive'. In the mid-1920s, Ağaoğlu firmly believed that Kemalism's ultimate goal was transforming Turkey into a complete democracy. Thus, it was Italy that turned to barbarism and 'exporting political assassinations to the world'.⁴⁶ Weaponising the Matteotti crisis, Ağaoğlu turned Pedrazzi's argument upside down to argue that Kemalists were establishing democracy where there was none, while fascists replaced democracy with assassinations, which was true barbarism.

The discussions thus far cited have been in line with the existing literature on Turkish-Italian contact in the early 1920s. As Grassi argued, 'misunderstandings' loomed large in the relations. Contrary to Turkish fears, the Italians did not seriously intend to invade Turkey. Despite the hopes of Ahmed Emin or Velid Ebüzziya in *Vatan* and *Tevhid-i Efkâr*, fascists' dealing with the Matteotti crisis proved scarcely promising for the prospects of democracy. Çelebi's observation that the relationships were generally characterised by mutual suspicion also appears to bear out. More topically, these early perceptions already contain important themes that became more visible in the coming years. One theme is the prominence of the ideas of Europe and the West in perceptions of fascism and Kemalism. Both Pedrazzi's argument and Ağaoğlu's response drew from different visions of the West and Europe. In Pedrazzi's view, the West and

⁴⁵ *Tevhid-i Efkâr* had already clarified in June 1924 while discussing the 'suspicious' Italian military movements in Rhodes the Turks would swiftly put an end to the controversies among themselves and unite under their leaders to repel invading Italians. 'Silaha Sarılmaya Mecbur Kalırsak...', *Tevhid-i Efkâr*, 2 June 1924, p. 1. On the Italian-Turkish relations in the context of the Dodecanese Islands at large, see Hazal Papuççular, 'Fragile Balances: Turkish Foreign Policy on the Sovereignty of the Dodecanese Islands (1940-1947)', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 20.5 (2018), pp. 405-19; Hazal Papuççular, *Türkiye ve Oniki Ada: 1912-1947* (Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2019).

⁴⁶ Ahmed Ağaoğlu, 'Bir Konferans Münasebetiyle', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 20 April 1925, p. 1.

Europe were inseparably linked to Christianity. Ağaoğlu instead conceived of the West and Europe communities that non-Western countries of the past could join by accepting key values such as freedom of speech.⁴⁷ Their definitions of barbarism varied accordingly.

Another theme that speaks to the continuity of certain perceptions of fascism is that of all the contributors to the *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, it was Ağaoğlu to respond to Pedrazzi in this manner. At the time, Ağaoğlu occupied a prominent position in the newspaper, as in the Republican People's Party (the RPP). Other newspapers, especially Yunus Nadi's *Cumhuriyet*, occasionally referred to Mussolini pejoratively as the Italian dictator, too.⁴⁸ Yet, Yunus Nadi dramatically shifted his position more than once in the 1920s and 1930s, partially in line with the official foreign policy of the state.⁴⁹ Ağaoğlu's stance remained more stable, such that his response to Pedrazzi was not merely one of a high-ranking RPP figure but of one such figure who also disliked fascism. To see how Ağaoğlu's response was far from coincidental, we shall now turn to another, more domestic crisis in Turkey. This was the crisis engendered by the rise and fall of the Progressive Republican Party [PRP] in late 1924 and 1925, and the

⁴⁷ This vision of the West as a potentially open community was, in different versions, common to many non-Western intellectuals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For a succinct introduction to various conceptualisations of the West, see Riccardo Bavaj, "'The West': A Conceptual Exploration', *EGO: European History Online* (2011) <<http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/crossroads/political-spaces/riccardo-bavaj-the-west-a-conceptual-exploration#citation>> [accessed 19 October 2022]. For various conceptualisations of the West in Asia, including the West as an open community and the West as a closed and Christian community, see Cemil Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (Columbia University Press, 2007).

⁴⁸ 'İtalya Bütün Cihana Meydan Mı Okuyor?', *Cumhuriyet*, 19 December 1925, pp. 1-2; 'Fransız-İtalyan İhtilafı Alevleniyor', *Cumhuriyet*, 7 November 1926, p. 1.

⁴⁹ This is not the place to consider to what extent Yunus Nadi was sincere in his views, but with regard to fascism, at least, it does appear that beyond some vague sympathy with authoritarianism, he did not have strong beliefs on the subject. In many cases included in the sample for this thesis, Yunus Nadi appeared to either follow the government policy strictly or the general public opinion at the time. See Chapter Five for how his views on fascism varied in line with material expectations from the Italian regime in the 1930s.

next section will delve deeper into investigating the role perceptions of fascism played in arguments for and against the PRP.

§ 2.2 Debating Democracy and Fascism, Deferring the Ballots: The PRP Crisis (1924-25) and Beyond

During the War of Independence, the Turkish side was effectively a coalition of groups with variant political outlooks united by opposition to foreign invasion under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal. The leader managed to contain opposition until the end of the war through much manoeuvring, though, as Ahmet Kuyaş notes, the liberal and Islamist opposition likely saw through Mustafa Kemal's occasional Bolshevik-like and Islamic rhetoric during the war.⁵⁰ Though Mustafa Kemal merely posed as a Bolshevik, the Turkish resistance at large included groups amply influenced by Bolshevism and its discourse on an anti-Western revolution.⁵¹ That the Kemalists would embrace Turkish nationalism and Westernisation became clearer after the war, as the regime question became more pressing. Compromised by taints of cooperation with the Allies, the discredited Sultanate was abolished in November 1922, but curiously, Turkey did not officially become a republic until October 1923. It was this sudden proclamation of the Republic and the reshuffling of the parliament, intended to kickstart the Kemalist revolution, that pushed liberal and Islamist opponents of the Kemalists towards alternatives.⁵²

Opponents of the emerging regime were as variant as their reasons for turning to opposition, which included intellectuals like Halide Edip

⁵⁰ Ahmet Kuyaş, 'Neden Cumhuriyet', *Cogito*, 15. Cumhuriyet: Alkışla Olmaz (1998), pp. 114–18 (pp. 114–15). I have also benefited from a meeting with Dr Kuyaş in 2019, where he detailed his thoughts on what contemporaries thought about Mustafa Kemal's radical projects for Turkey before the end of the Turkish War of Independence.

⁵¹ Abdulhamit Kırmızı, 'After Empire, Before Nation: Competing Ideologies and the Bolshevik Moment of the Anatolian Revolution', in *Revolutions and Counter-Revolutions: 1917 and its Aftermath from a Global Perspective*, eds. Stefan Rinke and Michael Wildt (Campus Verlag, 2017) pp. 119–37.

⁵² Kuyaş, 'Neden Cumhuriyet', pp. 117–18.

[Adivar], officials like Dr Adnan [Adivar], and generals and heroes of the war of independence such as Kazım Karabekir, Ali Fuat [Cebesoy], Refet [Bele], Cafer Tayyar [Eğilmez] and Rauf [Orbay]. The rumours of an imminent coup d'état against Mustafa Kemal dominated discussions in what came to be known as 'the clash of the Pashas'. Ali Fuat was a convinced Westerniser who also feared unlimited power in any authority. A personal friend of Mustafa Kemal, he moved to opposition with memoirs of the CUP's triumvirate of Enver, Talat and Cemal Pashas fresh in mind. Halide Edip had similar misgivings about the Kemalists' governance, deeply mistrusted foreign totalitarianism, including fascism, and argued from a Burkean conservative stance for a more gradual alteration of social life.⁵³ Other figures of opposition, like Rauf Bey, were likely more conservative; hailing from a family well connected to the palace, it appears that Rauf Bey could not digest the anti-monarchist radicalism he saw in Kemalism.

Shunning a coup d'état, Rauf Bey and certain other figures of opposition rallied around the new Ottoman caliph, Abdülmecid. The Kemalists' suspicions grew stronger when Aga Khan, a Muslim religious leader in India, wrote a letter to Ismet Pasha in defence of the Caliphate. The letter was quickly publicised by the opposition-aligned newspapers to heap on the criticism of the Kemalists.⁵⁴ Eventually, the Kemalists got rid of their Caliphate problem radically by abolishing the institution in March 1924. Having seen that nothing could stop the Kemalists short of a direct political confrontation, the opponents resolved to create a political party of their own. The Progressive Republican Party [PRP] was founded in November 1924, quickly becoming an umbrella party to unite the myriad forms of opposition to the Kemalist leadership.

⁵³ Halide Edip chose to quote Edmund Burke as the epitaph of his English book *Turkey Faces the West*, published in the 1930s. Also, see her remarks on the epigraph in Halide Edip Adivar, *Türkiye'de Şark-Garp ve Amerikan Tesirleri* (Can, 2009 [1955, parts published in 1930 and 1935]), p. 15.

⁵⁴ Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek-Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması* (Yurt, 1981), pp. 73–77.

Champions of the new party included two newspapers, Velid Ebuzziya's *Tevhid-i Efkar* and Ahmed Emin's *Vatan*. An opponent of radical Westernisation and devoutly committed to Islamic values, Velid had every reason to doubt Kemalism's benefits for Turkey.⁵⁵ Ahmed Emin instead moved closer to the opposition through his suspicions of a top-down and rapid reform programme like Halide Edip. These reservations brought the duo together against the RPP, with Ahmed Emin writing for his *Vatan* and contributing to *Tevhid-i Efkar*. In their defence of the multiparty competitive politics, both frequently drew from the Italian example.

As the Matteotti crisis coincided with 'the clash of the Pashas', *Tevhid-i Efkar*'s Velid utilised what he deemed 'the final days of Mussolini' as a message to the RPP. While the entire world was marching towards the ideals of popular sovereignty, Mussolini, 'a man who mocks the notion of popular sovereignty' ruled Italy as a dictator. Mussolini was also portrayed as a 'shapeshifter', with reference to his 'complex' past involving socialism, too. Predicting in June 1924 that the final days of Mussolini were near, *Tevhid-i Efkar*'s piece concluded with the forecast that 'such an unnatural state of affairs (*gayrıtabii bir hal*)' could not persist for long.⁵⁶ If the fact that this was a lesson for Turkey was not apparent, another piece of the newspaper from December 1924, likely penned by Velid Ebuzziya, explicitly considered what fascism could teach 'if lessons from abroad are needed'. Interestingly, *Tevhid-i Efkar* portrayed Mussolini and fascism as taking steps backwards before the opposition and compromising rather than being on the verge of *leggi fascistissime*. While Mussolini 'did a great service' to Italy by ridding it of the red menace, his misstep was believing that this prestige would coax people into tolerating his dictatorship. More problematically, 'certain men in the party' in Turkey seemingly had the same desire to rule as dictators. The conclusion was that fascism's imminent downfall had to teach these unwise men how

⁵⁵ Falih Rıfki [Atay] notes that Velid's problems with the Kemalists were already apparent during the War of Independence. Falih Rıfki Atay, *Çankaya* (Bates, 1980), p. 340, p. 382.

⁵⁶ 'Mussolini'nin Son Günleri', *Tevhid-i Efkar*, 20 June 1924, p. 1.

'one cannot simply rule through oppression'.⁵⁷ The parallels were crystal clear: both Mussolini and Mustafa Kemal did great service to their nations in the past, both personally or through certain men around them tended towards dictatorship, and both would find that their peoples were not going to tolerate this 'unnatural state of affairs'.

Ahmed Emin's *Vatan* joined *Tevhid-i Efkar* in both its anti-dictatorial messages to the RPP and the selective perception of fascism as on the brink of destruction. The more theoretically minded Ahmed Emin explained to the readers in June 1924 that fascism was 'the victory of oppression over anarchy'. He called attention to Mussolini's recent preface to Niccolò Machiavelli's *Il Principe* [*Prince*], where Mussolini dwelled on the success of armed as opposed to unarmed prophet. This particular armed prophet presented a danger to world peace, and the world hoped for 'a predictable and lawful government' to arise in Italy.⁵⁸ In late June and July 1924, Ahmed Emin continued to argue that fascism was reliant on brute force and that such regimes of oppression would fail inevitably, with their demise serving as an example for all.⁵⁹ Even in January 1925, Ahmed Emin retained hope that democracy would eventually prevail. His frustration by then was more visible, however: Mussolini was now defined as a 'vile oppressor' to whom the millions that had supported him until recently now exclaimed: 'Murderer!'.⁶⁰ In Ahmed Emin's work, fascism served as the primary negative example to illustrate to the Kemalist leadership what misery could result from their missteps towards dictatorship.

Against charges of tyranny and fascism, Ağaoğlu was at the forefront of the RPP's defences. The chief argument in Ağaoğlu's arsenal was that, as he noted in December 1924, the opposition targeted the RPP and the revolution rather than specific figures in the Kemalist leadership.⁶¹ As the

⁵⁷ 'Hariçten Ders Lazımsa', *Tevhid-i Efkar*, 9 December 1924, p. 1.

⁵⁸ Ahmed Emin, 'İtalya'daki Buhran', *Vatan*, 19 June 1924, p. 1.

⁵⁹ Ahmed Emin, 'Haftalık Tarihçe', *Vatan*, 21 June 1924, p. 1. Ahmed Emin, 'Haftalık Tarihçe', *Vatan*, 19 July 1924, p. 1.

⁶⁰ Ahmed Emin, 'Haftalık Tarihçe', *Vatan*, 3 January 1925, p. 1.

⁶¹ Ahmed Ağaoğlu, 'Asıl Hedef', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 9 December 1924, p. 1.

leaders of the PRP included heroes of the War of Independence, Ağaoğlu was careful to explain that they were not so much traitors as short-sighted: they simply did not realise what their opposition to the RPP could cause in such a young republic. Some days later, Ağaoğlu found himself having to clarify the RPP's position vis-à-vis the freedom of the press. A motion by the RPP deputy Ali Saib Bey [Ursavaş] calling for more severe restrictions on the press caused an uproar, and Ağaoğlu rushed to explain in *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* that the proposal did not have the RPP's support. Ağaoğlu also warned the pro-opposition journalists to steer clear of incendiary publications against the government, which could indeed result in the curtailing of the freedom of the press eventually. This was not a threat but a prediction from a worried democrat, Ağaoğlu explained.⁶² On the whole, Ağaoğlu did not resort to re-drawing fascism as a positive example to counter the opposition. He completely agreed that fascism was a problematic ideology but believed that the Kemalists' temporary measures had nothing to do with fascism. While he felt that the conditions in the country were not ripe for liberal democracy as of 1924, in the coming years, Ağaoğlu himself gradually became disillusioned with what he perceived as the needless and indefinite deferring of democratic processes.

The Sheikh Said rebellion that began in eastern Turkey in February 1925 seemingly validated the worries that Turkey was not ready for competitive electoral politics. As Martin van Bruinessen notes, interpreting the Sheikh Said rebellion as the work of either a purely religiously motivated or a Kurdish nationalist movement would be a mistake. Figures moving from both sets of premises were active in the revolt.⁶³ Some rebels disagreed with the increasingly tighter grip of the central authority, some with the secularist tendencies of Ankara, and some with both.⁶⁴ As rebels made early progress, the more liberal-leaning Fethi Bey [Okyar]

⁶² Ahmed Ağaoğlu, 'Hürriyet-i Matbuat', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 14 December 1924, p. 1.

⁶³ Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Sheikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (Zed Books, 1992), pp. 298–99.

⁶⁴ Zekeriya Kurşun, 'Şeyh Said', *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* (2019), pp. 560–62. <<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/seyh-said>> [Accessed 21 May 2024].

government was replaced by the hawkish İsmet Pasha cabinet. The new government quickly tackled the rebellion and, along with it, the country-wide opposition to the RPP with a series of draconian laws known as the *Takrir-i Sükun* (Maintenance of Order). The Islamist *Sebilürreşad* and the communist *Orak Çekiç* alike found themselves shut down, with the rebellion suppressed and Sheikh Said on the run. The captured rebels and opponents of the regime were put on trial in the re-established *İstiklal Mahkemeleri* (Independence Tribunals, active during the War of Independence, courts with extraordinary authority designed to deal mainly with cases of treason and sedition).⁶⁵ In the meanwhile, Ağaoğlu hoped that once these troubling times passed, the young Republic's leaders would abandon these admittedly draconian but necessary measures.

Recep Bey [Peker], whom portions of the literature single out as the chief figure responsible for the development of a fascism-like interpretation of Kemalism in the 1930s, was instrumental in defending the RPP against the opposition in the mid-1920s as well.⁶⁶ Born in Istanbul in 1889, Recep Bey became an officer and served as part of the Ottoman Army that sought to quash rebellions in Yemen, along with the future deputy İsmet. His military activities included fighting in the Balkan Wars and joining the resistance movement in Ankara during the War of Independence.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ On these tribunals, see Ergun Aybars, *İstiklal Mahkemeleri* (Bilgi Yayınevi, 1975).

⁶⁶ For a more recent example of Peker being seen as the chief figure of the era responsible for positive perceptions of fascism and seeking to interpret Kemalism in light of German national socialism and Italian fascism, see M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 190.

⁶⁷ For a non-teleological exploration of political visions in the immediate aftermath of the Balkan Wars, with a particular emphasis on how pan-Islamism did not immediately fall out of favour at all, see Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, 'Point of No Return? Prospects of Empire after the Ottoman Defeat in the Balkan Wars (1912-1913),' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 50.1 (2018), pp. 65-84. I have attempted to analyse the impact of the Balkan Wars on Ottoman political thought and in engendering or opening the way for the empowering novel ways of thinking in a paper: Buğra Can Bayçifci, 'The Balkan Wars from an Ottoman Perspective: Rupture as Creative Destruction', (2020), pp. 1-20 <https://www.academia.edu/43962569/The_Balkan_Wars_from_an_Ottoman_Perspective_Rupture_as_Creative_Destruction> [accessed 20 October 2022].

With his energy, Recep Bey emerged as a trusted lieutenant for the leadership and became a founder and the first secretary of the RPP.

Contemporaries tended to depict Recep Bey as a rather paradoxical figure. On the one hand, both Falih Rifkî and Yakup Kadri relate incidents that give the reader the impression of Recep Bey being a stern and difficult figure. He dared to challenge Mustafa Kemal on policy matters according to Falih Rifkî and shouted at Yakup Kadri 'so loud as to shake the windows' during a conflict over *Kadro* the journal.⁶⁸ Both nevertheless conclude that he was ultimately a well-meaning, sincere Kemalist. His portrayal is typically as a man who felt much genuine admiration for Kemalism and dedication to Kemalist orthodoxy, though perhaps lacking in understanding of ideological intricacies of the interpretations developed by the likes of Falih Rifkî or *Kadro*. Crucially, contemporaries did not portray Recep Bey as a masterful pragmatist or a careful theorist. Yakup Kadri even referred to him as 'tactless' due to his penchant for speaking his mind.⁶⁹ These depictions will be in line with the image of Recep Bey to result from this study: a man furiously convinced of the rightness of Kemalist orthodoxy, who, through his distance from 'abstract theorising', created a different interpretation of Kemalism from the likes of Ağaoğlu and Falih Rifkî alike.

The tumultuous years of 1924 and 1925 caught Recep Bey in between different ministerial posts. While a minister under the liberal PM Fethi Bey in 1924, he resigned from the cabinet. Interestingly, he did not hide his reasons for resigning under excuses such as, say, health issues: he clarified to the newspapers that he had certain policy differences with the government.⁷⁰ These differences revolved around different understandings of democracy. Recep Bey felt that, at the time, Turkey could not afford to experiment with the free election of mayors in Istanbul: they had to be appointed by Ankara. Observing the dormant forces of reactionism and the 'immaturity' of the masses, his argument was not that

⁶⁸ Atay, *Çankaya*, p. 10, pp. 242-43, p. 446, p. 493, pp. 555-56; Karaosmanoğlu, *Politikada 45 Yıl* (Bilgi Basımevi, 1968), pp. 93-94.

⁶⁹ Karaosmanoğlu, *Politikada 45 Yıl*, p. 94.

⁷⁰ 'Dahiliye Vekili Recep Bey'in İstifası', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 5 January 1925, p. 1.

democracy was not a target of the revolution; it was simply a target that could not be reached so quickly. Recep Bey's resignation found ample echoes in the press and was variously interpreted as signs of internal trouble within the RPP or a confrontation between the pro-İsmet and pro-Fethi wings.⁷¹ Whatever his reasons may be, as İsmet Pasha regained power in February 1925, Recep Bey duly returned to the cabinet. He adopted a hardline stance in defence of the *Takrir-i Sükun* laws and the crackdown of the opposition. Recep Bey's continued imagining democracy as the goal of Kemalism and argument for a deferral of ballots until the education and maturation of the masses indeed proved a popular and enduring policy line well into the late 1930s, as we shall see. Crucially, his arguments did not touch upon fascism or comparable foreign regimes. He simply thought of Kemalism as democratic without going into too much detail. For this, we may dub his brand of Kemalism as 'quietist'.⁷²

Falih Rifkî made more frequent appearances in the press in defence of the RPP. He was born in 1894 in Istanbul, where he grew up and read literature at the Istanbul *Darülfünun*, the precursor to the Istanbul University. Falih Rifkî initiated his journalism career with Hüseyin Cahit's [Yalçın] *Tanin*, identifying with the latter's pro-Westernisation stance. During the First World War, he served as a bureaucrat for the Ottoman Army in Palestine and Syria, where he penned his extremely popular visions of the meaninglessness of imperial war for the impoverished Turkish population: *Zeytindağı* [the Olive Tree; the Turkish translation of the

⁷¹ Ahmed Emin felt that the real reason for Recep Bey's resignation predated the disagreement on municipal elections; he thought Recep Bey's resignation had to do with his previous disagreements with other members of the government. Ahmed Emin, 'Haftalık Tarihçe', *Vatan*, 10 January 1925, p. 1.

⁷² In philosophy, quietism refers to the stance of denying that a given question can be explained in any detailed and meaningful way. The term quietism has been used in the Christian tradition, too. But quietism, as used here, derives solely from analytic philosophy and should not be confused with the Christian term, which does not have anything much to do with either the concept of quietism in analytic philosophy or its employment here. Philosophers associated with this way of thinking include, most famously, Ludwig Wittgenstein. See John McDowell, 'Wittgensteinian "Quietism"', *Common Knowledge*, 15.3 (2009), pp. 365–72, doi:10.1215/0961754x-2009-018.

Jabal al-Zaytun] and *Ateş ve Güneş* [Fire and Sun]. Joining the Anatolian resistance, he remained in the occupied Istanbul and supported the cause with his journalism. After moving to Ankara, he emerged as a crucial figure for the *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* and the RPP. He also developed a close relationship with Mustafa Kemal that granted him not only insight into the workings of the state but opportunities to influence policy.

Falih Rıfkı's hardline stance against opposition to the burgeoning Kemalism was clear well before the height of the clash of the Pashas. Writing for Istanbul's *Akşam* as early as January 1923, we see Falih Rıfkı already contemplating what needed to be done for the 'education of the people and the youth'.⁷³ An important question was what was to be done with the old generations while creating the new ones, and Falih Rıfkı heavily leaned on robust security-oriented steps. Also, in January 1923, he put this double duty of the revolution as 'combatting reactionism' while 'enlightening the people'. The lion's share in enlightenment fell upon the youth, especially the youth of the nationalist Turkish Hearths (*Türk Ocakları*), which remained as the primary youth institution since the 1910s. Falih Rıfkı conceded that the revolutionary youth in Turkey was a minority. But they were nevertheless stronger than the shapeless and heedless masses. All that was needed to check the reaction and further the revolution was providing guidance to the youthful revolutionary energies. 'In this, the Italian fascism is an example', Falih Rıfkı observed. As the Italian government and army remained 'mere spectators' to the chaos brought upon by the 'Bolsheviks', the fascists, or rather 'the patriotic youth', took it upon themselves to combat the red menace. Using sticks if need be, the fascists reached a 'thorough victory' over the socialists.⁷⁴ Short of calling for a mobilisation of the youth to physically beat the reactionaries, the text clearly illustrates both Falih Rıfkı's hardline and his flirting with fascism as an ideology from which he could draw ideological lessons. The Kemalists had to 'strangle reactionism by not granting it of even the tiniest trace of freedom'.⁷⁵

⁷³ Falih Rıfkı, 'Bizim Sene-i Devriyelerimiz', *Akşam*, 1 January 1923, p. 1.

⁷⁴ Falih Rıfkı, 'İnkılabın Müdafaasına Ait Bir Teklif', *Akşam*, 28 January 1923, p. 3.

⁷⁵ Falih Rıfkı, 'Sulh Olunca', *Akşam*, 16 February 1923, p. 3.

Other intellectuals, such as Feridun Fikri [Düşünsel], directly defended the RPP against charges of fascism by the intellectual equivalent of a shrug. Feridun Fikri noted that the Kemalist leadership did not seek to establish a fascist-like regime at all. Drawing from fascism would be pointless since Mussolini was merely 'a faint reflection of the deeds of Mustafa Kemal' in Italy. Writing in February 1923, Feridun Fikri observed that what fascists and Kemalists had in common was their determination not to sacrifice their revolution for the sake of 'abstract theories'. Moreover, as fascism could be defined as an anti-Bolshevik and nationalist force, Feridun Fikri did not quite see why drawing from it could cause such an outcry, even if that were to be the case.⁷⁶ Feridun Fikri's appreciation of fascism was multifaceted. He enjoyed fascism's 'success' over Bolshevism as a fellow nationalist movement. The fascist propaganda techniques in converting the masses also piqued his interest. As he was interested in not turning fascism into an example but countering the opposition argument that the Kemalists were not to become fascist-like, however, he also emphasised Kemalism's primacy. There was neither such shame or, indeed, any need, to draw from fascism.

Falih Rıfkı's hawkish attitude in 1923 continued with his energetic anti-PRP campaign in late 1924. The PRP utilised the prestige of its founders' prominent role during the War of Independence by portraying its cause as a second 'national struggle' (*milli mücadele*). Falih Rıfkı retorted that they could more fruitfully be compared to the anti-resistance troops (*kuva-yı inzibatiye*) deployed by the Istanbul government against Ankara during the war.⁷⁷ Another argument was doubting the sincerity of the opposition, including Hüseyin Cahit, whom Falih Rıfkı depicted as engaging in *quid pro quo* with the Armenians and Greeks despite his self-proclaimed nationalism.⁷⁸ Drawing from a commentary published in the Italian *Corriere della sera*, Falih Rıfkı repeated the author's observation of how the opponent's headquarters, Istanbul, was spiritually closer to

⁷⁶ Feridun Fikri, 'Façizm [sic] mi?', *Yenigün*, 22 April 1923, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Falih Rıfkı, 'Bize Boykot mu Yapacaklardı', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 23 November 1924, p. 1.

⁷⁸ Falih Rıfkı, 'Fena Alametler', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 4 December 1924, p. 1.

Milan than to Ankara.⁷⁹ Hardly contained during the short life of the PRP, Falih Rıfkı fully disclosed his elation at the party's dissolution in June 1925: perhaps unsurprisingly, it was he who commented on this development for *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*. The PRP was closed by the Independence Tribunals, which 'objectively' found that the party abused an article on its programme that called for tolerance for religious traditions, Falih Rıfkı argued.⁸⁰

In the mid and late-1920s, Falih Rıfkı's positive references to fascism as illustrating a way of dealing with the opposition continued. In October 1928, at a time when the stately relations between Italy and Turkey were undergoing significant improvement with a visit of Tefvik Rüştü [Aras] to Italy, Falih Rıfkı pointed out the way Mussolini dealt with the press as an example. Fascism was 'a system binding for everyone without exception', and this meant that, as its discipline was binding even for Mussolini, it was not 'personal or arbitrary oppression'. The fascists rightly 'avoided compromises' with enemies of their revolution 'for the sake of theorising' (*nazariye hatrına*). Nor was fascism a form of *istibdat*, the term meant tyranny and was associated with the unpleasant memories of the Abdulhamid II era (1878-1909). While *istibdat* was based on 'ignorance and submission', fascism stood on 'science and discipline'.⁸¹ If a European regime could discipline its society thus, such disciplining certainly did not make the Kemalists Abdulhamid-like.

Documents in Italian state archives illustrate how Falih Rıfkı's interest in the Italian press did not remain limited to using it as an example. In 1927, Falih Rıfkı contacted Italian authorities and called for greater co-operation between the Turkish *Anadolu Ajansı* and Italy's *Agenzia Stefani* in the sharing and broadcasting of news. Falih Rıfkı noted that the relations between the two countries were much harmed by the mingling of third parties in the transmission and interpretation of news.

⁷⁹ Falih Rıfkı, 'Acaba Muhallifler İstanbul'a Niçin Geliyor', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 26 November 1924, p. 1.

⁸⁰ Falih Rıfkı, 'Sed Kararnamesi', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 5 June 1925, p. 1.

⁸¹ Falih Rıfkı, 'Bir Nutuk', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 14 October 1928, p. 1. Falih Rıfkı, 'Türk Güzidesi', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 15 October 1928, p. 1.

Unspecified third parties, probably and primarily the French, were very much interested in ensuring that a rapprochement between 'Kemalism and fascism' did not take place. Falih Rıfkı noted that 'our movements should be in agreement' and that they were 'different expressions of the same nationalistic idea'.⁸² The Italian side agreed, and work began to initiate cooperation. While it is possible his remarks were intended as diplomatic nicety on the part of Falih Rıfkı since he addressed these letters to Ambassador Luca Orsini-Borini, a sincere attraction to fascism as an alternative to liberal democracy is a more parsimonious explanation.

This attraction sometimes led Falih Rıfkı to define esteem for liberal democracy as the equivalent to old 'religious dogmas'. Writing in July 1926, he observed that the entire Europe longed for 'order and discipline' (*nizam ve inzibat*), tired of endless strife between parliamentary parties and class warfare. Not a single European country would swap order and discipline for 'fancy words on freedom'. As even publications in 'the most civilised countries' attested, 'old parliamentarian views' were bankrupt, and every country sought powerful leaders to rise above class warfare in the name of the public good. Against claims of a Kemalist *istibdat*, Falih Rıfkı emphasised that the Kemalist leaders exercised their power for the country's good. Thus, Turkey could not be the type of arbitrary dictatorship that the opposition's claims of *istibdat* meant.⁸³ That Turkey's leaders were among the 'powerful leaders' every European country sought was clear from the argument: Falih Rıfkı invited the Turks to embrace this fact. Likewise, Italians were certainly among those nations who looked for and found their own powerful leaders.⁸⁴

Hawkish against opposition and already flirting with fascism as an ideological example, Falih Rıfkı nevertheless refused to leave the mantle

⁸² 'Embassy in Constantinople to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 17 June 1927, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 735, stampa I. 56.

⁸³ Falih Rıfkı, 'Nizam ve İnzibat', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 18 July 1926, p. 1.

⁸⁴ Falih Rıfkı often referred to the USSR as a parallel example. But the particular example in this text from Europe must be Italy since referring to the Soviet leadership as 'rising above class warfare' would hardly be in keeping with their self-description as a government of and for the proletariat.

of democracy to the opposition. In September 1928, he referred to İsmet Pasha as 'a sincerer adorer of democracy', whereas Turkey was 'a great democracy in the East' as per another text from July 1928.⁸⁵ In many pieces between the end of the PRP crisis and the early 1930s, Falih Rıfkı referred to the Kemalist regime as the 'Turkish democracy' and emphasised the need for education before democratisation.⁸⁶ If dissimulation is a possibility, an arguably stronger possibility is that he was occasionally undecided over democracy. He was convinced that the ballots had to be deferred, much as Recep Bey; where he differed from the latter was his interest in fascism and the USSR as examples that could perhaps put an end to the deferral and lead to an embrace of the current Turkish regime as the definitive regime of Turkey. As Chapter Three will demonstrate, what happened to him in the 1930s was less a total conversion to anti-democratic Kemalism than a clarification of his previous stance when facing terrifying old questions anew.

§ 2.3 The Rise of Italy as an '*İnkılap Memleketi*': Perceptions of Fascism in the Late 1920s

1925 was an important turning point in domestic Turkish politics, the Middle Eastern post-war settlement, and by extension, the global diplomatic context. The PRP was no more, the Sheikh Said rebellion was suppressed, and the *Takrir-i Sükun* was still in force, deterring further opposition to the regime. Abroad, the Great Syrian Revolt of 1925 incentivised France to settle its remaining problems with Turkey, while the League of Nations decreed in favour of the United Kingdom on the lingering Mosul question in December.⁸⁷ Before the government lifted the extraordinary

⁸⁵ Falih Rıfkı, 'Mısır Hadisesi', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 23 July 1928, p. 1. Falih Rıfkı, 'Malatya Nutku', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 17 September 1928, p. 1.

⁸⁶ For example, see Falih Rıfkı, 'İktisat Demagojisi', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 29 November 1929, p. 1. Falih Rıfkı, 'Belediye Kanunu', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 26 March 1930, p. 1.

⁸⁷ Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, 'Navigating Futures Past: Colonialism, Nationalism, and the Making of post-Ottoman Order in Kilis, 1919-1926', *Contemporary Levant* (2024), pp. 1-17 (pp. 10-11). <https://doi.org/10.1080/20581831.2024.2397308>

measures in 1929 as no longer necessary, a series of radical reforms appeared, shielded by the *Takrir-i Sükun* during the adoption period. These included the adoption of a version of the Swiss Civil Code in 1926, which marked the first thorough legal Westernisation of the family sphere in Turkey, the removal of Islam as the official religion in 1928, and the adoption of the new, Latin-based script for Turkish.

Between 1925 and 1929, the diplomatic relations between Turkey and Italy gradually evolved from suspicion to alliance. 1926 introduced further difficulties.⁸⁸ Mussolini's brother, Arnaldo Mussolini's published remarks on Antalya and Izmir as targets of Italian imperialism rekindled the flames of anger and suspicion in the Turkish press.⁸⁹ In July, the famed Italian poet Gabriele D'Annunzio called for 'capturing Anatolia' for Italian interests.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, towards the end of the year and the beginning of 1927, there was a growing interest in reconciliation at the state level in both countries. Reflecting this new mood, though without praising fascism as such, Ağaoğlu was able to refer to Mussolini in August 1926 as a rather astute man whose 'intelligence and authority attract the attention of the entire world'.⁹¹ Soon, however, Ağaoğlu himself fell from grace. The reasons for this are not exactly clear, but that Ağaoğlu's shift away from the RPP occurred around 1927 is evident from his absence in the *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* from this year onwards. Previously a key figure in formulating the 'democratic' defence of the RPP, it appears Ağaoğlu gradually became disillusioned with what he saw as the self-congratulatory

⁸⁸ *Cumhuriyet's* stream of negative news about Italy in the second half of 1926 is worth mentioning. Considering the shifts in the newspaper's policy, it is likely that this reflects the ongoing suspicion in Ankara towards the intentions of the fascists. For example, see Kazım Nami, 'Mekteblere Düşen Vazife', *Cumhuriyet*, 24 July 1926, p. 2; 'İtalya'da Kanlı Bir Hadise?', *Cumhuriyet*, 15 October 1926, p. 3; Ali Nahid, 'İtalya Oturulmaz Bir Hale Gelmiştir', *Cumhuriyet*, 20 November 1926, p. 2.

⁸⁹ Çelebi, *Türkiye-İtalya Siyasi İlişkileri (1923-1939)*, pp. 147-48.

⁹⁰ Çelebi, *Türkiye-İtalya Siyasi İlişkileri (1923-1939)*, pp. 152-53.

⁹¹ Çelebi, *Türkiye-İtalya Siyasi İlişkileri (1923-1939)*, pp. 174-75.

and non-democratic character of the party.⁹² The literature cites a report penned by Ağaoğlu in 1926 and intended for internal consumption within the party leadership, in which Ağaoğlu severely criticised how the single-party regime was at odds with a truly Republican regime.⁹³ Whether this was the only reason for Ağaoğlu's fall from grace, it is most certainly correct that from 1927 onwards, he became a leading figure of 'liberal Kemalism' outside the RPP and continuously laboured to push the regime towards a more liberal democratic direction.

By 1927, the Kemalist regime had successfully seen off the challenges of 'irtica' [reaction], Kurdish nationalism, and the remnants of the Committee of Union and Progress and the PRP.⁹⁴ As Grassi notes, it was in 1927 that Mussolini recognised the staying power of the new regime in Turkey.⁹⁵ On 2 April 1928, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Tevfik Rüşdü [Aras] met Mussolini in Milan, marking a decisive turning point in Turkish-Italian relations. Tevfik Rüşdü visited Rome in 1929 and 1930 to discuss further issues and bolster the amicable relations between the countries following the ratification of a treaty of friendship in 1928. In the meantime, Italian foreign minister Dino Grandi reciprocated the visit and met Mustafa Kemal. Reporting his meeting with Mustafa Kemal, Grandi stated that the Turkish leader was particularly interested in Mussolini and

⁹² This stance of Ağaoğlu is evident in his utopia, *Serbest İnsanlar Ülkesinde* (*In the Land of the Free People*) from 1930. The theoretical arguments are detailed in his *Devlet ve Fert* (*The State and the Individual*) from 1933.

⁹³ Fahri Sakal, 'Ahmet Ağaoğlu (1869-1939)', *Atatürk Ansiklopedisi* <<https://ataturkansiklopedisi.gov.tr/bilgi/ahmet-agaoglu-1869-1939/>> [accessed 20 October 2022]. Excerpts from this report were published in İzmir's daily *Hizmet* in late 1930, with the note that Ağaoğlu had written the report in 1926. See 'Ağaoğlu Ahmet Beyin 1926'da Verdiği Bir Rapor', *Hizmet*, 8 October 1930, pp. 1-2; 'Ağaoğlu Ahmet Beyin 1926'da Verdiği Bir Rapor', *Hizmet*, 10 October 1930, p. 1.

⁹⁴ The standoff between the Kemalists and the ex-CUP and PRP members ultimately boiled down to an assassination attempt against Mustafa Kemal in İzmir in 1926. Leading members of the CUP, such as Mehmed Cavid, were hanged in the trials that followed, with the CUP no longer able to pose a threat to the Kemalist regime as a result.

⁹⁵ Fabio L. Grassi, *Atatürk* (Salerno Editrice, 2008), p. 281 quoted in Çelebi, *Türkiye-İtalya Siyasi İlişkileri (1923-1939)*, p. 182.

fascism, as well as the structure of the fascist youth and militia organisations.⁹⁶

While the new geopolitical environment gave intellectuals more space and opportunity to think about Italy, the void left by Ağaoğlu in *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* was filled by a social scientist named Zeki Mesud [Alsan]. Born in the Aegean town of Aydın in 1889, Zeki Mesud went on to study Political Science at the *Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques* in Paris, which would later be renamed *Sciences Po*. With his social scientific expertise and command of French, Zeki Mesud first served in the country's elite educational institutions before becoming a deputy for Edirne from the RPP. He combined his political career with journalistic activities, contributing to *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* as well as *Hayat*, the leading intellectual journal of the country in the 1920s, with pieces on international politics, ideologies, and regime matters.⁹⁷

The contributions of Zeki Mesud to these outlets ranged from theoretical considerations to pondering the global significance of fascism and the jails in Sweden. In March 1927, he tackled the seemingly perennial individualism-holism debate in the social sciences to reject the view that the state was something above and beyond individual citizens.⁹⁸ Other contributions that were more reflective of the widely shared concerns of the time included considerations of 'fascist Italian imperialism' in May 1927. He described Italy in chaos before the rise of fascism and then set out to analyse in a social scientific and detached way the reasons that led Italy towards imperialism. Chief among these was the demographic problems. Zeki Mesud then turned to practical concerns: it was important 'for Mediterranean countries to keep an eye on Italian imperialism, which goes hand in hand with Anglo-Saxon imperialism'.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Çelebi, *Türkiye-İtalya Siyasi İlişkileri (1923-1939)*, p. 269.

⁹⁷ İsa Koyuncu, 'Zeki Mesut Alsan', *Türk Edebiyatı İsimler Sözlüğü*, 2019 <<http://teis.yesevi.edu.tr/madde-detay/zeki-mesut-alsan>> [accessed 20 October 2022].

⁹⁸ Zeki Mesud, 'İçtimai Nizam 3: Asri Devlet Telakkisi', *Hayat*, 17 March 1927, pp. 13-14 (p. 14).

⁹⁹ Zeki Mesud, 'Faşist İtalyan Emperyalismi', *Hayat*, 5 May 1927, pp. 13-15 (p. 13).

Zeki Mesud's observations of an Italy in chaos before the rise of fascism were accompanied by the view that 'Mussolini was able to provide new momentum to Italian national life within three or four years'.¹⁰⁰ In fascism, Zeki Mesud identified the opposition to the French Revolution, liberalism, and their conceptualisation of the state as social scientifically interesting novelties.¹⁰¹ He did not wholeheartedly agree with the fascist view. As a methodological individualist, he objected to the fascist idea that the state could have desires or goals independently of and beyond its individual citizens. This view was hardly new, he explained to the reader, reminding them of the comparable German notion of *machtstaat*.¹⁰² But the fascist challenge to the French-inspired orthodoxy also piqued his interest, leading him to call it 'a blow to the French intellectual imperialism'.¹⁰³

With his propensity for theoretical elaboration, Zeki Mesud could not possibly be drawn to the fascism of various local *ras* that prioritised violence at home and imperialism abroad. What caught his eye within fascism was the interpretation of Alfredo Rocco, a legal mastermind who served as the Minister of Justice and Religious Affairs between 1925 and 1932. Rocco's interpretation of fascism heavily revolved around corporatism and legal doctrines on how to overcome class warfare.¹⁰⁴ In August 1927, Zeki Mesud reviewed and translated from the French *La revue des vivants. Organe de la génération de la guerre* [The Journal of the Living: The Review of the War Generation], which introduced the fascist and communist conceptualisations of the state and society by publishing texts by Rocco and a certain 'Tehlenoff'.¹⁰⁵ As Rocco argued and Zeki Mesud translated, the fascist view was antithetical to the 'eighteenth-

¹⁰⁰ Zeki Mesud, 'Faşist İtalyan Emperyalismi', p. 15.

¹⁰¹ Zeki Mesud, 'Devlet Mefhumunda Tekamül', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 19 August 1928, p. 1.

¹⁰² Zeki Mesud, 'Faşizmin Devlet Telakkisi', *Hayat*, 25 August 1927, pp. 6–8 (p. 8).

¹⁰³ Zeki Mesud, 'Devlet Mefhumunda Tekamül'.

¹⁰⁴ For further information on Rocco and his interpretation of fascism, see Emilio Gentile, *Le Origini dell'ideologia Fascista: 1918-1925* (Il Mulino, 2011), pp. 584–93.

¹⁰⁵ A director of the journal was Henri de Jouvenel, who was the French high commissioner in Syria between 1925 and 1926.

century worldviews' deriving from the English and French revolutions, such as liberalism.¹⁰⁶ Against the individualism of these, Rocco posed the collectivism and statism of fascism, explaining that the states could have goals above their individual citizens. Contrary to the doctrine of natural law, individual rights themselves made sense only within the framework of the state.¹⁰⁷ Rocco opposed parliamentarianism and fascism as well: parliaments divided societies while the fascist government was 'the total and complete expression of the people' and thus reflected the national consciousness in its totality, without class-based or other fractures.¹⁰⁸ In conclusion, Zeki Mesud explained the prominence and originality of Rocco while also distancing himself from aspects of his theory, such as the not-at-all-novel idea of *machtstaat*.¹⁰⁹ Zeki Mesud's interest in Rocco's thought continued despite these differences of opinion, as attested by his piece in December 1929 in *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* on how Turkey was to arrange the relationship between the lawyers and the state. Drawing from Rocco, 'one of the greatest scholars of fascism', he observed that lawyers had to be understood and treated as performing a service to the nation and state. They were not to be imagined in an antagonistic relation with or independent from the latter.¹¹⁰

Beyond the thought of Rocco, other features of fascism also attracted Zeki Mesud's interest. One was its anti-communism, while another was the example of Mussolini as a 'great guide' of a nation that ensured national order and peace. Other 'great guides' included Mustafa Kemal, George Washington, Otto von Bismarck, and Count Cavour. Zeki Mesud's interest in both the theories of Rocco and the practice of fascism stemmed from what he called 'the unity of ideals', *mefkure birliği*.

¹⁰⁶ Another prominent fascist theorist and minister, Giuseppe Bottai, took issue with this conception of Rocco. Bottai argued that while fascism surely sought to overcome liberalism, its intention was not merely to conserve an *ancien regime* but to establish an even more thoroughly revolutionary new order. See Gentile, *Le Origini dell'ideologia fascista*, p. 514.

¹⁰⁷ Zeki Mesud, 'Faşizmin Devlet Telakkisi', pp. 6–7.

¹⁰⁸ Zeki Mesud, 'Faşizmin Devlet Telakkisi', p. 7.

¹⁰⁹ Zeki Mesud, 'Faşizmin Devlet Telakkisi', p. 8.

¹¹⁰ Zeki Mesud, 'Milli Hizmetler', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 18 December 1929, p. 1.

Throughout his texts in the era, Zeki Mesud heavily emphasised this concept and found it to be the key to a nation's welfare and survival. However, this unity of visions among individuals who constituted a country was not to be understood as an alternative to democracy. Despite his keen interest in Rocco, Zeki Mesud thought of 'the unity of ideals' as a crucial underpinning of any healthy democracy and clarified that the notion of popular sovereignty was 'non-negotiable'.¹¹¹ That contemporary democracy had problems was obvious to him and was part of the reason he was drawn to the fascist alternative. However, efforts to 'reform the parliaments' were valiant and valuable.¹¹² The democratic Sweden, which proudly closed many of its jails as unnecessary, was an ideal country for Zeki Mesud, where 'the social mechanism functioned perfectly'.¹¹³ 'The principles of democracy and popular sovereignty shall be preserved in their entirety' was the conclusion in August 1928.¹¹⁴ The fascist experiment was valuable but was not to be followed to the totality of its logical conclusion in Turkey, even in the more theoretically elaborate Rocco variant.

With this, Zeki Mesud took a step away from the exemplification of fascism seen in the work of Falih Rifkî and came closer to the line adopted by Peker. He, too, did not trouble himself with the fact that Turkey in the late 1920s did not have competitive party politics, but deferring the ballots was one thing and toppling them and refusing all the underlying principles as remnants of the outdated French revolution another.¹¹⁵ This was perhaps a prudent choice for a deputy since in September 1928, when discussing relations between France and Turkey, Mustafa Kemal himself stated that 'in its efforts of reform and its development towards popular

¹¹¹ Zeki Mesud, 'Mefkure Birliği', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 22 August 1928, p. 1.

¹¹² Zeki Mesud, 'Parlamentarizmin Islahı', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 30 August 1928, p. 1.

¹¹³ Zeki Mesud, 'Mes'ut Bir Memleket', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 19 October 1929, p. 1.

¹¹⁴ Zeki Mesud, 'Parlamentarizmin Islahı', p. 1.

¹¹⁵ In early 1930, before the rise and fall of the FRP, Zeki Mesud more directly concluded that 'any dictatorship has to be necessarily temporary' and democracy was simply irreplaceable in terms of a core belief of any viable political system. See Zeki Mesud, 'İspanya Diktatörünün İstifası', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 5 February 1930, p. 1. Zeki Mesud, 'Sulh Diktatörleri', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 6 February 1930, p. 1.

(*halkçı*) and democratic institutions, the young Turkish Republic' found a reliable buttress in the 'great revolutionary principles of rights and justice' that gave birth to the French democracy; these were principles that every nation tried to adapt to its conditions.¹¹⁶

Zeki Mesud showed an interest in certain more practical aspects of fascism, too, with a view to how these could benefit the Kemalist practice in Turkey. Much as many other Kemalist intellectuals by the late 1920s, he, too, felt that much progress in the education of the masses was needed before the shift to a completely democratic system. In his search for examples of public education, *inkılap memleketleri*, 'the countries that have recently undergone revolutions' such as the USSR and Italy, occupied a key role. As he explained in August 1928, despite their clear ideological differences, these countries all sought to shift the worldviews and praxis of their masses in line with new systems.¹¹⁷ Crucially, the new system Zeki Mesud had in mind was not the totalitarianism that he investigated in his more theoretical texts and, despite his interest, rejected as an alternative to democracy. The search for a 'solid' education policy was what many *inkılap memleketleri* sought, as he repeated in a number of texts in 1929.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ 'İtikatname Taktimi Merasimi', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 28 September 1928, p. 1. This was not the first time Mustafa Kemal manifested his admiration for the French Revolution and its principles. Ali Fuat Cebesoy stated in his memoirs that together, the duo read several forbidden works in the military school as youngsters, including the French Declaration of Human Rights. Ali Fuat Cebesoy, *Sınıf Arkadaşım Atatürk 1: Okul ve Genç Subaylık Hatıraları* (Cumhuriyet, 1997), p. 47. During the Turkish War of Independence, *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* published and distributed the Declaration to its readers. İsmet Giritli, 'Fransız İhtilâli ve Etkileri', *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, 5.15 (1989), pp. 539–49 (p. 541). Yücel Özkaya, 'Hakimiyet-i Milliye', *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 1997, 201–2 <<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/hakimiyet-i-milliye>> [accessed 22 October 2022]. See Atatürk's praise of the Declaration to a French audience in *Atatürk'ün Bütün Eserleri*, ed. by Şule Perinçek (Kaynak, 2006), XIII, pp. 136–37. I owe this reference to Taha Akyol, *Ama Hangi Atatürk* (Doğan Kitap, 2008), pp. 156–57.

¹¹⁷ Zeki Mesud, 'Milli Terbiye', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 18 August 1928, p. 1.

¹¹⁸ Zeki Mesud, 'Maarif Siyaseti', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 15 April 1929, p. 1. Zeki Mesud, 'Terbiye İdeali', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 25 April 1929, p. 1.

In many aspects, Zeki Mesud's thinking was highly original in its being unique, from the interest he showed in the theorists of fascism like Rocco to his lengthy considerations of the right balance between state authority and freedom. In his attempts to draw from the revolutionary know-how of the *inkılap memleketleri*, however, he was joined by many others. Many Kemalists imagined the world to be divided between 'mature countries', the prime example of which was often the United Kingdom, and others who were 'constructing themselves'.¹¹⁹ Some countries in the latter category were those that underwent revolutions in the aftermath of the First World War, and these countries ranged from Italy and the USSR to Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, with the shift away from the Habsburg order to a nation-state deemed revolutionary.¹²⁰ Samuel J. Hirst explores another dimension of the Kemalist beliefs and values surrounding 'revolution' in his recent work on the Turco-Soviet relations, where an initial anti-imperialism and seeking alternatives to the Western international and economic order played an influential role; however, it should be emphasised that the *inkılap memleketleri* way of thinking did not involve portraying or perceiving the USSR as revolutionary against the West.¹²¹ The sole quality of being revolutionary relevant to this way of thinking consisted of having overthrown an old regime and trying to replace with a novel mentality, whatever that might be, with modern propaganda techniques.

¹¹⁹ This view of the British (or, occasionally, Anglo-Saxon) anomaly was shared by some fascists as well. An example is the remarks of Mussolini himself on how democracy could well work for the Anglo-Saxons (or, as he put it in this interview, 'rich nations', but this did not mean much for Italians or Turks, whose conditions were incomparably different to those of the 'rich nations'. See 'Mösyö Mussolini'nin Roma'da Akşam Muhabiri Mahsusuna Beyanatı', *Akşam*, 30 June 1926, pp. 1-2.

¹²⁰ For a report on Yugoslavia in particular, dating from 1937, where the country is specified as the most suitable example for Turkey due to its being home to a largely rural population, see 'Rahmi Apak, Naili Meran ve Carl Diem'in Gençlik Teşkilatları ve Spor Eğitimi Üzerine Hazırladıkları Raporlar', 1937, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1107-43-1.

¹²¹ Samuel J. Hirst, *Against the Liberal Order: The Soviet Union, Turkey, and the Statist Internationalism, 1919-1939* (Oxford University Press, 2024), p. 9.

Museums in fascist Italy, as well as the USSR, were carefully studied by Turkish observers. But fascist institutions such as the youth's *Balilla* or the *Dopolavoro* for the workers occupied an even more prominent role in serving as exemplary institutions of a fellow *inkılap memleketi*. Fascists had a complex youth system consisting of several sub-branches that organised children and teenagers into groups according to their age and gender. An Italian child as young as six years old could step into this system via the *Figli della lupa* (Children of the She-Wolf) established in the 1930s. From here, the child could progress to the *Balilla*, which included male children from eight to fourteen years old, or the counterpart for girls, *Piccole Italiane* (the Small Italians). After fourteen years of age, a *Balilla* joined the *Avanguardisti*. *Balilla* was also the name of the greater youth organisation encompassing these different branches: *Opera Nazionale Balilla* (The National Balilla Organisation). *Gruppi Universitari Fascisti* (Fascist University Groups) was established in 1927 as an organisation for university students to complement this structure. Importantly, joining the branches of *Opera Nazionale Balilla* was made compulsory instead of voluntary, as in the fascist militia, *Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale* (MVSN, Voluntary Militia for National Security). All these branches had uniforms of their own, with specific features of the uniforms indicating the branch to which the uniform's bearer belonged. The functions of such uniforms were multiple. They addressed the fascist desire for symbolism and grandeur. Even the young *balilla* wore black fezes, the symbol of the *Arditi* (the special Italian units in the First World War) and fascist *squadristi*. Uniforms were decisively militaristic in design, and this was intended to inculcate a warrior spirit in the youth. They would add to the charisma and attractiveness of the youth organisations, while creating an *esprit de corps* amongst the members.

This complex structure of Italian youth organisations attracted the attention of Turks from the 1920s onwards.¹²² Writing for *Hayat* in

¹²² On the functioning of fascist youth organisations in the 'post-Ottoman' setting of Rhodes, an island just off the coast of Turkey and part of the Italian Empire since 1912, see Andreas Guidi, *Generations of Empire: Youth from Ottoman to Italian Rule in the Mediterranean* (University of Toronto Press, 2022).

December 1926, the philosopher Mehmed Emin [Erişirgil] called attention to the success the USSR and Italy had in converting their youth to the ideals of their respective revolutions. Mehmed Emin observed a need to rally the youth around the revolution rather than focus on personal concerns or the 'obsolete' worldview of reactionism. The latter was no longer a serious threat, Mehmed Emin thought, whereas the former was a pressing issue. One indication of the Italian success was a recent survey with the global university youth that demonstrated how the Italian youth was among the most dedicated to their country's regime. While Italy and the USSR could serve as an example in this sense, Mehmed Emin was quick to explain that the Turkish revolution, much as 'the Great French Revolution', had to have a philosophy and literature of its own. The fact that Italy and the USSR had diametrically opposed ideologies meant Turks could draw from their practices while retaining their ideology, too.¹²³ Days later, Mehmed Emin discussed the goal of 'proper intellectual education' for the youth in Turkey. Such education could help inculcate an interest in science and boost the scientific capabilities of Turks. It would also 'ensure that democracy is strongly established' in the country. The term 'democracy' had different uses at the time, with some contemporaries using it to mean legal or status equality in public as in the absence of aristocracy. Mehmed Emin was clear that democracy, in the context of his article, meant a political regime based on popular sovereignty.¹²⁴ Clearly, Mehmed Emin felt democracy needed further work to be properly established in Turkey, and he was clear that this was the aim of Kemalism.

As his pieces appeared in *Hayat* within the space of a month, the positive references to fascist institutions and democracy may appear confusing. The key to understanding what Mehmed Emin was doing in these pieces is to notice his discussion of the ideological differences between Italy and the USSR. What Turkey had in common with these countries was the mere fact that they all underwent revolutions and felt the pressing need to reshape their masses. Accordingly, Turkey could learn from

¹²³ Mehmed Emin, 'Manevi İnzibat ve Gençlik', *Hayat*, 9 December 1926, pp. 1–2.

¹²⁴ Mehmed Emin, 'Nasıl Bir Fikir Terbiyesine Muhtacız?', *Hayat*, 12 January 1927, pp. 1–2.

their revolutionary know-how as *inkılap memleketleri* to serve its own different ideology.

About a year and a half later, and also in *Hayat*, Dr Halil Fikret [Kanad], a professional educator with a degree in pedagogy from the University of Leipzig, penned another praise for the Italian youth organisations and the Italian intellectuals' commitment to fascism. Halil Fikret noted that 'propaganda organisations' were crucial in the USSR and Italy, with Italian intellectuals working relentlessly to inculcate 'new ideas' in the masses. Turkish intellectuals had failed in this task until then. 'If we could substitute the ideal of driving the enemy into the sea with the ideal of the social revolution, whatever the cost', Turkey could have undertaken an effort worth centuries within the space of five years. The Turkish intellectuals' failure led to a range of regrettable scenes across Ankara and elsewhere. These scenes were taken from daily life, all intended to illustrate how the Westernising and civilising effects of the revolution were yet to captivate the masses. Halil Fikret was infuriated by those who could not keep their mouths shut in the cinema, who smoked, continuously chewed things, shouted, and whistled there. A poor denizen of Ankara could go to the riverside for a breath of fresh air, only to be greeted by uneducated citizens doing their laundry or even children shamelessly urinating into the river. Kindness was hard to stumble upon, including in the more educated strata of society, whose behaviour towards the uneducated could be nothing short of scandalous on the street. These were because the youth were not organised, and the intellectuals were not committed enough to the cause of Kemalism, the doctor felt.¹²⁵ Drawing from the fascist commitment to the cause of revolution would not make Turkey less democratic but could keep the cinemas quiet.

Prominent examples among *inkılap memleketleri* included anti-democratic regimes as in Italy and the USSR, and sometimes, the way of thinking seen in Falih Rifki's work revolving around drawing anti-democratic lessons from fascism co-existed with the *inkılap memleketleri* way of

¹²⁵ Doktor Halil Fikret, 'Münevverler ve İctimai İnkılabımız II', *Hayat*, 16 August 1928, pp. 1–2.

thinking. Reviewing a Turkish committee's visit to the USSR to study their methods of propaganda and education in September 1926, for example, Falih Rıfkı called attention to the use of fine arts in spreading new ideas.¹²⁶ In February 1927, he reminded the readers of *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* that despite their ideological differences, they were in the same position of having to disseminate their novel ideologies.¹²⁷ Cinema, in particular, attracted the attention of Falih Rıfkı among the Soviet propaganda techniques.¹²⁸

If Falih Rıfkı was able to combine an interest in *inkılap memleketleri* with wider ideological lessons to be drawn from Italy and the USSR, several other cases illustrate why we must treat the *inkılap memleketleri* way of thinking as independent from drawing anti-democratic lessons. A highly popular example of an *inkılap memleketi* institution was the Czechoslovakian and Yugoslav *Sokol*, which was a self-proclaimed democratic, pan-Slavist organisation. *Sokol* was founded by two Czech intellectuals, Miroslav Trys and Jindrich Fügner, in mid-nineteenth century Austria-Hungary. *Sokol* aimed to train the youth in accordance with the national culture and morality, to bestow physical as well as intellectual excellence upon them. With the emergence of Czechoslovakia as a new nation-state in the aftermath of the First World War, the organisation acquired particular importance in the strengthening of national identity across the country. *Sokol* members wore uniforms that displayed the Slavic and revolutionary roots of the organisation, with a falcon (*sokol* in many Slavic languages) as the symbol.¹²⁹

We learn from a letter of the Turkish ambassador in Belgrade, Ali Haydar [Aktay], to Rana Bey [Ali Rana Tarhan], a deputy for Istanbul, that

¹²⁶ Falih Rıfkı, 'Maarifte Yeni Teşebbüsler', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 10 September 1926, p. 1. On the wider significance of the USSR to Falih Rıfkı's thought, with particular attention to its diplomatic and economic connotations, see Hirst, *Against the Liberal Order*, p. 49, pp. 182-184.

¹²⁷ Falih Rıfkı, 'Kıymetli Bir Vaad', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 14 February 1927, p. 1.

¹²⁸ Falih Rıfkı, 'Propagandaya Karşı', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 14 March 1927, p. 1.

¹²⁹ Claire E. Nolte, *The Sokol in the Czech Lands to 1914: Training for the Nation* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 42, pp. 48-49.

Vildan Aşir [Savaşır] was tasked with studying the *Sokol* organisation sometime before 1929.¹³⁰ The ambassador wrote that Vildan Aşir and Nizamettin [Kırşan] Bey from the Gazi Institute of Education in Ankara had been sent by 'the late Necati Bey' [the Minister of Education, who died in January 1929] to Czechoslovakia in the 1920s to gather information about *Sokol*.¹³¹ An influential figure in the history of sports in Turkey, Vildan Aşir wrote extensively on *Sokol*. Embassies in both Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia sent a large number of reports and informative pieces on the goals, structure and public displays of the organisation. The documents they sent (or had the *Sokol* members send to them) were quite voluminous: in one case, they comprised over sixty pages of information, illustrations, exemplary membership forms and other documents.¹³² *Sokol*'s success in rendering Czechoslovakia (and, to some extent, Yugoslavia) a nation-state also found echoes in the official *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*. At least three different intellectuals in 1930 alone referred to *Sokol* as a successful youth organisation from which Turks could learn.¹³³ As early as April 1927, Mehmed Emin [Erişirgil] of *Hayat*, whose praises for the fascist youth organisations we saw above, referred to the Czechoslovakian *Sokol* as a successful example. He felt that the Turkish Hearths (*Türk Ocakları*) could resemble *Sokol* with its future efforts to train Turkish youth, 'both physically and intellectually'.¹³⁴

It appears that Mehmed Emin praised both the *Balilla* and the *Sokol* for their successes in educating the youth. Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia (before and after the abolishment of the country's parliament in 1929),

¹³⁰ Though the ambassador did not clarify when the duo were sent to Czechoslovakia or tasked with this, the reference to the duty coming from Necati Bey and Necati Bey's death in January 1929 means this trip must have been planned at the latest in 1928.

¹³¹ 'A. Haydar, Ambassador in Belgrade to Râna Bey, Deputy for Istanbul', 28 May 1931, p. 46, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1107-41-1.

¹³² 'Yugoslavya ve Çekoslovakya'daki Sokol Teşkilatı Hk.', 1934, pp. 140-203, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1107-41-1.

¹³³ F. N., 'Gürbüz Nesil', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 25 May 1930, p. 1; Zeki Mesud, 'Gençlik Teşkilatı', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 15 July 1930, p. 1; Mahmud, 'Başka Memleketlerde...', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 19 December 1930, p. 1.

¹³⁴ Mehmed Emin, 'Türk Ocakları', *Hayat*, 14 April 1927, p. 1.

the USSR, and Italy were all examples of *inkılap memleketleri*. Despite their widely different ideologies, they were united in their attempts to educate their masses and to inculcate new ideologies and lifestyles. The originality of Falih Rifkî consisted in his combining such relatively common observations on how to be a good *inkılap memleketi* with ideological lessons against democracy derived from the success of Italy and the USSR. In referring to Italy as an *inkılap memleketi*, Mehmed Emin or Dr Halil Fikret could seamlessly combine such references with their belief in the future of Turkish democracy. Paradoxical as it may sound, they felt organisations such as *Balilla* or the lessons of the Soviet cinema could be used to help inculcate a more democratic mentality in the Turkish masses. These commentators compartmentalised fascism, separated its anti-democratic principles from its propaganda techniques, and advocated for a careful study of the latter with a view to combining it with what they saw as the Kemalists' goal of democracy. It will be important to remember this potential difference between the *inkılap memleketleri* way of thinking with its compartmentalised perception of fascist practice and the more anti-democratic views of fascist ideology. As we will see in the next chapter, having their roots in the 1920s, both ways of thinking gained strength in the 1930s, though only partially coinciding within the thought processes of the same individuals.

§ 2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has focused mainly on perceptions of fascism in Turkey in the 1920s. In the first section, we have seen the initial perceptions of fascism and Italy before the March on Rome, by Turkish observers. Many Turks expected fascism to fail, an expectation that reached its zenith in the Matteotti crisis. The early years were characterised by mutual suspicion. This was despite the fact that some individuals, such as Falih Rifkî or Feridun Fikri, could see fascism as a useful example for dealing with the opposition as early as 1923. Others, such as Ahmed Ağaoğlu, instead saw fascism as a threat to progress and democracy. As he wrote in response to Pedrazzi's remarks on the 'closed doors' of Anatolia, the ones

that were reverting to barbarism were none other than the fascist Italians, not the Turks who were trying to Westernise. In these, we have seen the crucial role ideas of the West and Europe played. While Turkey did not possess any democratic institutions but sought to build them through Kemalism, Italy swapped democracy for 'exporting political assassinations' and thus fell into barbarism, according to Ağaoğlu.

The chapter then considered perceptions of fascism during and in the immediate aftermath of the PRP crisis in Turkey in late 1924 and early 1925. Using this crisis as the key to contextualisation, I have tried to decipher various Turkish factions vis-à-vis their perceptions of fascism and, relatedly, democracy and liberalism. The thesis has conceptualised such views as constituting a spectrum, the most vehemently anti-fascist end of which was the anti-RPP opposition. Journalists such as Velid Ebüzziya and Ahmed Emin continuously drew from the Italian case to invite the Kemalist leadership to caution and respect democracy. These journalists did not expect Mussolini and the fascist hardliners to survive the Matteotti crisis. They utilised the crisis to drive home the point that dictatorship, 'an unnatural state of affairs', was not a viable option in the modern world. Other individuals were suspicious of fascism and supportive of the RPP, convinced that Turkey and its people were too immature to sustain a wholly democratic regime. A crucial figure was Ağaoğlu, who was on the frontline of the RPP's defence against the PRP. Another strategy was that of Recep Bey, characterised by silence on fascism combined with vocal opposition to immanentising liberal democracy. Falih Rıfkı occasionally saw fascism as a usefully authoritarian ideology, though also apparently remaining in two minds over the ultimate desirability of democracy, if not merely feigning adherence to the latter. With this, the chapter has posited the existence of several factions within Kemalism rather than reifying it and the Kemalist perceptions of fascism. This was possible by linking views of Kemalism and the West with views of democracy and fascism, with perceptions of fascism serving as leverage to gain insight into contemporary ways of thinking.

The final section of this chapter covered perceptions of fascism from the end of the PRP crisis to the 1930s. The two dominant themes of the

section have been the rise of Zeki Mesud as a chief commentator on the *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* and the increasingly widespread perception of Italy as an *inkılap memleketi*. We have seen that Zeki Mesud's perception and coverage of fascism were highly original, with him attempting to balance his commitments as a social scientist and a Kemalist. He was as unique in his knowledge of European figures and intellectuals otherwise obscure in Turkey as in being intrigued by the doctrinal aspects of fascism but ultimately proving unwilling to relinquish democratic aspirations.

Around the same time, with an increased emphasis on the necessity of education and discipline in the country after the troubled year of 1925, we have seen that many Kemalists turned abroad in search of examples. Though Italy and the USSR were primary countries of interest, they were closely followed by the staunchly democratic Czechoslovakia, among many other countries and organisations. Perceptions of fascism are almost unanimously interpreted as necessarily perceptions of fascism's anti-democratic ideology in the literature. The myriad positive references to democracy as an ideal, sometimes found in the very same essay where the author praised the fascist youth organisations, is typically missing from the literature or explained away as a 'limited rhetoric'.¹³⁵ The cases of Mehmed Emin, who identified fascist youth organisations (as well as the democratic *Sokol*) as a tool to democratise and educate young Turks in a scientific mindset, or Dr Halil Fikret, in whose texts fascist youth organisations are praised as a potential vehicle of civilising the masses represent a clear anomaly to this approach. These individuals compartmentalised fascism. They divided the fascist regime into its more and less ideological parts and hoped to strip its organisational and

¹³⁵ The term 'limited rhetoric' comes from the work of Ünver. See Cennet Ünver, 'Images and Perceptions of Fascism Among the Mainstream Kemalist Elite in Turkey, 1931-1943' (unpublished master's thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2001), p. 111. The tendency to ignore the positive references to democracy in Kemalist texts of the interwar era is most prominent in the post-Kemalist literature discussed in the Introduction. However, note that the 'tutelage theory', too, largely ignores these texts and instead focuses on the memoirs or the like to ascertain the democratic intentions of Mustafa Kemal and the leadership cadre.

popular success from its anti-democratic ideology. It was one thing to import revolutionary know-how on teaching the masses and another thing to derive ideological lessons on what kind of a regime Turkey was to have. Though the *inkılap memleketleri* way of thinking could co-exist with designs for a more radical Kemalism within a single mind, it was nonetheless independent of the latter. Most individuals who thought along this line of thinking tended not to express strong positive or negative opinions about fascism's stance against democracy.

The literature has thus far focused largely on the 1930s in examining perceptions of and relations between fascism and Kemalism.¹³⁶ This may create the impression that in the 1920s, there was nothing interesting to say or analyse about perceptions of fascism in Turkey. The findings and discussions contained in this chapter are intended to correct such a notion. It appears that the roots of both authoritarian and liberal variants of Kemalism, the associated ways of perceiving fascism, and the *inkılap memleketleri* way of thinking all date back to the 1920s. Using such perceptions as leverage, we have been able to posit the existence of several different factions within Kemalism. Following mental connections between thoughts on fascism and Kemalism, or fascism and the West, we have posited the existence of multiple (and, in many cases, mutually exclusive) interpretations of Kemalism already in the 1920s. The next

¹³⁶ To mention only a few examples, consider the thesis of Ünver where the author considers perceptions of fascism by the Kemalists only from the 1930s. Keyder noted that Kemalists drew especially from the example of Italy in subsuming the state under the party following the perceived successes of totalitarianism in the 1930s. See Çağlar Keyder, *Türkiye'de Devlet ve Sınıflar* (İletişim: 2014 [1987]), pp. 127–28. Zürcher detected a shift to more fascist-like policies and propaganda in Turkey in the 1930s without discussing factions or individuals that had already expressed pro-fascist views in the 1920s or anti-fascist views in the 1930s. See Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building* (I.B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 255–56. Ahmad considered Recep Peker to be the chief man responsible for the drawing from fascism in the 1930s. Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (Routledge, 1993), pp. 67–68. A similar interpretation, with the same focus on the 1930s, is found in the work of Andrew Mango, despite his mentioning of Yunus Nadi's pro-fascist remarks in the early 1920s. See Andrew Mango, *Atatürk*, trans. by Füsün Doruker (Sabah, 1999), p. 357, pp. 458–59.

chapter will focus on directly testing the theories that are dominant in the literature on perceptions of fascism in Turkey in the 1930s and provide an alternative based in large part on the continuity of ways of thinking and, indeed, actors from the 1920s to the 1930s.



Learning from the West: Turkish Perceptions of Fascism in the 1930s

As turbulent as the interwar era was, the late 1920s could be deemed relatively more peaceful compared to what came before and after. With the organised opposition pacified, the Turkish government lifted the *Takrir-i Sükun* measures in 1929, and for a while, it appeared the reforms took hold just as planned. Fascism in Italy overcame much adversity to solidify its position, culminating in the historic 1929 settlement with the Catholic Church that massively boosted its popularity in the country. It soon appeared that all this was the silence before the storm. The global economic crisis of 1929 unleashed new waves of uncertainty, Turkey found itself in the 1930-31 political and ideological crisis with the rise and fall of a new party of opposition, and Italy saw the rise of an increasing number of young individuals discontented with what they deemed the conservatism of older fascists. Questions such as what to do with democracy and how to interpret fascism became more pressing than ever in the 1930s. This chapter analyses perceptions of fascism in Turkey in the 1930s, contextualising such perceptions within these global and local contexts. Recognising the crucial importance of the 1930s, the chapter will seek to revise certain theories in the literature vis-a-vis Kemalist perceptions of fascism. One such revision will involve the demonstration of considerable continuity from the 1920s to the 1930s.

To illustrate this point, the following section will begin by considering the widely publicised trial of Şevket Süreyya [Aydemir] in early 1928. A former communist confessing his ‘sins’, Şevket Süreyya’s confessions and novel interpretations led him to lead the charge for a more radical Kemalism. The section will investigate how he and the *Kadro* circle, which he led, interpreted Kemalism and fascism. Particular attention will be paid to how they both used fascism as an example to showcase the ‘obsolescence’ of liberal democracy while yearning for a still different regime for Turkey. The section will then consider an ally of the *Kadro* in the 1930s: Falih Rıfkı [Atay]. Falih Rıfkı’s leading role in positive portrayals of fascism will be illustrated, as will the role fascism played in his interpretations of Kemalism and Turkey in the 1930s. Importantly, this section will also provide information about the context of the 1930-31 crisis in Turkey, which will serve as a background for the chapter.

Section Two will consider another strategy to oppose the immanentisation of liberal democracy in Turkey. This strategy, which we have called quietism in Chapter Two, was most prominently exemplified by Recep [Peker] and his allies around the *Ülkü* journal, such as Nusret Kemal [Köymen], Mehmet Saffet [Engin], and Necip Ali [Küçük]. The section will investigate the role fascism played in their thoughts and, contrary to a sizeable literature, it will argue that despite their deferral of the ballots, the quietists tended to have a vaguely positive opinion of democracy and certain objections to fascism. The reasons for the quietists’ rise to prominence in the RPP in the 1930s will be analysed, too.

Section Three will analyse a more vocal opposition to fascism and the deferral of ballots found in the works of Ahmet Ağaoğlu and others in Istanbul or, indeed, the self-titled ‘nationalist Turkish liberals’ such as Zeynel Besim in Izmir. The shift away from Ankara will illustrate how worries of an increasingly authoritarian Kemalism often went hand in hand with less than flattering views of fascism.

In the penultimate section, the discussion will focus on perceptions of fascism towards the late 1930s. Two key themes to consider will be the remaining popularity of Italy as an *inkılâp memleketi* well into a period of time when the stately relations between Turkey and Italy deteriorated

– especially following the Balkan Pact of 1934 and the increasing assertiveness in Italian foreign policy in the second half of the decade – as well as the increasing shadowing of fascism by Nazism. Important developments such as the Italian invasion of Abyssinia and participation in the Spanish Civil War will ground the discussion and serve as key contextual cues as to what, for example, led a Kemalist poet like Behçet Kemal Çağlar to dedicate a poem to the Abyssinian resistance.

§ 3.1 Grabbing ‘the New West’ by the Hand: *Kadro*, Falih Rıfkı, and Fascism in the Eyes of Radical Kemalists

On 18 January 1928, the daily newspaper *Milliyet* provided a detailed report of the trial of individuals associated with the clandestine Communist Party of Turkey [*Türkiye Komünist Partisi*]. Among those on trial was a young man named Şevket Süreyya [Aydemir], whose pedigree until 1918 was virtually undistinguishable from a typical Kemalist. Born in 1897 in an Edirne rife with ethnic and religious conflict, Şevket Süreyya closely witnessed the disaster of the Balkan Wars (1912-13), during which he lost his older brother who served in the army and had to leave his hometown that came under Bulgarian invasion briefly.¹ These experiences contributed to his association with the Committee of Union and Progress and Turkish nationalism, with Şevket Süreyya, the pan-Turkist, ending up in Azerbaijan with the Ottoman Army in 1918 to educate Azeri children.

The advent of the Bolshevik power changed as much for Azerbaijan as for Şevket Süreyya. Disenchanted by the Ottoman defeat in 1918, he was captivated by the adversity towards the West and perceived frankness towards the Turks demonstrated by the Bolsheviks. This led him to the Communist University for the Toilers of the East (KUTV) in Moscow and

¹ Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan Adam* (Remzi Kitabevi, ?), pp. 59–60. On the life of Aydemir, see İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *Bir Cumhuriyet Öyküsü: Kadrocuları ve Kadro’yu Anlamak* (Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2003), pp. 42–70; Halil İbrahim Göktürk, *Bilinmeyen Yönleriyle Şevket Süreyya Aydemir* (Arı Matbaası, 1977); Cennet Ünver, ‘Şevket Süreyya Aydemir’, in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce 2: Kemalizm* (İletişim, 2009), pp. 466–73.

membership in the Communist Party of Turkey. The KUTV during the interwar era counted among its alumni prominent names such as the Turkish poet Nazım Hikmet [Ran], the future president of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, the future leader of the Greek Communist Party, Nicos Zachariadis, and a mastermind of future Communist China, Deng Xiaoping.² Along with these names, Şevket Süreyya perfected his understanding of historical materialism and cemented his allegiance to Marxism. As he put it in his memoirs, upon his return to Turkey as a Marxist, he was an ‘automaton’ explaining everything in class terms.³ However, disenchantment with prospects of communism in Turkey, trouble within the party and with the Comintern, and facing the ‘Anatolian reality’ once again transformed him. As others sought to flee the police, he was ready to surrender and rethink his worldview.

Imprisonment in Afyon, central Anatolia, led Şevket Süreyya to impingement by ‘the reality of Anatolia’.⁴ He was now desperate to find a solution specifically tailored to Turkey, and it was the solution proposal that turned his trial into a conference on Kemalism. Defiantly declaring himself as a Marxist still, Şevket Süreyya explained one shortcoming of Marxism was what he some years later called ‘*Europacentrisme*’.⁵ Shedding light on history more than any other theorist, Karl Marx nevertheless failed to see how his predictions and proposals applied to the class-based societies of the West. For the latter, Marxism remained as valid as before, but Turkey did not have such a clear-cut class structure. In such countries, he now declared, ‘for the captive and semi-captive nations of the East, the national liberation movement [*milli kurtuluş hareketi*] of Turkey will serve as an example.’⁶ The exposition of his new outlook led

² Rossen Djagalov, *From Internationalism to Postcolonialism: Literature and Cinema between the Second and the Third Worlds* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2020), pp. 43–46.

³ Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan Adam*, p. 435.

⁴ Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan Adam*, pp. 435–36.

⁵ Şevket Süreyya, “‘Europacentrisme’ in Tasfiyesi”, *Kadro*, July 1932, pp. 5–10 (p. 5).

⁶ ‘Dünkü Muhakemenin Bütün Safahatını Aynen Neşrediyoruz’, *Milliyet*, 18 January 1928, pp. 1–4 (p. 4).

to Şevket Süreyya's rehabilitation within Kemalism, which was amply aided by another ex-member of the Communist Party of Turkey and visitor to the KUTV: Ahmed Cevat [Emre]. Ahmed Cevat recognised Şevket Süreyya's expertise in economic matters, compared to a typical Kemalist, and asked him to write detailed pieces on the Turkish economy and development in the *Muhit* journal.⁷

Among occasional contributors to the *Muhit* were İsmail Hüsrev [Tökin] and Yakup Kadri [Karaosmanoğlu]. *Muhit* served as a platform for the future members of the *Kadro* circle to get to know each other. With their essays on specialised subjects such as precious metals and monetary policies, as well as their shared affinity with historical materialism, Şevket Süreyya, İsmail Hüsrev, Dr Vedat Nedim [Tör], and Burhan Asaf [Belge] quickly formed a faction within the RPP. As Burhan Asaf's sister, Ayşe Leman, was married to Yakup Kadri, who knew Atatürk and other leading Kemalists like Falih Rıfkı personally, the new circle was soon able to write for the *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*. Şevket Süreyya gave conferences in Ankara in 1929, which caught the attention of the elite literati of the country.⁸ Meanwhile, Turkey began to feel the shockwaves of the Great Depression, which added further weight to informed minds on economics. The move to what PM İsmet Pasha called 'moderate etatism' of the RPP was greatly appreciated by the future *Kadroists*. While the RPP recognised the primacy of individual entrepreneurship, the state actively intervened in the economy and established a variety of economic enterprises, from railroads to factories producing fabrics, sugar, or steel, all intended to boost the country's economy in the face of the Great Depression.⁹

Seasoned Kemalists like Ahmed Ağaoğlu and Fethi Bey were displeased by the turning away from liberalism. In July 1930, Mustafa Kemal met Fethi Bey, the ex-PM now serving as Ambassador of Turkey in France. The discussions between the two revolved around economy and politics. Mustafa Kemal gave his blessing to, if not actively invited, Fethi Bey to

⁷ Şevket Süreyya, 'Demir Yollarımız', *Muhit*, March 1929, pp. 338–43.

⁸ Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan Adam*, p. 467.

⁹ 'Millî Devlet İçin Şimendifer İhtiyacı', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 31 August 1930, pp. 1–4 (p. 3).

establish a new party: the Free Republican Party (*Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*, the FRP), which emerged in August 1930. Tellingly, the party was led by Fethi Bey, known to be a liberal figure, and Ahmed Ağaoğlu was to have a key role, too. In an open letter, Mustafa Kemal threw his support behind the new system by declaring that multiparty democracy was a regime of which he had been 'an admirer ever since my childhood'.¹⁰ The FRP shared much of its foreign and domestic policy with the RPP, though not its more liberal economics and insistence on competitive party politics. Mustafa Kemal declared he would be the impartial arbitrator between the two parties.

Whatever the reason behind the leadership's green light to the FRP, figures within the RPP were perplexed by the emergence of this new rival. The secretary general of the RPP, Saffet Bey [Arıkan], engaged in a hectic traffic of correspondence with the local branches of the RPP to ascertain the situation on the ground in 1930. In a letter, Saffet Bey informed the branches of the emergence of the FRP and reassured them of the good intentions of Fethi Bey, who had the unconditional support of the leadership.¹¹ Soon enough, Saffet Bey felt obliged to counter dangerous rumours circulating the country, such as the notion that the FRP would restore the *fez*, which had been banned in public since 1925. Saffet Bey invited the local branches to illuminate the masses on the falsity of such rumours. He vowed that those spreading such falsities 'cannot save themselves from the claws of law'.¹² Another worry was that saboteurs such as reactionaries and communists could infiltrate the FRP despite its leaders' good intentions. In late 1930, Saffet Bey wrote to the RPP inspector Ali Nazmi Bey to warn against such a possibility.¹³ Inspectors were also

¹⁰ 'Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası'nın Teşkilatı İle İlgili CHP Genel Sekreterliği'ne Sunulan Raporlar', 1930, p. 33, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 490-1-0-0, 435-1804-2.

¹¹ 'Saffet Bey, the Secretary General of the RPP, to Party Inspector Esat Bey', 1930, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 490-1-0-0, 1-4-5.

¹² 'The RPP General Secretariat to Inspector Sami Bey', 1930, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 490-1-0-0, 1-4-14.

¹³ 'Saffet Bey, the Secretary General of the RPP, to Party Inspector Ali Nazmi Bey', 1930, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 490-1-0-0, 1-4-12.

invited to closely monitor who exactly joined the FRP since the party 'declared its allegiance to secularism' but lacked the means to check infiltration effectively.¹⁴

Winds of change behind their sails, the FRP's leadership set out on a tour of the Aegean region before the coming municipal elections. Rumours of trouble emerged already in Balıkesir, where, reportedly, Fethi Bey and his entourage were greeted by the 'green flags of Sharia'. The next stop was Izmir, where Fethi Bey's plans for a meeting turned into mayhem. Local officials sought to thwart the meeting, participants clashed with the police, and security forces, in panic, opened fire on the crowd. Some in the RPP believed that the protestors even tore into pieces the portraits of Ismet Pasha and Mustafa Kemal. The protestors were perhaps motivated mainly by the economic crisis, but many in the RPP thought the incidents showed the extent of reactionary infiltration within the FRP.¹⁵ Violence in Izmir led Mustafa Kemal to throw his support behind the RPP. Back in Ankara, Fethi Bey confronted the parliament and the accusations of abetting reactionaries. In November 1930, Mustafa Kemal invited him to dissolve the party. Upon the shutting down of the FRP, Fethi Bey went to London as the new ambassador.

A month later, the RPP leadership was struck by another, even more bloody incident from Izmir. In December 1930, individuals rallying around a self-proclaimed Mahdi, Derviş Mehmed, took to the streets, chanting religious slogans. Reportedly, Derviş Mehmed challenged the

¹⁴ 'The RPP General Secretariat to Party Inspectors', 1930, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 490-1-0-0, 1-4-11. In a similar vein, on 14 September 1930, Şükrü Kaya, the Minister of Internal Affairs, sent out a note to governors across Turkey concerning the FRP. Much as Saffet Bey, he too pointed out that the FRP was a legally founded party that was dedicated to the causes of secularism and republicanism. It was natural for the new party to seek new members to register. But the new party's officials themselves 'agree that there is a risk of infiltration from reactionaries'. In such cases, it was important to 'enlighten' the FRP. See 'Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası'nın Teşkilatı ile İlgili CHP Genel Sekreterliği'ne Sunulan Raporlar', *BCA*, p. 5.

¹⁵ For a brief overview of the incident and its role in the perceptions of the crisis by the RPP leadership, see Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (Routledge, 1993), pp. 59–61.

authority of the government and claimed he was immune to the bullets of the government's forces. The group was met by a young and unarmed reserve officer, Mustafa Fehmi Kubilay, who demanded that they disband. Refusing, they attacked Kubilay, killed him, and reportedly placed his severed head on a spike and rallied around the town. Faced with a larger armed group of soldiers, a clash ensued. Derviş Mehmed was killed, and several of his supporters were captured.¹⁶ The 'Menemen incident' deeply disturbed the literati and leadership, particularly the rumours that the town's citizens passively watched the events unfold. As the incident occurred around one month after the dissolution of the FRP, sections of the pro-RPP press quickly blamed the former for the chaos, while outlets were united in condemnation of the perpetrators. The 'Menemen incident' and its aftermath ensured that even after the disappearance of the FRP, debates on the political regime of Turkey continued to dominate the scene in what has been dubbed the 1930-31 crisis in this thesis.

The future *Kadroists* and their allies were decisively more active in the aftermath of the FRP's abolishment, but they most certainly were not 'shocked' by the 1930-31 crisis. If anything, they and the likes of Falih Rıfkı predicted the incidents. The crisis bolstered the popularity of the more radical variants of Kemalism within the RPP, as many now thought the radicals' forecasts were born out by facts. İsmail Hakkı [Ocakoğlu] from İzmir's *Yeni Asır* daily observed that in December 1930, just days after the Menemen incident, certain individuals made the most of the 1930-31 crisis.¹⁷ *Kadroists* blamed the economic crisis on global capitalism, and both they and other radicals like Falih Rıfkı pointed their fingers at liberal democracy for the chaos in Turkey in 1930. With the winds of anti-liberalism fueling their rhetoric, the radicals set out to conquer the RPP from late 1930 onwards.

Keen critics in the opposition worryingly observed the emergence of this new and more radical faction within the RPP. *Yeni Asır* called upon 'moderates' within the RPP to check the dangerous radicals within the

¹⁶ Nasrullah Uzman, 'Menemen Olayı', *Atatürk Ansiklopedisi* <<https://ataturkansiklopedisi.gov.tr/bilgi/menemen-olayi-2/>> [accessed 20 January 2023].

¹⁷ İsmail Hakkı, 'Ne İstediklerini Biliyoruz', *Yeni Asır*, 28 December 1930, p. 1.

party in December 1930.¹⁸ In July 1931, *Yeni Asır*'s author, who went by the pen name 'A. A.' observed that Turkey was 'at a crossroads'. Either the radicals that even dared to challenge Mustafa Kemal's more democratic directives would lose, or they would succeed in weaponising the 1930-31 crisis, plunging the country into anti-democratic rule. Luckily, 'two currents' existed within the party, and a more democratic version of Kemalism was defended by Mustafa Kemal himself, who desired to place independent deputies in the parliament to criticise and balance the RPP.¹⁹

The controversy surrounding 'the new current' truly kicked off when Istanbul's daily *Son Posta* published an investigation in August and September 1931, which met refusal by individuals identified as partaking in this new movement. Peyami Safa identified two currents within the RPP: one, led by former Minister of Justice Mahmut Esat [Bozkurt], thought that Turkey could have a democratic regime with a single political party. Opposed to this were those advocating for 'radical etatism', who felt that democracy was on its deathbed since 1918. Peyami Safa identified certain authors of *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* as spearheading the latter current. He then noted the irony of opposing democracy and popular sovereignty in a newspaper literally titled 'popular sovereignty', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*. He was not so much opposed to the new current as its self-presentation as the definitive version of Kemalism: the statutes, programmes, the very name, and the speeches of the party leaders clearly demonstrated the pro-democracy stance of the RPP. The new current was turning the RPP into a 'mosaic' of ideological differences.²⁰ Safa also countered the argument of democracy's imminent death by pointing out that the number of republics exponentially rose after 1918; the reader was invited to compare this to how 'the Italian and Russian etatism are currently shaking to their foundations'.²¹ In late August and September 1931, *Son Posta* continued its coverage of 'the new current', directly quoting from the works of

¹⁸ İsmail Hakkı, 'Cumhuriyet İstiyoruz', *Yeni Asır*, 4 December 1930, p. 1.

¹⁹ A. A., 'Dönüm Noktası: Halk Fırkası Hakiki Çehresini Gösterecek', *Yeni Asır*, 3 July 1931, p. 1.

²⁰ P. S., 'İzmir ve Ankara Münakaşaları', *Son Posta*, 20 August 1931, p. 3.

²¹ P. S., 'Devletçilik ve Demokrasi', *Son Posta*, 27 August 1931, p. 3.

Şevket Süreyya and Falih Rıfkı.²² The new current's main tenets were found to be as follows: they drew from but claimed to improve on Marx²³, saw Kemalism as mainly an anti-imperialist, anti-Western 'national liberation movement'²⁴, and opposed the principles of the French Revolution and democracy as obsolete.²⁵

Those who were allegedly part of the 'new current' refused the notion that theirs was a novel interpretation that divided the RPP. Falih Rıfkı explained that heterodoxy was to be sought among 'inventors' of liberal variants of Kemalism. *Son Posta* had identified the following as credos of the radicals: 'Liberalism is an obsolete idea; liberalism will render Turkey a colony; cultural reforms such as the headdress reform did not constitute the essence of the revolution; Turkey used to be a semi-colony before WW1; the real goal of the revolution was economic independence and struggling against the imperialists; the "moderate etatism" should simply become etatism, pure and simple'. Falih Rıfkı countered that far from being inventions, these principles were found in the RPP's official documents. He then argued that the radicals were 'neither liberals nor socialists or fascists'. Instead of imitating others, they wished to 'establish a regime unique to Turkey'. What was at odds with the RPP's programme was not Falih Rıfkı's or Şevket Süreyya's views but the desire to 'transform Turkey into France', found amongst 'Tanzimat-like' FRP circles, fond of 'imitation'.²⁶

In early 1932, *Kadro*, the journal, began publications. Among the founders of the *Kadro*, intended to raise up a wakeful 'cadre' as the 'vanguard' forces of the revolution, there were Yakup Kadri, Şevket Süreyya, Vedat Nedim, İsmail Hüsrev, and Burhan Asaf.²⁷ One important difference

²² 'Yeni Cereyan Taraftarları Ne İstiyorlar?', *Son Posta*, 29 August 1931, p. 3.

²³ 'Yeni Cereyan Taraftarları Komünist Değildirler', *Son Posta*, 1 September 1931, p. 3.

²⁴ 'Yeni Cereyan Taraftarları Ne Düşünüyorlar?', *Son Posta*, 2 September 1931, p. 3.

²⁵ 'Demokrasiyi Niçin Beğenmiyorlar?', *Son Posta*, 3 September 1931, p. 3.

²⁶ Falih Rıfkı, 'Yeni Bir Cereyan Varmış', *Milliyet*, 11 September 1931, p. 1; Falih Rıfkı, 'Yeni Bir Cereyan Varmış?', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 12 September 1931, p. 1.

²⁷ On vanguard forces, see Şevket Süreyya, *İnkılap ve Kadro* (Muallim Ahmet Halit Kütüphanesi, 1932), p. 150. In his memoirs, Şevket Süreyya cites Mehmet Şevki Yazman

that separated *Kadroists* from most other Kemalists was their reluctance to prioritise cultural reform. While appreciating legal and cultural reforms, as historical materialists, the *Kadroists* interpreted these as manifestations of deeper economic and structural phenomena. Hence, they pushed for a more thorough etatism in Turkey: only if the state organised the economy more centrally would the revolution truly succeed in its goals.²⁸ This meant that they interpreted political systems as at least dependent on a socioeconomic base. Accordingly, the *Kadroists* interpreted every political alternative as reflective of a given era. Parliamentarianism and liberal democracy sprung from the class-based West in the 18th and 19th centuries. The question of whether Turkey had classes received varying answers from the *Kadroists*, though they generally agreed that classes in Turkey were not as prominent and clear-cut as in the West.²⁹ This automatically meant that as the political regime of class-based societies, liberal democracy was not suitable for Turkey.³⁰

In making their cases, the *Kadroists* often relied on temporal arguments. The French Revolution was portrayed as a progressive force in the past, but it was obsolete by the postwar era. Liberal democracy and the principles of the French Revolution were not only outdated for Turkey but harmful even to the West. Time and again, the *Kadroists* saw this as instigating class warfare and undermining public order in Europe. In a

as one of the core members of the *Kadro* movement. See Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan Adam*, p. 481. Mehmet Şevki's publications in *Kadro* appeared only in later issues, however, and there were typically differences in emphasis and vocabulary between his pieces and those of the other *Kadroists*. Hence, it might be better to cite Mehmet Şevki as among the circle of the *Kadroists* though not necessarily a constituting member from the beginning, in an institutional or ideological sense.

²⁸ Dr. Vedat Nedim, 'Müstemleke İktisadiyatından Millet İktisadiyatına', *Kadro*, January 1932, pp. 6–9 (p. 6); B. A., 'İnkılâbımız ve Hilâfet', *Kadro*, January 1932, pp. 37–40 (pp. 37–38).

²⁹ On *Kadro's* interpretation of the class structure in Turkey, see Mustafa Türkeş, "The Ideology of the Kadro [Cadre] Movement: A Patriotic Leftist Movement in Turkey", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 34.4 (1998), pp. 92–119 (p. 94).

³⁰ For one example among many others, see Burhan Asaf, 'Rejimler Niçin, Nasıl Değişiyor?', *Kadro*, December 1932, pp. 27–32 (pp. 28–29).

series of letters from France, Şevket Süreyya portrayed the country in chaos, with workers on strike, capitalists contemplating replacing workers with immigrants with lower wages, streets dominated by clashes between various political groups, and a hapless state mechanism watching it all passively.³¹ Imitating liberal democracy could not be any more misguided for Turkey, a country yet to experience the type of turbulent class warfare witnessed in Europe.³²

Another temporality-based argument in the *Kadro's* arsenal was that of seeing Turkey as following Europe a few centuries behind. While common to many intellectuals at the time, this observation, combined with their historical determinism, allowed the *Kadroists* to argue that Europe represented an example not to be imitated but to be carefully studied. If Turkey followed the European path to development step by step, it would end up in precisely the same place sometime later: a chaotic society divided by class warfare. Instead, Şevket Süreyya invited the Kemalists to be 'the inheritors and not the imitators of Europe': they were to derive lessons from Europe's regrettable situation and borrow its technology, but not its ideologies and harmful regimes.³³

This temporal perspective allowed the *Kadroists* to mock two of their opponents: Hüseyin Cahit [Yalçın] in his *Fikir Hareketleri* [*Intellectual Movements*] and İsmayil Hakkı [Baltacıoğlu] with his *Yeni Adam* [*the New Man*]. The two journals were invited to unite under the name of *Hür Adam* [*the Free Man*] since there was no movement in the ideas of Hüseyin Cahit and his '19th-century liberalism' and nothing new in İsmayil Hakkı's obsolete outlook.³⁴ Elsewhere, Burhan Asaf mocked Ağaoğlu for his dedication to the principles of the French Revolution by likening him

³¹ Şevket Süreyya, '1789 İhtilalinin Mezarı Başında: I', *Kadro*, August 1934, pp. 5–11; Şevket Süreyya, '1789 İhtilalinin Mezarı Başında: II, Mahreç Yok!... Il n'y a Pas de Débouché!', *Kadro*, September 1934, pp. 4–10.

³² For example see Dr. Vedat Nedim, 'Sınıflaşmamak ve İktisat Siyaseti', *Kadro*, November 1932, pp. 17–21.

³³ Şevket Süreyya, 'Biz Avrupanın Hayranı Değil Mirasçımız!', *Kadro*, May 1934, pp. 43–46 (p. 45).

³⁴ 'Mecmualarımız', *Kadro*, March 1934, pp. 52–53.

to the 18th-century Ottoman diplomat Atıf Efendi. Just as the latter could not make sense of the rise of the French Revolution then, Ağaoğlu was as old-fashioned not to recognise its downfall in the 1930s.³⁵

Mustafa Türkeş has argued that whereas *Kadro* adopted a pro-fascist stance before 1933, their coverage became more negative from 1933 onwards.³⁶ While it is true that the *Kadroist* criticism of fascism gradually became more vocal, the role fascism played in their webs of belief did not undergo significant change in the late 1920s and 1930s. Fascism served as an example to drive home the point that the French Revolution and liberal democracy were dying even in the West. In fascism, they saw the experiment to build a new, more virile West. Fascism was more efficient and, as Yakup Kadri observed, not without the clichés surrounding how Mussolini made the trains run on time, everything in Italy functioned more smoothly than before.³⁷ Another cliché appeared in an essay of Şevket Süreyya in 1933, when he rhetorically asked how fascism could drain the swamps of Italy if it hesitated to use violence, curtail freedoms, and rally the enthusiasm of the *Balilla*.³⁸ Examples from the USSR typically accompanied these remarks, with Yakup Kadri titling a series of essays 'Ankara Moscow Rome'. Arguably, fascism was even more valuable with its anti-communism and location at the heart of the West.

The *Kadroists* were constantly critical of other aspects of fascism. One was its imperialism and the role fascist Italy played in 'rationally organising' European imperialism, with the Four-Power Pact of 1933 particularly drawing the ire of *Kadro*.³⁹ As their socioeconomic analyses showed fascism to be a proposal to save the imperialist West, the *Kadroists* never trusted Italy fully, even when the Turco-Italian relations were amicable. In July 1933, İsmail Hüsrev defined fascism as an ideology aiming to

³⁵ Burhan Asaf, 'Rejimler Niçin, Nasıl Değişiyor?', p. 32.

³⁶ Türkeş, 'The Ideology of the Kadro [Cadre] Movement', pp. 126–29.

³⁷ Yakup Kadri, 'Ankara Moskova Roma', *Kadro*, November 1932, pp. 38–40 (p. 38); Yakup Kadri, 'Ankara Moskova Roma', *Kadro*, January 1933, pp. 29–31 (p. 29).

³⁸ 'Kadro', *Kadro*, February 1933, pp. 3–4; Şevket Süreyya, 'Darülfünun - İnkılap Hassasiyeti ve Cavit Bey İktisatçılığı', *Kadro*, February 1933, pp. 5–11 (p. 10).

³⁹ 'Kadro', *Kadro*, November 1932, pp. 3–4; 'Kadro', *Kadro*, April 1933, pp. 3–4.

‘render other races slaves to the white race’.⁴⁰ It was a more organised attempt than liberalism to save imperialist Europe, though there were times when anger towards fascists led to comments on how fascism was even weaker than liberalism.⁴¹ Nor were fascist efforts to unite various European fascistoid groups in the *Convegno Volta* conference of 1932 appreciated: in January 1933, Burhan Asaf interpreted the event as aimed to ‘restore the political, economic and cultural hegemony of Europe’. As we will see in Chapter Five, the *Convegno Volta* conference on Europe was an important turning point for internationalist fascism, and, in fact, an invitation extended to Turkey was refused by the authorities.⁴²

The incident that brought *Kadro* and the fascists to a head occurred in the summer of 1932 when the Turcologist Dr Ettore Rossi published an essay in *Giornale di politica e letteratura* on the perceived similarities between fascism and Kemalism. What annoyed Burhan Asaf was that the piece went beyond positing similarities and interpreted these as imitations of fascism by Kemalism.⁴³ Burhan Asaf argued that Rossi was misled to such a conclusion by his belief that Kemalism was merely a movement for Westernisation. If that were to be the case, then it would make complete sense for Turkey to imitate the latest regimes in Europe, like fascism. Such imitation could be found in the contemporary Balkan countries or the Ottoman Empire but not in Kemalist Turkey, which, as the home of the primary national liberation movement, did not resemble any Western setting.⁴⁴ Despite these contrasts, Burhan Asaf granted that Kemalism and fascism had ‘a shared perspective on democracy’. This

⁴⁰ İsmail Husrev, ‘Milli Kurtuluş Devletçiliği II’, *Kadro*, July 1933, pp. 23–31 (p. 30).

⁴¹ ‘Kadro’, *Kadro*, November 1932, pp. 3–4.

⁴² Burhan Asaf, ‘Milli Kurtuluş Davaşını Tarih Mikado’ya Yahut Mussolini’ye Vermemiştir’, *Kadro*, December 1933, pp. 43–46 (p. 45). Note that Burhan Asaf did not mention the name *Convegno Volta* but wrote of a ‘recent’ conference on Europe held in Rome.

⁴³ Ettore Rossi, ‘Recenti Aspetti della Rivoluzione Turca’, *Il Giornale Di Politica e Di Letteratura*, June 1932, pp. 3–10 (pp. 9–10). A more detailed analysis of this piece and the thought of Ettore Rossi will appear in Chapter Six.

⁴⁴ Burhan Asaf, ‘Faşizm ve Türk Milli Kurtuluş Hareketi’, *Kadro*, August 1932, pp. 36–39 (p. 37).

similarity stemmed not from imitation but a comparable reaction to the common questions of the post-war era.⁴⁵

Burhan Asaf also compared fascism and Kemalism. Fascism emerged to save the 'semi-capitalist Italy' from class conflict and the echoes of this anarchy, such as demagoguery and the parliamentary democracy.⁴⁶ In a country without such pronounced class distinctions, Kemalism instead aimed to suppress class conflict pre-emptively. Fascism relied on colonialism in its foreign policy, dictated by demographic factors in Italy. It thus found itself in the 'contradictory' situation of embracing etatism at home but following a 'liberal' foreign policy. The Turkish Revolution instead aimed to create a wholly independent nation out of the ruins of a 'semi-colony' Ottoman Empire. The analysis once again laid bare the *Kadroist* perception of fascism as a Western solution for Western problems that Kemalists could prevent from occurring in Turkey.

Much has been made of *Kadro's* references to fascism in the literature. The observations ranged from claims of resemblance to 'national-socialism' to Yalçın Küçük's – a Turkish socialist intellectual – claims that the *Kadroists* directly learned from the fascists in suppressing and ignoring class struggle.⁴⁷ Peyami Safa often criticised *Kadro* for seeking to invent 'Turkish fascism', while the Communist Party of Turkey readily accused *Kadro* of conversion to fascism.⁴⁸ There are indeed what might be dubbed structural similarities between the fascists and the *Kadroists*. One

⁴⁵ Burhan Asaf, 'Faşizm ve Türk Milli Kurtuluş Hareketi', p. 39.

⁴⁶ Burhan Asaf, 'Faşizm ve Türk Milli Kurtuluş Hareketi', p. 38.

⁴⁷ Alparslan Nas, 'Kadro ve Kadrocular: Marksizmden Kemalizme', *Birikim*, 21 July 2008 <<https://birikimdergisi.com/guncel/237/kadro-ve-kadrocular-marksizmden-kemalizme>> [accessed 22 January 2023]. Yalçın Küçük, *Türkiye Üzerine Tezler: 1908-1978* (Tekin Yayınevi, 1980), I, p. 153. Also see other negative observations by Küçük, who was infuriated with the *Kadroist* shift from socialism to Kemalism as a socialist intellectual: Yalçın Küçük, 'Döneklerin Kadrolaşması', *Yürüyüş*, 78 (5 October 1976), p. 16. Yalçın Küçük, *Aydın Üzerine Tezler: 1830-1980* (Tekin Yayınevi, 1985), I, p. 170. Naci Bostancı also observed that *Kadro* was similar to fascism: Naci Bostancı, *Kadrocular ve Sosyo-ekonomik Görüşleri* (Kültür Bakanlığı, 1990), pp. 132–41.

⁴⁸ Aclan Sayılğan, *Türkiye'de Sol Hareketler*, ed. by Erol Cihangir (Doğu Kütüphanesi, 2009), p. 462.

similarity was their familiarity with Leninist ideology and vocabulary, with terms like ‘vanguard’ frequently appearing in the texts of both. Both shifted from a left-wing background to nationalism. Many prominent fascist leaders like Michele Bianchi, Italo Balbo, Leandro Arpinati, and Roberto Farinacci hailed from the ranks of the Italian pre-war left. Bianchi, Arpinati and Farinacci even played important roles in local left-wing groups.⁴⁹ Most prominently, Mussolini was the chief editor of Italian socialism’s flagship publication, *Avanti!*, and was touted as a potential future leader of the socialist party before siding with the ‘interventionists’ in the First World War.⁵⁰ Similarly, all *Kadro* members apart from Yakup Kadri and Mehmet Şevki began their political careers in clandestine left-wing parties. Both groups sought to find a way to harmonise etatism in the economy and social life with nationalism. In their attempts to find new formulae for the brave new world of the postwar era, both voiced their dislike for liberalism and democracy.

Despite these ‘structural similarities’, we must not forget that unlike many fascistoid movements across Europe, the *Kadroists* never saw themselves as a fascist-like movement. They rather imagined a hierarchy of ideologies, at the top of which was the ‘national liberation’ ideas of Turkey. This ideology shared its dislike for liberal democracy with fascism but foresaw a regime specific to Turkey and non-West. On the second step of the hierarchy stood fascism, Nazism, and Bolshevism. These were likewise opposed to democracy and had replaced liberal democracy; hence,

⁴⁹ Alceo Riosa, ‘Michele Bianchi’, *Dizionario Biografico Degli Italiani*, 1968 <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/michele-bianchi_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/> [accessed 22 January 2023]; ‘Leandro Arpinati’, *Dizionario Biografico Degli Italiani*, 1962 <[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/leandro-arpinati_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/leandro-arpinati_(Dizionario-Biografico))> [accessed 22 January 2023]; Giuseppe Sircana, ‘Roberto Farinacci’, *Dizionario Biografico Degli Italiani*, 1995 <[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/roberto-farinacci_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/roberto-farinacci_(Dizionario-Biografico))> [accessed 22 January 2023].

⁵⁰ The most controversial but still definitive study on the revolutionary period of Mussolini is the provocatively titled *Mussolini: il Rivoluzionario* [Mussolini: The Revolutionary] by De Felice. See Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini Il Rivoluzionario: 1883-1920* (Einaudi, 1965).

they were more novel ideas that sought to address the shortcomings of liberalism but were not to be imitated by national liberation movements. At the base of the hierarchy was liberal democracy, which was not only socioeconomically unfit for Turkey but obsolete even for Europe. Accordingly, the *Kadroists* never argued for fascism or exactly a fascist-like system in Turkey. They used fascism as a weapon to batter their liberal opponents. On the one hand, *Kadro* sought to reject Westernisation and the notion that Turkey needed to follow the West. On the other, even if Turkey were to Westernise, liberal democracy was not an option anymore: *even* the West was no longer liberal democratic.

While elaborate, several aspects of the *Kadroist* interpretation of Kemalism made them susceptible to attack. Their invectives against the West and Westernisation were not widely shared by most Kemalists, even if a vague suspicion of Western foreign policies was common. Most Kemalists also did not wish to downplay the importance of cultural and legal reform to prioritise the economy. As a fellow radical Kemalist, Falih Rıfkı, too, was fascinated by the fascist experience in Italy. Despite occasionally contributing to *Kadro* and helping them appear on the columns of *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, however, Falih Rıfkı combined belief in Westernisation with perceptions of fascism in a different manner.

In Chapter Two, we considered how Falih Rıfkı already explored the ideological lessons to be drawn from fascism in the 1920s. While seemingly in two minds over democracy then, the rise of the FRP in 1930 added further urgency to the example of fascism. In his memoirs *Çankaya*, Falih Rıfkı explains that the RPP leadership warned him to steer clear of invectives against the FRP on the *Hakimiyet-i Milliye's* columns.⁵¹ This warning does not appear to have bothered him much. In August 1930, he mocked *Son Posta* and their claims of Turkey's need for a third political party: surely, he wrote, in proportion to its population, the country needed at least seventy parties to function.⁵² In August and September 1930, he continued to write a series of articles, initially without signature

⁵¹ Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Çankaya* (Bates, 1980), p. 464.

⁵² 'Politika', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 19 August 1930, p. 1.

but later signed with his initials. A common theme to these articles was how even France's legendary statesman Georges Clemenceau observed the democracy he long adored was beyond saving.⁵³ Falih Rıfkı warned his fellow Kemalists following the incidents surrounding Fethi Bey's visit to İzmir: 'They want sharia!'.⁵⁴ The belief in 'obsolete' liberalism led to the 'abuse' of freedom and prevented some Kemalists from seeing this naked truth.⁵⁵ Conceptually echoing his texts in the 1920s, he argued in September 1930 for 'discipline (*inzibat*) through the lifetime of a generation' instead of 'grappling' among sincere republicans.⁵⁶ This strict discipline and sticking with the 'revolutionary methods', not experimenting with liberal democracy, was the secret to ensuring that the efforts from 1923 onwards would not be in vain and the revolution could thoroughly Westernise Turkey.⁵⁷

During the rise and fall of the FRP, Falih Rıfkı was most vocal with his opposition to the party and weaponised the incidents to prove his point. Until some time in 1931, however, his hesitation to oppose democracy *tout court* remained. In December 1930, he exclaimed in response to the Mene-men incident that 'this is what reaction does to democracy'.⁵⁸ The change that was already visible in 1930 became more pronounced in 1931 and 1932. Falih Rıfkı increasingly began to defend Turkey's single-party regime with reference to Italy and the USSR. It was also in December 1930 that he rhetorically asked if the single-party regime rendered Turkey backwards, was 'Italy such a backwards, Asiatic country' to have such a

⁵³ 'Politika', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 21 August 1930, p. 3. Falih Rıfkı returned to the Clamenceau argument in other texts as well. For example, see Falih Rıfkı, *Faşist Roma, Kemalist Tiran, Kaybolmuş Makidonya* (Hakimiyet-i Milliye Matbaası, 1932), p. 37. These references to Clamenceau were not common in the Turkish press at the time, further giving support to the idea that it was Falih Rıfkı who wrote the 'Politika' series of articles for *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*.

⁵⁴ F. R., 'Politika', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 8 September 1930, p. 1.

⁵⁵ F. R., 'Politika', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 17 September 1930, p. 1.

⁵⁶ F. R., 'Politika', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 18 September 1930, p. 2.

⁵⁷ Falih Rıfkı, 'Cümhuriyet', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 29 October 1930, pp. 1-2.

⁵⁸ Falih Rıfkı, 'Politika', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 27 December 1930, p. 1.

system.⁵⁹ The 'Italian method' of dealing with the opposition, sending the latter on mandatory 'touristic trips' abroad until they appreciated fascism, was another example.⁶⁰ It was comments such as these that led to the 'new current' controversy in 1930-31. Undeterred, in April 1931, he insisted that 'the democracy of the French Revolution is sick in Europe', and the likes of fascism and Bolshevism were the doctors.⁶¹

Much as most of his contemporaries, Falih Rıfkı, too, readily resorted to temporality-related arguments. Unlike *Kadro*, he granted that Westernisation was a chief goal of the Turkish Revolution. The key was his refusal of the notion that Westernisation required democratisation; by June 1931, he portrayed liberal democracy as the past of the West. As Europe was experimenting with novel ideas such as fascism, the Turks had to 'grab the West by its left [progressive] hand.'⁶² Both Falih Rıfkı and Burhan Asaf repeatedly accused their opponents of being 'modern reactionaries' no better than the advocates of *irtica*, as both were infatuated with bygone ideas. Falih Rıfkı made this connection even clearer by referring to liberal democrats in Turkey as 'Western *softas*'⁶³ [*Garpli softa*]

⁵⁹ Falih Rıfkı, 'Politika', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 17 December 1930, p. 1.

⁶⁰ Falih Rıfkı, 'Politika', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 28 December 1930, p. 1.

⁶¹ Falih Rıfkı, 'Sınıf Kavgası', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 1 April 1931, p. 1.

⁶² Falih Rıfkı, 'Bir Cevap', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 16 June 1931, pp. 1-2.

⁶³ *Softa* has a double meaning, one being its original meaning and the other a pejorative turn on that. Originally, *softa* derives from *suhte*, which means a *madrasah* student. The word *softa* was often used unironically and non-pejoratively to refer to such students. With the association of these students with reactionarism, especially the pro-Westernisation circles in Turkey began to use the word in a pejorative sense. This constituted the second meaning, which roughly means a fanatic blindly dedicated to a false cause. By referring to the 'adorers of the French Revolution' as *softas*, Falih Rıfkı effectively positions himself as the reasoned alternative between two extreme. Both types of *softas* demand respect for old and obsolete ideas; the Western *softa* does not realise his being *softa* but ends up in the same position by failing to realise how fascism and the Soviet ideology replaced liberal democracy in the West.

or 'Şişli⁶⁴ *softas*', who were as dangerous as 'Eastern *softas*' [*Şarklı softa*] or 'Fatih *softas*'.⁶⁵

As he was becoming more daring with his views of Kemalism and democracy, Falih Rıfkı embarked on several trips abroad, including to Latin America and the United Kingdom, but most topically, the USSR and Italy. Accompanying İsmet Pasha's official visit to Rome in May 1932, he joined Yakup Kadri, Recep Bey [Peker] and others in visiting the fascist party and exchanging opinions with fascist leaders.⁶⁶ The travels culminated in two books, *Moskova-Roma* [*Moscow-Rome*, 1932] and *Faşist Roma, Kemalist Tiran, Kaybolmuş Makidonya* [sic] [*Fascist Rome, Kemalist Tirana, Lost Macedonia*, 1931]. Falih Rıfkı turned his travelogues into investigations of regimes. In Italy, what he was interested in was not Roman antiquities but, as he put it in 1933, the transformation of the Italian youth from 'the worst in the West' to a masterclass in discipline.⁶⁷ In *Moskova-Roma*, perhaps in a bid to pre-emptively defend himself from charges of importing regimes, Falih Rıfkı argued that fascists did not want other nations to become fascist since this would strengthen them.⁶⁸ Beyond this, the books portrayed fascism as a virile and largely successful force, and this portrayal was mirrored in the USSR for Bolshevism. As Italians themselves did not want this, and as Kemalism was original enough, Falih Rıfkı

⁶⁴ Şişli and Fatih are two districts of Istanbul. Şişli is traditionally seen as the epitome of Turkish Westernisation, while Fatih remains a bastion of the Islamic heritage of the country. The differences between the lifestyles seen in the two districts constitutes the central drama in Peyami Safa's 1931 novel *Fatih-Harbiye*, where the protagonist is torn apart between the allure and shallowness of Şişli's Harbiye neighbourhood and the homeliness and moralistics of Fatih.

⁶⁵ Falih Rıfkı, 'Türkiye'nin Hür Kafası', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 5 August 1933, p. 1; Burhan Asaf, 'Modern İrtica', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 20 June 1931, p. 2.

⁶⁶ 'Recep B. Faşist Fırkası Merkezinde', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 30 May 1932, p. 1. Precisely in May 1932, Falih Rıfkı quoted Mussolini's remarks on how liberal democracy could work for some countries but not necessarily for others. See Falih Rıfkı, 'Faşist İtalya', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 25 May 1932, p. 1. This view also permeated his account of the UK in *Taymis Kıyılarında* [*On the Banks of the Thames*] published in 1934.

⁶⁷ Falih Rıfkı, 'Balbo Uçarken...', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 21 July 1933, p. 1. The particular success in question was the young minister Italo Balbo and his exploits in military aviation.

⁶⁸ Falih Rıfkı, *Moskova Roma* (Muallim Ahmet Halit Kütüphanesi, 1932), p. 86.

clarified that Turkey would never become fascist. But this did not mean meaningful ideological lessons could not be derived. 'Dictatorship' had negative connotations in Turkey, and even the radicals largely refrained from using the term to define Kemalism in any way. Upon stating that Mussolini was 'the chief of the dictatorship of fascism', Falih Rifkî observed that Turks took the word 'dictator' to be the European version of the term '*müstebit*' (oppressor, tyrant). Hence, 'whenever we hear that word, our mind goes back either to the personal tyranny of Sultan Hamid [Abdulhamid II] or the oligarchy of the Union and Progress, and we cannot but be terrified.' However, such tyrants were unique to the East; one could simply not find an Abdulhamid II in Europe. The key difference was that a European dictator was bound by a set of principles like any other individual in society: this, too, was an echoing of his view in the 1920s that fascism was not an arbitrary dictatorship as its rules were binding even for Mussolini. The dictator in such a setting was effectively 'the incarnation of the principles of a new cause'. If Turks could forget about Abdulhamid II and the Union and Progress for a moment, they could appreciate the fact that 'nations occasionally need dictators'.⁶⁹

Venturing where no radical went before, Falih Rifkî's explicit defence of the need for dictatorship is arguably the zenith of radical Kemalism. Clearly, by 1932, he thought Kemalism was not liberal democratic, and there was no shame in this. His version of radical Kemalism had the advantage of relying on a distinct interpretation of Westernisation, through which he could refer to fascism as the new West and portray his liberal democrat opponents as reactionaries unable to appreciate the evolution of Europe. However, his version, too, had risks, mainly from his drawing from foreign examples in a more direct manner than even *Kadro* and the defence of dictatorships. As he found, the example of Abdulhamid II could easily be turned around by the opposition. The dynamics within the party were evolving by 1934 as well. As late as November 1934, Falih Rifkî argued in *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* that 'dictatorship has a place in history, science and reality'; but this time, he qualified this view with the

⁶⁹ Falih Rifkî, *Moskova Roma*, pp. 75–76.

observation that all dictatorships would eventually give way to a ‘normal system’.⁷⁰ In February 1934, he had already argued that ‘nations would not willingly surrender to dictators’, but democracies had to find a way to counter demagoguery.⁷¹ The zenith of radical Kemalism was bygone.

Falih Rıfki did not need *Kadro* or the example of fascism to convince himself that a less liberal democratic variant of Kemalism was required. Fascism provided important examples and further conviction, while *Kadro* added ‘scientific’ arguments for anti-liberalism and a political language with its own concepts like ‘semi-colony’, which made its debut in Falih Rıfki’s works in the 1930s. Just as they rose to prominence together in the early 1930s, *Kadro* and Falih Rıfki fell together, too; in the case of *Kadro*, the fall engendered the closing of the journal while Falih Rıfki astutely reverted to a more quietist stance and retained his place by the dinner table of Mustafa Kemal. In arguing for their brand of Kemalism, the *Kadro*ists made important enemies. Going beyond the more liberal Kemalists and criticising even the likes of Recep [Peker] and Mahmut Esat [Bozkurt] for their ‘inadequate’ understanding of the terms *inkılap* and *ihtilal* [both roughly meaning revolution, with the former referring to a wider, more prolonged process and the latter more to the act of overthrowing a previous regime] did not help *Kadro*’s case. Şevket Süreyya wrote that ‘according to Recep Bey, our *inkılap* consists of “replacing what was bad with what is good”’.⁷² Complaining that good and bad were moral terms, he invited Recep Bey to the realm of ‘objective science’, studying ‘social laws’ and ‘deterministic causal chains’, through which he could see how an *inkılap* consisted of changes to the ‘*strüktür*’ [structure, base] of society and not merely to its superstructure.⁷³ Only this way could he appreciate how the Turkish Revolution could save itself from being reduced to a ‘shallow movement for democracy’, a ‘petit-

⁷⁰ Falih Rıfki, ‘İki Tecrübe’, *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 6 November 1934, p. 1.

⁷¹ Falih Rıfki, ‘Demokrasi Davaları’, *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 25 February 1934, p. 1.

⁷² Şevket Süreyya, ‘İnkılap Kürsülerinde, İnkılap İlmileşmelidir’, *Kadro*, April 1934, pp. 7-13 (p. 8).

⁷³ Şevket Süreyya, ‘İnkılap Kürsülerinde, İnkılap İlmileşmelidir’, p. 11.

bourgeoisie revolution' and an imitation of the French Revolution.⁷⁴ The secretary general of the RPP, Recep Peker, responded by getting *Kadro* closed and convincing Atatürk to send its *de jure* owner, Yakup Kadri, away to Albania as Turkey's ambassador.

Could the Kemalist regime in Turkey be described as a dictatorship? Between 1931 and 1934, Falih Rıfkı's response to this question was, albeit cautiously expressed, proudly in the affirmative. By 1934, the scene changed, and another variant of Kemalism that ensured the deferral of the ballots without the inconvenience of the Abdulhamidian connotations emerged victorious. From around 1934 onwards, Falih Rıfkı himself reverted to a more quietist line: In February 1937, he looked back at the ideological development of the Kemalist regime and argued that what Kemalism became was the result of 'the chief's [Atatürk] preference to keep dogmatism out of Kemalism'. This was why Kemalism was not a dictatorship.⁷⁵ In 1937 and 1938, he referred to the Turkish regime as 'our democracy' or 'the Atatürk democracy'.⁷⁶ Following Atatürk's passing away on 10 November 1938, he wrote an article for *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* that epitomised his views by then. He now described Atatürk as a 'revolutionary who despised dictatorship'. 'Yes', he admitted, 'there was a *dictat*, coercion and use of force; but that was nothing other than the will to be saved of the Turkish nation itself'.⁷⁷ The next section of this thesis will focus on the ideas of Peker and his allies around *Ülkü* that triumphed over radical Kemalism and consider the quite different role fascism played in their arguments for deferring the ballots.

§ 3.2 Quietism: Recep Bey [Peker] and *Ülkü* Against 'Mad Men'

The 1930-31 crisis in Turkey found Recep Bey as the Minister of Public Works, which followed other cabinet duties in the 1920s. While he lacked

⁷⁴ Şevket Süreyya, 'İnkılap Kürsülerinde, İnkılap İlmileşmelidir', p. 13.

⁷⁵ Falih Rıfkı, 'Bir Usul Farkı', *Ulus*, 10 February 1937, p. 1.

⁷⁶ Fatay [Falih Rıfkı Atay], 'Benzeyişler', *Ulus*, 16 February 1937, p. 1; Falih Rıfkı Atay, 'Millet Hakimiyeti Devrinin 18inci Yıl Dönümü: 23 Nisan Bayramı', *Ulus*, 23 April 1938, p. 1.

⁷⁷ Falih Rıfkı Atay, 'Büyük Vatandaş', *Ulus*, 26 November 1938, pp. 1-2 (p. 1).

a position in the press like Falih Rıfkı, during this particular crisis, too, he was influential within the party first, as he was particularly close to İsmet Paşa. Later, Recep Bey augmented his influence in the wider public through his conferences and the *Ülkü* journal, established to rival *Kadro*. Both Recep Bey and his predecessor as the secretary general of the RPP, Saffet Bey [Arıkan], had a keen interest in the structures and ideologies of different European parties. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, embassies in Europe from the United Kingdom to Austria penned up reports, with particular attention to Switzerland by Recep Bey.⁷⁸ One report from Switzerland in January 1931 contained thinly veiled jabs at the recently closed FRP, with the author observing that the country's democracy functioned because its political parties sincerely defended their causes rather than engaging in moves motivated by personal interest to overthrow the government. The report portrayed Switzerland as a harmonious country with a strong democratic government; the implication was that it was not a *sine qua non* of democracy to form political parties based on different interest groups.⁷⁹

For a man so often identified in the literature as the chief responsible for making Kemalism resemble fascism, Recep Bey had an unexpectedly keen interest in Swiss politics. In January 1933, now the secretary general of the party, he spoke to the constituents for upcoming general elections behind closed doors. According to the Turkish electoral system at the time, the constituents elected the deputies rather than the public. Recep Bey asked the constituents to support Aka Gündüz, a doyen of Turkish journalism who long adopted a pro-RPP stance in the *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*. More topically, he explained that the system of constituents had to continue 'for a limited timeframe'. To dispel doubts about whether this made Turkey a non-democracy, Recep Bey turned to Switzerland and France.

⁷⁸ 'Avusturya ve Çekoslovakya Fırkaları İle İlgili Raporlar', 1928, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 490-1-0-0, 205-813-1; 'Çekoslovakya'daki Fırkalar ve Teşkilatları İle İlgili Hariciye Vekaleti'ne Gelen Rapor', 1930, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 490-1-0-0, 206-819-5; 'İsviçre Fırkaları İle İlgili Cumhurbaşkanlığı'na Sunulan Raporlar', 1931, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 490-1-0-0, 205-813-3.

⁷⁹ 'İsviçre Fırkaları İle İlgili Cumhurbaşkanlığı'na Sunulan Raporlar', *BCA*, p. 5.

Both were obviously democratic but with widely different political systems. Switzerland readily deferred to public opinion via referenda, whereas the conditions in France rendered a typical parliamentary democracy a much more feasible option. The point was that if the lack of referenda did not make France non-democratic as of 1933, the constituents did not make Turkey less democratic either. Recep Bey assured the audience that once Turkey progressed enough 'in the way of science and civilisation', direct elections would be held. Until then, 'indirect elections are necessary and true to democracy'.⁸⁰

Though undoubtedly active in the suppression of the FRP behind the scenes, Recep Bey particularly came to the fore in interpreting Kemalism in 1933. It was then that he launched *Ülkü*: if *Kadro* boasted congratulatory messages in its early issues by Mustafa Kemal and Ismet Pasha to give further credence to their claims of interpreting Kemalist orthodoxy, Recep Bey ensured the name of the journal itself was chosen by Mustafa Kemal.⁸¹ While *Ülkü* targeted *Kadro*, radicals in expectation of a clear-cut ideology opposing to theirs were surprised by the wide range of contributors to its first issue, from the liberal Ahmet Ağaoğlu to the *Kadroist* Burhan Asaf. *Ülkü* gradually grew into its own and began to advocate for a certain interpretation of Kemalism, though it always remained more eclectic than *Kadro*. What characterised *Ülkü's* ideological line in the coming years was a conspicuous lack of reference to fascism or any other foreign ideology as an example, the upholding of democracy as either the goal or the present state of Turkish politics, and animosity towards both the liberal and radical Kemalists. In a way that illustrates how he saw himself and his friends as representing Kemalist orthodoxy rather than pragmatically navigating the divisions within the RPP, Recep Bey dismissed opponents of his interpretation of Kemalism as 'some mad men'. Between the Scylla of anarchical freedom and the Charybdis of tyrannical

⁸⁰ 'Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Katibiumumisi Recep Bey'in Bir Intihap Nutku', 1933, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 490-1-0-0, 2-8-3.

⁸¹ Recep, 'Ülkü Niçin Çıkıyor', *Ülkü*, February 1933, pp. 1-2 (p. 1).

discipline, both defended by ‘mad men’ in Turkey, he made it clear that he sought a reasonable middle path of ‘disciplined freedom’.⁸²

Beyond his activities within the party and contributions to *Ülkü*, Recep Bey offered lectures on the Turkish Revolution at Istanbul University, along with other figures such as Mahmut Esat Bozkurt. The lectures were published as a book in 1935, the *İnkılab Dersleri Notları* [*Notes from Lectures on the Revolution*], with the radical challenge of *Kadro* eliminated. As the lectures required more theoretical prowess and background, Recep Bey delved deeper into a comparison of Kemalism and other contemporary movements, including fascism and parliamentarism in the West. Unlike the radicals, Peker insisted that the French Revolution was betrayed in Europe, rather than being obsolete or to be refused. With the passing of its ‘idealist chiefs’, the Revolution was sacrificed to compromise with its enemies.⁸³ Parliamentarism in the West thus weakened liberty and democracy through its penchant for compromise: a pointed example was how anti-democrats were allowed to weaken democracy under the cloak of tolerance.⁸⁴ He then referred to Czechoslovakia, an ‘advanced and highly civilised’ country that was also harmed by such parliamentarism, and, surely, Switzerland, where the previous president, Marcel Pilet-Golaz, had argued to the Swiss parliament that just as soldiers obey commanders, the parliamentarians must obey their leaders.⁸⁵

Peker depicted Italy before fascism as a hotbed of anarchy like most other Turkish observers.⁸⁶ Such anarchy partially stemmed from the complacency of Italian politicians like Giovanni Giolitti, who had argued that just as olive trees cannot grow anywhere, Italy was not fertile ground for communism, which quickly proved to be a wrong idea.⁸⁷ Recep Bey observed two revolutions before fascism in Italy. One was the *Risorgimento* and its ‘revolution of freedom’ that drew from the principles of the

⁸² Recep, ‘Disiplinli Hürriyet’, *Ülkü*, April 1933, pp. 177–80 (p. 177).

⁸³ Recep Peker, *İnkılab Dersleri Notları* (Ulus Basımevi, 1935), p. 23.

⁸⁴ Peker, *İnkılab Dersleri Notları*, p. 18, p. 20, p. 83.

⁸⁵ Peker, *İnkılab Dersleri Notları*, pp. 102–3.

⁸⁶ Peker, *İnkılab Dersleri Notları*, p. 44.

⁸⁷ Peker, *İnkılab Dersleri Notları*, p. 47.

French Revolution. Later came the socialists with their attempted 'revolution of class'. Interestingly, Recep Bey noted that fascism was not a third revolution. There was no doubt that fascists successfully restored law and order to Italy, but they lacked a philosophy to thoroughly replace the revolution of freedom.⁸⁸ With its law and order without an alternative to freedom, Peker defined fascism as 'Caesarism reborn'.⁸⁹

Peker noted that these limitations did not stop political movements across the world from imitating the ideas and external aspects of fascism, such as colourful shirts (as variants of the blackshirts, *camicie nere*) and salutes. He observed this desire for imitation existed in Turkey too but warned that any wholesale imitation was bound to fail, as imitations of the revolutions of freedom and class previously demonstrated.⁹⁰ Peker sought to actively hinder such movements. When, in the summer of 1933, the RPP leadership received complaints about the anti-Semitism of *İnkılap* in Izmir, he dispatched a deputy to investigate and identify any culpables.⁹¹ Led by Lemi and Cevat Rifat [Atılhan], *İnkılap* led a vehement anti-Semitic campaign, including remarks on how things could be 'learned from Hitler'. Whether this was blackmailing of certain Jews or an 'imitation of Hitlerism', Peker clarified it could not be tolerated, and the deputy wrote back that the *İnkılap* duo would no longer pen invectives against the Jews.⁹² This was followed by a letter by Lemi Bey to Peker, who explained that as a sincere Turkish nationalist, he was far from being

⁸⁸ Similarly, the examples of fascist Italy and Nazi Germany are conspicuously missing from his review of revolutions of global import. See Peker, *İnkılab Dersleri Notları*, pp. 9–10.

⁸⁹ Peker, *İnkılab Dersleri Notları*, p. 48.

⁹⁰ Peker, *İnkılab Dersleri Notları*, p. 52.

⁹¹ 'The RPP General Secretariat to the RPP Provincial Party Directors Board in Izmir', 1933, p. 17, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 490-1-0-0, 590-40-1. Note that this *İnkılap* is different from Ali Naci Karacan's *İnkılap* newspaper.

⁹² 'Hacim Bey, Deputy for Balıkesir and Head of the Provincial Party Directors Board, to the RPP General Secretariat', 1933, p. 1, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 490-1-0-0, 590-40-1.

a Hitlerist. Following a series of violent attacks on Jews in Thrace in 1934, *İnkılap* was closed by the authorities.⁹³

Despite his positive references to democracy, Peker played an instrumental role in deferring the ballots. This and his later exploration of the concept of ‘the national state’ (*ulusal devlet*) help explain associations in the literature’s insistence on him as a fascistoid figure. In 1935, the RPP’s programme underwent significant revision, and direct elections were removed as the party’s ultimate goal.⁹⁴ In the party congress, Peker insisted that despite all the emphasis on ‘etatism, national unity and discipline’, the party remained democratic.⁹⁵ He defined democracy as the ‘rule of the people by the people’, against the rule of aristocrats, theocrats, or plutocrats. Turkey fitted this definition perfectly, according to Peker, as democracy could assume myriad forms in different national contexts.⁹⁶ Likewise, even after deferring the ballots, Peker referred to the actions of the party as all ‘truly profound manifestations of democracy’.⁹⁷ From especially 1935 onwards, Peker explained Turkey was the primary example of a ‘national state’. These states triumphed in the downfall of liberal and class-based states in the 1930s, but Peker did not specify which other states qualified as ‘national states’. The national state was not opposed to democracy or the ideals of the French Revolution. The correct interpretation of the ‘national state’ was provided by the party: ‘The party programme’s draft has been prepared with utmost attention so that it has

⁹³ For further information on *İnkılap* (or *Millî İnkılap*) the anti-Semitic journal, see Celil Bozkurt, ‘Yahudi Aleyhtarı Bir Derginin Değerlendirilmesi: Millî İnkılâp ve Kamuoyundaki Yankıları’, *Tarih Dergisi*, 53 (2011), pp. 175–210. On the 1934 Thrace incidents and the anti-Semitic pogroms, Soner Cagaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who Is a Turk?* (Routledge, 2006), pp. 140–48.

⁹⁴ *CHF Nizamnamesi ve Programı* (TBMM Matbaası, 1931), p. 30; *CHP Programı* (Ulus Basımevi, 1935).

⁹⁵ ‘Partinin Yeni Programı İçin Kurultayda R. Pekerin Söylevi’, *Ülkü*, June 1935, pp. 247–59 (p. 256).

⁹⁶ ‘Partinin Yeni Programı İçin Kurultayda R. Pekerin Söylevi’, p. 257.

⁹⁷ ‘Partinin Yeni Programı İçin Kurultayda R. Pekerin Söylevi’, p. 258.

such clarity as to leave no room for any more right- or left-wing interpretations of it'.⁹⁸

A central belief in Peker's thought was the idea that democracy had to be adapted to local circumstances. As he put it in May 1935, democracy was not to be treated as 'the holy word of God' (*demokrasi bir nas, bir ayet değildir*). Any political moves had to first pass through 'the filter that we call reason' and adapt to the circumstances. The conclusion was another tree metaphor after Giolitti's olive tree: 'One does not plant an orange tree atop the Zigana Mountain'.⁹⁹ Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Peker insisted on the notion that Kemalism was democratic and resisted all attempts to provide a thorough definition. The quietist formula emerged victorious, overcoming the liberal interpretation first and then triumphing over the radicals by late 1934. The strength of Peker's interpretation lies in part in his refusal to use fascism as an example. Quietism offered the RPP the best of both worlds: with it, they managed to both indefinitely defer the ballots and deny bearing any semblance to Hamidian tyranny.

Then, suddenly, Peker was replaced as the party's general secretary and replaced by Şükrü Kaya in June 1936. The next month, *Ülkü* appeared for the first time under the editorship of Fuad Köprülü, who paid respect to Peker by publishing his article on the new programme and the 'national state' in a German journal.¹⁰⁰ According to much of the literature, following a research trip to Europe, with most time spent in Germany and Italy, Peker returned home with a grand project of replacing the parliament with a council modelled after the Italian *Gran Consiglio del fascismo*.¹⁰¹ Rejection of this accordingly led to Peker's downfall. Recent

⁹⁸ 'Partinin Yeni Programı İçin Kurultayda R. Pekerin Söylevi', p. 248.

⁹⁹ 'Partinin Yeni Programı İçin Kurultayda R. Pekerin Söylevi', p. 258. Zigana Mountain, located in the Black Sea region of Turkey, was used as an example due to its height and oceanic climate rendering it impossible to cultivate oranges.

¹⁰⁰ Recep Peker, 'Uluslaşma-Devletleşme', *Ülkü*, July 1936, pp. i-vii.

¹⁰¹ Beyond cases already discussed in the introduction, Şükrü Hanioglu, too, referred to the *Ülkü* circle as wishing 'to produce an ideology modeled on German national socialism and Italian fascism', claiming that Peker was deeply impressed with the Nazi and fascist

literature has challenged this interpretation and instead focused on personal problems between Kazım Dirik, a close friend of Atatürk, and Peker.¹⁰² That Peker's fall from grace in the summer of 1936 coincided with an increased emphasis on 'the national state' and a text by him on the subject for a German journal is certainly interesting. Whatever might be the reason for his temporary fall from grace, however, it is important to recognise that the 'national state' is less a shift to 'fascistoid' Kemalism than a change in emphasis. From the 1920s to the 1930s, Peker remained committed to a quietist view of Kemalism that argued the regime was and would be democratic despite (at least as of the date) the lack of competing political parties. Fascism was quite consistently and conspicuously missing from his rhetoric.

In his quest for quietism, Peker was flanked by allies in *Ülkü* and other journals of local People's Houses branches. These figures included the more senior Necip Ali Küçüka and younger intellectuals like Nusret Kemal Köymen and Mehmet Saffet Engin. Born in Denizli in 1892, Küçüka was an RPP deputy for Denizli and had been a prosecutor in the Independence Tribunals. The clinging to a notion of democracy separated Küçüka from the radicals, while the rejection of the primacy of the cultural sphere in *Kadro* particularly infuriated him. In March 1933, on the second issue of *Ülkü*, Necip Ali responded to the *Kadroist* privileging of the economy over the culture by noting that a nation 'without advanced culture' could never be compared to cultured ones. The differences between Abyssinia and Germany, or Tibet and Britain, were due mainly not to production but to the levels of advancement in respective cultures. Another counter-argument against radicals was Necip Ali's defence of the French Revolution; the latter contained the seeds of the 'modern world',

parties of Germany and Italy. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton: 2011), p. 190.

¹⁰² See Burak Özçetin, 'Zigana Dağındaki Portakal Ağacı: Recep Peker ve Kemalizm', *Akdeniz İ.İ.B.F. Dergisi*, 20 (2010), pp. 167–87; Murat Yılmaz, 'Recep Peker, CHF ve Bürokrasi: Kazım Dirik Örnek Olayı Üzerinden "Parti Devlet" Uygulaması ve "Faşist Proje"', in *Mete Tunçay'a Armağan*, ed. by Mehmet Ö. Alkan, Tanıl Bora, and Murat Koraltürk (İletişim, 2007), pp. 683–705.

which Turkey was striving to join by leaving behind ‘the land of the A Thousand and One Nights’.¹⁰³ In the *inkılap memleketleri* fashion, Necip Ali recognised Turkey could learn from the propaganda techniques of ‘countries that have recently undergone revolutions, such as Italy, Spain, and Russia’.¹⁰⁴ His defence of Kemalism as a democratic ideology relied on observation of differences between different democratic countries, as in Peker.¹⁰⁵ The thoroughly democratic system of Turkey was even an improvement on other democratic regimes in Europe.¹⁰⁶

While other figures writing for *Ülkü* supported Peker and Küçüka’s definition of Kemalism as democratic despite the deferral of ballots, the younger figures around *Ülkü* and other People’s Houses journals sometimes explored the limits of quietism. One such figure was Nusret Kemal Köymen, better known to historians as a leading peasantist (*köycülük*). Born in 1903 in Istanbul and educated in an American high school in the city, Nusret Kemal went on to complete his bachelor’s and master’s degrees at the University of Wisconsin with a thesis on the social role of villages.¹⁰⁷ Observation of American democracy convinced Nusret Kemal that the radicals falsely proclaimed democracy dead. In defending democracy, however, he was occasionally more pessimistic about the situation in Turkey than Peker. In 1933, he conceded that the Kemalist regime could be defined as the rule of a group over people. But this feature was a special and temporary one, as the Kemalists wanted people to rule themselves and were forced into such a regime due to people’s unpreparedness. With the education of the masses, especially in the villages,

¹⁰³ Necip Ali, ‘İnkılap ve Türk Kanunu Medenisi’, *Ülkü*, October 1933, pp. 178–85 (p. 183).

¹⁰⁴ ‘Necip Ali Beyin Nutukları’, *Yeni Türk Mecmuası*, February 1934, pp. 1317–27 (p. 1325).

¹⁰⁵ Necip Ali Küçüka, ‘Parti Kurultayı’, *Ülkü*, May 1935, pp. 161–64 (pp. 161–62).

¹⁰⁶ Küçüka, ‘Parti Kurultayı’, p. 164.

¹⁰⁷ Rıdvan Kızılkaya, ‘Köycülüğün İdeoloğu Nusret Kemal Köymen’in Köycülüğü Üzerine’, *Uluslararası Türk Dünyası Bilimsel Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 1.2 (2020), pp. 161–76 (pp. 162–63). On the idea of prioritising villages and raising the level of cultural and economic development of the peasants as the key to civilisation (*köycülük*), see M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, ‘Türkiye’de Köycülük’, in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce II: Kemalizm* (İletişim, 2009), pp. 284–97.

thanks to the good intentions of the leadership, Turkey would eventually become fully democratic.¹⁰⁸

Nusret Kemal was not oblivious to the fact that Turkey, in the aftermath of the 1930-31 crisis, only had a single political party, and the single-party regimes existed elsewhere, too. However, crucial differences separated Kemalism from the latter, such as the RPP's being open to all republicans in Turkey, its programme being based on 'logical principles' and not dogma 'as in other countries and parties', the complete freedom of opinion¹⁰⁹ in Turkey, and most importantly, the Kemalist intention to establish the rule of the people by the people.¹¹⁰ Though he occasionally used the term democracy to mean the absence of individuals privileged by birth or association in asserting that Kemalism was democratic or Turkey would be a full democracy, Nusret Kemal mostly meant a system of government where people freely voted in fair elections. He faulted the West for operating with a false sense of democracy; he criticised Western politicians for using democracy as a mere mask and not reaching out to the villages and helping every individual actively participate in politics.¹¹¹ Democracy mattered because he felt that nations thrived with affection and culture rather than terror and coercion, with Denmark serving as his example. Denmark could be democratic because of its principles and culture despite having a king, which meant that Turkey could be democratic without no current direct elections.¹¹² In December 1933, when PM İsmet Pasha talked about the government's endeavours to 'walk down the path of democracy', Nusret Kemal was elated and

¹⁰⁸ Nusret Kemal, 'Halkçılık', *Ülkü*, April 1933, pp. 185-90 (p. 187). Nusret Kemal, 'Bir Köy Terbiyesi Örneği', *Ülkü*, January 1934, pp. 416-24 (p. 424).

¹⁰⁹ Köymen thought that the reason criticism was hard to come across in Turkish newspapers was not Ankara's oppression but the general underdevelopment of culture in Turkey. Nusret Köymen, 'Büyük Kurultaydan Dilekler ve Kanadada Köycülük', *Ülkü*, May 1935, pp. 225-29 (p. 225).

¹¹⁰ Köymen, 'Büyük Kurultaydan Dilekler ve Kanadada Köycülük', p. 226.

¹¹¹ Nusret Kemal, 'Köy Seferberliğine Doğru', *Ülkü*, June 1933, pp. 355-61 (p. 355).

¹¹² Nusret Kemal, 'Bir Köycülük Projesi Tecrübesi', *Ülkü*, September 1933, pp. 118-25 (p. 121-23).

interpreted the PM's remarks as further proving the ultimately democratic goals of the regime.¹¹³

Nusret Kemal identified the *laissez-faire* liberals and anti-democrats as the two primary enemies of Kemalism. By late 1933, he was able to conclude that the struggle against the latter would be more prolonged and strenuous as the former were already defeated by facts.¹¹⁴ A chief target for Nusret Kemal was *Kadro* and other radical 'soothsayers'. The *Kadroists* and their allies were dangerous because they were calling the Turkish youth to embrace dangerous foreign ideologies that were only thinly veiled by the rhetoric of Kemalism.¹¹⁵ As the *Kadroists* frequently referred to the example of fascism, Nusret Kemal duly targeted their portrayals of fascism, too. Unlike Peker and Küçüka, who had to consider international relations carefully as deputies, Köymen was vocal in his criticisms of fascism. History would record fascism and communism as costly experiments for humanity, he predicted.¹¹⁶ If fascism and the Bolshevik regime had certain achievements thanks to dictatorship, which could well be necessary in select circumstances, one had to still remember that any such achievement came at the cost of 'the holiest ideal and greatest source of power for humanity': freedom.¹¹⁷ In March 1934, he went so far as to define fascism as 'the nemesis' of Kemalism.¹¹⁸ In a way that closely resembled his remarks on Denmark, he observed that Kemalism aimed

¹¹³ Nusret Kemal, "İsmet Paşa'nın Nutukları" ve Türk Rejiminin Vasıfları, *Ülkü*, December 1938, pp. 356–67 (p. 357, p. 360).

¹¹⁴ Nusret Kemal, 'Bir "Cihani Telakki Tarzı"', *Ülkü*, November 1933, pp. 285–88 (pp. 285–86).

¹¹⁵ Nusret Kemal, 'Bir "Cihani Telakki Tarzı"', p. 288.

¹¹⁶ Nusret Kemal, 'Halkçılık', p. 190.

¹¹⁷ Nusret Kemal, 'Bir "Cihani Telakki Tarzı"', pp. 285–86.

¹¹⁸ Nusret Kemal's remarks came a month later the Balkan Entente's launch, which was perceived as an anti-Italian measure by many Italians, and accordingly led to trouble between the two countries. It is important to remember that his arguments against fascism predated this, however; it was not just the fury against the Italian reaction to the entente, but also the already poor opinion of fascism he had, that led him to see in fascism the nemesis of the Turkish regime.

to rule Turkey through affection and culture, not the oppression of a select few as fascism did.¹¹⁹

Another American-educated defender of Kemalism against anti-democracy in *Ülkü* was Mehmet Saffet [Engin, later changed his surname to Arın]. Born in 1900 in Ottoman Cyprus, Mehmet Saffet was educated in an American school on the island. In 1920, he went to the US and graduated from the Sociology department of Columbia University in 1927.¹²⁰ Following his graduation, he went to Turkey and put his educational skills and mastery of the English language to use in service for the Ministry of Education. His time in the US seems to have had a comparable impact on his perceptions of American democracy as it did on Nusret Kemal. Already in 1928, he wrote a book titled *Demokrasi İnkılabı* (The Revolution of Democracy), where he offered an interpretation of Kemalism as a movement aiming to establish full democracy in Turkey.¹²¹ This vision of Kemalism as a revolution of democracy continued in 1929, with Mehmet Saffet writing in *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* that Turkey required a 'great mentality revolution' that would see a mentality based on 'positive sciences and democracy' take hold. The democracy in question was political and social, consisting of 'universal suffrage, equality before law and equality of opportunity'. Mehmet Saffet felt that if student unions based on self-government were established, the Turks would familiarise themselves with democracy and 'a European lifestyle'. He summoned the texts of John Dewey, his mentor in Columbia, in his support.¹²²

The rise and fall of the FRP did not change Mehmet Saffet's views on Kemalism, though the crisis of 1930-31 did push him slightly backwards in the press. Only in November 1931 was he able to write a piece on

¹¹⁹ Nusret Kemal, 'Bizim Plânımız', *Ülkü*, March 1934, pp. 41-45 (p. 44).

¹²⁰ Seher Kaşker, 'Mehmet Saffet Engin Arın: Yaşamı, Eserleri, Düşünceleri ve Türk Sosyolojisine Katkıları' (unpublished master's thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2002), p. 4 <<http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/TEZ/35875.pdf>>. [Accessed 8 September 2024].

¹²¹ Mehmed Safvet, *Türkiye'de Demokrasi İnkılabı* (Kitabhane-i Sudi, 1928).

¹²² Mehmet Saffet, 'Mekteplilerin İçtimai Mefkuresi', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 12 February 1929, p. 2. On the same theme also see Mehmet Saffet, 'Mekteplerde Demokratik Mefkure', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 24 March 1929, p. 4.

Hakimiyet-i Milliye again. Mehmet Saffet utilised his return as an opportunity to argue against Şevket Süreyya, who was becoming extremely popular with his brand of radical Kemalism at the time. Mehmet Saffet opposed Şevket Süreyya's reduction of the Turkish Revolution to 'the materialist, narrow views' of Karl Marx. Beyond methodology, he opposed the notion that the French Revolution was dead.¹²³ Whatever Şevket Süreyya thought, Mehmet Saffet argued Kemalism was democratic like the French Revolution, despite myriad differences between the two, and Kemalism concerned itself with 'spiritual matters' in addition to the economy.¹²⁴ Against the 'collectivism' of the radicals, Mehmet Saffet put the 'etatism' of Kemalism.¹²⁵ He was also unimpressed by Şevket Süreyya's call to turn away from European examples since Mehmet Saffet felt the essence of Kemalism was the sentence 'We are Turkish *and* [emphasis added] we are European'. Invented in the ancient world and developed in Europe, democracy was now a globally valid principle for the entire humanity.¹²⁶

Much like other figures in *Ülkü*, Mehmet Saffet also provided a vision of Kemalism that was much closer to the French Revolution than to fascism. Education was deemed crucial by both him and Nusret Kemal since only through educating the masses could Turkey become fully democratic. Both occasionally tested the boundaries of quietism, with observations of the contemporary Turkish regime as an authoritarian one. However, this regime was a stop-gap, and they felt that the RPP was sincerely committed to fully democratising Turkey. They dwelled on fascism and other authoritarian examples to the extent that the radical Kemalists utilised them as weapons and tended to downplay the success,

¹²³ Mehmet Saffet, 'Türk İnkılâbının Karakterleri', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 10 December 1931, p. 2.

¹²⁴ Mehmet Saffet, 'İnkılabımız Bir Demokrasi Sosyaldır, Materyalizim Sosyal Değildir', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 6 November 1931, p. 2.

¹²⁵ Mehmet Saffet, 'İnkılabın Tek Cepheli İyzağı Mümkün Değildir', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 23 November 1931, pp. 2-3 (p. 2).

¹²⁶ Mehmet Saffet, 'Medeniyet Tekamülünün Karakterleri', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 10 December 1931, p. 2.

desirability, or sustainability of fascism. More than that, as we saw, Nusret Kemal saw fascism as the ‘nemesis’ of Kemalism. In line with the *inkılap memleketleri* way of thinking, Italy was perceived as a successful example of propaganda, but not much more than that ideologically, by most contributors to *Ülkü*.¹²⁷

These cases illustrate how quietism, which we have presented as the winning formula in defining Kemalism in the 1920s and 1930s, overwhelmingly valued a form of democracy while avoiding the immanentisation of multiparty democracy. This stands in stark contrast with much of the literature, which only detects a ‘limited rhetoric of democracy’, if at all, in *Ülkü* and tends to conflate the radicals and the quietists. The two were united in opposition to liberal Kemalists and, less topically, to the ‘reactionaries’ like Islamists, Kurdish separatists, or communists. However, they diverged widely when it came to the question of whether the contemporary regime of Turkey was a dictatorship and whether it would change in the future. Even the most pro-deferral quietist like Recep Peker continuously referred to democracy as a goal of the revolution and helped more enthusiastic pro-democratic theorists like Nusret Kemal flourish in *Ülkü*. Quietists shied away from using fascism as an example. Criticism was much clearer in the work of Nusret Kemal and Mehmet Safet. They denied that fascism was ‘the new West’ as claimed by the radicals, and they defended the principles of the French Revolution from claims of ‘obsolescence’.

We saw that Nusret Kemal thought the ‘*laissez-faire* liberals’ were already defeated by late 1933. With this, he may have meant liberal Kemalists, liberals worldwide, or, most likely, both. The next section will illustrate how, while indeed suffering defeat within the RPP, the defenders of a more liberal democratic variant of Kemalism did not go down without

¹²⁷ An interesting case was a series of articles by Mazhar Nedim [Göknıl], a law scholar who wrote for *Ülkü* on different conceptions of law and legal order in countries including Italy. In writing on Italy and fascist law, Mazhar Nedim drew from the texts of fascists and anti-fascists alike and weighed in with his social scientific expertise. See Mazhar Nedim, ‘İleri Hukuk’, *Ülkü*, April 1934, pp. 184–94.

a fight. We will see how a key argument of them was turning the radical arguments surrounding fascism upside down.

§ 3.3 Fascist Regime as an ‘Eastern Despotism’: Liberal Kemalism in Ankara and Beyond

Ağaoğlu, that defender of Kemalism from Orazio Pedrazzi’s claims of ‘barbarism’ in the 1920s, clearly passed over to the opposition by 1930. Before the rise of the FRP, Ağaoğlu put forward a motion in the parliament in March 1930, according to which the central government would lose power in terms of directing municipal officials and upturning their decisions.¹²⁸ He then became a leading figure of the FRP, joined Fethi Bey on the eventful tour of Balıkesir and Izmir, and also, in 1930, wrote a novel, *Serbest İnsanlar Ülkesinde* [In the Land of the Free People]. The novel depicted a utopia thriving thanks to democracy, liberties and free criticism.¹²⁹ As is so often the case with utopias, this work was intended to pinpoint the shortcomings of the author’s present context. These actions led Ağaoğlu’s former allies in *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* to criticise him, with Falih Rıfkı defining him in November 1930 as a man ‘of Turkish origin, mixed language, and hybrid mentality’. Falih Rıfkı also charged him with flying the banner of democracy while, perhaps inadvertently, leading a rally of anti-republicans.¹³⁰ Ağaoğlu’s political activism cost him his position in Istanbul’s Darülfünun, where both politically and academically motivated reform transformed the institution into today’s Istanbul University in 1933 and radically reshuffled the academic staff.¹³¹

¹²⁸ ‘Mecliste Belediye Layıhasının Müzakeresi’, *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 28 March 1930, p. 1.

¹²⁹ See Ahmet Ağaoğlu, *Serbest İnsanlar Ülkesinde* (Sanayii Nefise Matbaası, 1930).

¹³⁰ Falih Rıfkı, ‘Politika’, *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 11 November 1930, p. 1.

¹³¹ Emre Dölen, *Türkiye Üniversite Tarihi 3: Darülfünun’dan Üniversiteye Geçiş. Tasfiye ve Yeni Kadrolar* (Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2010). On the broader education reform in early Republican Turkey and the perspective of Erich Auerbach, who arrived in the country as an expert, see Kader Konuk, ‘Erich Auerbach and the Humanist Reform to the Turkish Education System’, *Comparative Literature Studies*, 45.1 (2008), pp. 74-89.

Undeterred and in search of an outlet to disseminate his interpretation of Kemalism, Ağaoğlu founded the *Akın* daily newspaper in Istanbul in 1933. He also published a book titled *Devlet ve Fert* [The State and the Individual], largely dedicated to discrediting *Kadroist* and radical Kemalist arguments for collectivism and authoritarianism.¹³² Ağaoğlu was able to return to publishing for mainstream outlets such as *Cumhuriyet* by 1934 without shifting his outlook. In exploring regimes, Ağaoğlu sought to discredit fascism to bolster the case for parliamentary democracy. In September 1934, for example, he depicted the rise of fascism as a reaction to Bolshevism and the chaos it unleashed in Italy.¹³³ In Ağaoğlu's view, fascism in Italy, as well as Nazism in Germany, relied on brute force and particular individuals to overcome the chaos. He then pointed out the case of France as a counter-example, where 'the fascist peril was eliminated and parliamentarism continues on its path as before'. This was because the French were accustomed enough to liberty to see off both the chaos and the liberticide of fascism. Ağaoğlu was hopeful that even in Italy, fascism would crumble one day, as the democratic regime that humanity found through the experience of thousands of years would ultimately return.¹³⁴ The comparisons between democratic France and fascist Italy loomed large in Ağaoğlu's other pieces, too, with him observing in late 1935 that fascism, 'the illegitimate child of socialism', could never take root in the consciously democratic France where 'clear thinking still prevails'.¹³⁵

Occasionally, Ağaoğlu mocked Mussolini as 'an enemy of parliamentarianism'. Writing for *Cumhuriyet* in November 1934, Ağaoğlu conceded that Mussolini restored law and order and tackled the unemployment problem in Italy. Mussolini now pointed towards corporatism as the solution to Italy's remaining woes, and he noted that one could do anything

¹³² Ağaoğlu Ahmet, *Devlet ve Fert* (Sanayiinefise Matbaası, 1933).

¹³³ Note that Ağaoğlu's publications in *Cumhuriyet* began after the souring of the Turco-Italian state relations. The owner Yunus Nadi's intentions vis-à-vis the policy line of *Cumhuriyet* and fascism will be considered in detail in Chapter Five.

¹³⁴ Ahmet Ağaoğlu, 'Harpsunu Cereyanları', *Cumhuriyet*, 26 September 1934, p. 3.

¹³⁵ Ahmet Ağaoğlu, 'Sosyalizm ve Faşizm', *Cumhuriyet*, 15 December 1935, p. 3.

with faith. However, Ağaoğlu ironically noted how Mussolini had once placed his belief in syndicalism, too. 'Alas, faith too wears off over time'; so long as Mussolini had an entire country to experiment with his latest fashionable idea, he could continue try different systems.¹³⁶ In addition to its liberticide and its leader's toying with ideas at will, another problem of fascism, as well as Nazism, was their 'anti-humanism'. Ağaoğlu explained how Kemalism sought the reasoned middle ground of humanist nationalism. Whereas the fascists were aggressive towards other nations, Kemalism was defensive and sought cooperation whenever possible. Ultimately, humanitarian nationalism would prevail. just as socialism 'had to bow before the reality of nationalism', these, too, would necessarily become more humane.¹³⁷

Another pen in defence of the democracy that the radicals declared dead was Peyami Safa. In July 1933, Safa polemicised against *Vakit's* Selami İzzet Bey [Sedes], who thought Italo Balbo's aeronautical exploits proved the relative virility of fascism versus democracy. Safa noted that recent aeronautical successes included remarkable achievements by Americans and the British coming from staunchly democratic countries.¹³⁸ He then directly responded to the arguments of the *Kadroist* Burhan Asaf, whom he saw as one of the 'collectivists' hijacking Kemalism. Referring to a village teacher's letter to him on the need to clarify Kemalist ideology, Safa explained that this task was of utmost importance to convert the masses, and the radicals, 'these Turkish fascists', significantly compounded the issue. To illustrate how 'genuine Kemalism' was democratic, Safa then referred to myriad texts and speeches of Kemalists, from the name of the semi-official *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* that meant

¹³⁶ Ahmet Ağaoğlu, 'İtalyada Yeni Bir Tecrübe', *Cumhuriyet*, 27 November 1934, p. 3.

¹³⁷ Ahmet Ağaoğlu, 'Ulusçuluk, İnsancılıktır', *Cumhuriyet*, 9 July 1935, p. 3. Interestingly, Ağaoğlu defined Nazism as more obviously 'inhumane' than fascism, probably due to the former's racism and anti-fascism that was initially lacking or latent in fascism.

¹³⁸ Peyami Safa, 'Cevapsız Bırakmamak İçin', *Cumhuriyet*, 28 July 1933, p. 3. To return to the intentions of Yunus Nadi, notice that Peyami Safa's pieces were published at a time when, despite difficulties pertaining to the Four-Power Pact, Italy was still seen as an ally by Ankara. This highlights the importance of not seeing the diplomatic developments as the sole explanatory context.

‘popular sovereignty’ to speeches of the RPP’s leaders and textbooks intended to educate the people. If Kemalism had been fascist, it would surely abolish the parliament, placate the Caliphate, and imprison women in the kitchen. As a liberal Kemalist, Safa was open to debate such views so long as they did not pose as Kemalism.¹³⁹ Burhan Asaf’s reply that *Kadro* defended the originality of Kemalism from fascism did not change Safa’s view that ‘the methods of your system surely resemble those of fascists and national socialists’.¹⁴⁰ Safa also found the anti-democratic ideology of the radicals too dogmatic; he warned the readers against this ‘new Sharia’, the proponents of which Safa defined as ‘pseudo-intellectuals’ who were basically the old reactionaries born anew.¹⁴¹

The opposition to the radicals and their interpretations of Kemalism and fascism found echoes in Istanbul’s daily *Son Posta*. Published by the Sertel couple, Zekeriya and Sabiha, the newspaper was launched in July 1930 and sided with the FRP, which the democratic and socialist Sertels saw as finally bringing democracy to Turkey. A key tenet of *Son Posta*’s publications was explained by Zekeriya Bey: single-party regimes could exist in polities dominated by a single class or idea, as in Italy or Russia, but not in democracies.¹⁴² The incidents in Izmir did not turn Zekeriya Bey away from the opposition. He defined even the stoning of the pro-RPP *Anadolu* as ‘the protests were forced to stone the offices’.¹⁴³ With the FRP now in its downfall, Zekeriya Bey insisted on the need for a second party in November 1930 and observed the necessity of combining democratisation with Westernisation in December 1930, after the Menemen incident.¹⁴⁴ ‘We are trying to achieve within the lifetime of a single generation the progress the West obtained in a century’, and such reactions were

¹³⁹ Peyami Safa, ‘İnkılabımızın İdeolojisi’, *Cumhuriyet*, 29 July 1933, p. 3.

¹⁴⁰ Peyami Safa, ‘Bir Kadrocu Dostuma’, *Cumhuriyet*, 1 August 1933, p. 3.

¹⁴¹ Peyami Safa, ‘Sözde Münevverler’, *Cumhuriyet*, 12 August 1933, p. 3.

¹⁴² M. Zekeriya, ‘Fethi Beyin Yeni Fırkası’, *Son Posta*, 10 August 1930, p. 3.

¹⁴³ M. Zekeriya, ‘İzmirdeki Hadiselerin Hakiki Sebebi’, *Son Posta*, 8 September 1930, p. 3.

¹⁴⁴ M. Zekeriya, ‘İkinci Bir Fırkaya Mutlaka İhtiyaç Vardır’, *Son Posta*, 22 November 1930, p. 3.

to be expected and not cause a reaction to throw the baby out with the baby water.¹⁴⁵ Westernisation required 'respect for opinions of others', and as the Turks had long declared their intention 'to be Western and be governed by democracy', one could not abstract democratisation as distinct from or undesirable for Westernisation.¹⁴⁶ After all, respect for dissent was the cornerstone of British and French policy, as witnessed in their handling of Gandhi's and the far-left *L'Humanité's* publications.¹⁴⁷ Noting the allure and convenience of fascism and 'a government without checks', Zekeriya Bey warned against such extreme etatism where the state ruled for its sake. He was worried that the RPP was 'shifting towards fascism' in its attempts to tackle the Great Depression. Worse still, the RPP tended to see fascism as merely a system of government abstracted away from any of its economic innovations. He warned against this 'misguided move' and declared the fascist-inspired radical etatism as a system as obsolete as economic liberalism.¹⁴⁸

The fears of those who campaigned for liberal Kemalism against the increasing popularity of fascism as an example seemed to be coming true with the publications of Ali Naci Bey's [Karacan] *İnkılâp* and its campaign for a 'fascism-like regime in Turkey'. Against opposition and liberal Kemalists, *İnkılâp* downplayed the importance of freedom. The future *Kadroist* Yakup Kadri wrote in September 1930 that freedom was 'what obsolete romantic liberals demanded from fascist Italy of the 20th century'; such calls for freedom in Europe were now as obsolete as calling for Sharia in Turkey.¹⁴⁹ A month later, Ali Naci wondered if Italians, too, were a backward nation for desiring a single-party regime.¹⁵⁰ Turkey's regime had to suppress enemies of the revolution for 'at least fifty years' by becoming a 'fascism-like regime' rather than heeding to the calls for

¹⁴⁵ M. Zekeriya, 'Muvakkat Tedbir ve Devamlı Tedbirler', *Son Posta*, 31 December 1930, p. 3.

¹⁴⁶ M. Zekeriya, 'Fikirilere Hürmet Etmeliyiz', *Son Posta*, 18 September 1930, p. 3.

¹⁴⁷ M. Zekeriya, 'Bizde ve Onlarda Hürriyet', *Son Posta*, 16 September 1930, p. 3.

¹⁴⁸ M. Zekeriya, 'Halk Fırkasının Devletçi Siyaseti', *Son Posta*, 25 September 1930, p. 3.

¹⁴⁹ Yakup Kadri, 'Hürriyet İsteriz!', *İnkılâp*, 18 September 1930, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰ Ali Naci, 'Nereye Gidiyoruz?', *İnkılâp*, 11 October 1930, pp. 1–3.

freedom.¹⁵¹ Giving the concept of *inkılâp memleketleri* a decisively more anti-democratic tone, Ali Naci argued such regimes were needed in countries that have undergone revolutions. As the USSR and Italy realised, ‘what people need is not freedom but welfare’.¹⁵²

Ali Naci’s remarks caused much vitriol, even though he refused to back down and reiterated his calls for a proudly authoritarian Kemalism in the coming weeks.¹⁵³ His argument that Kemalism had to become what fascism was for Italy met with the criticism of Zekeriya Bey in *Son Posta*. If the radicals’ proposals were heeded, the rule of brute force and tyranny (*istibdat*) would ensue in Turkey. With a temporal argument, Zekeriya Bey observed that fascism, in its essence, was ‘nothing other than a lingering of the dark ages of monarchy’ and ‘the most powerful expression of reactionarism’ (*irtica*). Accordingly, Mussolini could be likened to ‘Eastern rulers of the old’. Kemalism had destroyed the edifice of Oriental despotism in Turkey by abolishing the Sultanate, but those who ‘wanted fascism’ wished to reduce Turkey into another regime of *istibdat*.¹⁵⁴ In Zekeriya Bey’s pen, fascism became an Eastern despotism that could teach nothing to Turkey, which was trying to Westernise to get away precisely from these sorts of regimes.

Opposition to radical Kemalism and the instrumentalisation of fascism as an example went beyond the circles of Ankara and Istanbul discussed above. İzmir, in particular, was a vibrant scene for both opposition to Kemalism and the radical and quietist interpretations of it by the

¹⁵¹ Ali Naci, ‘Evet, Biz Hürriyet Değil, Faşizm Gibi Bir İdare İstiyoruz!’, *İnkılâp*, 15 October 1930, p. 1; Ali Naci, ‘Faşizm Nedir? Niçin Faşizmden Korkuyorlar?’, *İnkılâp*, 23 October 1930, p. 1.

¹⁵² Ali Naci, ‘Evet, Biz Hürriyet Değil, Faşizm Gibi Bir İdare İstiyoruz!’.

¹⁵³ Ali Naci, ‘Bizim Fırkanın Acınacak Hali’ *İnkılâp*, 25 November 1930, pp. 1–2; Ali Naci, ‘İki Suale Bir Cevap’, *İnkılâp*, 28 November 1930, p. 1; Ali Naci, ‘Rusyada Nasıl Bir Komünizm, İtalyada Nasıl Bir Faşizm Varsa Bizde de Bir Kemalizm Olmalıdır’, *İnkılâp*, 2 December 1930, p. 1.

¹⁵⁴ M. Zekeriya, ‘Bizde de Faşizim İstiyenler Var!’, *Son Posta*, 14 October 1930, p. 3.

liberal Kemalists.¹⁵⁵ The city was where the failed assassination attempt of Mustafa Kemal in 1926 occurred and where the FRP leadership was more than warmly greeted in 1930. The city and its hinterland were well integrated into the global economy, particularly the agricultural markets, which meant the area was hit particularly hard by the Great Depression. The city also boasted educational institutions and an elite that few cities in the post-Ottoman landscape could rival.

The daily *Yeni Asır* was a hub of opposition to the radicals. In March 1931, the newspaper decried that the RPP was 'going towards fascism'.¹⁵⁶ One contributor interpreted the RPP's defence of the single-party regime as contradicting their proclaimed republicanism, a contradiction ultimately stemming from the party's desire to ignore 'the governance styles of civilised governments' and avoid criticism.¹⁵⁷ The contributor who wrote with the penname of A. A. observed that the RPP teemed with by adorers of Lenin and Bakunin and those who adhered to 'the school of fascism'.¹⁵⁸ A. A. argued that 'fascism has no place in Turkish democracy', as fascism was rooted in the idea of monarchy, the nemesis of Kemalism.¹⁵⁹ A crucial difference A. A. saw between Mustafa Kemal and Mussolini was that though the former, too, could be seen as a dictator, he relied not on brute force and fear but the genuine affection of the people.¹⁶⁰

In a similar perspective, *Yeni Asır*'s N. İ. criticised fascism from a non-relativistic perspective. It was not merely that fascism was bad for Turkey; led by Mussolini who was 'neither a genius nor a revolutionary', it was bad for Italy as well. Those who admired Mussolini in Turkey were those who wished for a similar dictatorial regime in Turkey, N. İ. felt. The reason he did not think Mussolini was a revolutionary was simple:

¹⁵⁵ On İzmir's importance to the Turco-Italian relations in commerce, intellectual history and diplomatic relations, see *Smirne e L'Italia: Comunità, Relazioni, Istituzioni*, ed. by Francesco Pongiluppi and Luis Miguel Selvelli (ETPBooks, 2022).

¹⁵⁶ 'Halkçılar Faşizme Doğru Gidiyorlar', *Yeni Asır*, 20 March 1931, p. 1.

¹⁵⁷ N. İ., 'Tek Fırka-Tek Dereceli İntihab', *Yeni Asır*, 15 March 1931, p. 1.

¹⁵⁸ A. A., 'Siyasi ve İktisadi Cephemiz', *Yeni Asır*, 17 March 1931, p. 1.

¹⁵⁹ A. A., 'Türk Demokrasisinde Faşizmin Yeri Yoktur', *Yeni Asır*, 24 March 1931, p. 1.

¹⁶⁰ A. A., 'Cumhuriyet Türkiyesinde Ne Faşizme, Ne de Mussolini Biçimi Diktatörlüklere Yer Vardır', *Yeni Asır*, 3 May 1931, p. 1.

Mussolini was a 'reactionary' who conspired with the Vatican to 'strengthen the reaction' [*irtica*]. As all revolutions of the time tended towards the left and freedom of conscience, this rendered fascism far from being a revolution.¹⁶¹ *Yeni Asır*'s contributors also criticised Turkey's official news agency, *Anadolu Ajansı*, for its coverage of the USSR and Italy, which they found too flattering towards dictatorial regimes, compared to the coverage of Spain marching towards a secular republic.¹⁶²

Yeni Asır sought to discredit positive portrayals of fascism and the Soviet regime by the radicals; this was a step towards checking the advance of radical Kemalism they feared. Mussolini was not a genius, fascism was not a revolution, and fascism had nothing useful to teach Turkey. This constantly negative coverage of Italy attracted the attention of Istanbul's *Il messaggero degli italiani* in May 1931. The newspaper was published in Italian and, while hosting pieces by non-fascists such as Ezio Bartolini, it was largely directed in cooperation with the Italian embassy.¹⁶³ *Il messaggero degli italiani* responded to *Yeni Asır*'s criticism by accusing the latter of inciting the violence that broke out in Izmir during Fethi Bey's visit in 1930. They found *Yeni Asır*'s non-stop incendiary publications vis-à-vis a friendly country and translations from European anti-fascists pointless. *Yeni Asır* instead transformed this move, effectively the literary equivalent of a cease-and-desist letter, into a trial of fascism. They wished to remind the Italians that 'as the current situation of the Turkish press has not yet been reduced to the level of the Italian press', they were not under obligation to express approval for any regime. Fascism was a regime of *istibdat*, they argued, echoing a common anti-radical Kemalist argument. The only thing *Yeni Asır* promised to *Il messaggero degli italiani* was the continuance of their efforts to keep fascism away from Turkey.¹⁶⁴ The Kemalists 'dislike every regime reliant on brute force and coercion', and they were rightly terrified of fascism as such a regime. *Yeni Asır*

¹⁶¹ N. İ., 'Mussolini Ne Bir Dahî, Ne de Bir İnkılapçıdır?..', *Yeni Asır*, 5 June 1931, p. 1.

¹⁶² A. A., 'Bizim Gibi', *Yeni Asır*, 12 July 1931, pp. 1-4 (p. 1).

¹⁶³ For example, see documents on and correspondence surrounding the newspaper in *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 245, I.56.

¹⁶⁴ 'Bir İtalyan Gazetesi Bizim Neşriyatımızdan Memnun Değil', *Yeni Asır*, 19 May 1931, p. 1.

reassured the Italians that 'contrary to what Europeans think', Turks would be able to build a thoroughly democratic society, which would have nothing to envy from the fascism that 'made peace with the two historical enemies of democracy: monarchy and the Church'.¹⁶⁵

Yeni Asır's contributors identified a faction within the RPP as deliberately shifting the party away from liberal democratic ideals, and they noticed the key role fascism played as an example in their arguments. Crucially, as *Yeni Asır's* İsmail Hakkı [Ocakoglu] observed, the radicals were not so much transformed by the 1930-31 crisis as weaponising the latter. Following the Menemen incident, the radicals effectively told the RPP 'did not we warn you about all this? Here, the serpent that is the reaction has arisen its head', İsmail Hakkı observed.¹⁶⁶ In its defence of liberal Kemalism, *Yeni Asır* was supported by İzmir's *Hizmet*, where commentators also identified a clear link between the instrumentalisation of fascism as an example in service of radical Kemalism. *Hizmet* was even more clearly on the side of the FRP during the 1930-31 crisis, going so far as to invite their readers to 'vote for the FRP'.¹⁶⁷ In September 1930, an anonymous contributor ironically congratulated the RPP for its 'turn to fascism' by 'doubling down its etatism'. The contributor observed that as the party was severing its links to the past's republicanism and liberalism, the RPP would also have to stop boasting about saving Turkey from autocracy since 'the difference between autocracy and fascism barely exceeds two millimetres'.¹⁶⁸ Quietism did not mean anything to *Hizmet's* F. M. either, since a country could either have a single-party regime or a democratic one with no middle ground.¹⁶⁹ *Hizmet's* contributors were horrified by

¹⁶⁵ Dr. Mustafa Ali, "'Il Messaggero Degli İtalyani" Gazetesine Cevap', *Yeni Asır*, 22 May 1931, p. 1.

¹⁶⁶ İsmail Hakkı, 'Ne İstediklerini Biliyoruz', *Yeni Asır*, 28 December 1930, p. 1.

¹⁶⁷ 'Reyinizi Serbes Fırkaya Veriniz', *Hizmet*, 29 September 1930, p. 1.

¹⁶⁸ 'CHF ve Faşizm', *Hizmet*, 25 September 1930, p. 1.

¹⁶⁹ F. M., 'Hadiseler Önünde', *Hizmet*, 11 September 1930, pp. 1-4.

the treatment of the pro-FRP crowds in Izmir, which they saw as another step towards a doubled-down authoritarianism by the RPP.¹⁷⁰

Much as *Yeni Asır*'s İsmail Hakkı identifying factions within the RPP, *Hizmet*, too, saw different cliques within the party. To explore these divisions, in October 1930, they published what they claimed was the series of reports that Ahmet Ağaoğlu sent to İsmet Pasha in the summer of 1926. The reports illustrated the RPP's sliding away from its early Republican and liberal days.¹⁷¹ *Hizmet*'s Orhan Rahmi [Gökçe] was among those who noticed the role fascism played in the radicals' arguments: what Turkey needed was working towards 'a normal republic', unlike a fascist-like one. Luckily, the latter project was futile due to the myriad socioeconomic, cultural and political differences between Italy and Turkey.¹⁷² But this futility did not stop the likes of Ali Naci from calling for a fascism-like Kemalism. A horrified Orhan Rahmi hoped Ali Naci was not the mouthpiece of the wider RPP leadership.¹⁷³

Hizmet published other pieces to minimise the odds of fascism serving as a regime example for Turkey. In August 1931, critics like Zeynel Besim and Hüseyin Hulki variously argued that the 'sick man' of the world was not democracy but the world itself, with fascism being a mere hallucination of the sick man; criticised Mahmut Esat Bozkurt for arguing that it was possible to be a democracy with a single-party; and described both communism and fascism as 'bankrupt dictatorships'.¹⁷⁴ They defended what Zeynel Besim called 'nationalist Turkish liberalism' against

¹⁷⁰ 'Fethi B. Bugün Şehrimize Geldi', *Hizmet*, 4 September 1930, p. 1; 'Beğendiniz Mi?', *Hizmet*, 5 September 1930, p. 1.

¹⁷¹ 'Ağaoğlu Ahmet Beyin 1926'da Verdiği Bir Rapor', *Hizmet*, 8 October 1930, pp. 1–2 (p. 1); 'Ağaoğlu Ahmet Beyin 1926'da Verdiği Bir Rapor', *Hizmet*, 10 October 1930, p. 1.

¹⁷² 'Faşizm Değil Normal Bir Cumhuriyet İhtiyacı Karşısındayız', *Hizmet*, 17 October 1930, p. 1.

¹⁷³ O. R. [Orhan Rahmi], 'Faşizm: Ali Naci Beyin Telkinleri Yerinde Değildir', *Hizmet*, 29 October 1930, p. 1.

¹⁷⁴ Zeynel Besim, 'Dünya Düzelmelidir', *Hizmet*, 2 August 1931, p. 1; Zeynel Besim, 'Demokraside Fırkalar', *Hizmet*, 12 August 1931, p. 1; Zeynel Besim, 'Biçare Fikirler', *Hizmet*, 31 August 1931, p. 1.

the likes of *Kadro's* Burhan Asaf.¹⁷⁵ Zeynel Besim also noted the contradictions between Falih Rifki's remarks on democracy and the RPP's official documents.¹⁷⁶ Both *Yeni Asır* and *Hizmet* felt 'free democracies such as Britain, the US and France' flourished thanks to freedom, while the USSR and Italy, much as Germany in the past with its 'national economics', were bound to wither away, with their peoples striving to reclaim their freedom.¹⁷⁷ They were certain that democracy would eventually triumph over fascism and Bolshevism, but they were extremely worried by the possibility that the radicals could successfully weaponise fascism as an example to crush democracy in Turkey in the meantime.¹⁷⁸ Izmir did not lack supporters for radical Kemalists, such as *Kültür*, with its early support for *Kadro*.¹⁷⁹ However, on the whole, the city with arguably some of the most intense contact with the Italians produced a disproportionate amount of intellectuals opposed to the derivation of ideological lessons from fascism.

Towards the late 1930s, the context rapidly evolved. Though the liberal Kemalist criticisms were not very effective in a direct sense, their portrayal of fascism as a Hamidian disaster likely contributed to the success of the quietists by rendering radical Kemalism too unpalatable for many. A range of other factors came to influence perceptions of fascism in Turkey in the late 1930s. One was the change fascism itself underwent, especially following the alliance with Nazi Germany, the associated rise of fascist racism and antisemitism, the increasingly aggressive foreign policy of Italy in the mid and late 1930s, and the souring of relations between Turkey and Italy. The following section will illustrate how, in this evolving context, many individuals continued to see Italy as an *inkılap memleketi* in the 1930s, though Nazism replaced fascism as 'the fascism' with each

¹⁷⁵ Zeynel Besim, 'Yeni Cereyan', *Hizmet*, 13 September 1931, p. 1.

¹⁷⁶ Zeynel Besim, 'Tezat Tezat Üstüne', *Hizmet*, 14 September 1931, p. 1.

¹⁷⁷ Doktor Mustafa Ali, 'İnkılap', *Hizmet*, 17 September 1931, p. 1. Doktor Mustafa Ali, 'Liberalizm-Devletçilik', *Hizmet*, 6 October 1931, p. 1.

¹⁷⁸ Zeynel Besim, 'Şaşkınlık Alameti', *Hizmet*, 8 October 1931, p. 1; Zeynel Besim, 'Nereye Gidiliyor?', *Hizmet*, 15 October 1931, p. 1.

¹⁷⁹ We will discuss this journal and circle more in-depth in Chapter Six.

passing day, and how Mussolini's remedial efforts paradoxically led more Turks to see fascism as a tributary of Nazism.

§ 3.4 Nazism as the new Fascism, and Italy as Still an *İnkılap Memleketi* in the 1930s

In 1933, the Nazis came to power in Germany following a decade of efforts. A long-time admirer of Mussolini, Adolf Hitler sought close cooperation with the fascists immediately. Mussolini had initially dismissed Hitler as irrelevant, though his rise to power was enough to force a rethinking.¹⁸⁰ One advantage of the rise of the uncompromising revisionist power of Nazi Germany was that Mussolini could now portray himself as a wise mediator, culminating in the Four-Power Pact of 1933.¹⁸¹ While ideological differences continued to trouble Italo-German relations in the coming year, the question of the South Tyrol and Austria was also an initial barrier to an alliance.¹⁸² Nevertheless, towards the late 1930s, Italy found itself in an ever-closer alliance with the Nazis. The calculation that the UK and France would disregard the Italian invasion of Abyssinia proved misjudged, as the invasion culminated with a cumbersome economic embargo imposed on Italy. The Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936, and Italy and Germany fought on the same side. By 1939, Italy was already engaged with Japan and Germany in a series of pacts and ultimately joined the Second World War in June 1940.

Many fascists were unhappy to be associated with what they deemed to be the extremities of the Nazi and other fascistoid movements. Leading figures such as Galeazzo Ciano, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and

¹⁸⁰ On the development of the relationship between fascism and Nazism, see Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini e Hitler: I Rapporti Segreti, 1922-1933* (Laterza, 2013).

¹⁸¹ On the role of the 'mediator' that Mussolini wished to play in Europe through the Four-Power Pact, see De Felice, *Mussolini Il Duce: Gli Anni del Consenso, 1929-1936* (Einaudi, 1974), p. 465.

¹⁸² For various occasions where the Italians weighed the Germans' intentions vis-a-vis the South Tyrol and where Hitler promised to recognise it as Italian, see Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini e Hitler: I Rapporti Segreti, 1922-1933* (Laterza, 2013), p. 4, pp. 12-15, p. 41.

Mussolini's son-in-law, as well as Balbo and Giuseppe Bottai, opposed entering the Second World War on the German side.¹⁸³ Already in 1932, Gilberto Primi, a Levantine journalist from Istanbul, felt obliged to chime in a Turkish debate on fascism and violence. The problem was, Primi observed, the fascism under discussion by Abidin [Daver] and Selami İzzet [Sedes] was that it focused on 'Russian fascism' following the assassination of the ex-President of France, Paul Doumer, by a 'Russian fascist', Paul Gorguloff. Primi insisted that the so-called 'Russian fascism' had nothing to do with real fascism, and observers too quickly stamped any movement from Finland to Germany as fascism. This shadowed the fact that 'fascism is a constructive force', not to be confused with the mere violence of others. Primi's conclusion sounded as much an argument against the modern literature on generic fascism as against his contemporaries: 'There can be nothing more meaningless and absurd than mixing up fascism with everything'.¹⁸⁴

The Primi interjection was only a foreshadowing of what was to come. A particularly troublesome possibility inherent in Nazism's rise was its potential to transform Berlin into the world capital of 'fascism'. From the early 1930s onwards, the fascist regime embarked on an enterprise to rally global fascistoid movements under the banner of Rome in a bid to both check Nazism and enhance fascism's global influence. Though largely unaware of these efforts, Turkish intellectuals were able to distinguish between fascism and Nazism, especially until the invasion of Abyssinia. For example, debates on fascism revolved around democracy and

¹⁸³ Emilio Gentile, *25 Luglio 1943* (Laterza, 2018), pp. 104–5, 135, 181. On the critiques the likes of Bottai and Balbo towards Germans, as well as the anti-German sentiments in the Italian population at the time, see Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini Il Duce: Lo Stato Totalitario, 1936-1940* (Einaudi, 1981), p. 474. On Ciano's regretful remarks that they had been 'tricked' by the Germans into 'an adventure that we did not want and that might compromise the regime and the country', see Galeazzo Ciano, *Diario* (Rizzoli Editore, 1946), I: 1939-1940, p. 141.

¹⁸⁴ [Abidin Daver], 'Yerinde Kullanılmayan Bir Kelime', *Cumhuriyet*, 10 May 1932, p. 3.

similar regime matters, with the feverish anti-Semitism and white supremacy of the Nazis seen as a difference.¹⁸⁵

Though many Kemalists, most prominently the *Kadroists*, were aware of the imperialism of fascism, the invasion of Abyssinia nevertheless changed much. While Turkey was not ready to throw itself in defence of the non-West globally, the Turkish intelligentsia sympathised with the Abyssinian resistance almost in unison. The Kemalist poet Behçet Kemal Çağlar wrote his poem *Habeşlere* (For the Abyssinians) in February 1935, where he voiced his desire for Addis Abeba to become ‘another Ankara’ and wrote that ‘every Abyssinian must now become somewhat Turkish’.¹⁸⁶ Less poetically and in a way reminiscent of the wishful thinking seen during the Matteotti crisis, the Turkish press continuously expected an imminent Italian routing. Unfounded or exaggerated reports of Abyssinian success against the Italians abounded in the newspapers, while *Yeni Asır* could expect as late as April 1936 an imminent Italian defeat with the commencement of the rain season.¹⁸⁷ *Yeni Asır*’s Şevket Bilgin criticised the Italian *mission civilisatrice* by wondering how gassing civilians and murdering children could amount to spreading civilisation. Bilgin also voiced a consequence of the invasion that particularly troubled many Turkish commentators: the invasion seemingly allowed any powerful state, particularly Western ones, to trample ‘small states’.¹⁸⁸ In *Ülkü*, Rahmi Apak echoed this observation by noting how the invasion showed anyone who felt strong enough could attack others with apparent impunity.¹⁸⁹ Mocking became a weapon to diminish the impact of the fascists’ intended *tour de force* in Abyssinia. *Cumhuriyet*’s Abidin Daver observed how Mussolini said only God could stop the will of fascism, though, thus far, fascism had only met the resistance of ‘the naked and *sansculotte*

¹⁸⁵ Tellingly, as we saw, the antisemitists in Izmir’s *İnkılap* referred to Hitler and not necessarily Mussolini as their example.

¹⁸⁶ Behçet Kemal Çağlar, ‘Habeşlere’, *Yücel*, March 1936, p. 17.

¹⁸⁷ ‘Habeş Çeteleri İtalyan Gerilerini Tehdit Edeceklerdir’, *Yeni Asır*, 11 April 1936, p. 1.

¹⁸⁸ Şevket Bilgin, ‘Bir Faciadan Alınan Uyanıklık Dersleri’, *Yeni Asır*, 3 April 1936, pp. 1–2 (p. 2).

¹⁸⁹ Rahmi Apak, ‘Türk Sporunun Yeni Yükümleri’, *Ülkü*, January 1936, pp. 345–48 (p. 347).

Abyssinians', whom the Italians managed to defeat thanks to 'money, weaponry, and mustard gas'.¹⁹⁰

In 1938, Italy took a decisive step in its alliance with Germany by approving the *leggi razziali*, which discriminated against the Jews, defined race, and took precautions to render Italy racially and culturally more homogeneous. While some fascists may have hoped the laws would help relations with the Nazis, the intention was not to give the impression of placating Germany. The laws were the outcome of an alliance with the Nazis, a growing suspicion of the fascists towards the 'global Jewish economic elite', whom they suspected of pushing for the sanctions against Italy in 1935, as well as increased contact between the locals and Italian officials in the new Italian Abyssinia.¹⁹¹

Contrary to fascist intentions, the *leggi razziali* was widely perceived as a submission of Italy to the Nazi will by much of the Turkish intelligentsia. In August 1938, *Cumhuriyet's* Muharrem Feyzi Togay observed that racism was not an original tenet of fascism. Its sudden appearance was owed to Mussolini's desire to move closer to his new German allies. Togay also noted that the *leggi razziali* sent the Vatican into panic as the second issue of contention between the fascists and Nazis was the question of Papacy: if Mussolini was placating the Nazis, the Pope had every reason to fear his next move.¹⁹² Togay clearly saw fascism by 1938 as so bent on falling in line with the Nazis that they could even sacrifice the Papacy. The fascist explanations of how *leggi razziali* were not Nazi-inspired but home-grown failed to impress Turkish observers. Writing for *Doğu*, Cihad Baban noted that 'everyone is convinced that Italy has adopted anti-Semitism inspired by Germany'. Baban theorised that

¹⁹⁰ [Abidin Daver], 'Faşizmin İradesi!', *Cumhuriyet*, 14 July 1936, p. 3.

¹⁹¹ De Felice observed that racism and anti-Semitism were not central tenets of Italian nationalism or fascism before the late 1930s. See De Felice, *Mussolini Il Duce: Lo Stato Totalitario, 1936-1940*, pp. 247–48. Tarquini instead traces the roots of the *leggi razziali* of 1938 to the roots of the fascist regime. Alessandra Tarquini, *Storia Della Cultura Fascista* (Il Mulino, 2011), p. 193.

¹⁹² Muharrem Feyzi Togay, 'İrkçılık', *Cumhuriyet*, 1 August 1938, p. 2.

antisemitism everywhere stemmed from economic troubles.¹⁹³ Turkish observers saw *leggi razziali* as something towards which Italy was pushed, by the Nazis or by economic troubles, and not as a natural outgrowth of fascist ideology as Mussolini and his race scientists hoped to portray the move.

By the time the Second World War broke out, the transformation of Nazism into *the* fascism was complete among the Turkish intelligentsia. Despite warnings from his close collaborators, Mussolini pushed ahead with the Nazi alliance and soon found to his terror that the Nazis never intended to wait until 1942 to initiate the war as promised.¹⁹⁴ As the *blitzkrieg* rolled over Poland, the Turkish press engaged in a heated debate over whether Turkey was to side with the ‘fascists’ or the democratic powers, with the crucial difference that the most active ‘fascist’ actor in terms of both conducting propaganda in the country and acting in the global scene was Nazi Germany.¹⁹⁵ Efforts of Balbo at home and Primi in Istanbul failed, as Nazism effectively swallowed fascism in Turkey.

A more continuous theme in the 1930s was the perception of Italy as an *inkılap memleketi*, much as in the 1920s. Even feverishly anti-fascist publications such as *Yeni Asır* referred to Italy, the USSR, Czechoslovakia, and later, Nazi Germany as *inkılap memleketleri*, from whom Turkey could import organisational techniques.¹⁹⁶ This way of thinking retained

¹⁹³ Cihad Baban, ‘İtalyada da Irkçılık Cereyanı Açığa Vuruldu’, *Doğu*, 10 August 1938, pp. 1–3.

¹⁹⁴ De Felice, *Mussolini Il Duce: Lo Stato Totalitario, 1936-1940*, p. 177. On Mussolini’s recognition of the alarming state of readiness of the Italian armed forces in the wake of the Second World War, see De Felice, *Mussolini Il Duce: Lo Stato Totalitario, 1936-1940*, pp. 534–35.

¹⁹⁵ A prominent pro-democratic side was led by the Sertel couple. Interestingly, a contributor to *Cumhuriyet* that was frequently accused of being a fascist sympathiser was Peyami Safa, whose remarks against the radical Kemalists from the mid-1930s we saw above. Whether Safa was a Nazi sympathiser during the war goes well beyond the scope of this thesis, though the findings of this chapter suggest in any case, he cannot be regarded as a fascist sympathiser in the mid-1930s.

¹⁹⁶ On 7 February 1933, A. A. wrote of several *inkılap memleketleri* and their youth organisations: *Balilla* in Italy, *Sokol* in Czechoslovakia, and Octoberists in Russia. A revolution could only rely upon the social strata created directly by that revolution, A. A. observed.

independence from the more immediately ideological borrowings from or rejections of fascism seen above. Attempts to draw from other *inkılap memleketleri* were present in the 1920s, especially after the PRP's rise and fall, though it was arguably the 1930-31 crisis that created more orchestrated efforts towards a systematic investigation of what made other revolutions succeed. In 1932, the RPP's general secretariat notified certain embassies in Europe that deputy Hasan Cemil [Çambel] was tasked with studying youth organisations worldwide.¹⁹⁷ The embassies were instructed to assist Hasan Cemil in this task, which was defined as 'perfecting and strengthening Turkish youth, physically and intellectually'. Hasan

Regrettably, Turkey did not have a similar youth organisation to link the youth to the regime. Nine days later, he revisited the idea of *inkılap memleketleri* and argued that 'while there are differences between Ankara on the one hand, and Moscow and Rome on the other', they had certain things in common. The most striking of these was that they were all creating new societies and citizens in ancient countries. It would then not be inappropriate to derive certain valuable lessons of propaganda and organisation from these countries. This voicing of the *inkılap memleketleri* conceptualisation did not amount to an overall revision in the position of *Yeni Asır* vis-à-vis fascism; much as in the 1920s, this amounted to a compartmentalisation of fascism between ideological content and external form. In August 1933, a series of responses to a survey by *Yeni Asır* on how to best organise Turkish youth touched upon the subject of fascism. On 15 August 1933, Dr Necati Kemal, a prominent name in the intellectual life of İzmir, declared that the real alternative was between the old and new lifestyles: the old was 'democracy', and the new was 'socialism'. Fascism stood between these two alternatives but did not in and of itself represent a new social order. It was merely a stepping stone. Hence, 'nations that are on the verge of a cliff cling onto that rotten plank called fascism'. Two days later, largely concurring with Dr Necati Kemal on the value of fascism in the modern world, Dr Faik Muhittin Bey interpreted fascism as a regressive and reactionary movement that represented a step backwards in the 'matured and progressive course of civilised humanity' (*beşeriyet-i mütemeddeninin mütekamil ve müterakki seyrinde*). Throughout 1934 and 1935, *Yeni Asır* writers kept referring to democracy as an ideal for Turkey, cited France and the French Revolution as positive examples, and refrained from using fascism as a positive ideological example. While the criticism of the RPP and the single-party regime was much more toned down once the 1930-31 crisis was surpassed, *Yeni Asır* remained committed to democracy as an ideal and shunned fascism as more obsolete than parliamentarianism.

¹⁹⁷ 'Yugoslavya ve Çekoslovakya'daki Sokol Teşkilatı Hk.', 18 August 1932, p. 97, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1107-41-1.

Cemil was greeted by the Turkish ambassador in Rome, Vasıf [Çınar], who personally introduced him to Achille Starace, the general secretary of the fascist party. As Vasıf Bey reported back to Ankara with a report dated 23 September 1932, Starace ordered ‘two of his friends’ [fellow fascists] involved in youth organisations to provide the information the Turks requested. One of these ‘friends’ of Starace indeed reported to the Turkish embassy and met with Hasan Cemil, with the duo establishing a ‘modus operandi’ about the transferring process of know-how.¹⁹⁸ Similarly, in August 1931, İhsan Bey of the Ministry of Health turned to the Italian embassy in Turkey and requested documents on the *Balilla* and *Avanguardisti*.¹⁹⁹ In both cases, it appears that the contact did not lead to any palpable development of a kindred organisation in Turkey.

High-ranking individuals within the regime also saw it as their duty to contemplate other *inkılap memleketleri* and their lessons. Kazım Paşa [Dirik], the governor of İzmir between 1926 and 1935 and a friend of Mustafa Kemal, observed in a report how ‘countries that were forced to make a revolution’ in the post-war context, such as Italy and Russia, sought to sever ideological links between fathers and children. He quickly explained that the task before the Turkish revolutionaries was greater, as they were ‘not only changing regimes but even changing perspectives on our history’. A thorough youth organisation could help educate the youth in line with this new perspective. Kazım Paşa went on to provide bureaucratic details about the organisation to be founded, from its headquarters (Ankara) to who would lead its branches in villages (‘headmaster of the school and a select committee’).²⁰⁰ Yet another report featured its author – a pen-written note which suggests this, too, was the work of Kazım Paşa – addressing fellow members of the RPP with the following words: ‘Friends; today, countries that experience revolutions (*inkılap*

¹⁹⁸ ‘Yugoslavya ve Çekoslovakya’daki Sokol Teşkilatı Hk.’, 23 September 1932, p. 95, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1107-41-1.

¹⁹⁹ Mevlüt Çelebi, *Türkiye-İtalya Siyasi İlişkileri (1923-1939)* (Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2020), p. 400.

²⁰⁰ ‘Rahmi Apak, Naili Meran ve Carl Diem’in Gençlik Teşkilatları ve Spor Eğitimi Üzerine Hazırladıkları Raporlar’, 1937, p. 187, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1107-43-1.

yaşayan memleketler) have gone so far as to have their [youth] organisations embrace their members [the country citizens] from the moment of their birth.’²⁰¹ In a report dated 3 September 1933, likely the same individual observed that the post-war conditions necessitated regime changes in certain defeated countries. The new conditions, as exemplified by ‘the Russians, the Italians and Hungarians, the Czechoslovakians and the Germans, who are once more sprinting towards a more disciplinary style’, meant that a child had to become a Kemalist from conception. The report proposed a Turkish youth organisation to be named *Türk Kemal Gençliği* (Turkish Kemal Youth)²⁰², specified how it would have unique uniforms, indicated the age limits of this organisation (between eight and twenty-three years of age), and went into detail about its structure. The examples of *Komsomol* in the USSR and fascism in Italy and how they incorporated nearly the entire youth of their countries within their ranks illustrated the need for a parallel organisation in Turkey.²⁰³

The increasing German influence was apparent in the *inkılap memleketleri* way of thinking, too, as the author of the report complained of how tasking a foreigner to organise the Turkish youth was misguided.²⁰⁴ The foreigner in question was the world-famous German sports administrator Dr Carl Diem, who was part of the task force to organise a youth and sports organisation for Turkey. Diem visited Turkey in the autumn of 1933 and wrote in-depth reports on the details of a prospective youth organisation for the country.²⁰⁵ To the usual list of the USSR, Italy,

²⁰¹ ‘Gençlik Teşkilatı Hakkında Rapor ile Gençliğin Milli Talim ve Terbiyesi Hakkında Kanun’, 1934, p. 17, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1107-42-1.

²⁰² The name of the suggested organisation likely sheds light on the prominence of Germany as an *inkılap memleketi* after the Nazis’ rise to power. The Italian and other organisations did not feature the name of Mussolini or other leaders but the Nazi youth organisation was named *Hitler Jugend*, which means ‘Hitler Youth’ in German.

²⁰³ ‘Gençlik Teşkilatı Hakkında’, 3 September 1933, pp. 1–8, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1107-42-1.

²⁰⁴ ‘Gençlik Teşkilatı Hakkında’, *BCA*, p. 2.

²⁰⁵ See Diem’s reports in ‘Rahmi Apak, Naili Meran ve Carl Diem’in Gençlik Teşkilatları ve Spor Eğitimi Üzerine Hazırladıkları Raporlar’, *BCA*, pp. 53–144. Also see ‘Beden ve

Czechoslovakia, and occasionally Hungary and Yugoslavia, Germany was now firmly added; among the embassies notified of Hasan Cemil's visit was Berlin. Still, Italy's prominence as an *inkılap memleketi* did not as easily yield to the rise of Nazism as in the more ideological perceptions. When the RPP closed the Turkish Hearths (*Türk Ocakları*) and sought to replace them by establishing the People's Houses in 1932, an example from abroad that was under study by the party was the *Dopolavoro*.²⁰⁶ In the literature, the influence of *Dopolavoro* on the People's Houses is widely seen as a sign of Kemalism's increased authoritarianism.²⁰⁷ Referring to the official texts citing *Dopolavoro*, Erhan Berat Fındıklı even concluded that this institution, and not other European institutions cited in varying lengths in the text, must have served as the primary inspiration for the People's Houses.²⁰⁸

Gençlik Terbiyesi Teşkilatı Kurmak İçin Almanya'dan Gelecek Olan Dr. Carl Diem'in Gelişi Hakkında Yazışmalar', 1938, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1116-75-2.

²⁰⁶ 'Halkevleri Örgüt, Yönetim ve Çalışma Öğreneği', *Yeni Türk Mecmuası*, August 1935, pp. 2268-82 (p. 2268). *C.H.F. Halkevleri Talimatnamesi* (Hakimiyeti Milliye Matbaası, 1932), p. 4.

²⁰⁷ Tunçay emphasises the impact of the *Dopolavoro* and German Nazi organisations despite mentioning the examples of Britain, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. See Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek-Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması (1923-1931)* (Yurt Yayınları, 1981), pp. 320-21. Ünver mentions the *Dopolavoro* as the prime influence, though also notes this should not be seen as imitation. See Cennet Ünver, 'Images and Perceptions of Fascism Among the Mainstream Kemalist Elite in Turkey, 1931-1943' (unpublished master's thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2001), pp. 62-66. Ayşegül Baykan also noted the influence of *Dopolavoro* without much further discussion. Ayşegül Baykan, 'Italy and Turkey Between the World Wars: A Comparison on the Politics of Aesthetics', in *Italia e Turchia Tra Passato e Futuro: Un Impegno Comune, Una Sfida Culturale*, ed. by Esra Danacıoğlu Tamur and Fabio L. Grassi (Nuova Cultura, 2009), pp. 159-68 (pp. 165-66). An interesting aspect of these discussions is the reification of Kemalism. Even in Ünver's study, where the author strives to consider not Kemalism *tout court* but Kemalist factions, the observations on the People's Houses and *Dopolavoro* seem to capture the entirety of Kemalism, which further encapsulates the importance of a more deflationary and individualistic interpretation of this ideology.

²⁰⁸ Erhan Berat Fındıklı, 'Tek Parti Döneminde Türkiye'de Halkevleri ve İtalya', *Arredamento*, 263 (December, 2012), pp. 100-111 (p. 101). Fındıklı's argument may rely on

Dopolavoro played an important part in engendering the zenith of the consent, the *consenso*, that fascism enjoyed in the 1930s in Italy. Importantly, part of *Dopolavoro's* popularity derived from organising activities in which the Italian masses enjoyed partaking. As Victoria De Grazia noted in her *The Culture of Consent*, the activities of *Dopolavoro* included 'an entire range of traditional popular pastimes'. It was in part due to such activities that many Italians sent letters of gratitude to Starace and Mussolini in the 1930s, the genuineness of which is not to be doubted, De Grazia observed.²⁰⁹ While an explicit citation in the official text, *Dopolavoro's* approach significantly differed from the People's Houses. Whereas the former, in part, aimed to bring the masses closer to fascism through popular entertainment, the latter began work by organising grandiose Western classical music concerts in Ankara.²¹⁰ Over time, their activities came to include conferences on matters of ideology, global affairs, culture (including conferences on Latin poetry, Shakespeare and Byron!²¹¹) and history, as well as more interactive activities, plays, and social activities designed to help the locals' daily lives. The main rationale behind the People's Houses was the idea that the regime had to improve the cultural and intellectual level of the Turkish masses. This is why *pace* Ünver, the way cultural education trumped ideological-political education in the People's Houses is less a failure of operation than a design feature.²¹² The point of Western classical music was that this music was thought to 'improve' people, and the People's Houses were designed precisely for such

the fact that a few more lines were dedicated to the *Dopolavoro* in the official text on the establishment of the People's Houses or, alternatively, the perceived similarity between the functions of the two institutions.

²⁰⁹ Victoria De Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 164–65.

²¹⁰ For merely one example among many others, see 'Dünkü Konser', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 12 March 1932, pp. 1–4.

²¹¹ See a list of conferences to be held in 1938 in 'Ankara ve İstanbul Halkevlerinde Verilen Konferanslar', 1938, pp. 2–3, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 4-18-21.

²¹² Ünver, 'Images and Perceptions of Fascism Among the Mainstream Kemalist Elite in Turkey, 1931-1943', p. 64.

improvement rather than creating consent through entertainment or subtly inserted ideological messages.²¹³

A more pertinent problem with singling out *Dopolavoro* as the definitive inspiration for the People's Houses is that a number of other examples were cited in the foundational text mentioned by Fındıklı. Examples included the Czechoslovakian *Sokol* (another *inkılap memleketi* organisation, and extremely popular in Turkey from the 1920s, as we saw in Chapter Two) and radio societies in the United Kingdom. Both cases involved democratic associations. Similarly, Hasan Cemil did not visit Berlin, Rome, and Moscow alone; he also studied the Sokol of staunchly democratic Czechoslovakia and the much-ignored case of Hungary.²¹⁴ While Hungary in the 1930s was far from being a proud democracy under the reign of the Regent Miklos Horthy, Hasan Cemil was particularly interested in the Hungarian Boy Scouts, a self-defined democratic association. As a Turkish student in Budapest, Ömer Necati observed in 1933 that this organisation took pride in how it was governed democratically; Ömer Necati also wished for the establishment of a similar youth organisation in Turkey.²¹⁵

While the interest in Italy as an *inkılap memleketi* was stronger than ever in the 1930s, with the *Balilla*, *Dopolavoro*, and, as we will see in Chapter Six, the museums exhibiting particular influence, we must resist the allure of interpreting this interest as the same as the interest Falih Rıfkı felt towards fascism. To further illustrate how positive beliefs and values could be combined with an interest in fascist practice, let us consider another example. The archives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

²¹³ In an interview for a German newspaper in 1929, Mustafa Kemal drew from Montesquieu to argue that there was a strict and causal relationship between a nation's level of civility and its taste in music. This is why, he explained, the Turkish leadership aimed to reform the Byzantine type of music found in parts of Anatolia with modern, Western-inspired music. See *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri* (Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1997), III, p. 182.

²¹⁴ 'Yugoslavya ve Çekoslovakya'daki Sokol Teşkilatı Hk.', *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1107-41-1.

²¹⁵ 'Ömer Necati to Kazım Pasha, Deputy for Izmir', 5 August 1933, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1106-38-1.

contain correspondence between Nusret Kemal and the Italian officials from 1931. We already saw above how Nusret Kemal was decisively anti-fascist; in this correspondence, we see him inquiring the Italian side if they have any books or brochures explaining the fascist approach to the education of the rural masses.²¹⁶ The dominant research programme in the literature would lump this correspondence along with the more ideological perceptions of fascism seen in the works of Ağaoğlu or Falih Rifkî; in light of the concept of the *inkılap memleketleri*, however, we can now explain how it was possible for Turkish intellectuals to strongly dislike (or, in the case of many others, not feel anything at all) the anti-democratic aspects of fascist ideology while appreciating fascism's methods of 'public education'. Such perceptions of fascist Italy as an *inkılap memleketi* continued in the 1930s, even after the souring of the state-level relations or the trumping of fascism by Nazism.

§ 3.5 Conclusion

In the introduction to this study, I have discussed the tendency of the literature to reify Kemalism, especially with regard to views of fascism and democracy. We have seen that, whether supporting the tutelage theory or seeing Kemalism as a totalitarian ideology, most scholars assumed that Kemalists' views of fascism form a rather unified landscape. Despite valuable attempts towards identifying different Kemalist sections by Cennet Ünver, Ertan Aydın or Mete Tunçay, there is as yet no consensus on how exactly Kemalists varied in terms of their views of authoritarianism and whether their differences were significant enough to warrant a categorisation into different factions. This chapter has argued that there are quite strong contrasts between the ways different individuals interpreted Kemalism and fascism, and it certainly makes more sense to posit factions

²¹⁶ See the correspondence between Nusret Kemal, the Italian Embassy in Turkey, and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and National Education in the spring of 1931 in *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 255, st 3.II.139.

than assume they must all belong to the same, single category of the Kemalism.

Another, even more prevalent assumption in the literature has been the tendency to assume that both perceptions of fascism and the intense interest in fascist Italy, as well as the USSR, began in the 1930s. *Prima facie*, this assumption sounds reasonable: with the advent of what I have called the 1930-31 crisis, the RPP would shift towards more authoritarian solutions as a whole, in 'shock' of the Menemen incident and other moments of crises. Interpreting perceptions of fascism in Turkey in the 1930s in light of the factions proposed in this chapter, and the findings of Chapter Two, the plausibility of this theory is greatly reduced. The continuity in the ways of thinking is too great not to present an anomaly for this theory. The main contribution of this chapter to the literature is then that once we avoid reification, it emerges that different Kemalist factions had different interpretations of fascism and democracy, which remained surprisingly stable from the early 1920s to the mid or late 1930s.

Despite positive views of Italy appearing more prominent in the Turkish press during the zenith of Italo-Turkish relations between 1928 and 1934, perceptions of fascism did not mimic the trend of state-level relations. Though unwavering in support for Kemalist foreign policy, many figures of opposition such as Ahmet Ağaoğlu or Zekeriya Bey viscerally opposed fascism between 1928 and 1934; even individuals such as Nusret Kemal could criticise fascism in no uncertain terms in semi-official outlets such as *Ülkü* and *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*. Though the government did occasionally move to restrict the vitriol against allies, this did not mean they could dictate what Peyami Safa or *Yeni Asır*'s contributors from Izmir thought when Gilberto Primi interjected their discussions.

In many cases, we have seen that, as expected from mental holism, there were quite constant links between perceptions of fascism and perceptions of democracy. The idea was that generally, beliefs, desires, and intentions of an individual are connected with other beliefs, desires, and intentions of hers. This chapter has sought to put this insight into practice and use perceptions of fascism as leverage for identifying different interpretations of Kemalism and democracy. We have seen that those like

Ahmed Ağaoğlu or İsmail Hakkı Ocakoğlu thought Turkey had to become a democracy, and because they saw Kemalism as an ultimately democratic ideology, they disliked fascism. They, and other liberal Kemalists as well as opponents of Kemalism, vehemently opposed the idea that fascism proved the bankruptcy of democracy. If anything, as Peyami Safa argued, such claims were not to be advanced in the RPP, the very name of the semi-official daily of which was 'popular sovereignty', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*.

An alternative was found in the works and deeds of whom I have called the radicals, such as Falih Rıfkı and the *Kadroists*. Just as in liberal Kemalists, the beliefs and desires of these individuals regarding fascism were reliably related to their beliefs and desires regarding democracy. These individuals felt democracy was problematic for a number of reasons. Democracy was perhaps the reflection of a certain developmental pattern unique to the West and thankfully foreign to Turkey, or perhaps, with the current level of cultural development in the country, democracy would ultimately place 'reactionaries' in power. Another alternative, which ultimately became the official position of the RPP, was simply ignoring fascism as an example, insisting on the democratic credentials of Kemalism but deferring ballots indefinitely. This was the 'quietist' alternative most prominent in the works of Recep Peker and other members of the *Ülkü* circle. They insisted that Kemalism and the Turkish regime were somehow democratic; though they typically kept quiet on how exactly Turkey was a democracy, Peker sometimes referred to Switzerland and France to make his arguments. Just as the lack of referenda and direct democracy in France did not make it less democratic than Switzerland, the contemporary and regrettable lack of direct elections in Turkey did not mean it was less democratic than France. Other allies of Peker, such as Nusret Kemal or Mehmet Saffet, were more vocal in their support of democracy and criticism of authoritarianism; they insisted that through education, Turkey would one day become a complete democracy.

In these debates on democracy and fascism, arguments based on temporality were ubiquitous. In an age where all that was new seemed unstoppable, different factions raced to claim their currency and the

obsoleteness of their opponents. The *Kadroists* mocked the liberal *Yeni Adam* [the *New Man*] and *Fikir Hareketleri* [*Intellectual Movements*]; there was nothing new in *Yeni Adam* and no movement whatsoever in *Fikir Hareketleri*, who defended ideas of the French Revolution well past their expiry dates. The opponents in Istanbul and Izmir replied in kind by claiming parallels between the worldviews of fascists, the radical Kemalists, and the ‘old Eastern despots’ like Abdulhamid II. Wary of this connection that could reduce radical Kemalism to a mere *istibdat*, Falih Rıfkı repeatedly sought to emphasise differences between ‘old Eastern despotisms’ on the one hand and modern dictatorships such as fascist Italy and Soviet Russia. He and his allies insisted that those who remained infatuated with the liberal democracy of previous centuries were no different than reactionaries bent on making Turks live by the rules of Arabia of the 7th century: both were *softas* of sorts. The very basis of the *Kadroist* worldview was that there was a temporal order of succession between different ideologies; the 18th-century liberalism and democracy were substituted by the more ‘rational’ fascism and communism, to be replaced in time by ‘regimes of national liberation’ led by Turkey. As Turkey followed the Western developmental pattern from a few centuries behind, this delay meant they could successfully prevent the development of class warfare and chaotic liberal democracy in Turkey. Such arguments did not convince opposition figures, who insisted on decrying how the RPP sought to take the country centuries back by importing Abdulhamid-like regimes from abroad. Nearly everyone was convinced that the new was better; great complexity emerged when it became apparent that what exactly was new was precisely the thing to debate.

In addition to temporality, factions also strove to define the West and Europe. Though these two concepts were typically distinct and, at times, even opposed in anti-American arguments in Europe, they were virtually interchangeable in the context of the works analysed in this thesis. Beyond the *Kadroists*, basically, no faction denied the importance of the West for Kemalism and Turkey’s development. Virtually everybody agreed there were some useful lessons to derive from the West that could go beyond importing technology. For liberal Kemalists and opponents of

Kemalism, the ideas of the West and Europe were inseparable from the ideas of democracy and freedom of expression, or indeed, the path to development. As Ahmed Ağaoğlu argued, the very reason for the divergence between the West and the rest was that the West allowed freedom to the individual in a democratic setting, which also bolstered development and wealth, whereas the East oppressed individual initiative. For most, countries such as France and the UK remained the essence of the West and Europe, and despite occasional troubles, they remained staunchly democratic. Some liberals and anti-Kemalists argued that there was no point in arguing that Kemalism was Westernising or modernising Turkey without democratisation. The likes of Falih Rıfkı and Yakup Kadri vehemently opposed such claims; though the USSR too was often used as an example, with its impeccably Western credentials, fascist Italy was an excellent opportunity for the radicals. As figures ranging from Falih Rıfkı to Ali Naci argued, Italy was far from being a backwards or Asiatic country; yet, as a country of undeniable Western and European credentials, they proudly had an anti-democratic single-party regime. The scramble to define the West and Europe was foundational to debates on fascism, democracy, and Kemalism in Turkey in the 1920s and 1930s. In the succinct words of Falih Rıfkı, the question was the future direction of the West and Europe. If he was right and fascism represented the future of the West, then Turks had better stop restricting themselves to the liberal principles of a long-gone West. If, instead, the opponents were right and the West and Europe were ultimately bound to be democratic, and fascism was nothing but a temporary hallucination of a sick man, as Zekeriya Sertel argued, then democracy would be restored in Europe and established in Turkey.

The ideas of the West and Europe also popped up in Turkish perceptions of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, where, virtually regardless of their views of democracy, many Turks saw the British and French to be initially acting in unison with Italy as a fellow European nation. In the following chapters, shifting the focus of the thesis more towards Italian sources, we will see that the Europeanness of Turkey and fascism, and which ideology constituted the core of Europe and the West, were questions with a bearing on Italian perceptions of Kemalism, too. Ironically,

we shall see that such concepts acquired even greater importance in the Italian intellectual scene with the attempts to clarify the relationship between Nazism and fascism, just as many Turks were beginning to see fascism in Italy as secondary to Nazism. In the evolution of such perceptions, the invasion of Abyssinia, the alliance of Italy and Germany, and contrary to fascists' intentions, the promulgation of *leggi razziali* of 1938 played important roles. Some Turkish observers even expected fascists to follow the Nazi example and take steps against the privileged role of the Vatican in Italian cultural life, following the *leggi razziali*.

One exception to the connections between perceptions of fascism and democracy was the *inkılap memleketleri* way of thinking, identified in Chapter Two and found to persist in the 1930s. This way of thinking continued throughout the 1930s and gained increased currency due to the fact that the claimed stability of authoritarian states became more credible in Turkey in the aftermath of the 1930-31 crisis. Hence, individuals and the state alike sought remedies for the perceived crisis in countries such as Italy and the USSR, but also Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mexico and Yugoslavia, all seen in some way as *inkılap memleketleri*. As indicated already in Chapter Two, it is conceptually indispensable to distinguish between this way of thinking, with its focus on practical benefits for a 'new regime', and other ways of thinking identified above, where the focus was on democracy. Some individuals continued to see in fascist Italy a successful example of a country that has recently undergone a revolution, an *inkılap memleketi*, and utilised fruitful methods of propaganda and public education which could be stripped away from its ideological content and used as a mere technique in Turkey. It appears that in drawing from Italian, as well as Yugoslavian or Czechoslovakian institutions for the establishment of the People's Houses, the responsible individuals, including Recep Peker, thought of Italy more as an *inkılap memleketi* than a source of anti-democratic lessons. That Nusret Kemal [Köymen] studied fascist rural education does not mean he disliked democracy or was unaware of the 'contradiction' in his views, if interpreted in light of the *inkılap memleketleri* way of thinking.

With these observations, we shift our attention towards Italy. Thus far, this study has attempted to analyse Turkish perceptions of fascism in line with certain factions and in light of certain domestic and international developments. The following chapters will aim to do much the same by following the traces of who interpreted Kemalism how, based on primary sources from contemporary newspapers, journals, monographs, as well as personal and state archives contained in Rome and beyond.



Turkey from 'Porta Chiusa' to 'Civiltà Europea': Italian Perceptions of Kemalism in the 1920s

Fascists and anti-fascists alike in Italy closely observed the Turkish War of Independence (1919-23). Bitter for the way their coveted prospective Anatolian colonies ended up as parts of the Greek 'Ionia', most fascists and nationalists watched the Greek plans falter with delight. Some had predicted Greek defeat earlier, from the nationalist Francesco Coppola, who foresaw Turkish victory already in September 1919, to Carlo Manetti, who noted that Greeks were better cooks than warriors.¹ A trendsetter in predicting Turkish victory, Coppola and his journal, *Politica*, tried their hand in 1921 at foreshadowing the downturn in Italo-Turkish relations. This time, they were worried that Turks did not intend to reciprocate Italian support for their independence and instead drew ever closer to the dangerously anti-Western force of Bolshevism.

Precisely this alliance between the Bolsheviks and Kemalists endeared Kemalism to many socialists, especially the revolutionary socialists. Their flagship newspaper, *Avanti!*, enthusiastically supported the Kemalist struggle, warned the 'voracious' Greek leadership of impending Soviet crushing of their armies of Anatolia if necessary, and delighted at the prospect of a new, more equal Western civilisation arising from the

¹ Carlo Manetti, *L'Anatolia* (R. Bemporad & F. Editori, 1922), p. 84.

efforts of Kemalists in Turkey and socialists in Europe. By the end of the war, it emerged that Kemalism intended to Westernise Turkey thoroughly. What exactly this Westernisation entailed, to what extent it could succeed, and whether it was desirable in a global or Turkish context were all questions extensively debated by fascist and anti-fascist intellectuals in the mid and late 1920s. Indeed, such discussions trumped the popularity of what we shall call a 'colonial literature' on Anatolia, whereby the Italian public was prepared for and informed about this prospective Italian colony, the commercial opportunities therein, as well as an extensive focus on its ancient Roman heritage. The colonial literature portrayed Anatolia as ever-Italian despite centuries of 'misgovernment' by the Turks. Socialists never partook in this literature, and even the right-wing circles dropped it for alternatives by the late 1920s.

As this brief overview attests, Italian perceptions of Kemalism in the 1920s offer an infinite variety of ways of thinking, all with links to global themes, from worries about the fall of Europe to a perceived global trend towards secularisation. Whether coming from fascist or anti-fascist minds, these Italian perceptions have remained unexplored thus far. This chapter will analyse the way Kemalism was seen variously as a builder of slave markets where Christian girls were sold, a destroyer of the picturesque Orient so masterfully described by the French author Pierre Loti in the previous century, a triumphant victor over European imperialism, a forceful leveller of genders, an example for other 'Eastern' nations, a type of excessive xenophobia, or an effort to redefine borders of the West. The chapter will shed light on how, for certain anti-fascists, thinking about Kemalism meant finding an example for a non-fascist future of Italy. The example of Kemalism figured in debates on whether dictatorship could ever be justified in this context. Similarly, it will become evident that conservatives and fascists thought about Turkey in relation to their colonial hopes and frustrations. Later, instead, Turkey became an example for them too, whether of the possibility of Westernisation or, indeed, of how to deal with opposition.

Chapters Two and Three have provided an analysis of how various Turkish individuals and factions perceived fascism in the 1920s and 1930s.

The analysis has sought to illustrate the links between domestic concerns and perceptions of fascism, as well as the persistence of certain factions of Kemalism in these decades. The present chapter will initiate a similar, factions-based and contextualised analysis of Italian perceptions of Kemalism by fascists and anti-fascists. The present chapter will consider Italian perceptions of Kemalism, mainly in the 1920s, with Chapter Five focusing on the 1930s. This chapter will mostly consider Italian perceptions prior to the Turco-Italian rapprochement of 1927-28. We will begin with early perceptions of Kemalism by fascist, nationalist and conservative actors and the way they created a colonial literature on Anatolia. The main context explaining these ways of thinking will be the Allied invasion of Turkey in the aftermath of the First World War and the invasion of portions of southern and western Anatolia by Italy. Antalya witnessed an occupation of nearly two years, with Italian forces withdrawing only in June 1921.² Elsewhere, the Italian presence was more fleeting. Konya experienced less than a year of Italian occupation which ended in March 1920.³ This variance was partially due to the maritime and strategic importance of Antalya, as well as the Italians' probable desire to retain a bargaining chip. In any case, the Italian invasion, in general, ended quicker and in a less bloody manner when compared to the French invasion of, say, Maraş, and certainly, the Greek invasion of western Anatolia.

Within Italy, the major change in the domestic context was the rise of fascism, with its oath to make up for the '*vittoria mutilata*', the 'betrayal' of Italian sacrifices in the Allied post-war settlement. Section One of this chapter will concentrate on how a range of Italian actors, from journalists to social scientific experts like Biagio Pace, paved the way for dreams of Anatolia as an Italian colony with texts written in Anatolia. The unfulfillment of this promise turned fascist and nationalist opinion against Kemalism, seen as an inexplicably xenophobic force in the mid-1920s. To illustrate the disillusionment among fascist or fascistised Italian

² Feridun Emecen, 'Antalya', TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (1991), pp. 232-36 <<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/antalya>> [accessed 16 October 2022].

³ Tuncer Baykara, 'Konya', TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (2002), pp. 182-87 <<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/konya>> [accessed 16 October 2022].

intellectuals of the early 1920s, the section will cover how many fascists, including the likes of Coppola and for a longer time Mussolini himself, vociferously defended Turkey against Greece, only to be later faced with 'ingratitude'.

Section Two will investigate a thematical shift in right-wing Italian perceptions of fascism that became most apparent from the mid-1920s onwards. Both the colonial literature and the view of Turkey as a xenophobic 'closed door', as put by the fascist deputy Orazio Pedrazzi, left its place to a focus on Kemalism as a Westernising enterprise. This intellectual shift was not engendered but significantly bolstered by the Turco-Italian rapprochement. As the fascist authorities recognised that the Kemalist regime was not faltering as they had expected, the likes of Michele Viterbo emphasised how the path to conquering the Turkish markets was not military conquest or antagonism but active cooperation with the Turks. A number of travellers and journalists, such as Italo Zingarelli, offered their thoughts on Turkish Westernisation. More conservative fascists, that is, fascists whose Catholic credentials or preference for the post-1922 status quo trumped commitment to a permanent fascist revolution in the mould of the universalists of the 1930s, tended to doubt such radical reform's odds of success, even when all agreed that some reform was necessary.

Section Three will focus on another theme that became a prominent subject of discussion in debates on Kemalism in Italy from the mid-1920s onwards: the question of Kemalist authoritarianism. This focus will go hand in hand with a shift in the actors under study, as more anti-fascists will be incorporated into the section, who have largely been ignored in the literature.⁴ The section will investigate how various anti-fascist groups perceived Kemalism, and in particular, the Kemalist regime structure. Comparison with the fascist views will also appear, as will an investigation of anti-fascist perceptions of Kemalist policies such as secularism and female emancipation. The section will shed light on how most

⁴ Here, the work of Francesco Pongiluppi on Ezio Bartolini's engagement with Kemalism must be cited as an important exception.

anti-fascists prioritised such ends of Kemalism over its means, which they widely perceived as authoritarian but also totally different from fascism precisely because of the intended goals of the Kemalist regime. Exceptions such as criticism of Kemalism as yet another form of power-hungry nationalisms by Italian socialists will also appear in the section.

§ 4.1 Kemalism as Reinvigorated Anti-Westernism or ‘Extreme Xenophobic Nationalism’

Following the First World War, the victor Italy seemed on the brink of ‘falling prey’ to a second Bolshevik revolution at the heart of Europe, many conservatives and liberals feared. The *Partito socialista italiano* apparently had the power within its grasp, but it fell dramatically short at the decisive moments due to internal schisms within its ranks and pressure from the fascists. Indeed, fascism arose largely against the backdrop of the growing socialist dominance, first as an *interventista* (pro-intervention in the First World War) force in Milan in 1919, then transforming into a broader coalition of anti-socialism in northern and central Italy from 1920 onwards. The impact of the provincial fascists transformed the movement, with Mussolini swiftly moving away from the Milan days towards a more ambiguous stance vis-à-vis monarchy and the Church. Despite troubles with the provincial fascist leaders called *ras*, fascists maintained their unity well enough to establish the *Partito nazionale fascista* in November 1921 and rose to power following the March on Rome in October 1922. Not content with the fragile balance of powers within fascism, Mussolini spent considerable time and effort in the early days of his government to pacify the *ras*, culminating in the establishment of the *Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale*.⁵ Effectively reigning over a coalition government including liberals and conservatives and careful not to irk the status quo too soon, Mussolini and the fascists gradually laid down

⁵ Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini Il Fascista: La Conquista Del Potere, 1921-1925* (Einaudi, 1966), p. 432.

the foundational stones of what would become the fascist regime by the second half of the 1920s.⁶

Turkish observers keenly watched these developments in Italy for multiple reasons. Many imagined Italy to be a laboratory where the future political regime of Europe would appear. A defeat for democracy in the country could have wider repercussions. Developments in Italy also mattered since, as of 1919 and 1920, the country was in *de facto* possession of portions of Anatolia, following the Allied victory in the First World War. As Italian efforts at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 failed to secure Izmir, Greece proceeded to invade other parts of Western Anatolia. Italian forces quickly moved north to secure as much land as they could until the Greek troops arrived. The result was far from remedying the *vittoria mutilata*, and the anger towards the Greeks, disappointment in Anatolia, and a view of Turkey considerably different than the other Allies caught the attention of Turkish observers in fascism.⁷

Born in Izmir to a Levantine family and witnessing the Turkish War of Independence in Anatolia, Giovanni Filippucci Giustiniani criticised the Allied ‘betrayal’ of Italy and Greek ‘opportunism’ quite originally. Filippucci Giustiniani boasted that what many learnt, if they ever could, from books, he mastered by living in ‘the Orient’.⁸ One thing he learned in Anatolia was the fable of Nasreddin Hoca, a humorous Turkish folklore character who masterfully combines wisdom and irony. A modernised Nasreddin Hoca, a Darülfünun scholar of international law critical of the *vittoria mutilata* and the Greeks, appeared as the chief protagonist of Filippucci Giustiniani’s 1922 book *L’Italia esclusa dal mar Levante* (Italy Expelled from the Levant Sea). The theory-minded Nasreddin Hoca

⁶ For a detailed account of how the later features of the fascist regime and, most prominently, its totalitarianism were apparent early on with the rise of fascism to power, see Emilio Gentile, *E Fu Subito Il Regime. Il Fascismo e La Marcia su Roma* (Laterza, 2012).

⁷ For a review of the Italian reactions to the invasion of Izmir, see Fabio L. Grassi, *İtalya ve Türk Sorunu: 1919-1923. Kamuoyu ve Dış Politika*, trans. by Nevin Özkan and Durdu Kundakçı (Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), pp. 43–60.

⁸ Giovanni Filippucci Giustiniani, *L’Italia Esclusa dal Mar di Levante* (Editrice M. Carra e C. di Luigi Bellini, 1922), p. iii.

observed that treaties worked only when they were agreed to freely and sincerely, but the Turks were neither free to reject nor sincere in approving the Treaty of Sévres, which severely restricted Ottoman sovereignty.⁹ The Turkish response was the rise of a government in Ankara based on universal suffrage, which turned European legal theories into weapons against Europe itself. The French, British and the Greeks strove to 'kick Turks out of humanity'. As they knew the Greeks did not constitute the majority in Istanbul or Izmir, the argument for invasion suddenly became that the Turks were barbaric and administration had to be left to the Greek minority.¹⁰ The Turks were treated as 'born criminals' to be expelled from Europe.¹¹ Nasreddin found it delightfully absurd that it was the totally inert League of Nations to enforce these terms on the Turks. The latter would tear the treaty the second they felt strong enough.¹²

Though Filippucci Giustiniani clarified that the views of Nasreddin Hoca did not correspond exactly to his own, Nasreddin was not merely the viewpoint of 'nationalist, pious' Turkish resistance as he claimed. His Nasreddin combined the author's anti-Greek sentiments, hopes from Turkish resistance, and what he knew about Turkish objections to the invasions, a combination presented with almost equal deftness to the original folklore character. In the book, as in his newspaper pieces from Anatolia in the autumn of 1922, Filippucci Giustiniani continued to reinforce this harmonisation of Turkish and Italian visions. He acknowledged the plight of the Armenian and Greek civilians but questioned why the Turkish sufferings did not elicit the same feelings of sympathy.¹³

This *vae victis* attitude towards the Greeks and the associated interest in the Turkish side also characterised the nationalist *Politica's* early

⁹ Filippucci Giustiniani, *L'Italia Esclusa*, pp. 7–10.

¹⁰ Filippucci Giustiniani, *L'Italia Esclusa*, pp. 22–25.

¹¹ Filippucci Giustiniani, *L'Italia Esclusa*, pp. 32–33.

¹² Filippucci Giustiniani, *L'Italia Esclusa*, p. 13.

¹³ Filippucci Giustiniani, *L'Italia Esclusa*, p. 36–37n1. For Filippucci Giustiniani's accounts of the massacring and general maltreatment of Turkish civilians in western Anatolia by the Greek armies, see Giovanni Filippucci Giustiniani, *Dieci Anni di Viaggi Politici in Oriente (1914-1924)* (Casa Editrice M. Carra & C. di Luigi Bellini, 1924), p. 259.

coverage of the war. *Politica* was established in 1919 and led by two eminent figures of conservative fascism: Alfredo Rocco, whose influence on Zeki Mesud Alsan we saw in Chapter Two, and Francesco Coppola. A future fascist ideologue, Coppola was born in Naples in 1878, studied law like Rocco, and became a journalist for the nationalist *Giornale d'Italia* in 1904.¹⁴ He initially developed an interest in the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer, as well as Buddhism, going so far as declaring Buddhism to be superior to Christianity at the time.¹⁵ This attitude gradually changed over time, as he came to value the role of Christianity for preserving social order and joined the nationalists around *Idea nazionale* in the 1910s. Viscerally defending the Italian invasion of Tripolitania in 1911, Coppola threw his support behind fascism after 1922 and continued to make a name for himself with his feverish anti-Semitism and proud imperialism. The days he was interested in Buddhism and its principle of *ahimsa*, non-harm, were long bygone when the Turkish War of Independence broke out.

Early on during the war, Coppola reported 'a shameful massacre' of Turks in Izmir by the Greeks, as well as how the latter indulged in all sorts of anti-Italian behaviour in the city.¹⁶ Though they massacred civilians, Coppola predicted that the Greeks would have much trouble against organised Turkish opposition under the leadership of the 'young and energetic' Mustafa Kemal. Basing his forecast on the Greeks' 'well-known, incomparable inferiority in military matters', Coppola was able to predict a Turkish victory as early as September 1919.¹⁷ The Allied misconceptions led to the emergence of a legitimate government in Ankara, which quickly became 'the real Turkey'.¹⁸ In the initial phases of the war, Coppola's and *Politica's* Turcophilia was such that a member of the parliament in Ankara, Ahmed Rüstem [Bilinski], penned an address to the Italian and

¹⁴ Rocco D'Alfonso, 'Guerra, Ordine e Razza Nel Nazionalismo Di Francesco Coppola', *Il Politico*, 65.4 (2000), pp. 539–70 (p. 542).

¹⁵ D'Alfonso, 'Guerra, Ordine e Razza', pp. 545–46.

¹⁶ Francesco Coppola, 'Nuova Fase', *Politica*, 30 September 1919, 377–96 (p. 393).

¹⁷ Coppola, 'Nuova Fase', pp. 393–94.

¹⁸ Francesco Coppola, 'La "pace" Con La Turchia', *Politica*, 31 March 1920, pp. 59–80 (p. 66).

European public, which *Politica* published. Ahmed Rüstem thanked Italy for its support of Turkey, as well as calling attention to atrocities committed by invading forces in Anatolia.¹⁹ In time, however, the anger towards the Greeks subsided, as did the enthusiasm for Turkey. To understand this shift that affected even Filippucci Giustiniani and Coppola, the rise and fall of a colonial literature on Anatolia deserves attention.

During and in the immediate aftermath of the First World War, what I have dubbed a colonial literature surrounding Anatolia thrived in Italy, with examples extending to around 1926-27. Many Italian experts, typically social scientists, arrived in Anatolia to study the land, its history, and the opportunities it offered to Italy. As many Italians imagined portions of Anatolia ready to become an Italian colony, careful studies of the country, from mineral resources to its anthropology, attracted interest. Following the Turkish War of Independence, such publications continued, albeit now typically with a more nostalgic, regretful tone surrounding the missed opportunities. A prominent example of this literature was Biagio Pace's work *Dalla pianura di Adalia alla valle del Meandro* (From the Plains of Antalya to the Valley of Meander), published in 1927 but mostly written in Anatolia during the Italian invasion. Born in 1889 in Sicily, Pace studied and taught archaeology at Italian universities, fought as a volunteer in the First World War, and later joined the fascist party. After the war, he embarked on a research trip in Anatolia, where he combined his archaeological interests with his Italian patriotism. Pace clarified in no uncertain terms that these two duties were one in his mind: Italian archaeology was the spearheading cavalry force (*cavalleria in avanscoperta*) of Italian colonialism in Anatolia, and the Austrians had tried much the same before, too.²⁰

Pace began his trip in Antalya in March 1919, where he found a power vacuum left behind by the Austro-Hungarian experts and Turkish authorities.²¹ From Antalya, he travelled northwards to Burdur and Konya and

¹⁹ Ahmed Rüstem, 'La Disperata Reazione Turca', *Politica*, 31 March 1920, pp. 85-97.

²⁰ Biagio Pace, *Dalla Pianura di Adalia alla Valle del Meandro. Impressioni di Viaggio* (Casa Editrice Alpes, 1927), p. 38.

²¹ Pace, *Dalla Pianura*, p. 51.

from there to the Aegean coast in the west. The archaeologist found the sheer number and grandeur of ancient Greek, and especially Roman ruins in these regions striking. Nearly every section of the book starts with an account of the ancient history of the towns visited by Pace. This functioned not merely as a narrative hook but as an illustration of the ancient grandeur of the region contrasted with its contemporary ruination, of which Pace offered ample examples. Roads were a mess, agricultural production hit historical lows, lives of the local Turks were ‘primitive and miserable’, and the statistics provided by the Turks could be wildly inaccurate since statistics was one of those European phenomena that ‘turned into a joke’ in Turkey.²² The Roman presence demonstrated the ancient spiritual links between these parts of Anatolia and Italy.²³ Besides establishing the Roman connection, the ruination also functioned to convince the Italian public of the opportunities Anatolia offered. If Anatolia was once prosperous under Greeks and Romans, as attested by the ruins, contemporary ruination could not stem from an inherent lack of quality or geographical difficulties. This called for an inquiry into the socio-historical conditions underlying the present ‘Turkish-inflicted’ ruination. Pace sought to provide a balanced account of the opportunities Anatolia offered: he opposed both those who saw Anatolia as a ‘cornucopia’ of riches and others who found it full of malaria and nothing else.²⁴ The listed shortcomings of Anatolia could be easily overcome by the more able Italian administrators, and the land had significant potential, from the carpets of Burdur to mineral resources and proximity to the Italian-controlled Dodecanese Islands for easy commerce.²⁵ Such exploration of

²² Pace, *Dalla Pianura*, p. 63, pp. 76-79, p. 147, p. 148.

²³ Pace, *Dalla Pianura*, pp. 142-43.

²⁴ Pace, *Dalla Pianura*, pp. 6-7.

²⁵ Pace, *Dalla Pianura*, pp. 177-84, pp. 76-77, pp. 82-84, p. 115, p. 147, p. 150. Pace paid particular attention to the coal mines in Ereğli (Heraclea) in northern Turkey, where Italian capital was involved since at least 1907, and where much potential laid untapped. On the mines and the Italian investment, see Giampaolo Conte, ‘The Italian Bank Società Commerciale d’Oriente and its Business in Ottoman Istanbul (1907-1915),’ in *Osmanlı İstanbul IV*, eds. Feridun M. Emecen, Ali Akyıldız and Emrah Safa Gürkan (İstanbul 29 Mayıs Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2016), pp. 31-45 (31-32).

potential riches and threats in Anatolia was not limited to Pace's work, of course, with Carlo Manetti's geographical treatise, *L'Anatolia*, also exemplifying this colonial literature.²⁶

Having realistically illustrated the potential of Anatolia and reclaimed it for Italy via the Roman legacy, Pace then proceeded to explain how, from its ancient grandeur, it was reduced to such ruination by the Turks. Part of the reason Turks could not do justice to Anatolia's potential was their sheer lack of numbers. Lacking sufficient numbers even before the war, the casualties and the exodus of local Christians meant that Anatolia became even more acutely underpopulated.²⁷ This argument permeated much of Italian right-wing views on Turkey in the early 1920s, with Giovanni Alessio regretting even in 1927 the fact that so many Italians had to migrate to far-away America when they could instead go to Anatolia and improve the 'irrational' agriculture there.²⁸ Accordingly, when Turkish authorities compiled the first complete census of the country in 1927, they announced their numbers triumphantly to the entire world and carefully awaited reactions in the Italian press to gauge their reaction.²⁹ As Ankara realised, such discourse on Turkey could easily be used to legitimise colonial rule, which was the case in the mandates the British and the French established in the Middle East.³⁰

²⁶ Manetti, *L'Anatolia*.

²⁷ Pace, *Dalla Pianura*, p. 152.

²⁸ Giovanni Alessio, 'Da Costantinopoli a Smirne', *Il Piccolo*, 13 May 1927, p. 1.

²⁹ 'Memleketimizde Yapılan Genel Nüfus Sayımının İtalyan Basın ve Ajanslarında Yapılan Yorumu', 1927, *BCA*, Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü, 30-10-0-0, 24-134-11.

³⁰ In Syria, as elsewhere in their empire, French authorities banned contraceptives and abortion to boost the population. Youssef Courbage, 'Fertility Transition in Syria: From Implicit Population Policy to Explicit Economic Crisis', *International Family Planning Perspectives* 20.4 (1994), pp. 142-146 (142). Sometimes, the lack of population and the problems it created for agriculture was also touched upon by local actors. See Simon Jackson, "'What is Syria Worth?' The Huvelin Mission, Economic Expertise and the French Project in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1918-1922', *Monde(s)*, 2.4 (2013), pp. 83-103 (100).

Rather than treating the demography of Anatolia as a given, Pace set out to investigate ‘the social and political reasons’ that shaped it.³¹ The lack of numbers in Anatolia stemmed from inefficient government by the Turks, exemplified by astronomically high taxes levied on the locals. Turks were also incomparable in their tendency to procrastinate.³² At times, Pace offered a ‘noble savage’-like portrait of the Turks, sympathising with their morality, simplicity, and making do with cultivating just enough for their subsistence. Nevertheless, Turkish laziness, which reminded Pace of ‘the other Muslims we have gotten to know about elsewhere’, was part of the reason for Anatolia’s ruination.³³ In addition to these observations that illustrate examples of Italian Orientalism towards the Turks, a more worrying cause of ruination was the ‘exacerbation of nationalism’.³⁴ Right-wing Italians tended to interpret this as a

³¹ Pace, *Dalla Pianura*, p. 156.

³² Pace, *Dalla Pianura*, pp. 150–51.

³³ Other Italian observers had various takes on Turkish laziness or hardworkingness. Concurring with Pace on the riches of Anatolia and sharing his disregard for the Greeks, the journalist Italo Zingarelli felt the Turkish peasant was actually rather durable and hardworking. Italo Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio Dell’Islam* (Fratelli Treves Editori, 1928), p. 120. In his view, the backwardness of Anatolia stemmed not from an inherent Turkish laziness but a lack of manpower, expertise, and capital; conspicuously, these were all things Italians were ready to provide in a more cooperative agreement as Italian hopes shifted from colonisation to peaceful cooperation from 1926–27 onwards.

³⁴ The classic treatment of Orientalism as a fiction embroiled in power relations remains the work of Edward Said. Note that Said’s approach has been criticised by scholars for a variety of reasons, from more contemporary politics-oriented critiques to raising issues with Said’s methodology and concepts. See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage Books, 1979). Aijaz Ahmad criticised Said from a left-wing political perspective by arguing that his work has had a negative impact on contemporary politics. Aijaz Ahmad, ‘Orientalism and After’, in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 162–71. Arif Dirlik has taken issue with what he perceived as the political and methodological implications of the wider postcolonial perspective. Arif Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism* (Westview, 1998). Bernard Lewis, a prominent target of Said in his critique of Orientalism, responded by accusing Said of ignoring ‘material facts’ about Middle Eastern history and societies, and defended the objectivity of

manifestation of the Turks' chronic 'xenophobia', 'ingratitude' for Italian support, and typical anti-European sentiment. In the later parts of his book, Pace variously complained about misguided Turkish suspicions of Italian troop movements in Rhodes and regretted the missed opportunities in Anatolia: by the mid-1920s, despite fascism's best efforts in damage control, Italy had missed the chance to make Anatolia a second home, with the Treaty of Lausanne representing the capitulation of the entire Europe before the Turks.³⁵

While the Italo-Turkish Nasreddin Hoca dominated the initial parts of Filippucci Giustiniani's *L'Italia esclusa*, later on, a more suspicious account of Turkey replaced Turcophilia. Such was his disappointment that after the war was over, Filippucci Giustiniani felt obliged to explain that 'though we are Turcophiles, we have certainly not transformed into Turks; we are Italians, and we have interests'.³⁶ The welcome the French deputy Franklin Bouillon received in Turkey, and the Turkish desire for French friendship in general left a bitter taste in his mouth, as he compared the French cries of Turkish 'barbarism' with Italy's 'courageous struggle' for Turkey's rights during the war.³⁷ Having previously supported the Turks and, in difference with much of the right-wing thought in the early 1920s, identified the seeds of Westernisation in the Kemalist leadership, Filippucci Giustiniani concluded with a warning: 'Kemal should remember that things could change quickly, and he could once

Orientalist experts. Bernard Lewis and Ellis Buntzie Churchill, *Notes on a Century: Reflections of a Middle East Historian* (Viking, 2012), pp. 266-285. Dennis Porter has also questioned certain methodological aspects and historical conclusions of Said, especially vis-à-vis the Foucauldian influence on Said's theory and its implications. Dennis Porter, 'Orientalism and its Problems', in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 150-161.

³⁵ Pace, *Dalla Pianura*, p. 220, p. 1, p. 248, p. 251. On Italy and the Treaty of Lausanne, and the ratification process of the treaty in Italy, see Maria Antonia Di Casola, 'Italy and the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923', *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, 23 (1993), pp. 61-78 (p. 77).

³⁶ Filippucci Giustiniani, *L'Italia Esclusa*, p. 171.

³⁷ Filippucci Giustiniani, *L'Italia Esclusa*, p. 162.

more find himself alone'.³⁸ The internal evolution of Filippucci Giustiniani's book perfectly encapsulates the Italian right-wing perceptions of Turkey from the early to mid-1920s, from Turcophilia and anti-Greek sentiment to exclamations of xenophobia.

Right-wing Italian observers found Turkish 'xenophobia' to be an irrational reaction since 'importing' cultivators, capital and expertise from Europe, preferably from Italy, was a 'rational' solution to the woes of Anatolia. Whereas they imagined Italian migration and economic penetration into Anatolia as a win-win arrangement, the Turks rejected to entertain the idea. The journalist Italo Zingarelli understood that the Turks, with their perceptions coloured by the bitter memories of Ottoman capitulations, saw every penny and worker as limiting their independence, but most commentators agreed such a policy was irrational and hurt both Italy and Turkey.³⁹

The 'ad hoc' legal obstacles the Kemalists erected before Europeans seeking work or investment in Turkey were particularly bothersome due to their unpredictable nature. These obstacles infuriated not only the creators of the colonial literature and its nostalgic echoes in the mid-1920s but also the Italian diplomats in Turkey. A young intellectual employed as a diplomat in Istanbul, Tommaso Bertelè wrote an entire book on how to deal with the Turks. Apparently written for internal consumption at the embassy and finished in October 1925, the book was presented to Cornelio di Marzio, a colleague of Bertelè in the embassy and a prominent fascist intellectual, then in Istanbul as the commercial attaché.⁴⁰ Part of the embassy staff from 1923 to 1926, Bertelè was the author of several historical works investigating the relations between Venice and the Ottoman Empire.⁴¹ Where Pace and Manetti put their archaeological and

³⁸ Filippucci Giustiniani, *L'Italia Esclusa*, p. 163.

³⁹ Zingarelli, *Il risveglio*, p. 110.

⁴⁰ It is thanks to the personal papers of di Marzio at the *Archivio centrale dello stato* that the present author was able to consult this rare work of Bertelè.

⁴¹ Maria Pia Pedani, 'In Ricordo Di Tommaso Bertelè | Tommaso Bertelè'nin Anısına', *Hilâl: Studi Turchi e Ottomani*, 3 (2012), pp. 11–19 (pp. 11–12). Pedani does not mention the work

geographical expertise in service of the homeland, Bertelè did the same with his historical knowledge: his 'guideline' for dealing with Turks was a compilation of negative observations found in Venetian texts from centuries ago. Bertelè hoped that if the dictum of '*historia magistra vitae*' retained any truth, their ancestors' remarks could assist Italian diplomats who found it intolerable to deal with the Turks. The quotes in Bertelè's book provided an insight into the unchanged realm of Turkish culture, which was portrayed by Venetians as without any scholarly activity, literature, or even games other than backgammon (*tavla*); the Turks were boastful, absolutist, without a sense of honour and justice, and tended to interpret European will to negotiate as a sign of weakness.⁴² Bertelè likely found it delightful that the Venetian accounts anticipated parts of the Italian colonial literature, from the idea that Anatolia was massively underpopulated to the view that the unjust 'tyranny' of the Turks hurt every people of the region, including the Turks themselves.⁴³ The moral of the book was that by profiting from their ancestors' wisdom, contemporary Italians could master *modo di negoziare coi turchi* (the way of negotiating with the Turks), which was the title of the book's tenth section.⁴⁴

We do not know to what extent Di Marzio appreciated the book and utilised it to improve his own methods for dealing with the Turks. Based on some reports from around the mid-1920s he wrote from Istanbul, we can safely assume that he mostly agreed with Bertelè. In October 1926, he informed the Ministry of National Economy that statistics from Turkey were unreliable as much due to incompetence as to Turkish secretive-ness.⁴⁵ Since the Turks were 'xenophobic and suspicious', it was possible

of Bertelè that I refer to; it is possible that Bertelè compiled this work from a more comprehensive study of his on Venetian-Ottoman relations.

⁴² Tommaso Bertelè, 'I Turchi e La Turchia Giudicati Dagli Ambasciatori Veneti', 1925, pp. 5-6, p. 17, p. 9, located in *Archivio centrale dello stato*, Carte di Marzio, b. 47, f.2.

⁴³ Bertelè, 'I Turchi', pp. 21-22.

⁴⁴ Bertelè, 'I Turchi', p. 27.

⁴⁵ 'Cornelio di Marzio, Commercial Delegate at the Embassy in Constantinople, to the Ministry of National Economy', 10 October 1926, *ACS*, Carte di Marzio, b. 47, f. 2.

that they were deliberately feeding misleading data to the Europeans, Di Marzio speculated. But it was not Bertelè and Di Marzio in Turkey, nor Pace while touring Anatolia or Manetti in Italy, to epitomise Italian criticism of 'Turkish xenophobia' in the mid-1920s. As discussed in Chapter Two, this duty fell on the shoulders of the fascist deputy Orazio Pedrazzi and his diatribes against Anatolia being turned into a 'closed door'. While the term '*porta chiusa*' was not omnipresent in the downfall of the colonial literature and the accompanying disappointment, Pedrazzi's definition perfectly captured a widely shared sentiment among right-wing Italian intellectuals by the mid-1920s.

Though convinced that Turkey was a 'closed door', fascist and nationalist intellectuals were particularly sensitive to the possibility that the doors of Turkey were open to others. Occasionally, the suspicion centred on the French, with the remarks of Filippucci Giustiniani on the French deputy Boullion a pointed example. Distrust of France continued in the 1930s; in the following chapter, we will see that some fascist observers tended to see France behind even the rise of Fethi Bey's FRP, which, they thought, was inspired by a French-style liberal democracy and funded by French financial circles.⁴⁶ However, it was Germany, more than any other state, that was the focus of Italian fears of European 'free-riding' in 'xenophobic' Turkey in the 1920s. Many right-wing Italians, including Pedrazzi, were doubly suspicious of Germany because of the recent scars of the First World War and the profound Ottoman-German connections. Any German presence, from the railways to attempts to transform Central Anatolia into a granary for Germany in the 1910s, received much attention among fascists.⁴⁷ Filippucci Giustiniani felt the German meddling with Ottoman affairs was so extensive that it was they who forcibly relocated the Greeks from the Aegean town of Ayvalık during the First World War.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ This was the conclusion of the up-close examination of the FRP by the ambassador Pompeo Aloisi in his report to Mussolini in October 1930. See 'Aloisi to Mussolini', 15 October 1930, *ASDMAE*, Gabinetto, b.792 [Gab. 475], f. 1.

⁴⁷ For only a few examples, see Filippucci Giustiniani, *Dieci Anni*, p. 18. Pace, *Dalla Pianura*, pp. 78–79.

⁴⁸ Filippucci Giustiniani, *L'Italia Esclusa*, pp. 36–37n1.

The dominance of the German school in Turkish military thought, which Zingarelli saw as the reason for the continued Turkish preference for German aircraft, was another bothersome phenomenon.⁴⁹ Pedrazzi felt that Germans were plotting to benefit from the Turks' xenophobia, hoping to fill in the gaps left in production and commerce left by the Greeks, Armenians, and the Western capital forced to flee Turkey.⁵⁰

The fear that Germans were able to sneak through the Turkish embargo of all things European did not mean that fascist intellectuals saw Germany as tricking the Turks to hate other Westerners. 'Xenophobia' stemmed from within the Turkish mind. Some observers, especially the more religious fascists and conservatives, went so far as to see Kemalism in the early and mid-1920s as a pan-Islamist force. The more open-minded Filippucci Giustiniani could utilise his familiarity with the Turks to observe that the Turkish War of Independence gave way in late 1922 to struggle against 'religious fanaticism that is a thousand years old'.⁵¹ Instead, writing in August 1925, Domenico Russo saw Turkey as actively and militarily supporting the Rif rebels in Morocco through weapon shipments under the banner of the Turkish Red Crescent.⁵² Russo feared that Turkish pan-Islamic solidarity was backed by the self-serving Germans, who sent two experts ('Schmidt and Bülow') to establish a chemical weapons factory in Turkey for Turkish use. The Turks were preparing for a wider anti-European, pan-Islamic coup, with German assistance.⁵³ Russo was not the only one to harbour such suspicions. A report emanating from the Italian Ministry of Colonies in July 1925 read that some authors on 'Oriental matters' wrote much about the changing Kemalist approach to Islam. However, the fact was that the feelings of pan-Islamic

⁴⁹ Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. 107.

⁵⁰ Orazio Pedrazzi, *Il Levante Mediterraneo e l'Italia* (Casa Editrice Alpes, 1925), p. 90.

⁵¹ Filippucci Giustiniani, *Dieci Anni*, p. 270.

⁵² Led by Abd el-Karim, the Riffians had engaged in a prolonged warfare against the Spanish and French for their independence between 1921 and 1926.

⁵³ 'Ambassador in Rome to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 1 September 1925, *Dışişleri Bakanlığı Türk Diplomatik Arşivi*, 541, 44223-210223-80.

solidarity were still strong in Turkey.⁵⁴ That the Turkish press did not hesitate to manifest their sympathy for the Riffians made this clear to the author of the report.⁵⁵ Likewise, in 1924, various publications in Turkish papers in support of the anti-Italian resistance in Tripolitania and criticisms of Italian foreign policy alarmed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁵⁶ Early coverage of Kemalism in the prestigious Catholic outlet *Civiltà Cattolica* largely echoed this view of Kemalism. In 1922, a piece read that Mustafa Kemal had become 'the hero of the Muslim world', thanks to the mistakes of the West. Kemalists were described as massacring Christians and adopting an anti-Western stance.⁵⁷

Contrary to their enthusiastic and early support for the resistance, *Politica's* contributors began to see seeds of a dangerous anti-Westernism in Turkey from the moment the Greek defeat seemed palpable. With the memories of the *biennio rosso*, the 'red years' of 1919-20 when Italian socialists seemed set to revolutionise Italy, fresh in mind, Ankara's alliance with the Bolsheviks troubled the journal's authors. Others, such as Gustavo Traglia in 1922 and, later, Zingarelli, also called attention to the potentially dangerous role Russia sought to play in Turkey.⁵⁸ As early as April 1921, Roberto Cantalupo reviewed 'the dangers of Kemalist victory'. Cantalupo observed how the Turks 'tricked' Carlo Sforza and the pre-fascist Italian government. The Turks, now bolstered by the Bolshevik alliance, 'deceived themselves' that they could push towards their

⁵⁴ In the early 1920s, British intelligence officials and diplomatic personnel also tended to see Kemalism as a pan-Islamist force, allied to the Bolsheviks in their common bid to topple European, and in particular British domination in the world. Later on, some of these officials stated that they were wrong in their beliefs but these were nonetheless beliefs 'tenable' at the time. See Alp Yenen, 'Elusive Forces in Illusive Eyes: British Officialdom's Perception of the Anatolian Resistance', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 54.5 (2018), pp. 788–810.

⁵⁵ 'La guerra al Marocco e la Turchia', 29 July 1925, *ASDMAE*, AP 1919-30, b. 1714, f. 7890.

⁵⁶ See various incidents reported in *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 735, f. 38.

⁵⁷ 'Cronaca Contemporanea: Grecia', *La Civiltà Cattolica*, vol. 3 (1922), pp. 282-288 (286-288).

⁵⁸ Gustavo Traglia, *I Turchi Tornano in Europa!* (Società Anonima Poligrafica Italiana, 1922), pp. 5–8. Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. xii.

'unrealistic' goal of tearing apart the Treaty of Sévres while ignoring Italy. The counter-trend argument culminated with a previously unthinkable option: Cantalupo suggested that Italy could consider supporting Greece to avoid a comprehensive defeat for the whole of Europe.⁵⁹ Other contributors like the scholar Aurelio Palmieri retained hope. Palmieri saw Mustafa Kemal as a '*business-man*' who sought the best deal for his movement and would never allow the Bolshevisation of his army. Palmieri claimed that some Russians teaching 'revolutionary sociology' to the Turkish soldiers were shot dead by the orders of Mustafa Kemal. Palmieri concluded that in need of capital, Turkey would eventually turn away from the Bolsheviks and seek European friendship.⁶⁰ As this did not prove to be the case, the way of thinking illustrated in Cantalupo's piece gained currency in *Politica*, as in the wider fascist thought. By 1925, Coppola claimed that Kemalism was a key agent in the ongoing 'anti-European revolution' and argued that secularisation in Turkey did nothing to detract from this fact.⁶¹ As Cemil Aydın's research illustrates, the Bolshevik Revolution was indeed perceived by many anti-Westernist individuals across Asia as an ally in a wider struggle against Western imperialism, at least in its immediate aftermath.⁶² Coppola's perceptions of Kemalism changed in response to his fear that Kemalism was part of this wider phenomenon.

Perceptions of Kemalism as a reinvigorated Islamism were accompanied by perceptions of women in Turkey. Published in *La Tribuna Illustrata*, one of the most influential illustrated papers in Italy at the time, in February 1926, an article depicted alleged slave markets in Turkey. The author not only claimed that such markets existed but even argued that enslaved Christian women were sold there 'per head', in a dehumanising

⁵⁹ Roberto Cantalupo, 'Pericoli Della Vittoria Kemalista', *Politica*, March-April 1921, pp. 120–36.

⁶⁰ Aurelio Palmieri, 'Politica Bolscevica Nell'Oriente Islamico', *Politica*, 15 September 1922, pp. 92–107 (p. 94, 107).

⁶¹ Francesco Coppola, 'La Rivoluzione Antieuropea', *Politica*, May-June 1925, pp. 197–226.

⁶² Cemil Aydın, *Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (Columbia University Press, 2007), pp. 146–147.

manner as though they were cattle. The article read that beasts of burden perhaps lived better lives than these tormented and violated Christian girls, 'dragged through the desert' by the Turks, Arabs, and Kurds. The author noted how Islam allowed men to take up four wives and argued that these slave girls were tattooed with symbols demonstrating ownership.⁶³ The article attracted the attention of the Turkish Consulate in Milan, which reported it to Ankara,⁶⁴

In conclusion of this section, we may observe that the early 1920s saw the rise and fall of a colonial literature on Anatolia, where dreams of transforming this piece of land into an Italian colony dominated discussions. Forged by social scientists and journalists travelling across Anatolia, the colonial literature focused on the potential benefits and the Roman heritage of Anatolia, as well as its contemporary backwardness explained with reference to Turkish socio-historical inadequacies. During the Turkish War of Independence, the hopes of turning Anatolia into a direct colony subsided, though it was widely expected that Turkey would return Italy's support in the war for Turkey by recognising 'legitimate' Italian interests. Once Turkey proved unwilling to do so, colonial literature came to be accompanied by a nostalgia for missed opportunities. Meanwhile, the initial Turcophilia found in the work of Filippucci Giustiniani, *Politica*, and *Gerarchia* alike gave way to perceptions of Kemalism as a reinvigorated version of Islamism. By the mid-1920s, conservative fascists, in particular, came to see the early signs of Kemalist secularism as nothing more than a farce. Russo even imagined an anti-European alliance involving Protestant Germany, Bolshevik Russia and Muslim Turkey, the signs of which he traced in a putative factory for chemical weapons in Turkey. Following Filippucci Giustiniani some years later, in the second half of the 1920s, and especially after around 1926-27, the focus on perceptions of Kemalism in Italy moved from 'xenophobia' to radical Westernisation, with the Turco-Italian rapprochement at the time certainly playing a role in encouraging fascists to see Turks as not

⁶³ 'Con 100 Lire Si Compera Una Donna', *La Tribuna Illustrata*, 28 February 1926, p. 11.

⁶⁴ 'From Consul in Milan to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 7 March 1926, *Dışişleri Bakanlığı Türk Diplomatik Arşivi*, 541, 44224-210224-8.

all that xenophobic, after all. The following section will delve deeper into this shift in right-wing Italian perceptions of Kemalism.

§ 4.2 Kemalism as Radical Westernisation: Pierre Loti No More

The shift from focusing on colonial opportunities to investigating the Kemalist reform project did not imply a definitive rupture from earlier accounts. With the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tevfik Rüştü [Aras], visiting Milan in 1927 and returning in 1928 to sign a treaty of neutrality, Italy was now becoming an ally of Turkey. As noticed by Mevlüt Çelebi and Fabio Grassi alike, by 1927, the Italian leadership came to see the Kemalist regime as built on more solid grounds than previously imagined.⁶⁵ This meant that the sizeable literature on Anatolian opportunities evolved from a colonial discourse to a focus on ‘win-win arrangements’ and cooperation. Characteristic of this new way of thinking about Anatolian opportunities was a speech by Michele Viterbo in January 1929. Born in Bari in 1890, Viterbo fought in the First World War, then showed interest in reformist socialism, only to meet the famed fascist scholar of economics, Sergio Panunzio, in whose ideas he developed a keen interest. In 1924, along with Antonio de Tullio, the duo established the *Camera di commercio italo-orientale*, an organisation aimed to bolster the trade between the ‘Orient’ and Italy. With postings at Italian universities, Viterbo increasingly became absorbed within the fascist regime.⁶⁶

In a speech for the *Camera di commercio italo-orientale*, attended by Panunzio, among others, Viterbo spoke on the commercial opportunities awaiting Italians and the duties they had to reckon with before reaping the fruits in Anatolia. Characteristically for the new trend, and far from an investigation of Turkish backwardness, Viterbo defined Kemalist and

⁶⁵ For Çelebi’s observations and an evaluation of Grassi’s observation, see Mevlüt Çelebi, *Türkiye-İtalya Siyasi İlişkileri (1923-1939)* (Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2020), p. 182.

⁶⁶ Raffaele De Leo, ‘Michele Viterbo’, *Dizionario Biografico Degli Italiani*, 2020 <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/michele-viterbo_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/> [accessed 20 September 2023].

fascist regimes as 'saviours' of their countries.⁶⁷ He explained that Mussolini's remarks on expansion in the Orient meant economic and not military expansion, thus entailing cooperation and not conflict. The Turks' willingness to cooperate emerged from the warm welcome emissaries of the *Camera di commercio* received on their tour of Turkey.⁶⁸ Viterbo offered ways to make the functioning of Italian companies and merchants in Turkey smoother.⁶⁹ He also praised the 'strong intuitions of the *Ghazi* [Gazi, Mustafa Kemal]' in terms of knowing how to valorise Istanbul once again.⁷⁰ Cooperation and win-win was the new trend. However, a more comprehensive shift in paradigm was the turning of focus away from considerations of economic gains towards politics and culture. Especially from the mid-1920s onwards, it became increasingly common for Italian intellectuals to discuss sociocultural developments in Turkey and agree that the country was Westernising. Beyond this, there were vast discrepancies about what exactly Westernisation meant to each faction and, consequently, whether Turkey's Westernisation was something positive and feasible or negative and merely based on wishful thinking.

In a series of articles published in *Il Piccolo*, a daily from Trieste, between April and July 1927, the Italian journalist Giovanni Alessio tackled the question of Turkish Westernisation head-on. What Turkey was going through was, in part, a 'holy war proclaimed by Kemal Pascia against the foreigners', Alessio explained.⁷¹ At the same time, Kemalists recognised the need for 'Westernisation (*occidentalizzazione*) of customs, life and mentality', with the Turkish cities now full of individuals donning the latest Western-style hats. Alessio defined this contrast as one between 'the ferocious xenophobia and the craving for imitating the West'. Alessio also noticed that far from being Islamists, Kemalists intended to sever

⁶⁷ Michele Viterbo, *Il Mercato Turco e Le Nuove Possibilità per Il Commercio Italiano* (Flli Laterza & Polo, 1929), p. 19.

⁶⁸ Viterbo, *Il Mercato Turco*, p. 5.

⁶⁹ Viterbo, *Il Mercato Turco*, pp. 8–14.

⁷⁰ Viterbo, *Il Mercato Turco*, pp. 6–7.

⁷¹ Giovanni Alessio, 'Un Paese Che Si Trasforma: La Turchia Padrona in Casa Propria', *Il Piccolo*, 23 April 1927, p. 1.

Turkey's links to the past. While Alessio noted that one could well doubt to what extent such extensive reform could succeed, he found the Kemalist moves promising and positive, especially in 'a nation that had proven its incapability of governing itself'.⁷² The European observer would sorrowfully notice that by 1927, the Turkey that the French artist Pierre Loti depicted decades ago was bygone. To unveil the new Turkey, Alessio embarked on a tour of Turkey from Izmir to Adana and Mersin. He felt that the Turks had an 'audacious and great plan' to develop Anatolia, which continued to suffer from the aftershocks of the First World War. Another observation of Alessio that could endear him to the Turks was that Izmir could not be burnt by the Turks in 1922: 'common sense and reality argue against this theory; conquering nationalism could not possibly wish to destroy the very city that was considered its ultimate goal'.⁷³

In Alessio's series of articles, we have a vision of Kemalism that is at once struggling against the remainders of the past, Westernising, and striving to retain its nationality vis-à-vis the West. While more positive about Turks in general, Alessio's work was not intended as flattery, with the author lamenting Turks' inability to exploit the fertile lands of Anatolia to its potential.⁷⁴ If this sounded like a cliché, much more novelty was to be found in his comparison of Kemalist Westernisation with the Ottoman script (which Alessio saw as an obstacle before Turkey's development), the previously dominant mentality in Turkey (which interpreted electrical lights and automobiles as devilish), and the 'rudimental, primitive' organisation of the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁵ Though pessimistic about the 'civilisational level' of the rural masses, Alessio was convinced not

⁷² Giovanni Alessio, 'Il Nazionalismo Turco: Una Formula Nuova per Una Nuova Nazione', *Il Piccolo*, 26 April 1927, p. 1.

⁷³ Giovanni Alessio, 'Smirne, Come è e Come Sarà', *Il Piccolo*, 25 May 1927, p. 1. On Italian perceptions of the Great Fire of İzmir, Mevlüt Çelebi, 'İtalyan Kaynaklarında İzmir'in Kurtuluşu', in *Kurtuluş ve Kuruluşun Sembol Kenti İzmir Sempozyumu Bildirileri*, ed. by Murat Alper Parlak (Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2015), pp. 173–90 (pp. 183–87).

⁷⁴ Alessio, 'Da Costantinopoli a Smirne'.

⁷⁵ Giovanni Alessio, 'La Turchia Che Non Prega Più', *Il Piccolo*, 9 July 1927, p. 1.

only that Kemalism was a programme of Westernisation but one that had at least some success.⁷⁶

Certain aspects of Zingarelli's travelogue from Turkey echo such contemporary opinions, such as his assertion that 'the duty of civilising the East [*Oriente*] can never be left to Russia'. As Kemalists were Westernising and Russian success in the East could detach the Eastern peoples from Europe forever, they had to be stopped: 'Between Russian civilisation and Western civilisation [*civiltà occidentale*] always existed such a clear divide as to allow a classification of the Muscovite civilisation as one between European and Asian, and Western and Eastern civilisations'.⁷⁷ Even more reflective of the newer trend from the mid-1920s was his view that xenophobia in Turkey was no longer what it used to be: having adopted the Western-style hat, Zingarelli observed the Turk could not dismiss Europe as mere '*gavurs*' (infidels) anymore.⁷⁸ Like Alessio, he, too, noticed a tension between Kemalist desire for Westernisation and diffidence towards the West. The result was that the Turks treated Europe as if it was 'a shop of civilisation', where one could enter and acquire whatever piece of civilisation she desired upon payment. Turkey wanted 'to Europeanise itself [*Europeizzarsi*] freely' without the enforcement or meddling of foreign powers. Because of this, they forced out of Anatolia the philanthropists and other Westerners, who 'come and push them to Westernism [*Occidentalismo*]'. The reform project certainly had strange aspects: the entire business of 'transforming a people given to a life of contemplation to a people of workers' could certainly raise an eyebrow in Europe.⁷⁹ It was also important to realise that nations could go from one extreme to another quite easily; the Turks needed a new ethics to replace the old and forsaken ideas.⁸⁰ However, Europeans were not to look down upon the Turks for assimilating the bad parts of European culture along with its merits.

⁷⁶ Giovanni Alessio, 'Un Villaggio Diventato Una Capitale', *Il Piccolo*, 11 June 1927, p. 1.

⁷⁷ Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. xii.

⁷⁸ Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. 21.

⁷⁹ Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. xiv.

⁸⁰ Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. xv.

Zingarelli was less than flattering about Italy's rivals in setting an example of Western culture before Turkey. He regretfully observed how, in their process of adopting a much less idyllic and more 'active' lifestyle, the Turks were already copying Americans more than Europeans. The fact was that Europeans themselves did not notice how such a significant part of their own lifestyles already became Americanised.⁸¹ Another lesson of the Turkish Westernisation for Europeans was precisely the value of Western civilisation, contrary to what 'Germans' lately preached. Against the 'spiritual Bolshevism' of the likes of 'Keyserling and Spengler', who invited the Germans to the contemplative lifestyle of 'Muhammad and Buddha', the Turks were more interested in the West. All forms of Bolshevism demanded the capitulation of the West before the East, and the aforementioned Germans did much the same spiritually. Luckily, the Turks themselves knew that there were multiple civilisations in the world, and the Western civilisation was the dominant one.⁸² Whereas the likes of Russo doubted the sincerity of Kemalist Westernisation, Zingarelli turned it into an example against 'self-loathing Westerners'. Misgivings about how the Turkish reform needed to address the moral void it was bound to create accompanied these views.⁸³

Much like Turkish intellectuals from *Kadro* to *Yeni Asır* at the time, Zingarelli agreed that a temporal gap separated Turkey from Europe. A chief cause of this was Islam, 'the crisis' and transformations of which gave its name to Zingarelli's book *Il risveglio d'Islam* (The Reawakening of Islam). Zingarelli believed that the 1920s in the East was the equivalent of the wars of religion in Europe centuries ago.⁸⁴ He observed that Muslim peoples recently began a long march under the banners of nationalism and Western civilisation.⁸⁵ Though he described the Quran as 'the most complete book in human history' in terms of its comprehensiveness vis-à-vis all life spheres, the Kemalists 'threw it into the attic', and they

⁸¹ Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. xvi.

⁸² Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. 7.

⁸³ Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. xv.

⁸⁴ Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. 8.

⁸⁵ Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. 2.

were justified in doing so: 'It is absurd to think that Turkey could be re-born without getting rid of the magic book [the Quran] first'.⁸⁶ Unlike Pedrazzi, who expected an imminent religious backlash against Kemalism, Zingarelli was convinced that the reform was largely successful and that many Turks did not feel a deep attachment to Islam by 1927. The division of the state and religion was already 'clearer and deeper' in Turkey than in France or Italy.⁸⁷ This civilisational switch also affected geopolitics, as Zingarelli felt that claims of Turkish support for Islamic anti-Western movements elsewhere were unfounded.⁸⁸

Zingarelli saw Kemalism as a simultaneously nationalist and Westernising movement, noticed some tension between these two tenets, argued that Westernisation in Turkey was necessary, and despite certain misgivings, felt that the reform was mostly successful. This vision of Kemalism as Westernisation was confirmed in the work of another Italian intellectual, Bosco, who defined it in a way reminiscent of the *Datsu A-Ron*. This, 'Farewell to Asia', was the statement of the goal of Japanese Westernisation earlier in the 19th century by Fukuzawa Yukichi.⁸⁹ In Bosco's view, Turkey was 'rejecting Asia with an apparently superhuman effort' [*rinnegare l'Asia con uno sforzo apparentemente sovrumano*]. Bosco observed that several intellectual influences converged to create the mentality of the Turks: 'Fatalism of Islam, Epicureanism of Byzantinism, and the sweet and maritime weather'. What tipped the balance was the European attempts to kick Turks out of Anatolia, which resulted in the Turks' reawakening and 'rejection' of Asia.⁹⁰ Bosco noted that while the armed struggle against European powers was the first step of the Turkish War of Independence, a second stage consisting of a spiritual 'struggle against Asia' [*la lotta contro l'Asia*] was underway. Writing in February 1928, Bosco clarified that the 'titanic efforts' of Mustafa Kemal

⁸⁶ Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. 13.

⁸⁷ Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. 17.

⁸⁸ Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. 15.

⁸⁹ On the formula and its inventor, see Marius B. Jensen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (The Belknap Press, 2009), p. 427.

⁹⁰ M. Bosco, 'Il Nemico Senza Trincee', *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 24 February 1928, p. 1.

were now directed against this more insidious enemy of 'centuries'. As a result, 'the entirety of Asia, with its religion, mentality and its barbarisms' opposed Mustafa Kemal, whose title, 'Gazi', Bosco mistranslated as 'the Victorious' as was common in Italy at the time.⁹¹ Europeans could laugh at what appeared as Turks' excessive reformism against their past 'Byzantinism'. Bosco invited them to a careful study of Turkey instead, where they could see a work of civilisation incomparable to 'the simpler parliamentary or economic reforms seen in certain democratic regimes'. Despite these critical comments on democratic regimes, Bosco apparently did not think that Kemalism was similar to fascism. He saw the central tenets of Kemalism as 'atheism, democracy, liberty' and observed that Kemalism aimed to transform Turkey into a 'Western-style' modern country.⁹²

Though most right-wing observers agreed by the mid to late 1920s that Kemalism was a movement for Westernisation, opinions diverged as to how desirable and achievable this end was in itself. In the novella *Yescià! Evviva! [Hooray!]* written around September 1925 and published in 1928, the Italian author B. Bionne portrayed a Turkey torn between the ties to the past and the allure of wholesale Westernisation. Written from the perspective of an Italian female protagonist, the novella was characterised by amazement and disapproval for the extreme adoration of all things Western by Turkish women. One example is a certain 'Emine Hanum', who speaks to the protagonist in a perfectly Parisian French and declares 'Ah, Europe! How beautiful must it be to live there, where everything is different and better'.⁹³ This 'Emine Hanum' sought to 'Europeanise herself' [*europeizzarsi*] by browsing through French periodicals, following the latest Parisian fashion and going to the cinema with her

⁹¹ This constant mistranslation of 'Gazi' as 'victorious' in the Italian literature caught the attention of the eminent Turcologist and Orientalist Ettore Rossi as well. See Ettore Rossi, 'Recensione di Ugo Bassi – L'Italia e la nuova Turchia', *Oriente Moderno*, Anno 12, Nr. 9 (September 1932), p. 463.

⁹² Bosco, 'Il nemico senza trincee'.

⁹³ B. Bionne, *Yescià! Evviva! Impressioni e Visioni Della Turchia Moderna* (Alberto Corticelli Editore, 1928), p. 63.

friends.⁹⁴ Emine was so much of a stranger to her country that she was able to declare Turkey was ‘a country of savages’ compared to Europe.⁹⁵ Though Bionne did not detail the protagonist’s response to such excessive remarks, we later find her sympathising with the complaints of an old anti-Kemalist conservative. The self-reflective protagonist then finds that the reason she tends to sympathise with the conservative is because she is European: ‘Surely, the revolution does not harm the Turks, in particular, Turkish women’, she concludes.⁹⁶ However, this does not stop her from saying to herself, ‘*Peccato!* [What a shame!] when she meets a Turkish passport policewoman who gushes over how Turks ‘will be real Europeans’ soon.⁹⁷ The protagonist initially presumes that this female official must be a Jew or a local Christian, but, in a way illustrating the monumental transformation of Turkey under Kemalism, the Turkish official responds: ‘I am Turkish, from Tophane’.⁹⁸ Bionne felt nostalgia for the old colourful East and worried that the Kemalists were importing the vices of the West. The author also conceded that some Westernisation was necessary for Turkey to survive. From the protagonist’s internal dialogue faced with the unveiled Turkish policewoman to her reception of the complaints of the anti-Kemalist who continues to don a *fez* at home, the novella reflects this mixture of ideas.

Civiltà Cattolica was particularly bothered by what Bosco saw as the ‘atheism’ of Kemalism. A piece published in 1928 reported that a certain Ismet Bey, who represented Turkey in an international educational congress, declared that Turkey was ‘an irreverent nation’ and ‘severed all ties to religions’. Far from enthusiasm for what seemed to many Westerner eyes as blows to Islam, this contributor to *Civiltà Cattolica* saw Turkish secularisation as part of a global assault on religions and feared its

⁹⁴ Bionne, *Yescia!*, p. 65.

⁹⁵ Bionne, *Yescia!*, p. 66.

⁹⁶ Bionne, *Yescia!*, pp. 88–89.

⁹⁷ Bionne, *Yescia!*, p. 77.

⁹⁸ Bionne, *Yescia!*, p. 71. Tophane is a quintessentially Muslim neighbourhood of Istanbul near the heart of Westernisation and largely non-Muslim populated Pera and Taksim.

consequences.⁹⁹ Beyond *Civiltà Cattolica*, Guglielmo Casetti's 1927 work, the simply titled *Turchia*, echoed similar suspicion towards Turkish Westernisation. Though the book was published in 1927, certain details of the text show that at least the bulk of it was written around 1925, which may help explain the author's more distanced attitude towards Turkey.¹⁰⁰ Casetti was a conservative fascist who saw Catholicism as 'the perfect expression of Christianity'.¹⁰¹ Much like Zingarelli and Alessio, he saw Westernisation and, in an afterglow of the colonial literature, 'Kemalist xenophobia' as two conflicting desires within Kemalism.¹⁰² Another harking back to the colonial literature was his idea that despite the façade of secularism, scratching Kemalism would reveal Islamism underneath with its intolerant anti-Westernism.¹⁰³ Where he diverged most clearly from the colonial literature was that, despite seeing Kemalism still as a reinvigorated Islamism, he noticed that the 'Turkey of Pierre Loti' was no more.¹⁰⁴ Having tossed the Quran aside, the Kemalists were drawing from 'the hated West' to reorganise their society.¹⁰⁵ Recognising the necessity of Westernisation, Casetti felt that the Turks were drawing from the wrong West. In his view, the 'encyclopaedist-derived, nebulous ends of progress and modernisation' in Kemalism could have significant negative consequences for Turkey. Once Kemalists tore down the ethical checks, 'primitive spirits' in Turkey would be led to ruination.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ 'L'Educazione Nuova' a Congresso', *La Civiltà Cattolica*, vol. II (1928), pp. 289-303 (291).

¹⁰⁰ The author discusses the dissolution of the Progressive Republican Party and opposition at large as a development that took place in recent weeks, while not mentioning several vital developments from 1926 and 1927, such as the adoption of the 1926 Turkish penal code from the Italian *Codice Zanardelli*, or the Izmir assassination attempt in June 1926, and the meetings between Turkish and Italian officials in 1927 that paved the way for the rapprochement and treaty of 1928. These strongly suggest that the book was written around 1925.

¹⁰¹ Guglielmo Casetti, *Turchia* (Casa Editrice Berlutti, 1927), p. 68.

¹⁰² Casetti, *Turchia*, p. 6.

¹⁰³ Casetti, *Turchia*, p. 74.

¹⁰⁴ Casetti, *Turchia*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ Casetti, *Turchia*, pp. 67-69.

¹⁰⁶ Casetti, *Turchia*, pp. 67-68.

The consideration that brought Casetti to this conclusion was not merely an evaluation of Kemalist Westernisation in itself but, with a significant foreshadowing of what was to come, a comparison of Kemalism and fascism. Casetti noted that some individuals sought to draw parallels between the two ideologies, but the French Revolution-like ideas of Kemalism made the two differ. He complained about how certain circles – most likely anti-fascists – claimed fascism made Italy seem more backwards than Turkey since Kemalists were secularising Turkey while fascists were not interested in curbing the influence of religion on society. Casetti rebuked that by arguing that Kemalists would succeed in their French Revolution-like ends was doubtful.¹⁰⁷ That Turkey was Westernising did not mean it was becoming fascist-like since the Turks were drawing from an obsolete West.

This association between the ends of the French revolutionaries and Kemalism was also present in Coppola's analysis of Kemalism's role in the global 'anti-European revolution' in 1925. Imagining Turkey at the heart of a pan-Islamic network of solidarity backed by Soviet Russia and Germany, Coppola analysed reasons for participating in this alliance. Turkey was not European, and nor was Russia, and hence, their participation was understandable: 'Russia has never been really Western and European' and 'for many centuries, the real border of Europe has been Vistula and Danube'.¹⁰⁸ Germany's participation instead stemmed from short-sightedness and an inability to appreciate the country's Western heritage. Despite its Protestant inheritance, Coppola readily acknowledged Germany as 'one of the major Christian powers in the world' and 'without doubt, one of the greatest nations within Western and European civilisation'.¹⁰⁹ Coppola offered a vision of European solidarity, wherein all European nations would settle their differences and join forces against the onslaughts of the 'anti-European revolution'. This solidarity was crucial to Coppola

¹⁰⁷ Casetti, *Turchia*, pp. 67–68.

¹⁰⁸ Coppola, 'La Rivoluzione Antieuropea', p. 206.

¹⁰⁹ Coppola, 'La Rivoluzione Antieuropea', p. 204. The Catholic Coppola actually granted this status to Germany in a rather magnanimous manner, by noting that 'be it Catholic or Protestant', Germany occupied such a prominent role in Europe.

since he believed that the greatest threat before the West was self-inflicted injuries by European revolutionary ideologies. Signs of this were evident in the way French revolutionary theories created the anti-European revolution. Coppola readily defined Kemalism as 'democratic', 'anti-clerical', as well as 'anti-European'. Precisely because he interpreted the French Revolution as an aberration in the history of the authentic, proudly authoritarian and religious Europe, he did not consider democracy or secularism as part of a sensible Westernisation package. The value of fascism was precisely in its reaction against these 'Jewish' ideologies that sickened Europe.¹¹⁰

While not many Italian observers delved deep into the realm of theorising against 'Jewish' ideologies like Coppola, the worries about the 'ethical void' Kemalist secularism created abounded in the literature. Zingarelli felt that the Turks were importing the vices as well as the virtues of the West, which led to 'suicides, [unleashed] passions, and alcoholism', as the Kemalists failed to replace the older system of morals with a newer, equally comprehensive *weltanschauung*.¹¹¹ Altering European laws 'without consideration for local circumstances' was recipe for trouble.¹¹² The outlawing of polygamy itself was a touted reason behind the spike in Turkish suicides: the argument went that many ladies were left too disoriented after this reform to be able to continue with their lives.¹¹³ On a more positive side, Zingarelli did not imagine the pre-Westernisation Turkey as an idyllic utopia of social peace. Instead, he felt men exercised 'tyranny' over women, which the Kemalists had broken down only partially until then.¹¹⁴

With her struggle against such tyranny, Nezihe Muhiddin, a pioneer of Turkish feminism in the late Ottoman and early Republican eras, caught the attention of Italian observers like Zingarelli and Gilberto

¹¹⁰ Coppola, 'La Rivoluzione Antieuropea', p. 226.

¹¹¹ Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. xv.

¹¹² Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. 54.

¹¹³ 'L'abolizione Della Poligamia', *Il Piccolo*, 30 April 1927, p. 1.

¹¹⁴ Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, pp. 69–70.

Primi.¹¹⁵ In articles published in 1927 and 1929, Primi took delight in the emergence of 'suffragettism' in Turkey, a 'land of harems and eunuchs'. Living in Turkey, and likely with more Turkish readers than Zingarelli or Coppola, Primi was more positive towards female emancipation in Turkey. Discussing the likes of Nezihe Muhiddin and Halide Edip [Adivar], he extolled the education of elite Turkish women, their struggle for women's rights, and familiarity with Western culture and literature.¹¹⁶ Apparently not sharing the worries of Casetti, Primi was able to report joyfully in 1929 that within a few years, Turkish women moved 'from barbaric customs to the universities'. Kemalism deserved praise for this since, despite the odd Western exaggeration without actual observation of women in Turkey, Primi noted, the conditions of women in Turkey were truly pitiful. The shift from being unable to choose with whom to marry to being able to study at universities along with their male peers was too great a progress to ignore.¹¹⁷

The dominant right-wing Italian perceptions of female emancipation in Turkey are most succinctly summarised in a newspaper piece from September 1927, titled 'The Turkish Woman Has Disappeared'. The reason for this disappearance was the ongoing complete Europeanisation of Turkish women, such that the 'Turkey that Pierre Loti depicted' was 'no more' and harems were emptied. Much as Primi, the author disagreed with the gentlemen (*efendis*) who did not appreciate female emancipation but recognised the risks of Turkish girls 'hastily seeking to Europeanise themselves at all costs'. If it was a good thing that the *burqa* was destined for extinction, Turks had to be wakeful of the possibility of importing the vices of Europe.¹¹⁸

While all the authors cited thus far vis-à-vis their views of female emancipation were likely men, one of the most negative appraisals of Kemalist female emancipation came from the pen of a fascist woman,

¹¹⁵ Zingarelli, *Il Risveglio*, p. 69.

¹¹⁶ Gilberto Primi, 'Il Sogno Della Donna Turca: La Medaglietta Parlamentare', *Il Piccolo*, 30 June 1927, p. 1.

¹¹⁷ Gilberto Primi, 'Dalle Usanze Barbare All'Università', *Il Piccolo*, 2 April 1929, p. 1.

¹¹⁸ 'La Donna Turca è Scomparsa', *Il Piccolo*, 9 September 1927, p. 1.

Luciana Grimaldi. Writing for Dario Lischi's journal *Costruire* in May 1926, Grimaldi observed that contrary to the prominence of women in much of history, certain societies reduced their women to near-slavery conditions, isolation, and complete ignorance. One example of this was Tripolitania. While Turkey had constituted another example until recently, under Kemalism (an 'Oriental revolution'), Turkish women took a big step from 'perfumed softness and laziness of the *harem* life to a life of action and thought'. The issue with Turkish female emancipation was the brisk nature of this shift to 'full and uncontrasted liberty', which Grimaldi found problematic. Luckily for Tripolitania, Italy would guide them prudently towards a more stable form of female emancipation.¹¹⁹ Despite certain exceptions like Primi and Alessio, most fascists, especially the more conservative circles, but even fascist women like Grimaldi, found the Kemalist project for Westernisation and female emancipation too hasty.

Nostalgia for the lost Oriental colourfulness depicted by Pierre Loti, appreciation for aspects of Westernising reforms due to the 'tyrannical' nature of pre-Kemalist Turkish society, and worries for the impact of Western vices in the too hastily Westernising Turkey all featured prominently in right-wing perceptions of Kemalism in Italy in the 1920s. While positive perceptions gained increased currency with the improvements in state-level relations, they did not necessarily follow the heed of the diplomats. To illustrate this case and widen our cases towards movements typically ignored in the literature the next section will analyse fascist as well as anti-fascist perceptions of Kemalism in the 1920s, especially in the late 1920s. Along with this shift in actors and the slight progression in the chronology, a thematic change will also occur. As we saw, individuals like Casetti were busy comparing and contrasting fascism and Kemalism already in the mid-1920s. By paying particular attention to perceptions of Kemalist methods of governance, the next section will throw light on how various actors began theorising about the similarities and differences between fascism and Kemalism already in the 1920s.

¹¹⁹ Luciana Grimaldi, 'La Donna nella Femmina Libica', *Costruire*, May 1926, pp. 54–55.

§ 4.3 ‘Either the Hat or the Gallows’: Italian Perceptions of the Kemalist Means and Ends in the 1920s

In the wake of the Turkish victory against Greek forces, Italian deputies were busy debating whether fascism was establishing a dictatorship in Italy in November 1922. Among those who saw the latest demands of the Mussolini government for a more powerful executive as a sign of dictatorship was Ezio Riboldi, a *massimalista* socialist.¹²⁰ Born in Lombardy in 1878, Riboldi studied law in Milan and became an active member of the *Partito Socialista Italiano* (PSI), served as the mayor of Monza in 1914 and participated in the peace conference organised by European socialist parties, the Zimmerwald Conference of 1915. Riboldi continued his defence of socialism in the parliament from 1919 onwards. In that particular session of November 1922, Riboldi stepped forward and spoke ‘on behalf of the party’.¹²¹ Clarifying in advance that the parliament had already lost any control over the executive branch by the unexpected entry of Italy into the First World War, Riboldi described the current cohort of deputies as too toothless for any revolutionary initiatives.¹²² As Riboldi explained, the *massimalisti* readily conceded that such initiatives could necessitate dictatorships: the PSI did not have an ‘inflexible’ view of dictatorships *per se*. The problem with fascism was the type of arbitrary, anti-popular dictatorship it set out to establish.¹²³ While certain cliques supported Mussolini, Riboldi noted that his dictatorship was totally personal and not

¹²⁰ *Massimalista*, in plural *massimalisti*, or the maximalists were a faction within Italian socialism that disagreed both with the hardline communists and the reformist socialists. They formed the majority in the congresses of the *Partito socialista italiano* in the early 1920s, which led to the breakaway of both the communist and reformist parties. While Riboldi did not join the new communist party in 1921, he did later join it in 1924.

¹²¹ *Atti Parlamentari: Camera dei Deputati*, Legislatura XXVI, 1° sessione, tornata del 23 November 1922, p. 8619. <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg26/sed191.pdf> (Last Accessed: 23.09.2023).

¹²² *Atti Parlamentari: Camera dei Deputati*, Legislatura XXVI, 1° sessione, tornata del 23 November 1922, p. 8619; 8621.

¹²³ *Atti Parlamentari: Camera dei Deputati*, Legislatura XXVI, 1° sessione, tornata del 23 November 1922, p. 8620.

even the expression of a well-defined class, say, of the bourgeoisie.¹²⁴ Predictably, to illustrate his case, Riboldi turned to the Bolsheviks as one example of a necessarily dictatorial but popular group working towards noble ends such as equality and welfare, led by the selfless Lenin.¹²⁵ As a result of the non-personal and well-meaning nature of the Bolshevik dictatorship, despite Lenin's 'nearly eight months of absence from government', the state policies continued unaltered.¹²⁶

For Riboldi, the Bolshevik rule could be a dictatorship, but it was legitimate, and its workings had nothing to do with fascism.¹²⁷ It was precisely at this junction that Kemalism appeared in the debate. Not making do with the sole example of Bolshevism, Riboldi turned to Turkey for another example of beneficial and legitimate dictatorship. Kemalism 'brought the country to the Caliphate crisis and a radical transformation of Turkish society'. One had to remember that during all these, behind Mustafa Kemal stood the Grand National Assembly in Ankara. The Kemalists' regime was 'the dictatorship of a small class' [*la dittatura di una piccola classe*].¹²⁸ All of these meant that, unlike the fascists, Kemalists had a clearer class background and, therefore, solid structural bases, as well as much more commendable ends. Riboldi, and as we shall see, many Italian anti-fascists prioritised the ends over means and thus separated Kemalism and fascism.

¹²⁴ *Atti Parlamentari: Camera dei Deputati*, Legislatura XXVI, 1° sessione, tornata del 23 November 1922, p. 8621.

¹²⁵ *Atti Parlamentari: Camera dei Deputati*, Legislatura XXVI, 1° sessione, tornata del 23 November 1922, p. 8622.

¹²⁶ *Atti Parlamentari: Camera dei Deputati*, Legislatura XXVI, 1° sessione, tornata del 23 November 1922, p. 8622.

¹²⁷ A similar but more uncompromising stance was embraced by the Italian Communist Party until the mid-1930s. Not only did the party distinguish between fascist and proletarian dictatorships, it also drew a line between the 'social-democratic dictatorship of the bourgeoisie' seen in Western countries and the dictatorial regime of a proletarian country that left no freedom for the bourgeoisie. For an example from the official outlet of the party, see 'Dittatura proletaria e dittatura fascista', *L'Unità*, n. 7, 7 November 1929, p. 3.

¹²⁸ *Atti Parlamentari: Camera dei Deputati*, Legislatura XXVI, 1° sessione, tornata del 23 November 1922, p. 8622.

That many Italian anti-fascists perceived Kemalism in a similar light in the 1920s is evident from publications in the PSI's newspaper *Avanti!*. Established in 1896, the outlet greatly expanded its popularity by the time the First World War arrived. Thriving under the leadership of the young editor Mussolini and initially supporting neutralism in the First World War, *Avanti!* later found itself divided as with the rest of Italian socialism.¹²⁹ The outlet's offices were subjected to violent attacks by the fascist *squadristi* from 1919 onwards, while the draconian laws of *leggi fascistiche* in 1926 forced the outlet out of Italy to France and Switzerland, with the blanket ban on all anti-fascist organisations. As *Avanti!* generally reflected the policy line of the party, the coverage of the Turkish War of Independence was coloured by a *massimalista* tone itself influenced by the Bolsheviks. Already in March 1920, *Avanti!* reported that the Greeks were preparing to send additional troops to Anatolia. They interpreted this as the tragic and inevitable end of all colonial enterprises, and warned Rome to avoid repeating the same scenario by committing ever more money and men into an enterprise doomed to fail.¹³⁰ *Avanti!* also opposed the Allied occupation of Istanbul and the Ottoman parliament in March 1920, the dehumanising treatment to which the Turks were subjected, and the 'utilisation' of the Armenian massacres by the Allies as a pretext for their atrocities against Muslims in Anatolia. *Avanti!* predicted a massive global Muslim outcry in reaction.¹³¹

Avanti! saw the Bolsheviks as staunch defenders of this Muslim defence and welcomed the Islamo-Bolshevik alliance against Western imperialism. The coverage of the Turkish War of Independence was tinted with a non-negligible amount of wishful thinking, such as a report from May 1920 according to which Mustafa Kemal, leading 70,000 men, took Bursa from the Greeks; the news surrounding the Turco-Bolshevik

¹²⁹ On the divisions within the Italian socialist movement and the experience of the exile years see Alexander De Grand, "'To Learn Nothing and to Forget Nothing': Italian Socialism and the Experience of Exile Politics, 1935-1945", *Contemporary European History*, 14.4 (2005), pp. 539-58.

¹³⁰ 'Rinforzi Greci a Smirne', *Avanti!*, 16 March 1920, p. 4.

¹³¹ 'Costantinopoli Occupata dagli Alleati', *Avanti!*, 19 March 1920, p. 1.

alliance tended to be more accurate.¹³² If the ‘voracious Cretan’ [Eleftherios Venizelos, the Greek PM] wished to devour even more of Asia Minor, the Turks would surely stop him. Should this fail, *Avanti!* even speculated that the Bolsheviks would roll the Red Army into Anatolia to crush the Greeks.¹³³ Early on during the war, *Avanti!* went so far as to imagine Mustafa Kemal as a type of ‘people’s commissar’ establishing ‘Turkish Soviets’ across Anatolia.¹³⁴ Apparently, socialism was becoming massively popular in Anatolia, with a ‘Muslim Bolshevik committee’ established in Eskişehir.¹³⁵ As the war progressed, *Avanti!* combatted Greek claims of victory, assured the readers of an imminent Bolshevik-backed Kemalist victory, and when such a victory materialised, extensively covered its global repercussions.¹³⁶ The major repercussion was how this victory would encourage ‘the entire Muslim world (...) to fight against Western imperialism’.¹³⁷ In September 1922, *Avanti!* even gushed over the prospects of Turkey becoming a part of the West and serving as a bridge between Western and Eastern civilisations, all the while without adopting imperialism itself.¹³⁸ Despite seeing Greece as acting on behalf of the imperialist powers, in the aftermath of the Greek defeat, *Avanti!* largely refrained from the sentiments of *vae victis* seen in much of the right-wing intelligentsia. This was likely because, as put by an anonymous contributor who went by the pen name of Sticus, *Avanti!*’s authors believed that it was global capitalism, and not Greek gluttony as stipulated by Mussolini,

¹³² ‘L’alleanza Turca Coi Bolscevichi’, *Avanti!*, 16 June 1920, p. 1; ‘Successi Degli Insorti Turchi’, *Avanti!*, 29 May 1920, p. 1.

¹³³ ‘Il Convegno Di Hythe’, *Avanti!*, 22 June 1920, p. 1.

¹³⁴ ‘Gli Insorti Turchi Instaurano i Soviet’, *Avanti!*, 24 November 1920, p. 1.

¹³⁵ ‘La Turchia e La Russia dei Soviet’, *Avanti!*, 11 July 1920, p. 6; ‘Lenin Inaugura Un Congresso Mussulmano’, *Avanti!*, 26 August 1920, p. 1. The committee in question was likely the group around Çerkes Ethem, a militia leader who initially allied with the Kemalists but then switched to the Greek side over personal and policy differences with the Kemalist leadership.

¹³⁶ ‘I Greci Cantano Già Vittoria’, *Avanti!*, 29 March 1921, p. 6.

¹³⁷ ‘Nel Mondo Senza Pace’, *Avanti!*, 8 September 1922, p. 1.

¹³⁸ ‘La Ragione Fondamentale’, *Avanti!*, 22 September 1922, p. 1.

that pushed the Greeks and Turks to a war that benefitted none of them.¹³⁹

Towards the mid-1920s, *Avanti!* began to portray Kemalism as a programme of radical Westernisation, which led to differing interpretations. Among those seeking to decipher what Westernising Kemalism meant in a global context was Gustavo Sacerdote, an Italian-Jewish intellectual born in 1867 and with extensive links to other European socialist movements. In an article from March 1924, Sacerdote began by relating his memoirs of a certain 'Negib' [Necib] Bey, who gave lectures at Galatasaray High School and taught him some Turkish. This Negib Bey was an impeccable *Tanzimat*-era gentleman, equally devoted to modernisation and the protection of the Caliphate. Negib Bey was lucky not to survive and see the Kemalist reforms as his old heart would not tolerate it lightly, Sacerdote observed. As for Turkey at large, he was certain that the Kemalist reforms improved the country. Much as Zingarelli or Alessio, he, too, noted the existence of a seemingly paradoxical duo of ideas as the chief tenets of Kemalism: anti-Westernism and the desire for Westernisation. Sacerdote solved the paradox by interpreting the latter as a more efficient means of realising the former: the Turks wished to empower themselves quickly and better fulfil their function as 'one of the great Asian anti-European movements'. Sacerdote welcomed this prospect and saluted the abolishment of the Caliphate and even claims of an imminent adoption of a Latin-based new alphabet as necessary steps.¹⁴⁰

Interestingly, *Avanti!*'s editorial staff recognised that some of their Turkish comrades, such as Şefik Hüsnü [Deymer] of the *Türkiye İşçi Çiftçi Sosyalist Fırkası* [TİÇSF; *Workers and Farmers' Socialist Party of Turkey*] saw the Kemalists as readily exploiting the Turkish proletariat. A speech by Şefik Hüsnü at the Tours Congress of international socialism in December 1920 was translated and published in *Avanti!* where the speaker invited the Turkish proletariat to search for solutions independent of Enver Pasha and Mustafa Kemal alike.¹⁴¹ Though the *massimalisti* largely

¹³⁹ Sticus, 'Ideali e Realtà nella Lotta fra Turchi e Greci', *Avanti!*, 2 September 1922, p. 1.

¹⁴⁰ Gustavo Sacerdote, 'La Fine del Califfo', *Avanti!*, 9 March 1924, p. 3.

¹⁴¹ 'Il Movimento Operaio in Turchia', *Avanti!*, 9 January 1921, p. 3.

ignored such warnings from certain Turkish socialists, occasional dissent emerged, as in the case of Arturo Vella in 1923. Vella was the supposed leader of a more reformist 'Gruppo Vella' in 1923, and his criticism of the PSI centred around the unconditional support for the 'self-interested' Russian foreign policy and the 'pan-Turkist, imperialist ideas of Kemal Pasha'.¹⁴² Most damning vis-à-vis Kemalism was a publication by a certain 'Quidam' in 1925. Quidam observed that Kemalism was 'laicising and Europeanising' Turkey, but, given their legal and saltatory reforms, it appeared to him that the Turks had never heard of the saying 'the cowl does not make a monk'. Kemalists failed to understand that the headgear change was much less significant than mentality change. Quidam interpreted the Kemalist drive to 'clumsily copy [*scimiottare*]' the West as ultimately deriving from a desire to be as powerful as the West. He predicted that this power would be wielded against other oppressed nations and asked fellow socialists to stop seeing Turkey as the saviour of the non-West.¹⁴³ Effectively, Turkey was the new Japan, and the hopes of a peaceful Asian revival rested in India and China by the mid-1920s, for the author.

Apparently, the views of Vella and Quidam were not immensely popular within the party. In 1925, *Avanti!*'s reports of the Sheikh Said rebellion largely mimicked the Soviet interpretation, as the newspaper rejoiced at the crushing of the 'reactionary' rebels. While Soviet foreign policy played a role in popularising such portrayals of Kemalism, even anti-fascists more distant from the USSR came to prioritise Kemalism's ends over its means. As the PSI divided in the early 1920s, a reformist party emerged in 1922, *Partito sociale unitario* [the Unitary Socialist Party]. *Critica sociale*, a prestigious outlet of Italian socialism established in 1891 where the reformists Anna Kuliscioff and Claudio Treves played important roles, sided with the new party. While the party's distance to Bolshevism and antagonism with the *massimalista* coloured their perceptions of Kemalism early on, by the mid-1920s, they, too, largely saw

¹⁴² Arturo Vella, 'La Questione Morale e La Questione Politica', *Avanti!*, 12 January 1923, p. 2.

¹⁴³ Quidam, 'I Cappelli e Le Teste', *Avanti!*, 11 December 1925, p. 2.

Kemalism in a positive light, in a way that illustrates the potential independence of perceptions of Kemalism from perceptions of Bolshevism.

As good socialists, Treves and his friends criticised the 'grotesque' Allied policies in Turkey. Treves argued in May 1920 that the British and French particularly enjoyed bringing up Turkish 'barbarism' and 'inability' to put Anatolia to good use as a pretext for setting up Western-guided puppet governments in the region. However, Treves was also critical of the 'realpolitik' that inspired Russian foreign policy, which was not a genuinely socialist one.¹⁴⁴ The criticism of the international allies of the Italian *massimalisti* was also present in Francesco Ciccotti's essay from December 1920, where he invited European socialists not to sacrifice the entirety of the West. In Ciccotti's view, the socialist alliance with the Islamic resistance to Western imperialism had troublesome aspects. While he clarified how he backed the exploited coloured peoples, he warned Italian socialists over the excessive hatred for the 'dirty Christian' and the 'exalting of the verses of the Quran' witnessed among their Eastern allies. Surely, he argued, European socialists did not toss aside 'the Quran of the Catholics' to embrace that of the Muslims now: 'though we love the East [*L'Oriente*], we also love the West [*L'Occidente*]'. The charges of being *socialpatrioti* or *socialtraditori*, with the first name suggesting that *reformisti* were patriots in disguise and the second that they were traitors of the cause, did not bother him much. It was better to be these than 'becoming comrades of Kemal Pasha or the Shia of Persia', as Ciccotti reminded *massimalisti* to stand with the impoverished Egyptian *fellah* and not his overlords.¹⁴⁵ Nor was the initial coverage of *Critica sociale* vis-à-vis the governmental methods of Kemalism flattering, as Professor Gennaro Mondaini defined Turkey's regime as the 'dictatorship of Kemal Pasha' in February 1922.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Claudio Treves, 'Neanche Questo Primo Maggio', *Critica Sociale*, 1 May 1920, pp. 129–30.

¹⁴⁵ Francesco Ciccotti, 'L'Islam nella Terza Internazionale', *Critica Sociale*, 1 December 1920, pp. 361–63 (p. 363).

¹⁴⁶ Prof. Gennaro Mondaini, 'La Questione d'Oriente', *Critica Sociale*, 16 February 1922, pp. 51–54 (p. 52).

Worries of *Critica sociale* revolved around the idea that Kemalism was a robust anti-European force in terms of opposing not just European imperialism but the entire value system of Europe. As reformists saw democracy, freedom of opinion and other values as part and parcel of what being European meant, they were suspicious of Kemalism's global impact. By 1925 and 1926, they increasingly perceived Kemalism as a movement for Westernisation, besides its other aspects, and began to judge it accordingly. In 1925, Angelo Treves sought an objective appraisal of the Turkish economy and, in contrast to the initial pessimism of the outlet, concluded that if Kemalists' efforts would succeed in reconstructing the country and reforming its education system, Turkey could develop economically.¹⁴⁷ In June 1926, Gaio Ulpiani completed the evolution in the outlet's coverage of Kemalism. Discussing the prospects of a unified Islamic threat against Europe, Ulpiani argued this was largely unrealistic, and Turkey would likely stay away from such a movement in any case. Having regained its independence with the Treaty of Lausanne, Kemalism 'culminated in a state laicism that battered the religion, customs, family order, and shook theocracy to its foundations'. Turkey was no longer 'the sword of Islam', which was evident in the Turks' disinterestedness in the fate of Egypt.¹⁴⁸ Turkey, in short, was now 'a parliamentary republic that is Westernising'.¹⁴⁹

Critica sociale was obliged to cease its publications from October 1926 in the wake of the *leggi fascistissime*. A major *fuorusciti* [a term used by Italians to refer to anti-fascists who fled Italy] publication from Paris in line with reformist socialist politics, *La Libertà* provides a window into the evolution of reformist socialist perceptions of Kemalism in the late 1920s. A significant change in the context was the Turco-Italian rapprochement of 1927-28. Before, *La Libertà* could refer to Turkey as a country opposed to fascist foreign policy. In November 1927, for example, the seasoned reformist socialist Claudio Treves referred to 'Kemal Pascia' as

¹⁴⁷ Angelo Treves, 'La Situazione Economica della Nuova Turchia', *Critica Sociale*, 1 August 1925, pp. 174-75.

¹⁴⁸ Gaio Ulpiani, 'Il Mistero Dell'Islam', *Critica Sociale*, 1 June 1926, pp. 165-66 (p. 165).

¹⁴⁹ Ulpiani, 'Il Mistero', p. 166.

the sole post-war figure who backed his ostensible heroism with some actual content, 'as defined in antiquity'. Most of the dictators such as Mussolini, Primo de Rivera, Pilsudski, and perhaps even Lenin were merely false heroes; it was only Mustafa Kemal who acted with a sword at hand, defeated enemies of the Turks, and remade his homeland 'miraculously'.¹⁵⁰ Reformists' cautious optimism on Kemalism continued in January 1928, as an anonymous commentator of Mussolini's 'disastrous' foreign policy in the Balkans demonstrated with his comparison between Mustafa Kemal and Mussolini: 'Of all the dictators now troubling the world, Kemal Pascia is the only serious one, [in the sense that] (...) his dictatorship was established not in a war against... the cooperatives and *camere del lavoro* [an organisation of left-wing syndicates across Italy] but a real and victorious war'.¹⁵¹ This comparison between Mussolini, the posing warrior and Mustafa Kemal, the humbler general, proved extremely popular in anti-fascist literature in the interwar era.

When it became clear that Turkey and Italy reconciled their differences, contributors to *La Libertà* initially adopted diverging stances. One line of reaction to the rapprochement was to mock Mussolini for his 'renouncement' of the promised land that was Anatolia. By likening him to pre-war Italian politicians that the fascists blamed for *la vittoria mutilata*, they hoped to portray Mussolini as the 'traitor' to the dreams of colonies in Antalya and Izmir.¹⁵² Occasionally, contributors expressed disappointment and anger towards Turkey, describing the contributions of Spain, Hungary, Romania and Turkey to the Fair of Fiume in 1928 as 'miserable' performances from countries that were 'all dictatorships'.¹⁵³ Franco Clerici went still further to argue that the contemporary rumours in France on Mustafa Kemal's intention to proclaim himself king were probably deliberately spread by 'Turkish fascists'; of course, as a convinced moderniser, Mustafa Kemal would now be known as a king and not a sultan, he

¹⁵⁰ Claudio Treves, 'Individualismo o Libertà', *La Libertà*, 20 November 1927, p. 3.

¹⁵¹ 'Mussolini Balcanico', *La Libertà*, 8 January 1928, p. 3.

¹⁵² 'Più Rinunciatori Di Così Si Crepa!', *La Libertà*, 3 June 1928, p. 1; 'Mussolini Rinunciatario', *La Libertà*, 10 June 1928, p. 2.

¹⁵³ 'La IV Fiera Di Fiume', *La Libertà*, 9 September 1928, p. 4.

ironised.¹⁵⁴ Yet, in contrast to Clerici's comments, another essay from February 1928 argued that the way the Turkish side vehemently denied rumours of kingship in Turkey made one wonder whether Italy was 'more backwards' than Turkey. *La Libertà*'s commentator quoted the response of the RPP's Mahmud Bey [Soydan] to the French press. Particularly striking for *La Libertà* was Mahmud Bey's argument that Turks were determined to preserve their republic, and a move to the contrary in other nations only illustrated their level of civilisation. The author rhetorically asked whether fascism reduced Italians to a civilisational level 'lower than the Turks'.¹⁵⁵ Later, in 1929, Libero Battistelli referred to Mustafa Kemal as a 'dictator but also the *Ghazi*' who shut the doors of Turkey to any foreign intervention and would surely not have Italy, bolstered by the recent treaty with the Papacy, pose as the protector of Catholicism in Turkey.¹⁵⁶ Other reports and commentary similarly highlighted Kemalists' resistance to fascist attempts to turn Turkey into a pawn of Italy.¹⁵⁷ Even as an Italian ally, Turkey was widely perceived as actively resisting a too-close association with fascism.

By the mid-1920s, then, most anti-fascists recognised Kemalism as a force for Westernisation partly supported by coercion. As we saw in the Section Two, it was around the same time that most fascists concurred with this view. Biagio Pace not only referred to Mustafa Kemal as a 'dictator' but also noted the existence of some discontent amongst the masses and observed the work of the Independence Tribunals in

¹⁵⁴ Franco Clerici, 'Dinastie Fasciste', *La Libertà*, 30 September 1928, p. 3.

¹⁵⁵ 'Siamo Più Giù della Turchia?', *La Libertà*, 16 September 1928, p. 2.

¹⁵⁶ Libero Battistelli, 'Per Un Piatto Di Lenticche Bacate', *La Libertà*, 28 April 1929, p. 3.

¹⁵⁷ One such case put under the spotlight by *La Libertà* was the claimed failure of a trip by the fascist former Minister of Finance, famed businessman and key figure of the regime, Giuseppe Volpi. Accordingly, Volpi was sent to Turkey to become a sort of monetary supervisor for Turkey, which could cement fascism's international prestige as a 'restorer' of countries. However, seeing through the Italian plan, the Kemalist leadership kindly sent Volpi packing. This was the *La Libertà* version of Volpi's visit, of course, and may not accurately capture the actual intentions of the involved parties. 'L'infortunio di Volpi ad Angora', *La Libertà*, 1 December 1929, p. 2.

suppressing dissent.¹⁵⁸ Pace also related the idea that the Western hat was forbidden in Islam as it made its wearers unable to perform certain parts of the Muslim prayer; in response, the government 'forcibly removed' the *fezes* from the Turkish heads.¹⁵⁹ In difference from anti-fascists, and as we shall see, from many fascists, Pace related these as fantastic tales from the surreal land that was the East. He claimed that a pro-opposition journalist was hanged in Turkey merely for refusing to write more pro-opposition pieces. These reminded Pace of 'the old, Byzantine type of corruption', the kind of 'arbitrary rule seen at the times of Selim [Selim I] and Ibrahim [Ibrahim I]' that was still alive in Turkey.¹⁶⁰ Such views were not rare in the fascist literature in the mid to late 1920s. A review of Casetti's book on Turkey concluded that 'the frenzied modernisation programme of Kemal Pasha's dictatorial republic' constituted only an 'apparent' reawakening of Turkey. This was because Kemalism spread through fear and terror, thus remaining 'limited and superficial'. The comparison with fascism was implicit in the argument: while Kemalism failed to alter the lives of the Turks ('inferior by nature'), fascism relied on genuine affection of the Italians and not fear.¹⁶¹

However, it was also in the late 1920s that comparisons between fascism and Kemalism began to acquire a different tone. Unlike intellectuals with scarce sympathy for Turks like Pace, Casetti and Caretta, who felt that fascism and Kemalism were quite different, an author from Trieste's *Il piccolo* argued to the contrary in November 1927. This was a time when the relations between the two countries were improving. Facilitated by this softening of the atmosphere, the author observed that Mustafa Kemal had 'dictatorial powers' and intended to utilise these by bringing the parliament in line with his will after the PRP debacle of 1924-25. Even Kemalist actions that could strike the Western observer as strange, such as the hat reform, were mired at uprooting 'old ways of thinking', the author explained. Such were the feelings of rapprochement that he concluded by

¹⁵⁸ Pace, *Dalla Pianura*, p. 229.

¹⁵⁹ Pace, *Dalla Pianura*, p. 226.

¹⁶⁰ Pace, *Dalla Pianura*, pp. 241-42.

¹⁶¹ C. M. Caretta, "'Turchia" di Guglielmo Casetti', *Costruire*, January 1927, p. 51.

interpreting the results of the Turkish census in 1927 as illustrating how the Turks knew to repopulate Anatolia, in stark contrast to the colonial literature.¹⁶²

The rapprochement also provoked a self-critical look at the Western perceptions of the East. An opinion piece on *Il messaggero* in March 1929 criticised ongoing European misconceptions that hindered proper understanding of Turkey and Kemalism. Europe failed to understand even the reason for the alphabet change in Turkey. This was a move to tackle pervasive illiteracy caused by the infinitely complex Ottoman alphabet that threw many intellectuals in jail under Abdulhamid II, who accused the journalists of meaning things they did not actually mean. Mustafa Kemal was an 'iron-willed' visionary who based its programme on popular support and not terror. He was vividly aware of the choice facing Turkey: 'to renew itself or perish'. Kemalists chose renewal, and with this, they showed to the West how their misguided tales of irreversible regression of peoples were false: Turkey was rejuvenating, 'destroying the barriers that separated her from the European world'. The author concluded with a favourable comparison of Kemalism and Bolshevism. Kemalism proved that one could 'break away from the past and build one's future without a utopian transformation of life, based on theoretical programmes that create an abyss between different social classes'.¹⁶³ Unlike the earlier coverage, such as a piece by Antonio Lovato in February 1926 where he argued Kemalism could rekindle the flames of independence in the entire Asia, *Costruire* too aligned its publications on Kemalism with this new spirit.¹⁶⁴ By June 1928, Mario di Brayda was full of praise for how Mustafa Kemal 'single-handedly' saved Turkey, resolved to 'Europeanise' Turkey and bring it 'to the same level as civilised powers'. The only thing the Kemalists had to do to bring this 'miraculous' work to completion was to last [*durare*] for a few more years so that their reforms would take root

¹⁶² U, 'La Terza Assemblea Turca. Il Suo Compito: Risolvere La Crisi Economica', *Il Piccolo*, 16 November 1927, p. 1.

¹⁶³ 'L'alfabeto Latino in Turchia', *Il Messaggero*, 13 March 1929, p. 3.

¹⁶⁴ Antonio Lovato, 'Il Trattato Russo-Turco e La Posizione Inglese', *Costruire*, February 1926, pp. 27–29.

fully. The term *durare* was widely used by Mussolini to describe the work of fascism in the creation of novel generations, and perhaps di Brayda's utilisation of the term was not a coincidence. The article concluded with an observation of similarities between fascism and Kemalism: both countries underwent a disastrous post-war period, out of which they rose thanks to the work of 'a single, tenacious, audacious man full of faith, will and action'. Readily recognising how such comparisons often turn into slippery arguments, di Brayda nevertheless felt that the factors identified were sufficient for both sides to respect each other.¹⁶⁵

The euphoria of the Turco-Italian rapprochement and the establishment of analogies between Kemalism and fascism led to two narrowly avoided diplomatic scandals in the late 1920s. A key actor in the first near-scandal was Haşim Nahid [Erbil], born in Erbil in 1880 in modern-day Iraq. Haşim Nahid had a career in law and journalism before serving as a diplomat between 1924 and 1931 when his remarks on the political and economic crisis in Turkey cost him his job. In 1928, in the city of Genoa, Haşim Nahid benefitted from the rapprochement to talk to *Il giornale di Genova*, explaining profound 'similarities between Turkish and Italian regimes'. These included a shared attempt to 'homogenise their countries' by assimilating the non-national groups. The interviewing journalist objected that this was an aspect all nationalisms had in common, whereas fascists had distinct ideological qualities such as corporatism. Haşim Nahid nonchalantly responded that both fascism and Kemalism desired 'order and discipline' and Italy, 'as the cradle of Western civilisation', constituted an example for Turkey.¹⁶⁶ Fascist authorities perhaps appreciated such comments, but back in Ankara, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was fuming: Haşim Nahid received a stern warning to avoid giving political

¹⁶⁵ Mario di Brayda, 'Turchia Moderna', *Costruire*, June 1928, pp. 43–44 (p. 43). Also see another work along the same lines, published in Giuseppe Bottai's prestigious *Critica Fascista* in 1929: Renato Caniglia, 'Roma e Angora', *Critica Fascista*, 1 July 1929, pp. 253–57.

¹⁶⁶ 'Fascismo e Nazionalismo Ottomano', *Giornale Di Genova*, 2 December 1928.

interviews without explicit approval from the Ministry.¹⁶⁷ Considering his dismissal in 1931, one can easily surmise that this was a warning he could have heeded much more carefully.

Unbeknownst to the Turkish side, a similar diplomatic ‘scandal’ was only narrowly avoided through the efforts of the Italian ambassador to Turkey, Luca Orsini Baroni, in June 1929. Orsini Baroni was present in a ceremonial dinner offered for visiting Italian journalists and attended by high-ranking Turkish and Italian diplomats, as well as Italo Balbo, an influential fascist and member of the prestigious *quadrumvira* of the March on Rome. Orsini Baroni explained that the event proceeded as expected, with speeches by Balbo and the head of the Turkish press association. Following the latter’s address, ‘without prior consultation with anyone’, the fascist deputy and journalist Gaetano Polverelli made a speech. Orsini Baroni reported that Polverelli drew parallels between fascism and Kemalism, found similarities between Mussolini and Mustafa Kemal, and underlined how both Italy and Turkey were against ‘old democratic Europe’, in particular, France. Polverelli clearly felt that Kemalists would appreciate this portrayal of them battling against an obsolete Europe together with the fascists. However, Italian journalists at the event found the speech most inopportune, while Balbo himself harshly reprimanded Polverelli for such potentially scandalous remarks. The scandal was avoided only because Polverelli spoke in a language (Italian?) or manner (French spoken hastily or in a heavy accent?) that rendered his ‘vivid’ remarks impossible to understand by the Turks present in the event.¹⁶⁸ Over time, and unlike Haşim Nahid, Polverelli rose within the regime, become the Minister of Popular Culture in 1943 and have a seat in that fateful

¹⁶⁷ ‘Giornale Di Genova Gazetesinin Türk Milliyetçiliği Ile İtalyan Faşizmi Karşılaştırmasına Dair Haberi’, 1928, *Dışişleri Bakanlığı Türk Diplomatik Arşivi*, 541, 44115-208925-12.

¹⁶⁸ ‘Orsini Baroni, Ambassador in Constantinople, to Mussolini’, 1929, *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, Settima Serie, Volume VII. The report with document number 489 is found on page 479 in the volume, which can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/series/SETTIMA%20SERIE/volumi/VOLUME%20%20VII/full#AVVERTENZA> (Accessed: 4 October 2023).

session of the *Gran Consiglio* on 25 July 1943, where he sided with the deposed Mussolini. Here, in 1929, and contrary to the extreme caution of Balbo and Orsini-Baroni, he was anticipating the wider shift of fascism towards universalism. In the 1930s, such remarks came to permeate fascist outlets, in relation not only to Turkey but to a variety of countries and movements.

While it is tempting to see the increasing fascist appreciation of Kemalism in terms of both its ends and means in the mid to late 1920s as stemming from the rapprochement, we must resist postulating this as the sole causal factor at play. An illustration of this point is provided by the utilisation of Kemalism as an example against anti-fascist opposition in *Il piccolo* in July 1926. Reviewing opposition to the *leggi fascistissime*, the fascist author of this small piece invited the anti-fascists to first consider the influence fascism lately exerted on French and Belgian government circles. If deemed insufficient, Turkey offered a different type of lesson. This was the immediate aftermath of the Izmir assassination attempt against Mustafa Kemal, and the fascist author noted how ‘the deputies who plotted against the republic (...) were tranquilly hanged’. Thirteen individuals now ‘hang lifeless on the gallows’. Instead, in ‘fascist Italy, where terror and reaction [supposedly] reigns’, anti-fascist deputies such as Tito Zanaboni of the *Partito socialista unitario* serenely lived in the knowledge that they would not be hanged. The author was likely a conservative fascist who associated social revolutionaries and democracy with terror. While opposition saw the Italian regime as a Medieval one, France and Belgium were considered democracies; no wonder, the author concluded, that democratic ideas ‘required the invention of Mr Guillotine!’.¹⁶⁹

In this piece written against Zanaboni in July 1926, we see the counterpart of the way Falih Rifkî in Turkey used fascism as an example to batter the opposition roughly around the same time. While some Kemalists were using the example of fascism to justify the crushing of the opposition and make their own rule seem softer, certain fascists, in turn,

¹⁶⁹ ‘Sulle Orme del Fascismo’, *Il Piccolo*, 17 July 1926, p. 1.

were turning to the suppression of the opposition in Turkey to justify their own means through *whataboutism*. The argument was that anti-fascists were too obsessed with fascism and Mussolini to recognise that many governments in the world adopted measures much harsher than fascism in dealing with opposition. While the cross-Mediterranean connections at the time were not as intense as in the coming decade, they were not non-existent; as noted in Chapter Two, Falih Rifkî expressed his admiration for fascism as a fellow nationalist movement as early as 1927 to Italian diplomats.¹⁷⁰

In the second half of the 1920s, attention in Italy shifted away from the colonial literature and consideration of a putative Kemalist threat against Europe, gradually towards a focus on the ends and means of Kemalism. Most fascists and anti-fascists agreed on certain fundamental facts, such as Kemalism relying on authoritarian methods to assert itself or Kemalism seeking to 'Europeanise' or Westernise Turkey. Interpretations varied in line with the position of the commentator. Most socialists felt that Kemalist rule was justified in Turkey. Even reformist socialists who were more than unwelcoming of a non-democratic regime in Italy, be it Bolshevik or fascist, felt that any other governmental methods were unavailable in Turkey at the time. Though the likes of Arturo Vella had misgivings about both the foreign policy and internal politics of Kemalism, they remained a minority. Meanwhile, fascist coverage of Kemalism did not passively follow the rapprochement, as the case from 1926 above, or parts of Zingarelli's work indeed, illustrates: even before the rapprochement, the means of Kemalism piqued the interest of certain fascists. Nevertheless, it was thanks to the rapprochement that certain fascists and Kemalists were able to express a keener interest in the other side and its ideology. This interest intensified in the 1930s, thanks in no small part to both the popularisation of universalist fascism in Italy and the exacerbation of the global crisis of democracy.

¹⁷⁰ ASDMAE, DGSE, b. 735, stampa I. 56.

§ 4.4 Conclusion

This chapter ends roughly at a time when the Turco-Italian state-level relations entered a period of ‘warmth’, which was to last from 1928 to 1934.¹⁷¹ The flourishing of the relations between the two states influenced perceptions of Kemalism in Italy, similar to the way it influenced Turkish perceptions of fascism. Moreover, both states played a more active role in attempting to shape public opinion in response to the changing global atmosphere, characterised by increased confrontation between blocks, and the opportunities offered by a more welcoming regime on the other side of the Mediterranean. The following chapter will consider how perceptions of Kemalism among Italians developed in this context.

The chapter has focused on Italian perceptions of Kemalism and Turkey in the 1920s by dividing these into three thematically and quasi-chronologically organised sections. Temporally, the first section concerned the first half of the 1920s when perceptions of Kemalism were characterised by the Turkish War of Independence, the widespread resentment for *vittoria mutilata* on the right side of the political spectrum, and the colonial opportunities Anatolia offered. A *vae victis* approach towards the Greeks was prevalent at the time among the nationalist and fascist circles. This stance considerably influenced perceptions of the Turkish resistance. From Filippucci Giustiniani’s Nasreddin Hoca and critique of the Allied policies in Anatolia to *Politica*’s initial coverage, fascists

¹⁷¹ While the literature generally agrees with such a periodisation, for a dissenting view, see Mehmet Doğar, ‘The Place of Italy in Turkish Foreign Policy in the 1930s’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 58.1 (2022), pp. 48–69. Doğar argues that Italy was never quite the primary threat perceived by Turkish policymakers at the time, and perceptions of Italy did not deteriorate as rapidly and deeply as claimed in the literature in the second half of the 1930s. While concerning mostly non-state-level relations, the findings of this dissertation lend greater support to the literature in terms of perceptions of the ‘other’. As clarified before, this does not mean the state-level relations dictated perceptions of fascism and Kemalism, as numerous examples show positive perceptions of Kemalism and fascism before 1927–28 and after 1934. The term ‘warmth’ comes from Dilek Barlas, ‘Friends or Foes: Diplomatic Relations Between Italy and Turkey, 1923–36’, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 36 (2004), pp. 231–252 (p. 231).

and conservatives largely saw the Turkish resistance as a legitimate force to back. The Turks were thought to be willing to grant Italians considerable economic opportunities in Anatolia in return for their 'generous and sincere support'. Once this turned out to be far from the case, most fascists came to see Kemalism as an anti-Western, excessively nationalist and xenophobic movement. As the colonial dreams and the colonial literature on Anatolia, to which social scientific experts contributed, vanished, so did the initial Turcophilia. As early as the Spring of 1921, Coppola's *Politica* warned its readers of the implications of the pro-Soviet and Islamic Turkey's prevailing over the Greeks. Pedrazzi interpreted Turkey as adopting a 'closed door policy' towards Europe in this context. By the mid-1920s, the predominant fascist and conservative perception of Kemalism was that it was a xenophobic ideology, such that Pedrazzi's conceptualisation of Turkey as a *porta chiusa* was merely the most famous example of a pervasive way of thinking.

Few individuals such as Filippucci Giustiniani, perhaps aided by his Smirniote background, could see as early as 1922 or 1923 that Kemalism was a movement that did not intend to revive Islamism but instead Westernise Turkey. Filippucci Giustiniani found such goals noble, and though difficult, he felt Kemalists could well achieve them in time. The majority of the Italian intelligentsia recognised Kemalism as a movement that sought to change the traditional Turkish lifestyle thoroughly only from the mid-1920s onwards. From this common observation, a faction-based divergence emerged. While nearly all parties thought Kemalism's xenophobic and Westernising desires formed a paradox, the evaluation of the Kemalists' ends varied. A particularly striking development for the observers was the new status of Turkish women. The more conservative circles watched in bewilderment the 'unlimited' female emancipation suddenly occurring in Turkey. In their view, this sudden shift from the world of *harem* and eunuchs to active participation in social life and liberties would surely introduce an imbalance in Turkish society. As Zingarelli argued, the pace of Kemalist reforms caused many regrettable side effects, from alcoholism to the soaring of suicides. A female fascist, Grimaldi appreciated female emancipation but worried that the Turkish

method was rushed and libertine. Sometimes, more negative observers like Caretta combined such worries with the idea that Turks were unable to embrace civilisation fully in any case. Some fascists, such as the contributor to *Il Messaggero* in March 1929, believed Kemalism would succeed in its noble goal of Westernising Turkey, while others doubted this.

Italian socialists generally interpreted developments in Turkey positively, largely because they operated with a different view of the West and Europe in mind. Unlike Coppola in the 1920s, who saw Kemalism as an offspring of the 'wrong West' born out of the French Revolution and Enlightenment, many socialists like Sacerdote thought Turkey could well become part of an open, new and non-imperialistic West. Female emancipation was part of Turkey's Westernisation and Europeanisation *par excellence*. That was what Europe stood for in their minds. What was particularly important to them was to which Europe and West Turkey aspired to join. Most felt that Turkey, along with European socialists and other 'awakening nations' of the East, would create a more open, socially just civilisation based on a better West. Others like Arturo Vella doubted this early in the 1920s and saw the mires of imperialism and aggression in Kemalism. Writing for *Avanti!*, the author who went by the pen name Quidam, predicted that the long-awaited alternative to the West would arise from India and China rather than the similarly imperialistic Turkey.

Another particularly prominent point in the perceptions of Kemalism was whether the Kemalist regime was a dictatorship. The theoretical significance this question was its role in anti-fascist debates on whether a dictatorial regime could ever be justified. With the Russian experiment and calls for a dictatorship of the proletariat fresh in mind, most Italian socialists felt denouncing dictatorship *tout court* against fascism was not an attractive option. Instead, adopting the stance embraced by Riboldi in 1922, they opted for a view of some dictatorships as just and corresponding to the needs of certain social strata, and others being arbitrary and unjust. Ends justified means, and Kemalism was perceived as a step towards progress in Turkey. Even though the *riformisti* refused to back national liberation movements unconditionally, with the Kemalist regime proving its distance from anti-European plots with each passing year,

they developed a largely positive view of Kemalism, as can be seen from the writings of Claudio Treves.

Some fascists appreciated Kemalism's ends, especially those from the less conservative circles; Kemalism was sometimes thought to represent 'a triumph of the Western civilisation'. When it came to its methods, however, divergences emerged. Especially in the mid-1920s, some Italian intellectuals such as Pace and Zingarelli occasionally found Kemalists' harsh treatment of opposition rather caricaturesque and 'Oriental'. Others justified what fascism did by referring to the example of Kemalism, pointing out that there were much more violent ways of dealing with the opposition. Unbeknownst to them, a small group of individuals in Turkey were doing the same thing in reverse, such as Falih Rifkî's call for attention to the fascist law concerning the press. Though comparisons between fascism and Kemalism became more common with the rapprochement of 1927-8, it was still unusual to see fascist intellectuals think of Kemalism as fascism-like, even when they elicited admiration for how Kemalists dealt with opposition. Many fascists thought that fascism's Westernness and Christianity, as well as its being a 'spontaneous' product of Italian spirituality, exempted it from comparison with non-Western, top-down Kemalism. When Haşım Nahid, the Turkish diplomat, went beyond his brief to gush over the virtues of and similarities between fascism and Kemalism, the Italian interviewer pointed out fascist corporatism as a key difference between the two.

All this occurred before the myriad economic, geopolitical, and ideological crises of the 1930s shook all ideologies to their foundations. This was also before Mussolini decided to go back on his declaration that fascism was not an 'export good'. As late as April 1929, Umberto Nani wrote a piece for *Politica* where he vehemently opposed the equation of the likes of De Rivera, Horthy, and 'Kemal' with Mussolini. Nani called attention to the setting within which fascism emerged, its ideological principles, and 'racial differences' between these nations. In his view, these hampered any comparison of these leaders and their ideologies with

Mussolini and the ‘purely Italian-made’ fascism.¹⁷² Already in the 1920s, individuals such as Haşim Nahid, Polverelli or Falih Rıfkı broke with the party line to establish direct comparisons and affinities between Kemalism and fascism. By the early 1930s, in complete contrast to what Nani thought, a younger group of fascists increasingly turned their gaze abroad to search for the potential of a fascism that was at once more globally oriented and less conservative and rigid. Emboldened by Mussolini’s new directives for universal fascism, these younger fascists saw Kemalism in ways unimaginable by Coppola in the mid-1920s or Nani in 1929. The next chapter will consider Italian perceptions of Kemalism in light of this rapidly evolving context.



¹⁷² Umberto Nani, ‘Il Colpo di Stato in Jugoslavia’, *Politica*, April 1929, pp. 116–33 (pp. 132–33).

Italian Perceptions of Kemalism in the 1930s: Fascism as an 'Export Good'

The global search for new intellectual and political horizons and the Turco-Italian rapprochement of 1927-28 changed the context of fascist perceptions of Kemalism. Virginio Gayda, a person closely aligned with the foreign policies of the regime, laid bare the new sentiments for *Gerarchia* in August 1928 when he observed that 'nations now follow *condottieri* [leaders] who possess a strong personality'. Examples of such *condottieri* included Albania's recently crowned Zogu I, Turkey's Mustafa Kemal, and certainly, Mussolini.¹ Earlier in 1927, Gayda had noted that Mustafa Kemal was neither a mad adventurer nor the builder of an ephemeral regime, contrary to what he deemed French wishful thinking on the subject.² With the shift in official policy, the 1930s was going to be a decade where many fascists increasingly sought to claim Kemalism for themselves. Having declared fascism as not a 'good for export' earlier, Mussolini sharply changed his mind in the early 1930s and threw his support behind universalist fascism.³ In the latter's youthful exuberance and

¹ Virginio Gayda, 'Il Nuovo Re di Albania', *Gerarchia*, August 1928, pp. 607-10.

² Virginio Gayda, 'La Turchia Che Si Rinnova', *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 20 November 1927.

³ With 'universalist fascism' I refer to the idea and movement that gained increased currency from 1929 onwards, especially in the early 1930s, in Italy. The key tenet of this

opposition to what they saw as increasingly conservative interpretations of fascism, Mussolini saw the missing piece of his puzzle to restore Italy to global grandeur. *‘L’Europa sarà fascista’* [Europe will be fascist] became the new motto of the regime: the panacea of fascism would cure all other European nations ‘sickened’ by the economic and moral crisis.

This chapter aims to analyse fascist and anti-fascist perceptions of Kemalism in this turbulent context. The following section will concentrate on a key actor of this shift in fascism: the universalist fascists. The section will throw light on their mostly positive portrayals of Kemalism and appreciation of Kemalist authoritarianism, which they interpreted as a kindred movement that proved the global spread of fascism. Individuals such as Asvero Gravelli and Eugenio Coselschi, who led the *CAUR* [*Comitati per l’Universalità di Roma* – Committees for the Universality of Rome] and helped organise the 1932 *Convegno Volta* conference on Europe for universalist fascists, will feature prominently in the section. In addition to their view of Kemalism as another nationalistic and authoritarian enemy of the French Revolution and its liberal democracy, the section will also reveal how the association of Kemalism with fascism led to a debate between a German author, Anton Hilckman, several leading Nazi theorists, and Gravelli himself, on whether Kemalism could possibly be fascist.

movement was that albeit born in Italy, fascism was a globally valid idea and would spread across the world. Aristotle Kallis has distinguished between a more organisations-oriented ‘internationalism’ and a spiritually focused ‘universalism’, building on the remarks of a contemporary ‘universalist’, Eugenio Coselschi. The ‘internationalist’ trend was led by Asvero Gravelli. While taking note of the differences and personal problems between Coselschi and Gravelli, as well as observing a theoretical difference between ‘*universalismo*’ and the more concrete, institutions-oriented ‘*internazionalismo*’, Marco Cuzzi has used the terms in a rather interchangeable way in his own research, as he did not find the ideological differences between the two strands too profound. In this paper, while carefully noting differences between Coselschi’s and Gravelli’s interpretations, I will use the term universalism in a way that encompasses both. See Aristotle Kallis, ‘From CAUR to EUR: Italian Fascism, the “Myth of Rome” and the Pursuit of International Primacy’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 50.4–5 (2016), pp. 359–77 (p. 370), doi:10.1080/0031322X.2016.1243347; Marco Cuzzi, *L’internazionale delle Camicie Nere: I CAUR 1933–1939* (Mursia, 2005), p. 93; Marco Cuzzi, *Antieuropa: Il Fascismo Universale di Mussolini* (M&B, 2006), p. 38.

This debate will lay bare the crucial place ideas of Europe and the West played in definitions of fascism and perceptions of Kemalism since Hilckman saw Kemalism as too Eastern to ever possibly be fascist.

Section Two puts on the spotlight the fascist regime's role in propagating certain favourable views of fascism within Turkey, as the regime stepped up its efforts to propagate fascism as the solution for global problems. The section will throw light on the financial entanglement between *Cumhuriyet's* Yunus Nadi [Abalıoğlu] and the fascist regime in the early 1930s. The analysis of Italian archival documents will reveal a less post-Kemalist, more attuned-to-detail explanation of the 'Salute from Kemalist Turkey to Fascist Italy' that Yunus Nadi's *Cumhuriyet* notoriously sent in 1932. Sometimes, local agents could prove resistant to fascist attempts, as a discussion of the career of Şemseddin Talip Diler and his refusal to partake in propagating fascism in Turkey will illustrate. Discussing Italian efforts to dispel negative views about and spread positive perceptions of fascism in Turkey through financial arrangements, providing pictures to outlets, or pressurising Turkish authorities *inter alia*, the section will also shed light on the much-ignored Turkish service of the Italian *Radio Bari*. The programme, the intended audience, and the relative rate of success of this propaganda method will be analysed.

While universalist fascism enjoyed a boost of popularity in the early 1930s, not every fascist converted to it. Some paid lip service, while others questioned whether all the supposedly 'fascist' movements abroad really resembled fascism. Section Three will analyse the more mainstream fascist and conservative perceptions of Kemalism in Italy in the 1930s. The section will throw light on how closely Mussolini and the Italian diplomats followed Turkey's 1930-31 crisis. An analysis of the diplomats' reports will reveal that many imagined Kemalism to be similar to fascism in some aspects but different, if not lacking, in several other crucial dimensions. A closer look at the fascist literature in Italy in the 1930s will illustrate that while the Turco-Italian rapprochement promoted more positive views, most fascists perceived the ends of Kemalism in a way largely continuous with the ways of thinking in the mid-to-late 1920s.

As fascists were vying for international conquests, anti-fascists wondered whether this threat could ever materialise. Perceptions and portrayals of Kemalism occupied a quite central place in their analyses. As Section Four will seek to illustrate, against fascist claims of Kemalist authoritarianism as their own, most anti-fascists continued to emphasise the ends of Kemalism. *Giustizia e Libertà*'s Emilio Lussu criticised the socioeconomic shortcomings of Kemalism while seeing in Mustafa Kemal Atatürk a true revolutionary; *Avanti!* lamented the lack of a 'leader like Kemal' among European socialists, who could check fascism's advance early on in Europe; the liberal Carlo Sforza had misgivings about the rapidness of Kemalist reform but never doubted the desirability of Kemalism's ends. The discussion will reveal numerous occasions when anti-fascists utilised Atatürk's military credentials to mock Mussolini's lack thereof despite his more militaristic policies. It will become apparent that precisely because most anti-fascists saw the Western and European civilisation as built on the notions of equality, democracy and emancipation, they refused the idea that Kemalism resembled fascism. Kemalism's methods were not suitable in a 'civilised' setting, perhaps, and its socioeconomic reform left much to future generations to complete the revolutionary work started by the Kemalists: but, if anything, Kemalism was proof that the likes of Gravelli failed in the eyes of many anti-fascists.

§ 5.1 'L'Europa sarà fascista': Universalist Fascists and Kemalism

From the declaration of fascism as uniquely Italian and unfit for exportation, Mussolini and regime underwent a radical change in the 1930s. In the doom of the 1930s and the crisis of liberal democracy and liberal capitalism, Mussolini saw an opportunity. He now claimed that Europe would either be outright fascist or fascistised. Entities such as CAUR sought willing fascistoids abroad, and the fascist intelligentsia at large cheered for the success of such movements; despite initial suspicions of and rivalries with Nazism, their rise was welcomed as another sign of

Europe becoming fascistised.⁴ Gone were the days when Mussolini ignored Adolf Hitler and refused to reciprocate his desire to exchange visits or autographs.⁵ However, Mussolini and universalists were also careful to make sure they were the leaders of this movement rather than following others like Nazis in their 'extremities'. Ironically, Nazism trumped fascism's influence and most universalist fascists found themselves eagerly supporting the alliance with Germany in the late 1930s. In the 1930s, however, possibilities seemed endless. Mussolini's decision was certainly influenced by *realpolitik*, but most universalist fascists were genuinely convinced that, as Michael A. Ledeen defines it, universalism would batter the 'lethargic' conservative fascism of the late 1920s.⁶ Mussolini masterfully absorbed their criticisms within the boundaries of the regime.⁷

A crucial figure for universalist fascism was Asvero Gravelli, who was born in Brescia in 1902. A 'fascist of the first hour', he joined the first *fascio di combattimento* in 1919, clashed with the socialists as a fascist militia, and partook in the infamous raid of the *Avanti!* offices, as well as Gabriele D'Annunzio's Fiume invasion. Gravelli was arrested multiple times until the March on Rome for assaults on socialists and conducting fascist propaganda during military service. His hawkish attitude saw him rise in the *Partito nazionale fascista* in 1923 before his association with the 'fascist Cheka' pushed him to the background in the aftermath of the latter's murder of Matteotti in 1924. Never to despair, Gravelli continued to adhere to fascism and, against what he saw as the overly conservative fascism of elder figures, he established *Antieuropa* to defend universalist fascism in 1929. *Antieuropa* was supplemented by the *Ottobre* from 1932 onwards.⁸ By then, the top-ranking figures in the regime were utilising the concepts

⁴ The relations between Mussolini and Hitler, and fascism and Nazism until 1933 are analysed in Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini e Hitler: I Rapporti Segreti, 1922-1933* (Laterza, 2013).

⁵ De Felice, *Mussolini e Hitler: I Rapporti Segreti, 1922-1933*, pp. 179–81.

⁶ Michael A. Ledeen, *L'internazionale fascista*, trans. by Jole Bertolazzi (Laterza, 1975), p. 9.

⁷ Ledeen, *L'internazionale fascista*, pp. 9–10; 104–105.

⁸ Mauro Canali, 'Asvero Gravelli', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 2002 <[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/asvero-gravelli_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/asvero-gravelli_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) [accessed 8 January 2024]; Ledeen, *L'internazionale fascista*, pp. 106–7.

and language Gravelli used earlier, with the difference that nobody would now dare to call him a dreamer and utopian.

Relations between Gravelli and Mussolini were often unpredictable. The latter promoted Eugenio Coselschi as a universalist fascist leader and placed him in charge of the CAUR, with a view to check the independence of Gravelli. The latter's response was doubling down on his publications and joining the invasion of Abyssinia as a volunteer. While he aimed to use the war as an opportunity to endear himself to the regime, rumours of his 'cowardness' in war spread and further damaged his position. The regime even suspended the publications of *Antieuropa* and *Ottobre* for a while, though Gravelli went on to volunteer to fight in Spain, where he received treatment for a while at a hospital in Valladolid.⁹ This restored some of his former eminence back and convinced Mussolini to let *Antieuropa* be. Initially, Gravelli had reservations about Nazism, but he later approached Nazis, joined a Waffen SS division in 1945 in Italy to help save the fascist *Repubblica sociale italiana* in Northern Italy, and joined the neo-fascist *Movimento sociale italiano* after the war. Gravelli died in 1956.¹⁰

The *magnum opus* of Gravelli was *Antieuropa*, which promoted universalist fascism within and beyond Italy for over a decade. After its universalist turn, the regime provided funds for the *Antieuropa*. The support of Arnaldo Mussolini, the *Duce's* brother, in popularising, legitimising, and funding both Gravelli and wider universalist fascism was significant.¹¹ Such support was needed, especially early on, since the provocative title of the journal led many other fascists to wonder how fascists could be anti-European. Gravelli explained that despite much talk of 'European spirit' and 'pan-Europeanism', what exactly Europe meant was often left undefined and abstract. He thought multiple versions of Europe existed, and 'the entire Europe' was 'still sick' after the divisions of the First World War. This meant that any contemporary description of

⁹ See the discharge document of Gravelli from the Valladolid Hospital, as well as several photos of him in Spain in *ACS*, Carte Asvero Gravelli, b. 1, f. 1.

¹⁰ Canali, 'Asvero Gravelli'.

¹¹ Cuzzi, *Antieuropa*, p. 105, p. 112; Canali, 'Asvero Gravelli'.

European solidarity was wishful thinking.¹² There were two *Europeismi* [Europeanisms]. One was that of Northern and Eastern Europe, a 'fatalist and Latin-exclusionary' understanding of Europe seen in the works of Spengler: a 'mixture of German idealism and Russian mysticism'. Portions of European youth, especially the Germans, increasingly turned their faces to Russia for salvation, of which Gravelli and other *Antieuropa* commentators disapproved. In 1929, Vincenzo Zangara defined Russia as 'outside Europe, therefore against Europe' with its traditions.¹³ Another pretender to fill in the moral vacuum in European spirit was the '*ovest*', which means the West in Italian but used strictly in a directional sense compared to the civilisational *Occidente*. Europe was now a vacant land between 'entrepreneurs of the West [Americans] and revolutionaries of the East'. The 'anti-European' function of fascism was precisely here for Gravelli. Fascism represented a new Europe that harked back to classical Rome. It was only appropriate that Europe should once again turn to Rome for solutions, as it was 'undeniable that the civilisation of European peoples derives from Italy; that civilisation is always Catholic in its origin'.¹⁴ The name of the journal stemmed from fascism's struggle against certain current iterations of Europe, such as the liberal democratic and socialist ones.¹⁵ *Antieuropa* authors readily accepted that one could not easily change a society's mentality, to which 'Duce's remarks on Afghanistan' attested: crucially, fascism was both new and revolutionary, and the revival of a centuries-old tradition of ancient Rome and Catholicism – undoubtedly, such interpretations were bolstered by the Lateran Pacts of 1929 between the regime and the Vatican.¹⁶

¹² Asvero Gravelli, 'L'idea Storica Fascista: Difesa dall'Europa e Funzione Antieuropa', *Antieuropa*, April 1929, pp. 1–11 (p. 2).

¹³ Vincenzo Zangara, 'L'iniziativa Rivoluzionaria in Europa', *Antieuropa*, 25 August 1929, pp. 366–71 (p. 368); Gravelli, 'L'idea Storica Fascista: Difesa dall'Europa e Funzione Antieuropa', pp. 3–4.

¹⁴ Gravelli, 'L'idea Storica Fascista: Difesa dall'Europa e Funzione Antieuropa', p. 6.

¹⁵ Gravelli, 'L'idea Storica Fascista: Difesa dall'Europa e Funzione Antieuropa', p. 10.

¹⁶ 'Carta Stampata in Francia', *Antieuropa*, April 1929, p. 20.

Antieuropa's contributors blamed the French Revolution for creating a void in European morality. For Zangara, the French Revolution's ideology was ultimately traceable to the ideas of Luther, as it was Protestantism that first bolstered the spirit of insurrection against authority.¹⁷ This moral void was now confronted across Europe. The very first issue of *Antieuropa* referred to kindred movements in Bulgaria, Belgium, and Britain, while hard facts of life now pushed even Bolsheviks to draw from aspects of fascism. As Telesio Interlandi put it, fascism and Italy were succeeding in 'the defence of the Western, that is, European civilisation'.¹⁸ Roberto Suster saw various fascist-like groups from Lithuania to Portugal as united around a 'global aspiration' and, while not being copies of fascism, resembling the latter in certain aspects, with Spain's regime deemed the closest relative of fascism.¹⁹ All nations now wanted to have a Mussolini of their own to tear down the bankrupt liberal democracy.²⁰ Suster's list of nations largely coincided with Gravelli and Interlandi's vision of fascism as saviour of the West; however, and anticipating much debate on the subject, Suster also observed how 'Turkey of Kemal Pascia', just like Persia, was also in a revolutionary renewal in an 'anti-democratic, nationalist sense'. Exterior differences between fascism and Kemalism stemmed from the Oriental nature of the Turkish people but both ideologies shared a roughly common outlook.²¹

The more countries sought to imitate or join fascism, the stronger the proof of universal fascism's validity. In this spirit, *Antieuropa* published a short piece on Kemalist Turkey in May 1929. Likely penned by Gravelli, the piece titled 'Another Copy of Fascism in Turkey' listed the characteristics of the RPP that made it a copy of fascism: it had branches across the

¹⁷ Vincenzo Zangara, 'Il Fascismo e i Principi dell'89', *Antieuropa*, May 1929, pp. 86–91 (p. 86).

¹⁸ Telesio Interlandi, 'Dialogo sull'Antieuropismo', *Antieuropa*, May 1929, pp. 102–3 (p. 102).

¹⁹ Roberto Suster, 'Il Fascismo ed Il Bolscevismo Nelle Loro Influenze Sull'assestamento Del Mondo', *Antieuropa*, May 1929, pp. 113–21 (p. 119).

²⁰ Suster, 'Il Fascismo ed Il Bolscevismo', p. 119.

²¹ Suster, 'Il Fascismo ed Il Bolscevismo', p. 118.

country, its officials were appointed top-down, it controlled the state, and its youth organisations were organised in a way reminiscent of the *Balilla* and *Avanguardisti*. Just as many Turks thought the latter could serve as a useful example for organising Turkish youth, Gravelli thought Turkey already possessed such institutions. Despite choosing the word 'copy', Gravelli did not intend his piece as an indictment of Kemalism. While the piece emphasised the primacy of fascism, being a copy of it was an honour, if anything, for Gravelli. The conclusion was that 'the entire movement looks like it is copied from fascism'.²² That the Turks did not know of this piece was likely a boon for the Italo-Turkish diplomatic relations.

Identification of other 'fascist' movements could cause controversy vis-à-vis fascism's Catholicity and Western credentials. Initially, *Antieuropa* distanced itself from the 'Protestant', if not 'Wotanist' Nazis in Germany. A conservative Catholic intellectual, Anton Hilckman was the leading German contributor to *Antieuropa* in the early 1930s. Born in 1900 in Westphalia, Hilckman reacted to the 'Prussian mentality' that clashed with the Western spirit.²³ Where the Western civilisation was born was Northern Italy and the Netherlands, Hilckman thought: against Prussian Protestants, Hilckman hoped for a Catholic revival in Germany.²⁴ He saw fascism as the reinvigorated expression of this Catholic Western civilisation and saluted it. This approach earned Hilckman a range of amicable nicknames among the *Antieuropesi*, all illustrating how the notions of Latinity or Romanness were more culturally than geographically bound, from 'our Hilckman' to 'A Catholic, Roman German' and a 'Latin of

²² 'Un'altra Copia di Fascismo in Turchia', *Antieuropa*, May 1929, p. 131. This piece was published below another by Cornelio di Marzio, who occasionally wrote for *Antieuropa*. It would be interesting to question to what extent di Marzio would agree with such coverage of Kemalism. Nevertheless, di Marzio must have served as a source of information for Gravelli and other *Antieuropesi* on Turkey.

²³ Interestingly, much as many other contributors to *Antieuropa*, Hilckman did not appreciate the work of Spengler: in his view, Spengler was a leading proponent of this Prussian mentality.

²⁴ Anton Hilckman, 'Roma e l'Occidente: Pensieri Sul Passato e Sull'avvenire della Nostra Civiltà', *Antieuropa*, 15 November 1929, pp. 579–602 (p. 588).

Germany'. Hilckman insisted that the essence of Western civilisation was Rome and Catholicism, not liberal democracy.²⁵

While Germany could return to Rome, forces such as Nazism strived to moor her firmly to Prussia. The Nazis were copying 'external forms' of fascism, Hilckman argued in May 1930, such as their desire for uncontested dictatorship following a revolution. Hilckman thought there was much more to fascism than this 'external form': a non-Catholic and spiritually non-Latin nation could never have fascism.²⁶ Around a year later, a disappointed Hilckman returned to the subject when he found Gravelli too welcoming towards the Nazis.²⁷ He once more invited his fellow universalists to ponder on how fascism, that 'idea of a Latin and Roman *Occidente*' could co-exist with Nazism. Whereas fascism was the spiritual descendent of Rome, the Nazis and the Austrian *Stahlheim* were instead revivers of the Hohenstaufen, Luther, and Bismarck's spirits. Hilckman claimed that many eminent Nazis worshipped Wotan, and they were bent on destroying German Christianity, especially Catholicism.²⁸ He explained away the shared anti-liberal-democratic and anti-socialist outlook of the Nazis and fascists nonchalantly. By the 1930s, he observed, 'anyone with just a bit of a brain' could find myriad reasons to oppose liberal democracy.²⁹

When *Antieuropa* gave voice to prominent Nazis such as Alfred Rosenberg on Nazism and fascism, instead of adopting an openly inimical stance towards Nazism as demanded by Hilckman, the latter wrote yet another piece and utilised another example. Hilckman noted that Nazism was 'a danger for the Western civilisation'.³⁰ Hilckman felt that to press

²⁵ Anton Hilckman, 'Roma e l'Occidente: Pensieri sul Passato e sull'avvenire della Nostra Civiltà', p. 597.

²⁶ Antonio Hilckman, 'I Più Occidentali d'Occidente', *Antieuropa*, 1 May 1930, pp. 1084–87 (p. 1087).

²⁷ Anton Hilckman, 'Il Fascismo Tedesco è Antiromano?', *Antieuropa*, 1 March 1931, pp. 1731–33 (pp. 1731–32).

²⁸ Anton Hilckman, 'Il Fascismo Tedesco è Antiromano?', p. 1732.

²⁹ Anton Hilckman, 'Il Fascismo Tedesco è Antiromano?', p. 1732.

³⁰ Anton Hilckman, 'Il Nazionalsocialismo Pericolo per La Civiltà Occidentale?', *Antieuropa*, September 1931, pp. 2045–65 (p. 2045).

this point, he needed an *argumentum ad absurdum*; a case where the claims of similarity with fascism would be absurd and thereby illustrated why Nazism, too, was not Christian and thus not fascist. The example was Kemalist Turkey. One could imagine Turkey 'copying the entire social system of fascism, imitating its social and state construction'. To claim that this would amount to something more profound than an imitation of fascism's 'external' aspects would be an offence to 'the noble sons of Italy'. Hilckman thought that 'a system that rejects or combats the moral and spiritual bases of the Western civilisation' like Kemalism could never be fascist.³¹ As the same external similarities with fascism and the rejection of Western spirituality were found in Nazism, it, too, was not fascism. Seeing that even the example of Kemalism was not enough, Hilckman proceeded to write a letter in 1932 to Gravelli, followed by another to *Antieuropa's* Aristide Campanile, which appear to have not been published on the journal. In the letter to Gravelli, too, he emphasised the significance of '*Abendland* [Occident] for fascism and the latter's '*Abendländisch*' heritage and how *Antieuropa* had to re-focus on this heritage rather than forming 'strange friendships' with *Stahlheim* members or the Kemalists.³² Despite *Antieuropa's* Latin-centrism and prioritisation of Europe over America, the Italians were less conducive to such finer distinctions between *Abendland*, *Okzident*, and the West: Italy was at the heart of Europe and the West, however defined.

Hilckman's warning to pay closer attention to the Catholic and European roots of fascism was ignored by *Antieuropa* in the coming years, with 'fascist' movements identified in not only Christian South America but also in Arabic-speaking lands, Japan, and even the USSR, where

³¹ Anton Hilckman, 'Il Nazionalsocialismo Pericolo per La Civiltà Occidentale?', p. 2046.

³² 'Hilckman to Gravelli', *ACS*, Carte Gravelli, b. 4, f. 2. Hilckman's letter to Gravelli is undated. A reference to an essay by R. De Becher from September 1931 in *Antieuropa* as from 'a few months ago' suggests the letter was written some time around the first months of 1932.

Campanile saw influences of fascist policy.³³ It appears that while *Antieuropi* saw fascism's main function as saving Europe, its principles were imitated by others, too. Contrary to Hilckman's *argumentum ad absurdum*, they continued to perceive Kemalism in a positive light. In May and June 1932, *Antieuropa* published Mahmud Bey's [Soydan] remarks on *Milliyet* regarding Turco-Italian friendship and French attempts to divide the two countries.³⁴ Collaboration with actors linked to Turkey also intensified, as *Antieuropa* published a piece that compared Albert Einstein and the black dancer Josephine Baker by H. Z., the Geneve correspondent of *Akşam*'s French edition: H. Z. thought the European preference for Baker's 'ape-like agility' and cheap, American entertainment must have ashamed Einstein.³⁵ A more detailed interpretation of Kemalism came in September 1933, in the special issue of *Antieuropa* to the study of 'dictatorships'. Gravelli defined the post-war era as the fertile ground on which 'the reality of dictatorships' blossomed.³⁶ Noting the differences between several types of dictatorships and the superiority of the fascist type over the Bolshevik type, Gravelli observed the better type of dictatorship always preceded the arrival of the dictators themselves. They corresponded to the real needs of a society, from which the dictators did not usurp power but received it in recognition of these needs; in Gravelli's view, only this type of dictatorship deserved to be called modern. Examples included Mussolini, Napoleon, Hitler, and Mustafa Kemal.³⁷ The issue also featured an essay by the Spaniard Francesco Cambo, who counted the Turkish revolution as among the three most interesting 'dictatorships' that merited particular attention in the modern world, along with

³³ For Aristide Campanile's observations on the 'fascist revolution in the USSR' see Aristide Campanile, 'Rivoluzione Fascista Nel Mondo Dei Sovietti', *Antieuropa*, November 1931, pp. 2163–83.

³⁴ 'Le "Temps" Franchet D'Esperey et La Turquie', *Antieuropa*, May 1932, p. 309; 'Italie et Turquie', *Antieuropa*, 29 June 1932, pp. 422–23; Cunctator, 'Gallica Dona Ferentes...', *Antieuropa*, 29 June 1932, pp. 442–43.

³⁵ H. Z., 'Josephine Baker et Le Prof. Einstein', *Antieuropa*, 29 June 1932, pp. 449–51 (p. 451).

³⁶ Asvero Gravelli, 'Dalla Gerarchia al Dittatore Moderno', *Antieuropa*, 30 September 1933, pp. 208–12 (p. 208).

³⁷ Gravelli, 'Dalla Gerarchia al Dittatore Moderno', p. 212.

the Russian and Italian revolutions. Cambo felt that Mustafa Kemal was largely successful in transforming Turkish society and lifting it up from the humiliation of defeat and invasion to equal treatment with great powers.³⁸

Unlike *Antieuropa*, the more journalistic *Ottobre* was more often silent on the 'fascism' of Kemalism. Some initial publications of *Ottobre* even contradicted *Antieuropa's* depiction of Kemalism. In November 1933, for example, *Ottobre's* piece '*...fascistizzazione del mondo!* [Fascistisation of the world] illustrated the global spread of fascism with a map, with countries divided among those already governed by a 'fascist regime' or home to significant 'fascist' groups. Turkey was left unmarked, which stood in stark contrast with other pieces of *Ottobre* depicting fascism in Palestine or South America.³⁹ Gravelli joined the wider fascist intelligentsia in interpreting the Balkan Pact of 1934 as an anti-Italian measure by Turkey.⁴⁰ However, in May 1935, Gravelli once more depicted Kemalism as falling in line with fascism's social policies. Curiously, Gravelli felt Kemalism reached this conclusion through a process of trial and error. His particular case under discussion was the 12th Congress International Alliance of Women in Istanbul under the auspices of the Kemalist regime. An anti-feminist, he took delight in how the Kemalists hosted the congress only to then abolish feminist associations in Turkey. Gravelli concluded thus: 'Turkey needed this experience to appreciate that women could not pass from a centuries-old regime of servitude to the most grotesque claims of democratic international feminism'.⁴¹ In this conclusion, we see at once a recognition of the drawing of the Kemalists to 'democratic international feminism' and the hope that they were wise enough to realise how fascism was right all along. The varying coverage of Turkey continued in *Ottobre* in 1935; one piece criticised how a new Turkish law caused an 'exodus' of foreign clerics who did much to

³⁸ F. Cambo, 'Caractéristique des Dictateurs de la Russie et de la Turquie', *Antieuropa*, 30 September 1933, pp. 303–8 (p. 307).

³⁹ '*...Fascistizzazione del Mondo!*', *Ottobre*, 16 November 1933.

⁴⁰ 'Fra Cani e Gatti: A Che Cosa Serve Il Patto Balcanico?', *Ottobre*, 24 June 1934, p. 4.

⁴¹ 'La Conclusione del Congresso d'Istambul', *Ottobre*, 1 May 1935, p. 2.

establish schools and hospitals that also benefitted the Turks, while another praised the arrest of a certain Nazmi Bey for wastefulness in Istanbul. The first piece depicted Kemalism as hopelessly anti-clerical, while the second cited it as an example of 'good government'.⁴²

Gravelli and his friends' interpretations of Kemalism were affected by state relations but as the example of 'good government' shows, diplomacy did not determine perceptions of Kemalism. The more theory-rich *Antieuropa* offers clearer examples. Writing in the summer of 1938, Carlo Curcio warned against lumping together all dictatorships, from Italy to Turkey, but he readily recognised the internal strength and virtues of Kemalism.⁴³ *Antieuropa* also published praise for the 'decisive' abolishment of freemasonry in Turkey, which they interpreted as part of a global anti-freemasonry wave that started in Italy and reached Portugal and Turkey.⁴⁴ As late as 1942, when many fascists were suspicious of Turkish foreign policy, *Antieuropa* depicted Atatürk as the Turkish 'national hero' who left behind 'a strong country'; the author lamented how, following his death, 'the Anglo-Russian technical and financial influence' dominated the country.⁴⁵

This refusal to directly follow official policy to the letter may explain why Coselschi and not Gravelli were tasked by the regime to establish and run the CAUR. Ledeen described Coselschi as a self-interested pragmatist.⁴⁶ Born in Tuscany in 1888 to a family of distant Polish origins, Coselschi studied law in Rome, associated with the future nationalist cadres of Italy, joined the *interventisti* [those who wanted Italy to participate in the First World War], volunteering and getting wounded while fighting against the Austro-Hungarians.⁴⁷ Coselschi adhered to fascism after the

⁴² 'Segni di Buon Governo', *Antieuropa*, 5 July 1935, p. 2.

⁴³ 'Rassegna d'Aspetto: Sulla Dittatura', *Antieuropa*, 1 June 1938-1 July 1938, p. 364.

⁴⁴ 'Rassegna d'Aspetto: Statistica Massonica', *Antieuropa*, 1 June 1938-1 July 1938, p. 365.

⁴⁵ A. L. C., 'La Turchia e Il Nuovo Ordine Eurasiatico', *Antieuropa*, 1942, pp. 290-94 (p. 292).

⁴⁶ Ledeen defined Coselschi as a man for whom 'all ideologies were interesting provided that it kept him in close contact with the centres of power and he could take sufficient advantage of this to save his skin.' Michael A. Ledeen, 'Presentazione', in Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle Camicie Nere: I CAUR 1933-1939*, p. 8.

⁴⁷ Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle Camicie Nere: I CAUR 1933-1939*, p. 75.

March on Rome.⁴⁸ Between 1929 and 1931, Coselschi proposed several projects to Mussolini, including some that aimed to bring the Poles and Italians closer.⁴⁹ Ledeen interprets this as a result of Coselschi realising the rising stocks of universalist fascism, though genuine conviction mixed with opportunism cannot be out-ruled.⁵⁰ In any case, one such project was the establishment of the CAUR, which was formed in July 1933, led by Coselschi, had multiple publication organs, and sought to establish links with foreign fascistoid groups. CAUR organised the 1934 Montreux Fascist Congress, in addition to undertaking other similar enterprises, all supported by the regime's propaganda machinery. Coselschi and other members of the CAUR extensively travelled abroad, from the Baltics to the Balkans. These attempts earned the CAUR 'adhesions' and association with groups from Britain and Sweden to Switzerland and Romania.

'Adhesion' letters and news of visits were proudly published by CAUR's periodicals, such as *Roma universa*, and it appears that there were no Turkish interlocutors of the CAUR. However, *Roma universa* and other CAUR publications did discuss Turkey and Kemalism. In July-August 1934, as part of their review of nationalisms from Argentina to China, the journal reviewed the situation in Turkey. Similarities with fascism were found: an unspecified student organisation's 1924 manifesto was deemed to have similar principles to fascism, while another point in common was how Turkey 'did not need' political parties. The latter also meant that one could not find in Turkey a fascist party as elsewhere, and fascist groups had to be found beyond the government. One such group was found around the outlet 'Atzs', a misrendering of Hüseyin Nihal's [Atsız] *Atsız Mecmua*, 'the first outlet to give voice to radical nationalism' in Turkey. Another fascistoid group was the anti-Semitic *Millî İnkılap*; *Roma universa* saw such antisemitism as proof of their fascism, though,

⁴⁸ Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle Camicie Nere: I CAUR 1933-1939*, p. 77.

⁴⁹ Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle Camicie Nere: I CAUR 1933-1939*, p. 80.

⁵⁰ Interestingly, we see Coselschi embracing another 'turn' of fascist policy and seeking to play an important role in propagating it: the seeking of closer relations with the Arabs against Britain and the Jews. See Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle Camicie Nere: I CAUR 1933-1939*, p. 347.

as we saw before, *Millî İnkılap* referred to Hitler rather than Italy in their anti-Semitism. The author noted that while Kemalism itself was not fascist, it would open the way for 'radical nationalism'.⁵¹ CAUR's compilation of positive remarks in the global press on fascism included Falih Rıfki's and other *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* authors' praises of fascism in 1931 and 1932.⁵²

One reason for the regime to support the CAUR was to check the rise of Nazism and ensure fascism's primacy. However, *Roma universa's* depiction of *Millî İnkılap* provides a foreshadowing of how, in the end, fascism itself ended up incorporating more of Nazism than previously imagined. More topically, *Roma universa's* misrendering 'Atzs' likely suggests they came to know *Atsız Mecmua* indirectly through intermediaries, rather than establishing direct contact.⁵³ This failure to establish contact with Turkish actors was evident earlier, in 1932. The culmination of the regime's shift to universalist fascism was the *Convegno Volta* of 1932. This was a prestigious international conference on the concept of Europe organised by the Italian Royal Academy and the Alessandro Volta Foundation, intended to gather intellectuals at the heart of Europe in Rome and have them conclude how fascism would save Europe. Initially, it was contemplated to invite 'non-European' figures such as Americans and Russians, but the invitations were ultimately limited to Europeans. The Conference opened in Rome on 16 November 1932 and terminated with the final session on the 20th.

Turkish state archives contain an invitation to the *Convegno Volta* extended to the Turkish government. The government was invited to identify and send suitable participants to this 'conference on Europe' they

⁵¹ 'Il Nazionalismo Turco', *Roma Universa*, August 1934, p. 203.

⁵² *Universalità del Fascismo: Raccolta di Giudizi del Mondo* (Vallecchi Editore, 1933), p. 233, 333-334.

⁵³ Compare this to the case of Yunus Nadi, for instance, on whose dealing with Italians we have ample documentation in the Italian state archives. By contrast, our research has not unearthed any materials that might indicate direct contact between Hüseyin Nihal and the fascist regime.

detailed for Turkish authorities.⁵⁴ The Ministry considered the invitation for about a month and then apparently approved of Turkey's participation in late June 1932, asking the Cabinet to make the final decision. Interestingly, however, the Ministry did not identify or suggest any suitable names for participation, deemed 'beneficial and necessary'.⁵⁵ More curiously, the Cabinet only approved of Turkey's participation in the *Convegno Volta* on 16 November 1932, the very date the Conference began in Rome, without specifying any participants either.⁵⁶ Nor did any individuals from Turkey send letters to or receive an invitation to the conference, as letters, contributions, and the names of all invitees were published in the proceedings book afterwards.

One possible explanation for this strange process is misunderstanding or miscommunication between the branches of the Turkish government. However, another archival document suggests something else at play. On 29 October 1932, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs notified the Italian embassy that due to the Minister being abroad, the government was 'unable' to make an official decision or specify participants. The Ministry expressed Turkey's 'sincere' desire to join and stated they would willingly supply participants when a similar future enterprise took place.⁵⁷ While it is true that the Minister, Tevfik Rüştü [Aras], was indeed travelling abroad around this time, he was in Turkey greeting his Persian counterpart on 28 October, and presumably, he could have easily

⁵⁴ Note how the very fact that the Italians did not propose names but asked for the Turks to identify participants likely indicates the CAUR's inability to secure interlocutors in the country.

⁵⁵ 'İtalya Akademisi Tarafından (Volta) Kurum Namına Yapılacak Konferansa Türkiye'nin Davet Edilmesi', 30 June 1932, *Dışişleri Bakanlığı Türk Diplomatik Arşivi*, 541, 44237-210130-1.

⁵⁶ 'Kasım Ayında İtalya'da, Avrupa İçtimai ve İktisadi Durumu Konusunda Yapılacak Toplantıya İştirak Edilmesi', 16 November 1932, *BCA*, Kararlar Daire Başkanlığı, 30-18-1-2, 31-70-17.

⁵⁷ 'Volta Kuruluşu Tarafından Roma'da Düzenlenen Toplantıya Davet Edilen Türk Akademisyenler', 12 November 1932, *Dışişleri Bakanlığı Türk Diplomatik Arşivi*, 541, 44237-210130-4.

delegated the matter of selection to others had he chosen to do so.⁵⁸ While we cannot be certain in the absence of more definitive evidence, we may conclude that Turkey chose not to participate in the *Convegno Volta*. Turkish officials might have first thought of the enterprise as an academic conference, which can explain the Ministry's initially favourable view, only to later grasp the true nature of the event. While appreciating Italy as an ally, and therefore trying not to bluntly reject the invitation but citing 'inability', Ankara wished to avoid a too close association with fascism for geopolitical and ideological reasons.

We have another example of this Turkish tendency to 'pleasantly' refuse fascist overtures. In the summer of 1932, the University of Rome invited Ankara to send two Darülfünun students from Istanbul to join a university summer camp in Italy. The RPP's deputy secretary general, Saffet [Arıkan], found that the invitation was specifically extended to Turkey and did not involve other countries, contrary to what the Italians told İsmet Pasha in Rome. Saffet Bey decided that 'as the invitation was not international, participating in the event was not deemed appropriate, however well-meaning the invitation might be', and he instructed the officials to reject Italians 'in a pleasant manner' [*tatlılıkla*].⁵⁹ Tellingly, Saffet Bey was able to deputise for Recep [Peker], who was out of Ankara. This all suggests that the Turkish side rejected the invitation to the *Convegno Volta* 'in a pleasant manner'. Though we do not know whether Turkey was invited to send participants to the 1934 Montreux Fascist Congress as well, which was intended as a follow-up on the *Convegno Volta*, we know that the conference, or its follow-ups, did not feature Turkish participants.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ 'Hariciye Vekilimizin Milletler Cemiyetinde Mühim Nutku', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 5 October 1932, p. 1. 'İyran Hariciye Veziri Frugi Han Hz. Geldi', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 28 October 1932, p. 1.

⁵⁹ 'From N. Saffet, the Secretary General of the RPP', *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 490-1-0-0, 1107-41-1.

⁶⁰ For a list of fascistoid movements represented in Montreux, see the July-August 1934 issue of *Roma Universa*, in particular 'I movimenti fascisti europei rappresentati a Montreux', *Roma Universa*, July-August 1934, pp. 27-28. The conference took place some

Universalist fascism beyond the Gravelli circle and the CAUR included Florence's *L'Universale*, led by a 'wunderkind' of fascism, Berto Ricci. *L'Universale* did not pay attention to Kemalism or Turkey, though Oddone Fantini's *L'Universalità Fascista* did.⁶¹ Born in Reggio Emilia in 1889, Fantini fought in the Turco-Italian War of 1911 and the First World War studied social science and became an economist. He established *L'Universalità Fascista* in 1929. The journal published a piece on 'the fascist ideals in new Turkey' concerning political developments in Turkey in the immediate aftermath of the 1930-31 crisis. The author found certain similarities between the tenets of fascism and principles in the RPP's programme. These included 'national sovereignty' understood as the full undertaking of the state's and citizens' respective duties towards each other, the greater involvement of the state in the country's life and in the economy in particular, and the 'harmony of interests' as a social vision, as opposed to class warfare.⁶² This meant to the author that Turkey, which he placed in 'the Orient' in his mental map, was gravitating more and more towards the Occident, towards Rome in particular.⁶³ As fascism was the future of the West, Westernisation rightly meant fascistisation. If this conclusion is reminiscent of Falih Rifki's views, this may perhaps not be a coincidence since *L'Universalità fascista* knew of Falih Rifki's exemplification of fascism. In the autumn of 1931, the outlet extensively quoted the pieces of Falih Rifki for *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* following his trip to Rome. While Falih Rifki's words were directly translated without comment, the conclusion

months after the assassination of the Austrian chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss. This assassination pitted Dollfuss's assassins, the Austrian Nazis and their supporters in Germany, against the then-staunch supporters of Dollfuss, Mussolini and his fascists. This meant that Nazis would not attend the conference, and the participants would be limited to either those who were in any case ideologically and politically closer to Italy, such as Mercouris from Greek fascistoid movements, or others who still hoped to reach some universalist middle ground between Italian and German sides.

⁶¹ The literature on universalist fascists and Kemalism is sorely lacking, and this conclusion is based on the author's research on *L'Universale*.

⁶² 'Gli Ideali Fascisti Nella Nuova Turchia', *Universalità Fascista*, August 1931, pp. 104-5 (p. 104).

⁶³ 'Gli Ideali Fascisti Nella Nuova Turchia', pp. 104-5.

of the outlet summarised the point of a Turkish author indirectly, most likely unbeknownst to himself, appearing in a fascist journal: 'Falih Rıfkı concludes [thusly], pointing to Italy as an example for his country'.⁶⁴

In general, the perceptions of Kemalism among these mostly younger, more revolutionary universalist fascists were typically positive, with negative or suspicious comments appearing mostly in connection with Turkish foreign policy. Gravelli's suspicions of Kemalist perceptions of 'international democratic feminism' is a noteworthy exception, though he, too, concluded that Kemalists found 'the right path', upon trial and error. One reason for such positive perceptions was the actions of the Turks: *Universalità Fascista* and Coselschi could draw from Falih Rıfkı's lavish praises of fascism in 1931, seeing these as further proofs of the 'fact' that Kemalism was becoming increasingly fascist-like. Coselschi's *CAUR* were also encouraged by the 'radical nationalisms' of *Atsız Mecmua* and *Millî İnkılap*. It appears that these never evolved into actual contact between the universalist fascists and Kemalists; certain Kemalists, radical or otherwise, were aware of the work of Gravelli and others, but neither the *CAUR* nor the various conferences and journals had a Turkish counterpart to the British Fascists of Mosley. It must also be remembered that the universalist fascists were in active search of kindred movements worldwide. How far they could go in labelling movements as fascists is best illustrated by remembering their interpretation of certain sociopolitical developments in the USSR as a turn to fascism. Not all Italian intellectuals felt such a dire need to find validating examples of fascism's universality from abroad. The next section will focus on the more mainstream and conservative fascists' interpretations of Kemalism and how, while appreciating the fascist sympathies of certain RPP figures, their conclusions were not necessarily identical to those of the likes of Fantini or Gravelli.

⁶⁴ 'Il Fascismo in Turchia', *Universalità Fascista*, September-October 1931, pp. 201-2 (pp. 201-2).

§ 5.2 Italy Speaking: Regime Attempts to Reach a Turkish Audience

Italian efforts to dispel negative views of fascism in Turkey predated the universalist turn. The energetic ambassador Giulio Cesare Montagna engaged in busy correspondence with the Turkish authorities in the early 1920s to curb the spread of negative news on fascism. During the Matteotti crisis in 1924-25, the Turkish perceptions of which we covered in Chapter Two, Montagna constantly complained about the negative coverage and refuted news surrounding fascism's imminent collapse. To the Turkish authorities, he explained that such criticism of a foreign country's regime was unacceptable, though the authorities merely replied that the press in Turkey was free.⁶⁵ Turkish intellectuals subjected Montagna's reassurance to comparative analysis: in June 1924, Ahmed Emin [Yalman] argued that the latest 'British, French, and even Italian newspapers make it wholly impossible to believe him [Montagna]'.⁶⁶ Elsewhere, in Antalya, Montagna and his colleagues had to deal with the feverish anti-Italian campaign of Dr Ferruh Niyazi, or, as in Izmir, physical challenges to the Italian presence in Turkey. In 1925, a rather ostentatious Italian coat of arms was placed on the gate of an Italian school in Izmir in what Italian diplomats saw as an uncalled-for show of force. The response by the local Turks was the stealing of the coat of arms. The diplomats noted the proximity of the school to a branch of the 'xenophobic'

⁶⁵ For some examples see 'İtalya'da Mühim Hadiseler Cereyan Ediyor', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 20 June 1924, p. 1. 'İtalya'daki Buhana Dair Gazetelerde Çıkan Haber ve Makaleler Hakkında İtalya Mümessili Mösyö Montagna'nın Şikayeti', 1924, *BOA*, HR. İM., 241-76; 'Mösyö Montagna, Antalya'daki Mekteple Hastahanenin Kapatılması, Doktorun Bilmuhakeme Icra-yı Sanattan Menedilip Tecziye Edilmesi ve Antalya Gazetelerinin İtalyanlara Karşı Tahrik Edici Neşriyatta Bulunmaları Keyfiyetinin Roma'da Endişeyle Karşılandığını İfade Edip İtalyanların Anadolu Mücahedatını Hayır-Hah ile Karşıladıklarından Bahisle Türk Hükümetinin "Antalya Meselesi"nde Müsaadekar Davranmasını İstemesi', 1924, *BOA*, HR. İM., 239-39; 'İtalya Mümessili Montagna'nın İtalya Seyahatı Öncesi İtalyan Askerinin Tahşidatı ve Gazetelerin İtalya Aleyhindeki Neşriyatı Konusunda İstanbul Murahhası Adnan Bey ile Mülakatı', 1924, *BOA*, HR. İM., 240-148.

⁶⁶ 'İtalya'da Faşistlerin Mukabil Nümayişleri', *Vatan*, 22 June 1924, p. 1.

Turkish Hearths [*Türk Ocakları*]. Though the Consulate observed the close links between the Turkish Hearths and the Kemalist leadership and expected no further action by the police, they felt obliged to pressure the local police, at least.⁶⁷

Montagna's job was dominated but not exhausted by contrasting sceptical or inimical Turks. In February 1925, he conceived a way to impress Turks who did not speak Italian. When he found that Turkish officers in Adana either spoke just Turkish or knew French, he arranged for illustrated Italian papers to be sent so that the officers could be influenced by the global language of pictures.⁶⁸ As journalists worldwide were discovering the importance of visual materials, the fascist regime provided pictures, captions, and short news pieces to Turkish outlets throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Levantine papers like *Il messaggero degli italiani* were not alone in receiving such pieces: Istanbul's *Akşam* and İzmir's anti-fascist *Yeni Asır* also received and published material emanating from the Italian diplomats.⁶⁹ The domination of Ankara journalism by the semi-official *Ulus* [*Hakimiyet-i Milliye*'s new name from 1934] was deemed a problem for propaganda in the city.⁷⁰ The pictures and news pieces sent were often seemingly innocuous, such as a picture and description of a new observatory built in Asiago. The fascist regime hoped to showcase the modernity of fascism through such pieces, while the journals likely accepted these to fill in the blanks, hoping to balance fascist propaganda with their overall editorial policy. The success of this engagement worried Turkish officials. In 1937, Vedat Nedim Tör, the ex-*Kadroist* now serving as the head of the central official regulatory institution on the press in Turkey, sent a stern written warning to Turkish papers on their duty to abstain from conducting foreign propaganda.

⁶⁷ See the reports dated 10 September 1925 and 15 October 1925 in *ASDMAE*, AP 1919-30, b. 1714, f. 7889.

⁶⁸ 'Montagna to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 19 February 1925, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 735, stampa 1.1.47.

⁶⁹ See numerous examples in *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati, b. 247, f. 3.

⁷⁰ 'Galli to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 15 November 1936, *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati, b. 247, f. 3.

Apparently, similar warnings had been made to the newspapers and journals in the past, to little effect. Outlets like *Son Posta* continued to publish pictures from the Italians as late as November 1937.⁷¹

The pieces and pictures for Turkish newspapers were curated by diplomatic personnel, sometimes with the help of Italians in Turkey, such as Ezio Bartalini.⁷² When input from local agents was lacking, problems arose. In August 1930, the journal *Economia nazionale* tried to boost Turco-Italian relations with a piece on the subject; the piece included the picture of an Egyptian gentleman in fez introduced to the reader as Tefvik Rüştü [Aras].⁷³ The embassy in Ankara wrote to the editor, Ezio Maria Grey, that the individual in question was not Tefvik Rüştü. It was particularly regretted that as the *fez* had become a symbol of opposition to Kemalism, the caption could do much damage to the image of Italy in Turkey. More attention to local facts was requested from Grey.⁷⁴

Beyond feeding material to the press, the fascist regime also aimed to win hearts by distributing books on or written by fascists in Turkey. The consulates distributed books, typically translated into French, in not only Istanbul and Ankara but also Izmir and Samsun. Documents of the *Minculpop* [Ministry of Popular Culture]⁷⁵ meticulously record the titles of the books distributed and the recipients. In 1937, the Italian consulate in Izmir distributed thirty-eight copies of a work by Mario Missiroli on Italy's 'debt' to Mussolini, a tract by Edmondo Rossoni on fascist

⁷¹ See reports by the diplomatic personnel, clips from the newspaper pieces, and some correspondence between newspaper personnel and the diplomats in *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati, b. 247, f. 2.

⁷² *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati, b. 247, f. 2.

⁷³ The same picture appeared on *Giornale d'Italia* with the same caption.

⁷⁴ 'Ferretti to Ezio Maria Gray', 10 January 1931, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 245, i. 56; 'Aloisi to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 2 September 1930, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 245, i. 56. The *fez* caused a diplomatic issue between Egypt and Turkey in 1932, too. See Amit Bein, *Kemalist Turkey and the Middle East: International Relations in the Interwar Period* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 66-67.

⁷⁵ Ministero della cultura popolare in Italian, was, in effect, the overarching propaganda institution of the fascist regime by the late 1930s.

economics, and an introduction to the organisation of *Dopolavoro*.⁷⁶ In Samsun, among the recipients were the governor and vice-governor, the mayor, the head of the police, and some leading bureaucrats of the city. Other than prominent Turks of the province, Italians who lived in Samsun were among the recipients, as well as the library of the local *fascio*.⁷⁷ The recipients in Izmir constitute a similar profile: the leading members of the governing class of Izmir, such as the governor and head of the RPP's section in the city, prominent figures of the commercial class, such as engineers and merchants, and many Levantines and Europeans. In 1936, many of these individuals had received works from the consulate in Izmir, such as Mussolini's *La dottrina del fascismo*, a history of the fascist movement by Gioacchino Volpe, and a book titled *L'Italia per l'Islam in Africa*.⁷⁸ In December 1936, eminent Smirniots, including the governor Kazım Dirik, received books intended to illustrate the triumphs of fascism in Ethiopia.⁷⁹ Both the gifting and possession of books have long been socially loaded gestures across the world, as excellently explored by Andrew Pettegree and Arthur van der Weduwen in their book on the history of the library.⁸⁰ Through penetrating libraries, the fascist regime hoped to win European, Levantine, and, by the 1930s, Turkish hearts in Turkey.

The leadership was certainly aware of how RPP figures like Dirik and Doğan received books. It appears Ankara drew the line when it came to propaganda for the ordinary Turkish citizen. Already in the 1920s, fascists utilised the *fasci* and other Levantine organisations to screen 'national' themed films, initially limited to consular premises and Levantine audiences. A report from Izmir from March 1937 read that the Italians were able to come together to watch such a film, a *Luce* newsreel on the

⁷⁶ See examples of lists illustrating the books distributed and the recipients in *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 2.

⁷⁷ *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 2.

⁷⁸ See examples in *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 3.

⁷⁹ See the list of books and recipients in *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 4.

⁸⁰ Andrew Pettegree and Arthur van der Weduwen, *The Library: A Fragile History* (Profile Books, 2021). See especially pages 26, 39, 54, and 86 for brief examples and discussions of the ancient roots of gifting books as a socially loaded gesture.

invasion of Abyssinia, in the 'Alhambra Cinema' of Izmir for the first time outside consular premises 'since the Kemalists rose to power'. The audience consisted of a representative of Izmir's governor, who declared himself out of town, the consular personnel, and around six hundred Italians, whom regime hoped to rally in support of the cause of the Italian Empire. Crucially, the report's author noted he desired Turks to attend as well, but the governor rejected 'as before', citing the opposition of the relevant authorities to the presence of Turks in such settings.⁸¹ This limitation was not specific to Izmir since a document from 1936 notes how Turkish authorities in Istanbul allowed a screening on the condition that no Turks were allowed.⁸² The manager of a local cinema in Izmir owned by the Turkish Aviation Association (*Türk Hava Kurumu*), who was 'an influential member of the RPP', wanted to screen Italian films in his cinema and offered help to bypass these regulations in 1935, but his help proved insufficient.⁸³

Levantines in the press offered another avenue of propaganda.⁸⁴ Gilberto Primi served as a middleman who facilitated the propaganda demands of the regime in Italy and the supply in the form of publications in both Turkish and Levantine papers in Turkey. Primi wrote for *Akşam's* French edition and effectively led the regime-backed *Il messaggero degli italiani*. Through Primi, the regime gradually came to have a greater voice

⁸¹ 'Izmir General Consulate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 19 March 1937, *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 2.

⁸² 'Armao to the Ministry of the Press and Propaganda', 5 June 1936, *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 3.

⁸³ 'Smirne Fascio to the General Secretariat of the Fasci all'estero', 24 June 1935, *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 4.

⁸⁴ On Italian propaganda in Turkey, the Levantines, and the Levantine press in Istanbul, see the work of Francesco Pongiluppi. Especially see Francesco Pongiluppi, 'Tra fede cattolica e legame nazionale: l'identità degli italo levantini di Turchia negli anni 1923-1933', *Storia e Problemi Contemporanei*, 72, (May-August 2016), pp. 63-77; Francesco Pongiluppi, 'Beyoğlu'nda Levanten Basını - The Levantine Press in Beyoğlu', *Levantines of Beyoğlu*, LHF, ICC Istanbul, Turkey, 23-24 September 2016; Francesco Pongiluppi, 'Exporting Fascist Ideology to the East: Italian Cultural Activities in Turkey during the Interwar Period', *Religion and Ethno-Nationalism in the Era of the Two World Wars*, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada, 21-23 May 2017.

in the French language *Beyoglu*, from which they could address the Levantines and the educated Turks more efficiently. While Primi noted that both Italian-educated Turks and Italians in the country could enjoy an outlet in Italian, he recognised that French remained a more efficient method of propaganda.⁸⁵ The regime provided news material and funds to *Beyoglu*.⁸⁶ However, conducting Italian propaganda in French was deemed problematic, which led to a prioritisation of *Il messaggero degli italiani*.⁸⁷

The obsession with the French extended beyond *Beyoglu*. In Chapter Four, we saw fascist suspicions of foreign influence in Turkey, from Pedrazzi and the Germans to Zingarelli and the Russians. The likes of Filippucci Giustiniani doubted the French intentions in Turkey in the early 1920s, but the rivalry grew exponentially in the 1930s. In January 1933, a pessimistic Marcello Campaner, the head of the *fascio* of Istanbul, wrote that Italians 'lost their position of dominance in theatre' to the French.⁸⁸ Sometimes, the methods of French cultural propaganda were imitated by the regime, though not always successfully. When the embassy in Ankara called attention to recent Franco-Turkish academic exchanges and conference series in 1935, Rome agreed to organise a similar conference series 'as France has done already'. The officials asked the embassy to determine in which cities the talks could take place, whether Italian could be used instead of French, and who could be potential participants.⁸⁹

A potential kick-starter for such Italo-Turkish academic exchanges was Şemseddin Talip Diler. Diler was born in Ottoman Albania as

⁸⁵ 'Primi to the Ministry of the Press and Propaganda [?]', 23 April 1935, *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 4.

⁸⁶ See reports and the relevant correspondence in *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati, b. 247, f. 4.

⁸⁷ 'Galli to the Undersecretariat of the Press and Propaganda', 29 April 1935, *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 4.

⁸⁸ 'Campaner to the General Secretary of the Fasci Italiani all'Esteri', 15 January 1933, *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 5.

⁸⁹ 'Scambio di conferenzieri fra l'Italia e la Turchia', 5 August 1935, *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 4.

Şemseddin Gabrani in 1903.⁹⁰ Migrating to Istanbul upon the passing of his father and later securing a scholarship to study at Rome, he obtained his doctorate in Roman law in 1929 at the *Regia Università degli Studi di Roma*. Upon his return to Turkey, he joined Istanbul University and launched *Capitolium*, a journal dedicated to the study of ancient Rome, which the fascist regime contemplated supporting with funds and contents for a while due to its 'spreading of Romanness [*romanità*]'.⁹¹ Diler was in a position that could bring him many privileges, academic or otherwise: an ethnic Albanian who lived in Turkey for so long and had intimate knowledge of Italian culture and language; he could be a perfect kick-starter. In 1935, the embassy in Istanbul brought forward his name as a potential leader or even organiser for a series of academic talks featuring Italians and Turks. However, confusion ensued when, first, the Italian authorities were unable to ascertain whether Diler already arrived independently and gave an academic talk in Rome in 1935. Correspondence between the university and the officials showed that Diler indeed did so, but he limited himself to extremely vague remarks on organising or leading a series of talks as intended by the fascist authorities.⁹²

A limitation for fascist authorities at the time was the souring of the state-level relations, following the Balkan Pact of 1934 and the increasing aggressiveness of fascist foreign policy that aroused suspicions in

⁹⁰ I would like to thank Zehra Ipek Williamson for generously providing me with biographical details and family memories on the life and career of his late father, Şemseddin Talip Diler.

⁹¹ Campaner brought the existence of *Capitolium* to the attention of Eugenio Coselschi, the head of the *CAUR* responsible for spreading fascism and Romanness worldwide, who then alerted Ciano, at the time the head of the Press Office, in 1934: 'Coselschi to Ciano', 7 July 1934, *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 5. Ciano then had the Press Office agree to providing support for *Capitolium* in the form of pieces and articles for publication: 'Ciano to Coselschi', 11 July 1934, *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 5. On the *Capitolium* and its promotion of '*Romanità*' see 'Scambi di conferenze fra l'Università di Roma e l'Università di Stambul', 22 March 1935, *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 4.

⁹² 'Scambio di conferenzieri fra l'Italia e la Turchia', 5 August 1935, *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 4.

Ankara. It appears Diler, too, refused the chance to propagate fascism and Italian culture 'as the French have already done'. The reasons for this may be multiple, though it is telling that *Capitolium*, which launched with a piece featuring side-by-side portraits of Justinian and Mustafa Kemal as two great lawgivers, avoided references to fascism and contemporary politics. In the late 1950s, Diler figured among the founders of a socialist party in Turkey, which, in addition to his decades-long friendship with the likes of Ezio Bartalini, may suggest he had some sympathy for socialist movements.⁹³ Interestingly, when Campaner, as the head of Istanbul's *fascio*, signalled *Capitolium* as a potential outlet to support, his letters to Rome did not indicate any personal familiarity with Diler. Campaner addressed his letter to Coselschi, the head of the *CAUR*, that was to spread 'Romanness' and fascism; he noted that the journal represented a 'courageous' move in a country that 'had little sympathy for' Italy.⁹⁴ Campaner would certainly not restrict his recommendation to a description of the context and the journal's content and would instead discuss the personality and stances of Diler had he known the latter in person. This further supports the theory that Diler carefully distanced himself from fascism while being able to attend congresses and exhibits in Italy in an academic capacity. In any case, and to make matters even more complicated for the academic exchanges, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs also objected to Diler's involvement in the project. While the University of Rome vouched for his integrity and expertise, the Ministry reminded the parties of a report from 1930 which indicated that Diler was a 'dangerous' and unreliable person.⁹⁵ Further research may illuminate why Diler was deemed 'dangerous', though a personal conflict with certain fascists or, perhaps more likely, resistance to fascist recruitment attempts during his time in Rome may explain this. In any case, the fascist regime found it

⁹³ 'Şemseddin Talip Diler to Ezio Bartalini', 2 November 1959, *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 1: Epistolario di Ezio Bartalini, 1641, b. 155, f. 1.

⁹⁴ 'Ciano to Coselschi', 11 July 1934, *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 5.

⁹⁵ 'Galli to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 5 March 1935, *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 4.

difficult to mimic the French, who were able to call upon an authority like Fuad Köprülü to make a speech. Diler himself appears to have been more interested in utilising his extensive networking opportunities in service of his academic and legal studies rather than engaging in politics.⁹⁶

Despite the failure in recruiting Diler for fascist propaganda, Turks educated in Italy remained a promising avenue of propaganda for the regime. Italian *Banca commerciale italiana* utilised its position in the Turkish economy to invite young Turkish bankers to Italy for a period of internship and hoped to impress them.⁹⁷ In the 1920s and 1930s, Turkey sent numerous individuals to Italy to gain expertise in a variety of subjects. We will later see how these individuals did not swallow fascism as intended, instead interpreting the 'excellence' of fascist practice in other ways. At times, however, education seems to have functioned as hoped by the regime. In 1933, a certain Sabit Muhlis, who was employed by the Turkish Ministry of National Education, requested Mussolini's autograph from the embassy in Istanbul. In their clarification of his credentials, the embassy found it noteworthy that Sabit Muhlis studied in Italy, which may have been a positive factor in shaping his perceptions of Mussolini indeed. In the end, it was decided to grant his wish and send him the autograph.⁹⁸ To our knowledge, based on the archival documents in the *Segreteria particolare del duce* section of the *Archivio centrale dello stato*, Sabit Muhlis was the only Turk to ask for a Mussolini autograph in this manner, though autographs of famous individuals at the time were generally regarded as a valuable possession by many.

The regime also utilised Turkish intermediaries to facilitate the publication of favourable pieces to gain sympathy in Turkey. This was not a method specific to the fascists: the Italian diplomats widely suspected

⁹⁶ This decision of Diler also serves as a warning against a tendency in recent historiography: rather than reifying networks and imagining them as determining individual minds, we must recognise how different individuals may utilise networks in different ways, depending on their pasts and personalities.

⁹⁷ 'Orsini to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 10 October 1925, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 735, stampa I/47.

⁹⁸ *ACS*, Segreteria particolare del Duce, C. O., b. 397, f. 147034.

that other European nations used the same method, and the Italians' resort to intermediaries predated the fascist regime. Between 1920 and December 1922, the Ottoman Jewish journalist Alberto Carasso received funds from the Italian embassy to promote pro-Italian views in Turkish papers. In February 1920, for example, he received two hundred Turkish liras to fund Yunus Nadi's newspaper, *Yeni Gün*. As Yunus Nadi was forced to flee to Ankara upon the invasion of Istanbul by the Allies, however, the arrangement with Carasso likely fell through.⁹⁹ However, the relationship between Italian 'recruiters' and Turkish journalists was not always clear and predictable. In February 1920, a certain Şahin Bey promised Italians the support of *İkdam* and *Alemdar* newspapers in exchange for payments. The Italian diplomats quickly began to suspect that the funds provided to Şahin Bey ended up in the latter's pockets and demanded a meeting with the editors of the cited newspapers. Şahin Bey predictably rejected the proposal on the grounds that the editors would not trust foreign diplomats the way they trusted him as the Turkish intermediary.¹⁰⁰ It is likely that the High Commissariat was effectively defrauded by this Şahin Bey, who devised a way of receiving money in exchange for doing nothing.

Yunus Nadi's contacts with Italy proved more enduring than Şahin Bey's. In 1924, he sent word to Mussolini through his Italian correspondent, Italo Sullioti, explaining his desire to publish remarks by Mussolini on 'the development of Turkey and the Turco-Italian relations'.¹⁰¹ Yunus Nadi knocked on the regime's door once more in March 1931 with a more audacious and comprehensive project: he wished to publish another newspaper and invited the regime to buy some shares. The Italian ambassador, Pompeo Aloisi, described Yunus Nadi as 'one of the most capable, appreciated, and amply read journalists' in Turkey and approved of such funding, which would 'constitute a non-negligible help towards the

⁹⁹ See the correspondence and receipts relating to the subsidies for Carasso in *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 735, f. 38.

¹⁰⁰ 'The Italian High Commissariat to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 3 February 1920, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 735, f. 38.

¹⁰¹ 'Sullioti to Mussolini', 18 April 1924, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 735, f. 38.

ends we pursue here'.¹⁰² As the Ministry requested an approximate idea of the financial costs before deciding, Aloisi predicted a monthly payment of about 10.000 to 15.000 Italian liras.¹⁰³ The *Ufficio politico* (the Policy Bureau of the Ministry) initially favoured the arrangement.¹⁰⁴ However, Aloisi was informed on 15 May 1931 that the Ministry was in no position to provide the necessary funds at this time.¹⁰⁵

This initial rejection did not deter Yunus Nadi, who joined PM İsmet [İnönü] in his official visit to Rome in May 1932.¹⁰⁶ In Rome, Aloisi personally introduced Yunus Nadi to Gaetano Polverelli, then head of the press office of the regime. Yunus Nadi offered Polverelli an alternative arrangement: his business (which he said had a worth of around 10.000.000 Liras, without specifying whether Italian or Turkish liras) was in dire need of cash, and funding of one million Italian liras would be greatly appreciated.¹⁰⁷ Even this proposal underwent sudden revision as Italo Rossi, an Italian journalist speaking on behalf of Yunus Nadi, explained a loan of 50.000 Italian liras at a bank in Turkey would temporarily ameliorate the latter's financial situation.¹⁰⁸ Bombarded by the requests, the Press Office explained to Yunus Nadi that it was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that would decide his case in consultation with Aloisi.¹⁰⁹

Anxiously awaiting a decision, Yunus Nadi bypassed the embassy and directly wrote to Polverelli in June 1932. The names Yunus Nadi

¹⁰² 'Promemoria pel S. E. Ministero', *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 255, st 3.II.131.

¹⁰³ This information was handwritten onto the document. It appears the text reads '*S.E. Aloisi ha detto che occorrerebbe [occorrereà?] L. 10 - 15.000 per mese...*'. 'The Press Office to the Embassy in Ankara', *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, 11-2. For a comparison, a document from the personal archives of Gravelli shows he received 10.000 Italian liras for the month of February for *Antieuropa* from the regime, some time in the 1940s. See the receipt in *ACS*, Carte Asvero Gravelli, b. 1, f. 3.

¹⁰⁴ 'Pro Memoria per S. E. Il Ministero', 7 May 1931, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, 11-2.

¹⁰⁵ 'The Press Office to the Embassy in Ankara', 15 May 1931, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, 11-2.

¹⁰⁶ On the visit see Mevlüt Çelebi, 'Başvekil İsmet Paşa'nın İtalya Seyahati', *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 22.2 (2007), pp. 21-52.

¹⁰⁷ 'Yunus Nadi Bey, Direttore del "Giumuriet"', 6 June 1932?, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, 11-2.

¹⁰⁸ 'Yunus Nadi Bey, Direttore del "Giumuriet"', 6 June 1932?, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, 11-2.

¹⁰⁹ 'Yunus Nadi Bey, Direttore del "Giumuriet"', 6 June 1932?, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, 11-2.

summoned to his cause were by no means modest: he explained to Polverelli how he wrote to both Dino Grandi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mussolini [*Grand Ami le chef du Gouvernement*] and secured their approval. Echoing Rossi, he explained that he needed an immediate loan of 50.000 Italian liras and even identified the *Banca commerciale italiana* in Istanbul to materialise the arrangement.¹¹⁰ A week later, in June 1932, Polverelli asked the embassy to assure Yunus Nadi that the question 'discussed during your [Yunus Nadi's] visit to Rome' was under review 'with best intentions'.¹¹¹

Patience was not a virtue of Yunus Nadi, who kept pressing Ambassador Aloisi, Polverelli, Grandi, and even Mussolini in a series of letters over the summer of 1932. Aloisi responded that the Italians were doing their best to extend his *Banca commerciale* credit from 10.000 to 50.000 Turkish liras.¹¹² Yunus Nadi instead elected to let out his frustration with the drawn-out process by approving the publication of a short piece deemed anti-Italian by the embassy in the French edition of his *Cumhuriyet*. The money came with strings, and the overwhelmed Italian side explained that such publications stood in stark contrast with Yunus Nadi's 'desire, expressed *a thousand times* to us [emphasis not in the original], that he wants to further the friendly Turco-Italian relations'.¹¹³ In September 1932, it was finally decided that Yunus Nadi's project could be funded by subtracting the necessary amount from the state loan Italy was to provide

¹¹⁰ 'Yunus Nadi to Polverelli', 4 June 1932, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, 11-2.

¹¹¹ 'Polverelli to the Embassy in Ankara', 11 June 1932, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, 11-2.

¹¹² 'The Press Office to the Embassy in Ankara', 1 July 1932, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, 11-2; 'Yunus Nadi to Polverelli', 4 July 1932, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, 11-2; 'Yunus Nadi to Mussolini', 4 July 1932, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, 11-2; 'Yunus Nadi to Grandi', 4 July 1932, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, 11-2; 'Yunus Nadi to Polverelli', 14 July 1932, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, 11-2; 'Yunus Nadi to Aloisi', 23 July 1932, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, 3.II.347; 'Yunus Nadi to Aloisi', 2 August 1932, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, 3.II.347; 'Aloisi to Yunus Nadi', 8 August 1932, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, 3.II.347.

¹¹³ 'Articolo di S. E. Mussolini sul fascismo', *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, i.56.9.

to Turkey.¹¹⁴ An emergency amelioration of Yunus Nadi's situation proved impossible, however, as *Banca commerciale's* director in Istanbul explained to the Embassy how they already provided too much to Yunus Nadi and were unwilling to do more short of a direct order from Rome.¹¹⁵ As the funds proved elusive, Yunus Nadi arrived in Rome [*me voilà*, he declared] in person in October 1932 and wrote to Polverelli, whom he wanted to meet 'sooner, even today if possible' [*un moment plus tôt, si possible aujourd'hui même*], and wished to meet Mussolini.¹¹⁶ He enlisted the Turkish ambassador, Vasıf [Çınar], to officially demand a meeting between Mussolini and himself, too.¹¹⁷ Three days later, Polverelli explained that Mussolini was unable to receive him due to his 'busy schedule', but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to study the arrangement with a favourable view.¹¹⁸ Some further pressure was applied to the central direction of the *Banca commerciale* in the coming days, but it appears Yunus Nadi did not receive the funds he wished from the Italians as the Italian loan to Turkey failed to materialise.¹¹⁹ Italian diplomats interpreted Yunus Nadi's and his outlets' new-found anti-fascism as a reflection of his bitterness over this failed arrangement in the years leading to the Second World War.¹²⁰ Even earlier, though, diplomats like

¹¹⁴ 'Appunto per S. E. il Sottosegretario di Stato', 23 September 1932, *ASDMAE*, Gabinetto, b. 792 (Gab. 475), f. 3; 'Yunus Nadi Bey', 20 September 1932, *ASDMAE*, Gabinetto, b. 792 (Gab. 475), f. 3.

¹¹⁵ 'Credito Yunus Nadi', 20 August 1932, *ASDMAE*, Gabinetto, b. 792 (Gab. 475), f. 3; 'Stampa 1: Koch to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 13 September 1932, *ASDMAE*, Gabinetto, b. 792 (Gab. 475), f. 3.

¹¹⁶ 'Yunus Nadi to Polverelli', 9 October 1932, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, I.56.9.

¹¹⁷ 'H. Vasıf to Polverelli', 10 October 1932, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, I.56.9.

¹¹⁸ 'Polverelli to H. Vasıf', 11 October 1932, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, I.56.9.

¹¹⁹ 'Credito Yunus Nadi', 20 August 1932, *ASDMAE*, Gabinetto, b. 792 (Gab. 475), f. 3; 'Stampa 1: Koch to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 13 September 1932, *ASDMAE*, Gabinetto, b. 792 (Gab. 475), f. 3. On the loan and its failure, see Dilek Barlas, 'Friends or Foes: Diplomatic Relations Between Italy and Turkey, 1923-36', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 36 (2004), pp. 231-252 (p. 245).

¹²⁰ 'N. 1723/677', 6 September 1932, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, I.56.9. In the autumn of 1939, the authorities felt that Yunus Nadi dropped his recent anti-Italian line of publications and

Ottaviano Armando Koch perceived Yunus Nadi as untrustworthy, ‘politically insignificant’, and ‘inconsistent’ and sought to avoid dealing with him.¹²¹

These findings on Yunus Nadi’s financial entanglements with the fascist regime shed new light on what we might safely call the ‘poster child’ of research and popular discussions on Kemalism and fascism: *Cumhuriyet*’s headline from May 1932, where İsmet Pasha’s visit to Rome was pompously announced with ‘Salute from Kemalist Turkey to Fascist Italy’, featuring an entangled *littorio* and star and crescent.¹²² This headline intended to illustrate the camaraderie of two ideologies and regimes acquired a notoriety beyond academia. In 2012, the headline was utilised in another round of duels on Turkey’s Kemalist legacy between the ruling party and opposition in Turkey.¹²³ It appeared to prove everything the post-Kemalist research programme found wrong in Kemalism. A counter-argument was that the headline reflected not genuine ideological fascination but a *realpolitik* move or a ‘diplomatic nicety’ towards a Mediterranean ally of and potential threat to Turkey, as the former RPP leader,

shifted towards a ‘more objective’ understanding of fascism. ‘Giornalista Yunus Nadi’, 27 October 1939, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, I.56.3. Also see correspondence in *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, I.56.13 regarding the visa situation to be discussed below.

¹²¹ ‘N. 1723/677’, *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, I.56.9. In September 1932, another Italian diplomat, Jung, sought to avoid talking to the Turkish ambassador to Italy on the subject of Yunus Nadi and asked Fulvio Suvich, the Undersecretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to talk to the Turks instead. ‘Appunto per il S. E. Barone Aloisi’, 21.09.1932, *ASDMAE*, Gabinetto, b. 792 (Gab. 475), f. 3. Note that Koch’s objection did not stem from an overall prejudice against the Turks. In 1931, Koch was able to gleefully report on how, in terms of its social composition and with many admirers of Italian corporatism within its ranks, the RPP somewhat resembled the fascist party and how Turkey’s current regime stood in contrast with ‘the democratic and liberal principles on which Mustafa Kemal wanted to base the republic’. See ‘Koch to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’, 25 April 1931, *ASDMAE*, Rappresentanza d’Italia in Turchia, b. 300, 198, f. 3.

¹²² ‘Kemalist Türkiye’den Faşist İtalya’ya Selâm!’, *Cumhuriyet*, 22 May 1932, p. 1.

¹²³ “‘Hitler sevdalısını CHP tarihinde ara’”, *NTV*, 2012 <<https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/hitler-sevdalisini-chp-tarihinde-ara,1T-7T44GF0S9M9pious14w>> [accessed 6 January 2024].

Altan Öymen, argued.¹²⁴ However, the findings above show that rather than stemming from an ideological conviction of the fascist-like nature of Kemalism or reflecting merely new geopolitical realities and alliances, the headline was motivated directly by Yunus Nadi's expectations of financial gain. The diplomats felt this was the case, and this interpretation makes sense considering the shifts in *Cumhuriyet*'s policy line throughout the 1930s. Just as the headline appeared, Yunus Nadi was embarking on his trip to Italy. Simply put, the 'poster child' cannot be isolated from the personality and entanglements of Yunus Nadi. It does not support the view that Kemalists *tout court* had a favourable view of fascism or the alternative that it was all and merely about geopolitics. This famous historical case used so often in public debate now appears to be largely irrelevant to the question of Kemalist authoritarianism.¹²⁵ It also illustrates the futility of reifying ideologies: the motivations of Falih Rıfkı and Yunus Nadi in praising fascism in public were simply not the same.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ 'Başbakan Ayıp Ediyor', *Cumhuriyet*, 6 February 2013 <<https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/basbakan-ayip-ediyor-402200>> [accessed 4 July 2024].

¹²⁵ These bring to mind the various uses of history, and how interpretations of it may be affected by these. On the justifications for and utilisations of history at large see Donald Bloxham, *Why History: A History* (Oxford University Press, 2020). On the necessity of the moderns to do 'their own thinking' rather than having past figures supposedly speak for themselves, see the classic criticism by Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory*, 8.1 (1969), pp. 3–53.

¹²⁶ In the literature review, I have already discussed many cases of reification and steps away from an individualistic analysis. For merely one example from popular discussions, see the following piece from April 2012, where *T24*'s Doğan Akin expresses the view that Turkey had to come to terms with its past by facing the praises of fascism in the works of Yunus Nadi and Falih Rıfkı: Doğan Akin, 'Cumhuriyet'teki o sayfa: Kemalist Türkiye'den faşist İtalya'ya selam!', *T24*, 3 April 2012 <<https://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/dogan-akin/cumhuriyetteki-o-sayfa-kemalist-turkiyeden-fasist-italyaya-selam,4910>> [accessed 7 January 2024]. This does not mean one should not face Turkey's or Italy's past; the point is that this desire is a non-academic one, that it cannot be the *direct* result of any academic research since academics are no better positioned than the general public in terms of selecting political *ends*, and that if one chooses to come to terms with the past, then at least one should really understand

The funding debacle did not terminate contact between Rome and Yunus Nadi. In the spring of 1933, the regime officials asked Yunus Nadi to fire his Rome correspondent, Edoardo Arnold Kahn, whose political associations they deemed problematic.¹²⁷ Though disappointed, Yunus Nadi agreed to fire Kahn.¹²⁸ By 1936, things changed to such an extent that Yunus Nadi's papers joined the wider Turkish questioning of Italian intentions following the invasion of Abyssinia, resulting in him being denied a visa to visit Italy the same year due to his 'hostile attitude'.¹²⁹ *Cumhuriyet's* policy line shifted once more in the Second World War; it appears Yunus Nadi had no trouble promoting in line with his expectations of gain a certain host of authors or another in his outlets who sincerely advocated for given policies.

Yunus Nadi appears to have lacked a genuine interest in fascism, and in Turkey, the fascists never had the luxury of finding willing local fascistoids, as in the British Fascists of Sir Oswald Mosley or the Iron Guard in Romania.¹³⁰ Why Turkey lacked such movements is a profound question that can only be answered by calling attention to several factors. These include the unwillingness of even the most pro-fascist actors to see

the past. One cannot hope to really come to terms with the past while roughly thinking of Kemalism as though it were a single individual, or as if fascism of Edmondo Rossoni was the same as that of Alfredo Rocco. Also see Emilio Gentile's opposition to the erasure of differences between individuals and ideologies to assimilate all under a single category of 'fascism', which Gentile calls as '*gioco astorialogico*' [*a-historiology game*, with the a-historiology clearly evoking astrology with a reference to the pseudo-scientific qualities of the two enterprises] in Emilio Gentile, *Chi è Fascista?* (Laterza, 2019), p. 111.

¹²⁷ Apparently, Kahn was the brother of Maria Arnold, who was expelled from Italy in 1927 and charged with suspicious political convictions and attempted espionage.

¹²⁸ *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, i.56.2.

¹²⁹ See the correspondence in *ASDMAE*, DGSE, b. 964, I.56.13.

¹³⁰ This does not mean that the propaganda with fascistoid groups was always unproblematic. One constant problem from the mid-1930s onwards was the threat that these groups would be lured by the Nazis and conduct their propaganda rather than of Italian fascism's. On this, see Aristotle Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR: Italian Fascism, the "Myth of Rome" and the Pursuit of International Primacy', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 50.4-5 (2016), pp. 359-377 (p. 373).

fascism as something ultimately more than an example for their Kemalism, the cultural divide between Turkey and Europe which made it difficult for many Turks to directly sympathise with a 'foreign ideology', and, of course, the authoritarian state structure that did not tolerate independent political associations. The RPP had many chances to formally associate itself with fascism but refused to do so for a variety of reasons, from geopolitics to the reluctance to see fascism as a direct example for Turkey. In this context, a man as well-connected as Yunus Nadi could boost fascist propaganda, but only if he received what he wanted first. The crucial limitation was that once he was convinced that the arrangement no longer favoured him, he could turn to anti-fascist propaganda in a way Mosley simply could not.

One way to overcome these limitations was reaching the Turkish public directly. A marvel of interwar technology and a 'transnational' method of mass communication from the beginning, as Simon J. Potter put it, radio provided a particularly good option.¹³¹ The regime considerably expanded its propaganda offensive abroad in the 1930s, with *Radio Bari* attempting to undercut British domination in the Mediterranean.¹³² The radio reached out to the Arabs to highlight the 'achievements' of fascism in Italy, its 'benevolence' in Tripolitania, and the 'misdeeds' of the British against Muslims. While this Arabic propaganda of *Radio Bari*, along with other uses of radio propaganda in, for example, the Cold War or the Second World War, has received much attention in the literature, the Turkish

¹³¹ Simon J. Potter, 'Broadcasting in the Cause of Peace: Regulating International Radio Propaganda in Europe, 1921–1939', *The International History Review*, 45.6 (2023), pp. 843–864 (p. 846).

¹³² The means, content, and details of fascist propaganda aimed at the Arabic world through the Arabic service of Radio Bari are examined in depth by Nir Arielli. Nir Arielli, *Fascist Italy and the Middle East, 1933–40* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). On Italian attempts to link with the Arabs against the British Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini Il Duce: Lo Stato Totalitario, 1936–1940* (Einaudi, 1981), p. 396. For the Radio Bari and the British responses to it in the Middle East, see Callum A. MacDonald, 'Radio Bari: Italian Wireless Propaganda in the Middle East and British Countermeasures 1934–1938', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 13 (May 1977), pp. 195–207.

service remains ignored.¹³³ *Radio Bari's* Turkish services began on 10 March 1937.¹³⁴ The radio quickly recruited Turkish speakers, though problems also occurred: in 1940, it was found that one employee had an unmistakable Armenian accent, rendering him rather inopportune for propaganda in Turkey.¹³⁵ Another issue was that, according to Bartalini, who outlined his vision of a more effective Italian – but not fascist! – radio propaganda in Turkey in a confidential letter to the ambassador, the content of the programmes did not seem to fit well enough the tastes of the Turkish listener.¹³⁶

Despite such limitations, *Radio Bari* found eager ears in Turkey with its mixture of Turkish and Italian music, as well as news and programmes in Turkish. In June 1939, Turkish authorities in Izmir intercepted correspondence between a young student, Ali Paruğ, and the programmer of *Radio Bari*. Apparently, the *Radio Bari* was listened to in various Izmir coffeehouses, with citizens enjoying songs they could not hear in Turkish radios as the country underwent a Westernising music reform.¹³⁷ In late 1938, Paruğ asked 'A.', the radio's Turkish speaker, to expand their Turkish programmes, who responded that they needed to wait for the

¹³³ See only some examples from the recent literature: Mark D. Winek, 'Radio as a Tool of the State: Radio Moscow and the Early Cold War', *Comparative Humanities Review*, 3 (Spring, 2009), pp. 99-113; Maude Fagot, 'Radio Propaganda in France and in Germany during the Phoney War', *Revue historique*, 671.3 (2014), pp. 629-654.

¹³⁴ The first issue of the official *Radiocorriere* of the EIAR listed the Turkish service on its schedule for 9 March 1937. See 'Trasmissioni Speciali' [Special Transmissions], *Radio-corriere*, 10 (7-13 March 1937), p. 13.

¹³⁵ *ASDMAE*, AP 1931-45, Busta 319, f.?. I owe this reference to a study and cataloguing of the archive by Maria Gabriella Pasqualini.

¹³⁶ 'Ezio Bartalini to Ottavio de Peppo', 7 July 1942, *Archivio Storico Ivan Tognarini, Piombino*, Carte Ezio Bartalini, Epistolario, 170, b. 477, f. 1. 170 here refers to the number of the file containing this document in the catalogue of the archive. This reference has been added to the citation for the ease of researchers who may wish to consult the document themselves or double-check the references contained in this work. The same addition has been made to all other documents contained in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*.

¹³⁷ On the music reform and resistance to it by the popular masses and certain musicians, see Orhan Tekelioğlu, 'Modernizing Reforms and Turkish Music in the 1930s', *Turkish Studies*, 2:1 (2001), pp. 93-108.

construction of a new station for this.¹³⁸ The raiding of Paruğ's house and the language of the report show that, especially with the Second World War looming, Turkish authorities were particularly careful to tackle foreign propaganda in Turkey. With Italy perceived as a Mediterranean threat, Turkish authorities did their best to prevent not only films from being shown to Turkish citizens but also to the radio from finding an audience in Turkey.

Another option to propagate was using local fascistoid movements where available, though, as indicated above, for a range of reasons, this option never worked quite as efficiently in Turkey as in Europe. In the 1930s, the fascist regime launched or supported a number of universalist fascist groups, such as the CAUR, for propaganda abroad. A young universalist fascist, Guido Ferruccio Cabalzar, played a key role in linking 'fascists' abroad with the 'motherland' through his numerous trips. In 1935, CAUR planned to send Cabalzar on a tour of Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Turkey, with respective Italian embassies informed in advance.¹³⁹ The research of Marco Cuzzi has shown that Cabalzar and other CAUR members indeed visited all these countries except Turkey in 1935.¹⁴⁰ As both Italian and Turkish archives do not contain any indications of an actual visit by Cabalzar, it appears that he returned without visiting Turkey. Several factors may have played a role in this outcome. One possibility is an objection from the Turkish side to a visit by Cabalzar, perhaps communicated verbally to the embassy. Another, more likely factor might be the opposition of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We know that in certain contexts, such as Britain, the Ministry and embassies strived to limit the activities of the CAUR as they felt the organisation would harm rather than boost Italian interests. The Ministry disapproved of association with Mosley to the detriment of a wider engagement with

¹³⁸ 'İtalyan Radyosu'nun Türkçe yayınları', *BCA*, Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü, 30-10-0-0, 239-611-15.

¹³⁹ 'Undersecretary of the Press and Propaganda to the Embassy in Ankara', 17 October 1935, *ACS*, Minculpop, b. 247, f. 4.

¹⁴⁰ Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle Camicie Nere: I CAUR 1933-1939*, pp. 188-97, p. 263.

the British right.¹⁴¹ Perhaps they also wished to keep the CAUR out of Italo-Turkish relations, which were complex enough, with the Balkan Pact of 1934 and the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935 complicating matters between the governments. Finally, another factor was likely the lack of a grassroots fascistoid group. Cabalzar could meet individuals only as approved by the government, as the country lacked a direct counterpart to the British Fascists.

Italian authorities utilised these numerous instruments to conquer hearts in Turkey. As the utilisation of local fascistoids, a favourite method elsewhere, remained unavailable in Turkey, the regime prioritised other methods. These included indirect methods such as intermediaries like Yunus Nadi, distribution of books free of charge, and film screenings, as well as direct propaganda for the Turkish masses in the form of radio. As radio was much harder to track and silence compared to other methods, it offered much promise, though the advent of the Second World War both catapulted the sensitivities of the Turkish authorities and significantly altered the agenda of the fascist regime. Well before such a cataclysmic change in the context, however, other fascist actors and diplomats in Turkey developed a different view of Kemalism. The next section analyses their views to see how exactly the waves of universalist fascism found echoes in the wider fascist intelligentsia.

§ 5.3 Kemalism in the Mainstream Fascist Press and the Diplomats' Reports

The perennial micro-manager, Mussolini showed a keen interest in the Turkish crisis of 1930-31, which involved the shocks of the Great Depression, the Menemen incident, and the rise and fall of the Free Republican Party (FRP). His penchant for not leaving any reports on his desk unread and desire for ever more information meant that in August 1930, the day the FRP was officially founded, he wrote a letter to Ambassador Aloisi and asked him to provide information as the rise of the FRP 'greatly

¹⁴¹ Cuzzi, *L'internazionale delle Camicie Nere: I CAUR 1933-1939*, p. 173.

interested' him.¹⁴² Aloisi sent a number of reports over months, which provide us with a window to consider more mainstream right-wing Italian perceptions of Kemalism. Aloisi's first report came thirteen days after Mussolini's request. Aloisi thought the rise of the FRP revealed a rift between Ismet Pasha and Mustafa Kemal, who sought to blame the former for the country's socioeconomic woes. This could absolve the regime itself of criticisms, but Aloisi noted that what happened instead was that 'the masses (...) committed to the old ways' turned to criticising the Kemalist regime. If the Kemalist leadership could keep the FRP under control, the party could function to vent off popular unrest. However, the FRP's only significant difference in policy was the economy, which led to the 'absurd' situation of two parties clashing despite defending essentially the same programme.

Aloisi did not think highly of the intellectual capacities of the ordinary Turk in this first report. He felt that Turkey's 'xenophobic and intransigent nationalism' led to a 'crisis of spirits' as the new and old values clashed. The worsening of the economy, the 'Achilles' heel of every regime', exacerbated the situation and caused the circumstances surrounding the FRP's rise.¹⁴³ Nor did Aloisi think very highly of the Kemalist leadership. He observed that while Turkey's regime was clearly not liberal democratic, the leadership 'absurdly' aimed for such a regime. If Aloisi doubted Turkey could succeed in this effort, he also felt Turkey lacked the elements that made other dictatorial regimes, presumably like Italy, successful: 'the genius of the dictator, the ability to free oneself from interpreting situations in a militaristic light, flexibility'.¹⁴⁴

The rise of the FRP was 'absurd' and dangerous for Italian interests. Aloisi noted that figures within the RPP, such as Ismet Pasha, whom he

¹⁴² 'Mussolini to Aloisi', 12 August 1930, *ASDMAE*, Gabinetto, b. 792 (gab. 475), f. 1.

¹⁴³ Researchers largely agree that it was the economy that caused a significant portion of the masses, especially in Western Anatolia, to receive the FRP's rise positively. See Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building* (I. B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 255–56; Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: The Quest for Identity* (Oneworld, 2003), pp. 87–88.

¹⁴⁴ Note that the allusion to the 'militaristic light' is an allusion to the military background of most Kemalist leaders, which Aloisi perceived as a limitation of theirs.

perceived to be being pushed aside by Mustafa Kemal, and Tefvik Rüştü, were closer to Italy. Instead, Fethi Bey was the Turkish Ambassador in France until recently, which meant that he was well-connected with Parisian finance and diplomatic circles. That Fethi Bey saw Italian foreign policy towards Turkey as 'insincere' was further proof of French machinations behind the FRP. Though Aloisi did not expect a radical shift in Turkish foreign policy at this time, he felt the necessity to warn Mussolini, drawing from the omnipresent notions of the West and East: 'In these Oriental countries where the people lack political education, the men are ill-prepared [to govern], and where the collective conscience is unstable and variable, we need to be prepared for change'. Aloisi concluded his report with terms more familiar in the 1920s' literature. He observed a contrast between Kemalist desire to 'imitate' Europe and 'xenophobic nationalism'. This mentality kept Turkey from importing the European capital and expertise so sorely needed, all because the Turks developed a paranoia of European infiltration.¹⁴⁵

Aloisi continued his reports in mid-September and persisted with portraying Fethi Bey as too closely associated with the French and 'not original' in his speeches and programme. This report sought to go beyond the simplistic Ismet Pasha-Mustafa Kemal contrast identified in the first report by observing that the RPP consisted of two factions: the intransigents led by Ismet Pasha – who was closer to Italy, he insisted – against the 'dovish' wing of Mustafa Kemal. He reiterated the idea that the FRP was intended to vent frustration with the regime safely and blame Ismet Pasha and his faction, but he now more unequivocally defined the FRP experiment as a mistake. Specifically, Aloisi related his chat with Turkish regime opponents (*fuorusciti*¹⁴⁶, Aloisi called them) in Italian-controlled Rhodes and described their rejoicing at how the FRP could topple Kemalism. The Kemalist leadership realised the mistake in merely a month, and the 'dictatorship' returned. Aloisi bluntly expressed his incomprehension as to how Kemalists thought 'such backwards people' could make a

¹⁴⁵ 'Aloisi to Mussolini', 25 August 1930, *ASDMAE*, Gabinetto, b. 792 (gab. 475), f. 1.

¹⁴⁶ The term used for Italian anti-fascists who fled fascist Italy but in this context, referring to regime opponents who fled Turkey.

multiparty political system work. While this could give rise to the question of what he made of Italy's politics, he did not compare fascism and Kemalism. Aloisi made do with reiterating the clash between the reality of a 'dictatorial' regime in Turkey and the liberal democratic aspirations of the Kemalist leadership, who did not appreciate how, indoctrinated through centuries by Islam, that 'anti-progressive religion', the Turkish masses could not embrace democracy easily.¹⁴⁷

Aloisi sent another report in late September 1930, when he sensed that the country was taking a turn away from competitive party politics. The FRP was shut down in November 1930 and Aloisi already saw the path to the party's downfall, and the strengthening of opposition to liberal democracy. This report, too, continued the tendency of each subsequent report to provide finer detail, as Aloisi provided an overview of the RPP's history. In 1923, the RPP's central tenets were 'national [popular] sovereignty, republicanism [...], laicism, nationalism in foreign policy'. Aloisi quickly compared the RPP and fascism by noting how fascism sprung from within the Italian people while Kemalists were mostly ex-officers and bureaucrats. This did not stop individuals within the RPP to seek reforming the party in line with the Soviet and Italian examples, Aloisi observed: Ismet Pasha was emerging victorious from the FRP debacle, having defeated the 'French-backed' Fethi Bey, and his circle was showing greater interest in examples from abroad. Aloisi revealed that prominent Kemalists like Tevfik Rüşdü and Vasıf Bey [Çınar], the Turkish ambassador to Italy, told him fascism would be a prominent example for the RPP, and Tevfik Rüşdü would even like to study the PNF during his next visit to Italy. Moreover, he explained that both himself and the Russian ambassador 'at various occasions' talked to Ismet Pasha about the lacunae of the Kemalist regime, such as the RPP's 'total' inadequacy in propaganda, the lack of an 'organic backbone' rooted in the people, a 'defined hierarchy of leaders', and lack of direct contact with 'the people's spirit'. One problem with this new trend was the lack of Mustafa Kemal's

¹⁴⁷ 'Aloisi to Mussolini', 16 September 1930, *ASDMAE*, Gabinetto, b. 792 (gab. 475), f. 1.

support for their goals.¹⁴⁸ Though we cannot be certain about Mustafa Kemal's or İsmet Pasha's intentions, we may observe that from a simple and personalistic conflict between the two leaders of the regime, Aloisi reached an uncovering of the faction this thesis has dubbed 'the radical Kemalists' by late September. Not only did he hope that they would win, but he, along with the Soviet ambassador, also tried to show İsmet Pasha how he could succeed. Still, it must also be noted that Aloisi saw radical Kemalism as not a grassroots movement emerging from deeper roots within the elite but, ultimately, something to do with a rivalry between İsmet Pasha and Mustafa Kemal.

In a follow-up from December 1930, Aloisi explained to Mussolini that while the RPP was reshaping the economy according to the Soviet model, the Italian example was the inspiration for the party's reorganisation. However, despite the remaining popularity of these two examples, Aloisi observed that the initial enthusiasm for reform had already waned. He doubted whether the RPP would ever take the necessary steps towards better-organised authoritarianism.¹⁴⁹ Soon after Aloisi's report, the Menemen incident occurred, which appalled the Kemalists. In another, quickly penned report, Aloisi detailed the incident and occasionally shifted his attention away from the higher echelons of the leadership to quote Ali Naci [Karacan] and Falih Rifki's drawing from fascism as an example.¹⁵⁰ While Aloisi thought the Turkish authorities dealt with the revolt swiftly and efficiently, his conviction remained that Turkey's problem was 'adopting Occidental institutions through Oriental practices', as

¹⁴⁸ 'Aloisi to Mussolini', 30 September 1930, *ASDMAE*, Gabinetto, b. 792 (gab. 475), f. 1.

¹⁴⁹ 'Riorganizzazione del Partito del Popolo', 6 December 1930, *ASDMAE*, Rappresentanza d'Italia in Turchia, b. 300.198, f. 4.

¹⁵⁰ See various reports and correspondence in *ASDMAE*, Rappresentanza d'Italia in Turchia, b. 300.198, f. 2, in particular the following: 'Aloisi to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 30 January 1931, *ASDMAE*, Rappresentanza d'Italia in Turchia, b. 300.198, f. 2; 'Aloisi to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 13 February 1931, *ASDMAE*, Rappresentanza d'Italia in Turchia, b. 300.198, f. 2; 'Aloisi to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 14 February 1931, *ASDMAE*, Rappresentanza d'Italia in Turchia, b. 300.198, f. 2.

he put it in February 1931.¹⁵¹ He insisted that the RPP massively failed in propaganda, as a result of which, in rural Turkey, there were individuals who had not heard of the abolishment of the Sultanate and conceived of Mustafa Kemal as a 'new sultan'.¹⁵²

Aloisi's reports were original in their portrayal of the FRP as a French-backed enterprise, the Kemalist leadership as hopelessly infatuated with liberal democracy – a view shared by another Italian diplomat, Ottaviano Armando Koch¹⁵³ – and from September onwards, in identifying the rising trend of radical Kemalism within the RPP. Less original and more widespread among Turkish commentators at the time were depictions of Anatolian rural masses by Aloisi and, indeed, Italian consuls. The notion that the greatest failure of Kemalism was the lack of education for rural masses, from where the greatest threat to the regime would emerge, was most famously popularised by the *Kadroist* Yakup Kadri [Karaosmanoğlu] in his 1932 novel *Yaban* [translated into English as *Step-mother Earth*]. *Yaban* depicted Anatolians as haunted by ignorance, sickness, and, most controversially, indifference towards Kemalist reforms. While influence cannot be overruled, the embassy staff and the radical Kemalists seem to have converged on this observation independently. This convergent evolution explains why the question of a Mustafa Kemal-Ismet Pasha rivalry, which was never an issue for the staunchly pro-Mustafa Kemal and pro-Ismet radicals, was at the forefront of the embassy reports. Consul Fontana from Izmir even speculated that the 1930-31 crisis increased Ismet Pasha's prestige to the detriment of Mustafa Kemal.¹⁵⁴

A successor of Aloisi, Ambassador Carlo Galli, also wrote extensive reports on Kemalism, the RPP, and the relationship between fascism and

¹⁵¹ 'Aloisi to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 14 February 1931, *ASDMAE*, Rappresentanza d'Italia in Turchia, b. 300.198, f. 2.

¹⁵² 'Il tentativo reazionario di Menemen ed il problema religioso in Turchia', 19 February 1931, *ASDMAE*, Rappresentanza d'Italia in Turchia, b. 300.198, f. 2.

¹⁵³ 'Koch to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 25 April 1931, *ASDMAE*, Rappresentanza d'Italia in Turchia, b. 300.198, f. 3.

¹⁵⁴ 'Fontana to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 30 January 1931, *ASDMAE*, Rappresentanza d'Italia in Turchia, b. 300.198, f. 2.

Kemalism. In his analysis of the People's Houses (*Halkevleri*) and the Italian connection, with particular attention to the *Dopolavoro*, Erhan Berat Fındıklı has argued that Galli could shift and translate between the idioms of Kemalism and fascism easily.¹⁵⁵ This translation 'without significant loss of meaning and content' indicated the affinity of the two ideologies. Not only is this observation contradicted by Aloisi and Koch's remarks above, but they also do not offer the best interpretation of Galli's perceptions of Kemalism. A report penned by Galli in 1935 clearly shows how he thought fascism and Kemalism were ideologies that were similar in some senses and different in others. Reviewing the organisational structure of the RPP in April 1935, Galli noted that 'a parallel with the organisation of the PNF would be completely out of place'. One reason for this was how the ostensibly corresponding organs of the RPP and PNF, such as the general secretariats, had very different functions. Second and more topically, Galli observed how fascism manifestly rejected democracy while Kemalism, at least in theory, aspired to it.¹⁵⁶ Pace Fındıklı, then, the Italian diplomats in Turkey did not see Kemalism as a whole moving closer to fascism. Many identified factions within the RPP, hoped that the more pro-fascist ones would triumph but expressed frustration at what they saw as a pointless infatuation with liberal democracy in other portions of the Kemalist elite. Another difference was the way fascism was a natural product of the Italian spirit, while Kemalism was necessarily imposed by a cadre of ex-officers, as per Aloisi.

Interestingly, the diplomats appear to have been immune to the waves of universalist fascism at home, which may reflect the overall distance between the hard-nosed diplomats and revolutionaries like Gravelli. In the wider fascist literature, universalism became more popular, though it never became quite a central tenet of fascism as it was in *Antieuropa* or *Roma universa*. A prominent fascist intellectual, Margherita Sarfatti, wrote to *Gerarchia* in 1929 on three major 'laboratories of sociology'

¹⁵⁵ Erhan Berat Fındıklı, 'Tek Parti Döneminde Türkiye'de Halkevleri ve İtalya', *Ar-redamento*, 263 (December, 2012), pp. 100–111 (p. 108).

¹⁵⁶ 'Galli to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', *ACS*, Minculpop, Propaganda presso gli stati esteri, b. 247, f. 4.

worldwide: Italy, Russia, and Turkey.¹⁵⁷ In all of these countries Sarfatti saw the emergence of a single party shoving aside the relics of liberalism and parliamentarianism.¹⁵⁸ Sarfatti appreciated how, as Turkey was following Europe from a century ago, Kemalism was striving to close this temporal gap.¹⁵⁹ Despite finding Kemalism's goals valuable for Turkey, Sarfatti's point was demonstrating fascism's superiority: only fascism was an ideology of global importance.¹⁶⁰ Unlike *Antieuropa*, Sarfatti neither claimed that Kemalism was directly copying fascism nor did she portray Kemalist methods as proving fascism right; instead, she compared the two to show how fascism was better than even the other novel answers to liberal democratic failure.

In January 1931, Carlo Giglio wrote for *Gerarchia* on the disastrous end of competitive party politics in Turkey and how this proved 'Mustafa Kemal's belief that Turkish people are politically immature and require a strong government'.¹⁶¹ Giglio saw French and British meddling with Turkish affairs in the FRP debacle and praised the Kemalists' 'energetic response'.¹⁶² A more detailed look into Turkey appeared in *Gerarchia's* October 1932 issue, dedicated to fascism as a universal idea. The Turcologist Ettore Rossi reviewed the perceptions and influences of fascism in Turkey, citing the likes of Falih Rifki. With his exchange with Burhan Asaf fresh in mind, Rossi warned the reader that despite certain similarities, these did not amount to imitation and differences in national contexts meant one ideology could not be reduced to the other.¹⁶³ The article

¹⁵⁷ Note that in addition to his prominence as a leading female fascist intellectual, Sarfatti was also the lover of Mussolini, which provided her with a unique view of the workings of the fascist regime and foreign policy.

¹⁵⁸ Margherita G. Sarfatti, 'Il Fascismo Visto Dall'estero', *Gerarchia*, June 1929, pp. 436–43 (p. 438).

¹⁵⁹ Sarfatti, 'Il Fascismo Visto', p. 439.

¹⁶⁰ Sarfatti, 'Il Fascismo Visto', p. 443.

¹⁶¹ Carlo Giglio, 'Cronache del Mondo Musulmano', *Gerarchia*, January 1931, pp. 94–95 (p. 94).

¹⁶² Giglio, 'Cronache', p. 94.

¹⁶³ Ettore Rossi, 'Fascismo nel Vicino Oriente', *Gerarchia*, October 1932, pp. 843–47 (pp. 845–46).

by the author who used the penname of Fiolco D'Ancyra instead abounded with direct comparisons and resemblances between the two ideologies: the Battle of Sakarya during the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923) was the Turks' Battle of Piave with its symbolical significance.¹⁶⁴ If fascism was more global in its outlook and Kemalism more national, they were united by patriotism, renewal of the national spirit, and devotion to the leaders who emerged from within the people in times of danger.¹⁶⁵ The author was quite positive about the Kemalist efforts to 'absorb the latest progress of European civilisation', which, to his mind, included that 'renewal of the national spirit' introduced by fascism, the restorer of Europe.¹⁶⁶

Despite the professed universalism, *Gerarchia's* portrayal of Kemalism in the early to mid-1930s did not significantly change from the 1920s: Kemalism and fascism embraced comparable methods, had certain common enemies, but oriented themselves towards different ends deriving from national contexts. Some of these ends could well be found contrary to fascism, as Giuseppe De Lorenzo conveyed his thoughts on Kemalist 'anti-clericalism' in May 1931. Likening Mustafa Kemal to Lenin in their effort to 'eradicate religious sentiments among his people', De Lorenzo thought Bolshevism, Kemalism, and their spiritual forefather Jacobinism were doomed to fail in their 'anti-clerical' campaigns.¹⁶⁷ Interestingly, this piece was published at a time when there were no visible issues between the two governments. From 1935 onwards, *Gerarchia* authors tended to appreciate Turkish Westernisation and Kemalist authoritarianism as a useful method to achieve this goal, criticised Turkish foreign policy, and blamed Russian or British influence in drawing Turkey away from 'the friendship of Rome'.¹⁶⁸ The Balkan Pact was increasingly seen as an

¹⁶⁴ Fiolco D'Ancyra, 'Fascismo e Kemalismo', *Gerarchia*, October 1932, pp. 857–60 (p. 858).

¹⁶⁵ D'Ancyra, 'Fascismo e Kemalismo', p. 857.

¹⁶⁶ D'Ancyra, 'Fascismo e Kemalismo', p. 858.

¹⁶⁷ Giuseppe De Lorenzo, 'Asia ed Europa', *Gerarchia*, May 1931, pp. 359–81 (p. 380).

¹⁶⁸ For example, see Francesco Bertonelli, 'Turchia 1935', *Gerarchia*, June 1935, pp. 494–99; Federico Curato, 'A Due Anni dal Patto di Atene: Realizzazioni e Problemi dell'intesa

anti-Italian measure and shadowed the ‘miracle of Mustafa Kemal’ that was the Westernisation of Turkey and the strengthening of the Turkish state vis-à-vis Western powers.¹⁶⁹ Panunzio could still cite Turkey’s Kemalism and Atatürk, along with Pilsudski, Lenin, and Primo de Rivera *inter alia*, as a fellow example of dictatorship in 1936, but the heyday of identifying Kemalism and fascism seen in the youthful zenith of *Antieuropa* in the early 1930s was long gone.¹⁷⁰

Beyond the universalists and *Gerarchia*, important figures of Italian literature such as Corrado Alvaro and Antonio Baldini narrated their tours of Turkey. Alvaro’s travel notes, *Viaggio in Turchia*, were published in 1932, whereas Baldini’s *Diagonale 1930: Parigi-Ankara* first appeared in serial form in *Corriere della sera* in the early 1930s and was published as a book in 1943. Alvaro focused on everyday life in Turkey while occasionally sparing space for interpreting sociopolitical developments in the country. This everyday life focus may pertain to Alvaro being arguably less a fascist than a right-wing liberal posing as a fascist.¹⁷¹ He was among the signers of the ‘Manifest of Anti-Fascist Intellectuals’ authored by Benedetto Croce in 1925 and subsequently found himself at odds with the regime, only to be re-admitted into the world of mainstream publishing in the 1930s through the help of friends, including Sarfatti. This unique

Balkanica’, *Gerarchia*, March 1936, pp. 198–204; Leopoldo E. Checchi, ‘La Politica Navale: La Questione degli Stretti’, *Gerarchia*, August 1936, pp. 580–82. For ‘friendship of Rome and Turkey’s disbelief’, see Checchi, ‘La Politica Navale’, p. 582.

¹⁶⁹ Gustavo Pesenti, ‘Alcuni Aspetti del Nuovo Mondo’, *Gerarchia*, May 1935, pp. 389–395? (p. 395). Pesenti once more defined the deeds of Mustafa Kemal as ‘miraculous’ in August 1937 while singling him out amongst Ibn Saud and Reza Pehlevi as the ‘most original’ among the ‘Asiatic dictators’, a term he apparently used without any pejorative intent. See Gustavo Pesenti, ‘La Spada dell’Islam (Rileggendo M. Essad Bey)’, *Gerarchia*, August 1937, pp. 546–56 (p. 548).

¹⁷⁰ Sergio Panunzio, ‘Teoria Generale della Dittatura’, *Gerarchia*, April 1936, pp. 228–36.

¹⁷¹ For a counter point that he was too deeply entangled with fascism to then claim he had never really become a fascist, see this piece: Gaspare Giudice, ‘La Renitenza Di Alvaro: Un Anno a Berlino’, *Belfagor*, 45.3 (1990), pp. 249–66; Roberto Festorazzi, ‘Corrado Alvaro: “Per La Mia Fortuna Dissi No al Pci...”’, *Il Giornale*, 27 October 2022 <<https://www.ilgiornale.it/news/spettacoli/corrado-alvaro-mia-fortuna-dissi-no-pci-1565617.html>> [accessed 12 January 2024].

position of Alvaro vis-à-vis fascism makes him defy categorisation. Alvaro may have never absorbed fascism like, say, Sarfatti. However, he mainly wrote for a pro-fascist audience, and hence, connections and contrasts between his work and *Gerarchia* matter from a methodological point of view. Alvaro lived in Italy rather than choosing *fuoruscitismo*, and some of his contemporary works betray occasional association with fascism and some admiration for Mussolini. For these reasons, his work will be analysed here, with a particular focus on the aspects relevant to this study.

Much as most Italian observers, Alvaro observed a tension between the desire to 'Europeanise' and 'xenophobia' within Kemalism.¹⁷² Among things the Turks took from Europe was the Italian (as well as Soviet) economic policies, though Alvaro felt 'in a country that did not experience class warfare and had only recently developed the concept of property, this all looks rather primitive'.¹⁷³ Similarly, while Mustafa Kemal spoke in the name of all things modern, 'his methods are that of a primitive, a patriarch', Alvaro observed with his interpretation of Oriental despotism. However, he also appreciated that the Kemalists' was a titanic effort to close a gap of centuries between Turkey and Europe.¹⁷⁴ In Alvaro's view, Mustafa Kemal wished to establish a democratic system but saw the futility of this for the time being with the fall of the FRP.¹⁷⁵ Alvaro did not hesitate to ironise; in addition to myriad 'absurdities' he noted *in passim*, he found it predictable that a nation busily engaged in language reform (or, as Alvaro put it, 'who strive so hard to understand their own language') would have trouble correctly pronouncing his full name.¹⁷⁶ On the whole, however, he was positive about Kemalism. Against other 'European, chiefly French', observers, Alvaro called attention to the existence of multiple Europes. The French thought that Turkey was moving towards the present of Europe, 'inspired by a vague, democratic

¹⁷² Corrado Alvaro, *Viaggio in Turchia* (Treves-Treccani-Tumminelli, 1932), pp. 97–98.

¹⁷³ Alvaro, *Viaggio in Turchia*, p. 97.

¹⁷⁴ Alvaro, *Viaggio in Turchia*, pp. 122–123.

¹⁷⁵ Alvaro, *Viaggio in Turchia*, p. 184–185.

¹⁷⁶ Alvaro, *Viaggio in Turchia*, p. 129.

Europeanism'.¹⁷⁷ The Turks were indeed closing the gap but not through importing radio and parliamentary talks. The real secret lay in Turks' return to their origins, which was what 'countries that stayed alive after the war' did in Europe.¹⁷⁸ Alvaro apparently felt that despite 'absurdities', Kemalists could succeed in returning to their origins and joining Europe simultaneously. Alvaro's portrayal of Kemalism was decisively more optimistic than the typical fascist view of Kemalism in the early 1920s, and yet more detached than the likes of Gravelli.

Viaggio in Turchia followed through the travels of his author in Istanbul, Ankara, Bursa, and across the Mediterranean as a typical travelogue. Baldini's *Diagonale 1930: Parigi-Ankara* instead implicitly contrasted the author's travels in two sections dedicated to two different cities.¹⁷⁹ Baldini agreed with many other Italian observers that Kemalist Westernisation was erasing Turkey's 'Asiatic colour'.¹⁸⁰ To penetrate deeper into Turkish life, he enlisted the help of a Turkish doctor friend who visited the patients' homes accompanied by Baldini; letting foreigners in their homes remained a taboo for Turks, he observed.¹⁸¹ As for the furniture and design, however, not many 'Oriental' objects remained: the impact of Westernisation was clear.¹⁸² This Westernising trend was even more evident in female emancipation. While Turkish women could be taken to the police for unveiling in public a few years ago, the opposite was the case now.¹⁸³ Recognising the late Ottoman roots of the reform, Baldini attributed achievements in both female emancipation and the decisive Westernisation of society largely to Mustafa Kemal, who was 'the most radical among the Turkish feminists'.¹⁸⁴ Baldini appreciated these goals

¹⁷⁷ Alvaro, *Viaggio in Turchia*, p. 178.

¹⁷⁸ Alvaro, *Viaggio in Turchia*, p. 179.

¹⁷⁹ For a recent analysis of this book see Bülent Ayyıldız, 'Antonio Baldini: Genç Cumhuriyet'te Bir İtalyan Yazar', *Ankara Araştırmaları Dergisi - Journal of Ankara Studies*, 10.1 (2022), pp. 117–25, doi:10.5505/jas.2022.38039.

¹⁸⁰ Antonio Baldini, *Diagonale 1930: Parigi-Ankara* (Verona: Mondadori, 1943), p. 161.

¹⁸¹ Baldini, *Diagonale 1930*, p. 168.

¹⁸² Baldini, *Diagonale 1930*, p. 169.

¹⁸³ Baldini, *Diagonale 1930*, pp. 172–173.

¹⁸⁴ Baldini, *Diagonale 1930*, p. 174.

of Kemalism: from the almost incredulous prominence of the Western frock in Turkish cities to myriad monuments to Mustafa Kemal now adorning the Turkish landscape, he felt these challenges to the old custom and religion were successfully, if gradually and somewhat amusingly, ‘de-Orientalising’ (*disorientalizzare*) Turkey.¹⁸⁵

More oriented towards a political and military history of the young Turkish republic was Fernando Perrone di San Martino’s 1930 work *Un dittatore asiatico: Mustafa Kemal il Vittorioso* [An Asiatic Dictator: Mustafa Kemal the Victorious]. Though the author referred to Mustafa Kemal as an ‘Asiatic dictator’ – even worse than being a regular dictator in the eyes of most Kemalists – he did not intend any insult. The book lavishly praised Mustafa Kemal’s ability as a leader, a *condottiere*. The author dedicated his work to the Sovereign Military Order of Malta for their efforts to save Christians from Anatolia after the First World War, which reflects his conservative fascist stance and explains his lengthy excursus on the plight of Anatolian Christians. Describing the capture of Maraş by Turkish forces in 1920, Perrone di San Martino described Turkish tactics as mired at massacring local Christians to terrify and force the French to retreat.¹⁸⁶ With ‘incapable’ democratic politicians in charge, France utterly failed in its duty to protect Eastern Christians and fled, leading to a repeating of Maraş in Cilicia.¹⁸⁷ This betrayal was crowned by the Turco-French agreement of 1921.¹⁸⁸ The devoutly Christian author also attributed the Great Fire of Izmir to the Turks, who desired to eradicate the Christian heritage of the city.¹⁸⁹ Nor did Perrone di San Martino think the Turks had a flattering view of the West: at least during the Turkish War of Independence, he argued, the Turks wished to ‘remain completely Asiatic’ and ‘treat Europe the same way the Turks of the 15th century did’.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁵ Baldini, *Diagonale 1930*, pp. 186-187, 196.

¹⁸⁶ F. Perrone di San Martino, *Un Dittatore Asiatico: Mustafa Kemal Il Vittorioso* (Casa Editrice F. Casanova & C. di E. Rocco, 1930), p. 64, 101.

¹⁸⁷ Perrone di San Martino, *Un Dittatore Asiatico*, p. 70, p. 101.

¹⁸⁸ Perrone di San Martino, *Un Dittatore Asiatico*, p. 115.

¹⁸⁹ Perrone di San Martino, *Un Dittatore Asiatico*, pp. 207-208.

¹⁹⁰ Perrone di San Martino, *Un Dittatore Asiatico*, p. 104.

While such remarks were more common in the 1920s, Perrone di San Martino radically departed from this tradition with his clear appreciation of Kemalist authoritarianism. He found the Turkish War of Independence 'admirable from a military perspective and also for the faith underlying it'.¹⁹¹ The Lausanne Treaty of 1923 was the kneeling down of all of Europe before the victorious Turks.¹⁹² His work did not dwell on the social reforms of Kemalism, which, as a conservative fascist, he may have found exaggerated or perhaps doomed to fail. Appreciation of Kemalist power and decisiveness was mixed with apprehension for how the Kemalists might perceive Christian Europe.

P. Di Roccalta's *Angora e Kemal Pascià*, published in 1932, was instead more of a chronicle of political life in Turkey from the end of the War of Independence to the aftermath of the 1930-31 crisis. The book overviewed key turning points in Turkish politics, observing how the country entered a period of 'normalisation' from 1927 onwards, as the opposition reckoned their inability to topple Kemalism.¹⁹³ Di Roccalta attributed the rise of the FRP in 1930 to Mustafa Kemal's desire to wrestle back the excessive autonomy he had granted to Fevzi Pasha [Çakmak] in the army and Ismet Pasha in the government.¹⁹⁴ Much like Ambassador Aloisi, Di Roccalta was far from sympathetic to the FRP that was 'welcomed by Paris' and worked to intensify ties with the French to the detriment of Italy.¹⁹⁵ Suddenly, the Menemen incident occurred, and Ismet Pasha, now surrounded by 'energetic' collaborators like Recep Bey [Peker], was seen to still enjoy Mustafa Kemal's trust.¹⁹⁶ Di Roccalta also converged with the diplomats' opinion vis-à-vis their identification of liberal democracy as the ultimate goal of the Kemalists, in a distant future. The reason the FRP emerged was the Kemalists' desire for 'democracy', who formed a parliament consisting of individuals from various social classes to freely criticise the

¹⁹¹ Perrone di San Martino, *Un Dittatore Asiatico*, p. 216.

¹⁹² Perrone di San Martino, *Un Dittatore Asiatico*, p. 214.

¹⁹³ P. Di Roccalta, *Angora e Kemal Pascia* (A. R. E., 1932), p. 53.

¹⁹⁴ Di Roccalta, *Angora e Kemal Pascia*, p. 58.

¹⁹⁵ Di Roccalta, *Angora e Kemal Pascia*, p. 87.

¹⁹⁶ Di Roccalta, *Angora e Kemal Pascia*, p. 60, p. 62.

government.¹⁹⁷ Di Roccalta saw this democratising desire belied by the contemporary 'dictatorial' regime.

As for the other goals of the Kemalists, Di Roccalta observed how Kemalists were not quite as anti-clerical as the Bolsheviks, even though they did not tolerate the influence of religion on public life. A fundamental political fact was how religion mattered to 'every dictatorial government'. 'The fatalist Turk' knew nothing of dictatorship, parliaments or liberty but would gladly march to his death for religion.¹⁹⁸ The Kemalists actually knew this before, as Mustafa Kemal's rhetoric during the Turkish War of Independence clearly attested: 'In a religious country like Turkey', any other rhetoric would lead to failure.¹⁹⁹ In contrast with the wider enthusiasm for universalist fascism, it did not even occur to Di Roccalta to liken or even contrast the two ideologies. Where his work fitted with trends of the 1930s was the observation of a democratising intent contradicted by the dictatorial regime and the conservative fascist tendency of doubting the sustainability or desirability of Kemalism's policies vis-à-vis religion. In the next section, we will turn to anti-fascist interpretations of Kemalism to see how, quite to the contrary, it was the ends and not dictatorial means of Kemalism that gained most attention and appreciation among Italian anti-fascists.

§ 5.4 'A Leader Like Kemal': Anti-fascist Perceptions of Kemalism

The zenith of the fascist *consenso*, popular consent, the 1930s were challenging for anti-fascists. The penetration of the fascists into sectors of Italian society traditionally more receptive to socialism reached such proportions that, by 1936, the communist leader Palmiro Togliatti

¹⁹⁷ Di Roccalta, *Angora e Kemal Pascia*, p. 63.

¹⁹⁸ Di Roccalta, *Angora e Kemal Pascia*, p. 146.

¹⁹⁹ Di Roccalta, *Angora e Kemal Pascia*, p. 136.

appealed to 'our brothers in black shirts' to not heed to the lies of fascism.²⁰⁰ The solidification of the regime and the work of the secret police, *OVRA*, pushed regime opponents abroad, where the *fuorusciti* were not left alone. Some had to change addresses while the unluckier ones like the Rosselli brothers suffered assassination attempts. The 'social-fascism' policy of the Comintern until the second half of the 1930s did not help the anti-fascist cause either, with socialists and communists spending as much energy against one another as against the fascists.

Divided between the factions of Italian socialism and far from the immense popularity of a decade ago, *Avanti!* continued to be the main voice of Italian socialism. A review of international politics published in December 1934 illustrates how socialists continued to perceive Turkey first and foremost as a 'loyal ally' of the USSR despite the Turco-Italian alliance. The author saw Turkey as a leading anti-revisionist power that would strengthen regional and defence-oriented alliances against revisionism, together with the USSR.²⁰¹ It was telling that this piece was published on *Il nuovo Avanti!*, which was the iteration of *Avanti!* directed by Pietro Nenni who advocated for a wider anti-fascist union that would include the communists: the observation of the Soviet alliance was effectively a praise of Turkey.²⁰² Besides this continuity with the 1920s, *Avanti!* continued to wield the example of Kemalism against the fascists. Observing the Pope's relative silence over the Italian invasion of Abyssinia and its aftershocks, the *Avanti!* commentator felt this gave Mussolini a chance to get rid of the Vatican. Otherwise, the regime would make an 'unforgivable mistake' by not treating the Catholic leadership 'the way Kemal treated the Caliphate'.²⁰³ This portrayal of Kemalism as more daring than

²⁰⁰ On the '*appello ai fratelli in camicie nere*' and Togliatti's other attempts to reach out to non-communist groups such as the Catholics, see Paolo Alatri, 'Il partito comunista dall'azione clandestina alla lotta partigiana' in *La Resistenza Italiana: Dall'opposizione al fascismo alla lotta popolare* (Mondadori, 1975), pp. 65-102 (p. 88).

²⁰¹ '1934: Bilancio Carico Partite Aperte', *Il Nuovo Avanti!*, 22 December 1934, p. 1.

²⁰² On Nenni, see Marco Gervasoni, 'Pietro Nenni', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 78 (2013). < [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-nenni_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-nenni_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) > [Accessed 4 July 2024].

²⁰³ 'Le Sanzioni e i Tentativi Di Salvataggio', *Avanti!*, 20 October 1935, p. 3.

fascism, from the allusions to Mustafa Kemal's military background to Kemalist secularism, represents another line of continuity in Italian socialist perceptions of Kemalism in the 1920s and 1930s.

Interestingly, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk became an example to illustrate fascist inadequacies as well as socialist shortcomings. *Avanti!*'s coverage of Atatürk's death in late 1938 consisted of a lengthy appraisal of his career. 'The president, founder, and in fact, the dictator' of the Turkish republic was exceptional. Among all post-war dictatorships, 'Kemal's was the only one that had aspects worthy of appreciation'. This was because Atatürk 'wished to modernise [*modernizzare*]' Turkey, which 'had remained centuries behind Western civilisation [*civiltà occidentale*]'. Achieving this was only possible through much energy and a mentality that did not care for half-measures and subtleties. The author concluded that 'if only his [Atatürk's] energy was shared by certain socialist leaders when there was time to do it', Italian, or perhaps European socialism could be salvaged.²⁰⁴ Beyond the usual appreciation of the modernising thrust of Kemalism among left-wing anti-fascists, therefore, the author of this piece not only recognised 'dictatorship' as temporarily necessary for Turkey but favourably compared the decisive manner in which the Kemalists pushed for reform with the perceived hesitations of socialist leaders.

We do not know for certain who the author of this eulogy was, but it is noteworthy that it appeared on the Parisian edition of *Avanti!*, directed by Angelica Balabanoff. Born to a wealthy Ukrainian Jewish family in the Russian Empire, Balabanoff studied in Brussels and embraced socialism in the 1890s. Balabanoff lived in Italy from 1897 until fascism's rise to power. An influential figure of Italian socialism, Balabanoff observed the 'betrayal' of socialism by her former friend Mussolini, sided with the *massimalisti* until the late 1930s, and opposed the reformist socialism and the Stalinism of the *Partito comunista italiano* alike.²⁰⁵ Under her direction, *Avanti!* criticised the 'Stalinist press', including Nenni's *Il nuovo Avanti!*

²⁰⁴ 'Gli Avvenimenti', *Avanti!*, 11 December 1938, p. 1.

²⁰⁵ On Balabanoff, see Francesco M. Biscione, 'Angelica Balabanoff', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 34 (1988) <[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/angelica-balabanoff_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/angelica-balabanoff_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)> [Accessed 4 July 2024].

for their stance in the Spanish Civil War.²⁰⁶ Perhaps due to perceived differences between Turkey on the one hand and Russia and Europe on the other, criticism of Stalinism in Balabanoff did not evolve into critiques of Kemalism.

Such positive portrayals of Kemalism were even more prominent and frequent in *Giustizia e Libertà*. A clandestine journal published in France, *Giustizia e Libertà* was named after the anti-fascist movement launched under the same name in 1929 by Carlo Rosselli, Emilio Lussu, Alberto Tarchiani, and Fausto Nitti, a relative of the former PM of Italy, Francesco Saverio Nitti. Rosselli was the leader of the movement from 1929 to 1937, under whom *Giustizia e Libertà* upheld a liberal left-wing alternative to fascism and communism. Rosselli opposed socialists with his refusal of a Soviet-like regime in Italy and liberals like Benedetto Croce with his advocacy for broader social reform rather than a mere 'return to the pre-fascist Italy' with its liberal traditions.²⁰⁷ The movement made a name for itself with its daring underground activities in Italy and its original ideology. When an agreement with the *Partito socialista italiano* in 1931 and a congress in 1934 saw different strands of Italian anti-fascism reconcile their differences to concentrate on the greater struggle against fascism – now bolstered by the Comintern's abandonment of the 'social fascism' theory and embracing of the popular fronts – *Giustizia e Libertà* assumed responsibility of anti-fascist propaganda in Italy on behalf of all anti-fascist groups.²⁰⁸ Rosselli and his comrades rose up to fascism's global challenge, regularly countering universalist fascist claims and joining the International Brigades to fight in Spain against fascists. This intense anti-fascist activity caught the attention of fascist security agencies, resulting in an assassination in 1937 in France that claimed the lives of Carlo

²⁰⁶ 'Per la liberazione dei nostri compagni del P.O.U.M.', *Avanti!*, 11 December 1938, pp. 1-2.

²⁰⁷ 'Giustizia e Libertà', *Dizionario di Storia*, 2010. <[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giustizia-e-liberta_\(Dizionario-di-Storia\)/>](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giustizia-e-liberta_(Dizionario-di-Storia)/>) [Accessed 4 July 2024].

²⁰⁸ Alexander De Grand, "'To Learn Nothing and to Forget Nothing": Italian Socialism and the Experience of Exile Politics, 1935-1945', *Contemporary European History*, 14.4 (2005), pp. 539-58 (p. 543).

Rosselli and his brother, Nelio.²⁰⁹ Emilio Lussu succeeded Rosselli as the leader of the movement, to which he gave a more recognisably socialist tone.²¹⁰

The journal *Giustizia e Libertà* began publications in May 1934 in France. The recent cooling of the state-level relations between Italy and Turkey was welcomed by the journal's contributors, who, like *Avanti!*, portrayed Kemalism as an anti-revisionist force against fascist expansionism. In June 1934, the author with the penname of Atar reported how the Turks were alarmed by Mussolini's 'verbal expansionism' towards Asia and Africa. The result was Turkish attempts to re-militarise the Turkish Straits, which proved that the Turks trusted the Soviets and not Italian fascists. This was deemed a clear defeat for Italian foreign policy.²¹¹ Atar referred to Turkey as a 'new and not irrelevant appendix to the Little Entente', an anti-revisionist bloc, in January 1935.²¹² Other publications in 1935 and 1936 similarly underlined the anti-fascist function of Turkish attempts to establish direct control over the Straits, the Balkan Pact of 1934, and the 'blow' to fascist foreign policy that was the Montreux Conference of 1936 that granted the Turks greater control over the Straits.²¹³ The commentator of the Montreux Conference observed that the Turks had initially tried the 'fascist-Nazi' method of forcing the hands of the international community with a *fait accompli*, but thankfully, they ultimately reverted to the path of law.²¹⁴ A succinct summary of the Kemalist foreign policy as seen by *Giustizia e Libertà* between 1934 and 1938 is provided by the journal itself in July 1935: 'It is known that Turkey, (...)

²⁰⁹ Mauro Moretti, 'Carlo Rosselli', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 88 (2017) <[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/carlo-rosselli_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/carlo-rosselli_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) [Accessed 4 July 2024].

²¹⁰ Giuseppe Sircana, 'Emilio Lussu', *Dizionario Biografico Degli Italiani* (2006) <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/emilio-lussu_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/> [accessed 12 January 2024].

²¹¹ Atar, 'Il "duce" e i Dardanelli', *Giustizia e Libertà*, 8 June 1934, p. 3.

²¹² Atar, 'Nel Caos Mondiale', *Giustizia e Libertà*, 11 January 1935, p. 1.

²¹³ 'Fra i Due Mondi', *Giustizia e Libertà*, 22 March 1935, p. 2. 'Fra i Due Mondi', *Giustizia e Libertà*, 26 June 1936, p. 1.

²¹⁴ 'Fra i Due Mondi', *Giustizia e Libertà*, 26 June 1936, p. 1.

protected by the USSR, represented a tough obstacle before fascist expansion in the Balkans and the East.’²¹⁵

Despite their criticisms of Stalinism and rejection of Bolshevism in Italy, *Giustizia e Libertà*, too, largely saw dictatorship as an instrument that could be necessary in certain settings. It was simply that Italy, or the wider Europe, was not one such context. Contributors to the journal were attentive to the ideological differences between different ‘dictatorships’. Against Drieu de la Rochelle’s fusion of fascism and socialism, a January 1935 essay in French argued that there was little sense in lumping together leaders as diverse as ‘Kemal, Roosevelt, Pilsudski, Hitler’, *inter alia*, under the header of totalitarianism.²¹⁶ That Kemalism exercised a dictatorship was clear to the authors. Together with the USSR, Turkey was one of the ‘dictatorships of the East’.²¹⁷ As the author who went by the pen-name of Tirreno – this was probably Emilio Lussu – granted, various single-party regimes could even have certain governmental techniques in common.²¹⁸ Nevertheless, ideological content came first. Against Francesco Saverio Nitti’s comments on how Nazism, fascism and Bolshevism were all the same, a *Giustizia e Libertà* contributor defended Bolshevism in 1937 – with the theory of social-fascism bygone, the USSR could be defended in specific settings like this. Though the Soviet regime caused ‘many horrors and not few instances of madness’, the Russian revolution ‘represented a step forward for humanity’, whereas fascism was nothing but ‘a step backwards’. The Soviet regime had to be understood in its unique, Russian sociohistorical context. Unfit for Europe, it could be a necessary evil for Russia. Another example for the author was Kemalist Turkey. Turkish dictatorship was nothing short of other single-party regimes, Tirreno observed, but ‘nobody could suppose that Atatürk is the equivalent of the Sultan’.²¹⁹ There was no point in detaching regimes from

²¹⁵ ‘Fra i Due Mondi’, *Giustizia e Libertà*, 12 July 1935, p. 3.

²¹⁶ ‘M. Drieu La Rochelle et Le Socialisme Fasciste’, *Giustizia e Libertà*, 25 January 1935, p. 4.

²¹⁷ ‘Fra i Due Mondi’, *Giustizia e Libertà*, 29 January 1937, p. 2.

²¹⁸ For the identification of Tirreno as Lussu, see Santi Fedele, ‘Lo “Schema di Programma” di “Giustizia e Libertà” del 1932’, *Belfagor*, 29.4 (1974), pp. 437–54 (p. 446).

²¹⁹ Tirreno, ‘Verità Impopolari’, *Giustizia e Libertà*, 19 August 1938, p. 3.

their ideological contents and goals to lump them together according to their governmental methods.

Giustizia e Libertà covered Atatürk's death with two pieces published in November 1938. 'Il Cronista' [Chronicler] wrote that 'the first dictator has died' and quickly explained how this seemingly provocative statement did not mean to convey hope that other dictators shall soon follow suit. It was intended descriptively: Atatürk really was the 'first dictator' of the post-war era, chronologically speaking. Once again prioritising ends over means, the author wrote how 'the question of dictatorship cannot be posed in abstract terms, as some of our friends still believe'. Every dictatorship had to be understood in its context, with particular attention to its people and their 'level of civilisation'. The author reviewed several Kemalist successes, from the annexation of Alexandretta or the re-arming of the Straits in the Montreux Conference of 1936 to domestic reform. It was doubtful that others could achieve through less 'dictatorial' methods what Atatürk was able to achieve, he observed. Nevertheless, he felt the necessity to remind how, in the early days of the fascist government, certain fascist authors referred to the laws and measures of the supposedly 'liberal democratic' Turkey to silence their critics. Unless they paid attention to their remarks, the journalists were threatened, Italy would adopt a law regulating the press like that of Turkey.²²⁰ Kemalism, then, suited the sociohistorical conditions of Turkey but not Italy.

The second piece was penned by Tirreno [Lussu] and was a detailed appraisal of Kemalism and Atatürk, 'an exceptional man'. Tirreno complained how, from a strictly liberal-democratic perspective, Atatürk could appear merely as an 'implacable dictator'. There were arguments in favour of such a perspective, such as how Atatürk established a 'totalitarian, mostly personal dictatorship' following the fall of the liberal Fethi

²²⁰ Il cronista, 'Un Dittatore Morto e Due Vivi', *Giustizia e Libertà*, 18 November 1938, p. 2. As an interesting contrast and an illustration of how actors' self-perceptions may vary significantly from how they are perceived by others, note that Falih Rıfkı called for the Turkish government to adopt a law similar to the one restricting the freedom of press in Italy, whereas according to 'Il cronista', it was Mussolini who just a couple of years ago pointed to Turkey as his example in curtailing the freedom of press.

Bey government in 1925. The liberal opponents of the regime were treated in the same way as the revolting Kurds, with 'terror reigning supreme'. However, Tirreno noted that the opposition was far from blameless. If Kemalism was far from democratic in practice, the opposition parties proved to attract 'advocates of illiteracy, Islamism, and harems'.

With this, Tirreno began to counter this liberal-democratic perspective, noting how similar criticism was levelled against the Jacobins and the Bolsheviks before. In the typical fashion of *Giustizia e Libertà*, he proposed to place Kemalism in its historical context. Atatürk resuscitated the 'depleted' Turkish nation and 'modern Turkey began' with him. The rupture that separated Turkey from the lethargic Islamic world was so radical as to merit comparison with that between Renaissance and Medieval Europe. Tirreno summarised the achievements of Atatürk: Atatürk was a general 'who knew of no defeat'; in comparison, the dictators of the post-war era 'that pose as if they were great generals look like generals from operettas'. Tirreno found the reforms in the cultural and political spheres even more important than military success. Whereas Islamic civilisation knew only monarchical dynasties as a form of government, 'Kemal, a republican', overthrew the dynasty and replaced it with a republic. While nobody could dare to touch the Caliphate before him, he went on to abolish it. He completed his secularising work with the abolition of polygamy, harems, and oaths taken in the name of Allah, replacing the latter with the oaths of honour.

Tirreno continued his arguments against a liberal-democratic, Eurocentric mentality by noting how misplaced the laughter at Kemalist sartorial reforms was. These were not futile efforts to imitate the West externally: 'There is more revolutionary quality to the abolishment of the fez and veil than to a thousand constitutions for racial and corporative states'. Such reforms made Atatürk an 'iconoclast'. Tirreno even felt that through its serving as an example for the non-West with such reforms, Kemalism had a global import. A particularly iconoclastic reform was the complete Westernisation of the legal sphere. In lament for Italy's fate, Tirreno observed how Turkey imported the liberal Italy's penal code, the *Codice Zanardelli*, only for the latter to be found too soft and replaced in

fascist Italy. With this, Tirreno referred to Turkey's adoption of the pre-fascist penal code of Italy, named after its creator, ex-PM and member of the historical left, Giuseppe Zanardelli. The penal code was adopted by Turkey in 1926, while fascist Italy replaced it with another penal code crafted by Alfredo Rocco in 1930, with elements of the latter incorporated into the Turkish law later. Legislation such as the civil code and Zanardelli's penal code convinced Tirreno that sooner or later, the dictatorship would come to an end in Turkey. Coming generations would further the work of the Kemalists. As a socialist, he felt it necessary to end this optimistic picture with a caveat: beyond the abolishment of the *aşar* tax on peasantry, Kemalist reforms in the socioeconomic sphere lagged behind the cultural and political reforms. Tirreno argued that it was these profound social woes and not obsession with the *fez* and veil that led the Turkish masses to support the PRP in 1930. Once the land was more equally distributed, leaving no peasants without land, and the exploitation of the proletariat ended, the workers and peasants would find organic representation within the state. Then, the Turkish Republic would be 'democratic in form and substance'.²²¹

This eulogy for Atatürk by *Giustizia e Libertà* perfectly encapsulates the dominant left-wing Italian perceptions of Kemalism in the 1930s. While noting the authoritarian state structure of Turkey, these anti-fascists focused more on the ends of Kemalism than its authoritarianism, which they explained away as a necessary evil due to the temporal gap between Turkey and Europe. The ends of Kemalism such as secularisation, female emancipation, or the place attributed to sciences in the Kemalist *weltanschauung* were all aspects that brought Kemalism closer to anti-fascism than fascism. A significant factor underlying these perceptions was the way anti-fascists defined Europe or the West as being built on such tenets as secularism and equality. Where conservative fascists saw danger or exaggeration, anti-fascists saw clear-minded attempts to join Europe. Conversely, authoritarianism was a necessary evil in Turkey for anti-fascists, while it was part and parcel of Westernisation following

²²¹ Tirreno, 'Kemal Atatürk', *Giustizia e Libertà*, 18 November 1938, p. 3.

the heed of Rome, of the new West, for some, especially the universalist fascists. Where left-wing anti-fascism found Kemalism lacking was in socioeconomic reform, in contrast with fascist worries of moral vacuity or extreme liberality in society.

Compared to left-wing anti-fascism, liberal and conservative opponents of fascism did not find Kemalism quite as theoretically interesting, perhaps because the urge to distinguish between various ‘dictatorships’ was not as pressing for them. Other potential factors include a relative lack of liberal clandestine activity; underground resistance was something to which the personalities of the liberals did not lend itself as easily. The death of key liberal anti-fascists such as Giovanni Amendola in 1924 and Piero Gobetti in 1927 also affected the movement. The great liberal Benedetto Croce was more given to philosophical contemplation than to facts on the ground in Turkey. Though his ‘education’ or ‘raising’ of a new generation of anti-fascists means Croce had an indirect role in this study, research into his voluminous work did not yield much result relevant in this context.²²² The leading figure of Catholic opposition to fascism and the leader of the *Partito popolare italiano*, Luigi Sturzo, only mentioned Turkey *in passim* as a ‘totalitarian’ regime in his work on sociology and modern politics.²²³ The infinitely knowledgeable Gaetano Mosca referred to facts and observations about Ottoman and Turkish history

²²² Note that negative results such as these do not mean the research itself was futile or did not yield any results *per se*. Reporting negative results can be as important as the positive ones, since evidence of the non-existence of a given object in a given sample is still the evidence of something and can support and undermine given theories. In most sciences, the reluctance of authors or editors to shy away from publishing negative results leads to various types of reporting and publication bias, affecting the quality of research and accuracy of our theories. For an accessible theoretical overview of this issue, see Fiona Fidler and John Wilcox, ‘Reproducibility of Scientific Results’, ed. by Edward N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2021) <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2021/entries/scientific-reproducibility/>> [accessed 12 January 2024].

²²³ Luigi Sturzo, *Essai de Sociologie*, trans. by Juliette Bertrand (Librairie Bloud & Gay, 1935), p. 228; Luigi Sturzo, *Church and State*, trans. by Barbara Barclay Carter (Longmans, Green and Co., 1939), p. 482; Luigi Sturzo, *Politics and Morality*, trans. by Barbara Barclay Carter (Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1938).

occasionally, though he too did not dwell on these subjects more than his theories required.²²⁴ Likewise, Gaetano Salvemini did not offer detailed appraisals of Kemalism.²²⁵

An important exception was Carlo Sforza (1872-1952), the liberal thinker and ex-minister of Foreign Affairs. His background as a diplomat in Turkey likely had a role in this difference, as Sforza served in Istanbul twice, in 1908-9 and then after the Great War, as the Italian High Commissioner. It was in Istanbul that Sforza's opposition to the Greek invasion of Izmir helped him establish contact with a range of Turkish figures, including Mustafa Kemal. Though he served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs later, his liberal thoughts forced him to become a *fuoruscito* from 1926. In addition to remaining an opponent of fascism, Sforza extensively wrote about global politics which earned him the status of a prominent author of the era. In his *Dictateurs et Dictatures de l'Après-Guerre* [Dictators and Dictatorships of the Post-War] from 1931, Sforza dedicated a chapter to Kemalism. In a way reminiscent of the left-wing coverage of Kemalism, Sforza felt that Mustafa Kemal was the only 'post-war dictator that has had real success'. Interestingly, Sforza saw the triumphs of Turkey in the international arena as this 'real success' of Kemalism, rather than prioritising the domestic reform. Both in *Dictateurs et Dictatures* and in a range of other works in the following decade, Sforza insisted that the Europeans paid excessive attention to immediately visible aspects of Turkish reform such as the alphabet reform.²²⁶ The true significance of

²²⁴ Gaetano Mosca, *Scritti Politici*, ed. by Giorgia Sola (Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1982), vol. 1: Teorica dei governi e governo parlamentare and vol. 2: Elementi di scienza politica; Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, trans. by Hannah D. Kahn (McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1939).

²²⁵ Gaetano Salvemini, *Under the Axe of Fascism* (Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1936); Gaetano Salvemini, *Prelude to World War II* (Doubleday & Company, 1954); Gaetano Salvemini, *Le Origini del Fascismo in Italia: Lezioni di Harvard*, ed. by Roberto Vivarelli (Feltrinelli Editore, 1966); Gaetano Salvemini, *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy* (Howard Fertig, 1967); 'Non Mollare' (1925), ed. Mimmo Franzinelli (Bollati Boringhieri, 2005).

²²⁶ Le Comte Sforza, *Dictateurs et Dictatures de l'Après-Guerre* (Gallimard, 1931), pp. 217-18; Count Carlo Sforza, *Contemporary Italy: Its Intellectual and Moral Origins*, trans. by

Kemalism was its 'renunciation' of old imperialism, which was the reason behind the Kemalist decision to reject a revived Ottoman imperialism. The Kemalists recognised the Arabic-speaking lands did not have much to do with Turkey, acknowledged their independence with maturity, and focused on how to develop their own country. Sforza found this even more impressive since 'dictatorships' in general sought to augment their prestige through conquests.²²⁷

The reason Sforza placed foreign policy at the forefront of his praise for Kemalism was not merely professional deformation owing to his diplomatic career. In a rather conservative vein, Sforza observed how, 'like Peter the Great', Mustafa Kemal too 'erroneously' believed that he could hasten the course of history.²²⁸ Another error was the missteps in economy, which was especially ruined by the exodus of Anatolian Christians and Ankara's 'economic xenophobia'.²²⁹ Despite such misgivings, Sforza was convinced that Kemalism was on the right path for Turkey. The Turks knew the Kemalists strove to ensure Oriental autocracy could never come back, and the opposition to the regime was, in any case, not quite widespread or strong.²³⁰

As such examples have illustrated, anti-fascist perceptions of Kemalism involved much continuity from the 1920s to the 1930s. Most anti-fascists tended to see Turkey as an anti-revisionist force even at the zenith of the Italo-Turkish alliance. Left-wing anti-fascists saw in Kemalism a commendable example of Westernisation, which, for them, meant female emancipation, secularisation, and ultimately, democratisation. Anti-fascists, much as fascists and Kemalists, imagined that a temporal gap separated Europe and Turkey, and Kemalism was bridging this gap. Its methods were deemed a necessary evil in Turkey, given the country's

Drake and Denise De Kay (E. P. Dutton & Co., 1944), p. 248. The views in these books mirror those published in Sforza's other works, such as *Europe and Europeans* or *Makers of Modern Europe*, sometimes consisting of texts solely differing in wording.

²²⁷ Sforza, *Dictateurs et Dictatures*, pp. 217-18; Sforza, *Contemporary Italy*, pp. 246-47.

²²⁸ Sforza, *Dictateurs et Dictatures*, p. 220; Sforza, *Contemporary Italy*, pp. 246-47.

²²⁹ Sforza, *Dictateurs et Dictatures*, p. 218.

²³⁰ Sforza, *Dictateurs et Dictatures*, p. 220.

'backwardness'. To the contrary, most fascists were enthusiastic about precisely these methods which, to them, signified Turkey's embracing of the new, Rome-led West's values. Mustafa Kemal was regarded as a wise, courageous leader who, despite being a dictator, acted in the public interest. Though different sides criticised varying aspects of Kemalism, both fascists and anti-fascists tended to see Kemalism in a positive light in the 1930s, with a focus on Kemalism's ends in anti-fascists and a focus on Kemalism's means among fascists decisively more common.

A common anti-fascist trope was comparing Mustafa Kemal with Mussolini and Hitler. The former's military pedigree was favourably compared to the bellicose 'posing' of the latter duo. Mustafa Kemal as a daring leader was the type of leader *Avanti!* wished Italian socialism had when fascism rose, and likewise, the fascist attitude towards the Vatican was compared unfavourably with the Kemalist 'courage' in abolishing the Caliphate. Anti-fascists continued to imagine themselves closer to Turkey during the Second World War, with an anti-fascist alliance including *Giustizia e Libertà* appealing to Turkey for help against fascist Italy.²³¹ The letter, sent to numerous other countries, was certainly ignored by the Turkish government, which was more interested in staying out of the war than taking a side. Nonetheless, when taken not in isolation as a mere consequence of geopolitics but read in the background of this section, the letter illustrates the entrenchment of a particular perception of Kemalism among Italian anti-fascists. Indeed, for quite a few decades after the Second World War, Italian liberals and socialists continued perceiving Kemalist Turkey in a similar light.

§ 5.5 Conclusion

This chapter concludes the quasi-chronological overview of, first, Turkish perceptions of fascism in the 1920s and the 1930s, and then, Italian

²³¹ 'Yabancı ülkelerde yaşayan İtalyanlar tarafından Faşist İtalya'ya karşı mücadele [sic] amacıyla kurulan Yeni İtalya cemiyeti başkanı, H. Bellini delle Stelle'nin hükümetimize yazdığı mektup', 26 December 1941, *BCA*, Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü, 30-10-0-0, 239-613-7.

perceptions of Kemalism in the same era. Chapter Five has focused primarily on the agency of fascist and anti-fascist Italian actors in the 1930s. The 1930s was the zenith of any discourse on Kemalism and fascism, whether of an associating or contrasting sort. This was due to several factors, from the universalist claims of fascism coming to fore in the global crisis of democracy, to the rise and fall of the Italo-Turkish rapprochement in this decade. While the latter factor was influential, we have seen numerous examples of how intellectuals could be quite independent at times. Examples here include the widely shared anti-fascist interpretation of Kemalism as an anti-fascist force in geopolitics even between 1928 and 1934, or conservative fascist suspicions surrounding female emancipation and secularisation in Turkey in the same period. Universalist fascist thought, in particular, appears to have followed a trajectory of its own. Gravelli's observations of Kemalist flirtation with liberal democracy and praises of Kemalist authoritarianism did not always and reliably correlate with his view of Kemalist foreign policy.

While both regimes were interested in fostering certain views abroad, the fascist regime intensified its propaganda offensive in Turkey with the universalist turn of the early 1930s. Fascist attempts to influence public opinion involved a variety of methods carefully tailored for specific sections of Turkish society. Newspapers received pictures or even short news pieces from the Italian diplomats, which was a win-win arrangement: the outlets needed material, and the Italians wished to showcase examples of fascist modernity to Turkish masses. Elites were targeted with gifting of books or, as in the case of Yunus Nadi, projects of substantial financial help as part of *quid pro quo* arrangements. Buying popularity did not always work. Intermediaries like Yunus Nadi who did not feel genuine affection for fascist ideology propagated favourable views of Italy only insofar as they expected payment. Italian diplomats in Turkey widely interpreted a new-found 'anti-fascism' of Yunus Nadi's papers towards the late 1930s as an echo of the failure of the financial arrangement between him and the regime. With its analysis of the Yunus Nadi case by focusing on documents from the Italian state archives as well as the publications in *Cumhuriyet*, this study thrown new light on the famous

headline of *Cumhuriyet* from May 1932: ‘Salute from Kemalist Turkey to Fascist Italy’. Rather than following the heed of a post-Kemalist analysis or a defensive argument, it has sought to illustrate how Yunus Nadi’s motivations were personal and financial-gain oriented, which must serve as yet another warning against reifying Kemalism.

The other option for using intermediaries, that of associating with local fascistoid groups, was immensely popular elsewhere in the world in the 1930s, with the CAUR playing a leading role. However, due to several factors from the authoritarian state structure of Turkey that left no wriggle room for independent political groups, to the RPP’s desire not to associate itself too closely with fascism, and the cultural gap between Europe and Turkey that kept Turkish nationalists from seeing themselves as directly a part of a Europe-wide phenomenon, this was not an option in Turkey. Occasionally, the universalist fascists could refer to the journal of Hüseyin Nihal [Atsız] or the anti-semitist *Millî İnkılap*, though without any concrete contacts, it appears.

To bypass the shortcomings associated with the use of intermediaries, the fascist regime turned to radio by establishing a Turkish service of the famed *Radio Bari* in 1937. The details of the programmes are not known, but we do know that they included news and Turkish music, which suggests a programme design tailored to suit the preferences of the Turkish audience. With the signs of a coming war palpable, Turkish authorities were particularly sensitive to Italian propaganda intended for ‘ordinary Turks’, which meant that they tried to prevent citizens from listening to *Radio Bari* whenever they could, as the case of Ali Paruğ in Izmir illustrates. Despite its promise and inherent potential to evade censorship more easily than agents on the ground, the Turkish service of *Radio Bari* also encountered problems, from the Turkish state’s obstacles to difficulties in finding Turkish-speaking staff or tailoring discussions and programmes to suit Turkish masses.

Both fascists in Italy and Italian diplomats in Turkey paid particular attention to the 1930-31 crisis in Turkey. The rise of the FRP was met with unanimous disapproval. Both diplomats like Aloisi and writers like Di Roccalta felt the democratic experiment was misplaced for an ‘Eastern’

country like Turkey and the FRP was backed by the French against Italian interests. The crisis gave Italian observers an opportunity to observe divisions within Kemalism. Though the diplomats attached excessive importance to a perceived personal conflict between Mustafa Kemal and Ismet Pasha, both them and many fascist observers at home recognised the existence of at least two factions within the RPP. One of these factions was deemed to be led by Ismet Pasha and wishing to draw more from the example of fascism. Despite the diplomatic reports narrating the articles of Ali Naci and universalist intellectuals at home gushing over Falih Rifki's use of fascism as an example for Turkey, these do not seem to have evolved into concrete contact between fascists and radical Kemalists. Moreover, the diplomats were as willing to observe similarities between the two ideologies and movements as to note differences. Contrary to the literature, both Aloisi and Galli constantly observed differences from a persisting belief in some form of 'democracy' among the Kemalist leadership to structural differences between the parties. The diplomats suspected it was Mustafa Kemal himself that was most insistent with democracy as the end goal of Kemalism. When fascist intellectuals criticised Kemalism, it was this clinging to the ideals of 1789 (or of the 'democratic feminism', as put by Gravelli), the 'excessive' nature of female emancipation (as seen in a piece by Luciana Grimaldi, among others), or the 'anti-clericalism' that was on the focus. Despite widely shared enthusiasm for Kemalism's authoritarian methods, therefore, a recognition of need for some Westernisation and a suspicion that this Westernisation involved aspects of a 'wrong West', as it were, characterised much of fascist thought in the 1930s.

Precisely due to this question of the West, Turkey represented both an example to prove their point and a theoretical headache for universalist fascists. In search for examples abroad, the likes of Gravelli and Coselschi found themselves simultaneously defending the impeccably Western and Catholic credentials of fascism and pointing at fascist movements in places as far as Japan or Turkey. This tension did not go unnoticed, as the viscerally anti-Nazi Anton Hilckman wondered how a Catholic movement could see itself the same as Nazism. Kemalism figured as

an argument for Hilckman: he felt that because Turkey was not part of the Catholic, Latin West, even copying all fascist laws and institutions would not make Turkey fascist. To claim otherwise would be defaming the 'noble sons of Italy'. Hilckman stipulated that even though Nazis or Kemalists could copy external aspects of fascism such as the following of an undisputed leader, they could never assimilate its inner spirit. The response of Gravelli and Coselschi was to merely ignore the question and continue referring to Turkey as another example of fascism's spread. Gravelli's coverage of Kemalism, however, points to an inner hesitation, with him at times appearing disappointed with Kemalist commitment to 'democratic feminism', while appreciating their 'good government' at other times. What must have disappointed Coselschi the most was the cancellation of his lieutenant Cabalzar's trip to Turkey in 1935. Despite efforts, the CAUR did not secure interlocutors in Turkey. The same factors that left the CAUR without 'adherents' in Turkey meant that Turkey abstained from sending participants to key universalist fascist congresses such as the 1932 *Convegno Volta* or the 1934 Montreux Conference.

Both universalists and mainstream or conservative fascists saw the Kemalist opposition to liberalism and freemasonry as motivated by similar considerations to fascism, and thereby supported it. Beyond this, in judging the ends of Kemalism, the prior beliefs of fascist factions exerted great influence. Conservative fascists like Perrone di San Martino appreciated the authoritarianism and decisiveness of the Kemalists, did not care for Turkish Westernisation enough to comment on it extensively, and remembered the 'strategic massacring' of Anatolian Christians. Unlike the universalists, these fascists typically did not compare Kemalism and fascism, thinking of both as responding to separate sets of national needs and merely having a negative view of liberalism and the single party regime in common. One significant internal evolution of the conservative fascist perceptions of Kemalism from the 1920s to the 1930s was the reluctance to imagine Kemalism as an Islamist force. Both the Italo-Turkish rapprochement and the chance to observe the Kemalist regime at work for over a decade must have been influential in engendering this shift.

As for anti-fascist perceptions of Kemalism, liberal opponents of fascism typically did not discuss Turkey much. Croce was far more interested in writing on Vico than on Fethi Bey. An important exception was Sforza, who personally knew many leading Kemalists from his time as a diplomat in Turkey. Sforza was exceptional in downplaying the importance of the Westernising reforms of the Kemalists in public life. He did see in Kemalism a progressive force, however, mainly because he thought Atatürk was an exceptional dictator that differed from all other dictators of his time with his opposition to Turkish imperialism. Sforza saw the Kemalists as renouncing imperial quests in the Middle East, which he acclaimed as a realistic and peace-bringing resolution. This was the most enduring and appreciable deed of Kemalism. As for Westernising reforms, some such reform was needed though he doubted how one could succeed in 'hastening the course of history'.

Whereas fascists prioritised the means of Kemalism in drawing affinities and especially conservative fascists saw Kemalist ends of female emancipation and secularisation as rather exaggerated, left-wing anti-fascists praised Kemalism precisely for these ends. It was these, and not the 'dictatorial means', that made them think Turkey was joining the West. Left-wing anti-fascists saw the Kemalist regime as a necessary evil not to be replicated in Italy and that fitted only countries following Europe from centuries behind. Particularly lavish in their praise were the authors of two obituaries for Atatürk, published respectively in *Avanti!* and *Giustizia e Libertà* in 1938, with the latter likely coming from the leader of the circle, Lussu, himself. The former lamented the lack of a 'leader like Kemal' among the ranks of Italian socialism who could halt the rise of fascism, whereas the latter saw in Kemalism a revolutionary project of global import for the non-West. Despite noting lack of profound socioeconomic reform, left-wing anti-fascists saw Kemalism as ultimately closer to their own ideals than to fascism, and often contrasted the 'daring' Kemalists of formidable military pedigrees with the 'cowardly' fascists posing as men of war.

Though travels and occasions of interaction were not lacking, from Filippucci Giustiniani's Smirniot background to Yunus Nadi's financial

entanglements, individuals in this chapter observed the other side from 'home', with the exception of the diplomats, who operated in a unique context. In the next chapter, we will consider the case of whom we may call experts and expatriates: individuals who spent considerable time in the land of the 'other' or mastered its language and culture and retained extensive contact. Such cases will help us to highlight once more the role prior beliefs and factions played in interpretations of Kemalism and fascism, as well as serving as a concrete background for a theoretical debate on whether contact with the 'other' can be construed as transformative on its own. This should not only shed further light on the dynamics of the relationship between fascism and Kemalism but hopefully indicate alternatives to certain aspects of contemporary historiographical practices, especially in transnational and global history.

Experts and Expatriates: Redesigning Mental Maps

In October 1935, Izmir's *Kültür* journal began publishing the travelogue of İhsan Altıntuğ, a high school teacher aboard the ship *Filippo Gri-mani* – an unmistakably Italian name – on his way to Austria via Greece and Italy, to join a pedagogy conference. Began with the author's musing on starry nights aboard, the travelogue quickly evolved into a questioning of where exactly Europe began. Fed up with 'spoilt Italian officials' and their 'loose neckties', Altıntuğ was delighted to 'finally' reach the last Italian station and cross the border: he wondered if Italy was really part of Europe or if it began in Austria.¹

Altıntuğ's shift from peaceful contemplation aboard an Italian ship to doubting Italy's European credentials poses questions about the role of contact in shaping perceptions of 'the other'. While previous chapters also included examples of contact, from Falih Rıfkı and his reception in Italy to the influence of Alfredo Rocco on Zeki Mesud, the focus was not entirely on the moment of contact itself. With a more theoretical organisational principle, this chapter instead tackles this question head-on, focusing on case studies of individuals who were experts of 'the Other' or

¹ The information in this paragraph is taken from İhsan Altıntuğ, 'Bir Öğretmen Gözüyle Avrupa: 1', *Kültür*, 1 October 1935, p. 9. The case of Altıntuğ will be discussed further, with reference to his further remarks on Italian officials or 'disorderliness' in the following section.

expatriates: Diplomats-cum-intellectuals, Cornelio di Marzio and Nüzhet Haşim Sinanoğlu, the journalist and translator Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, the Turcologist and orientalist Ettore Rossi, and the anti-fascist linguist Ezio Bartalini. These individuals knew and had much more extensive contact with the other side than the figures we already saw, and their careers offer much promise for analysis.

The question of how ‘contact’ should be construed in intellectual history is by no means insignificant. In transnational history, as Patricia Clavin has emphasised already in 2005, there has been a tendency to focus on moments of ‘attraction’ through contact as opposed to moments of ‘repulsion’, which may be just as common.² Klaus Kiran Patel has observed that scholars also tend to construe the ‘transnational’ as something positive in and of itself.³ This problem is most evident in transnational history due to its constant engagement with moments of contact, but arguably, it also affects other historiographical fields. The seemingly intractable question of ‘influence’ in intellectual history is certainly linked with scholars’ construal of contact and its impact on agents.⁴ Relying on the analysis of its case studies, this chapter will seek to contribute to the literature by showing that moment of contact is not necessarily

² Patricia Clavin, ‘Defining Transnationalism’, *Contemporary European History*, 14.4 (2005), pp. 421–39 (p. 424). Relatedly, though with a more negative view of the field as a whole, scholars also argued against the global and ‘spreading’ focus of global and international history. For example, see the debate and arguments in David A. Bell, ‘This Is What Happens When Historians Overuse the Idea of the Network’, *The New Republic*, 26 October 2013 <<https://newrepublic.com/article/114709/world-connecting-reviewed-historians-overuse-network-metaphor>> [accessed 16 September 2021]; Richard Drayton and David Motadel, ‘Discussion: The Futures of Global History’, *Journal of Global History*, 13 (2018), pp. 1–21.

³ Klaus Kiran Patel, ‘Transnational History’, *EGO: European History Online* (2010) <<http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/theories-and-methods/transnational-history>> [accessed 16 September 2021].

⁴ For an overview and an argument in favour of the notion of influence in intellectual history, see Gary Browning, ‘Agency and Influence in the History of Political Thought: The Agency of Influence and the Influence of Agency’, *History of Political Thought*, 31:2 (Summer 2010), pp. 345–365.

conducive to positive outcomes and perceptions.⁵ Much instead depends on the ‘paths’, that is, personalities and prior beliefs and desires of the agents that enter contact. If chapters thus far already illustrated how anti-fascists and fascists could develop widely different interpretations of the same phenomena, such as Kemalist authoritarianism, this chapter should take the point even further by showing how this tendency to differ grew even stronger upon contact with the Turks.

On a theoretical plane, the chapter will draw from the recent findings of Robert Axelrod and his colleagues on ideological polarisation. The question of polarisation is crucially linked with the issue of how we perceive contact. One prominent theory in the social scientific literature to explain the rising polarisation in American and European societies in the 2010s and 2020s is that insufficient interaction between individuals of varying beliefs and values created ‘echo chambers’, primary examples of which were social media platforms that continuously confirmed and radicalised agents’ views.⁶ Running computer simulations and basing themselves on previous empirical work on how polarisation occurs, Axelrod and his colleagues found that often, it was contact itself that caused further polarisation.⁷ When agents that are sufficiently different in their

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- ⁵ Another prominence of this notion is seen in the vast popularity of the term ‘spread’ in recent historiography. Historians are almost never interested in how transnational contact further pushes individuals away from one another; the study of how techniques or ideas ‘spread’ across borders is instead an extremely popular subject. For merely a few good examples of scholarship focusing on such transnational spread and contact, see Yin Cao, ‘Bombs in Beijing and Delhi: The Global Spread of Bomb-Making Technology and the Revolutionary Terrorism in Modern China and India’, *Journal of World History*, 30.4 (2019), pp. 559–89; Peter Frankopan, *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World* (Bloomsbury, 2016).
- ⁶ For example, see R. Kelly Garrett, ‘Echo Chambers Online?: Politically Motivated Selective Exposure among Internet News Users’, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 14.2 (2009), pp. 265–85, doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2009.01440.x; Matteo Cinelli and others, ‘The Echo Chamber Effect on Social Media’, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118:9 (2021), doi:10.1073/pnas.2023301118.
- ⁷ Robert Axelrod, Joshua J. Daymude, and Stephanie Forrest, ‘Preventing Extreme Polarization of Political Attitudes’, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118:50

worldviews and not extraordinarily tolerant come into *more* contact, they become *more* different and radicalised. Reaching this conclusion is possible only if we refuse to reify the moment of contact as having an influence on its own and instead recognise the importance of the specific actors and their ‘paths’, which is an intended contribution of the chapter to recent historiography.

The discussion of the cases will begin in the first section by focusing on the case of Altıntuğ and other visitors to Italy. Their travels in Italy and, in particular, their thoughts on the fascist museums and exhibits will appear in the section. Analysing their cases will offer us an opportunity to remember the *inkılap memleketleri* way of thinking that was extremely prominent in Turkey at the time. The discussion will also pave the way for seeing contact as potentially repulsion-bearing since the way these individuals perceived fascist Italy and its exhibits was not positive in any straightforward sense. Each of the following sections will then focus on one individual who had extensive contact with the other side of the Mediterranean. Sometimes, these individuals will be those in Italy or Turkey with diplomatic duties, such as Nüzhet Haşım Sinanoğlu or Cornelio di Marzio. Others will be individuals famed for their command of and translations from Italian, such as Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın. Ettore Rossi will be discussed as an eminent Turcologist who travelled extensively in Turkey; Ezio Bartolini instead will be a focal point of discussion for his links to anti-fascists in Italy and Kemalists in Turkey, having lived in Istanbul for years. While not neglecting to pay due attention to moments of influence and spread of ideas, these sections will revolve around the idea

(2021), p. e2102139118, doi:10.1073/pnas.2102139118. For empirical underpinnings of the study, see Christopher A. Bail and others, ‘Exposure to Opposing Views on Social Media Can Increase Political Polarization’, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115.37 (2018), pp. 9216–21, doi:10.1073/pnas.1804840115; Christopher C. Liu and Sameer B. Srivastava, ‘Pulling Closer and Moving Apart: Interaction, Identity, and Influence in the U.S. Senate, 1973 to 2009’, *American Sociological Review*, 80 (2015), pp. 192–217. Note that Axelrod and his colleagues indicate the existence of conflicting empirical studies conducted in other contexts, too.

of how the prior beliefs and values of these individuals determined how they were influenced by such extensive contact with ‘the other’.

§ 6.1 Is Italy Part of Europe? Turkish Travellers in Italy

Altıntuğ’s travelogue *Bir Öğretmen Gözüyle Avrupa* [*Europe Through the Eyes of a Teacher*] appeared in *Kültür*, which was established by prominent intellectuals of Izmir such as Asım İsmet [*Kültür*] in 1933. Izmir was a large port city with lively commerce well-linked with global markets, home to a sizeable Levantine community, and the scene of vibrant ideological debates. Perhaps unsurprisingly in this context, Izmir’s *Kültür* took a detailed look at Italy. The feverishly Kemalist journal placed secularism before all else. Asım İsmet argued in its columns that no promise of religion had ever come true, and the Turkish revolution envisaged a Turkish mentality based on ‘positive sciences’.⁸ Another contributor, Dr Necati Kemal [Kip], thought that ‘spreading the Qur’an via the radio is nothing but waste; it is just like carrying logs on an aeroplane.’⁹ The doctor opposed male circumcision, an Islamic requirement, as obsolete and medically dubious.¹⁰ Nor was Europe spared from criticisms, from how ‘Medieval Christianity’ continued to exert influence on contemporary Europe to critiques of the Papacy.¹¹ Economically, the journal leaned towards the left, with *Kadro* particularly influential in the early phases of *Kültür*. Necati Kemal stepped in to defend *Kadro* from Hüseyin Cahit’s criticisms, while *Kültür* published European authors, especially French socialists and communists, criticising Western social order, capitalism, and imperialism. Intellectuals whose works appeared in Turkish on the pages of *Kültür* include Paul Lantevin, Lucien Romier, Marcel Prenant, as

⁸ Asım İsmet, ‘Hakiki Serbesti: Niçin Laikiz?’, *Kültür*, 16 December 1933, pp. 4–5 (p. 5). Asım İsmet, ‘Bir Dünya İki İnsan’, *Kültür*, 1 January 1934, pp. 5–7 (p. 7).

⁹ Dr. Necati Kip, ‘Dinimiz İnkılap Dinidir’, *Kültür*, 1 February 1935, pp. 1–2.

¹⁰ Dr. N. Kip, ‘Sünnet’, *Kültür*, 15 July 1935, p. 7.

¹¹ Dr. Necati Kip, ‘Gerçek Kadın Hürriyeti’, *Kültür*, 15 July 1935, p. 1. Asım İsmet, ‘İnkılap Nedir - Niçin İnkılapçısınız? 2’, *Kültür*, 15 February 1935, pp. 4–6 (p. 4).

well as the Italian pedagogist Maria Montessori and the Soviet author Maxim Gorky.

Despite associating with the radical Kemalists, *Kültür*'s authors often did not think very highly of Italy, and this stance only became clearer in time.¹² Democracy proved a notion too difficult to shove aside as Asım İsmet, in particular, insisted that fascism was not a real revolution, while the Turkish, French and Russian revolutions were.¹³ Fascist Italy was an example of countries governed through the threat of 'brute force'.¹⁴ As Dr Necati Kemal argued in August 1934, with his penchant for throwing-in the occasional medical term, fascism was an 'atavism' that saw women as mere 'baby-producing machines'.¹⁵ In October 1934, he obliquely referred to Italy as a 'monarchical country' and found it shameful that the fate of individuals should be determined by the birth of a royal princess and the resulting royal pardon.¹⁶

Altıntuğ's travelogues reinforced *Kültür*'s negative portrayals of fascism as an ideology unworthy of admiration with its anti-secularism and attitude towards women. From the musings aboard, Altıntuğ's first shock was the Turkish denizens of the Italian-controlled Rhodes, who still donned the veil and fez. Rather than part of an ultramodern Europe, the island was where 'history rose from the dead'.¹⁷ Reaching Brindisi, the

¹² For an exception where the author refers to Mussolini, along with Atatürk, Hitler and Lenin as the type of leaders modernity requires, see Necati Kemal, 'İlmi Salahiyet ve Ölçüleri', *Kültür*, 1 March 1934, pp. 3-4.

¹³ Asım Kültür, 'İnkılap Nedir? Niçin İnkılapçısınız? 3', *Kültür*, 1 March 1935, p. 8.

¹⁴ Asım İsmet, 'Büyük Bayramımız', *Kültür*, 1 November 1934, pp. 2-3.

¹⁵ Dr. Necati Kemal, 'İçtimai Atavizm', *Kültür*, 15 August 1934, p. 1.

¹⁶ Dr. Necati Kemal, 'Görüşler Düşünüşler', *Kültür*, 15 October 1934, pp. 1-2 (p. 1). This is a reference to the birth of the royal princess Maria Pia and the resulting royal pardon in 1934.

¹⁷ İhsan Altıntuğ, 'Bir Öğretmen Gözüyle Avrupa: 2', *Kültür*, 1 November 1935, pp. 11-12 (p. 11). Debates on modernity and the *fez* were not limited to Turkey. For example, see Ahmet Serdar Aktürk, 'Fez, Brimmed Hat, and Kum û Destmal: Evolution of Kurdish National Identity from the Late Ottoman Empire to Modern Turkey and Syria', *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, 4.1 (2017), pp. 157-187; Sarah D. Shields, *Fezzes in the River: Identity Politics and European Diplomacy in the Middle East on the Eve of World War II* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

first thing that caught Altıntuğ's attention was how the city was 'dirty'.¹⁸ If the reader expected a romantic sequel from the city of Venice, they would be disappointed to find that Altıntuğ dedicated his attention to poverty. To illustrate the economic aftershocks of the Great Depression and the embargo imposed on Italy following the invasion of Abyssinia, Altıntuğ described Italians who scrambled to smoke a cigarette butt he had just thrown: such was the poverty in fascist Italy.¹⁹ The travelogue culminated with Altıntuğ's crossing into Austria, published in February 1936. Though all the places he visited from Piraeus to Venice were part of Europe on maps, Altıntuğ wondered to himself how could Austria and Italy be both European. In Austria, his first thought was, 'this must be where Europe begins'. He felt that the slackness, spoiltness and raggedy looks of the Italian officials stood in stark contrast with the well-organised, immaculate-looking Austrians, who greeted him with 'great kindness and seriousness'.²⁰ The souring of the state-level relations between Italy and Turkey around 1934, the impact of contact with 'slacky' Italian officials, and the clash between their secularism and feminism with fascist values must be factors that explain these decisively negative portrayals of fascism in *Kültür*.

Other Turkish observers concurred with the 'spoilt' attitude or 'pompousness' of the fascists. As discussed in Chapter Two, Turkish interest in other 'revolutions' and how they propagated their ideologies engendered a sizeable literature on fascist Italy in the interwar era. The Kemalists appreciated that a museum, quite like a modern library, was a quintessentially Western institution in public education. The government established an ethnographic museum in 1925 to house a range of cultural artefacts from Turkey.²¹ Well before the 1930s, some Kemalists felt such a museum could be complemented with a museum or section dedicated to

¹⁸ İhsan Altıntuğ, 'Bir Öğretmen Gözüyle Avrupa: 4', *Kültür*, 1 January 1936, p. 9.

¹⁹ İhsan Altıntuğ, 'Bir Öğretmen Gözüyle Avrupa: 5', *Kültür*, 15 January 1936, p. 11.

²⁰ İhsan Altıntuğ, 'Bir Öğretmen Gözüyle Avrupa: 6', *Kültür*, 1 February 1936, p. 8.

²¹ Mustafa Oral, 'Ankara Etnoğrafya Müzesi İnkılâp Şubesi', *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, 29–30 (2002), pp. 117–30 (p. 119).

the revolution; the plans for such a museum could draw from other countries that underwent revolutions. Informed by the *inkılap memleketleri* way of thinking, some of these plans defied ideological differences between Kemalism and others. A doyen of Turcology with impeccable anti-communist credentials, Fuad Köprülü's visit to Soviet Azerbaijan in 1926 led him to idealise Soviet propaganda. Writing for *Hayat* in 1927, Köprülü noted it was impossible 'not to admire these great efforts of our neighbour to spread the revolution', which had to be replicated by the Kemalists. Ideological differences aside, he proposed a museum of the Turkish revolution that would both educate the public and gather material for scholars to scientifically study the revolution.²² The Kemalists indeed tried to establish such institutions, including one in Istanbul in the apartment where Mustafa Kemal lived before departing for Anatolia to lead the resistance. This particular museum showcased the old '*feraj*'es and the like' to illustrate the progress recorded by Kemalism.²³

Just as Köprülü was not a communist for drawing from the USSR to design Turkish museums, the same applied to other figures within the RPP. In April 1933, the Museum Committee of the Ankara People's House [*Halkevi*] sought regulations and albums from 'Museums of Revolution' in Moscow and Rome.²⁴ A Russian book titled *Muzey Revolutsii Soyuz SSR* [*the USSR Revolution Museum*] in the Turkish state archives likely dates from this or a similar attempt to establish a Turkish museum of revolution.²⁵ Like Köprülü, these individuals sought to strip the Soviet 'revolutionary' techniques from their ideological content and apply them in Turkey.

Fascist methods of propagating their revolution caught the eyes of the Kemalists for parallel reasons. A fascist exhibit that garnered considerable interest from the Kemalists was the *Mostra della rivoluzione fascista*

²² Köprülüzade Mehmed Fuad, 'İnkılap Terbiyesi', *Hayat*, 16 June 1927, pp. 1-2.

²³ 'İnkılap Müzesi', *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 21 September 1929, p. 1.

²⁴ 'Ankara Halkevi'nde, İnkılabın Seyrini Gösterir Bir Müze Meydana Getirme Çalışmaları. Atatürk'ü Samsun'a Götüren Bandırma Vapuru Hakkında Bilgi', 1934, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1199-203-1.

²⁵ 'Rusça Kitap', 1932, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 609-111-1.

in Rome. Opened in 1932, this was the most famous exhibit of fascism's 'triumphs' that also exemplified the best of fascist architecture.²⁶ It was so successful in terms of the number of visitors it attracted that, as Emilio Gentile notes, it remained open for two years to 1934, only to be successively reopened later in 1937, 1939 and 1942.²⁷ The number of visitors between 1932 and 1934 reached nearly 4 million people, including many foreigners.²⁸ Among these visitors were Turks like Münir Hayri [Egeli], the principal of a girls' institute in Ankara. A dedicated Kemalist who created art to propagate Kemalism to the masses, he conveyed his observations of the *Mostra* to the RPP with a report in August 1933, hoping that Ankara could take note of the fascist techniques.²⁹ While he also discussed Nazi propaganda, having visited Germany before Italy, Münir Hayri was particularly struck by the *Mostra*, which he defined as 'the most ambitious' exhibit across Europe.

Fascist authorities did not organise the *Mostra* to impress the visitors on merely their techniques but to impinge on them with some ideological content. However, Münir Hayri was adamant that the whole point of his visit was to gather experience for establishing a party exhibition in Turkey, which would be based on 'the methods I learned in Europe'. He sorely regretted that while other '*inkılap memleketleri*' [countries that have undergone revolutions] were busy with propaganda, Turkey lacked similar enterprises. What particularly embittered him was how the Turkish revolution was actually much greater. While visiting the *Mostra*, Münir Hayri 'repeated to myself once more, as a credo, that there is no country in the entire world that has created a revolution greater and more comprehensive than our own'. He explained that transferring revolutionary know-

²⁶ For further information about the *Mostra della rivoluzione fascista* and other fascist exhibits, see the two excellent treatments by Emilio Gentile and Alessandra Tarquini: Emilio Gentile, *Il Fascismo di Pietra* (Laterza, 2007), pp. 166–75; Alessandra Tarquini, *Storia della Cultura Fascista* (Il Mulino, 2011), pp. 204–5, 225–26.

²⁷ Gentile *Il Fascismo di Pietra*, p. 166; Tarquini, *Storia della Cultura Fascista*, p. 204.

²⁸ Gentile, *Il Fascismo di Pietra*, p. 172.

²⁹ Münir Hayri wrote librettos in addition to building a statue of Mustafa Kemal all as part of his efforts to utilise the arts to spread Kemalism.

how could not mean copying fascism. In any case, the 'braggart' (*çığır-kan*) propaganda found in the West would not benefit addressing the 'solemn' Turks.³⁰ Where Altıntuğ pushed Italy out of Europe, Münir Hayri placed it back in the continent only to observe such personality differences between 'braggart' versus Turkish propaganda.

Among other Turks to visit the *Mostra* was a certain Dr Rıza from the town of Menemen in Izmir, which proved fateful for Turkish history in the 1930s. Studying malariology in Italy, Dr Rıza was one of those individuals sent to Europe by the government to gain expertise in fields ranging from classical music to medicine. In his free time, he took the liberty of visiting, or rather 'investigating' the *Mostra* 'a few times'. Dated September 1934, his report to the RPP explained how the party likely knew about such 'revolutionary techniques', but he still wanted to detail his observations. The propaganda techniques, the architecture, and the arts were splendid. The doctor helpfully supplied the officials with a brochure of the *Mostra*. Such data could help the efforts to establish a Kemalist exhibit, 'and later, this exhibit could form the basis of a museum of the revolution'. As for the content of such exquisite propaganda, Dr Rıza could hardly be more dismissive: 'this exhibition is like making something out of nothing; I did not and could not call it an exhibition of a revolution, for, as a Turk ... I had seen what the revolution was at home'. He also complained about how fascism was claiming a place for itself under the sun 'with such fuss and rumble'.³¹

We find similar observations in the work of Alaettin Cemil³², who visited the *Mostra* and wrote on his impressions in the *Cumhuriyet* in the spring of 1934. He, too, felt that the *Mostra* was grander than 'any other museum of revolution' and was particularly impressed by the aesthetics

³⁰ Ankara Halkevi'nde, Inkılabın Seyrini Gösterir Bir Müze Meydana Getirme Çalışmaları. Atatürk'ü Samsun'a Götüren Bandırma Vapuru Hakkında Bilgi', 1934, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1199-203-1, pp. 66-69.

³¹ 'İtalya Faşist Fırkası Silahlı Kuvvetleri'nin Faaliyet Raporu', 1935, p. 9, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 605-95-2.

³² Though it is not certain, it seems this Alaettin Cemil is Alaettin Cemil Topçubaşı, who was an RPP deputy for Istanbul between 1931 and 1934.

and technical aspects of the exhibit. As for its ideological content, he was convinced that fascism was an ‘extremely exaggerated imperialist dictatorship of nationalism’. Of course, a Turk had more reason than anyone else to sympathise with the nationalisms of others; Turkey’s past allowed Turks to understand how each nation could follow its nationalism. Still, all those visuals, sculptures and the like made fascism seem to be ‘the outbursts of a dangerous imperialism, rather than of a nationalism’.³³ Münir Hayri, Dr Rıza, and Alaettin Cemil were all understandably careful to underline their unwavering commitment to Kemalism in their reports, but we must not rush to conclude that all stems from fear of being castigated as imitators. Clearly, these individuals were drawn to fascist propaganda but not to fascist ideology. They appear to have felt a mixture of jealousy for fascist ‘success’ and a rekindled commitment to Kemalism while touring the *Mostra*.

As Aristotle Kallis observed on European fascistoid movements, we would do well to remember that often, non-Italian actors reconfigured fascism in ways Italian fascists did not originally intend.³⁴ The way Altıntuğ pushed Italy out of Europe and visitors to the *Mostra* focused on the ‘braggart’, excessively ‘aggressive’ nature of fascism speaks to the validity of this observation. If their contact with the *Mostra della rivoluzione fascista* did not produce exactly the type of reaction the fascists hoped, much more ample contact with Italy produced an even more unequivocally negative reaction in Hüseyin Cahit, to whose case we shall turn in the coming section.

§ 6.2 The Translator: Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın and Italian anti-Fascism

Born in Balıkesir in 1875, Hüseyin Cahit initially worked as an educator under different titles before reaching fame as a journalist and figuring

³³ Alaettin Cemil, ‘Roma’da Faşist Sergisi’, *Cumhuriyet*, 10 May 1934, p. 5.

³⁴ Aristotle Kallis, ‘The Transnational Co-Production of Fascism: On the Dynamics of Ideational Mobility and Localization’, *European History Quarterly*, 51.2 (2021), pp. 189–213.

prominently in introducing, and indeed reconfiguring, Italian thought to the Turkish public. A member of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), Hüseyin Cahit co-founded *Tanin* and engaged in relentless press campaigns against opponents of the CUP, as a result of which he was banished to Malta in 1919 by the invading British troops on account of his Unionism. Upon his return to Turkey in 1921, he republished *Tanin* and supported the Turkish resistance. *Tanin* continued its publications, distant from the RPP despite embracing many tenets of Kemalism, until 1925 when the draconian *Takrir-i Sükun* laws [Law on the Maintenance of Order] following the Sheikh Said rebellion crushed regime opponents. Despite being so pro-Westernisation as to defend the adoption of a Latin-based alphabet for Turkish in 1924, personal antagonisms and opposition to the RPP's monopoly of power pushed him away from the RPP leadership.³⁵ In his two-decades-long campaign for a more liberal democratic Kemalism, the Italian language, which he mastered in Malta under British captivity, served him well, as he continuously published the work of Italian anti-fascists in defence of democracy.

A liberal democrat, Hüseyin Cahit was sufficiently worried about the 'red years' of 1919-20 in Italy to not condemn fascism initially, like many Italian liberals. Early on, his crushing of the Italian 'communists' and his Turkish-friendly foreign policy endeared Mussolini to Hüseyin Cahit. In Ouchy, during the Lausanne Peace Conference, Hüseyin Cahit interviewed Mussolini, whom he felt compelled to 'congratulate' over his 'will and resoluteness' in domestic policy despite his intention to abstain from Italy's domestic issues as a foreigner. The interview depicted Mussolini as a friendly leader who was easy to approach. It concluded with Mussolini refusing to comment on whether Italy would side with Turkey should the peace talks fail and the Allies seek war against the Turks. Tellingly,

³⁵ Ettore Rossi, 'La Questione dell'alfabeto per le Lingue Turche', *Oriente Moderno*, 7.6 (1927), pp. 295-310 (p. 298).

Mussolini was reported to have a smile on his face that betrayed his sympathy for the Turkish cause.³⁶

By the time the socialist deputy Giacomo Matteotti was murdered, much like Italian liberals, Hüseyin Cahit realised that fascism was more than a stop-gap that would check the advance of socialism to then revert to law and order. In June 1924, *Tanin* reported the disappearance of Matteotti, asked the Italian embassy to comment, and interpreted their refusal to comment as 'meaningful silence'. *Tanin* contrasted this with, allegedly, remarks of a French official for *Tanin* on fascism's 'difficult situation'.³⁷ Reports of public disorder in Italy continued throughout June.³⁸ In August 1924, Hüseyin Cahit offered thoughts on 'the Italian disaster'. He found political assassinations not only brutal but also strategically unwise. Matteotti could do more harm to fascism as a dead man. He was convinced that this assassination 'threw a grand light of reality on the fascist oppression and fascist dictatorship in Italy'. In a not necessarily subtle manner, Hüseyin Cahit then utilised the Matteotti case as a lesson for the RPP, much as *Vatan* and *Tevhid-i Efkar*. 'Wherever law and legitimacy is suspended', the people would quickly topple tyrants since peoples would not tolerate dictatorships indefinitely. The trembling of the 'edifice of fascism that seemed quite robust from the outside' before the 'winds of reality' proved this. Nations who wished for 'sustained and powerful governments' had to look not to Italy and its dictatorial regime but to 'law only, rights and justice only!'.³⁹

Fascism proved more enduring than Hüseyin Cahit wishfully predicted, while at home, rather than embracing the mantra of 'law only!'

³⁶ On Turkish journalists' interviews with Mussolini at the time see Ramazan Erhan Güllü, 'Benito Mussolini'nin İtalya'da İktidara Gelişinin Türk Kamuoyuna Yansıması', *Cumhuriyet Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 22 (2015), pp. 305–29. Whether Hüseyin Cahit's interview was genuine is unclear. For the present context, what matters is how he chose to depict Mussolini and fascism rather than whether the conversations he narrated really took place.

³⁷ 'İtalya'da Galeyan', *Tanin*, 18 June 1924, p. 1.

³⁸ 'İtalya'da', *Tanin*, 20 June 1924, p. 1; 'İtalya'da', *Tanin*, 21 June 1924, p. 1; 'İtalya'da Heyecan Var', *Tanin*, 22 June 1924, pp. 1-2; 'İtalya'da', *Tanin*, 27 June 1924, p. 2.

³⁹ Hüseyin Cahit, 'Siyaset: İtalyan Faciası', *Tanin*, 20 July 1924, p. 1.

the Independence Tribunals forced him to close *Tanin*.⁴⁰ Obligated to reside in the central Anatolian town of Çorum initially, Hüseyin Cahit returned to Istanbul, picking up publishing a journal in the autumn of 1933. *Fikir Hareketleri* [*Intellectual Movements*] rose to meet the challenge of radical Kemalism and rampant arguments against liberal democracy. Against the radical Kemalist attempts to use the USSR as an example, Hüseyin Cahit launched a campaign against Bolshevism.⁴¹ A figure of moderate French right at the time – though a proponent of the Vichy regime later – Joseph Barthélemy’s criticism of the USSR’s becoming increasingly more capitalistic out of necessity and how it would necessarily revert to a regime of popular sovereignty (*milli hakimiyet rejimi*) was a highlight of this campaign.⁴² To the radicals, Hüseyin Cahit reminded that once accustomed to a ‘humane’ regime like the republic, nations could not abide by another regime that did not respect popular sovereignty.⁴³ He also tried to turn the portrayal of the USSR offered by Falih Rıfkı upside down by arguing that even in his travelogues from Russia, the poverty of the masses and the futility of the bloodshed were conceded by the pro-Soviet author himself.⁴⁴ Hüseyin Cahit also found Falih Rıfkı’s ‘hatred for democracy’ that permeated his travelogues rather ‘perplexing’ and inconsistent. This hatred clouded Falih Rıfkı’s judgment and led him to misjudge the temporary ills of liberal democracy as systemic problems.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ In addition to his opposition to the RPP’s monopoly of power, Hüseyin Cahit’s Unionist credentials were also influential in this outcome as it was around 1925-26 that the ex-Unionists and the Kemalists, many of whom used to be members of the CUP too, came into open conflict.

⁴¹ For example, see Francesco Nitti, ‘Hürriyet Düşmanları’, *Fikir Hareketleri*, 14 (25 January 1934), pp. 5-6; Francesco Nitti, ‘Bolşeviklik ve Çarlık’, *Fikir Hareketleri*, 44 (23 August 1934), pp. 273-274 (p. 273).

⁴² Joseph-Barthelemy, ‘Bolşevik Diktatörlüğü’, *Fikir Hareketleri*, 47 (13 September 1934), pp. 321-322.

⁴³ Hüseyin Cahit, ‘Türk Cümhuriyetinin Onuncu Yıldönümü’, *Fikir Hareketleri*, 1 (29 October 1933), pp. 1-3 (p. 1).

⁴⁴ Hüseyin Cahit, ‘Matbuat Hayatı: Bay Falih Rıfkı Atay’, *Fikir Hareketleri*, 63 (3 January 1935), pp. 172-173 (p. 172).

⁴⁵ Hüseyin Cahit, ‘Matbuat Hayatı: Bay Falih Rıfkı Atay 3’, *Fikir Hareketleri*, 65 (17 January 1935), pp. 203-204.

More polemically, Hüseyin Cahit defined Bolshevism as a 'religion' more similar to the 'green [Islamic] reactionarism' and Catholic Inquisition than Kemalism.⁴⁶ Since Bolshevism was a form of 'servitude', it was far easier for a Bolshevik to convert to fascism – thus, choose another form of 'servitude' – than it was for a democrat.⁴⁷

As contemporary critics noted, *Fikir Hareketleri* was largely a one-man act, with texts either written by Hüseyin Cahit or translated by him from foreign, mostly European authors. Italian authors figured prominently in the journal. *Fikir Hareketleri* emphasised various differences between fascism and Kemalism in defence of liberal Kemalism. One was Richard Lewinsohn's observation of fascism's 'corruption' in the economy, with Mussolini portrayed as too involved with capitalists to harm their interests.⁴⁸ Another difference separated nationalism in Turkey (what Hüseyin Cahit called *milliyetçilik*) and European nationalisms (*nasyonalizm*). Writing in November 1933, he noted that the likes of fascism and portions of the French right diverged from Kemalism by being 'the ultimate expression of reactionary movements'. These were opposed to democracy, used demagogical language, and sided with religion, clergy, and the monarchy. In addition, they were against freedom of the press and parliaments and hoped to restore 'oligarchic nobility'. Against such liberticide and imperialism, Kemalism stood in stark contrast as a movement that upheld the rights of the Turks. Any affiliation with reactionary *nasyonalizm* would be an insult to Kemalism.⁴⁹

Nonetheless, Hüseyin Cahit found himself obliged to explain the apparent success of dictatorial regimes. Clearly, they were spreading, and the democratic regimes were retreating. Besides occasionally referring to extraordinary social circumstances of the post-war era, a key

⁴⁶ Hüseyin Cahit, 'Matbuat Hayatı: Bay Falih Rıfkı Atay (Moskova-Roma) 2', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 66 (24 January 1935), pp. 219-221.

⁴⁷ Hüseyin Cahit, 'Bir Hülasa', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 52 (18 October 1934), pp. 401-403 (p. 402).

⁴⁸ Richard Lewinsohn, 'Siyasatta Paranın Rolü: İtalya ve Faşizm 1', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 2 (2 November 1933), pp. 2-4.

⁴⁹ Hüseyin Cahit, 'Bizde Milliyetçilik Avrupada Nasyonalizm', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 3 (9 November 1933), pp. 3-5.

argument for Hüseyin Cahit was one not wholly uncommon among Italian anti-fascists. The success of fascism owed to the Italians' lack of proper political culture, he argued, before adding that it was doubtful if Italy was a full-fledged democracy even before 1922.⁵⁰ 'Mature' nations knew how to make liberty and democracy function. This argument clearly did not mean that Italians as a whole were unable to appreciate democracy, as Hüseyin Cahit readily drew from the work of Italian anti-fascists such as Francesco Saverio Nitti, the former PM of Italy, and Carlo Sforza, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and a seasoned diplomat once positioned in Turkey. A critical engagement with their works meant Hüseyin Cahit sought to correct certain views of Nitti and Sforza, as in how their 'ignorance' of the Ottoman roots of Westernising reforms convinced them that Kemalism was trying to 'hasten' history through radical reforms.⁵¹ More appreciated were comments of Nitti on how Turkey's secularism was far beyond that of European movements. Rather than a mere separation of the state and Church, the abolishment of the Caliphate was the equivalent of abolishing the Papacy. Despite the imperfectness of liberal democratic conditions in the country, Turkey was moving towards a 'regime of freedom' as much as 'conditions allowed'. This march towards freedom was accompanied by 'Europeanisation', which involved saving the masses from illiteracy, female emancipation, and democratisation. The adoption of the Italian *Codice Zanardelli* penal code and its replacement by a fascist law in Italy was proof that Kemalism, 'this work of genius' for Nitti, functioned to resuscitate and democratise a nation that was on its deathbed merely a decade ago.⁵²

Yalçın was lavish with his praises of Nitti. One of the 'most authoritative authors' in Europe in political commentary⁵³, Nitti was also among

⁵⁰ Hüseyin Cahit, 'Matbuat Hayatı: Bay Falih Rıfkı Atay 3', p. 204.

⁵¹ Hüseyin Cahit, 'Türk Cümhuriyetinin Onuncu Yıldönümü', p. 2.

⁵² Francesco Nitti, 'Türk İnkılabı', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 1 (29 October 1933), pp. 4-5.

⁵³ See Hüseyin Cahit's brief introduction in Francesco Nitti, 'Demokrasi Meselesi: Bugünkü Vaziyet', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 3 (9 November 1933), pp. 1-3 (p. 1).

‘the most cultivated, free-thinking statesmen’ of the time⁵⁴ who worked ‘very energetically in the service of the democratic ideals he believes in, despite his old age’.⁵⁵ These were expressions of genuine admiration as well as attempts to showcase the authority of Nitti against radical Kemalists. If such an ‘authoritative author’ from Europe, from the land of fascism no less, felt that democracy was not dead, how could radical Kemalists claim otherwise?⁵⁶ Nitti was also instrumental to *Fikir Hareketleri* in the exploration of the contemporary ills of democracy, such as the unequal distribution of wealth. Much to the delight of the Turkish translator, Nitti linked this to imperialism abroad. European imperialism both destroyed other nations and corrupted the homeland.⁵⁷ Whatever the ills of democracy, Nitti observed that at least it did not create *ad hoc* nobilities for ‘stock-exchange manipulators’ like Giuseppe Volpi, the Minister of Finance who became the Count of Misurata.⁵⁸ The ‘corrupt’ fascists were undermining social equality by raising the ‘lowliest’ of society to meaningless positions of nobility.⁵⁹ Besides its corruption, in Hüseyin Cahit’s translation, fascism was also a form of *irtica*, reactionarism in Turkish.⁶⁰ In Italy, where ‘the press portrays every act of madness by Mussolini as yet another masterstroke’, one could understand why such *irtica* went

⁵⁴ Hüseyin Cahit, ‘Matbuat Hayatı: Bolşeviklik, Faşistlik ve Demokrasi’, *Fikir Hareketleri*, 83 (23 May 1935), pp. 75-76 (p. 75).

⁵⁵ Hüseyin Cahit, ‘Matbuat Hayatı: Tenvire Muhtaç İki Nokta’, *Fikir Hareketleri*, 37 (5 July 1934), pp. 171-172 (p. 172).

⁵⁶ Nitti, ‘Demokrasi Meselesi: Bugünkü Vaziyet’, pp. 1-3.

⁵⁷ Francesco Nitti, ‘Zenginliğin Cemiyet İçin Tehlikesi’, *Fikir Hareketleri*, 4 (16 November 1933), pp. 7-10 (p. 10).

⁵⁸ As Volpi had been involved in a number of financial enterprises in Turkey and was part of the Italian committee in the Treaty of Ouchy following the invasion of Tripolitania in 1912, perhaps Hüseyin Cahit had personal reasons to dislike Volpi, too. On this point see Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, ‘When Emmanuel Carasso Turned Italian: A Biography of Extraterritoriality and Questions of Nationality in the Ottoman Empire’, *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, LXIII (2024), pp. 309-340 (pp. 321-322).

⁵⁹ Francesco Nitti, ‘Demokraside Nişan ve Rütbe’, *Fikir Hareketleri*, 5 (23 November 1933), pp. 9-11 (pp. 10-11).

⁶⁰ Nitti, ‘Demokraside Nişan ve Rütbe’, p. 10.

unnoticed.⁶¹ However, *irtica* was the nemesis of Kemalism, and those seeking to import it from abroad were no better than proponents of homegrown *irtica* such as Islamism. Through Nitti, Hüseyin Cahit invited Kemalists to stay away from the ephemeral *irtica* of fascism. Mussolini himself knew perfectly well how the one who destroys the liberty of others must condemn himself to lifelong captivity of fear. He would either face a reaction at home or lead his nation to senseless imperialistic adventures abroad and feel the consequences: dictatorship at home was often ill at ease with peace abroad.⁶²

Fikir Hareketleri's anti-fascist campaign was bolstered by translations from Carlo Sforza. Hüseyin Cahit found it valuable to publish Sforza's – a seasoned statesman's – remarks on how modern states did not necessitate dictatorial methods to be run efficiently and how ills of democracy reflected deeper social problems and were temporary.⁶³ A realist, Sforza did not deny the popularity of fascism, especially among middle-class youth. Defining the fascist regime as even more oppressive than Tsarist Russia, Sforza observed that the actions of irresponsible individuals like Gabriele D'Annunzio helped spread a dangerous mentality among the Italian youth. He was hopeful that this mentality and its consequences would be swept away by the legacy of Mazzini and Cavour's Italy.⁶⁴

Against radical Kemalist portrayals of fascist Italy as a robust regime, Sforza in *Fikir Hareketleri* assured the reader that the fascist regime was merely a house of cards that would crumble under the first real challenge.⁶⁵ Though Hüseyin Cahit and Sforza were certain that regimes like fascism were unsustainable, they were particularly worried that the

⁶¹ Francesco Nitti, 'Faşizm Rejiminin Mahiyeti ve Neticeleri', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 38 (12 July 1934), pp. 177-179 (p. 178).

⁶² Francesco Nitti, 'Müstebidlerin Usulleri', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 128 (4 April 1936), pp. 371-373 (pp. 371-372).

⁶³ Comte Sforza, 'Harp Sonu Avrupası ve Diktatörlükler', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 21 (15 March 1934), pp. 1-3 (p. 2).

⁶⁴ Comte Sforza, 'Faşizmin Kaynakları', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 34 (14 June 1934), pp. 113-114.

⁶⁵ Comte Sforza, 'İtalyan Diktatörlüğünün Tabiatı', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 35 (21 June 1934), pp. 129-131 (pp. 130-131).

more they lasted, the worse an effect they had on public morality. Dictatorships tended to corrupt their people, and a particular example of this was 'Mussolini's lies'. Sforza saw Mussolini as a man who once 'attacked the idea of God viciously' only to later get married in a Church and have his children baptised. The fascist dictum of 'Duce is always right' particularly bothered him and gave Hüseyin Cahit another chance to push forward the notion of fascism as *irtica*. How could Duce be always right when he was a 'godless [...] communist' in 1913 and an agent of *irtica* in 1922, given that these two were completely contradictory positions? Mussolini managed to sweep such contradictions under the rug by lavishly decorating anyone who accepted his authority. Consequently, the Italian senate and universities were now filled with 'saddled donkeys'.⁶⁶

From the first issue of *Fikir Hareketleri*, Hüseyin Cahit underlined the importance of comparative reading and unprejudiced debates. To fulfil his promise to provide these, he translated a work of Mussolini on fascist philosophy in May 1934.⁶⁷ The translation series began without any commentaries, giving the reader time alone with the *Duce*.⁶⁸ Following the translations, he then provided an overview of Mussolini's arguments and explained how they left him 'in shock and somewhat suffocated'. Thinking long and hard, Hüseyin Cahit's attempts to make sense of what the *Duce* meant failed and gave him the impression that these were utterances of 'a drunkard or a half-mad man'. Hüseyin Cahit believed that the

⁶⁶ Comte Sforza, 'Faşizm İdaresinde Ahlak Düşkünlüğü', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 39 (19 July 1934), pp. 193-195.

⁶⁷ The timing of this review of Mussolini's work coincides with the aftermath of another speech by Mussolini that was widely regarded as expansionist towards Anatolia. This may have given Hüseyin Cahit more wriggle room to direct such words at a foreign regime's leader. However, the attack itself and perceptions of Mussolini as 'mad' cannot be solely related to state-level relations. As discussed, Hüseyin Cahit had been an anti-fascist at least ever since the killing of Matteotti. Thus, this can be interpreted as another example of the dynamic interplay between intellectuals and foreign policies.

⁶⁸ Mussolini, 'Faşizm Diktatörlüğü: Esasi Fikirler', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 29 (10 May 1934), pp. 33-35; Mussolini, 'Faşizm Diktatörlüğü: Siyasi ve İçtimai Meslek', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 30 (17 May 1934), pp. 49-52; Mussolini, 'Faşizm Diktatörlüğü: Siyasi ve İçtimai Meslek', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 31 (24 May 1934), pp. 65-68.

grandiosity and verbosity of the text were intended to trick ‘ignorant, un-discerning’ masses into believing that they were beholding a profound work of political philosophy. No mere riffraff, he and other intellectuals were able to see how, rather than a philosopher, Mussolini resembled an ancient soothsayer. The verbosity was designed to mask the fact that having ‘accidentally’ landed on power, the fascists had neither an overarching philosophy nor a political programme. In any case, no philosophy could justify the violence and liberticide in Italy. Hüseyin Cahit ‘laughed at’ the remarks of Mussolini, which did not fool him: fascism ‘was not a system of thought but a tool of torment and oppression that renders thought itself impossible’.⁶⁹

The idea that fascism sought to trick the ‘ignorant’ masses into believing that it had a profound philosophy was echoed widely among Italian anti-fascists. More specific to domestic context was the debate between the radical Kemalists and *Fikir Hareketleri*. The exchanges between *Kadro*, their allies, and *Fikir Hareketleri* quickly evolved into a controversy on ‘importing’ ideas from abroad and translations. In March 1934, *Kadro* mocked *Fikir Hareketleri* and İsmail Hakkı’s [Baltacıoğlu] journal *Yeni Adam* [the New Man] by observing that as both were Europe-loving ‘democrats’ who ‘relied on translations’, they could simply merge their journals under the name *Hür Adamlar* [the Free Men]. There was no dynamism [*hareket*] in the obsolete ideas defended by Hüseyin Cahit and certainly nothing new [*yeni*] in İsmail Hakkı’s liberalism.⁷⁰ The *Kadroist* Şevket Süreyya portrayed Hüseyin Cahit as a typical pre-Great-War Ottoman intellectual who worshipped Europe. *Kadro* called for the Kemalists to embrace techniques of Europe, from historical materialism to importing factories. By contrast, Hüseyin Cahit was importing a mentality that was doomed to fail. The historical materialist *Kadroists* conceived of mentalities as springing from given socioeconomic conditions. Liberalism was rooted in a certain European organisation of economy. Worse, these ‘obsolete’ ideas were defended in *Fikir Hareketleri* by the likes of

⁶⁹ Hüseyin Cahit, ‘Benim Anladığım Faşizm’, *Fikir Hareketleri*, 32 (31 May 1934), pp. 81-82.

⁷⁰ ‘Mecmualarımız’, *Kadro*, March 1934, pp. 52-53.

Nitti, 'an Italian whose ideas failed even in his country and was forced out of Italy'.⁷¹ Şevket Süreyya later revisited this argument and once more observed how problematic it was that *Fikir Hareketleri* consisted merely of the 'Ottoman' Hüseyin Cahit and his translations from 'bankrupt' Italians Nitti and Sforza.⁷² In a context where the 'new' was typically 'better', the radicals and their liberal opponents scrambled to claim the mantle of novelty: hence Hüseyin Cahit's insistence on fascism being merely *irtica* and the *Kadroist* view of liberal democracy as belonging to a bygone era of Europe. For the *Kadroists*, Italy was proof that liberal democracy was abandoned even by the West.⁷³

Izmir's *Kültür* joined *Kadro's* offensive against translating 'obsolete ideas'. In early 1934, a commentator observed that Hüseyin Cahit invited the Turkish youth to worship 'totems left without believers' even in Europe. Reversing the *irtica* argument, the author argued that the likes of Nitti were 'thrown out of the sea by the waves of the Italian revolution' and represented *irtica*, the clinging to a bygone era. The author felt 'an enemy of revolution' like Nitti could teach nothing to the Turkish youth. 'The texts of a man whose ideas were not accepted in his own country in the first place' were of dubious utility elsewhere. Moreover, a serious intellectual like Hüseyin Cahit had to do more than merely act as a middle-man for the ideas of others, just as Turkey was not to imitate Europe.⁷⁴

The radical offensive against Hüseyin Cahit focused on a number of themes. One was the questioning of Nitti's and Sforza's authority as

⁷¹ Şevket Süreyya, 'Biz Avrupanın Hayranı Değil Mirasçımız!', *Kadro*, May 1934, pp. 43–46 (p. 45).

⁷² Şevket Süreyya, 'Hüseyin Cahit Beyin Hazin Tarafı', *Kadro*, July 1934, pp. 36–40 (p. 39).

⁷³ Şevket Süreyya, 'Hüseyin Cahit Beyin Hazin Tarafı', pp. 39–40.

⁷⁴ 'İnkılap ve Kadın: Vali Paşa ile Mülakat', *Kültür*, 6 (15 January 1934), pp. 1–3 (p. 3). Note that, much as Falih Rıfkı had to at times, *Kültür's* author found himself having to clarify how they could oppose democracy in a country where the semi-official paper was called *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 'National [Popular] Sovereignty'. Thus, the author continuously shifts between a more quietist stance of arguing that Turkey is already a democracy and the more radical arguments surrounding the untenability, as well as dangers of democracy, from the way the democratic US is unable to teach Charles Darwin to its children to, going much deeper into the past, the death of Socrates.

foreigners to have a say in Kemalism. Nitti and Sforza's *fuoruscitismo* [the phenomenon of anti-fascists fleeing from fascism by moving abroad] was also problematised. The radicals felt that Nitti's ideas proved useless even in Italy and thus had no validity in Turkey. Temporality was crucial, as both sides of the debate sought to present the other side as obsolete. The radicals, especially *Kadro* and Falih Rıfkı, felt fascism was not to be directly copied in Turkey but proved the futility of liberal democracy even in Europe. Besides *Kadro*, which tried a wholly radical argument by relativising the West, sides to the debate depicted their ideologies as triumphing in the contemporary West.

Undeterred, Hüseyin Cahit continued to rely on anti-fascists to uphold their vision of Europe, which was far from dead, he explained. He invited the *Kadroists* to recognise how Europeanisation, and certainly not 'apish imitation', was a goal of the Turkish revolution. He conceded that democratic regimes in Europe were undergoing a crisis, though he denied that fascism or communism were novel solutions that would successfully resolve Europe's problems. Fascism had decisively unillustrious precedents in ancient Roman and Greek tyrannies.⁷⁵ The radicals could freely draw from fascism and even contradict the Kemalist law on the press, which cited the 'defence of democracy' as a goal of the press regime. The sole prerequisite was for them to leave the mantle of Kemalism and thus avoid contradiction between their values and those of Kemalism. As for Nitti, Hüseyin Cahit insisted that Nitti's departure from Italy was not a shame. Repeating a common argument in opposition to the radicals, Hüseyin Cahit likened fascism to Abdulhamid II's 'tyranny' and observed that if Nitti were dishonoured, so would be the Young Turks.⁷⁶ The latter were revered by Kemalists as heroes of freedom who honourably struggled against the tyrant. Therefore, fascism and Abdulhamid II were both examples of *istibdat* (tyranny), which was an argument sure to strike a

⁷⁵ Hüseyin Cahit, 'Matbuat Hayatı: Avrupanın Mirasçıları', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 35 (21 June 1934), pp. 138-140 (p. 140).

⁷⁶ As we saw in Chapters Two and Three, this argument to establish a parallel between fascism and the reign of Abdulhamid II was used by *Vatan* in the 1920s and Zekeriya [Sertel] in the 1930s in their opposition to the RPP's monopoly of power, too.

chord among the Kemalist intelligentsia, allergic as they were to the notion of *istibdat* having grown up in the Hamidian era.⁷⁷ A final line of defence in drawing from Nitti and Sforza was Hüseyin Cahit's observation that contemporary Turkish intellectuals had to draw from Western sources. As the Turkish letters and sciences lagged behind the West for theory or systematic information in any field, the Turks required European expertise. *Kadro's* frequent drawings from the methods of Karl Marx were emblematic of this. If drawing from the West as of the 1930s was inevitable, then the question was which sources were more beneficial rather than petty arguments about purely Turkish ideas versus translations.⁷⁸

Hüseyin Cahit revisited this theme when responding to *Kültür*, albeit in a more condescending tone. European ideas were 'a complex forest', and the uninitiated, like the *Kültür* authors, easily got lost in the forest, following the lead of the first European book on which they laid their hands. Ironically, the authors of this Izmir journal that Hüseyin Cahit could not find in Istanbul – another indication of condescension – claimed Europe was dead, basing this claim on the arguments of European books. To help the perplexed, Hüseyin Cahit argued that the guidance of Nitti and Sforza was crucial.⁷⁹ As he repeated in his review of Esat Adil Müstecaplıoğlu's translation of Nitti's works in the city of Balıkesir in 1935, such translating help was welcome precisely because 'Europe is not a simple concept. It is a thoroughly complex entity', and quality guides were needed to understand it.⁸⁰

Hüseyin Cahit felt that the unexperienced, understandably excited radical youth were lost in the complex forest of Europe. He and the anti-

⁷⁷ Hüseyin Cahit, 'Matbuat Hayatı: Tenvire Muhtaç İki Nokta', pp. 171-172.

⁷⁸ Hüseyin Cahit, 'Matbuat Hayatı', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 45 (30 August 1934), pp. 298-300 (p. 299).

⁷⁹ Hüseyin Cahit, 'Bizim Allameler', *Fikir Hareketleri*, 12 (11 January 1934), pp. 3-4 (p. 3).

⁸⁰ Hüseyin Cahit, 'Matbuat Hayatı: Bolşeviklik, Faşistlik ve Demokrasi', pp. 75-76. Esat Adil was born in Balıkesir in 1904 and studied law. Building on his defence of democracy in the interwar period, he later became the founding leader of the *Türkiye Sosyalist Partisi* [Socialist Party of Turkey] in 1946. Note that this party is not the same as the *Sosyalist Parti* of 1959-60, among the founders of which were Şemseddin Talip Diler.

fascists he translated would show these perplexed individuals the right way in the cacophony of contemporary ideologies. In his efforts to check the rise of radical Kemalism in Turkey in the 1930s, he portrayed fascism as merely a reborn ancient tyranny or, even worse, the European equivalent of the Hamidian *istibdat*. In translating Italian anti-fascists, however, Hüseyin Cahit did not merely transfer their thoughts from one context to another without any alteration. As we saw in Chapters Four and Five, most Italian anti-fascists, including Sforza, felt that the contemporary regime structure of Turkey as of the 1930s was inevitable and necessary, given the conditions of the country. In Hüseyin Cahit's translation, instead, the anti-fascists became weapons with which he battered those who wanted to uphold the contemporary regime structure, including the quietists. Though both sides appreciated the ends of Kemalism and shared a dislike for fascism, in *Fikir Hareketleri*, the work of Italian anti-fascists found a use that the authors did not originally intend. Both were opposed to any form of *istibdat*, but only in Hüseyin Cahit's translation did Italian anti-fascism serve as a warning against the Kemalist leadership to refrain from *istibdat*-like measures.

Returning to the overarching question underlying this chapter, we can already appreciate the ways contact may work transnationally. Yalçın did not become an anti-fascist after coming into contact with the work of Nitti and Sforza. His domestic concerns over the future of liberal Kemalism drew him to their work.⁸¹ That he spoke Italian and followed the Italian press closely, perhaps closer than virtually any other Turk in Turkey at the time, did not mean such an opportunity of contact made him a fascist. Rather, due to his prior beliefs and values, the opportunities for contact led him towards Italian anti-fascists, whose ideas he reconfigured rather than wholly assimilating. The result was a form of appreciating the

⁸¹ This observation is akin to the point made by psychologist David C. Funder that 'situations are not randomly populated'. That is, certain people are more disposed than others to be found in certain situations, circumstances and locations than others, due to their personalities, and as I would add in keeping with a central argument of this thesis, the prior beliefs and values. On this point, see David C. Funder, *The Personality Puzzle*, 7th edn. (W. W. Norton, 2016), p. 142.

ideals of Kemalism but opposing the RPP's practice of catching up with the West through non-democratic means. The next section will consider another individual who had ample contact with Italy, even more so than Yalçın, and was more disposed to drawing from fascism but ended up with a unique interpretation that no faction in Turkey or Italy could easily recognise as their own.

§ 6.3 The Diplomat: Nüzhet Haşım Sinanoğlu Against 'Demo-Liberalismo'

As Italian diplomats closely followed developments and factions in Turkey, Ankara did not lack a counterpart. In the 1920s and the 1930s, a Turkish diplomat who spoke Italian well enough to translate classical works of Italian literature into Turkish operated in Italy. The Consul Nüzhet Haşım Sinanoğlu wrote numerous reports about fascism and Italy's contemporary situation. Such was the epistemic advantage he derived from contact that he even knew the work of Asvero Graveli and his position within the PNF. Born in the 1890s, Nüzhet Haşım mastered Italian and French at an early age before teaching at the prestigious Galatasaray High School.⁸² Entering diplomatic service, he arrived in Italy following a short stint at Sofia. Before taking up the position of Consul in Bari, he first served as Deputy Consul in Trieste.⁸³ With his knowledge of the Italian

⁸² Biographical information about Nüzhet Haşım is very much lacking in the literature. The journalist Soner Yalçın reports that the Sinanoğlu family introduced to him a box containing the personal papers of Nüzhet Haşım. In a newspaper article, he wrote that Nüzhet Haşım was born in Kavala in 1896 to a prominent Ottoman Turkish family, that he received his early education there, that the family migrated to Istanbul after the Balkan Wars and the ethnic cleansing of Muslims and Turks in those regions that became part of Greece and Bulgaria after the war, and migrated to Ankara after Istanbul fell under the Allied occupation. See Soner Yalçın, 'O Sandık...', *Sözcü*, 13 July 2018. <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/o-sandik-wp2518463> [Date Accessed: 30 April 2024].

⁸³ The report to be discussed in the following paragraph dated March 1927 was signed '*Trieste Şehbender Vekili, Nüzhet Haşım*', meaning Deputy Consul in Trieste. This means that Nüzhet Haşım was on duty in Trieste and in Italy at least as early as March 1927. For more information about the report, see the following paragraph.

language and culture, in addition to spending time in different parts of Italy, his reports into the workings of the fascist regime provide a unique picture, from observations of weakness that most ignored, such as the conflict between fascist militia and army officers in the 1920s, to vocabulary traces of erudition in fascist ideology second to none in Turkey.

The earliest report from Nüzhet Haşım in Italy to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Italian domestic affairs is likely the one from March 1927. As the Deputy Consul in Trieste, Nüzhet Haşım investigated fascist attempts to propagate their ideology in this region that became part of Italy after the First World War. Party and militia discipline were priorities, and Nüzhet Haşım noted that a significant number of people tasked with this were Jewish. Much more effort was needed to ensure discipline: Nüzhet Haşım described division among ‘old and new fascists’, likely in reference to the division between those who became fascists before or after the March on Rome. He even related an armed duel between two fascists on the streets that left one wounded. The PNF established its union in the region, but the relevant classes and the masses deemed the organisation ‘meaningless’. Nüzhet Haşım concluded that despite serious efforts, the fascist regime was not yet a ‘serious and sustainable force’ in Trieste and the new regions.⁸⁴

In April 1928, Nüzhet Haşım detailed the ‘nationalising’ work of the fascist authorities in the newly acquired regions, oriented towards boosting national belongingness. Describing the functioning of the *Balilla*, *Avanguardisti* and *Dopolavoro* organisations, Nüzhet Haşım observed a *Dopolavoro* trip from Milan to Trieste. These trips were designed to bring the people of Italy closer to their brethren in Trieste. Seeing through fascist propaganda, Nüzhet Haşım noted that despite such efforts, alienation persisted between citizens of cities such as Trieste and Gorizia and the rest of the Italians who continued to refer to the former as ‘*allogeni*’ [foreigners]. Nor was the *Dopolavoro* entirely successful in converting the workers to fascism, who were mostly displeased with the economy.

⁸⁴ ‘Tireste’deki [*sic*] Faşist Örgütlenmesi’, *Dışişleri Bakanlığı Türk Diplomatik Arşivi*, 22 March 1927, 541, 44239-210174-6.

Nüzhet Haşim's report also contained advice for Turkey, and it is through this advice that we encounter a highly original aspect of his interpretation of fascism and fascist Italy. The reason Nüzhet Haşim detailed the workings of *Balilla* or *Dopolavoro* was that similar organisations could benefit Turkey. He even suggested one such youth group to be established could be called the Grey Wolf Organisation [*Bozkurt Teşkilatı*] and roughly modelled after the *Balilla*. The problem with Italy was not the inadequacy of the fascist organisations but the inherent shortcomings of the Italians, which the fascists could mend only partially.⁸⁵ Transferred to Bari, Nüzhet Haşim continued to go beyond fascist propaganda on the domestic situation in Italy, sending home detailed unemployment statistics that somewhat undermined the regime's claims.⁸⁶ His reports also included depictions of daily scenes from life in fascist Italy, such as a group of unemployed stonemasons in Bari turning to the PNF officials in Bari for help. The officials pledged help with job finding and food for their families.⁸⁷

The most detailed into the workings of the fascist regime and ideology was a report from April 1934, which illustrates how, beyond deriving lessons from Italy as a fellow *inkılap memleketi*, Nüzhet Haşim also appreciated aspects of fascist ideology. The report began by addressing the need for a robust Turkish youth organisation and set the scene for taking the example of Italy by depicting pre-fascist Italy in total chaos. Nüzhet Haşim went further by observing that after the Great War, 'demo-liberal principles' were weakened and 'new doctrines that seek to harmonise within national interest both the need for protecting the national body

⁸⁵ 'İtalya'da Faşist Gençlik Teşkilatının Faaliyetleri Hakkında Rapor', *Dışişleri Bakanlığı Türk Diplomatik Arşivi*, 12 April 1928, 541, 44108-209115-77.

⁸⁶ 'M. Konsolos [Nüzhet Haşim] to Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 22 November 1930, *BCA*, Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü, 30-10-0-0, 237-598-14. As another report from December 1930 from the embassy in Rome put it, the unemployment figures in the country were far higher than the figures provided by the Italian authorities. See 'Ambassador in Rome to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 20 December 1930, *BCA*, Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü, 30-10-0-0, 237-598-14.

⁸⁷ 'İtalya'daki İşsizlik Hakkında, Bari Konsolosluğu'muzun Raporu', 21 May 1931, *BCA*, Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü, 30-10-0-0, 237-599-1.

and the individual interest' emerged. Statesmen and intellectuals across the world shunned the notion of absolute liberty: the solution was '*disiplinli hürriyet*'.⁸⁸ These remarks are crucial to understanding Nüzhet Haşım's web of beliefs. The '*disiplinli hürriyet*' is a remark often used by Recep Peker and the quietists. The *demo-liberal*, however, is a word that did not exist in Turkish before. It was quite common in fascist literature, in its various forms, such as *demoliberalismo*, as pejorative references to various democratic ideologies. Nüzhet Haşım likely found the radical Kemalist arguments too unpalatable but also felt aspects of fascist ideology, such as opposition to *demoliberalismo*, were universally valid.

Perhaps unexpectedly in a report designed to recommend the fascist organisations as the model for the structuring of the Turkish counterparts, Nüzhet Haşım provided ample detail about the shortcomings of the *Balilla*. The Italian youth was far from being completely disciplined, as factionalism (*politikacılık*) and heedlessness run rampant among them. Benefitting from the confidentiality of the report, he solved the apparent paradox of his clear appreciation of fascist organisations and his observation of fascist propaganda's failures quite bluntly. The first reason was that 'the Italian nation is not a disciplinarian one. The Italian personality is laid back. The Italian is a showoff, easily swayed by the allure of pompousness.'⁸⁹ The second reason was the fascist 'factionalism' that divided the Italian youth into those who partook in the fascist youth organisations and those who did not, with the result that the members of these organisations felt much vanity and grew spoilt and undisciplined.⁹⁰ Consequently, fascist legislation and organisations were not at fault for the failures of the *Balilla* and the like. The problem with Italy was the Italians and 'the Italian character'. Nüzhet Haşım thus assured the authorities that they could easily draw from fascist organisations since 'discipline is

⁸⁸ 'Nüzhet Haşım Bey'in Türkiye Gençlik Teşkilatı Hakkındaki Raporu', 2 April 1934, *BCA*, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 490-1-0-0, 1106-40-1, p. 1.

⁸⁹ 'Nüzhet Haşım Bey'in Türkiye Gençlik Teşkilatı Hakkındaki Raporu', *BCA*, 490-1-0-0, 1106-40-1, p. 2.

⁹⁰ 'Nüzhet Haşım Bey'in Türkiye Gençlik Teşkilatı Hakkındaki Raporu', *BCA*, 490-1-0-0, 1106-40-1, p. 3.

an obvious quality of the Turk'. Moreover, unlike the 'factionalism' the PNF caused in Italy, the RPP was not an ordinary party. Anyone who was not with the RPP was an enemy of the homeland rather than a partisan of another faction.⁹¹

Nüzhet Haşim's careful study of the fascist case also led him to grant the Turkish military a prominent role in prospective Turkish youth organisations. Though he referred to the traditionally Westernising role the Turkish military played for over a century, he seems to have also wanted to pre-empt a repetition of the militia-army conflict seen in Italy.⁹² Relatedly, Nüzhet Haşim proposed that the prospective youth organisation should be part of the RPP rather than having an independent structure.⁹³ This youth organisation would fulfil several functions, such as Turkifying the masses. Unsurprisingly, Nüzhet Haşim reminded the role the fascist organisations played in the newly acquired regions and felt a similar institution in Turkey could work over the Kurds, Lazes and Circassians. Another function of the organisation was to alter the worldview of the Turks to be in line with Kemalism. This Kemalism was clearly tinted with Nüzhet Haşim's experience in Italy:

'The goal of the organisation shall be rooting out the old Eastern upbringing, the kind that makes one accustomed to being exploited and oppressed, and substitute it by raising a Western [*Garpli*] nation that has the power to exploit. The notion of Easternness would be a defamation of Turkishness. The term "Eastern" is not a geographical one but one that determines the civilisational level of a nation. The Eastern is the one that is exploited and is so backwards as to deserve such exploitation (...) while the Western is the exploiter and is so advanced as to deserve it.'⁹⁴

⁹¹ 'Nüzhet Haşim Bey'in Türkiye Gençlik Teşkilatı Hakkındaki Raporu', *BCA*, 490-1-0-0, 1106-40-1, p. 3.

⁹² 'Nüzhet Haşim Bey'in Türkiye Gençlik Teşkilatı Hakkındaki Raporu', *BCA*, 490-1-0-0, 1106-40-1, p. 8, p. 11.

⁹³ 'Nüzhet Haşim Bey'in Türkiye Gençlik Teşkilatı Hakkındaki Raporu', *BCA*, 490-1-0-0, 1106-40-1, p. 8.

⁹⁴ 'Nüzhet Haşim Bey'in Türkiye Gençlik Teşkilatı Hakkındaki Raporu', *BCA*, 490-1-0-0, 1106-40-1, p. 9.

The organisation would at once render the Turks more Turkish and more Western. After ‘spilling much blood in vain for vacuous internationalist causes’ such as Islam, the Turks were reverting to their true selves under Kemalism. A thorough youth organisation was the best tool to guarantee the success of this mentality revolution. Nüzhet Haşim included a will to exploit if necessary to this mentality. While a form of social Darwinism was common among the Kemalist intelligentsia, as in Italy and elsewhere in Europe in the interwar era, such pride in the capacity to ‘exploit’ is certainly more reminiscent of the fascist discourse on the empire than the typical Kemalist beliefs surrounding imperialism.

Another unprecedented influence of fascism is evident in the parts of the report where Nüzhet Haşim argued the fascist youth organisations’ regulations and programmes could be almost directly applied in Turkey, with him promising help with the translations.⁹⁵ Prospective Turkish leaders or teachers of the Grey Wolf Organisation were envisioned to receive training in a fascist academy in Rome, where they would be taught for three years, learn Italian, master the fascist propaganda and organisational techniques as interns, and return to Turkey to establish a similar Turkish academy. ‘I very much hope that the Italians can spare some places’ for prospective Turkish students, Nüzhet Haşim concluded.⁹⁶

About a year before this lengthy report, Nüzhet Haşim published a book, *Faşizm ve Onun Devlet Sistemi* [*Fascism and Its Government System*] in 1933. The book was an edited compilation of his articles for *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* on the subject and intended for the wider public. While we saw Nüzhet Haşim was probably closer to the quietists, Falih Rıfkı in *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* utilised his texts to bolster his case for drawing from the fascist example. The book was thorough in its explanation of various fascist institutions and the history of fascism; however, its intended audience meant that both the audacious proposals for the Turks to be educated in Rome and the disparaging observations on ‘the Italian character’

⁹⁵ ‘Nüzhet Haşim Bey’in Türkiye Gençlik Teşkilatı Hakkındaki Raporu’, *BCA*, 490-1-0-0, 1106-40-1, p. 7, p. 13, p. 14.

⁹⁶ ‘Nüzhet Haşim Bey’in Türkiye Gençlik Teşkilatı Hakkındaki Raporu’, *BCA*, 490-1-0-0, 1106-40-1, pp. 12-13.

were left out. Nüzhet Haşım explained his reason for publishing the book as providing an impartial account of fascism since much coverage of fascism in Turkish and Western languages was flawed.⁹⁷ The book began with a narration of the ideological roots of fascism, including the influence of Georges Sorel on fascism and Mussolini's socialist past.⁹⁸ An account of pre-fascist Italy in chaos during 1919-20, the fascist reaction to the rise of the Italian 'communism' and the left-wing disrespect for returning veterans followed.⁹⁹ As elsewhere, in his coverage of the early years of fascism, Nüzhet Haşım differed from most Turks by the wealth of his knowledge of Italy, discussing Edmondo Rossoni's vision of fascist economics and the conflicts between the local fascist militia leaders [*ras*] and Mussolini.¹⁰⁰ Then came the Matteotti crisis, and out of the ashes of what Nüzhet Haşım called 'the fascist government of a liberal state' emerged the new set of laws (*leggi fascistissime*) and the structure of the fascist state.¹⁰¹ Mussolini stabilised the country and overcame myriad conflicts within the fascist regime machinery. In the meantime, most regime opponents had to flee the country, becoming *fuorusciti* as 'those who went outside'; striking a chord quite close to the fascists, Nüzhet Haşım saw the *fuorusciti* as largely assisted by the freemasonry and the French left.¹⁰² The rest of the book delved deeper into the organisational structure and regulations of fascist Italy, with the author observing that fascist Italy was arguably the country that paid the most attention to educating (*terbiye*) the masses.¹⁰³

The book attests to Nüzhet Haşım's unparalleled familiarity with fascism and its figures, as he cites Rossoni and his syndicalism, Gravelli and his work on propaganda, as well as mentioning Leandro Arpinati, Italo

⁹⁷ Nüzhet Haşım Sinanoğlu, *Faşizm ve Onun Devlet Sistemi* (Muallim Ahmet Halit Kütüphanesi, 1933), p. 8.

⁹⁸ Sinanoğlu, *Faşizm ve Onun Devlet Sistemi*, p. 21, pp. 30-32.

⁹⁹ Sinanoğlu, *Faşizm ve Onun Devlet Sistemi*, pp. 39-56. On disrespect towards the veterans, see Sinanoğlu, *Faşizm ve Onun Devlet Sistemi*, p. 58.

¹⁰⁰ Sinanoğlu, *Faşizm ve Onun Devlet Sistemi*, p. 84, p. 87, pp. 105-106.

¹⁰¹ Sinanoğlu, *Faşizm ve Onun Devlet Sistemi*, p. 162.

¹⁰² Sinanoğlu, *Faşizm ve Onun Devlet Sistemi*, pp. 170-171.

¹⁰³ Sinanoğlu, *Faşizm ve Onun Devlet Sistemi*, p. 323.

Balbo, Giuseppe Bottai, among others.¹⁰⁴ These were not mere instances of namedropping since Nüzhet Haşım knew the factions to which these individuals belonged. For example, he introduced Roberto Farinacci to the Turkish reader as an '*intransijan*', a Frenchified rendering of *intransigente* in Italian used in reference to hardcore fascists. Farinacci was 'one of the ... toughest revolutionary [*inkılapçı*] fascists'. *İnkılapçı* was a central term in Kemalist ideology, as discussed before in the context of the term *inkılâp*.¹⁰⁵ Obviously, Nüzhet Haşım thought of fascism as a revolutionary ideology. Such attention to detail and the mostly friendly portrayal of fascism gained the praise of the eminent Turcologist Ettore Rossi, who observed that Nüzhet Haşım's book was as empirically accurate as it evinced the author's 'sympathy' for fascism. Rossi interpreted these as results of the time Nüzhet Haşım spent in Italy.¹⁰⁶

Was Nüzhet Haşım a fascist? We can confidently answer this question in the negative since he never thought of the fascist ideology as a whole, with corporatism and religious policies, to be applicable in Turkey. The question of whether Nüzhet Haşım's perceptions of fascism place him within the *inkılâp memleketleri* way of thinking or closer to the ideological drawings of the radicals from fascism is more complex. From the appearance of fascist vocabulary such as *demolibérale* in his work to his view that the Turks had to be proud of the power to exploit, Nüzhet Haşım's contact with Italy clearly created quite a positive impact on his perceptions of fascism as a regime and an ideology that was justly becoming prominent in the West. Though he intended to borrow revolutionary techniques from Italy chiefly, he himself was more influenced by fascist ideology than the typical Turkish visitors. Contact clearly played a role in this affective shift, along with bringing him an unrivalled epistemic advantage. This meant that whether in 1927 or 1934, Nüzhet Haşım was always ready to seek explanations of phenomena in Italy that went beyond fascist propaganda. The most striking example of this is his quite

¹⁰⁴ Sinanoğlu, *Faşizm ve Onun Devlet Sistemi*, pp. 105-106; p. 327; p. 342; p. 181; p. 228.

¹⁰⁵ Sinanoğlu, *Faşizm ve Onun Devlet Sistemi*, p. 162.

¹⁰⁶ Ettore Rossi, 'Sulla Letteratura e Sulla Cultura Italiana in Turchia II', *Oriente Moderno*, 14.11 (1934), pp. 557-67 (p. 566).

persistent belief that while fascist institutions were wonderfully devised, ‘the Italian character’ prevented the fascists from reaping the fruits of their work fully. In light of these, it is best to think of Nüzhet Haşım as someone clearly influenced by fascism in multiple ways and reconfigured rather than swallowing it as intended by the regime. Certainly, no matter how disparaging Mussolini could be about the Italians in private, neither he nor the regime ever desired foreigners to think of fascism as successful within the limits of a wayward Italian nation. This complex of ideas cannot be deemed as entirely positive or negative towards fascism, and even the epistemic advantage of Nüzhet Haşım was as much a benefit of his contacts as his curiosity and overall personality. A keen interest in fascism as an *inkılap*, combined with his contact with Italy and his personality, resulted in his unique perceptions of fascist Italy. Through the case of Cornelio Di Marzio, the next section will illustrate how, when curiosity for the other side was less prominent, the consequences could change quite significantly.

§ 6.4 *Porta Chiusa* Anew: Cornelio Di Marzio in Turkey

The way *Kültür*’s Altıntuğ deemed Italy outside Europe could greatly surprise Cornelio Di Marzio, who saw himself as a European *par excellence* in Turkey. Staunchly fascist, Di Marzio was born in L’Aquila in 1896, studied literature and philosophy in Rome and fought in the First World War. After the war, he became associated with the nationalist circles around the *Idea nazionale*, which kickstarted his journalistic career. Di Marzio partook in several ‘punitive expeditions’ against anti-fascists before the March on Rome and later moved to Istanbul as the commercial attaché and the correspondent for *Il Popolo d’Italia*. Di Marzio spent around five years in Istanbul and conveyed his observations of Turkey and Kemalism in numerous publications, confidential reports, and the book *La Turchia di Kemal* [Turkey of Kemal] in 1926. The book reached a wide public in Turkey and Italy and was reviewed by a large number of intellectuals, including Rossi. Meanwhile, his efforts to rally Italians in Turkey and the surrounding countries around fascism led to his nomination as the leader

of the *fasci italiani all'estero*. His travels, culminating in a travelogue titled *Viaggi Senza Orario* [Untimely Travels], seem to have caused some confusion among Turkish authorities. In 1927, it took a series of correspondence between Istanbul and Ankara to establish whether Di Marzio left Turkey to take up a new position in Italy, which he did in February 1927, or returned to Turkey for reasons to be investigated.¹⁰⁷ Upon his return to Italy, Di Marzio's activities shifted from *fasci italiani all'estero* to establishing fascist control over the arts and journalism, authoring myriad pieces for many different outlets and editing the *Meridiano di Roma* in 1938. Though he was quite close to Mussolini, he decided not to join the *Repubblica sociale italiana* in the north in 1943, and he died in 1944 as a result of an aerial attack near his whereabouts.¹⁰⁸

In Turkey, Di Marzio had to deal with what he and others saw as '*ad hoc*' obstructionisms of the Turkish government and the rampant 'xenophobia'. Tommaso Bertelé gifted a copy of his compilation of Venetian recommendations for 'dealing with the Turks' to Di Marzio, a fellow diplomat and fascist.¹⁰⁹ Though his rage did not inspire him to author a book like Bertelé, his private papers suggest Di Marzio largely shared Bertelé's view of 'Turkish xenophobia' in the mid-1920s. In a report from October 1926, Di Marzio defined Turkey as possessing a 'xenophobic and suspicious' character. Because of this, the commercial attaché found it difficult to obtain reliable statistics; if Turkish inefficiency was one explanation, another, more troubling possibility was deliberate Turkish secrecy.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ 'Sabık İtalya Sefareti Ticaret Ataşesi, İtalya Hariciye Nezareti Müsteşarı ve Faşist Teşkilatı Katib-i Umumisi Corneli di Marcio'nun [*sic*] İstanbul'a Geldiği İstihbaratının Tahkiki ile Faaliyetlerinin Bildirilmesi', *BOA*, 27 March 1927, HR. İM., 214-34. 'Cornelio di Marcio'nun [*sic*] İstanbul'da Bulunuş Sebebinin Tahkiki', *BOA*, 30 March 1927, HR. İM., 214-72.

¹⁰⁸ Albertina Vittoria, 'Cornelio Di Marzio', *Dizionario Biografico Degli Italiani*, (1991) <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/cornelio-di-marzio_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/>.

¹⁰⁹ Tommaso Bertelé, 'I Turchi e La Turchia Giudicati dagli Ambasciatori Veneti', 1925, located in *Archivio centrale dello stato*, Carte di Marzio, b. 47, f.2.

¹¹⁰ 'Cornelio di Marzio, Commercial Delegate at the Embassy in Constantinople, to the Ministry of National Economy', 10 October 1926, *ACS*, Carte di Marzio, b. 47, f. 2.

These negative observations were not limited to the Kemalist leadership, which Di Marzio saw as mirroring the tendencies of the wider public. Writing in 1927 a short recommendation to Mussolini on how to deal with Turkey upon his departure from the country, Di Marzio underlined his authority as someone 'dealing with Turkish affairs for years' and noted how the Turks were 'blindly and unconsciously' following their leadership. A great cultural divide separated the West and the East, with Turkey part of the latter, and 'the East is not an easy realm' [*L'Oriente non è paese facile*] for Westerners. The substitute for Di Marzio in Turkey had to be someone familiar with the workings of Turkey and the Eastern way of life and vigilant enough to decipher the divisions among the Turks that Turkish secrecy sought to hide.

Complaining about the unfulfilled potential of Italian commerce in Turkey, Di Marzio nevertheless felt the problem was largely the Turkish 'xenophobia'. He felt that the political situation in the country was now stable – presumably, after the Izmir assassination attempt of June 1926 – reinforcing the shift in fascist perceptions of the Kemalist regime as no longer temporary in 1927. This stability owed not to any praiseworthy qualities of the leaders but to the 'blind' following of the masses and 'the terroristic regime of the army'. Clearly, as of 1927, Di Marzio did not think of Kemalism as comparable to fascism in any sense, even though he later contributed to universalist outlets like *Antieuropa*. Turkey was a wholly different Eastern setting where Western agents had to tread carefully. In this context, Di Marzio was proud of the work of the local *fascio* and the diplomats. Against 'Oriental inertia, ambiguous Levantinism, invading Hebrewism, the vilest freemasonry', they did their best to defend Italian interests, Di Marzio observed with tones of anti-Semitism that became more common among fascists in the late 1930s. The Orient remained a place where 'the strong are always respected, more than anywhere else'; the Italians had to be strong to earn the Turks' respect.¹¹¹

Di Marzio conveyed his thoughts about Turkey to the wider Italian readership in his *La Turchia di Kemal*, published in Milan in 1926 but

¹¹¹ 'Promemoria per il Duce, Viaggio in Turchia', *ACS*, Carte Di Marzio, b. 47, f. 4.

largely written in Istanbul in 1925.¹¹² Developments in Turkey, such as the abolishment of the Progressive Republican Party (PRP) and the crack-down on the opposition, induced him to pen a 'final chapter', completed in January 1926. A key leitmotif of the book was Di Marzio's careful selection of phenomena that could and could not be compared between the West and Turkey. Di Marzio placed Turkey firmly in the East in his mental map due to its history, religion, and traditions. Crucial differences separated the two, such as how 'logic has scarcely recorded any success' in the East throughout history.¹¹³ A mosaic of nations with infinite cosmopolitanism, Di Marzio wrote that the Ottoman Empire could be compared to Austria-Hungary at first glance, but this, too, would be an infelicitous comparison since 'Croats and Kurds cannot be compared', just as Catholic Austria was not the same as Muslim Ottomans.¹¹⁴ Against a tendency in Turkey and Europe, Di Marzio also insisted on the incomparability of the clearly hierarchical Papacy and the Caliphate that lacked a similar hierarchy of clergy, not to mention other differences.¹¹⁵ While he agreed with most contemporary observers that Turkish nationalism was rising, Di Marzio refused to interpret this as a by-product of Westernisation. Turkish nationalism, too, could not be compared to other nationalisms: other nationalisms, especially European nationalisms, emphasised returning to and preserving national traditions while the Kemalists turned their backs on their history.¹¹⁶ Di Marzio felt that political differences in Turkey ultimately boiled down to personal conflict or clashes of interest rather than ideological convictions, as in Europe. If both Bolshevism and fascism were inseparable from their leaders' personalities early on, they developed to become ideologies by themselves while Kemalism remained reduced to the will of its leader.¹¹⁷ Relatedly, the social organisation of Turkey also differed from the West, with no bourgeoisie in the

¹¹² Cornelio Di Marzio, *La Turchia Di Kemal* (Edizioni Alpes, 1926), p. 288.

¹¹³ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 91.

¹¹⁴ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, pp. 28-29.

¹¹⁵ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 77.

¹¹⁶ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, pp. 90-91.

¹¹⁷ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 205.

Western sense. The 'Muslim organisation' of society largely prevented class conflict and capital accumulation.¹¹⁸ One positive consequence of this was how Turkish masses would never accept un-Islamic socialism of any sort, whether Bolshevik or Sorelian. Even Turkish secularism was not comparable with its Western counterparts. While Di Marzio likened Kemalist secularisation to 'left-wing ministers' in Europe and their 'anti-clericalism', he nevertheless insisted that laicity was one thing in Turkey and another in Europe. European laicity meant state neutrality vis-à-vis all religions, though numerous differences also existed in various European countries: in Italy, the laicity of the state came to mean anticlericalism and 'suffocation' of the 'thousand-year-old ideals' of Italians.¹¹⁹ In any case, those who wished to proclaim Turkey as part of Europe due to its secularism were acting too hasty, Di Marzio argued. Nobody could know what Kemalist secularism would develop into in the future.¹²⁰

Di Marzio saw Islam as the chief factor that separated Turkey and Europe. Despite his official duties, Di Marzio did not hold back his views on Islam in his book. He observed that the Quran was unfit for civilised people. It could work to organise a band of 'savages' – like the early Arabs – but severely lagged behind the requirements of modern life.¹²¹ Islam was a 'static' religion that lacked any profound ethical content, oriented as it was towards material goods and military success. This made Islam 'entirely' a body of principles for nomadic military organisations. To illustrate his point, Di Marzio noted how even the Muslim prayer resembled military gymnastic and how the Prophet, aware of Islam's 'lack' of ethical content, wisely promised material goods in both words to his followers.¹²² Nonetheless, Islam functioned as the glue that kept the Ottoman mosaic together. Di Marzio observed that in Turkish culture, the alphabet was Arabic, the poetry was Persian, and the arts were of foreign origin.¹²³

¹¹⁸ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 211; pp. 183-189.

¹¹⁹ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, pp. 243-244.

¹²⁰ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 246.

¹²¹ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, pp. 32-33.

¹²² Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 33.

¹²³ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 32.

To illustrate the cosmopolitanism of the Ottoman Empire, he provided a list of Ottoman participants in an international event in 1876, which included Slavic surnames, Armenian names, as well as Turkish and Arabic ones.¹²⁴ It was only Islam and the institution of the Caliphate that had, until recently, united this mosaic.

Certain parts of the book give the impression that Di Marzio imagined Turkish nationalism to be as influential and ancient as the Turkish devotion to Islam. In keeping with the contemporary fascist trends, Di Marzio observed that 'xenophobia' permeated the Turkish mind. He felt that this '*xenofobia angorina*' ['Ankaran xenophobia'] largely stemmed from Ankara contrary to the more cosmopolitan Istanbul.¹²⁵ Examples of 'xenophobic' *ad hoc* obstructionism in diplomacy included the Turkish penchant for drawn-out talks and empty promises to ultimately deny the European side what they wished.¹²⁶ The Turkish maltreatment of the European schools and hospitals in Turkey further exemplified 'xenophobia'. Ankara either left these to be closed due to financial problems or sought to supervise them by sending Turkish teachers to teach Turkish and history in line with Ankara's perspective.¹²⁷ Such 'xenophobia' clearly harmed Italy, and Di Marzio saw this, as well as Turkish suspicions of Italy and their general 'lack of interest' in all things Italian, as 'ungratefulness' vis-a-vis the Italian support for the Turkish War of Independence (1919-23). Italy was 'used' like a 'piece on the chessboard' by the Turks.¹²⁸ The Turks not only saw a soldier in every Italian worker and a general in every Italian merchant but would even trade the Italians of Antalya for 'blacks of Congo' in an instant if given the chance.¹²⁹ As Di Marzio felt the Italians were infinitely superior and could improve Anatolia's economy, he felt this was an irrational choice motivated by 'xenophobia'. Di Marzio's complaints extended to the negative coverage of Italy by Turkish

¹²⁴ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 31.

¹²⁵ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 228; pp. 94-95.

¹²⁶ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, pp. 78-79.

¹²⁷ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 79.

¹²⁸ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 262.

¹²⁹ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 177.

newspapers and the latter's penchant to interpret any remark of Mussolini as indicating an intention to colonise Turkey: such suspicions did not accord with the realities of Italy, he observed.¹³⁰

Though he did not use the words '*porta chiusa*', Di Marzio's work largely depicted Turkey in line with Orazio Pedrazzi's depictions of the country as a 'closed door'.¹³¹ The duo also shared suspicion towards Germany. With the names Mauser and Krupp figuring multiply, Di Marzio observed Germany's prominent position in late Ottoman and Republican militaries.¹³² In the First World War, the Empire was effectively a 'German colony' and its army was a 'German division'.¹³³ As these contacts persisted, Germans benefitted from the elimination of all Christian competition in the Turkish economy.¹³⁴ Whenever Turks spoke of sending future bureaucrats to Europe for training, inviting specialists, or acquiring materials for their railways, 'Europe' almost invariably meant Germany.¹³⁵ Taking a more literary turn, Di Marzio found much symbolism in the union of the sights of the Hagia Sophia and the 'ugly' German Fountain, Emperor Wilhelm II's gift to Istanbul during a visit in 1901.¹³⁶ In Di Marzio's view, the Turks knew Germany was no longer what it was, though they continued to love and respect it while hoping for the revival of an 'anti-European, anti-English, rebellious' Germany.¹³⁷

Contact with Turkey gave Di Marzio a great advantage over individuals like Pedrazzi. While he, too, was prone to make an occasional mistake in spelling Turkish names, Di Marzio knew more about Turkish politics and culture. His book detailed the journalistic and political activities of

¹³⁰ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 262.

¹³¹ This similarity may not be a coincidence or even solely due to convergent evolution of views. Di Marzio was aware of the work of Pedrazzi on the 'Orient' as attested by the presence of works by Pedrazzi among his private papers. See Pedrazzi's text 'La veneziana di Smirne' from 1922 in *ACS*, Carte Di Marzio, b. 13, f. 65.

¹³² Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 46.

¹³³ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 53; p. 47.

¹³⁴ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 71.

¹³⁵ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 71.

¹³⁶ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 100.

¹³⁷ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 296.

Hüseyin Cahit.¹³⁸ Di Marzio also knew about Recep Bey [Peker], whom he introduced to the Italian readership as a firm man with youthful energy. He interpreted Recep Bey's opposition to democratically elected mayors in Istanbul in the mid-1920s as a sign of him being a man with a 'good amount of logical thinking'. In Di Marzio's view, Recep Bey noticed how the Kemalists were outnumbered in Istanbul and how it was better to act in an 'imperial' fashion for the safety of the revolution than to risk it all for an 'empty democratic principle'.¹³⁹ Noting the forging of factions within the RPP in the mid-1920s, Di Marzio observed that Recep Bey was part of a group of 'extremists' that also included Yakup Kadri and Yunus Nadi.¹⁴⁰ Policy differences also separated the more hawkish Ismet Pasha from the liberal Fethi Bey [Okyar].¹⁴¹

Despite this clear epistemic advantage, there are omissions and mistakes in the book that require explanation. These suggest that despite his epistemic advantage, Di Marzio was never interested in Turkish affairs sufficiently to make full use of his knowledge or extend it. For instance, the discussion of Hüseyin Cahit did not include even a passing reference to the fact that he spoke Italian. Di Marzio also did not think of comparing Recep Bey's opposition to the 'empty democratic principle' and fascism: any form of Kemalism remained too Eastern to merit meaningful comparison to fascism in his mind. Let alone establishing contact with the radicals or help Falih Rıfkı in his efforts to draw from fascism as Di Marzio was in Istanbul, it appears the latter barely knew who Falih Rıfkı was, whose name he mentioned just once as 'Falik Rıfti' while summarising the stance of Turkish papers vis-à-vis their government.¹⁴²

Di Marzio's perceptions of the PRP suggest this was a missed opportunity for contact between the radicals and fascists. Though various motives had been ascribed to the PRP leadership, Di Marzio observed, 'all the abstract elements of a political religion of democracy are present' in

¹³⁸ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 240; p. 272; p. 273.

¹³⁹ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 217.

¹⁴⁰ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 217.

¹⁴¹ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, pp. 215-216.

¹⁴² Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 278.

the PRP programme.¹⁴³ Inverting Nitti's statement on fascism, Di Marzio observed that the PRP had many leaders but not a mass to follow it.¹⁴⁴ He found the entire PRP experiment meaningless and even dangerous for Turkey. However, precisely because he continued to feel that it was the 'apathy' of the Eastern masses that would crush the new party, Di Marzio did not seek to utilise this failure of liberal democracy as proof of fascism or establish parallels between Turkey and Italy.

On the whole, as of the 1920s, despite his epistemic advantage, Di Marzio's interpretations of Kemalism did not meaningfully differ from the likes of Pedrazzi. In Di Marzio's view, Turkey remained an 'Islamic' and, therefore, 'anti-Christian' country. The Turks were fanatics and 'polygamous'.¹⁴⁵ In addition to doubting the effect of Westernisation, Di Marzio had misgivings about Turkish nationalism as Turkey was 'a nationalist state without a history'.¹⁴⁶ Where the Kemalists were connected to the West was the vestiges of democratic doctrines on their worldviews, and Di Marzio dismissingly observed that many Kemalist leaders associated with democratic freemasonry.¹⁴⁷ Noting the discrepancies between the Kemalist ideals and practices, Di Marzio proceeded to define Mustafa Kemal as the 'incongruous anachronism of a dictator-democrat'.¹⁴⁸ This dictatorial democracy of Kemalism had a peculiar sense of secularism, which induced the regime to oppress both non-Muslims and, now, Muslim clerics alike.¹⁴⁹ Where Di Marzio differed from Pedrazzi and other fascists was his observation of the Kemalist regime's stability: The 'fanatics' of the Black Sea region, to whom Di Marzio referred to as the 'Lazes' discontented with the secularist policies of the Kemalists, was one group that dared to oppose the new regime but was quickly crushed.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴³ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, pp. 225-26.

¹⁴⁴ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 232.

¹⁴⁵ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 190.

¹⁴⁶ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 285.

¹⁴⁷ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 244.

¹⁴⁸ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 213.

¹⁴⁹ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 131.

¹⁵⁰ Di Marzio, *La Turchia di Kemal*, p. 131.

Writing for the quasi-official *Gerarchia* in January 1926, Di Marzio toned down his views and conceded that Kemalist secularism could eventually allow Turkish conversions to other religions.¹⁵¹ Even in this text, however, Di Marzio's overarching theme was the 'static' Byzantine heritage that continued throughout Ottoman history. The Kemalists were portrayed neither as exactly the same as old Ottoman regimes nor as the heroic Westernisers. The discrepancies between the article and the confidential report, also from 1926, can best be explained with reference to self-censorship. Tellingly, even in 1933, when the Turco-Italian relations were excellent at the state level, Di Marzio felt the necessity to add that the 'masses are still too Islamic' when discussing the creation of a new capital and a new Turkey.¹⁵² Though he now appreciated the Turkish will to fight for their independence, the characteristic observation of similarities between fascism and Kemalism in the early 1930s in Italian works was missing.

This avoidance of comparison was not because Di Marzio saw fascism as uniquely Italian. He wrote for *Antieuropa* and even mentioned Mustafa Kemal in an article. Tellingly, the article compared Mustafa Kemal not to Mussolini but to Oliver Cromwell. Discussing Cromwell's career, Di Marzio likened his religious policies to those of Mustafa Kemal, who, he explained, led the Turks to become the heroes of the Islamic world during the War of Independence, only to later turn their faces away from Islam.¹⁵³ The only significant change appears to be Di Marzio's conviction by 1933 that the Kemalists were indeed secularists. Whether he thought this secularism would bring about a tolerance for Christianity soon or only in a distant future is unclear. When Di Marzio revisited the subject of Kemalism in 1935, with the Balkan Pact of 1934 and the Italian invasion of Abyssinia souring the state-level relations, he was once more dismissive of the Kemalist leadership. Complaining about Turkish 'ungratefulness' towards Italy, Di Marzio argued that in the Allied-occupied

¹⁵¹ Cornelio Di Marzio, 'De Bello Bizantino', *Gerarchia*, January 1926, pp. 33-39 (p. 39).

¹⁵² Cornelio Di Marzio, 'Creazione di una capitale', *Il Messaggero*, 7 February 1933, p. 3.

¹⁵³ Cornelio Di Marzio, 'Fisionomia di Oliviero Cromwell', *Antieuropa*, 1 February 1930, pp. 795-801 (p. 798).

Istanbul, the current Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tevfik Rüştü Aras, had sought refuge in the house of an Italian doctor when the British came looking for him.¹⁵⁴

Di Marzio never developed a keen interest in Turkey, where he ended up by sheer chance. The years he spent there benefitted him epistemically as he knew more about Turkey and its residents than most Italians. But this knowledge by itself did not lead to an affective change. Di Marzio continued to imagine a barrier between the West and the East and firmly placed Turkey in the latter category. Since he thought religion and the shared history of Europe were key to this barrier, there was only so much the Kemalists could do to bridge the gap. Where his epistemic advantage proved useful was his earlier appreciation of the staying power of the Kemalist regime compared to the likes of Pedrazzi. Beyond this, the contact or even the epistemic advantage it produced did not endear the Turks or the Kemalists to Di Marzio. Di Marzio did not seek to deepen his knowledge of Turkey beyond his knowledge as a diplomat and journalist in Turkey. The next section will contrast the case of Di Marzio with someone who felt quite different about Turkey and Kemalism and whose views of the latter, at times, differed from the fascist status quo. This case will throw light on the differing epistemic and affective impact of contact depending on the agent.

§ 6.5 The Turcologist: Ettore Rossi on Kemalism

Unlike Di Marzio, who ended up in Turkey by chance, Rossi's interest in Kemalism derived from academic curiosity. Born in Lombardy in 1894, Rossi studied in Pavia and fought in the Turco-Italian War of 1911, which introduced him to 'Oriental' cultures, and then the First World War, earning a bravery medal for his actions during the Second Battle of Piave in 1918. Having learnt Arabic in Tripolitania, Rossi came to frequent the *Istituto per l'Oriente* [the Orient Institute] and contribute to its journal

¹⁵⁴ Cornelio Di Marzio, 'Chiarezza Fascista', *La Provincia di Bolzano*, 11 December 1935, located in *ACS*, Carte Di Marzio, b. 13, f. 65.

Oriente Moderno. In the mid-1920s, he began to learn Turkish and mastered both modern Turkish and its historical variants to such an extent that he became the leading Turcologist of the journal. Rossi joined the Sapienza University's Turkish Language and Literature department in 1927 and replaced Carlo Alfonso Nallino as the head of the *Istituto per l'Oriente* after his death in 1938. Called to arms during the Second World War, Rossi continued his studies into the Arabic-speaking world and Turkey, retaining his directorate of the institute and journal after the fall of fascism. Rossi died in 1955 in Rome, leaving behind works the meticulousness of which is universally recognised.

Though Rossi began learning Turkish in Italy, he had ample opportunity for research trips in Turkey. It was occasionally third parties, like the Sovereign Military Order of Malta on a Near East trip in 1923-25, that funded his research trips.¹⁵⁵ This and the patriotism of Rossi sometimes coloured his research. As Bruna Soravia rightly notes in her biography of Rossi, the scholar wrote on Malta just as Italy and Britain were confronting one another for the sovereignty of the island; as Italian foreign policy began to develop plans for the Red Sea, Rossi wrote on Yemen.¹⁵⁶ In this context, Rossi may be fruitfully compared to Zeki Mesud [Alsan], as both tried to act with social scientific objectivity while seeking to combine this with their patriotism.

It was perhaps with this dedication to objectivity that much of the initial texts by Rossi aimed solely at providing the facts in Turkey to the Italian readership. The seasoned director Nallino occasionally commented or even responded to Turkish actors under study – for example, pointing out in December 1922 that contrary to Mustafa Kemal's claim, the Caliphate had never been a solely spiritual authority¹⁵⁷ – while Rossi limited himself initially to summarising developments. A piece co-

¹⁵⁵ Bruna Soravia, 'Ettore Rossi', *Dizionario Biografico Degli Italiani*, (2017) <[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ettore-rossi_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ettore-rossi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) [accessed 1 May 2024].

¹⁵⁶ Soravia, 'Ettore Rossi'.

¹⁵⁷ E. R., N., U. F., V. V., 'Notizie Varie', *Oriente Moderno*, 2.7 (15 December 1922), pp. 402-412 (pp. 402-404).

authored by Rossi predicted that the conclusion of the Turkish War of Independence meant that as of September 1923, Turkish politics would be dominated by divisions within the elite that conducted the war.¹⁵⁸ Accordingly, 'liberals' around *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, such as Ahmed Ağaoğlu or Yunus Nadi's *Yeni Gün*, pushed for Westernisation [*occidentalizzarsi*] and also a more 'liberal' attitude towards religion, whereas 'conservatives' around *Tevhid-i Efkar*, *İkdam* and *Sebilürreşad* opposed extensive borrowings from the West.¹⁵⁹ Rossi revisited *Tevhid-i Efkar*'s Islamism in November 1923 when summarising the reaction of the journal to the rumours that the Dutch would establish a second Kaaba in Batavia for their Muslim subjects to spare them from the time and money-consuming travels to Arabia.¹⁶⁰ Reviewing several examples of global 'pan-Islamic solidarity', Rossi concluded that 'the Muslims exaggerate easily' in their outcries against the West.¹⁶¹

Rossi found himself in Istanbul right as the Kemalists were abolishing the Caliphate in March 1924. This gave him an opportunity to witness another potential pan-Islamic solidarity or 'exaggeration' *in situ*. Just three days after the abolishment, on 6 March, Rossi sent a lengthy letter to *Oriente Moderno* from Istanbul. He found the last prayer of the Caliph in Dolmabahçeto be much less popular with the public than expected.¹⁶² This lack of interest, he explained, had more to do with the loss of prestige that the abolishment of the Sultanate incurred on the Caliphate in 1922, than fear of government reprisals: 'A Caliphate without a sword could no longer attract attention.'¹⁶³ While some Turks sympathised with the government's decision, most were apathetic to it, and this stemmed from the insufficient 'culture of the people' that rendered them unprepared for political pondering. The popular apathy also gave the conservative wriggle

¹⁵⁸ U. F., E. R., 'Turchia', *Oriente Moderno*, 3.4 (15 September 1923), pp. 209-216 (p. 214).

¹⁵⁹ U. F., E. R., 'Turchia', *Oriente Moderno*, 3.4 (15 September 1923), p. 215.

¹⁶⁰ Ettore Rossi, 'Notizie Varie: Solidarietà e propaganda islamica recentissime', *Oriente Moderno*, 3.6 (15 November 1923), pp. 373-384 (p. 373).

¹⁶¹ Rossi, 'Notizie Varie: Solidarietà', p. 375.

¹⁶² U. F., E. R., G. T., 'Turchia', *Oriente Moderno*, 4.3 (15 March 1924), pp. 168-182 (p. 170).

¹⁶³ U. F., E. R., G. T., 'Turchia', *Oriente Moderno*, 4.3 (15 March 1924), pp. 170-171.

room, Rossi observed, but manifestations of discontent remained limited and did not reach the proportions of open hostility towards the regime.¹⁶⁴

In August 1924, *Oriente Moderno* published the first piece on Turkey that was signed solely by Rossi. Benefitting from the contacts he established in Turkey, Rossi reviewed the reception of Italian literature and culture in the country. He praised Hüseyin Cahit's command of Italian, having met him in person; he could not speak Italian quite fluently but perfectly understood it, though he still missed 'the best part of our literature'. One bothersome tendency in Turkey was the focus on what Rossi deemed the more trivial portions of Italian literature. Rossi took note of a book titled '*Faşizm*' by Ali Reşad, which was largely an indirect translation of an Italian work on fascism translated from the French version.¹⁶⁵ Though this illustrated the French influence in Turkey, Rossi felt that this influence was waning: regrettably for Italy, the place voided by the French was being filled by the Russians and Germans. Writing at a time when state-level relations were characterised by distrust, Rossi wrote that Italian literature and culture were barely known in Turkey. Still, he was hopeful, as 'the cultured classes' in Turkey had sympathy for Italy. It was up to the Italians to transform these into a stable and widely shared pro-Italian stance and combat the 'occasional Italophobic campaigns of the Istanbul papers'.¹⁶⁶ Apparently, unlike Di Marzio, Rossi felt the 'Italophobia' was limited to certain circles. In the coming years, he continued to report on the popularity of Italian culture in Turkey, as well as providing detailed information about the rise and fall of the PRP in 1924-25.¹⁶⁷

Rossi dwelled much on religion and the impact of the Kemalist reforms on Islam. In reporting the conversion of a certain Hüseyin Haşım to Christianity and the resulting upheaval in Turkey, Rossi described the situation while Nallino commented on it. In Nallino's view, the incident

¹⁶⁴ U. F., E. R., G. T., 'Turchia', *Oriente Moderno*, 4.3 (15 March 1924), p. 174.

¹⁶⁵ Ettore Rossi, 'Notizie Varie: Sulla letteratura e sulla cultura italiana in Turchia', *Oriente Moderno*, 4.8 (15 August 1924), pp. 530-532 (p. 531).

¹⁶⁶ Rossi, 'Notizie Varie: Sulla letteratura e sulla cultura italiana', p. 532.

¹⁶⁷ E. R., U. F., V. V., 'Turchia', *Oriente Moderno*, 4.12 (15 December 1924), pp. 729-737 (p. 730).

showed how, despite much talk of freedom of conscience, conversion was equal to treason in the Turkish mind and how most Turkish intellectuals really thought Islam was to remain as the state religion. Nallino felt that Yunus Nadi's remarks on the subject illustrated the Turkish intelligentsia's 'confusion and [cultural] unpreparedness'.¹⁶⁸ While Rossi avoided such remarks on the Turkish elite, sometimes he, too, had to go beyond reporting, driven by an urge to predict the course of events. In June 1927, Rossi reviewed the alphabet reform debates in Turkic states. As usual, he meticulously noted the sides to the debate, such as how 'Jewish' Avram Galante opposed a Latin-based alphabet while Falih Rifkî countered that severing links to the past was a boon for Turkey.¹⁶⁹ Rossi himself thought that the Arabo-Persian script was unsuitable for the phonology of Turkic languages and created significant issues. The desire for reform was 'justified', but a number of sociocultural and economic factors, from the abundance of Arabic and Persian loanwords to a minimal sense of unity the Arabo-Persian alphabet gave to the Islamic world, meant that Turkey would not adopt a Latin-based alphabet soon.¹⁷⁰

However, the curse of the predicting social scientist soon struck.¹⁷¹ Returning to the subject in January 1929, Rossi humbly acknowledged that his prediction was swiftly belied by the adoption of a new, Latin-based alphabet for Turkish in late 1928. One factor he did not take into consideration in 1927 was 'the revolutionary spirit' and the will of the

¹⁶⁸ E. Cerulli, M. G., U. F., E. R., N., V. V., 'Notizie varie', *Oriente Moderno*, 6.10 (October 1926), pp. 555-561 (p. 559).

¹⁶⁹ Ettore Rossi, 'La questione dell'alfabeto per le lingue turche', *Oriente Moderno*, 7.6 (June 1927), pp. 295-310 (p. 304).

¹⁷⁰ Rossi, 'La questione dell'alfabeto', p. 310.

¹⁷¹ While such cases abound in all fields of social sciences, one of the most salient cases is probably that of Theda Skocpol and her theory that revolutions 'are not made; they happen'. Months after the publication of her book on revolutions, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 took place and Skocpol herself later admitted this necessitated at least some rethinking of her original theses. See Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 17; Theda Skocpol, 'Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution', *Theory and Society*, 11.3 (1982), pp. 265-83 (p. 265).

leaders, 'if not of the leader' directly.¹⁷² Though Falih Rifkî and other allies advocated for the alphabet reform as part of Westernisation, Mustafa Kemal was almost alone in his push for reform in the leadership.¹⁷³ The reformists were opposed by 'fanatical' individuals who thought the Arabic script was sacred.¹⁷⁴ Rossi observed that one could too easily brush aside this reform as another example of the Kemalist 'mania of transformations'. Rossi also found certain aspects of the reform problematic. Nevertheless, he was convinced that the Kemalists would successfully replace the old values with new forms of life in Turkey thanks to their mentality that 'does not care about obstacles'.¹⁷⁵

Analysing this disappearance of ancient mentalities in December 1929, Rossi comparatively analysed the 1923 and 1929 editions of a poem by Mehmed Emin [Yurdakul] titled *Zafer* [Victory]. Changes Rossi highlighted included the praises of the Ottoman dynasty and Islam in 1923 being replaced by those of the Kemalist leadership and the Turks. While Mustafa Kemal was 'the holy shield of faith' in 1923, he became 'the holy shield of honour' in the revised version.¹⁷⁶ Yakup Kadri's call for Turkish writers to ignore classical Ottoman literature was another illustration of the change.¹⁷⁷ Granting that certain manifestations of this new Turkish nationalism could be extreme, Rossi assured the readers that things were not as they seemed in the West. For instance, the population exchange between Greece and Turkey was deemed to override individual liberties unacceptably but ultimately led to more ethnically homogenous nation-states, which was a 'necessary condition of peace'.¹⁷⁸ Another peculiar mistake in Italy was the tendency to translate 'Gazi', Mustafa Kemal's

¹⁷² Ettore Rossi, 'Il nuovo alfabeto latino introdotto in Turchia', *Oriente Moderno*, 9.1 (January 1929), pp. 32-48 (p. 32).

¹⁷³ Rossi, 'Il nuovo alfabeto', p. 33.

¹⁷⁴ Rossi, 'Il nuovo alfabeto', p. 34.

¹⁷⁵ Rossi, 'Il nuovo alfabeto', p. 46.

¹⁷⁶ Ettore Rossi, 'Odiere tendenze letterarie e politiche in Turchia', *Oriente Moderno*, 9.12 (December 1929), pp. 580-590 (pp. 581-582).

¹⁷⁷ Rossi, 'Odiere tendenze', p. 587.

¹⁷⁸ Ettore Rossi, 'Lo scambio obbligatorio delle popolazioni tra la Grecia e la Turchia', *Oriente Moderno*, 10.9 (September 1930), pp. 397-418 (p. 399).

honorary title, as 'victorious'. Rossi rightly explained that the word meant an individual who waged war, especially against 'infidels'. Rossi thought that the confusion was caused by the title being granted to Mustafa Kemal after the Turkish victory.¹⁷⁹

While Rossi corrected the Westerners' mistakes on Turkey, a particular interpretation of Kemalism in 1932 led the *Kadroist* Burhan Asaf to accuse him of not really understanding Turkey. In June 1932, Rossi argued that Mustafa Kemal's rule was a 'decade-long victorious dictatorship'.¹⁸⁰ Though his swift reforms caused 'imbalances' in the Turkish spirit, Kemalism was successfully 'detaching Turkey from the Eastern world [*mondo orientale*]' and cleansing any 'Islamic, especially Arabic cultural influence'.¹⁸¹ The tenets of Kemalism that united all factions were, for Rossi, a 'desire of Westernisation, nationalism, the need to consolidate the current regime'.¹⁸² In Kemalist Westernisation, Rossi found echoes of fascism. One similarity was the rejection of construing society based on class struggle and the relevant labour policies of Ankara and Rome.¹⁸³ Rossi also saw the establishment of the People's Houses in Turkey as largely built on the *Dopolavoro* example. These 'imitations' of fascism were not surprising: as Turkey was hastily Westernising, it was only natural that the Kemalists drew from the best examples in Europe for their project.¹⁸⁴

Kadro's Burhan Asaf responded in August 1932 by arguing that Rossi's sympathy for the Turkish revolution was as evident as his mistakes in interpreting Kemalism's goals. Rossi erred, 'like certain Turkish authors', by interpreting the Kemalist revolution as targetting Westernisation through eclectic borrowings from the West. Kemalism was a 'national

¹⁷⁹ Ettore Rossi, 'Recensione di Ugo Bassi – L'Italia e la nuova Turchia', *Oriente Moderno*, 12.9 (September 1932), p. 463.

¹⁸⁰ Ettore Rossi, 'Recenti Aspetti della Rivoluzione Turca', *Il Giornale di Politica e di Letteratura*, June 1932, pp. 3–10 (pp. 3–4).

¹⁸¹ Rossi, 'Recenti Aspetti della Rivoluzione Turca', p. 7.

¹⁸² Rossi, 'Recenti Aspetti della Rivoluzione Turca', p. 8.

¹⁸³ Rossi, 'Recenti Aspetti della Rivoluzione Turca', p. 9.

¹⁸⁴ Rossi, 'Recenti Aspetti della Rivoluzione Turca', pp. 9–10.

liberation movement' instead.¹⁸⁵ Had Kemalists wanted to Westernise Turkey blindly, it would have been natural for them to follow the latest fashions in the West, like fascism.¹⁸⁶ Burhan Asaf thought that Rossi also ignored certain key differences between fascism and Kemalism. Fascism was a reaction to class warfare and chaos in Italy, while Kemalism sought to pre-empt such a scenario. Fascism was pushed to imperialism due to 'demographic necessities' whereas Kemalism was the anti-imperialist movement *par excellence*.¹⁸⁷ Burhan Asaf concluded that had Rossi interpreted any similarities between fascism and Kemalism, such as a shared disapproval of liberalism, as the result of a broader post-war rethinking of ideologies, he would have been both more friendly towards Turkey and more accurate in his analyses.¹⁸⁸ Burhan Asaf was correct to note that the refusal to see society as based on class struggle was not imported from fascism. A form of solidarism and a vision of class harmony for the nation's greater good was widely shared by Turkish intellectuals since the late Ottoman era.¹⁸⁹ In any case, despite his enthusiastic remarks that fitted well with the universalist fascist agenda of the day, Rossi, too, knew that analogies were not to be pushed too far. In his original 1932 piece, in addition to observing 'imitations', Rossi also noted that Turkey lacked a truly corporative state organisation, and the social conditions of the country prohibited any direct copying of the fascist system.¹⁹⁰

This misjudgement of the Turkish reaction, perhaps fuelled by the winds of universalist fascism, led Rossi to further caution when writing on fascism and Kemalism from then on. This certainly did not mean Rossi now wrote to placate the Kemalists and avoided remarks they could not appreciate. In October 1933, Rossi overviewed the Republican decade in

¹⁸⁵ Burhan Asaf, 'Faşizm ve Türk Milli Kurtuluş Hareketi', *Kadro*, August 1932, pp. 36-39 (p. 36).

¹⁸⁶ Burhan Asaf, 'Faşizm ve Türk Milli Kurtuluş Hareketi', p. 37.

¹⁸⁷ Burhan Asaf, 'Faşizm ve Türk Milli Kurtuluş Hareketi', p. 38.

¹⁸⁸ Burhan Asaf, 'Faşizm ve Türk Milli Kurtuluş Hareketi', p. 39.

¹⁸⁹ Zafer Toprak, *Atatürk: Kurucu Felsefenin Evrimi* (Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2020), p. 273.

¹⁹⁰ Rossi, 'Recenti Aspetti della Rivoluzione Turca', pp. 9-10.

Turkey on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Republic. Meticulously noting celebrations, Rossi then analysed the ends of the Kemalist revolution and insisted on the Kemalist desire to create a 'new Western culture' that would be simultaneously more purely Turkish compared to the Ottoman past.¹⁹¹ As for the methods of the regime, Rossi bluntly wrote that the Kemalists described Turkey as 'a free democratic regime' though the regime was, in fact, a 'dictatorship'. The regime relied on the prestige of the victorious war of independence, the success of Kemalist reforms, and Mustafa Kemal's 'iron will'. As an Orientalist with deep affection for Eastern arts and literature, he felt that the reforms sometimes went too far in rejecting the Islamic heritage of Turkey, and secularism could not justify such an attitude.¹⁹² However, Rossi was adamant that Kemalism was able to 'impose itself upon people' whether through education or force.¹⁹³ If the Kemalists were delighted at this prediction of success, they would much less appreciate the idea that their success partially owed to 'dictatorship'.

In the meantime, changes occurred in the reception of Italian culture in Turkey, which Rossi reviewed in November 1934, around a decade after his first review. Discussing translations, Rossi dwelled on the work of Şemseddin Talip [Diler], who learned Italian 'as a boy' and produced extremely high-quality translations with impeccable fidelity to the Italian originals.¹⁹⁴ He then reviewed the Turkish literature on fascism and singled out Nüzhet Haşim's work for the author's objectivity and meticulousness.¹⁹⁵ These few pages perfectly illustrate the connectedness of the actors in this chapter, as Rossi was familiar with the works of all individuals that appear as focal points of the sections here. However, this contact did not homogenise their views. For example, Di Marzio's interpretations

¹⁹¹ Ettore Rossi, 'Il decennale della Repubblica di Turchia', *Oriente Moderno*, 13.11 (November 1933), pp. 541-557 (p. 551).

¹⁹² Rossi, 'Il decennale', p. 555.

¹⁹³ Rossi, 'Il decennale', p. 554.

¹⁹⁴ Ettore Rossi, 'Sulla letteratura e sulla cultura italiana in Turchia II', *Oriente Moderno*, 14.11 (November 1934), pp. 557-567 (p. 560).

¹⁹⁵ Rossi, 'Sulla letteratura II', p. 565.

of Turkey always remained more negative compared to Rossi, who appears to have felt genuine sympathy for Turkey.

In December 1938, Rossi penned a eulogy for Atatürk that overviewed his career, which serves as a useful coda to his perceptions of Kemalism. In typical fashion, Rossi started by providing biographical facts about Atatürk, set the scene by narrating the late Ottoman and early Republican history, and observed how the RPP's 'clear political programme' distinguished it from the Committee of Union and Progress. The latter remained attached to different forms of belongingness, such as Ottomanism or pan-Islamism, while the staunchly Turkish nationalist Kemalism did not.¹⁹⁶ Rossi was not afraid to criticise aspects of Kemalism: he found the consequence of the language reform 'exaggerated' and was particularly scathing of the 'Güneş Dil Teorisi', the Sun Language Theory, which posited that proto-Turkic was the language from which all languages derived.¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless, Atatürk had 'extreme courage' as he worked with 'tenacity' to overcome all obstacles before the wellbeing of his country.¹⁹⁸ The Turkish people felt genuine affection for Atatürk, and the occasional use of coercion did nothing to detract from this.¹⁹⁹ If the reaction to Islamic civilisation was extreme, it was still aimed at curtailing the creeping influence of the Islamic clergy on public life.²⁰⁰ Rossi was convinced that Kemalism addressed the real needs of Turkish society.

Rossi's views of Turkey and Kemalism were influenced by his social scientific curiosity, his tendency for meticulous analysis, and his Italian patriotism. Unsurprisingly, the aspects of Kemalism he found problematic were related to his patriotism (as in his complaints of the Italophobic Turkish papers in the mid-1920s) or to his professional interest in the 'Orient' (for example, the 'exaggerated' Turkish reaction to classical

¹⁹⁶ Ettore Rossi, 'Atatürk (1880-1938)', *Oriente Moderno*, 18.12 (December 1938), pp. 635-646 (p. 643).

¹⁹⁷ Rossi, 'Atatürk', p. 642; V. V., Ettore Rossi, 'Turchia', *Oriente Moderno*, 17.10 (October 1937), pp. 506-510 (pp. 509-510).

¹⁹⁸ Rossi, 'Atatürk', p. 643.

¹⁹⁹ Rossi, 'Atatürk', p. 644.

²⁰⁰ Rossi, 'Atatürk', p. 645.

Ottoman literature). On the whole, Rossi balanced these commitments quite well, and the only serious communicative mistake in his career appeared when he claimed Kemalism was ‘imitating’ aspects of fascism. With his interest and knowledge, which grew on par with his contacts with the Turks, Rossi differed from many other fascists, observing earlier in the 1920s that the Kemalists were not pan-Islamists and that their regime was not as feeble as supposed. Throughout the interwar era, Rossi’s perceptions of Kemalism remained more positive than the likes of Pedrazzi or, indeed, Di Marzio. The case of Rossi also serves as a warning to construing contact as necessarily transformative. Despite myriad changes in state-level relations, various developments, and many visits to Turkey, Rossi’s perceptions of Kemalism did not undergo significant change in this period. In the early 1920s, Rossi differed from the wider fascist literature with his hope that the Turkish elite could develop a pro-Italian stance, but Di Marzio, living in Turkey around the same time, did not have such hopes. It was the combination of his academic interests, his patriotism, and his contact with the Turks that created the unique interpretations of Kemalism in Rossi’s work. To see how prior beliefs and values and the agents’ personalities played a key role in contact, the next section will enlarge the scope and analyse the career of an Italian anti-fascist, Ezio Bartalini. As we shall see, the years Bartalini spent in Turkey and the contacts he established there led him to develop a view of Kemalism that was quite different from those of Rossi or Di Marzio but significantly reminiscent of the anti-fascists at home.

§ 6.6 The Kemalist: Ezio Bartalini Bridging anti-Fascism and Kemalism

Had he been given a chance to point where he expected to spend much of the 1920s and 1930s on a world map, Turkey would not strike Ezio Bartalini as a realistic choice in, say, 1922; this was precisely where life as a *fuoruscito* would take him. Born in Tuscany in 1884 to a family of strong supporters of the nascent Italian socialism, Bartalini lost his father in 1922, who was killed by the fascists. In addition to his ideological distance

from the movement, Bartalini indicated much later to Italian diplomats in Istanbul that the killing of his father meant he would never be a fascist.²⁰¹ The Bartalini family moved to the port city of Genoa in the late 1890s, where the young Ezio joined the *Partito socialista italiano* in the 1900s and edited a pacifist, progressive journal titled *La Pace* [Peace]. The journal already makes clear Bartalini's worldview: antimilitarism and opposition to the use of violence as a method of politics, socialism, and a firm belief in equality. As the journal was shut with the entry of Italy into the First World War, Bartalini pursued his literary studies in Catania, Sicily, worked in Piombino in Tuscany before standing for election as a socialist candidate in Pisa in 1920. The prospects of life in Italy seemed slim after the March on Rome, and Ezio took his wife Lilia and daughter Isa abroad. The family lived in the UK, France and Belgium between 1923 and 1927, but the fascist pressure persisted. It was in 1927 that Bartalini avoided arrest by the French police, under pressure from Italy, and moved to Turkey.

Bartalini's move to Istanbul was apparently facilitated by an acquaintance and old politician of the late Ottoman era, Hüseyin Kazım Kadri. The fascist regime continued to survey the life of the Bartalini in Istanbul. The fascist observers thought it must have been Sforza, the famed anti-fascist with Turkish connections, who introduced Bartalini to 'Hüseyin Pasha'.²⁰² The Bartalini's rented a house in Göztepe on the Asian side of Istanbul, which was an affordable and secluded place.²⁰³ Though Ezio tried to make a living by herding animals initially, the enterprise ended

²⁰¹ 'The General Consul Armao to the Ministry of Internal Affairs', 12 June 1936, *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 4: Documentazione personale e familiare, 2898, b. 438. 2898 refers to the number of the file containing this document in the catalogue of the archive. This reference has been added to the citation for the ease of researchers who may wish to consult the document themselves or double-check the references contained in this work. The same addition has been made to all other documents contained in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*.

²⁰² 'R. G. 63 Italia: Ezio Bartalini: Telespresso n. 28187', 11 July 1928, *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 4: Documentazione personale e familiare, 2898, b. 438.

²⁰³ 'R. G. 63 Italia: Ezio Bartalini: Telespresso n. 28187', *Archivio Storico di Piombino*.

with a fatal failure for animals, and he returned to scholarly life by accepting a foreign language teacher post at a nearby American college.²⁰⁴ As of September 1929, it was reported that Bartalini lived with his family away from political intrigues.²⁰⁵

Il messaggero degli italiani and its chief figure, Gilberto Primi, played a crucial role in the rehabilitation of Bartalini into publishing. Bartalini first edited and then started writing pieces for the newspaper, often published under aliases that were amalgams of his name, such as Aliberto Ziani. By the mid-1930s, Bartalini was an established figure of the Italian 'colony' of Istanbul. His activities eventually caught the attention of Ankara, and Bartalini was able to participate in the congresses as a specialist where language reform was discussed. It was in these congresses that Bartalini met Mustafa Kemal in person.²⁰⁶ These Kemalist contacts not only catapulted Bartalini into eminence, in the form of obtaining a chair in the Istanbul University as a professor of Latin but also gave him an epistemic advantage unrivalled by any other Italians into the workings of the Kemalist regime. In the meantime, fascist authorities came to re-evaluate their stance vis-à-vis Bartalini; no more involved in 'political intrigue', his activities in 'disseminating Italian culture' were deemed valuable. Bartalini carefully avoided praises of fascism in his texts, occasionally experienced trouble with fascist authorities, such as his face-off with the local *fascio* on the subject of Italian libraries in Istanbul, and clarified to the embassy that he would never become a fascist.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ 'Mannerini, the Military Attaché in Constantinople to the Embassy in Ankara', 25 March 1933, *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 4: Documentazione personale e familiare, 2898, b. 438.

²⁰⁵ 'Schede di Prefettura', *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 4: Documentazione personale e familiare, 2898, b. 438.

²⁰⁶ Dr. Ezio Bartalini, 'Atatürk', *Les Annales de Turquie*, 7-8-9 (August-September-October 1936), pp. 11-16 (p. 11), located in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 2: Articoli di giornale e pubblicazioni di Bartalini, 2181, b. 481, f. 2.

²⁰⁷ When Bartalini thought of unifying all Italian libraries under a single, streamlined organisation in Istanbul, he faced opposition from the local *fascio* and did not hesitate to complain about them to the ambassador. 'Ezio Bartalini to the Ambassador [Ottavio De

Nonetheless, with the help of Primi and certain diplomats, he came to be seen as a valuable collaborator in Italian propaganda, one who was not actively anti-fascist but to be watched carefully, just in case.²⁰⁸ This new-found eminence earned Bartalini nomination as the representative of the *Istituto Italiano Interuniversitario* [Italian Inter-University Institution] in Turkey in the 1930s; the organisation facilitated collaboration and cooperation between universities and academics from all across the world.²⁰⁹

With the advent of the Second World War, Bartalini intensified his political activities and helped link Italians in Istanbul with Italian anti-fascist resistance. With the war over, he returned to Italy with his family and re-joined the *Partito socialista italiano*, exchanging letters with prominent figures of the left, such as Pietro Nenni, and playing a part in the post-war development of Italian socialism. Back home, Bartalini kept an eye on Turkey and continued his friendship with Turks, especially socialists, such as the Sertel couple (Zekeriya and Sabiha) and Halet Çambel. Bartalini lamented the jailing of the poet Nazım Hikmet, the pro-NATO turn in Turkish foreign policy, and the 'betrayal' of Atatürk's policies. He continued contact with Turkey, exchanging letters with Şemseddin Talip Diler on legal and family matters, as well as helping many Turkish

Peppo?]', 7 July 1942, *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 1: Epistolario di Ezio Bartalini, 170, b. 477, f. 1.

²⁰⁸ The military attaché Mannerini noted that he consulted Primi on the ideological stance and personality of Bartalini, who commended him and said he did not think Bartalini had communist ideas. See Mannerini, the Military Attaché in Constantinople to the Embassy in Ankara', 25 March 1933, *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 4: Documentazione personale e familiare, 2898, b. 438. Also see Bartalini explaining his stance and service for Italian culture in Turkey to the consul general Mario Badoglio in 1938: 'Ezio Bartalini to the General Consul Mario Badoglio', 15 March 1938, *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 4: Documentazione personale e familiare, 2898, b. 438.

²⁰⁹ 'General Consul Armao to the Ministry of Internal Affairs', 12 June 1936, *Archivio Storico di Piombino*.

students in Italy and elsewhere in Europe.²¹⁰ Bartalini died in 1962, and he remained committed to socialism and anti-militarism to his death.

The language was a leitmotif of Bartalini's life. His command of Latin and French opened the doors of re-employment in Turkey and catapulted him into prominence in Turkish academia. Bartalini felt the Kemalist reform was 'an audacious enterprise' that was 'unique and rare' in the world. While 'a certain philosophy of history' accustomed intellectuals to expect such phenomena to falter and crumble, Kemalist Turkey was dismantling every day 'the idols' of such a misguided philosophy. What others achieved through slow and arduous processes, Turkey acquired through the sudden introduction of new laws. Bartalini felt that the simultaneous nationalisation and Westernisation of the Turkish language attested to Ankara's good intentions and attention to the well-being of the Anatolian peasantry. The picture was not entirely rosy, as Bartalini quoted from the Turkish doctor Kemal Cenap [Berksoy] on how misguided the constant drawing from French pronunciations was. Bartalini agreed and felt that as the original Latin pronunciations were much closer to the Turkish phonology, the addition of French borrow words unnecessarily complicated Turkish. To Kemal Cenap's arguments on the confusion French pronunciation can cause, such as between 'sport' and 'spore' of the fungi, Bartalini added the similarity of Italian, Latin, and Turkish against the 'nasal' French. Even Mustafa Kemal spoke French with almost an Italian accent, he argued.²¹¹

Bartalini regarded such missteps, such as in the excessive drawing from French, as exceptions to the rule. Kemalism bestowed upon Turkey

²¹⁰ For only a few examples, see 'Şemseddin Talip Diler to Ezio Bartalini', 12 December 1945, *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 1: Epistolario di Ezio Bartalini, 1631, b. 155, f. 1; 'Ezio Bartalini to Şemseddin Talip Diler', 20 November 1960, *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 1: Epistolario di Ezio Bartalini, 494, b. 155, f. 1; 'Şemseddin Talip Diler to Ezio Bartalini', 4 July 1956, *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 1: Epistolario di Ezio Bartalini, 1640, b. 155, f. 1.

²¹¹ E. B., 'La nuova lingua turca e le radici latine', *Il messaggero degli italiani*, 12 April 1934, located in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 2.2: Articoli di Bartalini in 'Il messaggero degli italiani' di Istanbul, 1915, b. 130, f. 1.

‘the absolutely secular character of the government’. He reviewed precedents of the Kemalist reforms in social life in the late Ottoman era, citing the life and works of Ahmed Ağaoğlu. While these meant that Kemalism had deep roots, Bartalini argued that the ‘Westernisation movement, rupture from the Arab-like and Asiatic past’ was not quite as radical as under Kemalism.²¹² On the occasion of the 14th anniversary of the Republic, Bartalini observed that further steps were successfully taken to detach Turks from ‘a bloody past of ignorance, superstition, and tyranny’. Imagining a temporal gap between Europe and Turkey, much like many contemporary observers, Bartalini quoted Atatürk’s prediction that each day, the Turkish nation would record progress worthy of centuries. So successful were Kemalist efforts to bridge the gap that by 1937, Bartalini felt it was impossible to imagine Turkey being governed by a non-republican system.²¹³

Female emancipation was a crucial part of the Kemalist progress in Turkey. Bartalini observed that every anniversary of the Republic was a celebration of the citizens’ liberty, the ‘gifting of the fruits of intellect to the youth’, and the emancipation of women.²¹⁴ Commenting on the World Women’s Congress that took place in Istanbul in 1935, Bartalini observed that in the field of female emancipation, too, the Turkish revolution managed to exceed the deeds of ‘other European nations’, with the implication that Turkey was now European. While Turkey was ‘the least free and progressed nation of Europe’ before, the Kemalists recognised the civic and political rights of Turkish women before many other nations.²¹⁵ These remarks did not originate from a desire to endear himself to the

²¹² ‘Il Corano in turco’, *Il messaggero degli italiani*, 28 January 1932, located in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 2.2: Articoli di Bartalini in ‘Il messaggero degli italiani’ di Istanbul, 1870, b. 481, f. 2.

²¹³ ‘L’Anniversario della repubblica’, *Il messaggero degli italiani*, 1 November 1937, located in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 2.2: Articoli di Bartalini in ‘Il messaggero degli italiani’ di Istanbul, 2029, b. 130, f. 1.

²¹⁴ ‘L’Anniversario della repubblica’, *Il messaggero degli italiani*, 1 November 1937.

²¹⁵ ‘Cent’anni di femminismo e la donna turca’, *Il messaggero degli italiani*, 15 May 1935, located in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 2.2: Articoli di Bartalini in ‘Il messaggero degli italiani’ di Istanbul, 1956, b. 130, f. 1.

Kemalists; as late as 1945 and writing in Italian, Bartalini reiterated his point about how Turkish female emancipation was not only great in comparison with the conditions of women in other Muslim countries but put to shame even most European nations.²¹⁶

Beyond female emancipation, Bartalini agreed with most contemporary Italian observers by noting that Kemalism consisted of two seemingly contradictory tendencies: nationalism and 'xenophilia' towards the West. However, Bartalini did not see Turkish nationalism as xenophobic. As he most clearly explained in 1952, especially under Atatürk, Turkish nationalism was defensive rather than vengeful, irredentist, or bent on amending historical wrongdoings. Mirroring widespread Kemalist perceptions of the classical to late Ottoman history, Bartalini felt that the Turks spilt their blood amply for centuries for an empire that was not truly theirs.²¹⁷ Awakening to this fact with Kemalism, the Turks began improving the cultural and economic conditions of their country with the help of a foreign policy premised on peace. Domestically, the Kemalist regime sought social peace and justice by emancipating women and empowering workers and the youth; parallelly, its foreign policy made it an important element of global peace.²¹⁸ Already in 1936, in a piece for *Il messaggero degli italiani*, Bartalini saw Turkey as set to play a key role in ensuring European peace just as the camps that divided Europe became more threatening than ever with the Spanish Civil War.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Ezio Bartalini, 'La donna turca', *Lettera alla donna*, II.8, 29 October 1945, 1-2, located in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 2: Articoli di giornale e pubblicazioni di Bartalini, 2212, b. 316, f. 1.

²¹⁷ Ezio Bartalini, 'La penultima Turchia', *Il Paese*, 26 April 1952, located in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 2: Articoli di giornale e pubblicazioni di Bartalini, 2427, b. 217, f. 1.

²¹⁸ Alizio Bertani, 'La Verità sulla Turchia', *La Verità*, 1939?/1944?, located in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 2: Articoli di giornale e pubblicazioni di Bartalini, 2150, b. 352, f. 3.

²¹⁹ 'L'Anniversario della repubblica', *Il messaggero degli italiani*, 1 November 1936, located in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 2.2: Articoli di Bartalini in 'Il messaggero degli italiani' di Istanbul, 2011, b. 130, f. 1.

Bartalini thought that the main goal of Kemalism for Turkey could be summarised simply as ‘Westernisation’ [*occidentalizzazione*]. There was no tension between Kemalist nationalism and this goal; Kemalists intended to make Turkey a part of ‘the European family’, which would expand the borders of Europe to Mount Ararat in Eastern Turkey. Texts of Bartalini in the 1930s and the 1950s suggest he already thought that Europe began to the West of Mount Ararat.²²⁰ Much as other anti-fascists we covered in Chapters Four and Five, Bartalini, too, imagined the West and Europe as not religiously or racially defined closed units but as open categories that anyone could join by accepting certain values. As the Kemalists embraced female emancipation, freedom of conscience, and the value of labour, which were part and parcel of Western civilisation for Bartalini, Turkey successfully joined ‘the European family’.

A factor that drew the Kemalists and Bartalini closer was the latter’s willingness to criticise the West when it came to history and prejudice against the Turks. In 1945, Bartalini wrote how, as a socialist, he opposed the invasion of Istanbul by the Allies after the First World War. He appreciated the ‘proper’ behaviour of the Italian troops in Istanbul and noted how they were remembered fondly by citizens years later. Bartalini also explained how, earlier, his opposition to the Italian invasion of Tripolitania in 1911 led nationalists to dub him ‘a Turk in Italy’. The war caught the Turks by surprise, and they did not expect such a move from liberal democratic Italy. Combined with the ‘misguided’ imperialism of the Italian ruling elite later on, these conditioned the Turkish intellectuals to feel suspicion towards Italian foreign policy.²²¹ It was not Turkish xenophobia, then, but Italian policies that caused Turkish suspicion. Writing for the Turkish outlet *Bütün* earlier in 1934, Bartalini also refuted the idea of a European *mission civilisatrice* across the world. Napoleon, to whom Bartalini referred as a ‘monster’ and ‘the great dwarf’ in the piece, was the incarnation of this European vanity. Europeans mistakenly thought

²²⁰ Bartalini, ‘La penultima Turchia’; Bertani, ‘La Verità sulla Turchia’.

²²¹ Ezio Bartalini, ‘Italia e Turchia’, *Il Risveglio*, 25 April 1945, located in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 2: Articoli di giornale e pubblicazioni di Bartalini, 2201, b. 495, f. 1.

that by colonising other nations, they could spread civilisation through war and violence. Thus, Napoleon cried for liberty while committing libicide at home; he shouted fraternity while sending millions to their senseless deaths.²²² These condemnations of European imperialism certainly brought Bartalini closer to the Kemalists, whose memories of the Allied *mission civilisatrice* in Turkey were fresh.

At a time when Turkey was recovering its 'lost' national history, Bartalini's scathing criticism of the misconceptions among Western historians and literati vis-à-vis Turkish history was welcomed by the Kemalists. Writing for *Il messaggero degli italiani* in early 1934, Bartalini supported the notion that Ankara was always a Turkish city since it was first and foremost a Hittite city, who were the ancestors of the Turks, as the new Turkish history thesis heavily emphasised. The highlighting of the city's Hittite and Turkic past in a Turkish tourist guide was thus a legitimate reaction to Western historiography that continued to overlook Anatolia's Turkic past. Bartalini complained about how one could find histories of Anatolia in the West that detailed the Greek and Roman eras while merely brushing over the Seljuk and Ottoman times, then seamlessly reaching the present.²²³ The Westerners also erred in their interpretation of the massacring of Christians in Turkey. While it was only right to denounce any massacre, Bartalini observed, the West ignored the historical background, namely, the massacring of Muslim civilians by armed Christian bands in the past. Even though Abdulhamid II was a condemnable tyrant who made Christians and Muslims suffer alike and massacred Armenians, the Westerners forgot how, before then, Muslims and Christians lived together in peace for centuries in the Ottoman Empire. In considerable agreement with Turkish arguments on the subject, Bartalini concluded that unlike the Western perception of the Turks as blood-thirsty fanatics,

²²² Ezio Bartalini, 'Napoleon', *Bütün*, 1 June 1934, located in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 2: Articoli di giornale e pubblicazioni di Bartalini, 2162, b. 481, f. 2.

²²³ 'Ankara', *Il messaggero degli italiani*, 25 January 1934, located in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 2.2: Articoli di Bartalini in 'Il messaggero degli italiani' di Istanbul, 1906, b. 498, f. 1.

taking such a historical perspective would enlighten unprejudiced minds about how Turkic, Ottoman and recent Turkish history abounded with examples of religious tolerance.²²⁴ As Zafer Toprak rightly noted, the Turkish leadership turned to history, anthropology, and archaeology, especially in the 1930s, to bolster Turkish national confidence and counter such 'prejudice'.²²⁵ That Bartalini joined this Kemalist campaign is not surprising given that how, as a pacifist socialist, he was troubled by the way Europe perceived the rest of the world anyway. The Kemalist efforts would tear down the barriers of historical prejudice between Europe and Turkey. Unlike Rossi, an Orientalist deeply attached to the eroding 'Oriental' legacy of Turkey, Bartalini did not have many qualms with this simultaneous nationalisation and Westernisation. Nor did he doubt the prospects of such rapid reform in a conservative fashion like Sforza.

Another difference between contemporaries and Bartalini was his reluctance to compare fascism and Kemalism. Rossi once claimed Kemalism imitated aspects of fascism, while Emilio Lussu contrasted the military credentials of Atatürk with Mussolini. Tellingly, when he compared Atatürk to figures of Western history in 1936, Bartalini observed that Atatürk was both a great military commander and a legislator. Thus, he was not to be compared to Alexander the Great, just a great commander. Napoleon, Akbar, and Süleyman I could be considered famed commanders and legislators but differed from Atatürk in their projects of imperial expansion, as Atatürk instead fought to preserve his nation's independence. More fruitful comparisons could be established between great military minds and legislators who were also revolutionaries: Oliver Cromwell, George Washington, and Giuseppe Garibaldi. Even these legendary figures of Western history had certain shortcomings compared to Atatürk. In the rest of his text, Bartalini reviewed reasons for Atatürk's and Kemalism's grandeur, from their function in service of world peace and

²²⁴ 'I Turchi e la libertà di coscienza', *Il messaggero degli italiani*, 15 January 1936, located in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 2.2: Articoli di Bartalini in 'Il messaggero degli italiani' di Istanbul, 1991, b. 495, f. 1.

²²⁵ Zafer Toprak, *Darwin'den Dersim'e: Cumhuriyet ve Antropoloji* (Doğan Kitap, 2012), p. 99.

female emancipation to 'the plan to Europeanise Turkey' and the efforts to reform Turkish historiography, education and language.²²⁶

Bartalini saw Atatürk as not only a revolutionary but also an anti-fascist. Revisiting his time in Turkey with an essay in Italian for the left-wing outlet *Umanità Nova* in 1956, Bartalini argued that he fulfilled an important anti-fascist function in Turkey, at which Atatürk, 'a fiery adversary of fascism' supported him. Kemalism was not only different from but antithetical to fascism. Bartalini felt that the Kemalists ultimately sought to transform Turkey into a real, functioning democracy, achieve female emancipation, spread culture and knowledge to the masses, avoid wars of aggression and promote peace. With the fascist era bygone, Bartalini now narrated a personal anecdote on how he knew Mussolini as the editor of the *Avanti!* and how his unpredictable policy line regarding the war in 1914 blindsided Bartalini and other socialist comrades. Even before his turn to fascism, Mussolini was a turncoat. Worse, as 'Mussolini himself confessed', fascists were 'intellectuals without an intellect', without a definitive ideology.²²⁷ A rare moment of comparison between fascism and Kemalism in the work of Bartalini thus culminated with a portrayal of the Kemalists as idealists working to improve Turkey compared to fascists who were merely a band of mobsters.

Perhaps it was only once that Bartalini dissimulated as a fascist. Commenting on the March on Rome in 1936 for *Il messaggero degli italiani*, Bartalini attacked 'conservatives hiding under the banner of fascism'. The piece also included observations on how fascism transformed itself into a global movement in the 1930s.²²⁸ These remarks were either dissimulation or, less likely, an attempt to transform the fascist regime, which had obvious staying power by then, from within. The latter was an option for

²²⁶ Dr. Ezio Bartalini, 'Atatürk', *Les Annales de Turquie*, pp. 11-12.

²²⁷ Ezio Bartalini, 'Antifascismo', *Umanità Nova*, 9 December 1956, located in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 2: Articoli di giornale e pubblicazioni di Bartalini, 2530, b. 502, f. 2.

²²⁸ 'Marcia su Roma e la Romanità', *Il messaggero degli italiani*, 15 November 1936, located in *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 2.2: Articoli di Bartalini in 'Il messaggero degli italiani' di Istanbul, 2014, b. 130, f. 1.

many in Italy, especially for younger universalist fascists, some of whom later became so disillusioned to become anti-fascists. It appears that Bartalini and his 'exile in the Orient', as it were, served as an example for some of these individuals. Ruggero Zangrandi collaborated with Eugenio Coselschi and partook in the *CAUR* in the early to mid-1930s. By 1937, he was disillusioned enough by fascism to write to Bartalini in Istanbul about his experiences. 'Yearning for a new idea', he reached out to Bartalini because he, too, had experienced something similar before his move to the 'Orient'. Fearing such consequences, Zangrandi felt the time was not ripe for an overthrowing of the fascist regime and had to 'mask himself' but was confident that in the long term, 'our ideas' would triumph.²²⁹ That the supposedly 'politically inactive' Bartalini continued to serve as an example for anti-fascists in Turkey is certainly noteworthy.

This unsevered contact between Bartalini and Italian anti-fascists gives rise to an important question: Did Bartalini spread positive views of Kemalism among Italian anti-fascists? Though this is possible, his correspondence does not indicate an extensive exchange of opinion on Turkey. Upon his return to Italy, Bartalini indeed helped spread positive perceptions of Kemalism through his conferences and texts. Remembering the coverage of Kemalism in anti-fascist circles, from *Avanti!* in the early 1920s to Sforza in the 1930s, we must conclude that Bartalini reinforced rather than transformed anti-fascist perceptions of Kemalism. Much as many other *fuorusciti*, Bartalini had to interpret his world through the lens of certain prior beliefs and values. These, such as the belief in a Western civilisation centred around female emancipation and freedom of conscience, led anti-fascists and Bartalini alike to perceive Kemalism in a positive light. Rather than imagining a one-way influence, it is better to construe this case as one of convergent evolution, with Bartalini's experience in Turkey further confirming his convictions and reinforcing the positive perceptions, in addition to bestowing upon him more knowledge of Turkey than other anti-fascists. Engaging in some counterfactual

²²⁹ 'Ruggero Zangrandi to Ezio Bartalini', 6 May 1937, *Archivio Storico di Piombino*, Archivio di Famiglia Bartalini, 1: Epistolario di Ezio Bartalini, 1788, b. 78, f. 54.

history, it may not be outlandish to claim that Bartalini would interpret Kemalism in a similar light had he never set foot in Turkey. Bartalini's appreciation of Kemalism was sincere, as indicated by the persistence of his beliefs surrounding Kemalism even after his return to Italy, away from the purview of Turkish authorities. He continued to voice positive views on Kemalism in Italy through conferences, and in his private correspondence, including with young Turkish socialists in trouble with Turkish authorities in the 1950s. Such appreciation had as much to do with the contact itself as with the personality and background of Bartalini, which gave his portrayal of Kemalism a distinctly anti-fascist colour lacking in the likes of Di Marzio or Rossi.

§ 6.7 Conclusion

This chapter began with the observations of a number of Turkish travellers in Italy. Having departed Turkey for a visit to Vienna through Italy, the teacher Ihsan Altıntuğ concluded his travelogue from Italy with remarks on how Italy was not really where Europe began. The frontiers of Europe that he imagined were synonymous with the frontiers of discipline, cleanness, and order, which he felt were severely lacking in Italy but amply found in the very first train station on the Austrian side of the border. The last section of the chapter instead considered the views of Ezio Bartalini, who spent ample time in Turkey and became so closely drawn to Kemalism as to deserve being called a Kemalist for all intents and purposes. Much as Altıntuğ, Bartalini was busy re-drawing the mental borders of Europe. Bartalini thought that Kemalism was a movement for renewal that strove to reshape Turkey in line with the ancient Turkish customs and, more importantly to him, the best iteration of the contemporary Western and European civilisation. Kemalist reforms, from the adoption of the Latin alphabet to the emancipation of women, were of global importance because they were expanding the borders of Europe. Indeed, Bartalini referred to the aim of the Kemalists as pushing the borders of Europe to Mount Ararat on the Turco-Persian border in the East.

In addition to forming a full narrative circle within the chapter from the start to the end, this prominence of ideas on the West or Europe is suggestive of the overarching themes of the thesis. As in other chapters, here, too, it is evident that what an agent thought of the West and Europe was crucially related to what they made of Italy and Turkey. Hüseyin Cahit took pains to explain fascism was not the future of the West precisely because he felt the Western domination in culture and politics would last. If fascism were to lead this dominance, it would automatically become an example for all other nations. Most thinkers agreed Turkey could learn from the West, but there was a wide discrepancy when it came to defining what exactly the West was and which countries best embodied it. Cornelio di Marzio saw signs of the East everywhere he looked in Turkey. As a nationalist, he was not prepared to compare Kemalism and fascism in any positive fashion in the early and mid-1920s. In his view, Kemalism was nothing much more than a classical Oriental dictatorship that reigned through what he called ‘the terroristic regime of the army’, sustained through the passivity and ‘blind’ following of the masses. Relatedly, many agents perceived temporal gaps separating Italy and Turkey. In the case of Yalçın, the temporal gap divided Italy from Western civilisation. Fascism was an *irtica*, a reactionary return to ancient tyrannies that deserved the mantle of novelty as much as the Islamic *irtica* in Turkey. Much like many other Italians, Bartalini felt Turkey was following Europe from centuries behind. The greatness of the Kemalist revolution was precisely its boldness to close the gap and attain each day the kind of progress that took years in Europe.

The primary theoretical question that this chapter addressed was whether transnational contact could be construed as a transformative factor in and of itself. Certainly, there were cases where more contact with the other side deepened attraction and affection. Bartalini’s appreciation of Kemalism certainly grew due to his stay in Turkey. Sinanoğlu’s views appear to have undergone a subtle evolution; while he never underwent a complete transformation, his appreciation of the fascist practices and aspects of fascism vis-à-vis opposition to liberal democracy deepened as he spent time in Italy. However, the chapter’s findings

concur with the work of Axelrod et al. in that the contact itself is less transformative than contact in light of the prior beliefs and values of the agents. The contrasts between the cases of Di Marzio, Rossi, and Bartalini illustrate this. Di Marzio's perceptions of Kemalism never became quite as positive, and his attraction was quite as intense as the other two. Di Marzio did not have less opportunity for contact with the Turks, but because he was preconditioned by his prior beliefs and values to see 'the Orient' in Turkey, his interactions with the Turks were generally negative. This was not merely a function of time and context. True, Di Marzio spent his time in Turkey during a time when the Turco-Italian relations were characterised by mutual distrust. But Rossi, writing around the same time, was able to overcome such suspicion. Moreover, upon returning to Italy, Di Marzio's perceptions of Kemalism do not appear to have undergone a significant change that goes meaningfully beyond the overall change in perceptions of Kemalism seen in the works of mainstream fascists. Crucially, because their prior beliefs and values made them more sensitive to different things, Di Marzio, Rossi, and Bartalini found different aspects of Kemalism interesting or attractive. Part of the reason Bartalini was convinced that Kemalism was a boon for the world was precisely what Di Marzio did not appreciate in any ideology, such as what many fascists judged as remnants of the outdated liberal democratic theories within Kemalism. Di Marzio thought that, at least as in the mid-1920s, Kemalism was not that far from comparison with the classical cases of Oriental despotisms, whereas Bartalini felt Atatürk and the edifice of Kemalism could better be compared to European revolutionaries.

Epistemically, it is quite clear that transnational contact provided a considerable advantage. Even if the perceptions of the actors discussed in this case did not significantly diverge from the views of the ideological factions to which they were closest, they simply knew much more about Turkey and Italy compared to the average. As a seasoned Orientalist, Rossi was irritated by the Italians' penchant for translating '*Gazi*' as 'victorious'. At times, Rossi also corrected material mistakes in works concerning Turkish history and politics published in Italy. Yalçın knew enough about Italy to know that the situation in the country was not

exactly as portrayed by many radical Kemalists in the 1930s. In illustrating his cases, he could draw from the work of famous Italian anti-fascists like Sforza and Nitti, which were available to only a select few in Turkey in their original language. Sinanoğlu's coverage of fascist actors detailed the differences between the versions of fascism found in the thought of Rossoni, Farinacci, and Arpinati. While Bartalini's overall view of Kemalism was not different in essence from the typical coverage one found in *Avanti!* or *Giustizia e Libertà*, one could not expect Angelica Balabanoff of the former or Emilio Lussu of the latter to know who exactly Yunus Nadi was, or the inner workings of the language reform process in Turkey.

Sometimes, transnational networks could be mobilised as weapons against domestic rivals. This is a point that deserves further theoretical interest since it appears that many figures in this chapter were interested in figures, contacts, and ideas from abroad precisely because of certain domestic needs. Thus, it is probably wise to avoid researching transnational history in a way that is unnecessarily antagonistic and antithetical to the idea that most agents tend to act with more domestic concerns in mind, whether local, regional, or, indeed, national. That is, even though there are numerous studies on domestic impacts of transnational phenomena, the emphasis in the literature is generally on an influence from transnational contact to domestic influence. Instead, cases in this study often involved actors moving to transnational contact precisely because of certain domestic agendas. Hüseyin Cahit provided ample examples of this with his translations from Italian and French. He intended these as not merely exercises in interpretation but as interventions in domestic debates. It was not a coincidence that he was intensifying his translation efforts just as the radical Kemalists and the quietists were trumping the liberal Kemalists in terms of interpreting the relationship between democracy, fascism, and Kemalism in the early 1930s. However, translations were not uniformly accepted and welcomed by all actors. Some *Kadroists* and contributors to *Kültür* argued that such translations were outright harmful to the Turkish masses, and the youth in particular. The reason for this was accordingly that the ideas of Nitti and Sforza proved 'bankrupt' even in Italy and surely had no nutritional value for the Turkish

youth hungry for new and valid ideas. The question of temporality thus popped up once more in interpreting and comparing democracy and fascism. Both parties claimed novelty for the views in Europe that they felt best vindicated their brand of Kemalism at home. Touting something as *irtica* was a powerful weapon in revolutionary Turkey, and much effort was spent to portray the opponents of fascism or democracy as embracing virtually the same mentality as the Islamists.

In cases where there was influence from one side to the other, this did not function in ways that the influencing side always predicted either. The *Mostra della rivoluzione fascista* was designed with content and architectural grandeur intended to impress any Italian or foreign visitors. The numerous Turkish visitors to the exhibit were clearly impressed by what they witnessed. However, many visitors astutely distinguished between the propaganda techniques used in conveying the fascist message and the ideological content of the message itself. 'Jealousy' for the grandeur and the propaganda excellence and diffidence towards the message the fascists sought to convey may be the best way to summarise the visitor's view of the exhibit. Similarly, Nüzhet Haşim was certainly among the individuals who were best informed of the fascist ideology and practice. Digesting enough of fascism to introduce into Turkish the term '*demo-liberal*', Nüzhet Haşim still retained certain beliefs that the fascists would not appreciate, such as the real number of unemployed people in Italy or, more strikingly, the idea that fascism's lack of disciplinary success stemmed from the incurable indiscipline in the Italian 'national character'. These cases illustrate that, just as in the case of global fascistoid movements, as noted by Aristotle Kallis, transnational influence often involves reconfiguration of ideas and adaptation to the local context.²³⁰ Even when transnational contact concludes with a case of positive influence, the historian must not readily assume that this influence means the adoption of the ideas in question in their entirety and with complete fidelity to the original.

²³⁰ Kallis, 'The Transnational Co-Production of Fascism'.

Comparisons loomed large in the works studied in this chapter. Altıntuğ compared Austria and Italy to understand what Europe really was. Hüseyin Cahit compared aspects of fascist ideology, such as the stance towards religion and women, to argue that Kemalism would have nothing to do with such a 'reactionary' movement. Visitors to the fascist museums and exhibits compared Italy and Turkey vis-à-vis their respective performances in propaganda as *inkılap memleketleri*, countries that have undergone revolutions and needed to convert their masses. Nüzhet Haşim's comparisons included a contrast between Italy's past and present. Fascism made progress in winning hearts and reforming Italians, he felt, but this was a limited success since the Italian 'national character' did not really allow for further disciplinary improvements. Another comparison he resorted to was one between the Turkish and Italian national characters. This comparison allowed him to argue that as the Turks were, by their nature, more disciplined, the fascist institutions and their underlying principles would work much better in Turkey once put in a suitably Kemalist form. Di Marzio consistently compared the West and East, as many other figures at the time, and thought that Turkey certainly belonged to the latter, at least in the 1920s. If their scholarly background imparted upon both Rossi and Bartalini a penchant for comparative analysis, their conclusions were not identical. Rossi compared fascism to Kemalism and found certain similarities, which he then interpreted as a result of the latter copying the former. While Rossi took a step back in the face of the Turkish reaction to such an idea, Bartalini did not even think of comparing the two ideologies and regimes. In his mind, Kemalism was much closer to anti-fascism and its ideals of democracy and social justice than to fascism.

In any case, experts and expatriates played an influential role in connecting, uniting, and putting into conflict the two Mediterranean countries in the interwar period. The outcome of the transnational contact these individuals established and facilitated for others was not always positive. Instead, what appears to be more important in terms of determining the result of the contact was the prior beliefs and values of the agents. While opinion change was not impossible to find, the

transformative effect of the contact may easily be exaggerated. This chapter ends with this intended theoretical contribution. The following chapter will serve as the conclusion of the thesis, reiterating the main findings and patterns, signalling palpable outliers, and seeking to explain how the thinkers under study can be explained in context, and pay particular attention to some of the recurrent themes that we found in this chapter, too: the importance of arguments based on temporality, the central place of ideas of the West and Europe in interpreting Italy and Turkey, and how to explain Kemalist, non-Kemalist, fascist and anti-fascist perceptions of one another in a contextualist and methodologically individualistic manner, linking beliefs and values about democracy to perceptions of the other side without reification of factions or ideologies.



Conclusion

'The Turkish regime, which is most hostile to the dictatorship of individuals or groups of people, cannot, therefore, associate with forms of government such as fascism, racism, and the like, which give uncontrolled power to individuals or groups of people.'– Nusret Kemal [Köymen], *Ülkü*, March 1934

*'Of all the so-called "totalitarian" states that emerged after 1918, the Turkish one seems to be the strongest. In that country, there is only one party, the People's party [the RPP], the head of which is also the President of the Republic.'*¹ - Benito Mussolini, 1943.

The alliance with Nazi Germany ended up not only transforming the dreams of the universalist fascists but destroying the fascist regime itself. The context changed radically with the Second World War. A clear

¹ Benito Mussolini, 'Pensieri Pontini e Sardi', in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, ed. by Edoardo Susmel and Duilio Susmel, XXXIV (La Fenice, 1961), p. 288.

exposition of this change is offered by Benito Mussolini himself. In the 1920s and 1930s, virtually no fascist observer thought that the fascist regime would prove more ephemeral than the Kemalist one. Writing in his diary as a prisoner in 1943, Mussolini instead observed the situation as quoted in the epitaph: his regime crumbled while Turkey's regime remained, which required an explanation. Mussolini's observation of the Turkish regime's strength is the swansong of a story of perceptions and portrayals full of unexpected turns over two decades. It also highlights the trend of asymmetry in the literature discussed in the introduction. Despite Mussolini affirming that the Turkish 'so-called totalitarian' regime proved the strongest, there is a dearth of studies on Italian perceptions of Kemalism in the interwar era. Fortunately, scholars have not rushed to interpret these remarks as indicative of the Kemalism-like nature of fascism. By contrast, any remarks from the Kemalist side are quickly catapulted into academic significance, especially by the proponents of post-Kemalism.

The literature remains dominated by abstract comparisons rather than research into contemporary perceptions. Delving into sources in Ottoman Turkish, modern Turkish, Italian, French, and English, Italian and Turkish state archives, private papers, well-known journals like *Kadro* and *Gerarchia*, the minnows of the national publication world such as *Kültür*, and correspondence between diplomats and luminaries, this thesis has sought to address this lacuna. Insisting on abstract comparisons, we may indeed identify commonalities between fascism and Kemalism. The most striking similarity was, as noticed by contemporaries, the single-party regime structure. Taking a closer look at the historical sources quickly leads us to appreciate why it is as nonsensical to claim that Kemalism was a form of fascism as it is to argue that Kemalism *as a whole* was never associated with fascism. The very fact that both Italy and Turkey had single-party regimes could be interpreted in several ways. Some in Turkey, like the radical Kemalists, saw this as an opportunity to learn from fascism, while others, like the quietists, felt that this was a mere coincidence. In Italy, too, certain fascists appreciated Kemalist authoritarianism as a fellow traveller, whereas others, especially the more

conservative figures, saw traces of the good old Oriental despotism in Kemalism. Anti-fascists, especially left-wing anti-fascists, perceived Kemalism in a positive light by putting an emphasis on its ends, which they deemed to include female emancipation, secularisation, and democratisation. To quote Ludwig Wittgenstein, the scholars thus far have been methodological Hegelians who tried to say how things that appear different are actually the same. The time has come to turn Wittgensteinian, focus more on detail, and show how things that appear similar are, in fact, different.²

Turkish interest in fascism predated the March on Rome. Diplomats in Italy followed the rise of fascism closely, both because of its potential repercussions on Italian foreign policy and its wider consequences for democracy in Europe, as Osman Nizami Pasha's and Cevad Bey's reports show. Journalists, even the liberal Hüseyin Cahit [Yalçın], were initially more interested in what fascism meant for Italy's support for Turkey during the Turkish War of Independence (1919-23). Much as Italian liberals, Hüseyin Cahit appreciated fascism's anti-Bolshevism as well as the support for Turkey, only to be disappointed later.

Disappointment also characterised right-wing Italian perceptions of Kemalism after the Turkish War of Independence. The Italians hoped for demographic and economic arrangements in their favour in Anatolia in exchange for their material and diplomatic support to Ankara. Turkey's unwillingness to provide such 'advantages' meant the relations quickly reverted to mutual suspicion and distrust. The Turkish press amply reported Italian troop movements in the Mediterranean islands and interpreted any vague remarks by Mussolini as declarations of colonial intent over Anatolia. Only around 1927 did the state relations improve, culminating in the 1928 treaty and the 'warmth' of Turco-Italian diplomatic relations between 1928 and 1934.³

² M. O'C. Drury, 'Conversations with Wittgenstein', in *Recollections of Wittgenstein*, ed. by Rush Rhees (Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 97-171 (p. 157).

³ Dilek Barlas, 'Friends or Foes: Diplomatic Relations Between Italy and Turkey, 1923-36', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 36 (2004), pp. 231-252 (p. 231).

Illustrating how intellectuals did not always align their views with national foreign policy, perceptions of Italy as a primary threat did not stop certain Turks from seeing promise in fascism. From Chapter Two onwards, this thesis has tried to utilise perceptions of fascism as leverage to identify Kemalist factions. Already in 1923, individuals like Feridun Fikri [Düşünsel] and, much more insistently, Falih Rıfkı [Atay] lionised the way fascism dealt with opposition. They forged the roots of radical Kemalism already in the early 1920s, contrary to the literature's focus in the 1930s on the relations between fascism and Kemalism. These commentators were opposed by a faction the thesis has called liberal Kemalists, including Ahmed Ağaoğlu, Hüseyin Cahit, and Ahmed Emin [Yalman]. Islamic conservatives like Velid Ebüzziya joined the latter duo in their campaign against the RPP's authoritarianism in the early to mid-1920s, and a key weapon in their arsenal was arguments from fascism. These interpreted the killing of the socialist deputy Giacomo Matteotti as illustrating the baseness and weakness of fascism. They predicted a swift toppling of the fascist regime and heavily emphasised how this had to serve as a lesson for Ankara. Between these poles stood the quietists; Recep Bey [Peker] opposed the democratic election of mayors in Istanbul but insisted that the Turkish regime was democratic and continuously refused to draw from fascism.

In the 1920s, another discourse on fascist Italy and other 'revolutionary' regimes emerged. Intellectuals and bureaucrats categorised fascist Italy as an *inkılap memleketi*, a country that has recently undergone a revolution. These included the USSR, Yugoslavia, and Nazi Germany in the 1930s, but also the staunchly democratic Czechoslovakia. The *inkılap memleketleri* way of thinking did not have a relation to fascist ideology, as seen in the factions identified above. Rather, these individuals tried to compartmentalise fascism and identify and transfer revolutionary know-how without regard for ideological content. As Italy and Turkey were both in the process of transforming the mentalities of their masses, fascist techniques of propaganda could be useful. Individuals who were otherwise quite positive about democracy, such as *Hayat*'s Mehmet Emin [Erişirgil] or Dr Halil Fikret [Kanad], praised fascist methods of public

education and propaganda and even saw them as potentially beneficial for democratising Turkey. Similarly, the anti-communist Fuad Köprülü gushed over the revolutionary propaganda of the museums in Soviet Azerbaijan in the mid-1920s. Much as many other ways of thinking identified in this thesis, the *inkılap memleketleri* discourse, too, emerged in the 1920s and gained further strength in the 1930s.

The colonial expectations and their failure characterised much Italian thinking in the early 1920s. A colonial literature on Anatolia flourished in Italy in the early and mid-1920s. Social scientific experts like Biagio Pace and Carlo Manetti extensively detailed the riches and the risks of Anatolia. These individuals sometimes toured Anatolia, accompanying Italian troops. The colonial literature put particular emphasis on the Roman heritage of Anatolia, thus underlining both its ancient connections to Italy and its lost wealth. Reminding the Roman legacy served to illustrate that Anatolia's present misery stemmed not from inherent insufficiencies but from Turkish 'backwardness'. As these 'riches' mostly ended up in Greek hands, most nationalist and fascist intellectuals during the Turkish War of Independence adopted a *vae victis* attitude towards the 'opportunistic' Greeks. The nationalist Alfredo Rocco and Francesco Coppola's *Politica* published an address by the Turkish deputy Ahmed Rüstem [Bilinski] to the Italians. Most originally, the Smirniot Giovanni Filippucci Giustiniani combined Turkish and Italian complaints of Allied policies masterfully in the mouth of Nasreddin Hoca, a Turkish folklore character he reimagined as professor of international law. Right-wing Italians expected Turks to prevail over Greeks, of whose military credentials they were highly suspicious.

Politica also led the charge against Kemalism when it became clearer that Kemalists did not care for providing 'advantages'. The colonial literature evolved from a realistic, almost statistical investigation of Anatolia to lamentation for missed opportunities. Even Filippucci Giustiniani, so close to the Kemalists as to discern their Westernising intent as early as 1923, threatened that 'ungratefulness' towards Italy could isolate Turkey. Most fascists turned suspicious of Kemalism after 1923. The most notorious example of this was the fascist deputy Orazio Pedrazzi's remarks in

1924 and 1925 when he described Kemalism as irrationally 'xenophobic' and defined Turkey as a closed door, '*porta chiusa*'. For Coppola's *Politica*, the Muscovite connections of Kemalism sufficed: as early as 1921, *Politica*'s contributors began to wonder what a Bolshevik-backed Turkish victory truly entailed for Europe. By contrast, anti-fascists, especially the maximalists around *Avanti!*, in the early 1920s, valued Kemalism in part due to the Russian alliance. Those critical of the Bolshevik policies within the *Partito socialista italiano*, such as Arturo Vella, could also be critical of Kemalism. The reformist socialists, in particular, worried that Ankara could be key to the puzzle of a dangerous Islamo-Bolshevik alliance against Western civilisation. By the mid-1920s, both maximalists and reformists came to see Kemalism as a peaceful Westernising movement and appreciated its ends. Socialist anti-fascists also paid attention to the 'dictatorship' of Kemalism beyond its ends. In the parliament in November 1922, Ezio Riboldi explained his party's position on dictatorships: fascism was a terrible dictatorship because it was the arbitrary and personal dictatorship of Mussolini. However, other dictatorships could be beneficial. Two examples Riboldi offered were that of the USSR, predictably enough, and of Kemalist Turkey. Even reformists like Claudio Treves and others around *Critica sociale* came to see Kemalist authoritarianism as a necessary evil in the Turkish context by the mid-1920s. Left-wing anti-fascists prioritised the ends of Kemalism over its means and thus found it closer to anti-fascism than to fascism.

By the mid-to-late 1920s, the trend shifted: with the works of Italo Zingarelli and others, the focus turned away from the foreign policy and 'ungratefulness' of Kemalism towards its domestic reform. The worries of Cornelio Di Marzio persisted well into 1927 on Turkish xenophobia, and Catholic intellectuals like Domenico Russo were dismissive of Kemalism as reinvigorated Islamism in the mid-1920s. To most other commentators, who now pondered about the 'paradoxical' combination of Kemalist 'xenophobia' and Westernisation, it became increasingly evident to most that Kemalists intended to Westernise Turkey. Aided by the Turco-Italian rapprochement, the suspicion that Turks helped the Tripolitanian or Riffian Muslim rebels, as part of a wider 'anti-European revolution' in Coppola's

words, gradually gave way to considerations of whether Turkey could become part of Europe towards the late 1920s. Fascists, especially the more conservative ones, initially doubted whether Turkey could succeed in Westernisation without creating a dangerous 'ethical void' within the Turkish spirit. In time, these worries subsided.

From fascism's increasingly aggressive foreign policy to what this thesis has called the 1930-31 crisis in Turkey, many contextual changes separated the 1920s and the 1930s. However, as Chapter Three illustrated, perceptions of Kemalism and fascism evolved from the 1920s rather than emerging *ex-nihilo* in the 1930s. As contemporaries like İsmail Hakkı [Ocakoglu] observed in December 1930 for Izmir's *Yeni Asır*, a faction within the RPP was utilising the rise and fall of the FRP and the Menemen incident to prove that they were right all along. The radical Kemalist faction that began to emerge in the 1920s blossomed in the early 1930s, finding wider echoes in Turkish media and the RPP. Rather than being 'shocked', as much of the literature argued, these individuals predicted the 1930-31 crisis and strove to create a more proudly authoritarian interpretation of Kemalism to ensure such crises were never repeated. In this campaign, they frequently drew from fascism and Bolshevism. In the early 1930s, Falih Rıfkı invited Turkish intelligentsia to stop clinging to the relics of the 19th century and 'grab the West by its progressive hand', by which he meant fascist Italy and the USSR. The *Kadroist* argument was theoretically more intricate. Doubly radical, the *Kadroists* not only denied the validity of democracy as a goal for Turkey but even the notion that Kemalism was a movement for Westernisation. Falih Rıfkı portrayed fascism as the new West, and *Kadro* utilised it as a negative example to show how *even* the West was no longer democratic. Much more directly, Ali Naci [Karacan] demanded that Kemalism had to be what fascism was to Italy and Bolshevism was to the USSR.

The radical Kemalist challenge ultimately failed. These individuals were catapulted to prominence in the early 1930s, but they quickly saw their arguments challenged by the two factions identified in Chapter Two. Liberal Kemalists, including Ağaoğlu, Izmir's Hizmet and Yeni Asır circles, and Hüseyin Cahit, continued to oppose a non-democratic

formulation of Kemalism. They invited the RPP to install a multiparty system, welcomed the rise of the FRP, lamented its demise, and crucially linked the desire for a single-party regime to fascination with fascism and Bolshevism. Whereas the radicals portrayed fascism as new, the liberals strove to show how fascism was merely a resuscitation of ancient tyrannies. In this context, the parallels between fascism and Abdulhamid II's 'tyranny' loomed large in debates on fascism's potential to provide an example for Turkey. Ahmed Emin, Zekeriya [Sertel], and Hüseyin Cahit repeatedly portrayed fascism as a Hamidian tyranny that had nothing to teach Turkey. Falih Rıfkı instead invited Turks to observe differences between the rule-bound dictatorship of fascism and how this Western ideology had nothing to do with the arbitrary rule of the sultan. Despite Falih Rıfkı's efforts, the Hamidian argument for anti-fascism was likely influential since, growing under Abdulhamid II's rule, his 'tyranny' was the epitome of everything the Kemalist leadership wished to reverse in Turkey.

Even though portions of the literature single out Recep Bey [Peker] as chiefly responsible for the fascistisation of Kemalism, the study has illustrated how he and the quietists he led found a middle path between these two alternatives. Veteran Kemalists like Necip Ali [Küçük] and the American-educated youthful duo of Nusret Kemal [Köymen] and Mehmet Safet [Engin, Arın] wrote for *Ülkü* and other People's Houses journals to defend the idea that Turkey was already a democracy, Kemalism did not need fascism or Bolshevism as examples, and immanentisation of liberal democracy was not an option. As the epitaph illustrates, Nusret Kemal saw fascism as the nemesis of Kemalism. Where *Kadro* gushed over the virtues of the new regimes in the USSR or Italy, Recep Bey obsessed with Switzerland. He pondered how, if differences between France and Switzerland did not make the former more democratic, then Turkey's unique application of the 'democratic' system could not make it a non-democracy either. The quietists were generally quiet over fascism and tried to establish a tacit agreement that Turkey was somehow a democracy. This shunning of foreign examples, which exposed both the radicals and liberals to charges of 'imitation', the indefinite postponing of liberal

democracy, and the avoidance of the charges of *istibdat*, made quietism an attractive option for the RPP leadership, most probably including Atatürk and İsmet İnönü. Offering the best of both worlds, the quietists dominated the party's policy line by the mid-1930s.

The invasion of Abyssinia, the involvement in the Spanish Civil War, and the alliance with Nazi Germany and Japan significantly altered the context in Italy in the 1930s. These, as well as precedents like the Four-Power Pact of 1933, rendered fascism too aggressive in Turkish eyes. Most Turkish intellectuals sided with the Abyssinians. The kind of wishful thinking seen over the Matteotti crisis resurfaced as Turkish outlets frequently published uncorroborated claims of an imminent Italian routing. Even more important in changing Turkish perceptions of fascism was the rise of Nazism. By the late 1930s, most Turkish observers came to see Nazism as the primary form of 'fascism'. The 'fascism' that stirred a heated debate between the *Tan* newspaper and Yunus Nadi's *Cumhuriyet* in 1937 was more Nazism than fascism.⁴ Despite the efforts of the regime and the universalist fascists, Nazism successfully shadowed them. By the Second World War, the large-scale atrocities committed by these 'fascists', whether by Italians or others, came to be perceived as having a causal relation to the fascist ideology by many.

This ending of the 1930s stood in glaring contrast with the early 1930s when universalist fascism was on the rise, the Turco-Italian relations were enjoying the 'warmth', and Nazism was marginal. In the early 1930s, the universalist enthusiasm induced Asvero Gravelli in *Antieuropa*, Eugenio Coselschi in *Roma universa* and through the CAUR, as well as Oddone Fantini in the *Universalità fascista*, to interpret Kemalism as a fellow movement. Fantini quoted Falih Rıfkı's praises of fascism as proof of fascism's universality, while Gravelli even claimed that Kemalism seemed 'entirely copied' from fascism. These cases represent the moment when fascism became closest to Kemalism. It should not be forgotten, however, that precisely because of the urge they felt to find validating

⁴ For example, see Ahmet Emin Yalman, 'Millî Siyasetimizin Şaşmaz Ölçüleri' [The Unswerving Yardsticks of Our National Policy], *Tan*, 11 September 1937, p. 1, p. 10.

examples abroad, the universalists operated with more lax standards. *Antieuropa* also claimed that the USSR was drawing from fascism in ameliorating certain aspects of the Soviet regime. Though the universalist fever spread to more mainstream publications, too, its impact was often more limited, as Chapter Four illustrates. The ideological content of Kemalism also caused occasional confusion among the fascists. At times, what they saw as vestiges of liberal democratic ideologies, such as feminism, bothered the likes of Gravelli. The question of Kemalism caused a potential theoretical headache as it illustrated an incompatibility between the emphasis on Roman and Catholic roots of fascism and its globality. As Anton Hilckman pressed, how could Nazis or Kemalists be fascists as they were not part of this glorious Latin Catholic tradition? Hilckman shrugged off similarities between fascism and Kemalism as a nature of the times: in the 1930s, 'anyone with a bit of brain' could easily reach anti-democratic conclusions by observing their world. The universalist fascists tended to ignore the question. They gleefully continued to argue both that fascism was a uniquely Western, Catholic movement that would save the West and that its global spread reached the shores of Japan, Syria, and Turkey alike.

Not only fascist intellectuals but even some of the hard-nosed Italian diplomats perceived the 1930-31 crisis as Turkey's moment for fascistisation. Mussolini developed a keen interest in Turkish developments and asked Ambassador Aloisi to update him with detailed reports. Aloisi's and other diplomats' reports offer a window into Italian perceptions of the inner workings of the Kemalist regime at the time. The diplomats tended to see the rise of the FRP in 1930, mainly due to a personal conflict between Ismet Pasha and Mustafa Kemal. The party was universally regarded as a threat to Italian interests with its 'French-inspired' liberalism and Fethi Bey's French connections. Aloisi and other diplomats also speculated on how Mustafa Kemal may have wanted the FRP to channel popular frustration towards safer forms of expressing discontent. They felt that the 'cultural level of the masses' in Turkey rendered this a dangerous experiment in democracy. Aloisi and the Soviet ambassador both met Ismet Pasha and explained to him what elements of successful totalitarian

regimes Turkey lacked: chiefly an 'organic' connection to the masses. While the rise of radical Kemalism was welcomed and the remarks of Ali Naci or Falih Rıfkı noted by fascist diplomats, Aloisi felt that the Kemalist enthusiasm for transformation quickly waned. Later, in 1935, Ambassador Carlo Galli agreed that while there were similarities between fascism and Kemalism, the party structures and the ultimately democratic goals of Kemalism made the two differ. These findings contrast with the literature where Galli's reports are instead portrayed as illustrating solely the similarities between fascism and Kemalism.

Where the anti-liberalism and authoritarianism of Kemalism lent themselves to comparisons with fascism, Italian anti-fascists instead insisted on the ideological content of Kemalism and its proximity to anti-fascism. The Turco-Italian rapprochement initially caused disappointment and confusion, with the reformist *La Libertà* disdainfully noting Turkish participation in Italian fairs as niceties between 'dictatorships'. Already by the early 1930s, anti-fascists made up their mind: Ankara would never become the subservient power that, in their view, Rome desired. Even before the souring of the state-level relations in 1934, anti-fascists speculated crises between Rome and Ankara, and by the mid-1930s, both socialists and some liberals like Sforza saw in Kemalism a force for anti-revisionism and anti-imperialism. In both *Avanti!* and *Giustizia e Libertà*, left-wing anti-fascists proved particularly keen on emphasising the sociocultural goals of Kemalism. It was these individuals' understanding of the West as an open community characterised by freedom of conscience, opinion and labour, secularism, and female emancipation that made them cherish Kemalist Westernisation. Such was the appreciation that when Atatürk died in November 1938, Angelica Balabanoff's *Avanti!* lamented how Italian socialism lacked 'a leader like Kemal', who would decisively and energetically counter fascism when there was time, and Emilio Lussu of *Giustizia e Libertà* foresaw a global revolutionary role for Kemalism. Anti-fascists utilised the example of Mustafa Kemal as a peace-loving general opposed to the 'operetta generals' like Mussolini and Hitler. While the lack of socioeconomic reforms was acknowledged, the ends of Kemalism were largely appreciated.

Throughout the interwar era, but with increasing intensity in the 1930s in line with the universalist turn, the fascist regime utilised several methods to conquer hearts in Turkey. Ironically, the most pro-fascist sentiments were voiced by individuals like Ali Naci or Falih Rıfkı in response to domestic concerns, without directly resulting from fascist propaganda. The fascist regime targeted different sectors of society with varying tactics. Elites were offered free books on Italy and fascism, and Italians and Levantines were invited to film screenings, all intended to make them appreciate fascism. Fascist authorities provided pictures and captions to Turkish newspapers and journals, which published these even as late as 1937, despite Ankara's attempts to curtail foreign propaganda in the country at such turbulent times. Though the RPP elites were among the recipients of books and Ankara failed to stop the circulation of pictures and captions of Italian origin in the press, the restrictions on propaganda for the Turkish masses proved stronger. The Italian authorities wished to invite the Turks, but Ankara's precondition for film screenings was a strict ban on Turkish viewers. Similarly, when the famed Radio Bari began its Turkish broadcasting service in 1937, Turkish authorities scrambled to prevent the masses from tuning in, as is evident from the raiding of the student Ali Paruğ in Izmir in 1939. As an excellent transnational medium of propaganda, radio offered much promise and penetration into Anatolia. Radio Bari's Turkish services included Turkish and Italian music as well as news and 'cultural' discussions. A report from Ezio Bartalini in 1942 to the embassy suggests, however, that the content of these programmes by the Second World War turned too 'theoretically' intense for having an impact on the Anatolian masses.

The most enduring propaganda technique of the fascist regime also has the most obvious bearing on this thesis's alternative to post-Kemalism and certain available arguments against it. Yunus Nadi's [Abalıoğlu] *Cumhuriyet* daily published the headline 'Salute from Kemalist Turkey to Fascist Italy' in May 1932, complete with an entangled *littorio* and star and crescent. The headline has been a cornerstone of both academic and popular debate on fascism and Kemalism. In light of the findings of this thesis, both the post-Kemalist interpretation that the headline manifested

the Kemalist sympathies for fascism and the pro-Kemalist interpretation that the headline was merely diplomatic nicety appear untenable. Yunus Nadi was engaged in talks for 'financial support' for his outlets for more than a year when the headline appeared. Following its publication, Yunus Nadi joined Ismet Pasha's visit to Rome and met various fascist authorities. Yunus Nadi instrumentally promoted one or another group of authors in *Cumhuriyet* who sincerely defended given political views. Italian diplomats increasingly regarded the owner himself as an opportunist without any real ideological commitment, who shifted *Cumhuriyet's* policy line as per his expectations of financial gain. Though Yunus Nadi probably never had the funds he desired from Italy as a result of this arrangement, German diplomats also had contact with him and suspected that he also received money from the French. These findings do not push sincere authors of *Cumhuriyet* out of intellectual history, but they severely qualify any interpretation of Yunus Nadi's moves as reflective of a widely shared Kemalist stance.

Presupposing such a Kemalist ideological stance also appears problematic considering the study's findings on Turkey's 'gentle' turning down of the invitation to the *Convegno Volta* universalist fascist conference in 1932. Both geopolitical and ideological considerations stopped the RPP from associating with the fascists in similar ventures, such as an invitation to a university summer camp for Istanbul *Darülfünun* students the same year. Turkey's authoritarian state structure did not allow for independent fascistoid groups to emerge, associate with the CAUR, and join the conference. *Roma universa* discussed *Atzs* [a misrendering of *Atsız Mecmua*] and *İnkılap* as influenced by fascism, but apparently, they did not establish concrete contact. Finally, a cultural barrier remained between Turkey and Europe, which stopped any Turkish nationalist from seeing their movement as a direct counterpart to a European group. There was no Turkish counterpart to the British Fascists for these reasons. The literature thus far has either focused exclusively on cases like that of Yunus Nadi's headline or simply explained away claims of Kemalist fascination for fascism as a reflection of the *zeitgeist*. Using perceptions of fascism and Kemalism as leverage and taking a closer look at the

contemporary debates without reification, this thesis has proposed several Kemalist, fascist, and anti-fascist factions to better capture the complexity of the matter at hand. It is hoped that in addition to the empirical findings of this study, this historiographical perspective and practice will be beneficial to the literature.

This study has sought to highlight the importance of the background, that is, the personality, prior beliefs, and values of agents in moments of contact. Particularly, but not exclusively, in transnational history, actors are imagined as entering the moment of contact almost as *tabula rasa* and being transformed. There have been objections to such practices within the field, which nonetheless remain dominant. Instead, drawing from recent findings in political science and personality psychology, Chapter Six sought to shed light on how the background has a large effect on the outcome of the contact. The chapter put into the spotlight individuals who were not mere observers or tourists in the land of the other; that is, individuals we may call experts and expatriates. The very profoundness of contact itself depended on the background of the agent. This became clear by a comparison of the careers of Cornelio Di Marzio, who ended up in Turkey through sheer chance, and Ettore Rossi, a Turcologist who chose to frequent Turkish circles and appreciated aspects of Kemalism throughout the interwar era. Contact bestowed an epistemic advantage; this applied not only to the likes of Rossi, Nüzhet Haşim Sinanoğlu, or Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, who spoke the language of ‘the Other’, but even to Di Marzio, who did not speak Turkish but realised before most fascists in Italy that the Kemalist regime would not crumble soon, as of 1926.

This epistemic advantage did not always evolve into a clear-cut sympathy. Despite the years he spent in Turkey, Di Marzio’s view of Kemalism was hardly more flattering than that of the Pedrazzi. Several Turkish visitors to Italy in the interwar era also illustrate how contact may cause more conflict, with İhsan Altıntuğ’s travels serving as a prime example. While Di Marzio insisted that Turkey would have a difficult time becoming Western, Altıntuğ, in the mid-1930s, moved Italy out of Europe in his mental map, where, unlike fascist Italy, discipline reigned supreme. It is not that contact never made a difference. The point is rather that the

impact of contact depends on the agent's prior beliefs and values. Hence, an anti-fascist who interpreted Kemalism in much the same way as anti-fascists in Europe, Ezio Bartolini's knowledge of and affection for Kemalism grew in Turkey. Nüzhet Haşim's perceptions of fascism also attest to the myriad ways contact can operate: his interpretation of fascism as failing due to inherent shortcomings of the 'Italian character' despite the 'excellence' of fascist organisations certainly defies simplistic explanation.

A running theme of this study has been the importance and constant redrawing of mental maps, with particular emphasis on the centrality of the West and Europe. This theme permeated all the chapters, from how none of the *inkılap memleketleri* was recognisably more 'Eastern' than Turkey from a Turkish perspective to Bartolini's vision of Kemalism pushing the boundaries of Europe to Mount Ararat in Eastern Turkey. The centre of the West was Europe, especially in the eyes of the conservatives and fascists. Though ideologies of a 'wrong West' permeated minds, fascists felt their ideology was successfully restoring European glory before Europe was toppled by an 'anti-European revolution'. These findings indicate the originality of Italian views on the West and Europe. Unlike many German thinkers, like Hermann von Keyserling or Oswald Spengler, who were often denounced by the fascists as self-doubting and pessimistic East lovers, the Italian conservatives and fascists – and even anti-fascists – scarcely doubted the vitality and superiority of Western and European civilisation.⁵ Similarly, the foundational distinction between *Occident* and West did not appear so central in Italian ways of thinking, either in general or, especially, in relation to perceptions of Kemalism. The verbs *occidentalizzarsi* [Westernise or Occidentalise] and *europeizzarsi* [Europeanise] were used interchangeably in relation to Turkey.

⁵ This distinction between the fascists and the Nazis was noticed by contemporaries, too. Critiques of Keyserling and Spengler are illustrative of this point. Another example is noted by Simona Giustibelli. In 1932, the Austrian daily *Tagespost* praised the *Convegno Volta*, where one could not come across the kind of resignation and 'eulogies' on the downfall of the West. Simona Giustibelli, 'L'Europa nella Riflessione del Convegno della Fondazione Volta (Roma, 16-20 Novembre 1932)', *Dimensioni e Problemi Della Ricerca Storica*, 1 (2002), pp. 181-234 (p. 220).

Tellingly, the distinction between *Abendland* and *West* was pressed on *Antieuropa's* Asvero Gravelli and Aristide Campanile by a German, Anton Hilckman. Italian commentators, fascists and anti-fascists alike used the term *Occidente* rather than the directional *ovest* when referring to the West. In a text from 1936, Gravelli described Europe as the centre of *the Occidente and priority of fascism* while noting that there was a 'rest of the *Occidente*', clearly seeing Europe and America, as well as other parts of the Anglosphere, sharing a minimum of Western civilisation.⁶ The term *ovest* appeared in relation to America, whose influence on Europe was deemed problematic by thinkers across the political spectrum. Nonetheless, this distinction did not acquire the ideological significance of the German distinction between *Abendland* and the *West*.⁷

Individual differences meant contemporary actors varied significantly from one another in terms of their capabilities, tendencies, prior beliefs and values. The literature has thus far ignored or brushed over variation as inconsequential detail, leading to reification, in turn causing historians and the public to ignore how Yunus Nadi's intentions differed from those of Falih Rifki. Crucially, contemporaries were aware of these differences. For instance, Asvero Gravelli knew exactly how conservative fascists perceived his universalism and thus wielded the example of Kemalism as proof of his interpretation. The factions of Kemalism, fascism, and anti-fascism proposed in this study are not meant to be exhaustive. While mental holism means the factions proposed here will likely have some relevance to other relevant intellectual histories, a radical Kemalist and a liberal Kemalist could be united in questions of land reform, for example. Methodological individualism is often perceived as a divisive force in social sciences due to its proponents' tendency to see nuance and difference, whereas others see cases easily falling under clear-cut

⁶ Asvero Gravelli, 'Verso il duemila fascista', *Antieuropa*, April 1936, pp. 145-147 (p. 146).

⁷ For further information on German conceptualisations, see *Germany and 'the West': The History of a Modern Concept*, ed. Riccardo Bavaj and Martina Steber (Berghahn, 2015). For a comparison with Nazism, see especially the chapter 'No Place for "the West": National Socialism and the "Defence of Europe"' between pages 216 and 229 by Philipp Gassert.

categories. Dividing Kemalism, fascism, and anti-fascism into factions, however, this study not only discovered key differences in these individuals' perceptions of fascism, Kemalism, democracy, and the West. It has also shed light on what united them and why individuals could shift between factions across time. Only through such attention to detail can we understand how, for example, a mixture of Turkish nationalism, Westernising reform, and secularism united the Kemalists, who seem to have differed much when it comes to how to actuate these reforms. Studies that speak of *the* fascist way of perceiving Kemalism or *the* fascistic tendencies of the RPP should first answer the who, when, and why questions and take differences between actors seriously.



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