Towards a National Imagination:

The Script Reform of 1928 in Turkey

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Yalın Emek Çelik

Boğaziçi University

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This thesis by Yalın Emek Çelik

is approved by:

Assist. Prof. Biray Kolluoğlu Kırlı (Committee Chairperson) ....

Assoc. Prof. Meltem Ahıska ....

Assist. Prof. Zafer Yenal ....

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ABSTRACT

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This study is on the Script Reform of 1928 in Turkey. It aims to situate the process of the change from the Arabic Script to the Roman Script within the nationalist transformation projects put into practice in the early republican Turkey. The contemporaneous nationalist discourse and the ideology bore by the governing elite of the time are analyzed with reference to the Script Reform. The consequences of the reform, its impacts on the society and the reflections of the nationalist perception of the time on the social transformations conducted are the main foci of interest for this study.

The thesis mainly discusses the intended and/ or unintended rupturing consequences of the reform both in the daily and intellectual life of the early republican period, with a sociological approach.

KISA ÖZET

Milli bir Tahayyüle Doğru:
Türkiye'de 1928 Harf İnkılabı

Yalın Emek Çelik

Bu çalışma 1928 yılında Türkiye'de yapılmış olan Harf İnkılabı üzerinedir. Çalışma, erken cumhuriyet dönemi Türkiyesi'nde Arap alfabesinden Latin alfabesine geçiş sürecinin, uygulamaya konulan milliyetçi dönüşüm projeleri içinde konumlandırılmasını hedeflemektedir. Zamanın milliyetçilik söylemi ve yönetici elitlerin taşıdığı ideoloji, Harf İnkılabı'na referansla incelenmektedir. İnkılabın sonuçları, topluma etkisi ve zamanın milliyetçilik algısının uygulanan toplumsal değişim projelerine yansımaları, bu çalışmanın temel odak noktalarını oluşturmaktadır.

Tez asıl olarak inkılabın erken cumhuriyet döneminin gerek gündelik gerekse entelektüel yaşamına kasıtlı ve/ veya kasıtsız kırılma yaratıcı etkilerini, sosyolojik bir yaklaşım getirerek tartışmaktadır.

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INTRODUCTION

The Turkish Republic, founded in 1923 upon the remnants of an imperial past, went through a significant set of transformations led by a group of intellectual elite. The intellectual elite who ruled the country during the first decades of the republic and who led the way to the newly born nation state were the bearers of a nationalist ideology which was, in some respects, unique to the Turkish geography.

The preceding state on the Anatolian geography, the Ottoman Empire, was a significant power up to eighteenth century and comprised of various peoples from different ethnic and religious origins. The nation-state to be built naturally necessitated a different kind of belonging and identity, which required the acceptance of a national attachment and unity by the individual citizens. The Turkish nationalism that was supposed to form this new identity had some dilemmas inherent to it, one of which was the position taken *vis-à-vis* the West.

Though the Turkish Republic did not have a colonial background, the national legend leaned on liberation from the military occupation of the Western States and one of the means of unification within the society was the unity against the West constructed as a foe. On the other hand, the military-based ruling elite were the supporters of the idea which celebrated the Western civilization as the bearer of "universal" values, and had the project of achieving the *level* of the Western nations that had the power to defeat its foes such as the Ottoman Empire. The metaphor of progress and backwardness, finding their counterparts as the West and the East in the minds of most of the intellectual elite, had its impact on the development of Turkish Nationalism. The cultural traits having their roots in the "Eastern" civilization were condemned as obstacles to the national ambition defined as reaching the level of the advanced nations of the West. Also the old (Ottoman) institutions, education system,

and even the alphabet were condemned with the metaphors of chains, bonds, doors, preventing the people from progress which Western nations had achieved.

The nation-building process in the early republican Turkey was at the same time a process of setting a new system of authority and a new set of institutions, namely, of a nation-state. In the Anatolian geography, the transition from an imperial to a republican system can hardly be described as an outcome of structural changes within the social formation. The conditions such as the rise of Bourgeoisie or industrialization that gave way to the emergence of nation states in Western Europe, in this sense, were not the primary factors for the emergence of a new regime in this geography. Neither the notion of a nation was a widely accepted one among the Muslim population prior to the founding of the new regime, bringing about the task of *inventing* one, as a part of the nationalist project. So a change of a whole population, concerning their way of thinking and identity-building processes, was a prerequisite for the establishment of a nation-state with its institutions and way of governing. Such a transformation, without a historically developed social setting had to be conducted by a group of nationalist elite.

These transformations addressing directly the way of life of the people in the Anatolian geography were set into practice by the elite, most of who were former military officials and fought the War of Independence against some Western forces, with the claimed expectation of being one of the leading nations of the international community through a change of civilization. From the way the state is governed to the types of dress the people wore in everyday life, a huge project of change was tried to be conducted with the use of the state agent.

One of the main assertions in this work is that the recent past, conceived as bearing all the elements of the condemned "Eastern" traits and seen as a threat to the

newly found regime, was subjected to a process of *forgetting*. For the social transformations and the new governing mechanisms to be permanent, the new holders of the political power aimed the elimination of many elements belonging to the past, was among the aims of the nationalist project. In a sense, Turkish nationalism constructed its *other* not as a rival nation/ power confronting it but as the old and the East that prevented it from being the part of the civilized world as a proper nation-state. Hence the nation-building process was a two-sided one, simultaneously trying to construct the new while erasing the old.

As one of the most outstanding among the changes experienced in the early republican Turkey the Script Reform of November 1928, meaning the change of the script used for reading and writing from Arabic to Roman[1], is the core object of this study. This work aims to situate the Script Reform within the nation-building process of the early republican Turkey, with regard to how it was "utilized" for the manipulation of the intellectual field and the public sphere, for the control on and "shaping" of the society by the ruling elite, how it introduced a significant rupture to the social and cultural life of the population, and acted as a mechanism against the recollection of the past.

The first chapter of this study is a general discussion of the process frequently addressed to as "Turkish Modernization" or "Westernization" with respect to nationalism. The place of Turkish Nationalism among other nationalisms, with regard to the unique experience of the Turkish Republic, and to the social transformation projects held, is dealt with in this chapter. The attempts to propagate a nationalist discourse comprising an idea of being part of the Western civilization, among the people who were unified against the Western powers in a period of wars,

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[1] Though the Roman Script was always referred to as "Latin Script" or "Latin Alphabet" in both contemporaneous discussions or legislative texts in Turkey, throughout this study it will be referred to as the Roman Script.

is one of the points discussed in this chapter. Also the attribute of the nationalist elite to the recent and mythic pasts is analyzed with reference to the history-writing and education practices of the time.

The second chapter focuses on the implementation of the Script Reform. The debates on script having its roots in the Tanzimat period, the causes and developments ending up in such a reform are included in here. The alleged reasons for, and the ideas against the reform are tried to be dealt with in detail, to reveal that the reform process was not a smooth period of transformation and to search for the main intentions underlying the reform. The preparations for the reform, the legislation, the experience of National Schools and a nation-wide reading mobilization as parts of this reform are also included in the second chapter. The Language Reform, as a wider but unfinished project aiming the nationalization of Turkish Language is also discussed, albeit briefly. The discussion on the Language Reform is included in this study since it reveals that the Turkish Language, allegedly for which the new script was adopted to suit, was an invention under continuous construction. Also the effects of the Script Reform and Language Reform on the intellectual life and collective memory paralleled each other.

It is worth mentioning that the historical sources mostly address most of the ideas and decisions made to Kemal Atatürk in person, reinforcing a mythic one leader - one nation history. It is a fact that Atatürk was the center of authority in this period and took many decisions personally, as also reflected in this work while mentioning the historical phenomena for the sake of being loyal to the sources. Meanwhile it is important to bear in mind that the nationalist ideology of the early republican Turkey was not merely the production of a single person. The personal interventions of Atatürk to the reform process are mentioned for the sake of shedding

light on the truth level of the claims concerning the scientific background of the reform process.

The third chapter of the study concentrates on the outcomes and affects of the reform. The reform rendering the population illiterate with the aim of creating a totally literate nation, is approached with respect to the consequences it gave way to. In this chapter it is argued that the reform could not achieve most of its declared aims, but it did achieve some of the intended but not declared aims such as creating a rupture in the course of history and collective memory. The influence of the reform on the intellectual and cultural life of the people is dealt with, with special emphasis on the publishing life. The comparison of the promises and consequences of the reform is discussed in the light of the data at hand. Also the lack of printed materials in the period following the reforms is dealt with regard to their importance as means for achieving a collective national imagination.

In the fourth chapter I discuss the place of the reform within the construction of national identity. The peculiar features of the Turkish Nationalism and its reflections in the Script (and language) Reform(s) are dealt with in this last chapter. The characteristic of the Turkish Nationalism, setting its "other" as the recent history, and the impacts of this understanding to the social life and collective memory are focused on. Also, sacrificing of the older generations for the sake of creating a young republican generation with no bounds to the recent past, is a point of focus.

The conclusion part summarizes the outcomes of the study, discussing the constructive and destructive sides of the reform and to what extent they were realized, and in what ways they affected the society.

Method

Since I deal with an historical phenomenon, I made frequent use of historical documents and studies throughout this study. The post-colonial and cultural studies, as well as theories of nationalism are included in the discussion about the Turkish modernization. The studies on Turkish History and Turkish Nationalism are made use of as well as the ideas of cotemporaneous leading intellectuals of Turkish Nationalism.

In the analysis of the debates on Script Reform, the opposing and supporting ideas about such a change of the script are included, based on the studies made on the newspapers and books of the period. The reform is taken in hand with the reading mobilization and National Schools practice which followed the reform. The Script Reform is considered apart from the Language Reform which was a wider and encompassing maneuver. Meanwhile, the relation of the two reforms and the consequences of both are tried to be dealt with as briefly as possible. The construction of national history is also taken in hand parallel to the interventions on the language.

For the relation of the reform with the publishing processes and for dealing with the subject of literature prior to the reform, the bibliographies published 5 to 30 years after the reform are examined statistically. Also other statistical analyses of similar sources are included in this study. The statistical data and the contemporaneous writers' ideas are used for a brief description of the results of the reform and the clues they bore on the intentions of the Script Reform. Though the time interval chosen for the study is the decade following the reform, some

historically significant occasions or documents concerning the period after1940s are included in the study wherever it is revealing about the former developments.

Some other historical sources included are the parliament minutes, legislation books and decision books of committees such as the Language Committee established in 1928. All the translations from Turkish resources are made by the writer, unless the translator is mentioned.

CHAPTER 1

TURKISH MODERNIZATION, HISTORY AND THEORY

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire and with the push of nationalist ideas, new nation-states flourished within the former Ottoman geography. The Muslim community of the Anatolian geography, core of the Ottoman population, was among the last peoples who developed a nationalist movement and similarly turned into a nation-state through the leadership of soldier-based elite that was educated in military schools of the Ottoman Empire -the first "Westernized" institutions of the empire.

Alike many formerly colonized populations of Asia or Africa, the nationalist discourse arousing among the leading intellectuals, comprised a kind of admiration to the West. The desire to establish a Western style nation-state with Western style institutions is common for most of the newly born non-Western states[2]. The newly established Turkish Republic, with a nuance, had the claim to "be" a part of the Western civilization. Many reform movements handled by the government of the time had the aim to achieve an institutional background in accordance with this, as well as a population-wide understanding of being a part of this civilization.

By the governing elite of the time modernization and Westernization were conceived, in a sense, as transposable concepts referring to the same process. The first years of the Turkish republic witnessed a set of radical social transformations carried out by the newly found regime. A set of cultural changes initiated by the state, which later came to be known as Atatürk Revolutions in common language

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[2] For a more detailed discussion on how the Western traits were appropriated by the newly emerging non-Western nations see *Introduction* in Chatterjee (1993); "The Nation and its Fragments."

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were the attempts to achieve a homogeneous social body carrying the characteristics of a Western nation, with certain social and cultural traits[3].

A Short History of Modernization Attempts in Turkey

The idea of the superiority of the West, according to Mardin (2001), shows up in the first part of the eighteenth century, when the military defeats of the Ottoman Empire against the European powers began. The first considerations for adopting the military technology and institutions of the Western countries to the Ottoman Empire dates back to this time. Some diplomatic delegates were sent to the European capitals during these years. The coming of the first publishing machine to the Ottoman Empire also takes place at this period (in 1722) as a most significant example of adopting the Western technology in spite of religious oppositions[4]. The first wave of modernization was met with a serious opposition and some uprisings and was not so influential due to these oppositions. (Mardin 2001, p.9-11)

Many historians address the Tanzimat Period as the beginning of "modernization" movement in Turkish geography, the period beginning with the declaration of Tanzimat Edict in 1839, and during which beginning from military, the Western elements, such as technology, science –and even way of life were taken under close scrutiny and entered gradually to the intellectual life in the Turkish geography. The first institutions that took Western equivalents as a model were the

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[3] For detailed analyses on Turkish modernization and the period of reforms see Ahmad, Feroz (2000); Berkes, Nİyazi (2002); and Lewis, Bernard (1996)

[4] İbrahim Müteferrika, a Hungarian known for bringing the publishing machine to the empire, was at the same time a man following all the scientific innovations of the time and was interested in military technology. He writes a book in which he suggests some military improvements and presents it to the Sultan of the time, Ahmed the 3rd. In this respect Müteferrika was at the same time one of the intellectual intitiators of the Westernization movements in the Ottoman Empire (Berkes 2002, p.50-55)

military schools and other military establishments, due to the undeniable superiority of the military power of European states. (Ahmad 1993, p.2)

During the 2nd Constitutional Period (2. Meşrutiyet), the debates on how to overcome the "backwardness" of the country occupied a great place in the political life. The different ideas on the West began to take shape in this period. The West was a figure of civilization for some people, while by others it was seen as a monstrous power tyrannizing other peoples. Nevertheless, the clash of ideas in this period did not reach an end where one of the currents gained control on the other. The term "Turkish Nation" began to be pronounced in this period, causing objections from Islamists, since the word used for nation, *millet*, was formerly used to address religious communities.

A very determining figure in the formation of nationalist ideas in late Ottoman and the early republican periods was Ziya Gökalp, known to be the premium theorist of the Turkish Nationalism afterwards. He made a formulation for the term of nation, in which culturally Islamic, technically Western traits were collated within an ideal bore by the Turkish nation. Gökalp defined nationalism as a "microbe" which harms and damages Ottoman Empire as well as Islam but at the same time which "turned to the side of the Muslims and compensates for the damage it caused." (Gökalp 1997, p.76) So the nationalist move would be the rescuer of Islam through the rise of Turkish nation carrying at the same time the flag of Islam. In this sense, Gökalp's ideas were forming a moderating formulae between the nationalist and Islamist ideas of the time, before the nationalist move made its final act into the building of a nation-state just after a war of independence.

After the War of Independence fought against the remnants of the Western powers (especially the Greek military) after the First World War, the leading military

officials that served during these wars had gained substantial political power within the country. Most of the people of any class who gave support to the War of Independence were united against the Western forces that were aiming to occupy some parts of Anatolia. The majority of these people had in mind the restoration of the Sultanate and the maintenance of the caliphate after the war. But the hero of the war against the Greeks, Mustafa Kemal, who gained a significant political power, had a different project in mind for the regime that was to be built. (Ahmad 1993, p.52-53) In 1922, two years after the National Assembly was established, the Sultanate was abolished. Though the collaboration of the Sultan with the British forces during the war had initiated a negative perception towards the Sultan, the idea of the abolition of the Sultanate caused serious oppositions even within the Assembly, which were cut off by a speech by Mustafa Kemal, implying that some of the opponents of the law should be decapitated (Genel Kurmay Harp Tarihi Başkanlığı (GKHTB)1971, p.117)

But the caliphate, the religious leadership of the world Muslims, up to the time was a title held buy the Sultans and was more difficult to get rid of because of the religious connotations it bore. As a figure of attraction for all kinds of oppositions to the newly found regime, caliphate was a potential threat for the new political formation. The caliphate's being a symbol of Islam outside the borders of the Turkish republic as well was an unwanted phenomenon. Bernard Lewis tells that the support given to the caliphate by the Muslims of British India was a breaking point for the maintenance of the caliphate. A letter sent by two leaders of this organization told that the separation of the sultanate and caliphate even increased its importance in the eyes of the Muslims and it should be placed in a position that would provide might and dignity to the Turkish State. (Lewis 1996, p.262-263) This was, according

to Ahmad, "a link the Kemalists wanted to break since it violated the spirit of the nation state embroiling it into crises outside its boarders."(Ahmad 1973, p.54) On March 1924, again following severe debates the National Assembly abolished the caliphate and independent religious institutions. Once again, nationalism in the sense that Gökalp had formulated it was negated and the idea of a Turkish Nation leading the Islamic world was put aside by the new Turkish State. This was significant evidence that the new regime hardly had the will to be even in touch with the Eastern world, at least in terms of religion.

It is significant that the same day with the abolishing of caliphate, the law for unification of education (*tevhid-i tedrisat*) was also accepted in the assembly. According to this law all the schools, including religious ones, were brought under the administration of Ministry of Education. Also, with the same law, the establishment of a faculty of theology in Darülfünun, the only university of the early republican Turkey was decided. (Korkmaz 1992, p.27) The simultaneity of the two laws indicates that the government was willing to establish control over the teaching of religion and fill the gap of religious authority after the caliphate.

After the National Assembly appropriated the idea that the Turkish Republic was a "secular" state, the laws were to be changed accordingly. The Civil Code of Switzerland and the Penal Code of Italy were adopted instead of the Sharia, the religious set of rules. The former judges that were graduates of *medreses*, the religious schools, were dismissed gradually and were changed by the ones those who were educated in "modern" schools. (GKHTB 1971, p.152)

Besides the systemic modifications made in order to renew the political or administrative institutions, the lifestyle of the Turkish "nation" was also dealt with by the political leaders of the time. Since the creation of a "modern" nation was the

task in hand, all Eastern elements were conceived as a threat to the new nation. A significant example for this may be found in the banning of the classical Turkish music. The classical Turkish music, "with its plaintive melodies, was considered inappropriate for a dynamic, revolutionary Turkey." (Ahmad 1973, p.92) The national radio was ordered to broadcast Western classical music, opera and ballet companies were set. In November 1925, the wearing of *fez* was prohibited by law and all male citizens were compelled to wear hats instead. The adoption of Gregorian calendar in 1926 was the end of "Islamic way of keeping time" in which the new day "began with the evening prayer." (Ahmad 1973, p.80) The "international system of numbers" were adopted in May 1928 and the Roman Script was adopted in November 1928, which will be dealt with in detail later on[5].

Besides the reforms, two institutions were founded by the imperative of Atatürk himself, for setting the two most important issues conceived as the *basics* of nationality. The Turkish Language Association and Turkish History Association were set just after the reforms and were to create the national language and history on "scientific" bases.

These set of changes mentioned above are often referred to as Atatürk Revolutions, and named as acts of "Westernization." Much opposition from all over the country showed up during the making of the reforms all of which were in some way or another, meant to create a modern society resembling the nations of the "advanced" West. According to Ahmad, the new Western culture had become the "hallmark of the capital's *haute bourgeoisie*" and "remained only a thin veneer and did not affect society at large." The reforms in fact, in Ahmad's words, caused the

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[5] The numbers adopted from the Western system were called "Arabic" letters by the Western people while the script used in the Western countries was named Roman script. But in legislative texts the numbers to be adopted were called "international numbers" (*beynelmilel rakamlar*) and the Roman script was mentioned as "Turkish letters based on Latin script" (*Latin esasına dayalı Türk Harfleri*).

creation of a "gulf" between the people and the rulers and initiated an alienation of the people to the ruling elite which "aggravated with the death of charismatic Atatürk" in 1938. (Ahmad 1973, p.92)

Turkish Nationalism and the West

The nation, as an "imagined community" in Anderson's words, requires a collective perception of the society as a national unit[6]. (Anderson 1991) The formation of such an imagination / conception is open to many influences especially by the political authorities carrying out the task of building a political entity. The cultural transformations tried to be applied upon the "Turkish society" in the early republican period are such interventions by the state agent, aiming the achievement of a "national community" with a common understanding of the social unit and with a common culture in accordance with the official ideology born by the foundational elite.

Most of the third-world/ post-colonial studies reveal many similar nation-building processes in which the "codes" of the Western countries -the previous "colonizers"- are perceived as the "universal" ones and are appropriated. In the Turkish case, the distinguishing point is that the Turkish Republic was neither a European country where the "nation" arose as a consequence of social/ economical processes as it was the case in countries such as France or England, nor was it built on a geography colonized by such countries. On the other hand, the nation was built upon a "legendary anti-colonial" war but at the same time had a claim of being as "civilized" as the colonizers in essence. In this sense the Turkish nationalism may be

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[6] Anderson defines this imagination as the living of "the image of their communion" in the minds of each member of the nation, even if they "will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them." (p.6)

thought to have distinctive characteristics with respect to the theories concerning two kinds of nationalisms.

The Ottoman Empire, accepted as an "equal" of the leading European nations as well as a dangerous foe, has a historically distinctive situation compared to the colonized countries of Africa or Asia. (Gallegher, 1971) So the nationalism(s) existent in the late Ottoman and the new republican periods are expected to follow a different route compared to the colonized countries. Meanwhile, the elite-led modernization adventure of the Turkish republic has several practices policies similar to the colonized countries of Asia and Africa.

Alike the experiences of previously colonized countries, the national unit as existent in the leading European countries, was conceived by the national elite as the prerequisite of being an equal and modern member of the international community. And as it was the case for the post-colonial national state, from the field of music to the field of language and for other political/ cultural settings, the Western countries provided the model for the newly established social unit. In the newly born Turkish Republic, reinforced by the motto of "reaching the level of modern civilization", the leading elite went into a significant reform process and in a sense tried to carry out a kind of transformation which could be named as a social engineering.

On the other hand, the Turkish Republic was established just after and on the legend of a national War of Independence, which was a fight given against the European powers. The fight against the Western foe, that was described as a "monster called civilization" by Mehmet Akif, the writer of the Turkish national anthem and at the same time a conservative intellectual, was one of the main motives the national feelings and social unity was built upon. This situation put the Western countries in a janus-faced position in the eyes of the population, both as a model and

an enemy, one serving the modernization of the nation and the second one as a means of setting the moral background for being a nation.

Şerif Mardin, in his essay "Ideology and Religion in the Turkish Revolution", mentions the situation as follows:

> The War of Independence, which was the first stage of the Turkish Revolution, had much support from the lower classes, in so far as it embodied a resistance to a despised invader. The civil aims of the revolutionaries, i.e. the political and social modernization of Turkey, however, were not paralleled by popular demands. The Turkish transformation did not originate in the thrust of the masses. (Mardin 1971, p.198-199)

So the population's attitude towards the Western countries had experienced no swift shift as the ruling elite's, while the reforms were made.

Ahıska, in her article on Occidentalism, talks about the West's "celebration as a 'model' to be followed", and at the same time "being exorcised as a dangerous foe." (Ahıska 2003, p.353) So the dilemma of the governing elite of the early Turkish Republic was to make a shift from the hostility towards the West to "proving oneself as a part of the West" as a means of national solidarity. So the fantasy of the leading intellectuals of the time was to prove that the Turkish Nation was to be at least as "Western" (as a synonym of "modern" in Ahıska's words) as the Western countries, through a nation-wide compromise and enthusiasm.

Enver Ziya Karal, interpreting Atatürk's ideas on civilization, claims that Atatürk did not believe that there were two civilizations as wrongly perceived in our country. "There was only one civilization, and that was the Western civilization. This civilization has nothing to do with religion. It is a historical phenomenon.... It is a synthesis of the elements taken from civilizations founded before it... So it is not religious, national, or –except its name- geographical. It is universal." Karal also says that Atatürk believed Turks had made contributions to the Western civilization. (Karal 1971 p76)

Visiting the ideas of Ziya Gökalp again, we can see that the nationalism prior to the republican period had made a distinction between the technical/ material and cultural elements, the ones to be adopted from the West and the others to be maintained as constituting parts of the nationalism. According to Gökalp's ideas, Turkish Nation was to preserve its cultural and moral values while benefiting from the technical capabilities enabled by the "contemporary civilization." And meanwhile, it should also preserve national values such as language, which was the ultimate treasure of its culture. (Berkes 2001, p.422-424) In his formulation Ziya Gökalp also makes a differentiation between civilization and culture, claiming that the first is international while the latter is national. (Gökalp 1973, p.28) The project proposed by Gökalp was the "reviving of the Turkish culture that remained only among the common people and at the same time taking and inoculating the Western culture into this." (Gökalp 1973, p.40) The adoption of Western civilization, while keeping and reinforcing the "national culture," would later on be modified by the elite of the early Turkish Republic, but this formulation of Gökalp had a significant weight in the intellectual life in the following years.

Partha Chatterjee (1993), in his discussion on the anti-colonial nationalism, draws attention that the anti-colonial nationalism "divides the social institutions and practices into two domains- the material and the spiritual." According to Chatterjee, the former is the domain of "outside", in which the Western "superiority had to be acknowledged and its accomplishments carefully studied and replicated." On the other hand, there was the "inner domain" that comprised the "spiritual culture" that had to be preserved. (p.6) Ziya Gökalp's formulation, in this sense, perfectly fit the anti-colonial nationalism that Chatterjee defined. But the reform practices of the

post-republican period bring about a different perception of nationhood by the contemporaneous ruling elite.

The reforms affecting (at least intended to affect) the everyday life practices of ordinary people shows that the differentiation between culture and civilization formulated by Ziya Gökalp before was not taken for granted by the republican government. Macit Gökberk, a philosophy professor and chairman of Turkish Language Association between 1954-60 and 1969-1976, in one of his articles claims that the *Tanzimat* period reformists failed because they made an artificial separation between material and moral cultures as well as between culture and civilization. They perceived culture as an "inner" asset whiles the latter as an outer one. This separation, according to Gökberk was surpassed by Atatürk and the success of Atatürk's revolutions was due to the understanding that the Western civilization, with its all moral, technical and social traits was a unique entity (Gökberk, 1979 p.279) This was the way the Turkish Nationalism proved different from the nationalisms of previously colonized geographies, by including the cultural elements of the West in the adoption process, as will be dealt with in more detail later on.

As a matter of fact, the ideas that were addressed particularly to Atatürk were the ideas of power for the era, since the ideology of the political party in power was named Kemalism, the forename for Atatürk. The internal regulation for the People's Republican Party, that was the only organized political power within the national assembly, was re-written in 1927. According to this regulation stated that the requirements to be a member of the party comprised "thinking scientifically", which was a phrase, according to Ersanlı Behar (1996) meant having a secular way of thinking rather than creating a democratic production of knowledge. The same regulation described the "national solidarity" as having three elements; "common

language, common ideal and common idea." (p.90) So achieving a common idea within the nation, according to Ersanlı Behar again meaning a secular and scientific way of thinking, was the requirement for not only the rulers but all the individual members of the nation as well.

So the ruling elite of the time, confronted the task of making all the social transformations conceived as a movement of the people themselves, a movement having its roots in the minds of the people rather than an imposed set of actions. So the shaping of the national imagination in this way was also a desired aim during the accomplishment of all the reforms. This goal, as a matter of fact, was not achieved and the Western traits did not permeate into the minds of the ordinary people. So the cultural interventions of the Western elements at most affected the lives of a minority associated with the bureaucracy causing the coexistence of two different cultures; one Westernized and secular and one which is the "indigenous culture of the mass of the people associated with Islam" in Ahmad's words. (Ahmad 1973, p.92)

The initiation of the nationalist thoughts in the Turkish geography, as a result, can be said to have taken shape around the idea of saving and maintaining the Islamic state from Western forces, though the admiration of the Western powers for their technology or scientific development inherent to it. But with the republican elite who came to power after the war the situation took another shape in which the "other" that the nationalism set itself against came to be the East and the past, the latter to be dealt with below.

Every nationalist move needs the construction of a national history thesis. Partha Chatterjee, in his book on colonial and post-colonial histories, mentions the necessity of every nationalist for a past. As a part of an act he describes as the "classicization of tradition," he talks about how the Bengalis could claim "a cultural ancestry in the Vedic Age," resembling the claim of the British in classical Greece. Chatterjee also points to a shift in the course of historiography, in which the historians turned toward a history of societies from a history of kings or rulers. (Chatterjee 1993)

A very similar case was experienced in the early republican Turkey, especially when the first history books and history congresses are concerned. In Ersanlı Behar's study on the "making of the official history in Turkey," the history books that were prepared to be used in education were taken under scrutiny. (Ersanlı Behar, 1996) One of these books was named *Türkiye Tarihi*, which chose its name from a word referring to a particular geography that had acquired the name recently. The book was on the history of Ottoman Empire and this may be the reason that it was not given the name "Turkish History" as its successor. In the introduction to this book, the old style of history which relied on "persons as subjects" was criticized. It was argued that a scientific way that explained historical events in cause-effect relation would be followed. In the introduction to the last chapter, probably with the idea of a scientific social progress, Westernization was shown as a necessity.

After this book which was written in 1924 and was taught in schools until 1929, the year of the Script Reform, Ersanlı Behar focuses on another book written by the Turkish History Commission that was formed by Atatürk in 1929. Later on,

the members of this commission were to take place in the Turkish History Association founded in 1931. It is important to mention that most of these people were at the same time members of the National Assembly, so the books prepared by the association reflected the official nationalist ideology. This book, aimed to be included in the secondary schools' curriculum, was the first attempt to create a national history thesis according to Ersanlı Behar. In this book a strong emphasis was made on the Turks as a race and their ability to form states. The geographical locations that Turks had lived were exaggerated and 100 pages in this book were reserved for the Turkish roots of other civilizations, while the Ottoman History occupied only 50 pages. The bibliography, composed of 125 books, comprised no Ottoman resources or the name of any (Ottoman) Turkish historians. All the resources were French, English, Russian and German. 81 of the resources were French, the reason for which were set forth as these books' being more reliable and containing less prejudice. The book having only one page on the newly established Turkish Republic, was not found proper for schools and instead a minor part of the book, the part telling about the origins of the Turks and excluding the influences of other civilizations to Turks was published and sent to schools of secondary books. Another interesting point about this shortened version of the book was that it had "no account of Ottoman political existence." (Ersanlı Behar 1996, p.103-107)

The last book Ersanlı Behar studies was written in 1933 by Şemsettin Günaltay, again a member of the assembly, and had 4 volumes. In this book again the state-making abilities of the Turks and the historical roots of the Turkish people, their racial superiorities were paid great importance, while the volume about the Ottoman History was as half in page number compared to other volumes. Also, in this volume the developments in Europe during this period was paid more attention

and Ottoman Empire was mentioned as "a foreign empire that had nothing to do with Turks." (Ersanlı Behar 1992, p.108-116) Also in this book, the history of the Turks were carried back to 20.000 B.C. and many pre-historic civilizations were linked with the Turks that had migrated from Central Asia.

The history schoolbooks prepared after the reforms, as it appears from Ersanlı Behar's study, were based on the idea that the Turks were a very old people and a powerful race that had the tradition of building states. They lived in a very wide geography and initiated many civilizations. The Ottoman Empire with 600 years of history was almost overseen. Also in the History Congress held in 1932, as Ahmet Yıldız quotes, all papers and conferences were focused on the idea of "race as the power determining history." The idea that the Turks were of the yellow race was trying to be refuted. Instead the Turks were depicted as some of "the most beautiful members of the white race". (Yıldız 2001, p.186) It was also evident that the arguments again excluded the Ottoman history and no papers were presented on this subject.(Ersanlı Behar 1996, p.153)

The history to be appropriated by the new Turkish Nation, as a matter of fact, resembled the post-colonial Bengal that Chatterjee (1993) reveals. An ancestral background going back to prehistoric ages was invented and this was made allegedly according to a scientific historiography. Bu the "narrative break" which in Bengali history books used to exclude the Islamic intervention to the Hindu race appears in Turkish history in a significantly different manner. Though there is no negation of Islamic values or Islamic past, the Turkish "national" history deals very little with the Islamic states the Turks lived in or founded. The Islamic history of about a thousand years is shown as an insignificant part in a 20.000 years history and is not directly connected to the racial elements that are emphasized. The wide range of

geography, in which Turks allegedly lived, was an attempt to reject the idea that identified the Turks with the "East."

So the official history tries to set a secular vision of past, that would conceivably be sufficient for the "nation" to make use of as a means of national attachment, and go "forward" in the direction of *the* civilization. The elements of the recent past, the elements Ottoman culture, Islamic lifestyle, were kept outside of this history.

CHAPTER 2

THE SCRIPT REFORM

HISTORY

A most significant reform implemented in the modernization adventure of
Turkey, was the change of the alphabet. The abolition of the Arabic alphabet that
was used by the (ethnic) Turks for a thousand years and the acceptance of the Roman
alphabet that the Western nations used was a huge project with considerable effects
upon the society. Besides rendering the part of the population that was literate before
the reform illiterate in a very short period of time[7], it went hand in hand with a
nation-wide literacy mobilization, and with the claim of making the whole nation
literate thanks to the "ease" of the Roman alphabet. On the other hand, the written
material, printed with the former script up to that time was rendered inaccessible
with this reform.

A Short History of the Turkish Language

The first written pieces of the "Turkish" language goes back to the seventh
century, and were found in Central Asia, in an area that is now within the borders of
Mongolia. This first written language of the Turks was the Köktürk language and
from eighth century on, the Uygur script was used by the Central Asian Turks.
Besides these two primary scripts, according to the place they lived, Turks "used or

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[7] It is helpful to bear in mind that a part of the literate people who were also part of the elite class were
bilingual and more or less familiar with the Roman script.

tried" seven different scripts[8] within the span of five-centuries, until they came under the influence of Islamic culture. Being the script of Kouran, the holy book of the Muslims, the Arabic script began to be used as the primary script by all the Turkish principalities and states such as Great Selçuklu, Anatolian Selçuklu, Kıpçak etc. from the tenth century to the twentieth century. (Şimşir, 1995 3-5)

Along with the Arabic script, Arabic words became part of especially the official language of such principalities or states. Another influential culture and language was the Persian one, lending out many words and grammatical rules to the written language of the Turks. The Ottoman language, which was used for the official correspondence and literature as well, was full of Arabic and Persian words besides Turkish ones.

The mostly illiterate population of the Ottoman Empire, on the other hand did speak several dialects of Turkish differing according to the geography.

Towards a Script Change: Tanzimat and 2nd Constitutional Periods

Like the other reform movements the Script Reform, as a part of a nation-wide modernization and Westernization attempts, has its roots in the Tanzimat Period. The Tanzimat Period was the time the elite of the Ottoman Empire turned their faces to the West and from military to education, Western methods and systems began to be adapted to by the government of the time.

The first serious critic to the Arabic script, as Şimşir quotes it, comes from Münif Efendi in 1862, who was a general in military and who was to be the minister of education later on. He points out to the "inconvenience" of the Arabic script for

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[8] These scripts were Soğdak, Brahmi, Mani, Nasturi-Suryani, Tibet, Chinese and Mongol Pessepa. (Ülkütaşır, 1981, p.15)

the Turkish language because the letters of the Arabic alphabet did not match all the voices that exist in spoken Turkish. He also points out to the difficulty of reading and writing with the Arabic alphabet because; there are no vowels in the alphabet that the Turkish words comprised a lot, and the shapes of the letters of this alphabet differ according to the place it is used within a word. Another difficulty he mentioned was about the printing process of newspapers or books with regard to the latter fact. He also sees the cause of high literacy rates of the Western nations as the fewer number of letters in their vocabulary.

Münif Efendi offers two alternative amendments for the Arabic script to overcome such difficulties; the first one was to use some additional marks for the letters to identify vowels, and the second and more efficient one was to write to use the Arabic letters separately, which would also make printing processes easier.

After Münif Efendi comes few intellectuals who offer some amendments to the contemporaneous script or the development of a new one like the Roman alphabet. A well known drama writer Mirza Fethali who offers some specific amendments and an intellectual named Hayrettin Bey who sees the current Arabic script as the main reason for the low literacy rates and offers the use of a simplified version of the Arabic script in education and official correspondences are among the supporters of a script change. It is not surprising that some of these intellectuals were army officers, who were educated in the military schools that were the first Westernized institutions in the Empire. (Şimşir 1992 pp. 18-22)

The leading intellectuals of the time, the first journalist Şinasi and famous nationalist author Namık Kemal were also concerned with the language and script. Şinasi developed new Arabic letters and found a new notation that would make the printing process much easier. But he did not offer the adoption of a new alphabet.

Like Şinasi, Namık Kemal also was not for such an adoption. He blamed the education system for the illiteracy and found the adoption of the Roman script impossible. All the proposals for overcoming the difficulties Arabic script created for literacy and printing and the inconvenience of the script for writing Turkish words, were for the amendment of the current script especially concentrating on writing with separate letters and using additional notations to indicate vowels.

After a while, during the 2nd Constitutional Period of the empire (known in Turkish as 2. Meşrutiyet), new arguments arouse around the subject of the script. At this time the first intellectuals that offer the adoption of the Roman script began to show themselves. In this period, while some journalists or writers were claiming the necessity to shift to the Roman script, the more influential suggestions were again for the amendment of the Arabic Script. Most of the influential ideas were on the writing of Turkish words with separate Arabic letters and by showing all the vowels in Turkish words. Another suggestion was to write the Turkish words according to these rules and Arabic and Persian words with their own rules. Although there were attempts by some newspapers to apply some of these suggestions in their printing, without a legislative arrangement, they did not last long. (Ülkütaşır, 1981, p.23)

The first official attempt for the amendment of Arabic script was the establishment of the "Spelling Commission" (*İmla Komisyonu*) in 1909, under the ministry of education. A second semi-official one was the "Society for the Improvement of Letters" established by Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem in 1911. (Ülkütaşır 1981, p.33) In these years, two main suggestions were put forward for amending the script; the separate use of letters within the words and the inclusion of additional signs for representing the vowels. The time's minister of defense, Enver

Paşa, even made up a new, albeit short-lived script and began to use it in all official correspondences within the army, but this script did not last long. (Şimşir, 1992 p.53)

Ideas for adopting the Roman script as the official one was began to be voiced openly after 1912. Celal Nuri İleri, in his book named "The History of the Future" (*Tarih-i İstikbal*) says that the Arabic letters are terrible, and the Roman script must be accepted as the official script to make people able to read and write. Beside his opinions on the script, he also suggests that the "immortal pieces" and the "international pieces of art" of the Western literature should be "transferred to the East" *via* translation. This was the only way, according to Celal Nuri, that an "intellectual life could flourish" in the country. (Quoted in Şimşir 1992 p.49-50)

The disputes on the language and script went on till 1928, when the Roman script was accepted as the official script of the newly established Turkish Republic. As a summary of the debates presented above, we may encapsulate the main reasons put forward in favor of a change in script, whether as an amendment or the adoption of a new one, as follows:

- The Arabic alphabet did not have enough letters to meet all the sounds in the spoken Turkish (especially the vowels).
- There were no majuscules (upper case letters) in the Arabic script that were necessary to differentiate proper nouns from common words.
- The Arabic alphabet had additional letters for some sounds that did not exist in the Turkish language.
- The letters in the Arabic script were written in a connected manner and changed shape according to the place of the letters within the words, causing difficulties in printing process

- For the same reasons, the Arabic script causes the children to learn writing and reading in at least 3-4 years and the population remains illiterate.

- Since the Turkish nation is a part of the Western civilization, the alphabet used for Turkish language should also be the Western script. This would enable a more smooth communication between the Western countries and the Ottoman Empire (later on Turkish Republic).

Oppositions to the Script Change

The first ideas in opposition to the suggestions of a script modification/change appear at the same dates with these suggestions. As an answer to Hikmet Bey's proposals published in a newspaper, journalist and writer Ebuzziya Tevfik states that the illiteracy of the population is due only to the insufficiency of the education system and has nothing to do with the difficulties of learning the Arabic letters. He asserts that the American or French scripts are at least as hard as the Arabic script to learn. (Published in *Terakki* Newspaper on August 1869 and quoted in Yorulmaz 1995, pp.32-40) He is also one of the first intellectuals to draw the attention to the time's library and states that the change of alphabet would "leave nobody who understands the books that are written up to the time, and the transcription of a literature goes back to one thousand years ago is impossible." (quoted in Levend, 1972 p.158)

Ali Suavi, in one of his articles presents the letters that sound differently in different English and French words and points out to the difficulties in learning these languages. He again connects the illiteracy of the Turkish population to the education

system. (Published in *Ulûm* Newspaper in 1870 and quoted in Yorulmaz 1995, pp.32-40)

Another important point of focus for the ones who opposed the idea of a script change was the question of relations with other Islamic and Turkic countries. Ziya Gökalp, one of the leading figures of Turkish nationalism, was for a unification of all the Turkish ethnic origin people in the world. The idea of *Turanism* with the ideal of a worldwide unification of the Turks, led the defenders of the idea to keep the current alphabet in order to keep close relations with the Turkish people most of them living within the borders of Soviet Republic of the time. The unification, according to Ziya Gökalp and the supporters of Turanism, required a national as well as religious sharing.

In 1923, during the Economics Congress in İzmir, a proposal about the acceptance of the Roman Script is given to the chairman by a member. The chairman of the congress, a national hero of the Independence War and a very strong political figure of the time, Kazım Karabekir refuses to take this proposal into account. After the meeting he makes a declaration which, in the following day is printed in three different newspapers. In his declaration Kazım Karabekir states that some "powers" are making propaganda against the current letters, "some foreigners are trying to promulgate the idea that Turkish writing is difficult and unreadable." He also alleges that if Roman letters were accepted, "the country would go under a disorder, and since the holy books, histories, and thousands of volumes in our libraries are written in the current script, such a change would result in a disaster". He says: "The Europeans will tell the Islamic population that the Turks have accepted Christianity. This is the demonic idea that our rivals are working on." (quoted in Yorulmaz, 1995 p.92 from Vakit, Tanin and Akşam Newspapers of 1923, March 3rd)

There were several other religion-based oppositions to the script changes, most of them stating that the Koran, the holy book of Islam was written in Arabic letters and could not dared to be changed. As will be discussed later in this study, most of the intellectuals that were supporting any kind of script reform, responded mostly to the oppositions that were emphasizing the relation of Arabic script with Islam and the sacredness of this script. It is significant that the supporters of the reform, in general, preferred not to deal with the question of transcription of the former texts.

Ali Seydi, in a booklet named "Can Latin Letters Be Applied to Our Language?" published in 1924, discusses the question of script change and tries to answer the critics raised against the Arabic script. One of these was against the idea that Roman script should be applied to Turkish with several modifications to meet all sounds of the Turkish language. He states that if any modifications would be made to meet any sounds in Turkish, such a modification could be made to Arabic letters as well, and this would help keep current literature still available and readable. In the same text, he estimates that the transcription of the current printed material to the Roman script would take at least a quarter of a century, and all the children in this period of time would be left ignorant. In this booklet Seydi also gives examples of the Japan and Armenian scripts. He says that the Armenian script is one of the easiest ones and still the Armenians are very far from the contemporary civilization, while the Japans who have one of the most difficult scripts in the world have achieved a significant level of development. (Quoted in Yorulmaz 1995, p. 99-123)

Another significant figure against the acceptance of the Roman script is Avram Galanti, a Jewish professor, who was later to be a senator in the National Assembly in 1939. Galanti published a book in 1925, named "Arabic Letters Are Not Obstruction for Our Progress", dealing with the question of script change in detail.

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Galanti underlines the fact that the adoption of a new alphabet will render the reading of all complicated texts, from the field of military to philosophy impossible, since these texts use a vocabulary having Arabic and Persian concepts by a ratio of eighty percent. Besides the disadvantages of the Roman alphabet such as making the former literature inaccessible and creating a serious lack of literature for the next generations, Galanti also mentions that the economic and cultural relations with the Arabic and Persian worlds would be interrupted by the adoption of the Roman script. He attaches special importance to the problem of scientific terminology and points out that there are so many terms in several fields of science and arts that cannot be replaced by authentic Turkish words and that cannot be written by Roman script.

Another important point that Galanti mentions is that the letters are just creations of human beings and changes form according to different languages and their phonetic needs. The claim that one set of letters is not "appropriate" for a language is absolutely non-scientific since any letters or the alphabet may be modified according to the needs of a language with specific signs or dot. He also argues that the owners of such claims are not linguists or etymologists and these claims do not bare any scientific background. Galanti again mentions the difficulty of Japanese script and says that the level of education, civilization and economic power reached by Japans is no less than the European countries, and the books published in Japan are the second in number in the world. He also mentions the debates on adopting Roman script in Japan, but states that they rejected these idea in order to keep their ties with their culture and their past. (Galanti 1996, p.31-34)

In 1926, *Akşam* Newspaper published a questionnaire on the subject of script change. Many intellectuals responded to this questionnaire, most of them against a script change. According to the replies given to this questionnaire, most of the

intellectuals were against a script change and for an amendment of the Arabic script. Many of these respondents, however, were to change their minds and begin to support the reform within a two years period of time[9].

Even İsmet İnönü, a few years before the reform, countered a script change with these words:

> Can the difficulty of reading and writing be considered as a vital reason that necessitates a reform that will paralyze the entire state mechanism?... Is not it obvious that the nations' backwardness or progress in civilization can not be measured by the difficulty of their scripts?... The writing used for centuries can naturally be sustained. Men of science, all the literate people will turn into spelling class students. If the script is changed, how will it be possible to make use of the libraries full of hand-written or printed books?[10] (Emre, 1960 p.318)

Though there are several intellectuals not mentioned in this study, the ideas are more or less the same for or against the adoption of a foreign script. The opposing ideas to a script change seem to answer many questions rose by the intellectuals who are for the adoption of the Roman script. Since some of the problems of the Arabic script are acknowledged by these writers, they offer amendments to the Arabic script that would overcome such difficulties in writing, printing or education. The difficulty of reading and writing, as well as in publishing, according to these intellectuals, could be overcome by the addition of vowels to the script with the use of special signs and the separate writing of the letters would facilitate learning and publishing processes.

The technical or "scientific" background of the debate on the script, in this manner, gives no objective precedence to the claims sounded by the reformists. But

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[9] Among the intellectuals against the reform were Necib Asım, and İbrahim Naci, who were to write articles for the reform and even become a teacher of the new script later on. (Erten 1991, p.195)
[10] "Milletlerin medeniyetçe ileri veya geri olmaları yazılarınm kolaylık veya güçlüğü ile ölçülmediği meydanda değil miydi?...Yüzyıllardan beri kullanılan yazı bundan sonra da pekala devam edebilirdi. Alimler, bütün okur yazar kimseler, hece sınıfı çocuklarına dönecekti. Böyle son derece güç durum yaratmağa ne ihtiyaç vardı?...Yazı değişince kütüphaneler dolusu elyazısı, ve basma eserlerden nasıl faydalanacaktık?"

the debates on cultural outcomes of the script change is a more ambiguous field. Though they are not standing on solid ground, the alleged connections of the script to cultural and economic choices of the Turkish Republic seems to have more impact on the political decision to be taken regarding the script and language.

The oppositions to a script change can be traced up to 1928, and from this year on, after the Script Reform, it does not seem possible to see any objections to the reform. The main point of objection to such a reform was the "fear that the products that were created throughout centuries would be forgotten in a moment and the moral bound with the past would be broken." (Levend 1972, p.399) The defenders of the idea of a script change, as far as the research reveals, have no convincing answer for this objection. Agah Sırrı Levend, in his book on the history of the changes in Turkish language, after presenting such ideas by the opposing elite, states that the "main object was to enter the Western civilization and the means of reading, writing and thinking, as well as the means of living should be adjusted according to this civilization."

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM

Preparations

In 1926, an international congress on Turkology was held in Baku. Though the congress mainly focused on the problems of peoples of Turkish origin living within the borders of the Soviet Republic, the alphabet question was at the heart of the congress. This congress ended with a common decision that all Turkic groups had the right to decide the alphabet they were to use, meanwhile the Roman alphabet was

the most proper alphabet for these groups. (Alpay 1976, p.14) Rekin Ertem (1991) asserts that this congress was arranged by the Soviet Russian government because "they were aware of the power that the Turkish states had and they were thinking of a way to decide on a new script that would keep them away from the older sources giving a national and religious consciousness." (p.186-187) Also, Bernard Lewis writes that the main idea of the congress was to separate Russian Turkic states with Turkey that was using the Arabic alphabet and to reduce Islamic influence on these states. (Lewis 1996, p.427) Lewis states that the second script change in Soviet Russia to Cyril alphabet after the Turkish Script Reform was an evidence of this.

The Baku congress was a major factor for the reappearance of the alphabet debates in Turkey. Şimşir, in his book on the writing reform, tells that the alphabet reform in Turkey was expected any time in 1926, just after this congress. One of the reasons that the reform was made as late as 1928, according to Şimşir, was that the year 1927 was the year of Atatürk's Oration (*Nutuk*) in which he told the story of the War of Independence and the history of the newly born Turkish Republic. Atatürk had supervised the publishing and distribution of this book personally, and wanted it to be read by as many people from his own generation. For this purpose, he did not prefer the alphabet reform to be done before this book was written and published. (Şimşir, 1992, p.82) On the other hand, this work was in a sense the summary of a closing era, the depiction of the recent "past" as it should be remembered later on.

It is evident that Atatürk had the idea of taking the Roman script for a long period of time. In his memories published in Cumhuriyet Newspaper in 1948, Arif Necip Kaskatı quotes Atatürk's words in a conversation with a Bulgarian Turkolog Manolof: "We must abolish the writing that impedes us from entering the Western

civilizaton, and we must adapt in every aspect to the Western people even in our dressing" (quoted in Özerdim 1978, p.19)

Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, in his book on Atatürk named "*Tek Adam*", states that Atatürk had this idea on mind during the war years and shared his thoughts with Halide Edip and Adnan Adıvar, a writer and a historian. (Aydemir 1999, p302) Ahmet Cevdet Emre one of the members of the Language Committee, on the other hand, quotes that Atatürk had the idea of changing the letters from his childhood on. (Emre 1960, p.316) These facts show us that a whole project of change was present in Atatürk's mind long before the debates on this subject arose again after the establishment of the republic. This indicates that the committees or linguists that announced the necessity of a script change were hardly determinant in the process which was presented as a historical/ scientific need.[11]

The last time such debates arose was after the acceptance of the Western number system in May 20th, 1928. At this date, the National Assembly, upon the proposal given by the government, decided to abolish the Arabic numbers and use the "international" numbers. (TBMM 1928a, p.1) Both in the assembly and in the newspapers, there appeared proposals to accept the Roman alphabet as well.

After this, a Language Committee was formed under the Ministry of Education.[12] The task of the committee was to examine the alphabets of many European countries such as France, Germany, England, Italy, Hungary and the

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[11] The discourse that gives reference to the insight and vision of Atatürk is a frequent one in history books or memoirs, reinforceing the myth of the nation "saved" by a legendary leader with a former plan in his mind. This discourse is also significant for undermining the alleged historical reasons for and "scientific" implementations of the reforms.

[12] The first nine members of this committee were Mehmet Emin (Erişirgil), Mehmet İhsan (Sungu), Falih Rıfkı (Atay), Yakup Kadri (Karaosmanoğlu), Ruşen Eşref (Ünaydın), Ragıp Hulusi (Özdem), Ahmet Cevat (Emre), Fazıl Ahmet (Aykaç), İbrahim Osman (Karantay). After the works of this committee improves, five additional members join the committee: Ahmet Rasim, İbrahim Necmi (Dilmen), Celal Sahir (Erozan), İsmail Hikmet (Ertaylan) and Avni (Başman)

alphabets of Turkic states within the Soviet Union, and come to a decision about the change to be applied to the current script. Also in this period, some personal attempts by journalists to use Roman letters shows themselves. Some newspapers use Roman letters and French syntax in some of their headings and news texts.

Though there were ideas against the acceptance of the Roman alphabet at first, by the time all members accept a total change of alphabet. Şimşir (1992) states that the reason for this change of mind could be "the realization by some intellectuals that Atatürk was determined to make this reform." (p.90) It can be derived from this fact that the setting up of such a committee was not in fact for deciding if the Roman or another alphabet was applicable to the Turkish Language but to decide how it could be applied.

After a month's work, the Language Committee prepares a report called "the Alphabet Report. In this report a modified form of the Roman alphabet with 29 letters that is quite similar to today's Turkish alphabet was proposed. The first alphabet offered as the new "Turkish" letters included "q", "w", and "x" and did not have the letters "ğ", "ö" and "ü". (Ülkütaşır 1981, p.62) In this respect, the first script offered by the committee resembled the French alphabet. Also, the use of special dual letters was offered to properly spell some foreign words. With the intervention of Atatürk himself, this offer was not applied later on. Also Atatürk, making the first "corrections" to the alphabet and giving advises to the committee, states that the use of letters such as "q" and "x" were "unnecessary". (Şimşir 1992, p.158)

For the sake of having an idea on Atatürk's place in the decision taking process during the determination of the new alphabet, this interesting anecdote about the

rejection of the letter "q" quoted by Falih Rıfkı Atay (1969, p. 441) is worth mentioning:

> At the table on the evening of the day when I brought the draft proposals for the new writing, Kâzım (Özalp) Pasha grumbled, 'how am I going to write my name? We must have a "q".' Atatürk said 'what difference will one letter make? Let's have it.' Had we done so, we would have kept the Arabic word from being Turkicized. I didn't say anything at the table. When I went to see Atatürk next day I explained the problem to him again. He did not know the manuscript capitals; he simply wrote them like the small letters only bigger. He took a sheet of paper and wrote the initial letter of Kemal, first with an enlarged version of q, then with an enlarged version of k. He didn't like the first at all. So we were spared of q. Thank goodness he didn't know the script capital Q, whish was more flamboyant than K. (Translated and cited in Lewis 1999, p.33-34)

The facts mentioned above reveals that some of the decisions concerning the new alphabet had very little scientific background, and did not take shape according to the phonetic needs of the language. The letters to be used were affected by the ideas that shaped the interventions to the language, that was to be a "national" one, reflecting the attributes of the nationalism that was to show itself in the Language Reform mostly, as will be dealt with later on.

According to Korkmaz, Atatürk was also against the inclusion of the letters peculiar to the Arabic words. He thought that the addition of special signs to the alphabet to meet such voices were "against the benefit of the new generations but would be nothing of use other than benefiting the old generation that knew the former script." (1963 p.42) It is worth mentioning that the letter "j" that was not in any Turkish originated word (Ergin 1962, p.55) had its place in the new alphabet[13]. Regardless of the reality that ideas attributed to Atatürk were his own or

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[13] Though "f" and "h" consonants, as well as "j" are not present in Turkish words in origin, these two letters are found in many words in contemporary Turkish while "j" is still only peculiar to the words with Western origin. (Ergin 1962, p.55-57)

reconstructed to fit the national myth, it is obvious that the older generations and the words to be used by them were not taken into account.

Uriel Heyd, an Israeli linguist who made detailed analysis on Turkish Language Reform, states that the "new alphabet turned the Arabic and Persian words which had not been completely turkisized into distinctly foreign elements... In Latin garb, their etymology, structure and inflexion became almost unintelligible, especially to the younger generation, who from 1929 onwards no longer learnt Arabic and Persian in school." Heyd connects this development to the "categorical rejection" of the inclusion of certain letters or the use of dual letters (such as kh, gh) in order to pronounce specific Arabic and Persian words. (Heyd 1954, p.23-24) Here again, the negation of the Arabic and Persian letters, and even the destruction of the means of using those words with the new Roman alphabet come into appearance. Achieving a script that was to be used by the next generations, and for the new Turkish Language which was to comprise no Arabic or Persian words contemporaneously used, was the main concern.

Another important aspect of the Script Reform was the speed in which it was carried out. Most of the intellectuals of the time who were supporting the reform were expecting a long period of transition, predicting a bilingual period. "Even the most radical members of the committee", says Şimşir, "did not expect less than a minimum of 5 years period for a shift in alphabet... but the last decision was to be given by Atatürk himself". He also quotes a conversation from Falih Rıfkı Atay's memoirs, the member of the committee who presented the report to Atatürk. Falih Rıfkı Atay informs Atatürk that the committee foresees a 5 to 15 years period for the shift from Arabic letters to the Roman. According to the committee, both alphabets should be taught in schools and newspapers should use both alphabets

simultaneously for some time. Atatürk's response to this offer was considerable: "It should be accomplished in 3 months or never." (Şimşir 1992, p.96)

The pace of the implementation shows an uncomprimising decidedness for the realization of the reform and preventing the transition from slackening. The time interval predicted for the transition, as a matter of fact, was far from being sufficient for the appropriation of the new script. So the 3 months period here corresponds mostly to the elimination of the former script from all aspects of life. Setting a rupturing break, this would provide a non-viscous ground for the appropriation of the new script. Therefore, in setting a 3 months schedule, the primary concern was the abolishing of the old rather than the construction of the new.

<center>Reform</center>

Although the law was to be legislated in the last day of October, Atatürk's speech in Gülhane Garden on August 9th was a kind of declaration for the reform[14]. In a concert and dinner organized by the Republican People's Party, Atatürk wrote some words on a piece of paper the first sentences written in the new "Turkish Alphabet." In this speech Atatürk draws attention to the fact that at most 20 per cent of the Turkish population was literate, and this was a disgrace for the people. He says "the fault is not ours. The fault is of those who wrap chains around our heads, not understanding our character. It is time to clean up the faults of the past radically... Within a few years, with her writing and with her mind, our nation will show that she is with the world of civilization." (Korkmaz 1992, p.33-34) Also during this speech was included some ideas about the "incapability of the Turkish classical music" to

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[14] M. German's book about the alphabet reform, the inner cover has Script Reform 1928: August 9th as a heading. (German, 1938) German also tells that the teaching of new letters to the officers began the day after this speech was given by Atatürk .

"feed the very developed spirit and feelings of the Turks," which indicates the parallel ways of thinking about the cultural transformations, in various aspects of life.

The location of the speech was significant for several reasons. The Gülhane Garden was the place where the imperial edict giving a start to the *Tanzimat* Period, the period in which the first modernization movements experienced in the Turkish geography, was declared. The modernization project that was initiated at the same place 89 years ago would now be the place to realize the project completely. At the same time the place was very close to *Bab-ı Ali*, where almost all the newspapers and publishers of the time were located, and where the main oppositions for such a reform were initiated[15]. Two weeks after the speech on August 26th, the anniversary of the victorious last battle of the War of Independence, Atatürk would compare this battle with the "battle that is fought against illiteracy with the new Turkish letters." (Şimşir 1992, p.160) The battle, as a matter of fact, was not solely against illiteracy, but against the Arabic Script, the Ottoman past, and the conservative elite of İstanbul. It was the time to establish the national authority of the new regime to İstanbul and gain control over the cultural remnants of the empire, the aim that was symbolized by a single reform project[16].

It was by the Gülhane Speech, months before it was negotiated and accepted in the National assembly, Atatürk declared that new "Turkish" letters were to be used from that time on. The efforts of teaching and applying the new letters began just after this speech, without the legislation for the reform. Also some of the

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[15] Atatürk had not visited İstanbul, the Ottoman capital and the largest city of Turkey from 1919 to 1927. All other reforms were initiated and took shape in Ankara, the new capital of the Turkish Republic. İstanbul was the city that sheltered all cultural heritage of the Ottoman Empire as well as many conservative intellectuals who were against the reforms.
[16] Departing from this point, it is important to bear in mind that the negation of the old institutions, old traditions, etc, with the claim that these were the barriers in front of the progress to be achieved, was also a way for the new regime to cope with the problem of eliminating the politic resistance taking power from these.

newspapers, from August on, began to give examples of the Roman script and tried to teach people about the new letters.

Though it was not rendered compulsory by legislation yet, and though there were no manuals about the spelling of the words, the names of ships and trains began to be changed around August and September, 1929. Even the signboards of shops began to be changed. On October 19th in İstanbul, many signboards that bore Arabic letters were painted black by unknown people who, according to some sources were the officers of the municipality. (Şimşir, 1992, p.232) This was an act of cleansing the public space from the former script. In the public domain, the Arabic script would be just as if it never existed. This act was significant for being an intrusion to the collective as well as individual memory. Both rely on, according to Urry, material objects and spatial frameworks." So the act of destructing all the signs was an act of forgetting, by destroying some "structures of collective memory." (Urry 1996, p.50) A radical intervention to the Ottoman silhouette of the İstanbul streets was set off, which was a symbolic part of the battle between the national authority and the remnants of the imperial past.

Another interesting attempt to teach the new alphabet was the composition of a "Letters March" that was published in newspapers. This march was composed by Zeki Üngör, the composer of the national anthem, and the words of the march comprised only the new letters as they were pronounced. So a ceremonial element as a part of a national identity was also employed for the appropriation of the new letters by the society.

Two days after the Gülhane speech of Atatürk, lessons began to be given in Dolmabahçe Palace in İstanbul, the residence of Atatürk. Some higher state officials, deputies, and writers attended these lessons in order to learn and comment about the

new script. İsmet İnönü, then prime minister, made a speech at the end of these lessons in which he stated that the need for a new alphabet arose from the difficulties of the Arabic script and the new script would enable all the Turkish people including the rural population be literate. He also said that the new alphabet was not to be confused with French or English ones, since it was totally "Turkish" and was created "scientifically" according to the needs of Turkish language.

After this, in August and September Atatürk made visits to nearby cities such as Tekirdağ, Çanakkale and Bursa, asking both state officials and ordinary people about the new letters testing their knowledge about the new letters. Some of these visits were prior to the publishing of the new orthographic manual by the Language Committee. Also before such a publication the governor of İstanbul declared that everybody has to learn the new letters. The committee, a few days after these occasions felt the necessity to make a declaration that the proper use of the new alphabet would be announced shortly and people should not take the various forms of alphabets for granted. (Duda 1989, p.156)

In the following days Atatürk visited some cities in Blacksea and Central Anatolian regions, teaching the new letters and testing the knowledge of people on the new letters himself[17]. During this time the members of the Language Committee had the task to go to Anatolian cities also, recruiting Turkish words from different dialects and make a list of synonyms of already used Arabic and Persian words. (Duda 1989, pp. 159)

During his visits to the Anatolian cities Atatürk again made speeches on the new letters and taught people about the new writing rules. Also during these visits he decided on how to overcome difficulties that arose in writing. Some alterations done

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[17] The detailed depiction of these visits can be found in Ülkütaşır (2000 p. 90-121)

by Atatürk were dictated to the Language Committee by telegraph. The usage of question suffixes and separating lines were among these alterations made by Atatürk himself. (Ülkütaşır 200, p.122-123)

The delay between the Gülhane speech and the legislation, according to Geoffrey Lewis, was because Atatürk "did not want the details of the new letters to be the subject of endless wrangling in the Assembly; far better to present the deputies with a *fait accompli*." As a matter of fact, during the period between the speech declaring the reform and the legislation, the reform had already begun and had arrived at a point of no return. The alphabet and many of the spelling rules were already determined before the meeting of the Assembly; the newspapers had begun to give place to the new alphabet and all the deputies, for or against the reform had realized that the reform had already got started.

On November 1st 1928, the Great National Assembly opened up for its third period with a speech of president Atatürk. In this speech Atatürk states that "the Turkish Nation had to be provided with an easy writing and reading key in order to replace the barren way that renders all their efforts unproductive." He says that the only key to save Turkish people from ignorance is the new "Turkish letters that were taken from the Latin essence." Atatürk, in his opening speech, also declares that it is deputies' personal obligation to teach reading and writing to anyone who is illiterate. (TBMM 1928b, p.5)

Prime Minister İnönü, also makes a speech in this session and states that the reason for the script change is to save people from ignorance, and the legislation on the new letters will "open up a new era in the intellectual life of the Turkish Nation." İnönü also alleges that this would be one of the laws easiest for implementation since all members of the Turkish society were eager to learn the new letters and become

literate. (TBMM 1928b, p.8) In the same session, the speech of Mehmet Emin Bey, a former colonel, is worth mentioning. This speech is another indicator of the perception of the alphabet change by the ruling elite:

> ...The Arabic letters could not deliver the sound of science and arts to the ordinary people. It could not propagate the spirit of progress and civilization within the people. There were huge gaps between the intellectuals and ordinary people. These Turkish letters, which are to be the most important tools for delivering the sound of science and arts and propagating the spirit of progress and civilization to the people, are promising the sacred earth to us. Because with these letters 14 million Turks will mobilize intellectually, a new love and enthusiasm will begin to beat within the hearts of 14 million Turks, and 14 million Turks will create a nation between the intellectual and ordinary people, in the way of progress and civilization. Among these 14 million will appear thinkers, they will cast the golden keys of science and truth; will destroy the bronze doors of the eternal puzzle of the mystery; among these 14 million will appear rebellious spirits, they will break up the ideas rooting from doubt and insurrection, they will tear down the lies and chains of the past that are holding the souls. (TBMM 1928b, p.9)[18]

After the speeches "the Law about the Acceptance and Implementation of the New Turkish Letters" was voted and accepted unanimously. According to the law, until June 1929 all official institutions would adopt the new letters in their correspondences and after January 1st 1929 all books would be published in the new letters. The education would be carried out with new Turkish letters and the use of old material for education was prohibited by the 9th article of the law.

The books to be published after the beginning of the new year, according to the law, would only be in the new letters and according to the 4th article f the law, all the

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[18] "Arap harfleri ilim ve sanatın sesini halkın içerisine götüremiyordu. Terakki ve medeniyetin ruhunu halkın içerisine yayamıyordu. Münevver zümre ile halk zümresi arasında uçurumlar vardı, setler vardı, maarif tamime, ilim ve sanatı halkın içerisine götürmeye terakki ve medeniyeti halkın içerisine yaymaya en büyük vasıta ve amil olacak olan bu yeni Türk harfleridir ki, bize mukaddes arzı vaadediyor. Çünkü bu yeni Türk harfleriyle on dört milyon Türk fikren harekete geçecek, on dört milyon Türkün kalbinde yeni bir aşk ve heyecan çarpmaya başlayacak, on dört milyon Türk terakki ve medeniyet yolunda münevver zümre ile halk zümresi arasında bir millet vücuda getirecektir. Bu on dört milyonun içerisinden mütefekkirler çıkacak, ilim ve hakikatın altın anahtarlarını dökecek, esrarın ebedi muammasının tunç kapılarını yıktıracak; bu on dört milyonun içerisindcn asi ruhlar çıkacak, süp-he ve isyanın yıkıcı fikirlerini dağıttıracak, mazinin yalanlarını, ruhlara vurulmus zincirlerini parçalattı-racaktır."

newspapers, signs, advertisements, posters and film subtitles were to be written in new letters from November 1928 on. This meant that even the small shop-owners had to renew their signs, and the people who want to read these signs had to learn new letters within a month. To read the newspapers, on the other hand, the people had to learn new letters in a two months period and the newspapers had to acquire the equipment for publishing in new letters in the same period of time.

The reason of this law was explained as follows: "In order for the new letters to be widely accepted by the people, the things that the people must read have to be written in the new letters. While the people have the chance to follow newly published material in the old letters, they may show disregard to getting used to the new letters as soon as possible.... The acceptance of the 4th article is required." (TBMM 1928a)

Also by the law, an amount of 400.000 Turkish Liras was allocated to the ministry of education, in order to meet the expanses originating from the change of alphabet. 200.000 Liras of this amount was to subsidize the customs payment for the importation of new letters by printing houses and the press.

National Schools

Ten days after the law about new letters was accepted, on the 11th of November, a new legislation, about the establishment of a new kind of institution, the National Schools (*Millet Mektepleri*) was accepted. National Schools were aiming the teaching of reading and writing to all the citizens. According to Şimşir (1992, p.234) the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the time, Tevfik Rüştü (Aras), tells the American ambassador that the aim was to reach a literacy level of 100 per cent

within 15 years. According to the regulation of the organization, the head of the organization was Atatürk, and all the Turkish citizens were natural members. This points out to an effort to make people perceive the mobilization as their own belonging and join it voluntarily, while on the other hand the law made it mandatory for those who did not volunteer. In many cities and even villages the 1st day of 1929 was celebrated as education fest, and the opening of the National Schools were declared by drums and town criers. Also, the first day of the classes was celebrated with bands or local fests, and in the first lessons, the record of a speech by Atatürk on the new letters was played to the students wherever a gramophone was present.

In İstanbul, according to a declaration made by the governor, all people of ages between 16 and 40 were obliged to register to local administrative units[19]. The National Schools were to be divided into two types of classes, one of them was for the people who knew the former script and would last for 2 months, and the second type was for illiterates and would last 4 months. Also, according to Özerdim (1978, p.41) men would take four lessons in a week, while women were to take two lessons per week. In all cities, the state officials from the governor to the military were the responsible committees for the National Schools organization. All teachers were responsible for teaching the new letters to 30 to 50 students and if the number of the teachers did not suffice, any literate person could be a teacher. The teachers were responsible for the attendance of the people to the classes and could take help from the police or local military forces if necessary. The expenses of the schools were to be met by local administrations. The donations by Agricultural chambers (*Ziraat Odaları*), municipalities and persons also were to be made use of for this purpose. (Şimşir 1992, p.238-239)

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[19] This age interval is different from the interval that was mentioned as the government's aim by Özerdim (1978, p.48) which was 16 to 45. This may be due to the population of İstanbul.

All private company owners, employing more than 20 people were responsible for the teaching of reading to their employees. The public institutions were also responsible for the education of their employees. Even the convicts in prisons were to be taught the new letters. Any place adequate to make a meeting, including the mosques, was to be used for the classes. The local administrative committees were also responsible for the propaganda of literacy in any meeting, sports organization, marketplaces etc.

At the beginning, the reading mobilization seemed a promising effort, but the enthusiasm declined significantly in a five years period. According to the statistics of Directorate General of Statistics (cited in Şimşir p.242-245) in the first year of the National Schools, the number of classes opened was 20.489, the number of teachers was 16.922, and the number of attendants was 1.045.500. Five years later there were only 5.107 classes opened, 4.084 teachers and 157.639 attendants. In a five years period a total of 2.305.924 people attended to these classes and 61per cent of the were villagers, but only 1.124.916 people showed success in reading and writing, which corresponded to the 48.78per cent of all attendants.

Language Reform

Though the language reform was a broader and un-ended project in search for a "national" language freed from the influences and impositions of foreign impacts, the Script Reform cannot be considered without reference to this wider project. The Arabic and Persian words, having a significant place in especially the written language of the Ottoman Empire were begun to be considered as "foreign" words and the orthographic rules of the Persian and Arabic languages, as well as the words

tried to be get rid of. This move was supposed to create a "national" language that would bring about a vivid intellectual life in the modern Turkey. The Script Reform, "causing the death of Ottoman Language and the liberation and revitalization of the Turkish Language (Alpay 1976, p.44) ", was an initial step of creating the national language and help people, in Tahsin Yücel's words, "shift from an oral civilization to a written one" (quoted in Alpay 1976 p.44 from Tahsin Yücel's book "Dil Devrimi", İstanbul 1968)

For the creation of such a new national language, many words were to be replaced by "Turkish" equivalents whether found from compiled words or "created" according to the rules of Turkish, that were again whether existent or found out.

The Script Reform was considered as a first step for an overall change and nationalization of the Turkish language. In accordance with this perception, the spelling and orthographic rules that were to be declared after the Script Reform were decided on, according to the needs of a new language rooting from the Turkish spoken by the ordinary people.

The first action taken was the changing of some official titles, in accordance with the phrase making rules of Turkish. The names made up according to the Persian phrase-making rules and comprised Arabic words were changed (i.e. the name of the Administration of Religious Institutions was changed from "Müessesat-ı Diniye Müdüriyeti" to "Dini Müesseseler Müdürlüğü" and the name for maternal clinic was changed from "Seririyat-ı Veladiye" to "Doğum Kliniki") as an initiating move in September 1928. (Şimşir, 1992, p.223-224)

After the Script Reform the number of members of the Language Committee was increased. Since the question of which letters to use for writing certain words arose. For this purpose the Language Committee prepared a manual and meanwhile

they undertook many new tasks such as finding Turkish equivalents of foreign words, compiling words from different regions of Anatolia, and determine a standard spelling for these words. The translation of Larousse Universel, preparation of a Turkish dictionary and finding Turkish equivalents to the Agricultural terms were the first three tasks undertaken by the new enlarged committee. (Emre 1960, p.328)

On the 12th of July 1932, a new institution, namely the "Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti" (Society for the Turkish Language) was established by the directive of Atatürk. Among the tasks assigned to this institution were the preparation of dictionary, etymological studies, finding Turkish equivalents for the technical terms, conducting further studies for syntax and grammar, studies on the relation of Turkish Language with other languages, and studies on philology and linguistics. (Levend 1972, p.408)

Same year, on September 26th a General Assembly for Turkish Language was held, with the participation of many linguists, language historians, both from Turkey and foreign countries. As came into view in this assembly, there were three main idea-holders rendering the nationalization of the language.

One extreme attitude, supported by a group called "purists" was to find or make up new Turkish words for each word of foreign origin, whether in use or comes to appearance by the technical innovations. Opposite to this was the idea of keeping the words of foreign origin that were in use for a long time and settled within the daily language. These words, according to the "moderate" opinion-holders, were to remain in the language and be subject to Turkish word-making and grammar rules. The supporters of this idea were called the Turkishizationists (*Türkçeleştirmeciler*) by Falih Rıfkı Atay. There was another group that was named as "simple purifiers" who

were for a simpler language but rejected any forced action to be taken on the language. (Atay 1969, p.473)

There were also two other groups of people rejecting any simplification or purification of the language and another group supporting the use of Western words, for especially the newly appearing words due to technical or scientific developments and another one. These two groups did not gain much support in the following time. .

One of the founders of the idea of purification was Sadri Maksudi Arsal, who wrote a detailed book on Turkish Language named "For the Turkish Language" ("*Türk Dili İçin*"), offered the elimination of all foreign-originated words and creation of new literary and scientific terms instead. Also, he believed that the salvation of all the Turkic people in Asian geography was up to the liberation of their languages from foreign impacts.

The idea of a worldwide Turkish unification had a long history, also defended by many intellectuals up to that time, under the name of *Turanism*, for example by Ziya Gökalp who later on began to support the idea of maintaining foreign words that had its place in the daily language. Besides its political implications, the idea of achieving a pure Turkish language through making up of words and compiling Turkish words from different geographies and dialects was found appealing for Atatürk. According to Ahmet Cevat Emre, Arsal had "misled" Atatürk with this thesis for a while and "caused him to get tired and delayed our culture reform." (Emre 1960, p.331)

It was obvious that Atatürk was the ultimate authority for any decision concerning the language policy and personally very interested in the developments in the language, and any group was to gain his appreciation in order to be effective in reality. Two general assemblies were held in Dolmabahçe Palace, the residence of

Atatürk in that period, and the moderate ideas of people such as Falih Rıfkı Atay or Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın were not as impressive as purist ideas at the first years of the language reform.

Accordingly, the purist movement had its impact on the nationalization process of the language and many words were derived or found out to meet all the foreign words. Emre quotes that some people near Atatürk began to speak solely with these new words for being pleasant to him and were really impossible to understand. (Emre, 1960, p.332) Even Atatürk, in 1934, after the second General Assembly for Turkish Language, in an official reception, made a speech with pure Turkish words that could hardly be understood by a Turkish native speaker today.

Gradually, the purist movement lost its pace and the moderate ideas began to gain weight. Atay, in his memoirs collected in his book Çankaya, tells that Atatürk realizes the deadlock created by making up new words and said "we have brought the language to a dead-end... Is it possible to leave it at this dead-end? No. But I can not leave this task to other people either. We will save it from this dead-end."

Cevat Emre (1960, p.333) tells about the ending of the extreme purist movement as fallows:

> There were even people talking this fictitious language because Gazi[20] wanted so. Kazım Dirlik was talking this language fluently. One night at the table, he was talking like this. Gazi looked at the face of the governor who came from İzmir and said 'it became impossible to understand each other.' After that night, purification went busted for Gazi. Nevertheless, to turn back was very difficult.[21]

After the influence of moderate ideas on the Turkish language began to be influential, a dictionary from Ottoman to Turkish began to be prepared, with a

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[20] Gazi, meaning war veteran, was an appellation used for addressing Atatürk.
[21] "Bu uydurma dil kısa bir müddet yazılarda tecrübe edildi, hatta Gazi istiyor diye böyle konuşanlar bile oldu. Rahmetli Kazım Dirlik bu dili çatır çatır konuşuyor olmuştu. Bir akşam, sofrada, böyle konuşuyordu. İzmirden gelmiş olan vali beyin yüzüne Gazi bakmış, gülümsemiş, 'birbirimizi anlamaz olduk' buyurmuştu. 0 geceden itibaren özleştirmecilik, Gazi için iflas etmişti. Fakat geri dönmek de çok güçleşmişti."

method that maintained some words of foreign origin if no equivalent was already existent in Turkish. Also from these words, with Turkish suffixes, new words could be derived. (Atay 1969, p.477) During the period Atatürk had a fatal disease and after his death in 1938, the studies on Turkish Language followed an even more chaotic path, with contradicting ideas of purists, moderates and even conservatives who regained power.

Another fact about the Language Reform, related with the Script Reform as a matter of fact, was the doubts about the spelling of the words. The spelling manual published by the Language Committee in 1928 was not replaced until 1941. The writing of Arabic and Persian words remaining in the language was an enigma, while even the spellings of some Turkish words were not decided upon. This confusion, according to Rekin Ertem, was due to the insufficiency of the manual that was prepared in a very short period of time, namely six weeks. (Emre 1991, p.353)

Even in 1939, a writer named Muhittin Birgen complains that every generation and even every person has his/ her own vocabulary and one can not understand the language used by one another. Birgen shows this situation as a most important handicap for writing and publishing new books. (The article named "*Neşriyattan Önce Dil*" (Language Prior to Publishing) was published in *Son Posta* Newspaper on 5 May 1939, and quoted in Maarif Vekilliği 1939b, p.223) İsmail Habib Sevük, a language historian and an assembly member had also mentioned the confusion in the spelling of the words in 1940, arguing which letters of the new script should be used for the words with Arabic origin that remained in the language.[22] (Sevük 1949, p.48-

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[22] In a preface İsmail Habib Sevük writes for a book published in 1940, he discusses that the Arabic word for "danger" should be written as "tehlike" but not "tehlüke", or the word for "conversation" not as "mehabbet" but "muhabbet", etc indicating that the spelling of the Arabic origined words that were remained in the vocabulary were still debated more that 10 years after the reform.

49) In1948, Herbert Duda, a professor of Turkology describes the situation at his time as follows:

> The new literature of Turkey is under jeopardy. Because, being occupied with letter choices and orthographic rules, intellectual and artistic life was not given proper importance. As a result of this artistic and intellectual manners were impeded from development. (Duda 1948, p.179) [23]

As a project that was not finished, debates on words still prevail in contemporary Turkey. But at the period of the reforms, the commotion on language caused a most critical inconvenience compared with today. The uncertainty was obviously influential on any reading and writing activity. This fact shows how the Script Reform and Language Reform simultaneously formed a handicap for writing, one disabling the use of originally Arabic words and the latter creating a commotion on what word to use. The new script, together with the Language Reform, in this sense served the aim of the exclusion of originally Arabic words as intended, but the lack of Turkish words to replace them obstructed the production of written works.

The language reform definitely had permanent affects on the Turkish Language. It is a fact that the number of Arabic words used in written texts gradually decreased in a significant way. Meanwhile, as Rekin Ertem mentions, an increase was experienced in the use of Western words through the years following the language reform. (Quoted in Emre 1991, p.341 from Türkoloji Journal) Lewis states that the "fuss" about the foreign words was always "focused around Arabic and Persian –Islamic Eastern- languages." The words of European origin, according to Lewis "were as foreign were not affected from this movement and even used to fill the gaps caused by the disposed words." (Lewis 1996, p.429) This was an

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[23] "Türkiye'nin yeni edebiyatı da kriz içine düşmüştür. Zira kelime seçimi ve imla tesbiti meşguliyetinden dolayı düşünce ve sanat hayatıyla ilgili faaliyetlere gereken önem verilmemiş, bunun sonucu olarak da düşünce ve sanata dair olan şeylerin gelişimi engellenmiştir."

unavoidable outcome of the reform, when the pace of the change and the intention of negating the Ottoman Past with its Eastern and Islamic elements are taken into regard. Nevertheless, again visiting the figures quoted in Erten's book, we can see that the number of the Western words used did not experience a significant increase, at least during the first decade of the reform, indicating that the efforts were aiming not a Westernization of the language but the making of a language that is "Turkish" in every sense of the world, just rising on Western (and allegedly scientific) basis.

Another aspect of the Language Reform was the creation of a thesis called "Sun Language Theory," which alleged that Turkish was the mother of all other languages. According to this thesis many of the Arabic, Persian and European words used in daily language were Turkish in origin. (Heyd 1954, p.33-34) This theory which was created in 1935, is useful for understanding the linkage between the reform and the Turkish Nationalism. The Sun-Language Theory served two separate goals; the first and very pragmatic one was to save the linguists and other people from the burden of finding out pure Turkish words for each foreign word in the vocabulary. The second was the support it provided to the historical thesis that saw Central Asia as the "cradle of civilization" in Heyd's words, and claimed the ancestors of Turks as initiators of many civilizations over many places of the world.

Here again we should visit the traits of Turkish Nationalism, having the dilemma of both emulating and proving itself to the West. The Turkish Nationalism, as argued before, was not solely an act of Westernization but a challenge to be among the powerful civilized nations. The language reform paralleled the history thesis trying to show the ancestors of the Turkish nation as influencing, if not being initiators of, many civilizations throughout the history and in this sense backing the claim that the Turks were already having the "essential" values to claim its place

among the leading nations of the world. İlker Aytürk, in his study concerning the linguistic nationalism in the early republican Turkey, describes the Language Reform as an "extension of the Turkish history thesis". This interpretation may involve a little exaggeration since the language was mentioned as the premium criteria of the nationhood both in Gökalp and the internal regulation of the Republican People's Party as mentioned before. But the point Aytürk makes is important since both theses "put the ancient Turks on the highest pedestal possible, extolled their contribution to civilization and reminded the Western nations that they had to acknowledge the Turks as part of their family, as a nation which contributed most generously to their civilization." (Aytürk 2004, p.2)

Bearing in mind that the new alphabet had additional letters added to the ones for meeting phonetic needs of the Turkish Language and excluding some for the reason that they were foreign, both reforms did were not merely serving the Westernization of the country. Besides the biased conception of the West especially in showcase, the reforms also reflected the ideal of the Turkish Nationalism to be at least as superior as the Western nations.

CHAPTER 3

THE AFTERMATH OF THE REFORM

After the Reform

According to Duda, after the reform, due to strict control and censure on the press, no news about the opposition movements to the Script Reform was published. Only some news about a movement in Sivas, an uprising against the reform in the name of religion, appeared in three newspapers, all of which were sued for disinformation and provocation. Though none of the newspapers or writers were sentenced because of this news, a disclaimer was published telling that the news was not true and no other news on such movements were published from that time on, rendering it impossible to learn about any further oppositions to the reform by the people. (Duda 1948 p.163-164) This act of censorship itself indicates that there were serious oppositions to the reform those tried to be prevented from being widely known; and the change was not realized smoothly. On the other hand, this censorship also prevents us from being informed about the reactions of the people of the time.

The Script Reform enforced by the obligatory rules and restrictions, had its impacts on all printed media. Especially the newspapers, published in the new script from December 1st on, lost a lot of readers. According to a Frenchman making observations in Turkey at the time, the sales of the newspapers decreased about 30per cent - 50per cent. (cited in Şimşir 1992, p.227) Also, the sales of newspapers that were printed in French experienced a rise during the first days of reform. This indicates that some of the bilingual literates, those are used to reading texts with the

Roman script, found reading in French easier than reading Turkish texts in the new script.

Though the government allocated some fund to support some newspapers economically, the amounts were small and far from being a sound reinforcement for these newspapers (ranging from 200 to 2250 Liras per month for newspapers and 50 to 250 Liras per month for weekly journals). (Şimşir, 1992, p.227-228)[24] On March 1930, by a new law the government began to pay a supporting contribution to the newspaper owners and this payment goes on for three years. (İskit, 1943 p.254) In spite of all supporting efforts, 6 out of 10 newspapers that were in print in İstanbul were closed due to economic difficulties in a few years following the reform. These newspapers however, reopened some 10 years or 20 years later. (Alpay 1976, p.55) Another sector that felt the impact of the reform was movie theaters. Since the subtitles were to be written in the new script, the cinemas also lost a serious number of customers after the reform. (Duda 1948, p.161)

Duda points out to a significant vitalization in the publishing world in the last days of 1928. Since from the first day of 1929 the books had to be published in the new letters, many writers tried to publish their books before this time in the former script, fearing that nobody would buy and read their books if published with the new letters. (Duda 1948, p.162)

Transcription of the Texts Written with the Former Script

The question of transcribing the old printed material to the new script seems to be a subject overseen for the first years after the reform. A considerable amount of

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[24] For a rough comparison, the monthly salary of a parliament member was 300 Turkish Liras according to the memoirs of Fahrettin Paşa quoted by Taylan Sorgun (1998 p.425)

scientific books printed or written before the reform were in Arabic and some of them were in Persian languages. Besides this, most of the literary works were containing a lot of Persian and Arabic words. (Öztürk, p.62-66) So a mere transcription of these texts would bring about the question of writing Arabic or Persian words with new letters, which obviously was a task that would not be approached enthusiastically by the handlers of the reform.

Nevertheless, the Language Committee, at December 30[th]1928, decided the formation of a sub-committee of four members[25], to analyze the library catalogues and decide which books *had to be* transcribed to the new letters immediately. (TDK Minute Books, 30.12.1928) However, it is not clear if this sub-committee prepared a list for the books to be transcribed. Though in the bibliographies published in 1933 or 1938 there is no clue of how many books are transcribed from the former script or newly written, there can be found no trace of an organized transcription effort held by any official institution or others. Rekin Ertem states that in the first ten years after the reform, the books with the former script, that were promised to be transcribed did not find their place among the books published (Ertem 1991, p.322-323) He also makes a comparison between the translations made from foreign languages and texts transcribed from the former script. According to Ertem, the number of transcriptions was less than 50, while the number of translated books was 215. (p.362) This may lead us to a rational outcome that there was no will at all for such an effort of "reviving the past."

In the Publishing Congress held in 1939 the problems of which books to be transcribed and reprinted with the new letters were still in question. The minutes of this congress shows that even 10 years after the reform, it is not certain which books

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[25] In this sub-committee were present Fazıl Ahmet, Celal Safir, İhsan Ragıp Hulusi and İsmail Hikmet as members. (TDK Decision Books- 1928)

are to be selected for reprint and the spelling and words to be used instead of "old" ones are still to be determined.

In this congress, a commission that was formed for "publishing and publishing program" was handling the question of transcribing/ reprinting the materials published/ written in the former script. In the report of this commission, a list provided by Ankara and İstanbul Universities was discussed, which included only 109 books to be transcribed into the new script. And even the publishing of these books is offered to be revised and made definite. Besides the universities, the lists prepared by Turkish History Association (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*) and Turkish Language Association (*Türk Dil Kurumu*, the successor of the Language Committee) comprised hundreds of books that were offered to the congress in order to be transcribed and reprinted with the new letters. The commission also offers a plan for the use of money allocated for the publishing in which the ratio assigned for the transcription of the old texts is 15 per cent[26].

While some attendees of the congress stated that the transcription of the old materials were important and had to be dealt with seriously, some of them such as Orhan Şayik Gökyay claims that these texts are only useful for the studies made by specialists or historians and the transcription of these texts "provides no good for the general public". According to Gökyay, the specialists those are to work on these texts either already know the former script or have to learn it, and there is no need to spend money for the transcription of these works. The head of the commission, Mehmet Emin Erişirgil, upon the ideas of Gökyay, stated that there were many "spare" writings in some of the old texts that are not worth publishing, so these texts

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[26] In the same offer, other topics for which the allocation is to be used are Books of Science, Arts and Technicique; Books for Children and Teenagers; Books for Public and Villagers, and the ratios offered are per cent35, per cent20 and per cent30 respectively.

are to be revised/ shortened and then published, which is an idea shared by the History Commission. (Maarif Vekilliği 1939b, p.117-125)

The discussions that took place in the 1939 Publishing Congress tells a lot about the process that took place during the 10 years period following the Script Reform. During this period, it can be seen that there were no significant efforts to publish the texts those were rendered out-of-access by the Script Reform. Another significant fact is that, these texts were begun to be seen as a "subject of study to be conducted by specialists and historians" only ten years after the reform.

Books and Literacy after the Script Reform

The Script reform, obviously, had its most drastic effect on the publishing industry and the libraries. The main economic obstacles in front of the publishers were the acquiring of the new letter fonts as well as finding readers to buy the books that were printed in the new letters. On the other hand for the writers, there was the problem of writing with the new letters besides the lack of knowledge about the newly established grammar. The choice of words on the other hand, was a newly appearing problem since there were contradicting ideological currents regarding the Turkish language.

The number of books printed with the former script up to 1928, was estimated as 30-40 thousands in number. (Alpay 1976, p.47) The total number of books published between 1928 and 1933, on the other hand was 6262, according to the books catalogue published by the Ministry of Education. (Maarif Vekaleti 1939, p.VIII)

The number of books printed with the new letters in 1928 was 53, in 1929 and 1930, this number was 396 and 680 respectively, according to the Le Droit d'Auteueur journal as cited in the Turkish Bibliography, but meanwhile the numbers presented here, according to the same bibliography, are fewer than the real numbers.

Sami N. Özerdim, who made a detailed analysis of the bibliography, draws attention to the inconveniences between the numbers presented in the bibliography and the names of the books presented, which points to a an error in the numbers given. He also quotes that Türker Acaroğlu, the manager of the Administration of Compiling Printed Texts and Pictures, mentions an error in the number of books printed in this interval. The real number of books published in the time interval between 1928 and 1933, according to Özerdim, is about 5443. A rough estimation about the number of books published between 1923 and 1928, according to the same source is 5000, which indicates that there was almost no increase in the number of books published during the 5-year period following the Script Reform. Meanwhile, the number for the period between 1934 to 1938 rises to 10620. (Özerdim 1974, p.17-24)

In the same study Özerdim (p.21-22) makes a distribution of the books according to years. In this list is excluded the 655 books that had no publishing date.

Table 1: The Distribution of Books Published Between 1928 and 1933

		1928 (Last months)	
General Topics	0	Theoretical Sciences[27]	13
Philosophy	0	Applied Sciences	4
Religion	0	Fine Arts and Entertainment	0
Social Sciences[28]	34	Literature	14
Language	30	History, Geography, Bibliographies	4
		Total	99

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[27] The topics Theoretical Sciences and Applied Sciences refer to the phrases "Nazari İlimler" and "Tatbiki İlimler" used in the original source.
[28] The topic of Social Sciences comprises many subcategories such as books for firs and second level education , parliament minutes, legislations etc. as well as sociology, economy, law, education and many other headings, causing the outstanding number of this category.

1929

General Topics	4	Theoretical Sciences	51
Philosophy	9	Applied Sciences	62
Religion	9	Fine Arts and Entertainment	7
Social Sciences	248	Literature	97
Language	59	History, Geography, Bibliographies	45
		Total	591

1930

General Topics	5	Theoretical Sciences	91
Philosophy	7	Applied Sciences	96
Religion	21	Fine Arts and Entertainment	15
Social Sciences	324	Literature	145
Language	80	History, Geography, Bibliographies	86
		Total	870

1931

General Topics	13	Theoretical Sciences	51
Philosophy	12	Applied Sciences	111
Religion	32	Fine Arts and Entertainment	19
Social Sciences	355	Literature	205
Language	30	History, Geography, Bibliographies	91
		Total	919

1932

General Topics	11	Theoretical Sciences	37
Philosophy	18	Applied Sciences	121
Religion	33	Fine Arts and Entertainment	26
Social Sciences	357	Literature	336
Language	37	History, Geography, Bibliographies	122
		Total	1098

1933

General Topics	22	Theoretical Sciences	53
Philosophy	17	Applied Sciences	139
Religion	35	Fine Arts and Entertainment	21
Social Sciences	432	Literature	332
Language	33	History, Geography, Bibliographies	127
		Total	1211

This distribution helps us to see the kinds of books that were given priority for being published. It is obvious that the need for new school books in the new letters was of utmost importance and the priority was given to these books. The books that were cataloged under the categories of science, philosophy, history, etc. were 3386, while the books of literature were 1129, about one third of these.

An analysis of the bibliography reveals that of these 1129 books cataloged under the category of literature, 938 of them, of which the publication dates were present, were listed in the bibliography published in 1933. Considering the books in literature category, children literature was the leading category regarding the number of books it comprised. 221 books belonged to this category, while fiction and story books were 116 in number. Another category having the name "Anonym Stories" that included 113 books, some of which were stories belonging to foreign cultures such as "Arsen Lupen", and some were seemingly written in Western languages such as "La Vie de Nasrettin Hodja". The category of foreign literature comprised 138 books in total, 55 of which were under the category of English Literature, 48 under the category of French Literature and only two of them belonging to Persian Literature. Remaining books, except for two from Indian Literature, were all belonging to Western literatures[29]. (Maarif Vekaleti 1939)

The books translated from foreign languages, in the period between 1928 and 1938, do not change in ratio compared to the previous periods, but the choices of books regarding their topics and languages, indicates a change. Books translated from Arabic or Persian decreases in number while Western languages gain importance in translation. Also, the books on social sciences or philosophy gained weight during this period, replacing military or religious books. The translations from Eastern languages were confined to the translations of the Koran only, which was a taboo before this time. The translation of Eastern classics, on the other hand, which was demanded by a considerable amount of intellectuals, seemingly was not taken into consideration during this period. (Alpay 1976, p.50-55) Another significant point is that the languages from which the books in literature category

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[29] It is worth mentioning here that in the bibliography, the books on literary history or literary theory regarding these literatures are also included under the headings of English Literature, French Literature, etc.

were translated began to include Old Greek and Latin after the reform, representing the "cultural choices" parallel with the idea of being a part of the Western civilization evidently having its roots in these languages.

Publishing Industry and the Readers after the Reform

As was mentioned before, the publishing business was affected considerably from the reform. Besides the problems of acquiring the new fonts and getting used to the new fonts and reversing the shape of all books and texts, the publishers had to find readers for the books that they published in a circumstance that a part of the few literate people were rendered illiterate in a short while.

Nevertheless, it is somewhat dramatic that 6 years after the reform, that supposedly would render a whole population literate, there were only 116 fiction or short story books written in Turkish and available with the new letters. The number of science books and children's literature books, on the other hand, indicates that the majority of the books were addressing children and students. The elder generations, in a sense, were left aside by the writers, publishers and the state (a large proportion of publications were done by the state and the bibliography published in 1938 composed of two volumes of approximately equal sizes; one for the books published by state printing houses and one for the private publishers.)[30] (Maarif Vekilliği 1939a) As mentioned earlier, one reason for the writers to be unproductive may also be linked to the time's turmoil regarding both the grammar and word stock. Anyway, as will be discussed later, there was not much demand for the printed material by the

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[30] İskit gives the number of books published by state's printing houses as 7465, while this number was 8581 for the private publishers. (İskit 2000, p.207)

people either. The total circulation of a single book, according to the publishers of the time, is between 1000 and 1500. (Özerdim 1974, p.27)

The distribution of books included in the bibliographies in 1938 was not much different from 1933. As a matter of fact, the proportion of literature books of 1933 listed in the table above is 23 per cent, while this ratio decreases to 16.4 per cent in 1938 (2629 books out of a total of 16046)[31] for the ten years period, according to the figures derived from the 1928-1938 bibliography by İskit (2000, p.207). On the other hand, the figures derived by the analysis on the 1938 bibliography made by Sami Özerdim, points to a total number of 9801 books published in the 1934-1938 period, 1582 of which are literature books. This gives a ratio of 16.1 per cent for the literature within the total. The ratio of literature books to all books published between 1938 and 1948 on the other hand, was higher than 20 per cent. (Figures taken / counted out from Maarif Vekilliği 1957) The ratio of books for children, in the same period was about 14 per cent (666 books in 4780 literature books in total), which was as high as 23.5 per cent in the 1928-1938 period. These figures shows the law level of literature books published in the first five to ten years period after the reform, while the books for children and students of any age were occupying the premium place within the same period.

To take a look at the catalogues of private publishing houses in 1930s may as well be explanatory in order to have an idea about the reading and writing circumstance of the time. According to a study on the catalogues of some of the biggest publishing houses (of dates 1937 and 1938), it can be seen that the books addressing children as well as books for students and teachers, and books of history

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[31] In İskit's study, the literature books published by official publishing houses is depicted as 194 and the ones published by the private publishing houses as 861, while in total the number of all literature books are given as 2629, perhaps due to a typing error. The number given as the total is taken in the calculation since the separate numbers for official and private publishing adds up to 1055, which is even less than the 1933 figures.

exceeds fictions and other literary works. (İskit 2000, p.175-177) This proves that after the Script Reform, the main clients for the books in general were children and teachers, as well as high school or university students.

In 1936, a questionnaire by *Son Posta* Newspaper was published, raising the question: "why the people do not read?" Many intellectuals responded to this questionnaire some blaming the writers for not producing works of quality, some blaming the publishers for their policies and choices of books to be published[32].

Even in 1939, 10 years after the reform we can realize that the main problem of the publishers as well as some intellectuals concerned with the intellectual life of the population was that there was very little demand for books. According to an interview held with a publisher, Hilmi Bey that was published in *Son Telgraf* Newspaper on the 31st of March, 1939, the school books were the best selling category, followed by fiction and literary works. The main customers of the books, according to Hilmi Bey were young people, because they were tending more to read the "contemporary" works. He also states that the contemporaneous intellectuals tend to follow foreign publishing rather than Turkish books. He also points out the fact that poems are not demanded anymore. Regarding the low level of demand for books, he states that the reason for the declining demand for the books is having a more "civilized life"; because the civilized people has the need for movies, beaches, dance or dressing, they can save less time and money for the books. (Quoted in Maarif Vekaleti 1939, p.145-148)

Peyami Safa, a conservative writer of the time, in an article published in March 1939 in *Cumhuriyet* Newspaper, states that the private entrepreneurs in publishing industry lacks the economical means to generate a sufficient library, and the library

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[32] For the details of the debate, see İskit 2000, p.182-191).

composed of the books published by the private publishing houses in 10 years would not even be sufficient for the cultural life of a small town let alone a country. So "the state, who did the Script Reform, should bear the expenses rooting from this reform. ... The state should give all the money" required for this struggle. (Quoted in Maarif Vekilliği 1939b, p.209-210) Also Nadir Nadi, the editorial writer of the same newspaper states that the products of "civilization" that were accumulated over the centuries should be presented to the "generations that had to acquire their spiritual nutrition only from new letters," from the time on that the reform was made. (p.210-211)

On the other hand, Falih Rıfkı Atay, in an article he wrote about the question of publishing and reading, says that in a period when the new letters were adopted and the purification of the language was conducted, it was obviously not possible to solve the problems of the education and bring a national library into being. And he claims that the contemporaneous language (of 1939) was sufficient for such a task and it should be started immediately. (Article published in Ulus Newspaper on 4th of May, 1939 and quoted in Maarif Vekilliği 1939b, p.214-215)

Benedict Anderson (1991), in his book "Imagined Communities", emphasizes the importance of the "print capital" in the process of national imagination and homogenization. Giving the rise of vernacular instead of Latin in sixteenth century England an France as example, he stresses the "decline of the imagined community of Christendom" was paralleled by the proliferation of the print material, the use of vernacular and giving the "fixity" to the language, that "in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation." The language and words used in the seventeenth century, according to Anderson, is more accessible for twentieth century reader, than the twelfth century language was for the

fifteenth century reader. (p.38-45) The Turkish case, nevertheless, forms a contrast to this scene. The late-twentieth century Turkish reader may hardly understand any written text of the early twentieth century, even if written in the Roman script. The texts with the former script are a real mystery for today's literate people, and can be read only by a few specialists. Hence, the fixation of the language from the sixteenth century on in Europe that gave way to the national imagination through the homogenization of the language was reversed in the republican Turkey[33].

So the Script and Language Reforms, aiming the creation of a similar homogeneous and national language, for the time, worked against the possibility of using the printed media for enabling such an imagination. Apart from the economic difficulties that the publishing houses experienced after the reforms, the language to be used in the printing process was constantly changing that the writers themselves had confusion about the words to be used, which handicapped the production of texts of any kind. Hence, in a period a national imagination was trying to be set, the two reforms simultaneously undermined the process, by rendering the tool of printed media inaccessible for the purpose. It is a fact that the number of books proliferated after 1940s, but the nation-building endeavors of the 20s and 30s lost a promising agent for the achievement of more proper and more national one that would only be accessible for the following generations.

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[33] In the same book Anderson also mentions the newspapers as a powerful tool of the national imagination. The reading of the newspaper, as a "ceremony... being replicated by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence (one is) confident, yet of whose identity (one) has not the slightest notion." (Anderson 1991, p.35) The decline in the daily circulation of newspapers in Turkey, in this sense, points to another lost tool regarding the national imagination.
Also, effects of printed materials in the cultural life of lower classes, how the newspapers and books serve as a homogenizing agent, reinforcing a culture involving "progressivism", the "glorification of the youth" and condemnation of the past are discussed briefly in "The Uses of Literacy" by Richard Hoggart (1958) This potential tool was also unavailable for the nation-building process in the early republican Turkey.

CHAPTER 4

TURKISH NATIONALISM AND DISCUSSION ON THE SCRIPT REFORM

The Consequences of the Reform

The ratio of literate people to the whole population, in 1927, was 10 per cent, while this ratio in 1935, 7 years after the letters were change in order to facilitate reading and after the experiences of compulsory National Schools was 20 per cent. (Alpay 1976, p26) So it can be said that the reading mobilization with the new letters that was supposed to facilitate reading and create a literate population did not succeed[34]. According to an article published in Ulus Newspaper on August 23rd 1938, the young generation between the ages of 15 and 19, the literacy rate was 44.6 per cent, while this ratio was only 18.9 per cent for the age interval 45-55. (Quoted in İskit 2000, p.128-129) Since the latter group is also included in the obligatory national schools project, we can see that, especially for the older people, the success rates and attendance were not as well as the rates aimed. On the other hand, with such a nation-wide mobilization and establishment of the obligatory national school institution and obligatory first school attendance, it would hardly be possible to speculate that the literacy ratio would be lower with the former script in a period of 7 years[35]. This was a proof of the ideas of former intellectuals who opposed the reform saying that the law rate of literacy was a problem related merely with the system of education.

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[34] By 1945, the ratio was 30per cent according to Alpay (1976) and per cent28,9 according to Ertem (1991). Also, Ertem estimates the literacy rate in 1903 as 15-20 per cent, which is a higher amount than the one 25 years later. This points to a decline in the literacy rates during the time of Balkan and Independence wars.

[35] Rekin Ertem draws attention to the fact that India, making a move of education in 1947 with the former script, increases the ratio of literacy from 9per cent to 40per cent in a 20 years period in spite of political conflicts, economic crisis and Hindu-Muslim conflicts within the country.

The alleged aims of the Script Reform, namely increasing of the literacy rate and achieving a nation that is intellectually equipped and productive within a few years; were far from realized as a consequence of this reform. Meanwhile, there were many different outcomes of the reform, related with the intentions and motives that were inherent in its implementation. The reform, in itself, was far from being solely a technical amendment made for increasing of the literacy rate of the people, but bore the mission of being a step for the ideal of the Turkish Nation's taking its place within the "league of the civilized nations". As evident in the Dress Reform, the "shape" or the "showcase" was, as a matter of fact, had a significant importance for the reformists, and the using of the script that the "civilized" nations used was in a sense prior to the technical facilities that would make the reform more feasible regarding its aims. The resemblance in appearance, seemingly, would facilitate the identification with the Western civilization.

Rekin Ertem describes the Script Reform both as an ideological and cultural move, aiming "to westernize the state with all its institutions and the nation who is the root of it." So according to Ertem, the Turkish Revolution (as a name given for the set of reforms carried out in the first decade of Turkish Republic, also known as the Atatürk Revolutions) was basing itself on "the imperialist West, while it tried to cure the corrupted system caused by the interventions of the West... The only way to get rid of the harassment of the Western states was seen to be like them."(Ertem, 1991, p.309-310)

Halide Edip Adıvar, a leading figure of Turkish nationalism also acknowledges that the adoption of the Roman alphabet did not depend solely on the aim of propagating literacy to the public but it was an evidence of "the intensification of the tendency of Westernization." On her book on the Western and Eastern influences on

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Turkey, Halide Edip describes the aim of the Language reform as an "expression of our tendency to Westernize." (Adıvar, 1955 p.160, 162)

As stressed before, a very important facet of the Script Reform was that it rendered the former printed material inaccessible. The main oppositions to the Script Reform had come from the conservative elite, with regard to this fact. Ali Seydi, in his booklet criticizing the attempts for the Script Reform, claims that the former cultural pieces would be "sacrificed" and hundreds of thousands of young people from the upcoming generations would be rendered; without leader, without knowledge, would become completely uneducated. He also mentions that, such a reform would cause a severe rupture in Turkish history. (Seydi, 1924, 6-17; quoted in Şimşir, 1992, 67)

Besides other oppositions, the question of the former literature was of real importance and was expressed by many of the intellectuals of the time. Seemingly, the transcription of the former printed material would take decades and this would cause a cultural and historical rupture as Seydi mentions. But it is critical at this point to think about if, by the initiators of the reform, such a rupture is considered as a dangerous side-effect of a reform project or as a desired by-product of one of a series of reforms that were aiming the total cultural change of a population. In his mentioned booklet Ali Seydi states that the banning of the former script would obviously be impossible and the population would become a bilingual one, causing a sort of dissolution within. But the government did ban the former script with strict sanctions, factually denying the former script and rendering the former printed materials inaccessible for the new generations who would only be educated with the new Roman script.

So, by the adoption of the Roman Script, and by the loss of orientation to the former script, the connection with the past, namely the Ottoman past with its Islamic and oriental connotations would be overcome. The leaders of the reform, as mentioned before, frequently gave voice to the idea that the past was a threat for the new generations who would create the civilized Turkish Nation. In this sense, the old was to be buried and would not be taken a second look. Bernard Lewis, in his book on the Turkish modernization, states that the Roman script, for Atatürk, was "... a barrier for the Ottoman Empire. Seemingly, through the learning of the new script and forgetting the old one, the past would be buried and forgotten, and a new generation that would be open only to the ideas expressed by the new Turkish written with new Roman script would be raised." (Lewis, 1996 p.428)

Walter J. Ong, in his book named Orality and Literacy, on the subject of texts and modern technologies, describes the power of the written texts as follows:

> There is no way directly to refuse a text. After absolutely total and devastating refutation, it says exactly the same thing as before. This is one reason why 'the book says' is tantamount to 'it is true'. It is also one reason why books have been burnt. A text stating what the whole world knows is false will state falsehood forever, so long as the text exists. Texts are inherently contumacious. (Ong, 1982, 79)

The maintenance of the former texts that are for sure connected to the imperial and Islamic culture of the past, would obviously create a viscous medium working against the revolutionary changes trying to be imposed on the newly forming nation. Under these circumstances, the abolition of the former script would enable the "creation" of a new "republican generation" with no textual / intellectual bonds to the past that the republican government in-a-sense-denies. The Script

Reform in this sense, overcomes the problem of the "contumaciousness" of the former texts as Ong calls it, without taking a brutal action as to burn them[36].

On the other hand, the intellectuals or writers who insisted on the use of the former script would naturally be isolated and would be outside of the communication medium shaped by the new letters. Alpay, in her book regarding the effects of the Script Reform, points to the fact that the literate population did have many difficulties rooting from the reform but "they would overcome these difficulties as far as their interest in new script. As far as they resisted, they would break apart from the Turkish people. The rupture was for these kinds of intellectuals." Alpay also states that the break away from being Ottoman and becoming Turkish was an historical event that arose from the Westernization movement and the Script Reform aimed to propagate this movement to the masses. (Alpay 1976, p.56-57) The rapidity of the implementation of the reform was another element that solidified this rupture, giving room for no slackening for the process.

So another aspect of the reform was its being a means of controlling the intellectual field, as well as the filed of knowledge and communication, including the religion. The Koran, the holy book of the Islam, was to be translated and printed with the new letters, and the books on religion would apparently take place of the local elders or *hodjas*, introducing the control of the state even to the field of religious practices[37]. Salahi Sonyel quotes an interesting letter written by the English

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[36] It is a matter of fact that many revolutionary or nationalist movements involves book-burning as a ceremonial denial of the past/ ideas rejected. The burning of some religious texts and the texts that were glorifying royalty in 1793, after the French Revolution; the burning of some religious books and the books in favor of Czarist history by the Bolsheviks in 1917, the burning of books by writers such as Karl Marx, Thomas Mann, etc. By the Nazi regime in 1933 are among these actions taken towards the texts of the past in European history.

[37] It is worth mentioning that Benedict Anderson (1991), considering the community types other than the modern national community, states that the "sacred languages" such as Arabic, Latin or Chinese, were a means of imagining religious communities "out of signs, not sounds." (p.13) So the abolished Arabic Script, the code of the Arabic language (as it was for the Latin Language in West), was a symbolic tool for imagining a sacred community as opposed to the fragmented national communities.

Diplomatic Representative W. S. Edmonds to the English Ministry of Foreign Affairs in which Edmonds utters his idea that the change of letter would lead to a decrease in religious practices:

> ...People started to understand that the implementation of the new alphabet reform is more serious than wearing hats. Turkish parents realize that their children will be unable to read Koran unless it is translated into Turkish and printed with the new letters. They see that all the preachers in mosques will not be fond of the new alphabet. As a result of this, it is obvious that religious activity will be even less. The children raised in a manner that they will not be able to read with old letters will be under the influence of preachers that may be characterized as modern, and the influence of only religious texts that are allowed by the government and published in new letters...[38]

Edmonds, in the same letter also mentions some studies conducted in İstanbul University in order to create a "modern way of worship" and relates the Script Reform with the laicization of the country. (English State Archives, FO/ 13094/ E 4759 quoted in Sonyel 1979, p.290) Zafer Çetin, in his essay nationalist discourse in Turkey, states that the "*Kemalist* nationalism needed the state's coercive powers to dismiss communal identities for the benefit of the uniform identity of the nation," where communal identities mentioned in his debate were shaped around Islamic elements. Çetin explains the reason of the Script Reform solely as "cutting Turks off

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At the same text Anderson mentions how the Latin Language, being the only language taught and learned by a little proportion of the society, lost its hegemony in the 16th century Europe, and how this "fall... exemplified a larger process in which the sacred communities integrated by old sacred languages gradually fragmented pluralized and territorialized." (p.18-19) So the abolishing of the Arabic Script, the translation of the Koran etc. in this sense, was the repetition of the same process opening the way to a territorial nationalist imagination in Europe, but this time by a political decision taken and imposed by a group of intellectuals that were in power in Turkey. In Europe, Anderson tells, the idea that "a particular script-language offered privileged access to ontological truth" had lost its "axiomatic grip in people's minds. (p.36) This phenomenon, according to Anderson, was one of the things that made possible the imagination of the national entity. In Turkey, nevertheless, this "loss of grip" did not happen as an historical phenomenon but tried to be achieved by the use of power by the national elite.

[38] "Halk, yeni alfabenin uygulanmasının şapka giymesinden daha ciddi bir konu olduğunu anlamaya başlamıştır. Türk anne ve babası, çocuğunun, eğer Türkçeye çevrilmez ve yeni harflerle basılmazsa, Kuran okuyamayarak büyüyeceğini görüyor. Camilerde şu anda vaizlik etmekte olan tüm hocaların yeni alfabeden hoşlanmayacaklarını da görüyor. Bunun sonucu olarak dinsel etkinliğin daha da azalacağı açıktır. Arap harflerini okuyamayacak biçimde yetiştirilecek olan çocuklar, yeni yazıyla yazılmalarına ve basılmalarına yönetimin izin vereceği dinsel yapıtların ve modern sayılan hocalarm etkisi altında kalacaktır."

from their Islamic, Ottoman past, and making the Koran less accessible to them,"
(Çetin 2004 p.352) which excludes the efforts for the establishment of a new written
culture and medium of interaction between the state and the society through the
nationwide education mobility. But it is hardly deniable that the reform's negative
affects on the Islamic culture was a part of the motives initiating the reform.

In the Ottoman Empire, Mardin argues, "religion had a double function; for
the rulers that of linkage with the lower classes, for the ruled, that of an alternative to
the polity and a buffer against officialdom." (1971, p.204) The religion was
simultaneously a means for the political legitimization of the ruler, as well as a
mechanism of control over the lower classes. The Script Reform, in this sense, was
an intervention to the field of perceiving and experiencing of religion, by setting a
new medium of communication with religion. This aimed at abolishing of the old
means of control and legitimization in favor of a new system that was supposed to
fill the gap. But the written culture that the government aimed, as a matter of fact
was not appropriated by the whole population while the institutions to replace the
former system of ruler-ruled interaction were not settled in such a short period of
time, resulting in a wider gap between the rulers and the lower classes and causing
the dual culture Ahmad mentions, as dealt with above.

Reforms and Collective Memory

By the Government and the leading intellectual elite of the time, the main
reasons claimed for the implementation of a script reform were the difficulty of
reading and writing with the Arabic letters, and the incompatibility of the Arabic
letters with the phonetic of the *authentic* Turkish language –the Turkish spoken by

the ordinary people. Three ways of coping with these problems seemed obvious. The first one, as offered by many intellectuals from the Tanzimat period on, was to make some revisions to the Arabic alphabet, while another but most difficult one could be the invention of a new script. The third and applied method was the utilization of a foreign script with certain modifications.

Obviously, to make some revisions on the Arabic script and fix the writing rules with regard to the Turkish phonetic and grammar could render much of the difficulties and inconveniences of the Arabic alphabet overcome. This was the solution offered by most of the writers and intellectuals of the time. In this case, the currently literate part pf the population would not be turned into illiterates and the access to former printed materials would still be possible for most of the people. Also, the writing and reading of the originally Arabic words that had their place in the new Turkish dictionary would not be problematic and they could have fixed spellings.

It is not surprising that the foundational elite of the Turkish Republic, having turned its face to the Western civilization and in a sense denying the identity-forming mechanisms of the Ottoman period with imperial and Islamic connotations, decided to take the Roman script that the Western countries use. Trudgill, in his essay considering the relation of the language changes and nationalism in Greece and Turkey, points to the fact that the "sentiments of Turkish nationality and ethnicity often came into conflict with older, more conservative ideas of a wider Islamic identity", and the abolition of the Arabic script was "highly symbolic" in this respect. (Trudgill 2000, p.262)

So, it would probably be convenient to assert that for the leading elite of the time, obliteration of the Arabic script, with its strong bounds with the Islamic identity

and the Eastern culture as well as the cultural history of the imperial past, was among the intentions of the reform as well as the creation of a literate nation. Yılmaz Çolak, in his essay on the language policies of the early Republican Turkey, states that the former script was considered among many elements such as caliphate, sultanate, *sharia* courts, *tekkes, medreses, serpus*, etc. that "belonged to the East/ Ottoman past which had imprisoned the Turks to live in a backward Eastern position." (Çolak 2004, p.72) The Ottoman past was an obstruction for the reformist rulers with its institutional remnants as well as Islamic elements both as means of legitimization and identification regarding the people, in front of the secular-national way of thinking and ruling tried to be imposed. So the will to get rid of the Ottoman impediment was not less then the will to achieve the national glory fantasized. And these two acts of constructing and destroying were coexistent. The reform, again in Çolak's words, was "an act of forgetting." It is not possible, in my point of view, that the reform aimed only forgetting, but it should be admitted that the constructive/ creative side of the reform, as argued before, was hardly realized during the first decade of the republic. So, as an outcome, only one side of the intended purposes of the reform which can be formulated as the forgetting of the Eastern and Islamic way of life in favor of the "nation" with its glorious –but remote- past to walk to the "future" was somewhat realized regarding the Script Reform.

The reform was tried to be made embraced by the whole population, as if they had the eagerness to read and write for all the time and the situation was depicted in many means as if the only reason for this will to realize was the insufficiency of the Arabic letters used up to the time. But it is more or less clear that the Script Reform, despite all the supporting or opposing scientific, intellectual or

ideological reactions, was an idea rooting from the nationalist conception that negated the link with the recent past with its almost all cultural or religious traits.

One of the main objections to the Script Reform concentrated on was rendering inaccessible the literature printed (or hand-written) up to that time. The supporters of the reform, on the other hand, seemingly focused on the very low literacy rates within the population and blame the Arabic script for this. The sacredness of the Arabic script, which was one of the opposing ideas, was answered in one way or another by the supporting intellectuals but the question of transcription was left open. It would not be proper to think that the government of the new Turkish Republic was so naive that they thought a high literacy rate in the country would suffice for the aim of "reaching the level of modern nations." The *main* idea, it seems, is at the first place creating a geographical "rupture" as well as a rupture in the course of history. The allegory of backwardness and progress finding their counterparts in the East and the West, as well, was reflected on the library.

The other side of the Script Reform, as an act of forgetting, was that it rendered some physical means of remembering inaccessible. Besides the books of the former era, the words of the past were also expelled from the scene. Halbwasch (1992), in his study considering the collective memory, states that "the past is not preserved but reconstructed on the base of memory." (p. 40) Accordingly, the "verbal conventions constitute what is at the same time the most elementary and most stable framework of collective memory." (p. 45) So the expelling of many of the words/ notions of the former language, gave way to a situation that the past –the time those word existed- could only be reconstructed in memory through the use of new – mostly invented- words and notions[39].

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[39] In the same work of his Halbwasch mentions the aphasic people who "can no longer identify his thoughts with that of others or attain that form of social representation which is exemplified by a

Taking this feature of the two reforms into consideration, -one disabling the reading of old materials while rendering some old words from Arabic Origin un-writable, and the other employing a new, *national* set of notions into their places-, a control on the collective memory can be identified within this process. Connerton (1989), in his book in which he analyzes collective memory and how bodily practices contribute to this memory, states that "... the control of a society's memory largely conditions the hierarchy of power." (p. 1) So the intrusion to the language, through which people reconstruct the past, is at the same time a play of power, in which the elements belonging to the past –with its own hierarchies, power schemes, etc.- are overridden and to some extend, taken out of reach of the collective memory. Connerton also notes that the memories of different generations within a society affects the social setting:

> It is an implicit rule that participants in any social order must presuppose a shared memory. To the extent that their memories of a society's past diverge, to that extent its members can share neither experiences nor assumptions. The effect is seen perhaps most obviously when communication across generations is impeded by different sets of memories. Across generations, different sets of memories, frequently in the shape of implicit background narratives, will encounter each other; so that, although physically present to one another in a particular setting, the different generations may remain mentally and emotionally insulated, the memories of one generation locked irretrievably, as it were, in the brains and bodies of that generation. (Connerton 1989, p.3)

In the case of the early republican Turkey, even the languages used by the generations those having one or two decades in-between were different from each other, diverging the way they are reconstructing the past in a significant manner.

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notion... Contact between his thought and collective memory becomes interrupted at a certain number of detailed points." Departing from this, Halbwasch states that the aphasic people, "because they cannot tell of their pasts owing to their lack of words, and because their relation with others are diminished, are likely to maintain only a vague sense of time, persons and places." (Halbwasch 1992, p.44-45) From such a vagueness, for sure must have suffered some people who were trying to adopt the new script and new language after the reforms, and for whom, the remembering of the past could only be possible through the words of the new, republican set of words and notions comprised by the new *Turkish* Language.

Hence for the former generations, a severe isolation was inevitable. The reforms negating the past, in this sense, also negated the generations who were used to the language in use prior to the reform.

One of the major consequences of the Script Reform was experienced in the publishing life of the country. Apart from the rendering obsolete of the former literature, the publishing industry parallel to the intellectual life went into a chaotic path after the reform. The Script Reform, together with the language reform, a wider but unfinished project, handicapped the creation of especially literary works by altering first the letters and then the words to be used. Even 10 years after the reform, books published and read were so unsatisfactory in number that a significant amount of intellectuals were complaining about this.

It is clear that the intended rupture and the break-off with the Ottoman past were achieved by especially the reforms concerning letters and the language. The rupture, as mentioned above, showed up even among the coexistent generations. Besides their isolation regarding their memories, any intellectual activity, as a matter of fact, was almost completely out of the reach of the older generations that had their education before the new letters. These people were out of scene as far as written culture is considered.

It leads us to think that the Westernization trends, some of them criticized for being mere imitations, were on one hand an "investment" for the following generations that was to come after the "zero point" created by the revolutions –a zero point not meaning "without-a-past" but having a reconstructed and distant past that is out of reach. So the nation-wide compromise and enthusiasm mentioned in the first chapter, aiming the approval of the Turkish society as one of the "civilized" nations of the world (in the eyes of the imagined West), was the task for not the legendary generation that beat the Western powers but the post-zero-point generations of the

feature. From the speeches made to the books published, everything seemed to address the new generations, and the expectation of the republic from the older generations was evidently nothing more than not being an obstruct in the way to the civilization. But the aim of creating a new social entity with high intellectual accumulation that would produce many works to have their places among the cultural heritage of the "civilization" was clearly far from being realized, for the zero-point generations as well as the older ones.

CONCLUSION

The Script Reform, regarded not in terms of its intrinsic intentions but its consequences, looks as an action oriented to the past. It reflects the conceptions of the nationalism of the early republican period, in which the recent past, namely the Ottoman past, was a target of negation and subject of forgetting. In this respect the Script Reform was a tool of rupture, in which the concept of past was detached from the recent history and attached to a mythic one glorifying the nation.

Together with the Language Reform, it resembles the dual character of the nationalism as well, in which a self proving *vis-à-vis* the West coexists with the emulation towards it. The West was still the "other" for the Turkish nation but not as far as the Ottoman past, a fact that is mirrored in the choosing of letters and words to be remained.

The reforms also reflect the interventionist character of the nationalist elites directly to the daily and cultural life of the public. The reforms served a lot for the secular-national move led by the military-based elite who saw the Eastern way of life and Islamic culture as a most important obstacle for the "rise" of the nation towards the level of the advanced nations, by directly intervening the medium through which people were connected to the community, the state and the past.

The reform also provided the nationalist elite a means of control over the intellectual field through the isolation of the ones insisting on the former script. The daily life and religious practices of the ordinary people were also within the reach of this means of control. The books published with the new letters and by the allowance of the state, were to introduce a new medium for the people to get in touch with the religion, bringing also this space under the control of the ruling elite.

Another consequence of the Script Reform was that the older generations of the society, as well as opposing/ conservative intellectuals were detached from the social sphere. The republican generations, on the other hand, freed from the textual bonds to the past and would be able to be oriented toward the national imagination desired by the rulers, with the codes of a to-be-settled national language. The recollection of the past, after the erasing affects of the reform, would only be possible through the words of a new, *national* language. The reform in this respect helped the control of the intellectual/ educational fields in a solid manner. But while doing so, it also sacrificed a whole literature of a thousand years. Besides this, Together with the intrusions to the language introduced by the Language Reform, it formed a new handicap for the creation of a new vernacular as well as a new literature because of the confusion it created both in spelling/ grammar and proper use of words. Hence, the print capital as a means for the nation-building process was out of reach for the nationalist elite for a few decades after the reform.

The reform, while achieving its goal as an erasing element, failed to accomplish the task of constructing new medium of communications, institutions and cultural traits. The destructive aims of the reform, regarding the recent past with its institutional, administrative and cultural attachments, can said to be successful, while the constructive aims, including the creation of a national imagination and homogenization, were rendered apart from one of its most powerful tools, namely the texts, by the same reform.

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