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**YILDIRIM BEYAZIT UNIVERSITY**

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ADMINISTRATION**

**THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF EŐREK EDİP FERGAN AND HIS  
PLACE IN TURKISH POLITICAL LIFE**

**MASTER THESIS**

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**ANKARA-2016**

## **STATEMENT OF PLAGIARISM**

**I hereby declare that all information contained in this thesis is presented within the framework of academic rules and ethical behaviors. I also declare that I have fully cited all external sources and results as required by such rules and ethical behaviors. I accept all legal liability in case of failure to comply with the said rules and behaviors.**

**EMRE ÇALIŞKAN**

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF EŐREK EDİP FERKAN, AND HIS PLACE IN TURKISH POLITICAL LIFE**

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One of the most significant movements in the field of political thought in Turkey is Islamism. This movement developed and turned into an important movement of thought after the 2nd Constitutional Monarchy in the Ottoman Empire. An important figure of this movement was EŐref Edip Fergan. He started his career as an author and journalist in the 2nd Constitutional Monarchy era with the periodical Sıratımstakim, which was to be later named "SebilrreŐad", and continued his career after the founding of Turkish Republic. Despite the fact that he did not appear in a prominent position in the context of political thought and political history, EŐref Edip Fergan was nevertheless an important figure who continued to communicating his thoughts about Turkish political life until his death in 1971. This study deals with the political thought of EŐref Edip Fergan, and his life in Turkish political life. It aims to reveal the life and mentality of EŐref Edip Fergan, and his political, social, and philosophical perspective in different periods. The study is based on an analysis of works in political thought and political history, including primarily the works of EŐref Edip Fergan.

Keywords: EŐref Edip, Islamism, Sıratımstakim, SebilrreŐad, Turkish Politics

## ÖZET

### EŞREF EDİP FERGAN'IN SİYASİ DÜŞÜNCESİ VE TÜRK SİYASAL HAYATINDAKİ YERİ

Çalışkan, Emre

Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

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Türkiye’de siyasi düşünce alanındaki önemli akımlarından birisi İslamcılık olmuştur. İslamcılık II.Meşrutiyet sonrası dönemde gelişmiş ve önemli bir düşünce akımı haline gelmiştir. Bu akımın önemli isimleri arasında yer alan bir isimde Eşref Edip Fergan’dır. Eşref Edip Fergan II.Meşrutiyet sonrası dönemde daha sonra ismi Sebilürreşad dergisi olan Sıratımüstakim dergisi ile başladığı yazar ve gazetecilik hayatını cumhuriyet sonrası dönemde de sürdürmüştür. Vefat ettiği 1971 yılına kadar Türk siyasal hayatına ilişkin düşüncelerini ortaya koyan Eşref Edip Fergan, siyasal düşünce ve siyasal tarih bağlamında geri planda kalmasına rağmen önemli bir isimdir. Bu çalışmada, Eşref Edip Fergan’ın sahip olduğu siyasi düşünce ve Türk siyasal hayatındaki yeri incelenmektedir. Bu çalışmada Eşref Edip Fergan’ın hayatı, sahip olduğu düşünce yapısı, dönemler itibari ile siyasi, toplumsal ve felsefi bakış açısının ortaya konulması amaçlanmıştır. Çalışma, başta Eşref Edip Fergan’ın eserleri olmak üzere; siyasi düşünce ve siyasi tarih alanındaki çalışmaların çözümlenmesine dayanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eşref Edip, İslamcılık, Sıratımüstakim, Sebilürreşad, Türk Siyaseti

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# INTRODUCTION

History of thought is an important academic field of study for shedding light on the present and the past. For this reason, the history of thought is today one of the primary fields of academic research, which should indeed be studied intensively. Since it allows conducting research in several fields such as political science, philosophy, and history, it renders academic works sophisticated, interdisciplinary, and rich in content.

This study aims to address the political thoughts of Eşref Edip Fergan (1882-1971)<sup>1</sup>, and his place in Turkish political life from the perspective of the history of thought. Eşref Edip is a significant figure that was involved in intellectual and political life after the 2nd Constitutional Monarchy Era and in the Turkish Republic Era. Accordingly, the intellectual life of Eşref Edip and his stance towards political life are addressed with reference to the said periods.

The intellectual life of late Ottoman era can be considered a laboratory of the political life that formed or was formed after the declaration of republic (Alkan, 2009a: 20). The efforts of modernization gained momentum in the process that started with the declaration of the Edict of Reorganization (Tanzimat) and the Edict of Reformation (Islahat). In fact, this marked the period when the Ottoman Empire internalized the movement of thoughts that originated from the West to a certain extent. Particularly, the French Revolution of 1789 affected the Ottoman Empire like the rest of the world (Akşin, 1994). The concepts such as nationalism, egalitarianism and secularism affected the intellectual life of the Ottoman Empire (Akşin, 1994:27). The economic and political conditions of the Ottoman Empire also contributed to development and adoption of these concepts and ideas. As a matter of fact, such movements also gave rise to a contrast and gave life to new intellectual movements. The movements such as Islamism, Turanism, Ottomanism, etc. are among the examples of these movements.

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<sup>1</sup> After this, the name Eşref Edip Fergan which will be used only as Eşref Edip.



It is evident that the beginning of Turkish Republican era saw adoption of the intellectual movements that originated from the French Revolution. Concepts and ideas such as nationalism, secularism, and modernization were highlighted and turned into a policy development process in the early years of the Republic. Later systematized under the name of 'Kemalism', this process was originally the product of the intellectual life of late Ottoman period (Zurcher, 2009: 44).

The late Ottoman period deserves attention especially in the context of political thought. This period made important impacts on today's intellectual movements. One of such movements that originated and started to develop in the said period was Islamism. The movement of Islamism is still a highly debated movement led by a great deal of intellectuals and scholars.<sup>2</sup>

Eşref Edip, the subject of this thesis, was an Islamist figure among the intellectuals of the late Ottoman period. One of the most fundamental purposes of this thesis is to make a contribution to the debate on Islamism, which is still a hot topic, with reference to Eşref Edip, a leading Islamist thinker. This study is an attempt give an account of the life, and political thought of Eşref Edip as well as his views on political life, and different political and philosophical concepts.

There are not many academic studies on Eşref Edip. The existing studies deal with the life and works of Eşref Edip.<sup>3</sup> There is not an academic study that gives a specific account of the

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<sup>2</sup>At this point, these works can provide more information.

See. İsmail Kara, '*İslamcıların Siyasi Görüşleri*' (*Political Views of Islamists*), İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1994

See. Tarık Zafer Tunaya, '*İslamcılık Cereyanı 1-2-3*' (*Current of Islamism 1-2-3*), The Newspaper 'Cumhuriyet', İstanbul, 1998

See. Ali Bulaç, '*İslam'ın Üç Siyaset Tarzı veya İslâmcıların Üç Nesli*' (Three Political Styles of Islam or Three Generations of Islamism), Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: İslamcılık (Political Thinking in Modern Turkey: Islamism), Vol:6, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2009

<sup>3</sup> Such as works;

See. Esmâ Polat, '*Eşref Edip Fergan'ın hayatı, eserleri ve edebi kişiliği*' (*Life, works, and literary personality of Eşref Edip Fergan*), Master Thesis, Ankara University, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Ankara, 2011

See. İsmail Çakmak, '*Eşref Edip Fergan'ın hayatı ve Türk basın tarihindeki yeri*' (*Life of Eşref Edip Fergan, and His Place in the History of Turkish Press*), Master Thesis, Kırıkkale University, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Kırıkkale, 2011

intellectual life of Eşref Edip and his relation to political life. This study aims to fill this gap by presenting Eşref Edip's intellectual life and his relation to political life.

Organization and integrity are important in academic studies. In this respect, our study is made up of three main parts which are organized in chronological order to ensure that the study is integral and comprehensible.

The first part of the thesis includes a study of the life and works of Eşref Edip, the main character of the thesis. The life of Eşref Edip coincides with a very unsteady and painful time. Eşref Edip lived at the time which was characterized by the depression and disintegration of the Ottoman Empire as well as the difficulties attributable to Abdülhamid II era. Having moved to İstanbul to continue his education from his hometown Serez, Eşref Edip was in the middle of such difficult times. While conducting scientific works, he was also in search of a field to present his ideas. It was in the same period that Union and Progress Movement started to grow in power, turning into a movement which brought together the opponents of the regime, which included almost all opponents of Abdülhamid II. Thus the movement integrated a great diversity of ideas. Eşref Edip was close to this movement with the prominent figures of the Union and Progress. Eşref Edip made significant efforts in printing with the publications *Sıratımüstakim / Sebilürreşad* that were released at the time. He went to Anatolia during the War of Independence, continued to publish *Sebilürreşad* in Anatolia, becoming one of the prominent figures of the War of Independence.

The second part of the thesis attempts to scrutinize the origins of political thought in Turkey based on the political life in late Ottoman period and in the period of Republic. This part of the thesis presents Eşref Edip's point of view on Turkish political life, and his political opinions. The intellectual life of Eşref Edip is presented in the context of his perspective of different periods. Especially the political stance of Eşref Edip and his comments on the political developments make up the core of this part, which is significant for the thesis with regard to present the political views of Eşref Edip. The study in this part is intended to contribute to specific academic studies that may be conducted about Eşref Edip.

In the third part of the thesis, various political and philosophical concepts are referred to point out the views of Eşref Edip about these concepts. The concepts of religion, secularism,

constitutionalism, progress, liberty, state, and civilization are addressed in this part in an effort to discuss different aspects of these concepts and reflect Eşref Edip's approach to them. The ideas of Eşref Edip with regard to these concepts, in addition to their political and philosophical significance, were effective in identifying them.

The ideas put forward in the first three chapters of the thesis were supported with literature review. This includes a review of the literature about Eşref Edip, as well as a study of the books, articles, and columns that he wrote. The literature of political thought and political history was also reviewed and relevant studies were cited.

The content of the thesis is descriptive to an important extent since both the works of Eşref Edip and the works that stand out in the political and intellectual literature were reviewed. Books and newspaper articles of Eşref Edip, and his works published into books constitute the primary sources of this thesis.

Providing the standpoint of Eşref Edip towards philosophical and political ideas related to Islamism and several other concepts in a period spanning from the last years of Ottoman Empire to the post-Republic years with focus on Eşref Edip, this thesis is intended to make a contribution to the academic field of research about Eşref Edip.

Emre ÇALIŞKAN

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## CHAPTER ONE:

### LIFE AND WORKS OF EŞREF EDİP FERGAN

#### 1.1. Life of Eşref Edip Fergan

Eşref Edip was born in 1882 in Serres located in modern Greece, which was under Ottoman control at the time Eşref Edip was born. He was a member of a family that migrated to Serres from Fergana Valley (Yoldaki Çığır, 2012), located in Central Asian Turkistan. As stated by Yılmaz Öztuna,<sup>4</sup> this is the origin of Eşref Edip's surname. His father's name is İslam Ağa, and mother's name is Nefise Hanım. Eşref Edip began his education in Serres. He first finished elementary school, then secondary school and high school (Albayrak, 1995: 473-474). During his formal education, he learned Islamic studies from İmamüddin Efendi, the Mufti of Serres, memorized the Quran and became a Hafız. Eşref Edip worked as a clerk of the Sharia Court for a year in Serres. Interested in reading and science since his childhood, Eşref Edip came to İstanbul to continue his education enrolled in the school of law that was known as the "Mekteb-i Hukuk" (School of Law) in İstanbul.

While attending the school of law, Eşref Edip also studied Islamic sciences. He continued his Islamic education by attending the courses held in Atik Ali Paşa mosque (Fergan, 2015: 15). During his time in İstanbul, Eşref Edip had the opportunity to get into and familiarize himself with different circles. Among them were prominent figures of the intellectual life of İstanbul. Being part of these circles, Eşref Edip tried to attend both weekly gatherings and lectures. This

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<sup>4</sup> Yılmaz Öztuna is one of the prominent historians in Turkey. Öztuna is married to the daughter of Eşref Edip. He died in 2012.

is when he met the persons who had an influence on his intellectual and social life. The most significant among them were poet Mehmet Akif Ersoy<sup>5</sup> and Ebulula Mardin.<sup>6</sup>

Eşref Edip took part in intellectual movements of Abdulhamid II era. Therefore, he was a part of Committie of Union and Progress, the most influential movement of the time, which brought together many different fractions with its attitude against Abdulhamid II. Eşref Edip was influenced by the circle that emphasized Islamic values within the Union and Progress movement.

It was very important to read and write for Eşref Edip. He carried on his habit of reading and writing from his childhood to his last years, building on it his whole life. After he came to İstanbul, he developed an interest in journals and newspapers in particular, dreaming of publishing his own journal in the future. After starting the school of law, he took the lecture notes of Ebulula Mardin who had started the school of law earlier. He united the lecture notes kept by Ebulula Mardin with his notes and published them. His publication met great interest at the time of limited access to textbooks. In addition to lecture notes, Eşref Edip published the notes he kept in Islamic courses and gatherings that he attended. He attended and took notes in sermons that his master Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı Efendi<sup>7</sup> gave in Hagia Sophia Mosque. Then he organized his notes, had them corrected by his master, and published them as a publication

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<sup>5</sup> Known as the poet of independence, Mehmet Akif Ersoy is one of the most prominent figures of Turkish literature. He made important contributions to the literature and intellectual life. He was one of the most influential figures of the late Ottoman period. His friendship with Eşref Edip Fergan which started with the magazine Sıratmüstakim/Sebilürreşad continued for life. Eşref Edip tells in his article about how he met Mehmet Akif Ersoy that they met in the house of Bosnian Ali Şevki Efendi in Fatih. Eşref Edip met Mehmet Akif Ersoy at one of the 'Rejuvenation Nights' organized every Tuesday. Rejuvenation Nights were gatherings of cultural and artistic purpose. They remain friends for the rest of their lives. See. Caner Arabacı, *'Eşref Edip Fergan ve Sebilürreşad Üzerine'* (On Eşref Edip and Sebilürreşad), Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: İslamcılık (Political Thinking in Modern Turkey: Islamism), İletişim Publishings, Vol: 6, İstanbul, 2005, p.99

<sup>6</sup>One of the prominent intellectuals of the final years of the Ottoman Empire. He was also known for being a lawyer, and was among the first and important lawyers of the Republic of Turkey. He is one of the prominent figures of Islamism.

<sup>7</sup> He was born in Manastır to a family from Konya. He was a scholar and intellectual of the late Ottoman period. He taught in several places including primarily Hagia Sophia and Fatih Mosque. He is primarily known for his opposition to Westernization. The articles he wrote to defend his anti-Westernist views were published in many newspapers and magazines. He also has a lot of works. See. TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam), Entry: *'Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı'* p.563

of İbrahim Hilmi Library.<sup>8</sup> He published seven books of such compilations already in his college years (Arabacı, 2005: 98).

Various modern intellectual movements started to emerge in the last years of the reign of Abdulhamid II. Particularly the ideas put forward by the group led by the Young Turks who lived in Europe and returned to the Ottoman Empire became popular. These positivist and pro-Western thoughts also gave rise to a counter-campaign which included Eşref Edip. He started to fight against the positivist and pro-Western thoughts. This campaign had to be conducted and propagated by means of press. This is the reason why the idea of publishing a journal was always in his mind.

Eşref Edip advocated the 'Islamic Unity' which he made the backbone of his intellectual struggle until his death. He always made his struggle by means of his articles and the journals that he published. In this respect, his life was dedicated to the press.

For his entire life, Eşref Edip was an idealist who made an intellectual struggle. His idealism was the source of his close relations with the world of publishing and press. The restrictions imposed on publishing and press in particular during the Abdülhamid II era left Eşref Edip a very limited space to express his idealism. However, he rolled up his sleeves to realize his dreams in an air of excitement when Abdülhamid II was overthrown and the Second Constitutional Monarchy Declaration was made. He prepared to publish a magazine with Ebulula Mardin. An editorial staff had to be formed to publish the magazine. They made the necessary efforts which met considerable appreciation from their circle. Babanzade Ahmed Naim Bey,<sup>9</sup> Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı Efendi, Musa Kazım Efendi<sup>10</sup>, Bereketzade İsmail Hakkı

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<sup>8</sup> The publishing house founded by Tüccarzade İbrahim Hilmi Çığıracı. It was active in Sublime Porte firstly as Kitaphâne-i İslam, then Kitaphane-i İslam ve Askeri, and in the republic era as Hilmi Kitapevi. He was an intellectual and publisher of the late Ottoman period. He is the author of many works. He also pioneered the publication of many significant books of the time. See. Melek Dosay, 'Tüccarzade İbrahim Hilmi'nin "Maarifimiz ve Servet-i İlmiyyemiz" Adlı Eseri' ('Our Education and Wealth of Sciences' by Tüccarzade İbrahim Hilmi), Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi (The Periodical Magazine of Ankara University, Faculty of Divinity), Vol:40, Issue:1, Ankara, 1999

<sup>9</sup>One of the prominent intellectuals of the late Ottoman and early republic period. He was one of the prominent representatives of Islamism. İslam Ahlakının Esasları (Principles of Islamic Morality) (Çığır Publications, 1976) , İslam'da Kavmiyetçilik Yoktur (Islam Does Not Allow Nationalism) (Bedir Publications,1991) are among his influential works. Babanzade Ahmed Naim worked in the field of philosophy. He gave lectures on philosophy, metaphysics, logic, and psychology. See. Recep Kılıç, 'Babanzade Ahmed Naim'in Felsefi Görüşleri' (The Philosophical Views of Babanzade Ahmed Naim), Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi (The Periodical Magazine of Ankara University, Faculty of Divinity), Ankara,1997

Efendi<sup>11</sup> and of course, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, who was to become the editor-in-chief of the magazine.

Mehmet Akif Ersoy always had a special place for Eşref Edip who considered him his teacher and master. Mehmet Akif Ersoy was the most influential person whose ideas and support for magazine he wanted to have. Eşref Edip recounts the first time they mentioned the idea of establishing a magazine to Mehmet Akif Ersoy as follows:

*“I met Akif Bey at the famous Hacı’s teahouse in Direklerarası. It was a private tea house where there was a restricted and definite group of customers. It was a club of some kind. The regular customers met freely with confidence in one another. Hacı, the owner of the teahouse, did not let strangers in, and no civil servants were allowed. Akif recited his poems and we copied them there. When the Liberty was declared, we celebrated it at the teahouse. The current generations do not know and understand our love and desire for freedom, nor they feel a need such a need. When we told Akif that we would publish a newspaper, he got so happy. He said ‘I will send a poem for each issue. I can also make translations from precious works of Muhammed Abduh<sup>12</sup> and Ferid Vecdi<sup>13</sup>. We should put Fatih Mosque on the first issue’” (Arabacı, 2005: 99).*

Eşref Edip considered the magazine that they would establish as a medium where they would express their ideals and reach a wider audience. They started to find a name for the magazine after forming the editorial staff. This is how Eşref Edip recounts this process:

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<sup>10</sup> Musa Kazım Efendi was a scholar of late Ottoman period. He worked as a professor for years. He acted as Sheikh al-Islam and the minister of foundations in the constitutional era. He became one of the most important figures of Ottoman political life. See. TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam) (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam), Entry: ‘Musa Kazım Efendi’. p.221

<sup>11</sup> Bereketzade İsmail Hakkı Bey was a scholar and author of the late Ottoman period. He worked as a provincial treasurer, district governor, etc. He wrote articles in many newspapers and magazines. See. TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam) (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam) Entry: ‘Bereketzade İsmail Hakkı’ p.490

<sup>12</sup> Muhammed Abduh is an Egyptian thinker and scientist. He addressed a wide audience during his lifetime. He searched for the ways for Muslims to get rid of poor conditions, and he played an active role in formation of Islamism. See. TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam) (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam) Entry: ‘Muhammed Abduh’ p.483

<sup>13</sup> Muhammed Ferid Vecdi was an Egyptian scientist and intellectual. He conducted studies in such fields as philosophy, tafsir, and kalam. He published several magazines and newspapers, through which he expressed his ideas. He made a significant impact and gained recognition in his lifetime with his articles. He published important works and made contributions to Islamism. See. TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam) (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam) Entry: ‘Muhammed Ferid Vecdi’ p.393

*“Several different names were suggested. We did not like them. Somehow, the name ‘Sırat-ı Müstakim’<sup>14</sup> came to my mind, and I suggested it. Ebulula Bey appreciated it immediately. We did not have to come up with a name anymore. We asked Akif Bey and other masters, and they appreciated it. We registered the name with Ebulula Bey, and started working with the name of God.”* (Arabacı, 2005: 100).

Sırat-ı Müstakim was published for the first time in İstanbul on 27 August 1908. The founders and license holders of the magazine were Ebulula Mardin and H. Eşref Edip<sup>15</sup>. The statement below the title of the magazine was significant for expressing its purpose: *“Weekly booklet on philosophy, literature, law, and sciences”*. Although the statement contained the word ‘newspaper’ in the first issue, it was replaced with ‘booklet’ by the second issue (Sıratımüstakim, 2013:4).

The address of the magazine was stated as *“Headquarters: A private enterprise at the opposite of the new post office in İstanbul”*. The Sıratımüstakim magazine gained a significant momentum from the day it started to be published. It managed to get through the boundaries of İstanbul, reaching different provinces, even different countries when the current map is taken into consideration. A subscription system was established to reach a wider audience on a regular basis. The subscription fees of the magazine were as follows: *“Annual subscription for 60 kuruş, semiannual subscription for 35 kuruş for İstanbul. Annual subscription for 90 kuruş, semiannual subscription for 50 kuruş for other provinces. Annual subscription for 100 kuruş, semiannual subscription for 55 kuruş for foreign countries”*. It even included information about the method of delivery. For instance, this statement was printed on the magazine: *“unfolded delivery in cardboard tube costs 20 kuruş more. Postal delivery in İstanbul involves provincial postal charges.”* (Sıratımüstakim, 2013: 5) Since the magazine lacked a private printing house, it was printed in the Government Printing House.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The Correct Path; Al-Sirat is a narrow bridge hanging above the Hell, which leads the way to the Heaven. See. Ferit Devellioğlu, Ottoman-Turkish Encyclopedic Dictionary, Entry: ‘Sırat-ı Müstakim’

<sup>15</sup> Eşref Edip was conferred the title ‘Hafiz’ since he memorized the Quran. It is possible to see the title ‘Hafiz’ before his name in abbreviated form ‘H. Eşref Edip’.

<sup>16</sup> The first printing house established by İbrahim Müteferrika on royal decree. Its original name was Darüttıbaa. Having renamed several times, it was the official printing house of the state. It was called Matbaa-I Amire when the first issue of



The magazine met greater attention than was expected following the publication of the first issue. Eşref Edip expresses this unexpected attention as follows:

*“Publication of the first issue on Thursday, 27 August 1908, caused great excitement in Babiali. Distributors yelling the name of the magazine filled the streets. Tens of thousands of copies were sold in less than 24 hours. Not even a single copy was left over. We reprinted the first issue, and it was sold out again. Then the second copy published. We received a rain of telegrams from all over the country. Printing presses were not able to meet the demand despite the fact that they worked round the clock. In a short time, the entire country from Shkodër to Baghdad and Yemen were filled with Sıratımüstakim, and it started to reach the entire world of Islam. Sıratımüstakim became the best-selling magazine with the precious works and poetry of influential masters. Particularly the poems of Akif created an unparalleled excitement in hearts”* (Fergan, 1956: 199).

Sıratımüstakim gained great popularity as soon as it started being published. It virtually acted like a spokesperson that spoke out the prevalent problems at a difficult time when the Ottoman Empire was challenged by internal and external problems. The magazine managed to bring together a significant staff of writers and became a magazine in which thinkers of different views were able to fit in. The magazine was a lasting publication with its dynamic nature.

After publishing the magazine for a long time, Ebulula Mardin had to resign from the management of the magazine in 1912. Eşref Edip expressed Ebulula Mardin’s resignation as follows: *“Late Ebulula Mardin became a deputy and a professor, which took up the time he had available for the magazine. I continued to publish the magazine on my own after changing the name of the magazine to Sebilürreşad.”*(Fergan, 1956: 199). The resignation of Ebulula Mardin was an important threshold in the history of the magazine. Eşref Edip had to deal with all the workload of the magazine. Without complaint, Eşref Edip decided to rename the magazine and continued to publish it under the name of Sebilürreşad.

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Sıratımüstakim was published. See. TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam) (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam), Entry: *‘Darüttıbaa’* p.10.

The relaxation in press following the declaration of Second Constitution brought along the magazine and newspaper publishing rush. However, many of the newspapers and magazines did not last long. Some of them were closed down although they obtained permit. The success of *Sıratımüstakim* was considered to deserve respect. The magazine followed a lasting and balanced publishing policy. Such that Eşref Edip decided to rename the magazine after the resignation of Ebulula Mardin. Just as the way the name ‘*Sıratımüstakim*’ was adopted, the new name ‘*Sebilürreşad*’ has an interesting story. While Eşref Edip was discussing about the new name of the magazine with Mehmet Akif Ersoy at Prince Abbas Halim Pasha Mansion, Abbas Pasha offers turn a random page in Quran to find the name that they were looking for. Eşref Edip Fergan recounts this as follows: “*The Pasha turned a random page. The verse <ittebiuni ehdiküm Sebilerreşad> appeared on the page. Then we decided that the name ‘Sebilürreşad’ would be appropriate. Its meaning is very close to Sıratımüstakim. We made our decision immediately.*”<sup>17</sup> (Fergan, 1956: 200). There was a problem, though. The name was already registered to Tahirül Mevlevi<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, Tahirül Mevlevi was kindly requested to transfer the name and the publishing activity continued. Since it was the new name of the same magazine, it was published under the name of *Sebilürreşad* from the 183<sup>rd</sup> issue. Its title was “*weekly Islamic magazine on religion, science, literature, and politics*”. Many prominent figures of the time such as Musa Kazım Efendi, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Grand Vizier Said Halim Pasha contributed to the magazine with their writings. The purpose of the magazine was to contribute to unity of Muslims to help them escape the depression that surrounded them at the time. Certain efforts were made to make an impact not only in Ottoman lands but also in other areas of the world. The articles of the magazine were used to reach many areas of the world from Russia to Japan and spread the word to Muslim communities in such areas. The ideology of ‘Islamic Unity’ again made up the backbone of the magazine.

*Sebilürreşad* continued with a different and richer content than its predecessor *Sıratımüstakim*. Since it coincided with a period when Union and Progress movement completely grabbed the

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<sup>17</sup> Note: *Sebilürreşad* can be translated as ‘true path’, and has a close meaning to ‘*Sıratımüstakim*’.

<sup>18</sup> Also known as Tahir Olgun, he was a literary historian, author and poet of late Ottoman and Republic period. He was a permitted follower of the Mevlevi order. He engaged in newspaper and magazine publication. He worked at several government posts. He also studied literary history. He left many works by the time he died. See. TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam) (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam), Entry: ‘*Tahirül Mevlevi*’ p.407

power, Sebilürreşad was among the small number of publications that were able to criticize the poor policies that were implemented at that time. However, the intolerance of the Union and Progress with criticism and opposition caused interruptions in publication of the magazine. Despite a short period of closure in 1911, the magazine continued to operate but when the magazine was closed down once more, some of its issues were published under the name of “Sebilünnecat” in order to avoid inactivity.

The articles published in the magazine started to be censored. The oppressive times of the Union and Progress had started. Especially Mehmet Akif Ersoy was made the scapegoat for the articles that he published in the magazine. The magazine was not published from 1916 to 1918 when it faced a long period of closure. Against all odds, the magazine was embraced primarily by Eşref Edip and Mehmet Akif Ersoy. It returned to publication by mid-1918, and continued to be published despite censorship, threats, and oppression.

Sebilürreşad faced many challenges from the first day it was released. In addition to those challenges, the pressure on the magazine increased with the occupation of İstanbul since the publishing policy of the magazine disturbed the occupying forces. The magazine’s fight against the newspapers and magazines supporting the mandate and protection was the primary reason for this disturbance. The magazine did not have a strong voice but it advocated freedom and independence in the face of mandate and protection. Even when İstanbul was occupied, it supported the groups in Anatolia, which were starting to fight for independence.

In the period following the occupation of İzmir, the staff of Sebilürreşad moved to Balıkesir, and in the lead of Mehmet Akif Ersoy and Eşref Edip, the magazine started to offer their morale support to people. During these efforts, the sermon that Mehmet Akif Ersoy delivered in Zağanos Paşa Mosque had a resounding influence on people. Based on the struggle for freedom, this sermon was noted down by Eşref Edip for later publication (Arabacı, 2005: 107).

In this period, Eşref Edip never left Mehmet Akif Ersoy alone. This was because Mehmet Akif Ersoy was seen as one of the prominent figures of the War of Independence. The efforts of the staff of Sebilürreşad were noticed by the occupying forces and the pressures on the magazine increased. The magazine was expected to speak out louder. In this period, the staff of

Sebilürreşad was invited to Ankara to continue their efforts there. Since the invitation was made by Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the staff led by Mehmet Akif Ersoy and Eşref Edip accepted the invitation and decided to leave İstanbul for Anatolia. Mehmet Akif Ersoy and Ali Şükrü Bey<sup>19</sup> evaded English forces and travelled to Ankara. Eşref Edip settled his affairs in İstanbul, and travelled to İnebolu, and then Kastamonu. The state of affairs in Kastamonu disappointed him because the people did not show any sign of struggle. Eşref Edip took action to overcome the passivity of people, and contacted the senior officials, including the governor, chief of police, and the notable people of the region. It was necessary to raise awareness and awaken people for the War of Independence. He made speeches in public gatherings. He gathered the people under the existing Society for the Advocacy of Rights (Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti), prepared announcement handouts and had them distributed all over the city.

His efforts bore their fruits and the people started to their best to struggle. Eşref Edip invited people for armament in addition to raising awareness. The popularity gained by Eşref Edip during that period disturbed the governor who sent a telegram to Ankara stating that Eşref Edip would march to Ankara with the armed forces that he leads. Then the inspector commissioned by Ankara sent Eşref Edip on exile to Sinop. After hearing about this slander, Mehmet Akif Ersoy took action to save Eşref Edip and they returned to Kastamonu together.

The efforts were expedited when Mehmet Akif Ersoy came to Kastamonu. The sermons that he delivered in mosques were published in Sebilürreşad and distributed to entire Anatolia. These sermons had a great influence on people. In this period, Sebilürreşad became the voice of the War of Independence. Eşref Edip and the editor-in-chief Mehmet Akif Ersoy travelled to Ankara for convenience with conducting their efforts of publishing the magazine. They continued to work on Sebilürreşad there. Specifically, they had the chance to work closely and exchange ideas with Mustafa Kemal Pasha. He ordered to establish a group consisting of Eşref Edip, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Mustafa Fehmi Efendi and Recep Bey<sup>20</sup> in order to organize an Islamic Congress in Ankara. Eşref Edip Bey and the entire staff of Sebilürreşad were happy

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<sup>19</sup>Military man and politician who acted as Trabzon Deputy in the First Parliament. He was the most severe opponent of Atatürk after the War of Independence. He was assassinated.

<sup>20</sup> Recep Bey is a military man, politician, and statesman who took the surname 'Peker' with the surname law. He was the head clerk of the first parliament. He acted as a deputy, minister, and prime minister after the War of Independence.

with the congress which they considered an outcome of their ‘Unity of Islam’ ideal that they advocated for years. They got to work immediately but when the defeat of Eskişehir jeopardized the security of Ankara, the congress was cancelled. Then, Eşref Edip moved to Kayseri which was a safer place.

Eşref Edip continued to work on the magazine in Kayseri. Eşref Edip published in Sebilürreşad his public speeches that he made in mosques and meetings in Kayseri, and contributed to propagation of his speeches. Mehmet Akif Ersoy returned to Ankara after the victory gained in Sakarya. When the War of Independence was won, Eşref Edip and Mehmet Akif Ersoy decided to continue his publishing efforts in Ankara. They published articles particularly about how the government should be after the victory. As a matter of fact, those articles advocated a concept of government based on the ideal of ‘Islamic Unity’ as they did in the earlier days of their efforts. Following the commencement of the Lausanne talks, the first parliament was terminated to form a new one by an election. While Mehmet Akif Ersoy was the deputy of Burdur in the first parliament, he was not included in the second one. When certain developments eliminated the need for their stay in Ankara, Eşref Edip and Mehmet Akif Ersoy returned to İstanbul and continued their publishing efforts there.

Sebilürreşad continued its operations in İstanbul. Turkey had taken a whole new political path, and Eşref Edip and his company were among those who were to be affected the most. The post-war period was evolving into one that involved building a new state and society. The sultanate was abolished in 1922, and the republic was established in 1923. This period was sheer disappointment for Eşref Edip and his company who had thrown their heart and soul into independence during the period of the War of Independence. They had advocated the ideal of ‘Islamic Unity’ since the day they started their publication efforts in 1908 and worked for this ideal but the end result was nothing like they expected. They felt disappointed throughout the rest of their lives.

The “Westernization” process started with the declaration of republic was heavily criticized by Sebilürreşad. The deviation from the ideology and geography of Islam with abolition of the caliphate constituted the backbone of the opposition. Not only the writers and intellectuals of “Islamist” ideology but people of different ideologies started to react. Turkey was a republic

now, and the founder of the republic was Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Implementation of the politically-engineered roadmap determined by Atatürk and his staff were important for the “new”, “westernized” and “modern” ideals of the nation. The opposition of the media organs around İstanbul was an obstacle before implementation of this roadmap<sup>21</sup>, and it was apparent that this obstacle should be overcome. The Independence Tribunals<sup>22</sup> was established and the Law on Maintenance of Order<sup>23</sup> was enforced.

Eşref Edip was arrested in May 1926 when he was on vacation in Heybeliada, and was sent to İstanbul and then to Ankara without being informed about his arrest. He was brought to the Independence Tribunal in Ankara and then sent to prison. After being held under arrest for some time, he was brought to the court. The Independence Tribunal of Ankara was made up of figures that would be controversial names in the future: Ali Çetinkaya, Necip Ali Küçük, Ali Kılıç, and Reşit Galip ordered that Eşref Edip be sent to the eastern courts (Fergan, 2001: 52).

Eşref Edip was sent to Gaziantep, and then to Şanlıurfa, where he learned about what he was accused with: promoting the Sheikh Said rebellion. Sheikh Said told in his testimony during his trial that the articles published in newspapers encouraged them to rebel. Later it was found out that a politician suggested Sheikh Said to accuse journalists so that he could escape execution (Arabacı, 2005: 117). Eşref Edip learned about all these while he was in prison in

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<sup>21</sup> A letter written by Indian Muslims, which was about a request from the government of Ankara not to abolish caliphate was published in the newspapers Tanin and İkdam of the time. These newspapers and their owners were investigated after the publication of the letter, and Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, the owner of Tanin, and Ahmed Cevdet, the owner of İkdam were arrested. (Fergan, 2015a, 27).

<sup>22</sup> Special courts that were active during the War of Independence and early Republic period. They can be analyzed in two terms. The first term of Independence Tribunals had a military status. Its authority was limited to catching the deserters and eliminating the elements that may hinder the War of Independence. The Independence Tribunals were rather political in their second term. Almost every opponent of the regime intended to be passivized in the second term of these courts. For detailed explanation:

See. Mete Tunçay, *'Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek-Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması (1923-1931)' (Establishment of One-Party Government in the Republic of Turkey (1923-1931))*, Yurt Publishings, Ankara, 1981

See. *İstiklal Mahkemeleri Tutanakları (Proceedings of Independence Tribunals) Vol: 1-2-3-4-5*, Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Publishings, Ankara, 2015

See. Ahmet Turan Alkan, *'İstiklal Mahkemeleri ve Sivas'ta Şapka İnkılabı Duruşmaları' (Independence Tribunals and Trials of Hat Revolution in Sivas)*, Ötüken Publishings, İstanbul, 2013

<sup>23</sup>The Law on Maintenance of Order that got through the parliament on the pretext of Sheikh Said Rebellion. This law laid the groundwork for establishment of the regime. Those who were arrested within the framework of this law were tried and punished by Independence Tribunals.

Şanlıurfa. It was not only Eşref Edip who was sentenced but all journalists against the regime were arrested, sent on exile or did flee the country. Eşref Edip was brought to Diyarbakır and then to Elazığ where his trial would be held. Eşref Edip stood trial for treason and made very long pleas in the court. He defended himself against the accusations made for his certain articles. Finally, Eşref Edip was acquitted but he was banned from publishing.

Having returned to İstanbul as a person who is banned from publishing after the trials of Independence Tribunals, Eşref Edip now witnessed a one-party regime, and that formation of a new society and a new country was in progress. There were serious objections related to that period. However, they were forbidden to comment on the regime and its practices, otherwise they could be punished. However, despite all these adversities, he could not give up his publication efforts, and established the Library of Scientific Works (Asar-ı İlmiye Kütüphanesi). He translated and published lots of works there. Among these were the works of many prominent figures from the east and the west, including Muhammed Abduh, Raşid Rıza, Emile Boirac, and Arnold Thomas. In addition to these translations, he published the works of the prominent figures of the period as the publications of the Library of Scientific Works.

Carrying on with his activities, Eşref Edip tried to preserve his oppositional motivation by attending various meetings and communions. His idealism was his primary source of motivation. He tried to instill his motivation to those who were around him.

In the meantime a visit that would inspire his future work took place in 1932. He visited Mehmet Akif Ersoy who had been in Egypt since 1925. He was deeply affected by what he saw. The situation of Mehmet Akif Ersoy upset him. During this visit, he read the famous translation of Quran by Mehmet Akif Ersoy. After the death of Mehmet Akif Ersoy in 1936, he went to Egypt again to find out the latest situation of the translation but he failed to reach any detail. Eşref Edip was not able to give up publication works in 1925 but his efforts were limited with running a publishing house and editing works. Doubtlessly, the conditions of the time had a great impact on those state of affairs. However, he started to publish his own works by 1938.

The one-party regime was a challenging and restrictive period for Eşref Edip. Following the political events that took place after 1945, Turkey switched to multi-party system. It was

certainly the authors and journalists suffering the oppressive elements of the one-party period that were satisfied the most with this development. Eşref Edip was one of them. The developments of the time and transition to pluralist democracy encouraged Eşref Edip who turned back to publishing Sebilürreşad in May 1948. Eşref Edip was standing out as an author and intellectual with his articles and books. The editorial staff of the magazine had changed but it managed to gather the prominent intellectuals of the time under its roof just as it had always done. Ömer Rıza Doğrul<sup>24</sup>, Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen<sup>25</sup>, Kâmil Miras<sup>26</sup>, Kâzım Nami Duru<sup>27</sup>, Cevat Rifat Atilhan<sup>28</sup>, Tahirül Mevlevi, Ali Fuat Başgil<sup>29</sup>, M. Raif Ogan, Hasan Basri Çantay<sup>30</sup> were among those writers. Also, influential figures such as Bediüzzaman Said Nursi<sup>31</sup>, Nihat Sami Banarlı, Bekir Berk<sup>32</sup>, M. Said Çekmegil, İsmail Hami Danişmend, M. Şevket Eygi, Ali Ulvi Kurucu<sup>33</sup>, Mithat Cemal Kuntay, Cemal Oğuz Öcal, Peyami Safa<sup>34</sup>, A.

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<sup>24</sup>A journalist and author with a political aspect, who was elected Konya Deputy from the Democratic Party in 1950. He was also Mehmet Akif Ersoy's groom. See. TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam), Entry: 'Ömer Rıza Doğrul', p.489

<sup>25</sup>A scholar and interpreter of tafsir in the republic period, who was the President of Religious Affairs in 1960-1961. He is known for his tafsir and translation of Quran. See. TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam), Entry: 'Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen', p.162

<sup>26</sup> He is known as a politician and scientist. He is the author of many works. He assumed several government offices particularly in the Presidency of Religious Affairs. Mustafa Müftüoğlu states in his book *Cumhuriyet Tarihinde Mühim Olaylar (Significant Events in the History of the Republic)* (1988) that Kamil Miras recited a prayer in the parliament after the declaration of republic and election of Atatürk as the president. For this reason, Kamil Miras is known as the person who said the prayer of the Republic.

<sup>27</sup> He is known as an educator and politician in pre-republic and post-republic period. He made contributions to education policies of CHP with his views on education. He worked as a teacher, inspector, and deputy.

<sup>28</sup>An author of the republic era. He is the author of several books. He had been known for his adherence to Turkism during the one-party regime but took part in rising Islamist circles during the multi-party regime and had an influence on them. We can say that he was on a Turkist-Islamist line of thinking. He was the founder of Democratic Party (1951) during the multi-party regime.

<sup>29</sup> He is known as a politician, lawyer, and intellectual. He was a professor of constitution. Especially his statements on freedom of religion were influential. He also took part in social life and made contributions to establishment of several institutions. He is the author of many works on several topics. He is closer to a conservative line of thinking.

<sup>30</sup> He was a prominent scholar and politician of the late Ottoman, and Republic era. He is particularly known for his efforts for learning of Islam. His Quran translations are important. He was the person who convinced Mehmet Akif Ersoy to write İstiklal Marşı (the Independence March).

<sup>31</sup>The scholar and scientist who is known as the founder of the Nur movement. He created a movement that has reached the masses with his book Epistles of Light (Risale-i Nur). Even today, large masses follow the path drawn by Bediüzzaman.

<sup>32</sup>One of the disciples of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, who is known as a lawyer and author. He is also known as the attorney of the adherents of the Nur movement. He wrote articles in several magazines and newspapers, and authored books.

<sup>33</sup> He is known as an author and scholar. His memoirs compiled by M. Ertuğrul Düzdağ constitute a significant piece of work. See. Ali Ulvi kurucu Hatıratları (Memoirs of Ali Ulvi Kurucu) 1-2-3-4, Kaynak Publishings, İstanbul, 2014



Nihat Tarlan, Nurettin Topçu<sup>35</sup> contributed to the magazine with their articles at different times.

Sebilürreşad returned to publication with the title “*Weekly Magazine on Politics, Religion, Science, Literature, and Morals*” featuring the lead article by Eşref Edip, which was titled “*We Are Starting Sebilürreşad with the Favor of God*”. It was like a manifesto that revealed the principles of Sebilürreşad in its new term.

*“The laws against freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, democracy and secularism will all be amended. Muslim Turks will pray, recite the azan and the name of God in the language they please just as Christians and Jews living in our country do. Our Parliament will repeal all lawful and unlawful records that oppress the religion. I hope to God that everything will get better with the cooperation of the people with the government. No one will be able to assault the moral concepts of people. They will not let anyone trample their religion. They will strive for the progress and development of its religion with all their power and capability.”* (Fergan, 1948: 2).

In its new term of publication, Sebilürreşad stood out with its criticisms against CHP (Republican People’s Party) and one-party regime. The former policies were criticized. Establishment of the Democratic Party and its march to power were essential in establishing this relatively freer atmosphere where Eşref Edip was able to make his criticisms.

Eşref Edip was arrested and acquitted several times for his articles. He was sued particularly for his criticism of CHP and his anti-secularist statements. In addition he was tried for being a

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<sup>34</sup> He is known as a man of letters and an intellectual. He was one of the most prominent figures of anti-communist and nationalist-conservative line of thinking. For this reason, he is a powerful intellectual in addition to his identity as a man of letters. Necip Fazıl Kısakürek describes him as follows: “*He had a good mind, culture, writing skills, and style. He had palpitations, sufferings, and a search for metaphysics. He had faith, aesthetics, dialectics, and courage. In sum, he had all qualities expected from an intellectual and artist...*” See. Beşir Ayvazoğlu, *PEYAMI “ Hayatı, Sanatı, Felsefe Dramı “* (His Life, Art, and Drama of Philosophy), Ötüken Publishings, İstanbul, 1999

<sup>35</sup> One of the most prominent intellectuals in the republic era. Received his education in France, and conducted important studies in ethics. Made significant contributions to the intellectual life with his doctoral dissertation titled ‘İsyân Ahlakı’ (Ethics of Rebellion). The magazine ‘Hareket’ (Action) that he published was a significant magazine of thought and literature. With all his qualities, Topçu was one of the disciples of Abdülaziz Bekkine, one of the most significant representatives of the Naqshbandi order. Since there was a relationship of a sheikh and disciple between them, this aspect of Topçu should not be ignored. See. TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam), Entry: ‘*Nurettin Topçu*’ p.249

part of the Nur movement and his close relations with this movement and acquitted all these accusations.

Sebilürreşad continued to advocate the same ideals as Sıratmüstakim did in the earlier days of publication. Sebilürreşad adhered to the same principles until 1966. However, the magazine went out of publication in 1966 due to financial problems and because Eşref Edip got older. The magazine which held a significant place in intellectual life for about 60 years closed down. Following the closure, Eşref Edip continued to write in different newspapers and magazines including Büyük Doğu, Yeni İstiklal, Bugün, and Yeni Asya.

Throughout his years in publication business, Eşref Edip's relationship with political parties was always based on certain principles. This statement is important in this respect:

*“The members of all political parties should be like this. They should hold their religion in higher esteem than their political parties. No faithful Muslim should ever forget this principle, and should always act according to it: Religion is above everything. For forty years, Sebilürreşad acted according to this principle and never left it. It always occupied a place above political parties in the Constitutional era and subsequent periods. Whenever a political party acts against the religion, Sebilürreşad stands against it.”*(Fergan, 1958: 9).

With this mindset, he never refrained from supporting or criticizing the political movements that he considered to be closer to his worldview. Nation Party, Democratic Islamic Party and Democratic Party were the ones that he supported but also kept a certain distance in between.

For a long time, there was not a party that advocated the views held by Eşref Edip and would take his support. However, a party that would gain his support finally emerged when the National Order (Milli Nizam) Party was established in 1970. Eşref Edip who had remained distanced to politics and political parties was among the founders of the National Order Party. He did not only take part in establishment of the party but also suggested the name of it.<sup>36</sup> The significance of this party was much different than others for Eşref Edip. He made the

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<sup>36</sup>This was emphasized by Recai Kutan during a conference. See. Recai Kutan, 'Erbakan'ı Anma Ve Anlama Toplantısı' (Memorial and Understanding Day for Erbakan), Conference, Kayseri, 27.02.2014

following statement when the party was founded: *“I have lost my sleep at this age for the National Order Party. We do not have to withstand the lesser of evil any more. Righteousness himself is here.”*<sup>37</sup>

Eşref Edip made it his principle to live by the values that he held throughout his life and represented the intellectual side of the Islamist movement. He defended the cause of righteousness and truth in his own words. Having conducted important studies and works on the ideal of ‘Islamic Unity’, Eşref Edip died in İstanbul in December 1971.

Considering the ideas that he advocated, Eşref Edip had an understanding that envisioned the future, not the present. This statement of Eşref Edip is a proof of it: *“Perhaps we will not live long enough to see the days of growth. It does not matter. It is our duty to keep struggling in the way of God and the truth. I hope that our successors continue fighting for this cause.”*(Ergin, 2014).

## **1.2. Works of Eşref Edip Fergan**

### **Sıratımüstakim / Sebilürreşad**

Without any doubt, the most influential work of Eşref Edip was the magazines Sebilürreşad which started being published with the name of Sıratımüstakim.

182 issues of Sıratımüstakim was published from August 1908 to February 1912. Following the resignation of Ebulula Mardin from the magazine in the last issue, the magazine was renamed Sebilürreşad, and resumed to be published with that name by the 183<sup>rd</sup> issue by March 1912. It was banned after the establishment of Independence Tribunals and went out of publication with its 641<sup>st</sup> and last issue in 1925. Having closed down under the one-party

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<sup>37</sup>For more information that examines this work; See. Süleyman Arif Emre, *Siyasette 35. Yıl (35th Year in Politics)*, MGV Publishings, 2014

regime, the magazine returned to publication with the 1<sup>st</sup> issue in 1948. In its second term, 362 issues of the magazine were published until 1966.

Sebilürreşad made significant contributions to the domains of politics, literature, history, and philosophy in the intellectual life of late Ottoman and post-republic periods, gathering the prominent writers and thinkers under its roof. Without any doubt, what made it possible for the magazines to run for a long time was Eşref Edip and his idealism.

### **The Black Book (Kara Kitap) - How Did They Deceive the People? How Did They Assault the Sacred Values of the Nation?**

*The Black Book* was published in the Newspaper “Bugün” as a series of articles in 1967. It was published into a book in the same year. It is one of the most notable and renowned Works of Eşref Edip.

*The Black Book* was a book that harshly and openly criticized the oppressive practices of the one-party regime following the declaration of republic. Specifically the oppressive policies that restricted religious freedoms including the alphabet reform, recital of the azan in Turkish, and closure of Quran courses were criticized throughout the book. Eşref Edip was sued several times for his critiques but he acquitted all lawsuits filed against him.

Eşref Edip addressed in 52 items the unfair and oppressive policies imposed on Islam and religious freedom of Muslims in particular from the Tanzimat reform era to the book’s publication time.<sup>38</sup> The book was written in an emotional tone and it majorly conveys the opinions and experiences of Eşref Edip through the political events that he experienced. It is more of a collection of memoirs than an objective work based on documents.

### **Religion Book for Our Children (Çocuklarımıza Din Kitabı)**

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<sup>38</sup> See. Eşref Edip Fergan, ‘Kara Kitap- Milleti Nasıl Aldattılar? Mukaddesatına Nasıl Saldırdılar?’ (The Black Book - How Did They Deceive the People? How Did They Assault the Sacred Values of the Nation?), BeyanPublishings, İstanbul, 2014

The works of Eşref Edip are generally focused on literary, political and religious matters. However, he decided to publish a children's book as an exception. The purpose of the book was to communicate the basic tenets of Islam with a style and tone that is comprehensible to Children.

The series of books that comprises four volumes, namely Lessons on Belief, Lessons of Prayer, Lessons on Morality, and Our Dear Prophet, and was published by the Library of Scientific Works in 1944 and 1945. Following its publication, it was found inconvenient and pulled off the shelf by the Ministry of National Education. Then it was republished with the required changes made to its content.

The Directorate of Religious Affairs of the time made the following annotation about the book:

*“The petition signed by Eşref Edip on examination of the book titled ‘Religion Book for Our Children’ was read. It was found upon the examination that publication of the said book that is written with a clear style is not objected, and it is considered worthy of suggestion for elementary school children since it is capable of instilling religious knowledge and moral virtues to the young minds.”* (Sebilürreşad, 1949: 96)

### **The Pink Book - Critiques of Tevfik Fikret by Forty Authors from Five Perspectives**

This work of Eşref Edip was published in 1943. The book was formed by Eşref Edip by compilation of the critiques on Tevfik Fikret by the intellectuals of the time. The book is made up of five parts: the critiques on the art and poetry of Tevfik Fikret, the critiques on personal morals of Tevfik Fikret, the critiques on conceptions of homeland and nation in Tevfik Fikret, the critiques on intellectual perspective of Tevfik Fikret, and the critiques on the faith and religious beliefs of Tevfik Fikret.

Eşref Edip expresses the purpose of the book in the foreword as follows:

*“Those who study Tevfik Fikret express his faults and defects in addition to mentioning his qualities. There is no need to discuss his unquestionable traits. However, one may*

*talk about the points that are considered his defects. The judgments on this matter may be right or wrong. What is attributed to Teyfik Fikret as a defect? It is necessary to identify them to make discussions on them and to finalize the conversations on such traits. I have not written anything in this book. I have just conveyed the opinions of forty writers that criticized Fikret. The book does not reflect their opinions to the fullest extent. Therefore, those who would like to respond should directly speak to the critics. I will not except any discussion on this matter.”* (Fergan, 2015b: 111).

### **Said Nur, the Author of Epistles of Light (Risale-i Nur): Life, Works, and Occupation**

First published by the Library of Scientific Works in 1952, the purpose of the book was to express the offenses, negative thoughts and unfair acts against Bediüzzaman and the Nur movement at the time. It advocates Bediüzzaman Said Nursi and the Nur movement.

Eşref Edip made the following statement in the article of dedication that he wrote for the book: *“We compiled and edited the information on the life, works, and occupation of the Grand Master collected by his disciples. This book could only be a catalogue of his life, works, ideas, struggles, courage and heroism.”* (Fergan, 2011b: 3).

### **Mehmet Akif Ersoy: Life, Works, and Articles by Seventy Writers**

Eşref Edip and Mehmet Akif Ersoy are two close friends and ‘comrades’. Eşref Edip frequently emphasized after the death of Mehmet Akif Ersoy that he was greatly influenced by Mehmet Akif Ersoy whom he considered his master because of the ideas that he held. The bonds of friendship between the two lasted until the end of their lives.

This book was also published in 1938, shortly after the death of Mehmet Akif Ersoy, by the Library of Scientific Works owned by Eşref Edip. He wrote about the life and works of Mehmet Akif Ersoy, and the opinions of his friends about him since Mehmet Akif Ersoy always had an important place in his life.

This book is very important for its mission. The basic purpose of the book was to reveal the qualities of Mehmet Akif Ersoy in all respects, and to inform the generations to come about him.

### **Akif-Fikret, Youth-Supporters of Tan in the Face of Reform – Is It the Independence March or the Ancient History that Caused the War of Independence**

There was an ongoing clash of ideas between Mehmet Akif Ersoy and Tevfik Fikret from the Second Constitutional Era. This clash was reflected to fellow thinkers of Akif and Tevfik Fikret. Eşref Edip wrote this book as a response to the articles written against Mehmet Akif Ersoy in the Newspaper ‘Tan’. It was an effort to advocate Mehmet Akif Ersoy and his intellectual struggle in the face of Tevfik Fikret’s system of thought.

The book was published by the Library of Scientific Works owned by Eşref Edip in 1940. Its significance lies in shedding light on the intellectual life of Mehmet Akif Ersoy.

### **Quran According to Western Thinkers – Testimonials of World’s Thinkers on the Grandeur and Splendor of Quran**

It is a book prepared by Eşref Edip, which contains the views of western and eastern writers and thinkers on the grandeur and splendor of Quran. It was published as a series of articles in the second term of Sebilürreşad (after 1948). It was later published into a book by Eşref Edip in 1958. This book includes the views of many western thinkers on Quran.

Eşref Edip explains his purpose of publishing this book as follows:

*“It is observed with regret that lately those with a communist spirit and dark heart have ventured to make undeserved comments about our holy book and Prophet. Words are futile against these ill-willed, evil, stateless and immoral people. I have considered it beneficial to compile in short articles the opinions of western thinkers, which we have been collecting and publishing, on our great and holy Quran, in order to protect*

*our innocent youth from their evils, poisonous words, and atheistic propaganda.”*(Fergan, 1958a: 2).

### **A Scientific Study on the Allegations of the Authors against Epistles of Light (Risale-i Nur)**

Eşref Edip was a close friend of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi. Therefore, the attempts against Nur movement disturbed him and he felt the urge to do something about the matter. This is the reason why he wrote books and articles about Nur movement and Bediüzzaman. This book is among them. It was published in 1965. Eşref Edip made the following statement regarding the publication of the book:

*“Keeping silent in the face of these inconvenient assaults and violations, unfair confessions and allegations, and groundless accusations is abasement for the Muslims who could react by writing, and defending the truth and righteousness is a religious duty. In addition, it is a duty of humanity and conscience for me since I have been familiar with his life and thoughts, his nature and strength, his merits and virtues as a friend of the author for half a century”*(Fergan, 1965: 5).

### **Booklets and Compilations**

During his lifetime, Eşref Edip wrote a lot of books and articles. Some of them were published as books while others appeared in newspaper columns. As a critique of the Encyclopedia of Islam published during the term of Hasan Ali Yücel, he penned a work titled the *Scientific Aspect of the Encyclopedia of Islam* in 1946. This work contributed to publication of *Turkish-Islamic Encyclopedia* and the *Islamic-Turkish Magazine*.

In 1959, he wrote a booklet titled ‘Reformists in Religion’ with certain intellectuals. The booklet was published by Sebilürreşad Publications. It was a criticism of the attempts of Alterations to Islam, and opposed the debates of reformation in Islam.



The booklet titled ‘What does this man want?’ is another work that qualifies as a booklet. It was printed by Sebilürreşad Publications in 1965.

In addition to these works that he wrote, there are works published into books compiled from the article series that he wrote in newspapers and magazines. ‘The Novel of Sebilürreşad in Independence Tribunals’ which was made into a book by Fahrettin Gün by compiling the memoirs of Eşref Edip in Sebilürreşad, and published by Beyan Publishing House in 2001. Also the book titled ‘Years of the War of Independence’ was compiled from the article series of Eşref Edip. It was also published by Beyan Publishing House in 2002.

In addition, following the closure of the Sebilürreşad magazine, he wrote articles in several newspapers such as Bugün, Yeni Asya, and Büyük Doğu.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>For a detailed review of the Works of Eşref Edip Fergan, See. Esmâ Polat, ‘*Eşref Edip Fergan’ın hayatı, eserleri ve edebî kişiliği*’ (*Life, works, and literary personality of Eşref Edip Fergan*), Master Thesis, Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences, Ankara, 2011

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **POLITICAL HISTORY OF TURKEY, AND EŞREF EDİP FERGAN**

#### **2.1.1. The Origins of Political Thought in Turkey**

Political ideas and ideologies emerge in a historical context. Therefore, it is possible to see ideas and ideologies in conjunction with the historical causality of circumstances. In other words, the events that take place in the natural course of history give rise to political ideas and ideologies. In this respect, it is fair to say that one should refer to the historical memory and study the origins to explain and make sense of a political idea. This is predictable for almost all political ideas. The circumstances that give rise to an idea, and the effects and reflections of such circumstances should be focused.

19th century was a period of intense changes and transformation for Ottoman Empire just as it was for the whole world, particularly Europe. The ideas put forward from this period laid the groundwork for the intellectual movements to arise in following years (Alkan, 2009b: 277-407). These changes and transformations that originated in the Western world and had a deep impact on Ottoman Empire rest on several reasons.

A transformation had become a must for the Ottoman Empire which became a closed society that was not able to keep up with the developments and changes occurring within and outside of country. The Ottoman Empire took the path of modernization and westernization in order to regain its political, economic, and military power. However, these efforts failed to yield any result due to political developments and administrative problems. Still, these efforts led to lots of political and military developments and changes. They started to yield certain results and

played an important role in formation of ideological movements after the Second Constitutional Era in particular.

The period after the Second Constitutional Era emerged as the richest period in terms of the intellectual life of the Ottoman Empire. Many newspapers, magazines and publications came to life and enriched their intellectual life in this period. The restrictions in the period of Abdulhamid II came to an end, and intellectual life found expansion area (Ahmad, 2014b: 44). Following the declaration of the Second Constitution, especially ideological movements such as Ottomanism, Islamism, Nationalism, and Turan found larger following. Of course there are different reasons for the emergence of these movements. Historical memory should be studied to make sense of these reasons and their emergence. In this respect, it would be more sensible to track down the causality of the emergence of such ideologies among historical and political events.

The ideological movements that developed and spread in the Ottoman Empire originated from the modernization and westernization efforts that started in 19<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, the background of the modern Western world reveals that modernity was shaped by the political, social, economic, and religious developments dating back to the Renaissance at the latest. It is obvious that starting from the Renaissance, the Western world followed the latest changes in everything. This dynamism was particularly obvious in culture, arts, commercial and military activities, and in emerging intellectual areas.

An examination of the Eastern societies under the influence of the Ottoman Empire in the same period reveals that they entered a period of regression by the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This regression is attributable to many factors but it is fair to say that the most important ones among them are entrustment of government offices to unqualified officers, failure to diversify the agricultural economy, and military failures (Berkes, 2002: 41).

Following the renaissance and reformation movements, the effects of the Age of Enlightenment also known as the '*age of reason*' (Köktaş, 2015: 637-650) are seen in the West by 18<sup>th</sup> century. The effects of '*rationalism*'<sup>40</sup> can be said to be fundamental dynamic of

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<sup>40</sup> It is a philosophical movement that is also known as rationalism. It argues that reason is the source of true knowledge, and it can only be attained through reason.

the time. This period is marked by the decline in the church's impact and emergence of more rational and humanitarian ideas. It is fair to say that the prominence of rationalism and empiricism by Renaissance laid the foundations for the Age of Enlightenment.

The combination of experiment and observation with rationality led to important scientific breakthroughs in this period. The scientific works of Newton<sup>41</sup> are among the examples of the scientific advances of the time. On the other hand, the rapid rise of scientific developments and rationalism caused a decline in the impact of religion. One of the most significant political events of the Enlightenment Age, the French Revolution of 1789 abolished monarchy and established the republic, thereby decreased the impact of the church and aristocracy. Diversification and enrichment of the sources of information brought about by the Enlightenment made it easier to access accurate information, which raised awareness in the society and intensified the debates in the public domain. In other words, formation of the public domain was one of the distinguishing features of the Age of Enlightenment.<sup>42</sup>

The relations of the Ottoman Empire with the Western world by 18<sup>th</sup> century centered on improvement of military capabilities because of lost wars. Therefore, one can see that the Ottoman Empire never ceased its relations with the West (Mardin, 1991: 12).

Wars and loss of lands that occurred in 18<sup>th</sup> century caused the Ottoman Empire to gradually lose its power and enter the period of regression, which is mainly attributable to Military, economic, and political failures. The administration and bureaucracy of the Ottoman Empire entered a period of self-questioning to find out the reasons for this decline. This involved the examination of the West which continuously gained more political and economic power, and military incompetence was considered the reason for the regression of the Ottoman Empire. Military reforms were suggested as a solution to this problem (Lewis, 1993: 75).

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<sup>41</sup> He broke new grounds in science with his book *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (1678), and was considered one of the most prominent physicists with his studies on subjects such as gravity, and law of motion. He conducted the most important studies of the Enlightenment.

<sup>42</sup> Concerning the enlightenment and the formation of a public sphere; See. Jurgen Habermas (1991), *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Cambridge, MIT Press.

Since military incompetence was considered to have caused the loss of power of the Ottoman Empire, the reformation efforts focused on this area. This idea is the foundation of Ottoman reforms and modernization. The problem of military incompetence was taken as the basis of the reformation until the term of Mahmut II. The traditional concept of reformation was against the Western style of political and social transformation and wanted to restrict the reforms to military innovations. The concerns were being raised that the transformation and reforms in political and social domain would cause degradation in political/social structure and beliefs and harm Islam. The development and use of printing in the Ottoman Empire is a good example of these concerns.<sup>43</sup>

Ottoman Empire in fact preferred to increase its relations with the West from 18<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, it was an obligation rather than a preference because Ottoman Empire was getting weaker in the face of the ever-increasing political and economic power of the West, and did resort to appeal to the West for the remedy. For this reason, ambassadors were sent to European countries to monitor and report the developments in Europe in an effort to explore the developments that can be adapted to the state structure of Ottoman Empire (Lewis, 1993: 63). Although certain reforms were intended with these efforts, they were either limited to the military domain or hindered by the traditional Ottoman state structure (Berkes, 2002: 73).

French Revolution and accession of Selim III to the throne were turning points in Ottoman reform and modernization movements. Selim III believed in the necessity of a change with the French Revolution but he did not want this transformation to affect his monarchy. Thus, the Ottoman Empire maintained a distance to the intellectual developments of the French Revolution. However, Selim III made his reforms with the aid and support of France since he had been in close relations with France from the days of his principality.

As was the case in classical Ottoman reformism, Selim III started his reforms from the army. He established a new army called Nizam-i Djedid (meaning New Order).<sup>44</sup> He thought that the

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<sup>43</sup>For the discussions on printing and publishing life in Ottoman Empire, See. Niyazi Berkes, *'Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma-Basıncılık' (Modernization in Turkey-Printing)*, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002

<sup>44</sup>At this point, these works can be examined.

primary cause of failures and instability of the empire had been the disorganized and self-ordained nature of the Guild of Janissaries, and he wanted to end these failures with the new army he would establish. In addition to the army, he wanted to reorganize the corrupted structures in bureaucracy. One can see that he aimed to resolve the problems of bribery in bureaucracy, disorganization in justice, and misconduct. With regard to the economy, he started his attempts to make tax regulations and establish a more efficient order of taxation. He brought educators from France to solve the military problems, and transitioned to the French style of school education with these educators to train a qualified staff in the army. He tried to establish an education system which was largely under the influence of French language and literature. These attempts put the Ottoman modernization under French influence.

In addition a special interest in France, Selim III was closely monitoring the developments in other European countries. He sent permanent ambassadors to the major cities in Europe to monitor these developments more closely. He commissioned those ambassadors to monitor and report the economic, political, and social developments in the region for which they were commissioned.

Selim III wanted to make many reforms in financial, administrative, and military areas. However, he tried to make the reforms in traditional manner. Despite the fact that he seemed to have taken a different path from the classical Ottoman reform movements, he made the same mistakes as the classical reformism. In addition, his inability to fight traditional scholar and military classes rendered his reforms ineffective. Particularly the military transformations that he intended to make met reactions of the Janissaries. He also made the mistake of not alleviating the load of the reforms on the economy and reducing the value of the currency for economic reasons. Despite all these, the reforms of Selim III were important for evolution of Ottoman reformism into modern reformism. Since his relations with Europe were significant for upcoming periods, it is fair to say that the integration of Selim III with Europe paved the way for Westernization (Zurcher, 1995: 39).

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See. Erik-Jan Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye Tarihi- Gelenek ve Bidat Arasında Sultan III.Selim ve Nizam-ı Cedid (1789-1807)* (*History of Modernizing Turkey-Sultan Selim III and the New Order between the Tradition and Innovation (1789-1807)*), İletişim Publishings, İstanbul, 1995

See. Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma-Nizam-I Cedid* (*Modernization in Turkey and the New Order*), Yapı Kredi Publishings, İstanbul, 2002

The most prominent figure of 19<sup>th</sup> century reformation and modernization movements in the Ottoman Empire was Mahmut II. It is obvious that he completed the reforms started by his cousin. The difference between the reforms of Mahmut II and the traditional Ottoman reformism was that Mahmut II thought that deep-rooted transformations had been necessary in all respects in order to ensure permanence of reforms. He showed particular attention to education reforms, emphasizing that modern state officials in Western sense should be trained for government positions.<sup>45</sup>

For Mahmut II, there were two groups opposing the change and transformation: scholars (ulema) and the army which had opposed all reformation and modernization movements in Ottoman Empire. Mahmut II abolished the Guild of Janissaries and took the army under his supervision in 1826. He also took the scholars under his control as their impact on the army grew weaker.<sup>46</sup> When the obstacles were cleared, he established a new army as the first step of reformation.<sup>47</sup> He sought assistance from Prussia for establishment of the new army, which can be considered a transition from the French style to Prussian style of modernization. What lies in the background of this transition was that Prussia was not a threat as large as the states such as Britain or France to the Ottoman Empire. The Prussian style of military modernization penetrated into the Ottoman Empire to a significant extent as the result of this cooperation.

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<sup>45</sup> Some of the reforms made under the rule of Mahmut II are as follows: Ministries were established as a modern system of administration, system of monthly salary was introduced to bureaucracy, changes were made to appointments and promotions, a tight centrality was adopted and the central government was enhanced, all authorities other than those of the sultan were abolished, extension of the will of the sultan to the entire country was intended, government staff with proficiency in foreign languages were trained to make state diplomacy stronger in foreign relations, facilitation of more efficient diplomatic was intended with the establishment of the chamber of translation, permanent embassies were established for more efficient diplomatic relations, the first official newspaper, 'Takvim-i Vekayi' was founded, the postal organization was established, the means of communication were improved, the first census was made to facilitate effectiveness in taxation.

<sup>46</sup> It is important to study the relations between the army and politics in the Ottoman Empire to make sense of the relations between the army and politics in the Republic of Turkey. There are important studies on this topic:

See. William Hale, *Turkish Politics and Military from 1789 to present*, Hil Publishings, İstanbul, 1996

See. Ahmet Turan Alkan, *II. Meşrutiyet Devrinde Ordu ve Siyaset* (*The Military and Politics in Second Constitutional Era*), Ötüken Publishings, İstanbul, 2013

<sup>47</sup> A new army called *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediyye* was founded by Mahmut II in order to fill the gap that was caused by the closure of the Janissary Guild. The name which can be translated as "*The Glorious Soldiers of Mohammad*" was used to alleviate the potential reactions to closure of the Janissary guild from the religious circles and scholars.

The permanence of the reforms was contingent on two important factors: the financial resources to continue the reforms and the presence and training of bureaucratic officials qualified enough to carry out the reforms. With regard to the importance of these two factors, Mahmut II wanted to establish an effective central and provincial bureaucracy for an efficient taxation system. For this reason, schools were established to train qualified state officials. Students were sent abroad for training in 1827. Sending students abroad and carrying on this practice was a milestone for the future because the students that were trained abroad had a great impact on all structures from literature to politics when they returned to Turkey.

What is considered the climax of reformation and modernization efforts that started in the Ottoman Empire in 19<sup>th</sup> century was the period that started with the Edict of Reorganization which is also known as the Edict of Gülhane that was declared in the rose house (Gülhane) in the court yard. The Edict of Reorganization was an important milestone with the political, social and economic reforms that it introduced. Under the Edict of Reorganization, life, property and dignity of all subjects of the Ottoman Empire were taken under the guarantee of the state. Also, right of property for everyone, equality in taxation, military service in definite periods, and right to fair trial constituted the essence of the edict (Karpat, 2012: 46). Ottoman reformation efforts were taken to a new level with the Edict of Reorganization.

Another important point about 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman reformism was the Edict of Reformation declared in 1856. This edict is considered the continuation of the Edict of Reorganization brought about new changes for the political and social life in the Ottoman Empire. The Edict of Reorganization had introduced royal guarantee for the life and property of the subjects of the Ottoman Empire. With the Edict of Reformation, the steps taken in favor of non-Muslim subjects were taken to a new level. A common ground that can be called ‘Ottoman citizenship’ was introduced, and establishing a new order in which all people are considered equal before the state regardless of their religious and ethnic origins.

The Edicts of Reorganization and Reformation were declared with the intention of establishing a more secular and free order. However, these reformation efforts met reactions just as the previous reforms had done. The criticisms that the empire entered Western hegemony and that its independence was in danger were made in this context.



A group called ‘Young Ottomans’ under the leadership of the thinkers such as Namık Kemal, Ali Suavi and Ziya Pasha emerged to fight the concessive attitude to the West, spread of secularist state policies (particularly in the field of education), and fundamental problems such as bribery and favoritism in bureaucracy during the Reorganization period (Mardin, 1991: 87). Especially, located in this group, Namik Kemal had more prominent, and in the debates of that era it is seen as an important element of his thinking (Yıldız, 2012: 21). The fundamental argument of this group that was influenced by liberal ideas and nationalism was to “*keep up with the West but not make concessions from Islam and our homeland*”. The primary intention of this group that emerged as the New Ottomans was to establish an “assembly of consultancy” and ensure separation of powers rather than its centralization. The Young Ottomans movement fulfilled this purpose and played an important role in declaration of the Constitution (Mardin, 2008: 31).

Abdulhamit II came to power at the most difficult time of the empire in 1876 on the condition of accepting the Constitution of 1876 (Kanun-ı Esasi).<sup>48</sup> However, when the war of 1877-1878 that is also known as the war of 93 broke out, Abdulhamit II put the constitution aside and regained the whole power indefinitely on the pretext of the war.

The term of Abdulhamit II had a very important place in Ottoman reformism. As the result of the cooperative efforts with Germany for military purposes, important developments took place in the field of transportation in addition to modernization of the army. In education, a great number of new schools were opened in one of the major moves in the history of the empire and thousands of students received education in the new schools.<sup>49</sup> Transportation was one of the most distinctive traits of the reign of Abdülhamit II. He connected cities to each other and intended to enhance trade by building thousands of kilometers of highways. Furthermore, in a very comprehensive effort, thousands of kilometers of railway lines were

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<sup>48</sup> It was used in the sense of fundamental law or Constitution. It was the first and last constitution of the Ottoman Empire. Kanun-u Esasi is a result of the reforms in the Ottoman Empire. It emerged as the manifestation of the administration concept that was attempt to be created in the sense of western administrations.

<sup>49</sup> The period of Abdülhamit II was a rich period particularly in terms of education reforms. A well-educated generation emerged from the schools that were opened during the period of Abdülhamit II. Some of them were sent abroad for education. However, Abdülhamit II failed to engage in healthy communication with the generation that was trained during his period, and this made them an opponent of Abdülhamit II with the influence of the new ideas that spread in the country.

built. Abdülhamit II was particularly interested in the line that is known as the Hejaz Railway. Abdülhamit also extended the telegram system to enhance centralization in bureaucracy and conduct more healthy relations with provinces.

Abdülhamit II argued that the West should be taken as an example for its modern life standards, urbanization, military organization and even government system but this should be done with the Muslim identity preserved. For this reason, he opposed to Western views but he took the West as a model in other modernization efforts. In addition, the ideas of liberalism, nationalism, and constitutionalism were popularized more in the term of Abdülhamit II (Zürcher, 1995: 116).

The society *Ottoman Union* started by a group of students at the Medical School in 1889 was the first organized opposition movement. This organization considered it their purpose to put the constitution and the parliament into effect. They managed to find lots of supporters in a short time. However, certain members of the society moved to Paris after encountering the harsh attitude of Abdülhamid II and when some of their members got arrested. One of those members was Ahmet Rıza. The opponents of Abdülhamit II who were organized around the magazine *Meşveret* published in Paris engaged in opposition activities with their articles in Turkish and French. This group came together in Paris and started to operate under the name of *Committee of Union and Progress*.<sup>50</sup> Many prominent figures of different views gathered under the roof of this committee. However, disagreements arose among the members of the Committee of Union and Progress. Particularly, Prince Sabahattin, a member of the royal dynasty, started to oppose Ahmet Rıza, the president of the Committee. Another society called Ottoman Freedom Society which was founded in Thessaloniki by Major Enver and a post official Mehmet Talat later joined the Committee of Union and Progress, and the power of the movement grew larger.

The Union and Progress Movement that gained power in İstanbul and certain locations abroad by the beginning of 1900 turned into a large-scale opposition movement that included young military officers and bureaucrats. Abdülhamit's diminishing authority and increasing pressures

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<sup>50</sup> At this point that can be examined this work. See. Erik-Jan Zürcher, '*Milli Mücadelede İttihatçılık*' (*The Identity of Union and Progress in the War of Independence*), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003

from the opposition made him declare the Second Constitution in 1908. The constitution was in force again. Elections were made and the Parliament opened again. However, Abdülhamit II was dethroned by the riot called March 31 Incident. He was sent on exile to Thessaloniki. Following the dethronement of Abdülhamit II, the monarchy was restricted to a symbolic status and its authorities were restrained.

The Union and Progress Society and the Ahrar Party<sup>51</sup> competed in the elections. However, since the Ahrar Party lacked a well-organized structure, it failed. After the election success, the Union and Progress Society greatly enhanced its power. Although the Union and Progress Society did not start to rule as soon as it won the elections, it acted like an external inspection mechanism to exert control over the government. This caused internal conflicts and a rise in the opposition to the Union and Progress. Upper echelons of the Union and Progress was becoming increasingly disturbed by this growing opposition. This process ended in 1913 when the Union and Progress Society completely overtook the authority after a coup d'état led by Enver Pasha, which is also known as the Raid on the Sublime Porte. This allowed the Union and Progress Society to take complete control of the government.

The Second Constitutional Era and its aftermath were rich periods in terms of intellectual movements. The restrictive practices in press and publishing during the rule of Abdülhamit II prevented ideas from developing and popularizing. However, these obstacles were removed in the process that began with the declaration of the Second Constitution, and a freer and better qualified intellectual life was facilitated. It is seen that this period is characterized by an intellectual life that was based on newspapers and magazines.

From the day it was formed, the Union and Progress Society brought together persons and fractions that hold different views and ideas. The basic motivation in bringing these people together was the policies implemented by the regime of Abdülhamit II and the regression of the empire. In this respect, it brought three of the strongest veins of intellectual movements together: Islamism, Westernism, and Pan-Turkism.

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<sup>51</sup>A party with more liberal views, which was supported by Prince Sabahattin. The party was dissolved when it failed to make its presence felt against the Union and Progress.

Islamism held a significant place among the thought movements of the last years of Ottoman Empire. It is an ideology that is even today a hot topic of debate. When it originated and the system of thinking that it advocates are still among the topics of discussion. However, in the widely accepted sense established on common grounds, it could be defined as “*Implementation of the rules and principles of Islamic belief to social, political, and cultural domain*” (Tunaya, 1998: 32). In this respect, it is the system of thought arguing that the principles of Islam should hold a significant place in the individual life and in administration of state.

The first reactions that may be considered the basis of the establishment of Islamism were shown by the members of the Young Ottomans movement. People such as Namık Kemal and Ali Suavi reacted the practices that institutionalized after the Edicts of Reorganization and Reformation. They considered the rights granted to non-Muslims and other reforms as absolute Westernism, vulnerability to the West, and distancing from fundamental values, thinking that the increasing impact of the West on the empire along with imitation reforms harmed both the state and the social structure. One might ask the reason why New Ottomans reacted reform movements while their ideas were based on advocacy of the constitution and parliamentary system. Islamists including New Ottomans are not against modernization. On the contrary, Islamism was born in modernity and acted in parallel with modernization (Kara, 1994: 20). What causes the problem here is the idea of embracing modernity without avoiding a distancing from Islam and fundamental values. It also constitutes one of the basic arguments of the ideology of Islamism (Kara, 2001: 37-53).

The sultan who met the severest opposition from Islamist was Abdülhamit II. Oppressive practices of Abdülhamit II are said to be the reason for this opposition. However, in spite of such criticisms, he was an Islamist sultan and played an important role in development of Islam (Karpas, 2006: 323). It is seen that Abdülhamit II supported the view ‘*embrace modernity but remain attached to Islam*’. Carrying western modernity to the whole empire while implementing Islamist policies was an indication of this attitude. For instance, as the caliph, he tried to enhance the impact of caliphate throughout the empire and in the Islamic geography while trying to bring the modern lifestyle to the empire by building railroads with Germans (Zurcher, 1995: 116).

The period that started with the Second Constitutional Era is the primary period in which Islamism became an institutionalized thought movement and popularized. The Islamists found their place particularly through newspaper and magazine publishing efforts by the beginning of the Second Constitutional Era. The magazine *Sıratımüstakim / Sebilürreşad* was the one which the Islamists gathered around. Especially such influential figures as Said Halim Pasha, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Eşref Edip, and Babanzade Ahmed Naim started to stand out in this period.

Drawing on the question of “*How can the Ottoman Empire get out of its current state?*” Islamism tried to find Islamic approaches and solutions. The thesis that the empire can escape its current state by Islamization caused Islamism to emerge as an ideology.<sup>52</sup>

From the perspective of its origin, Islamism adopted the method of reforming the existing order rather than establishing a new one. An analysis of early Islamists reveals that they advocated reforming the state rather than founding a new state. The origin of this insistence on reforming was the political, economic, cultural and social underdevelopment of the empire. Islamists argued that Islamization is the only way of escaping this backwardness.

Based on all these factors, it is fair to say that “*Islamization*” involves practicing the principles of Islam. Islamization was presented as the empire’s way to escape. However, before showing this way, there arose controversy on how the empire had come to its current state. At this point, Islamists nominated inaction of Muslims, and weakening of the bonds of friendship and fraternity among them, poor governance, and favoritism and bribery in state administration as the factor behind the current state of the empire. Islamists expressed their opinion “*Islamic order is the way out of this situation*” (Tunaya, 1998: 18).

The ideas put forward by Islamism met reactions and criticisms. Among these, the critique that “*Islam is against progress*” occupied the agenda of Islamists for a long time. Islam was criticized for blocking the way to development and progress, and would not be able to save the empire from its current state. On the other hand, Islamists thought that Islam does not hinder

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<sup>52</sup>The word ‘*Islamization*’ is important in terms of its sense. Said Halim Paşa answers the question of ‘*What is Islamization?*’ as “We think that ‘*Islamization*’ means full implementation of the principles of belief, morality, life, and politics in Islam.” See. Said Halim Paşa, *Buhranlarımız ve Son Eserleri* (Our Depressions and His Final Works), İz Publishings, İstanbul, 2015

but does encourage and support progress. Islamists responded these criticisms by arguing that the backwardness prevalent in the empire is attributable to the failure of Muslims to be truly faithful and to their deviation from Islam (Tunaya, 1998: 30). In addition, the achievements of Islam in the past, and their progress in science were emphasized to support this argument. Islamists also argued that the critique of Islam as a hindrance to progress was orientalist in nature.

While Islamists were suggesting the ideology of Islamization as a way of exit, they also started looking for a practical solution. At this point, it is seen that the idea of “*Islamic Unity*” was presented. The Islamic Unity was a view proposing that all Muslims should come together to stand against Western imperialism and expansionism.<sup>53</sup> It stipulates that Muslims should cooperate under common structures even if they live in different countries or geographies. In this respect, it is possible to say that Islamism is a universal ideology.

Islamists strongly argued against western colonialism. They tried to find solutions to western colonialism and they intellectually declared it. They stated that they should be strong and develop strength to stop their losses against the West. At this point, they developed interpretations based on the verse “*Prepare against [your enemies]*” from the Quran (Feyizli, 2008: 197). The interpretation of the concept ‘*idad-ı kuvvet*’ (preparation of forces) by İskilipli Atıf Efendi is notable for making an explanation for this idea. The interpretation as a response to the question of what Muslims should do to grow stronger is as follows:

*First: Improve trade, agriculture, and arts, and prepare the money that land and naval forces need;*

*Second: Operate mines to establish docks, armories, factories, and to supply war instruments such as state of the art cannons, rifles, swords, bayonets, armored vehicles, and balloons;*

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<sup>53</sup>At this point; this work can be examined. See. Editor, ‘*İttihad-ı İslam*’ (*Islamic Union*)’, Köprü Magazine, Issue:108, İstanbul, 2009

*Third: Build schools and operating theaters, and train commanders, officers, and teacher soldiers that can manufacture any device and equipment for warfare, and are capable of all aspects of land and naval warfare;*

*Fourth: Produce horses, camels, mules, trains, transport vessels, chaussee roads, telegrams, telephone, fortresses, bastions, and castles... (Kara, 1994: 27).*

While Islamism gained strength, the ‘nationalism’ movement that had been increasing its impact since the French Revolution and was considered a menace for empires started to come into prominence. The movement of nationalism was considered dangerous by Islamists who thought that the spread of nationalism would put the empire at the risk of disintegration since many different ethnicities existed within the borders of the empire. Inspired by France, nationalism required that every nation have its own nation state. It would cause disintegration of the empire. Accordingly, the nations dreaming of establishing new nation states had a great impact in the collapse of the empire. At this point, it is fair to say that Islamists had a point.

Despite this growing wave of nationalism, Islamists referred to the verse “*The believers are but brothers*” (Feyizli, 2008: 528) to highlight that Islam is the common grounds for Muslims even if they may be of different ethnic origins, and that the fraternity of faith based on Islam would be more important having common ancestors. At this point, the book titled ‘*The Cause of Tribalism in Islam*’ of Babanzade Ahmed Naim Efendi is important for revealing the perspective of Islamists on tribalism. In this book, Babanzade Ahmed Naim Efendi explained the danger of nationalism as follows:

*“Tribally motivated causes are considered evil and rejected by sharia, according to which it is a cause of ignorance. It is the most severe blow to the consistency and continuation of Islam as well as welfare and happiness of Muslims. In a period in which almost all lands of Islam have turned into lands of blasphemy, it is frenzy for a handful of Muslims to loosen its bonds of affection to each other claiming that he is Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish, Laz or Circassian. Furthermore, the purposes of those who bear the flag of the madness of tribalism are hypocrisy to patriotism. Even if the field of religion, faith, reason, and understanding is left, we should take lessons from the great disaster that hit our Albanian brothers who pursued their dream of tribalism.*

*Based on the principle that same causes lead to same effects, this is what we are most likely to get if we insist on this movement. God forbid, if it goes on like this, this last refuge of Islam will turn into a land of blasphemy just as Albania has done.” (Kılıç, 1997: 335).*

Along with Islamism, two important movements of the Second Constitutional Era – Turkism and Westernism – were the ideologies that affected the fundamental policies of the republic in the aftermath of the collapse of the empire. Founders of the republic thought that synthesizing these two ideologies to establish a nation state on western principles would lead the way to development and progress, and tried to realize this idea. A new state was officially founded in 1923 following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Establishment of a new state meant breaking the connections to the past and institutionalization of the ‘new’. It is seen that the founders of the new state were made up of a significant part of the ‘former’ Society of Union and Progress.<sup>54</sup> From this perspective, it can be said that the newly-formed state was influenced by the intellectual axis of the Union and Progress Society. One can say that this was caused by assignment of the prominent figures of the Union and Progress Society to intellectual or administrative staff of the new state. From the same perspective, it is fair to say that the intellectual life of the late Ottoman Empire affected the newly-established state in terms of political thought. Westernism and Turkism, two main branches of the late Ottoman ideological life, showed its impact on the newly-established republic, and made an intellectual influence. The main axis of the ideology, which was to be called Kemalism, was influenced by these two main currents of the ideological life of the late Ottoman period (Zurcher, 2009: 44-55).

Kemalism is a movement that considering the main philosophy of the newly-established republic. One must make sense of the six arrows that constitute the program and philosophy of Republican People’s Party, the official party of the republic regime, in order to understand the

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<sup>54</sup> Kazım Karabekir (One of the founders of the Manastır branch of the Union and Progress Society.)  
Celal Bayar (Took charge in the İzmir organization of the Union and Progress Society.)  
Şemsettin Günaltay (Elected Bilecik Deputy from the Union and Progress Party in 1915.)  
Fethi Okyar (Took charge in the Thessaloniki Organization of the Union and Progress Society)

See. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Committee\\_of\\_Union\\_and\\_Progress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Committee_of_Union_and_Progress)



Kemalism. The six arrows that entered the party program in 1931 was later included in the constitution. The concepts that are signified by the six arrows are republicanism, secularism, nationalism, populism, statism, and reformism. Among these concepts, statism and republicanism are those which rather represent the regime, and they are not considered exclusively ideological elements. Republicanism advocates popular sovereignty. The other concept, statism, refers to identification of economic policies. The remaining four rather than these two concepts can be said to make the backbone of Kemalism (Zurcher, 2009: 45).

As a political concept, secularism, an intellectual concept that forms Kemalism, means not pertaining to religion, or absence of religion, and stands for not referring to a religion in state government and requires the state to adopt a position that is in equal distance to all religions. When we look at the policies implemented after declaration of the republic, we see that secularism is the essence of Kemalist ideology. It is seen that the last years of Ottoman Empire was scene to practices that can be expressed by the concept secularism under the influence of the French Revolution. Particularly the practices put into effect during the efforts of reformation support this view. For instance, the western style dress code, the efforts to transferre universal and modern legal norms in place of sharia law (such as civil law), adoption of western style of education instead of madrasa method can be seen as the impacts of secularism in Ottoman Empire.<sup>55</sup> In this respect, secularist practices particularly in education, social life, and law in Ottoman Empire were adopted more strictly and without compromise after the declaration of republic.

The policies implemented in the process following the declaration of republic do not reflect a clear opposition to Islam and religious people. Mustafa Kemal stated that religion should exist as a socially unifying force but it should also be free of ‘superstitions’ (Zurcher, 2009: 46). It is seen that a reform should be made in religion, as advocated by the Union and Progress

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<sup>55</sup> At this point, these works can be examined.

See. İlber Ortaylı, ‘*Osmanlı Düşünce Dünyası ve Tarih Yazımı- Osmanlı Devletinde Laiklik Hareketleri Üzerine*’ (*Ottoman Intellectual Life and Historiography- On the Movements of Secularism in the Ottoman Empire*), İş Bankası Kültür Publishings, İstanbul, 2007

See. Niyazi Berkes, ‘*Türkiye’de Çağdaşlaşma-Gavur Padişah*’ (*Modernization in Turkey - Non-Muslim Sultan*), Yapı Kredi Publishings, İstanbul, 2002

Society, was also present in Mustafa Kemal.<sup>56</sup> This attitude was clearly shown in the first phase of the republic. However, it later turned into a strict anti-religious policy arguing that religion should be expelled from all social/public domains. In this respect, it is seen that the founding fathers of the republic implemented a stricter policy than the Union and Progress Society had done in time and that they implemented such policies with reference to the concept of secularism. For instance, the statement ‘The official religion is Islam’ was removed from the constitution as required by secularism in 1928, and this caused the ‘Islamic State’ argument that was prevalent in Turkey from the Ottoman times to be abandoned in an attempt to rule out the effect of religion on government (Tunçay, 2009: 92-96).

Having emerged as the fundamental argument of the political and social life formed by Kemalism, the principle of secularism manifested itself in many practices based on this principle. Secularism was taken as reference in the strict policies intended to design the social life. Oppressive and intolerant policies started to be implemented in many fields ranging from the dress code to education, political discourse to religious freedom as a requirement for secularism. This is where Kemalism meets the most criticism: its practice of secularism.

Kemalism showed the intention of reforming the religion in terms of the policies it implemented. However, critiques were made that these reform efforts had turned into the intention of destruction and abolishment of religion. This is the origin of the criticisms towards Kemalism by Islamists (Tunçay, 2009: 92-96). Particularly the attempt to perform religious practices in Turkish and imposing the obligation of praying in Turkish in mosques are nominated as the examples of such practices. Establishment of the Directorate of Religious Affairs, abolishment of caliphate, abolishment of madrasa education and facilitation of Western style of education in its place are specified as other examples, and it is stated that these practices were based on the principles of secularism.

Another ideology that forms the backbone of Kemalism is Nationalism. The movement of Nationalism had the chance to spread in the period following the French Revolution and had a

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<sup>56</sup> At this point, they had been substantially affected by the opinions of the prominent names of Union and Progress like Ahmet Rıza. See. Şerif Mardin, *‘Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri (1895-1908) – Ahmet Rıza Bey’in Siyasi Fikirleri’ (Political Ideas of the Young Turks (1895-1908) - Political Ideas of Ahmet Rıza Bey)*, İletişim Publishings, 2008

great influence on the intellectual life of the Ottoman Empires as an ideology inspired by France. It was pioneered by the figures such as Yusuf Akçura, Ziya Gökalp and Ahmet Ağaoğlu in early 20th century.<sup>57</sup>

In the late Ottoman period, the policies of Ottomanism and Islamism were widely implemented. However, a ‘Turkism’ policy based on ethnicity was not implemented but only used as a political argument. Even though the Union and Progress Society were strict advocates of Turkism-Turanism, they could not find the chance to implement it as a strict policy in the empire. The most significant reason for this was that the empire was made up of different ethnicities. In addition, the fact that majority of these ethnicities were made up of Muslim people is one of the reasons why this policy could not be implemented. This is the reason why the anxiety that the empire could disintegrate faster if this policy had been implemented. In this respect, it was considered necessary to implement a policy based on the concept of religion as the fundamental aspect that holds the society together.

The advocates of Turkism among the late period Ottoman intellectuals, such as Yusuf Akçura, Ziya Gökalp, and Ahmet Ağaoğlu, shared the idea that Islam exists as a social building block and unifying force (Zurcher, 2009: 50). However, the period after the declaration of the republic was dominated by a different kind of nationalism which was based on ethnicity. The idea that Islam should be common ground was abandoned to nominate the quality of being Turkish as the new common ground as required by the new nation state. This made ‘Turkish Nationalism’ the second fundamental argument after secularism in the newly-established republic (Yıldız, 2009: 210-234).

Other important tenets of Kemalism – reformism and populism – are not as significant concepts of Kemalism as secularism and nationalism but they are important parts of the six arrows. Kemalists referred to the concept of reformism in the policies that they implemented

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<sup>57</sup> These intellectuals contributed to development of ‘Nationalism’ in the Ottoman Empire and had an influence on subsequent periods with their works.

See. Yusuf Akçura, ‘*Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*’ (*Three Political Styles*), Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara, 1991

See. Ziya Gökalp, ‘*Türkçülüğün Esasları*’ (*The Principles of Turkism*), Varlık Yayınevi, Ankara, 1968

in the newly-established state. They approached this concept in closer proximity to revolutionism.

Another important concept is populism. Stating that their policies were intended for popular good, they stated that these policies had been implemented to take the people to a more advanced level. Kemalism exalts and adopts a romantic view of the people. It mythicizes people and emphasizes that everything is done for the popular good. However, what was done in practice reveals that Kemalism turned into a practice ‘for the people, against the will of people’. In addition, populist romanticism is among the significant traits of Kemalism.

A general perspective allows us to simplify these concepts of Kemalism in three main factors, which are secularism, (Turkish) nationalism, and statism in the context of national economy. These three main ideas lay the foundation of Kemalist thought or discourse. Kemalism was an ideology with the ideological foundation laid by Atatürk and his friends, purposes and intentions put forward with party programs, which turned into the official ideology of the state by 1930s (Çelik, 2009: 75-91).

## **2.2.1. The Views of Eşref Edip Fergan from the Perspective of Political Thought and Political History**

### **2.2.1.1.Pre-Republic**

Eşref Edip is an Islamist author-intellectual with regard to his ideas. He was among the representatives of the Islamist ideology that was shaped around the magazine Sıratımüstakim (Sebilürreşad) after the declaration of the Second Constitution. The fact that he was the owner of Sıratımüstakim was among the reasons why he held a central position in Islamist ideology. Therefore, his views should be examined from this perspective. Despite the fact that he was not involved in politics, he did not refrain from putting forward his historical and current perspective on politics. He was not able to express his ideas much since he was rather busy with printing and continuing the publication of Sıratımüstakim and later Sebilürreşad. This is partly attributable to the fact that he was a young intellectual in his early years of publication. However, he started to express his views on politics and history more extensively in Sebilürreşad magazines published after 1948.

In Turkish-Islamic Encyclopedia and Periodical that they previously published, Eşref Edip tended to write more about Islamic topics and engaged in writing articles about the works of the influential figures of Islamist ideology. The multi-party system facilitated an environment that allowed him to express his views more comfortably, and he returned to publishing Sebilürreşad. In his articles and essays, Eşref Edip made remarks and expressed his opinions about the political history and the current state of affairs. At this point, his opinions can be grouped into pre-republic and post-republic periods.

One should first underline that Eşref Edip expressed his opinions on the pre-republic period more clearly in the post-republic period. It is seen that declaration of republic and the policies adopted thereafter influenced his perspective on this period and allowed him to analyze the pre-republic period from a more holistic point of view. Thus, he expressed the efforts of

reformation and modernization that began with Mahmut II in their relation to the collapse of the empire and post-republic period.

Eşref Edip's perspective on pre-republic political life is characterized by a classical Islamist point of view. He had a critical and reactive perspective with regard to the reformation and modernization processes that began with Mahmut II in particular. He considered the westernization movement an attempt to abolish 'religion and (Turkish) national identity'. He was of the opinion that Mahmut II paved the way to Edicts of Reorganization and Reformation step by step. In his own words:

*“Apparently, all efforts made for the sake of reformation were against the religion and national identity. If Sultan Mahmut had been able to abandon Turkish identity, he would have been a reformist in the sense intended by Europeans. However, the spirit of the people that are devoted to their religion and national identity was an obstacle before it.”* (Fergan, 1950a: 74).

From this perspective employed by Eşref Edip, it is seen that he accused Mahmut II of engaging in a reform movement favoring Western values in order to abolish Islam and Turkish national identity.

According to Eşref Edip, Mahmut II was an important milestone in Westernism and religious degradation in the Ottoman Empire. He considered Mahmut II as the reason for the ideas and practices that emerged later. Furthermore, he stated that the policies to be made thereafter had been executed by a program drawn up by the Western world and he showed it as an evidence that the policies made by Abdülmecit, the son and successor and Mahmut II were no different from those of his father (Fergan, 1950a: 106).

Historically, the efforts of reformation and modernization started by Mahmut II were continued by his son Abdülmecid. At this point, it is seen that the prominent bureaucrats of the time were the targets of criticism towards these policies. Eşref Edip stated that the bureaucrats that were trained in Europe were greatly influenced by the West and alienated from their nation and state while imitating the West. At this point, he directed his major criticism to Reşid Pasha. He stated that the reformist policies executed by Reşid Pasha starting from the

rule of Mahmut II were wrong and dangerous, and that these policies made Ottoman Empire dependent on the West.

*“The Edict of Reformation that constituted the first reformation program and granted equality to non-Muslims seriously harmed the sincerest and deepest feelings of Muslims. However, the conclusion that the government resorted to this measure as an atonement for foreigners with whom the government is engaged in certain affairs relieved the concerns to a certain extent.”* (Fergan, 1950a: 125).

As can be seen, Eşref Edip stated that the rights granted to non-Muslims with the Edict of Reorganization declared by Reşid Pasha had an adverse effect on Muslims that made up the majority of the empire. He argued that this caused the Muslim majority to lose their sovereignty and their right of custody over Jewish and Christian subjects of the empire. In addition, he emphasized that the Edict of Reorganization led to the establishment of a new system where the provisions of Islamic sharia are neglected and ignored. *“Now French laws have substituted the Islamic rules by which the courts have ruled since the establishment of the state.”* (Fergan, 1950a: 140). This is how Eşref Edip expressed his opinion on the new legislations borrowed from France. In this respect, he made the criticism that Reşid Pasha attempted to transform the state with imitation of France, and that the policies implemented by Reşid Pasha led the state to a catastrophe rather than salvation, arguing that these imitated reforms expedited the collapse of the empire.

*“If Reşid Pasha had not had this enchantment with and vulnerability to the West, and France in particular... if he had not ignored the fact that the politics of nations are formed by their social life, which is shaped by their morals and characters, their own dispositions and state of mind, he would not have resorted to such corrupted ways, and lead the state to a true salvation and welfare.”*(Fergan, 1950a: 141).

Thus, Eşref Edip pointed out that the reforms and modernization borrowed from France did not fit the social and political structure of Ottoman Empire, arguing that Reşid Pasha did serious mistakes at this point.

It is seen that Eşref Edip expressed his opinions on the Edict of Reformation in addition to the Edict of Reorganization. According to Eşref Edip, Western states used the Edict of Reformation to continue the process that they started with the Edict of Reorganization in an attempt to have more power and influence on the Ottoman Empire. Accordingly, Eşref Edip pointed out that Western states fulfilled their purpose and the empire came fairly under the influence of the West through reforms and modernization. Stating that the bureaucrats trained by Reşid Pasha had made poor decisions and showed wrong attitudes, Eşref Edip argued that especially Ali Pasha and Fuat Pasha imposed practices that had not done any good to the nation and the state (Fergan, 1950a: 189).

About the Edict of Reformation, Eşref Edip further stated that the act of harming the position and importance of Muslims, the fundamental dynamic of the empire, was taken to the next level after the Edict of Reorganization, emphasizing that representation of non-Muslims in the parliament and awarding them a voice on behalf of the world of Islam had been unacceptable for the time and that this had not done any good to the empire. Another critique of the period by Eşref Edip was that failure of the policies that had been made at the time to remedy the problems of the state brought along serious political and economic problems (Fergan, 1950a: 207).

Eşref Edip also made certain critiques on the constitutional government. Stating that a new method of government had been implemented, which had been intended to enforce reform and modernization policies more efficiently, he argued that the constitutional government of European origin had been implemented in the empire (Fergan, 1950a: 309). Despite the fact that he was one of the important advocates of the Second Constitutional Era, Eşref Edip later criticized the Second Constitutional Era. In this respect, especially his attitude towards the First Constitutional Era might be considered a paradox.

Abdülhamit II implemented the policies of modernization and Islamism together. He made a pro-modernization policy by showing important efforts particularly in transportation and education. In this respect, it is fair to say that Abdulhamit II tried to implement the technology and conveniences of Europe on the empire as well as maintaining and spreading the Islamic core of the society. This is in fact one of the most significant arguments of the Islamic



ideology: being a good Muslim and taking the science of the West at the same time.<sup>58</sup> However, despite this common point, the Islamists of the intellectuals were among the harshest critics of Abdulhamit II. One of them was Eşref Edip. Despite the fact that he was not an opponent figure of the time with regard to his age and status, it is possible to conclude that he was an opponent of Abdulhamit II from his close relationship with the opponents of Abdulhamit II and his intellectual association with Mehmet Akif Ersoy. Islamists referred to the period as the “period of autocracy” due to restrictive and authoritarian policies of Abdulhamit II. His opponents who maintained that he did not serve the purpose of saving the empire desired the declaration of the Second Constitutional Era as soon as possible and acted to this end. Union and Progress was the movement that brought together the opponents of Abdulhamit II. The Union and Progress Society turned into a movement that was made up of different factions such as Islamists, Turkists, and Westernists who acted in harmony to overthrow Abdülhamit II and declare the Second Constitutional Era as their main motivation. It is not possible to be sure that Eşref Edip was a part of the Union and Progress Society in that period. However it is clearly seen that he was acquainted with prominent figures of the Union and Progress Society. Particularly his acquaintance with Mehmet Akif Ersoy made him closer to the Union and Progress circle.

In the aftermath of the dethronement of Abdulhamit II, the magazine Sıratımüstakim that was founded by Eşref Edip and Ebulula Mardin became a publication where Islamist writers and intellectuals came together and expressed their opinions. Eşref Edip showed considerable effort and managed to gather a good deal of significant figures around the magazine in establishment of Sıratımüstakim which was later renamed to Sebilürreşad and became a significant opposing voice against the policies implemented by the Union and Progress Society after it seized power. The fundamental reason for this opposition was that the members of the Union and Progress came to be influenced by the currents of Turkism and Westernism due to the poor state policies made by their Society. This opposing attitude caused a few issues of Sıratıküstakim/Sebilürreşad to be halted, and this made a significant impact on this matter.

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<sup>58</sup> These ideas are extensively specified in the second chapter of the thesis.

In addition to his criticism of Westernism, Eşref Edip criticized the rising current of nationalism. In this context, he criticized the movement of Turkism that started to get a foothold in the aftermath of Second Constitutional Era. *“If the intention of Turkism is to serve Turkish language and literature, the service of Sebilürreşad on this matter is known to all. However, we refuse to recognize Turkism in political sense or against the national values.”* (Gündüz, 2007: 227).

Regarding the Union and Progress movement, Eşref Edip made certain critiques that he associated with the post-republic period. He argued that the Union and Progress Society caused the empire to collapse, and that the one-party mentality that emerged after the establishment of the republic had been the outcome of the Union and Progress since their ideas had been followed and implemented. *“The Union and Progress Society tried to govern the country from freemason lodges. They led the huge empire to devastation. They destroyed the foundations of the state.”*(Fergan, 2014: 42). As can be seen, Eşref Edip accuses the Union and Progress movement of causing the empire to collapse.

Many places including İstanbul were occupied after the Ottoman defeat in World War I. Intellectuals such as politicians, bureaucrats, and writers in İstanbul were sent on exile. Publication of many magazines and newspapers was stopped or tried to be stopped. Among the writers that were sent on exile were the writers of Sebilürreşad. Furthermore, Sebilürreşad faced the censorship and oppression of occupying states.

With the beginning of the War of Independence, Eşref Edip and Sebilürreşad started to pursue a publication policy that supported the national struggle against the occupying powers. *“When the menace of armistice fell on the horizons of our homeland, the heart of Sebilürreşad filled with the reflections of these catastrophes. Almost all of our writings including poems and proses were about them.”*(Fergan, 2011a: 25). Sebilürreşad adopted a patriotic publishing policy that was against mandate. However, when the oppressions of occupying states started to increase, they tried to look for different ways. Especially when Mehmet Akif Ersoy argued that the War of Independence could not be supported from İstanbul anymore, Eşref Edip, acting in agreement with his close friend Mehmet Akif Ersoy, decided to go to Anatolia with Mehmet Akif Ersoy. One can say that Eşref Edip was influenced by Mehmet Akif Ersoy, with

whom he was in close contact. His ideas were in parallel with the ideas of Mehmet Akif Ersoy. It is seen that Mehmet Akif Ersoy conveyed his views that can be defined as Islamist-patriotic to Eşref Edip.

Having travelled to several provinces including Ankara, Kayseri, Balıkesir, Kastamonu after moving to Anatolia, Eşref Edip brought the local people together with Mehmet Akif Ersoy in various meetings. He also continued his publishing efforts, and encouraged local people to join and support the National Struggle against the occupying forces. Despite the fact that the unwillingness and lack of awareness in local people was disappointing, he strived considerably to overcome this indifference. Especially the speeches made by Mehmet Akif Ersoy in Anatolian provinces arouse interest and motivated the people. Eşref Edip organized meetings for these speeches and published them in Sebilürreşad.

It is seen that Eşref Edip saw the War of Independence as a defense of the religion and the homeland. He had the motivation that the future of Islam and Muslims depended on the War of Independence. In addition, he thought that this struggle had been important for the empire to regain its strength. In this respect, one can say that he supported the continuity and resurgence of the Ottoman Empire. The attempts of Eşref Edip and his friends to help the crown prince Abdülmecid Efendi escape from İstanbul to Anatolia could be viewed from this perspective. Eşref Edip and his friends aimed to enhance the motivation to fight the War of Independence, shared this opinion with Ankara government and obtained their approval (Fergan, 2011a: 45). However, when the prince gave up the idea of escaping to Anatolia, this attempt ended up in failure.

Eşref Edip and his friends had good relations with Ankara government and Mustafa Kemal during the War of Independence. Ankara government attached a special importance to Sebilürreşad due to its support of the War of Independence. Furthermore, Mustafa Kemal wanted to see Eşref Edip and Mehmet Akif Ersoy and the meeting took place in Ankara Train Station. In this meeting, Mustafa Kemal conveyed his appreciation and praises for supporting the War of Independence (Fergan, 2011a: 94).

Eşref Edip had interesting dialogues with Mustafa Kemal. When Mustafa Kemal said that the idea of 'Islamic Unity' was nothing but a dream in one of his parliament speeches, Eşref Edip,

a strict adherent of 'Islamic Union', objected to him and told him about his Islamic Union idea (Fergan, 2011a: 98).

Certain critiques were made on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk from a historical perspective. These critiques generally concentrate on the allegation that his ideas before and after the declaration of the republic were different. Several comments have been made on this matter.<sup>59</sup> At this point, it might be better to refer to an idea expressed by Eşref Edip. He stated in his articles that an Islam congress should be convened in accordance with his Islamic Union idea.<sup>60</sup> These articles succeeded in attracting the general attention. Mustafa Kemal formed a commission membered by Eşref Edip, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Recep Peker and Mustafa Fehmin Efendi, and ordered them to organize the congress (Fergan, 2011a: 101). The congress aimed to gather the representatives of Islamic Nations all over the world in Ankara, and caused great excitement among Eşref Edip and his friends since this congress was a significant move for the idea of Islamic Union. However, the congress was cancelled due to the defeat of Eskişehir. Mustafa Kemal considered the congress a political move. It was very important for Eşref Edip and his friends since it was the exercise of their political ideology.

Sebilürreşad played a significant role in the publications of Eşref Edip during the War of Independence. The extraordinary efforts made the War of Independence successful. However, the first Parliament was disassembled. The first Parliament was a milestone in the political thought of Turkey since it was a parliament where all ideas were represented, any opinion was advocated, and a pluralistic view was adopted.<sup>61</sup> In this respect, the adjournment of the first Parliament was the beginning of a political atmosphere where a single type of idea would be dominant. Dismissal of the first Parliament caused disappointment among the Islamists in

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<sup>59</sup> These discussions were set forth on the basis of there being differences between pre-republic and post-republic in terms of especially Atatürk's views towards religion and society. In this context, '*Ama Hangi Atatürk*' by Taha Akyol can be examined. See. Taha Akyol, '*Ama Hangi Atatürk*' (*But Which Atatürk*), Doğan Publishings, 2008

<sup>60</sup> "By cooperating for Muslim Nations being split due to a thousand reasons of separation and experiencing the worst sufferings of enthrallment, seeking a remedy together is the most crucial, most necessary need today. Yes, this need is so critical that Muslim Nations will meet this need no matter what... Organising an Islam Congress in Anatolia is such a vital issue that it will have impacts on all the Muslims' ideas and opinions and grant an atmosphere of new hope and life in all the desperate souls" (Fergan, 2011a: 100)

<sup>61</sup> 'Birinci Meclis'te Muhalefet – İkinci Grup' may be studied as one of the important works on the First Parliament. See. Ahmet Demirel, '*Birinci Meclis'te Muhalefet -İkinci Grup*' (*Opposition in the First Parliament – The Second Group*), İletişim Publishings, İstanbul, 2003

particular. This was not the outcome that they had envisaged. Eşref Edip was also disappointed. He saw the War of Independence as a struggle to survive but when the first Parliament was dismissed and the republic was declared, he was disappointed with the end result.<sup>62</sup>

### **2.2.2.1.Post-Republic**

Following the victory of the Independence War, Mustafa Kemal and his friends as the leading crew of the country in the War of Independence started to work for establishing a new state. Thus, the Republic of Turkey was established with the declaration of republic on 29 October 1923. The first necessity after the establishment of the new state was facilitation of authority. It was thought that politicians, journalists, intellectuals, opinion leaders that were active in the last years of the Ottoman Empire, and the actual and potential opponents of the new state should be ‘silenced’ (Demirel, 2003: 571). In this respect, the process of the establishment of Independence Tribunals, one of the most controversial and criticized processes of Turkish political history, was started. Independence Tribunals that operated with the purpose of eliminating or assimilating all opposing elements turned into a process in which many prominent politicians, journalists, writers and intellectuals were prosecuted (Tunçay, 1981: 127).

Prominent people of the time including Eşref Edip stood trial in Independence Tribunals. The period of trial at Independence Tribunals was a very exhausting and challenging period for Eşref Edip. Even an article series titled ‘Sebilürreşad in Independence Tribunals’ were published. The articles were later released as a book. Some of his articles that appeared in Sebilürreşad were shown as the reason for his trial in Independence Tribunals. In addition, he was charged and tried with crimes such as political reaction, opposition to regime, and sedition

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<sup>62</sup> At this point, especially the views of Eşref Edip during the process of Independence Tribunals reflect his disappointment. (Fergan, 2015a)

in relation to Sheikh Said rebellion.<sup>63</sup> Some of his articles were presented to the court as evidence.<sup>64</sup>

Charged with such crimes as opposition to the forms of the republic and opposition to the regime, sedition to Sheikh Said rebellion, and political reaction, Eşref Edip managed to convince the tribunal with his defense and was acquitted. Nevertheless, many of those who stood trial were not able to acquit, and faced penalties imposed by Independence Tribunals.

The process of Independence Tribunal trials turned into a process of establishing authority. Eşref Edip stated that standing trial for treason in a period that he referred to as challenging and troublesome had made him suffer the most. He supported the War of Independence with Sebilürreşad and actively involved in the efforts. Therefore, being accused of treason was a disappointment for him. However, he also stated that at least his acquittal of these charges in two indictments gave him a certain amount of relief.

Another important period of Turkish political life was the term of Republican People's Party from 1923 to 1950, which was also known as the One-Party term. Following the declaration of republic in 1923, a period of reforms and modernization started, which was inspired by the six arrows of CHP and whereby the regime that was established by the founding staff of the republic was systematized. This period has been the most criticized due to the policies implemented back then, and is even a subject of political discourse today. This period was characterized by intensive Kemalistic tendencies, and emergence of westernist, secular, and ethnicity-based nationalistic policies.

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<sup>63</sup> Sheikh Sait showed the articles that he read in Sebilürreşad as a reason of drawing him to rebellion in court according to the agreement he had made with Ali Saib Bey, a member of court and blamed some journalists including Eşref Edip for drawing him to rebellion. In this way, according to the agreement he made, he aimed to avoid execution. (Fergan, 2015a: 78)

<sup>64</sup> “Mr. Fergan, in some of your articles, it is mentioned that religion is suppressed and destructed. Is there any truth to that?”

If we say, yes, there is; well then, they will say, Sheikh Said Rebellion happened because of this; we will meet the same end. What should be said?

“There is no destruction, dissolution in religion to my knowledge. These matters are social matters and controversial issues. Some authors were attacking religion. Sebilürreşad responded to these; involved in scholarly arguments. Our addressee is not the government. It was not written by way of a criticism against the government or Parliament. Rather on occasion Parliament and the Government has been praised and promoted. It has been written that our Parliament is a Muslim Parliament and it will stay as a Muslim Parliament forever.’ The bench seems a little bit relaxed. The frowning faces at the beginning of the court have disappeared.” (Fergan, 2015a: 115)

Secularism was one of the most significant arguments of the One-Party period where Republican People's Party was in power and the idea of Kemalism started to emerge (Yıldız, 2001: 115). Manifesting itself as the absence of religion, and abstraction of religion from all public and social domains including primarily the state is still among the important matters of debate today.<sup>65</sup>

Ottoman Empire referred to religious concepts both for state and social structure. It became the fundamental policy to change this structure upon declaration of republic. The level of development of the Western world was put forward as the justification for this change, and it was stated that attaining this level of development should be adopted as the primary purpose. In this respect, it is seen that the concept of secularism inspired by France became one of the significant foundational arguments of the republic.

The practices and policies of the one-party regime was a period that is criticized with respect to political ideology and studied at academic level. Eşref Edip also expressed his ideas and emotions with regard to this period. He closely witnessed the '*defeatism of the populists*'<sup>66</sup> as he put it, which started with Independence Tribunals and continued until 1950. Eşref Edip made several critiques on the one-party rule. These critiques were sometimes made harshly. However, these critiques were the ones which he referred to in his articles in the political environment that developed after the One-Party rule due to the practices of censorship and oppression during the one-party period.

According to Eşref Edip, Republican People's Party made its policies as the continuation of the Union and Progress Society. He maintained that their Westernist and secular mentality was a proof of this. In addition, Eşref Edip considered the 'populists' as the final point of the westernization movement that started with the Edicts of Reorganization and Reformation. In

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<sup>65</sup> At this point, these articles can examine.

See <http://www.sabah.com.tr/yazarlar/hanioglu/2016/05/08/laiklesemeyen-laiklik>

See <http://www.yenisafak.com/yazarlar/alibayramoglu/anayasa-laiklik-ak-parti-2028608>

<sup>66</sup> The word 'Populists' was used by Eşref Edip as a reference to Republican People's Party and its members.

his opinion, the populists had a mindset that aimed to drive Islam out of the social and public space.

*“Westernization efforts of the supporters of Reorganization undermined the reign of Muslim Turkish nation, disrupted social life, drove the state to bankruptcy, weakened it, and finally the armies of Moscow pounded on the doors of İstanbul. The Union and Progress attempted to rule the country from freemason lodges. They drove a mighty empire to collapse in less than 10 years, and undermined the state. Continents were lost, the homeland disintegrated and perished. The populists continued the pervert, mischievous mentality that they took over from the Union and Progress in what is left of our homeland. They assaulted the morals of the nation with all their anger and hatred. They attacked the sacred values of the people. They closed down the religious establishments, removed courses of religion from curriculums. They raised a malicious generation that did not recognize their God or prophet” (Fergan, 2014: 42).*

As you can see, the critiques of Eşref Edip on this period also included emotional reactions and he adopted the rough edge of his tongue in expressing them. The Islamist personality of Eşref Edip is apparent in his critiques at this point. He is seen to have emphasized repeatedly that the policies and political ideology of CHP aimed to eliminate Islam. From this point of view, it is possible to say that Islamism in Turkey creates an important discourse in the context of the One-Party rule, and Eşref Edip contributed to creating this discourse.

Eşref Edip particularly analyzed the concept of secularism among the populists, and made his critiques on this topic. He argued that secularism had been misunderstood by the populists.

*“True secularism is not a regime that opposes religion. The populists understood and implemented it inaccurately. Since secularism is a mode of government, its field of application can only be the government. The government takes a neutral stance towards religion, not a hostile one. The individual and the nation cannot be neutral to religion. One can either be a believer or a nonbeliever. They cannot say ‘I am neither a believer nor a nonbeliever’. Only a stateless rascal can say that. The Populists misrepresented this point to the nation.”(Fergan, 2014: 107).*



At this point it is seen that Eşref Edip considered secularism to be understood and practiced inaccurately. Moreover, according to Eşref Edip, secularism was utilized to abolish Islam and belief values, and used as a cover for the policies that had been implemented.

According to Eşref Edip, secularism – one of the most significant arguments of the republic – applies to government only and it does not amount to anti-religion. It is well known that this proposition that he made is in fact a significant argument of the Islamist discourse in Turkey. Islamists used this discourse considerably in political domain, and it is still in use.<sup>67</sup>

Eşref Edip's critiques on the one-party rule of CHP can be classified into two categories: mentality and policies. The foregoing is rather focused on the views of Eşref Edip on the populists. Other significant critiques of Eşref Edip focus on the practical policies that were being implemented. At this point, the abolishment of caliphate after declaration of republic is an important subject of criticism. Since Eşref Edip was an Islamist who devoted himself to the ideology of Islamic Unity, he did not appreciate but was disappointed with the abolishment of caliphate. He argued that the abolishment of caliphate meant building a wall between Turkey and the world of Islam. From this perspective, abolishment of caliphate that was considered an authority that would establish the unity among Muslims was an undesirable incident. Other practices that were criticized by Eşref Edip were removal of the expression 'the official religion of the state is Islam' from the constitution, recital of azan in Turkish, prohibition of religious education, and restriction of the freedom of worship. In his own words:

*“They said that people are free in their religious practices but they put in dungeons those who recited the Takbir. They talked about freedom of conscience but prohibited organization of religious communities. They made interventions to religious practices. They said they are secular but they oppressed the religion and faith of the nation. They implemented secularism as opposition to religion unlike it is done elsewhere.”*(Fergan, 2014: 101).

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<sup>67</sup>At this point that can look these speeches.

See. Necmettin Erbakan- What is secularism? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trMt2fG2kMw>

See. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan- Secularism is not Irreligion or Antireligion. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2kftHu-bbc>

As can be seen, he made harsh criticisms on freedom of religion and worship in particular. He also seriously criticized closure of mosques and sanctuaries.<sup>68</sup>

The one-party regime is considered an authoritarian period. No ideas other than those adopted by the People's Party were allowed any opportunity.<sup>69</sup> The oppressive policies did not only concern freedom of belief but they also concerned several other fields. For instance, the printed press was oppressed to disallow emergence of any opponent of the regime. As a writer and intellectual, Eşref Edip criticized those practices. He made serious criticisms on oppression of the press as such but also on prohibition of the publication of religious books and magazines in particular.

The one-party regime was a period in which the efforts of forming a new culture and history were undertaken intensively. In this respect, it is possible to encounter such practices as alphabet reform, creation of a new revolution history based on the War of Independence, and ignoring or defaming the Ottoman Empire under the one-party rule. Replacing the Arabic alphabet with the Latin alphabet is considered one of the most radical practices of the regime. Establishment of Turkish Linguistic Society was intended to purge the language of the words of Arabic and French origin in order to expedite the adaptation to Latin alphabet (Tunçay, 2009: 93). In this respect, it is fair to say that the Linguistic Society was an important element of the regime. These practices received serious criticism. In the words of Eşref Edip:

*“The Populists betrayed the rich language of Turkish that borrowed words from various languages. Thus they undermined the national unity. Giving an official form to a language that is unrelated to Turkish, they obliged children and teachers in schools, claimants and judges in courts, government officials and applicants in government offices to use this language.”*(Fergan, 2014: 81).

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<sup>68</sup> Eşref Edip stated these allegations in this matter; “Many mosques were no longer mosques, had been turned into storage units, barns, and sold to Jewish and Armenians to be turned into wine cellars. Hundreds and thousands of mosques, prayer rooms had been destroyed, sold and turn into storage units and barns.” (Fegan, 2014: 62,74)

<sup>69</sup> At this point that Cemil Koçak's work can be examined. See. Cemil Koçak, *‘Tek Parti Yönetimi, Kemalizm ve Şeflik Sistemi: Ebedi Şef/Milli Şef’*, Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Kemalizm (Political Ideas in Modern Turkey: Kemalism) Vol:2, İletişim Publishings, İstanbul, 2009

By these critiques, Eşref Edip argued that the language reform was unfair. He compared language reform to betrayal. Stating that the Populists had been motivated by hostility to Ottoman Empire, he accused them of destroying the language of the people. He further argued that while language should be held harmless from the policies that were implemented, this fanaticism of the Populists depraved the language of the people since they turned it into an ideological obsession (Fergan, 2014: 90). He also maintained that the bonds between the generations had been broken and that this created a gap between the state and the people.

Culture and history have an important place in harsh fields of practice of the one-party regime. It is fair to say that CHP attached a special importance to these fields and made policies for such fields. Especially when history is concerned, a conception of history was developed in line with the philosophy of the newly-established regime. This new conception in which the Ottoman history was excluded and the historical bonds with the Ottoman Empire were attempted to be broken was presented with approaches such as the ‘Thesis of Turkish History’<sup>70</sup>. It can be said that this thesis influenced the fundamental perspective of the state and continues to exist as a political discourse even though it cannot be said to be successful compared to the Ottoman conception of history.

The desire of distancing from the past and creating a new order appears to be an argument that the one-party regime puts forward in every respect. Just as the Turkish Linguistic Society was established, the Turkish Historical Society was established to institutionalize the concept of history that was presented. The Islamist ideology rejected this concept of history that was attempted to be formed, and employed a critical approach particularly arguing that the conception of history inspired by the Ottoman Empire had been attempted to be wiped out. The policies of language, history and culture in this period were criticized by the Islamists, and these criticisms were also used as a discourse. Eşref Edip criticized the new historical discourse of the regime and objected to the concept of history asserted by CHP. “*They have underestimated the history of the nation, and looked for the salvation of Turkish identity in the*

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<sup>70</sup> In 1930, the book called *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* published by Government Printing Office and then by Turkish Historical Society (Türk Tarih Kurumu) is the work this thesis was set forth. The sentence that was in the preface of this book also prove the purpose of this work. “*The purpose of this work is to remind the Great Turkish Nation, who unjustly was slandered for centuries, whose service and efforts in the establishment of the first civilisations were denied, their honourable history which is based on historical facts.*”

*darkness of prehistoric times. They have taught younger generations the assumptions and estimations that are nothing more than a thesis as historic truths”* (Fergan, 2014: 81).

In addition to language and history, many practices targeting the culture and lifestyle of the society were implemented under the one-party rule. It can be said that imitation of Western lifestyle and Western culture was included in the program of CHP. Certain efforts were made to resemble to the West in almost every respect, with many of them being made against the will of the public. One of the most famous of these practices, which was also turned into a discourse by the Islamists was the ‘hat reform’. In this practice that can be considered imitation of the Western lifestyle, it was made compulsory first for state officials, then for all citizens, to wear a ‘hat’. This practice of social engineering involved prohibition of clothes such as fez, which had been worn and adopted as a culture by the society for centuries. In this respect, it is one of the most heavily criticized practices of the republic. The opposition to the hat law was made to the oppressive and authoritarian ideology that tried to impose hat by force. Eşref Edip heavily criticized this oppressive and authoritarian practice which he interpreted as troublemaking and an effort to wipe off social culture. In his words: *“They wiped out all customs, traditions, and anything that reflects the higher morals of the society and the fundamental characteristics of the nation, replacing them with decayed and outrageous concepts that do not accord with science and history.”* (Fergan, 2014: 103).

Apparently, CHP intended to raise a modern and civilized generation within the scope of its party program. In this respect, a secular, nationalist, and positivist education atmosphere was attempted to be established. Western style of education was adopted and the education system was aimed to be formed in line with this ideal.

One of the most important educational practices of the one-party rule was the establishment of Village Institutes. This policy was implemented by Hasan Ali Yücel, the Minister of Education of the time. Having established in compliance with the ideas held by CHP at that time, these institutes were intended to train elementary school teachers in an effort to increase literacy and create an education system based on solidarity (Kirby, 1962).

Village Institutes were criticized with the allegation that CHP used these institutions for its ideology. At this point, Eşref Edip also made these criticisms. He defined Village Institutes as

structures in which communism is practiced within the framework of the close relations between the ‘populists’ and Soviet Union. He stated that the wave of communism of the time had been attempted to be propagated in Turkey through Village Institutes. Arguing that Village Institutes were intended to raise an antireligious generation, Eşref Edip stated that Village Institutes aimed to debase social values (Fergan, 2014: 65). *“They opened Village Institutes to subvert the sacred values, morals and manners of Muslims, and to indoctrinate their dogmas, their perverted mentality and ideologies, streaming millions from the state’s treasury to these slaughterhouses of morals and decency.”* (Fergan, 2014: 67).

Under the one-party rule, CHP tried to establish ideological institutions to make its own ideology dominant. Community Centers (Halkevi) were also created with this in mind. Having been established in 1932, Community Centers were organized to extend Kemalist reforms to the public domain and to make them accepted by the masses. Rather than a political structure, they were established as organizations of civil society – despite the fact that they were not civil. They were integrated with only CHP. Their purpose was to create a people that are conscious, understanding and loving to each other and committed to their ideal (Kemalism). Forming a modern and secularist society on the axis of Kemalism was the objective of Community Centers (Yeşilkaya, 1999: 61). In this context, one can say that CHP designed Village Institutes and Community Centers as ideological apparatuses.

Eşref Edip criticized Village Institutes in the same manner as Community Centers. He thought that Community Centers were built as an alternative to mosques in an effort to attract the people from mosques to Community Centers to get them under the influence of ideological discourse. Stating that Community Centers intended to propagate communism just as Village Institutes had done, Eşref Edip defined Community Centers as “red temples”. In his opinion, *“‘Atheist clubs’ were established in Russia to fight religious institutions. The Populists did the same in turkey by establishing Community Centers.”* (Fergan, 2014: 65).

Eşref Edip criticized the One-Party regime in that the policies that were implemented by the regime were mostly against religion. The policies followed by CHP during the one-party regime are considered attacks on beliefs. In fact, this is a common perception in critiques on the one-party regime as a discourse of the Islamist thinking, represented in this case by Eşref

Edip. It is seen that Islamists generated a discourse through the policies that were implemented at the time.

When the one-party rule is considered, it is seen that İsmet İnönü is in the forefront and under criticism. In general, Atatürk, the founding leader of the republic, does not face these criticisms, and İsmet İnönü stands out as the agent of the policies implemented back then. A distinction between İsmet İnönü and Atatürk is seen at this point. Islamist intellectuals are seen to hold the same view. Of course this distinction has several reasons. Putting Atatürk to the background, being able to criticize that period more conveniently, an attempt to avoid violating the Law on Protecting Atatürk or actually thinking that Atatürk did not contribute to the said policies are among the first reasons to come to mind for this distinction. Eşref Edip was among those who felt the urge to make a distinction at this point. He criticized the policies implemented by the one-party regime that he called the ‘Populists’ as imposed by İsmet İnönü, and he analyzed that period with reference to him. Eşref Edip avoided making any comment about Atatürk, and even praised him in some of his articles. Eşref Edip made the following explanation for this attitude that may seem paradoxical for an Islamist:

*“They try to shut your mouth saying 'you are criticizing that period but you seem to forget that Atatürk also was in that period!' And no one can argue with that. Was Atatürk a supreme being of science, laws, constitution, and national will? He is a historical personality who lived, did certain things and died. Now it is time to analyze and evaluate his actions in the light of science and law.”* (Fergan, 1952: 200).

Eşref Edip was in close relations with Atatürk especially during the War of Independence. Since he had the chance to know Atatürk closely, he even earned his confidence with Sebilürreşad. An examination of the articles of Eşref Edip reveals that he avoided making comments about Atatürk (Fergan, 1952: 195). In addition, he made criticized CHP for abusing Atatürk by using him for imposing their policies. He argues that the cause of Kemalism was a sickness that was invented after Atatürk (Fergan, 1952: 197).

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Islamism was interrupted and withdrawn in Turkey. Oppressive and gradual policies of the one-party regime caused Islamism to withdraw and hindered its growth. For this reason, Islamist intellectuals embraced a nationalistic ideology

and opened of a space for themselves there (Çetinsaya, 2005: 436). When the Islamists ran to a nationalistic ideology, the nationalist-Islamist ideology earned a greater elbow room. In this respect, the figures such as Eşref Edip, Necip Fazıl, and Osman Yüksel Serdengeçti emerged as the prominent names of this period.

In line with developing and changing conditions in global politics, Islamists avoided remaining indifferent to these conditions and expressed their opinions about the global politics on the axis of Turkey. In this respect, it is seen that Islamists put forward various discourses and ideas regarding the period after the World War I. These discourses and ideas are basically about these matters: Communism as a rising and popularizing ideology, also Zionism, Freemasonry, Imperialism, and Missionary practice. Islamists put forward various criticisms and discourses related to these subjects, which became political arguments in time.

The power of the Soviet Union made communism one of the most significant and effective ideologies of 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Once having reached a wide audience and gained power in Turkey, communism lost its power in time. The anti-communist front made a good deal of contribution to its declination. Segments of the society such as Islamists, nationalists, or nationalist-Islamists played an important role in weakening the communism. Above all, communism was considered an antireligious ideology, and this attitude made the main axis of the reactions shown to it. Putting forward his views regarding communism, Eşref Edip argued that it was a ‘materialistic’ ideology as he put it, which denies the principles of ‘religion, family, and freedom’. In addition, he described communism as ‘red reaction’ (Fergan, 1950d: 243-248) while criticizing the practice of communism in Turkey during the one-party rule. At this point, it is fair to say that Eşref Edip fought communism intellectually within the anti-communist front.

Zionism is an important argument within the Islamist discourse in Turkey. The anti-Zionist discourse found a wider influence when Israel occupied Palestinian lands and founded a state there. This became the main discourse of Islamism both in Turkey and in the Islamic world. It was made a political discourse that was supported particularly by the National Vision (Milli Görüş) movement in Turkey. Eşref Edip and certain writers of Sebilürreşad wrote on this subject and tried to raise awareness about Zionism in Turkey. Eşref Edip defined Zionism as a

mindset that depraved the world just as he defined communism. He defined Zionism as the sibling of communism, and maintained that it is a movement that tried to dominate the world economically and aimed to help Judaism facilitate world domination:

*“Just as communist adopt materialism as a means of attaining their goals, Zionism does the same by means of economy which is in a sense the sibling of communism. Just as communism aims domination of a single class over the rest of the people, Zionism attempts to dominate the world by Judaism and economy.”* (Fergan, 1957: 387).

As an organization that serves the purpose of spreading Christianity and dominance of Christian belief, the Christian mission is another organization that was criticized by the Islamists. It was argued that Christianity, which is defined as ‘superstitious’ by the Islamists, used this organization to wipe out the morality of Muslims and to realize their ‘superstitious’ ideas. Christian mission was heavily criticized in the articles of Eşref Edip. *“They act for the sake of spreading Christianity and save the mankind so to say In reality, they erode the morals and morality of the social group that they act in. They never hesitate to do whatever it takes to alienate them to their own religion and morals.”* (Fergan, 1957: 387).

Imperialism was one of the most popular concepts that were also criticized most frequently in 20<sup>th</sup> century. Defined as the attempt to dominate the world by means of capitalism, imperialism was defined by Eşref Edip with the following statement: *“It exists as a dominant force by abusing and exploiting a certain part of humanity.”* (Fergan, 1957: 388).

It is seen that Eşref Edip and certain authors of Sebilürreşad made a special emphasis on Freemasonry, which is one of the most controversial topics in Turkey. The subject of many conspiracy theories, the debate of Freemasonry was frequently referred to by the Islamists. Certain authors such as Eşref Edip were of the opinion that Freemasonry was very strong in Turkey and became a significant political power. Defined as a ‘*Restricted and secret society*’ by Eşref Edip, Freemasonry is made up of several clubs that operate as non-governmental organizations. The power and purpose of Freemasonry has always been a highly debatable topic. Arguing that Freemasonry is supported by Zionism, Eşref Edip said that it turned into a global power (Fergan, 1950d: 243-248).



Communism, Zionism, Imperialism, Freemasonry, and Christian Mission were referred to in the discourses of Islamists, which developed around Sebilürreşad in particular. They defined these organizations or concepts as Anti-Islamist structures that intend to wipe out the world of Islam. It is seen that Islamists turned these concepts and structures into a discourse, and put them forward as political discourses.

The Democratic Party was founded by Celal Bayar, Adnan Menderes, Refik Koraltan, and Fuat Köprülü during the transition to multi-party regime in 1946, a milestone in Turkish political life. Having ended the 23-year one-party rule, the Democratic Party came to power in a short time, and had a significant impact on Turkish political life. The party adopted democracy and liberalism as its fundamental principles, and emerged as a hope for the economy in a period marked by the failure of the statist structure of the one-party rule in particular.<sup>71</sup>

In addition to the oppressive atmosphere of the one-party rule, the economic decline following the World War II expedited the Democratic Party's path to power, and DP became a hope in the eyes of the people. The Democratic Party came to power in 1950, and the term of Celal Bayar as the President, and of Adnan Menderes as the Prime Minister started. DP's accession to power was met with a great excitement and expectation by the people.

The right conditions emerged for overcoming the amassed economic, political, and social problems when the Democratic Party came to power, and the people expected that the problems would be solved. In addition, expectations were created for freedom of belief when the people showed their will for ending the oppressive practices. It is seen that it was not only people who were in certain expectations and showed their will but the writers and intellectuals

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<sup>71</sup> At this point that can be examined these works.

See. Cemil Koçak, 'Türkiye'de İki Partili Siyasi Sistemin Kuruluş Yılları (1945-1950)' (The Establishment Years of Bipartial Political Systems in Turkey) Vol: 1-2-3-4-5', İletişim Publishings, İstanbul, 2010

See. Feroz Ahmad, 'Demokrasi Sürecinde Türkiye (1945-1980)' (Turkey in the Process of Democracy (1945-1980), Hil Publishings, İstanbul, 2010

See. Mustafa Albayrak, 'Türk Siyasi Tarihinde Demokrat Parti (1946-1960)' (Democratic Party in the Political History of Turkey (1946-1960), Phoenix Publishings, Ankara, 2004

who suffered during the one-party rule also expected a change. Eşref Edip was one of such intellectuals.

Eşref Edip was hopeful about the future when the Democratic Party came to power. He showed his satisfaction with the statement he made during his interview with DP deputies: “*It seems to me that this conscious faith that originated from the heart of the people will be victorious in any case.*”(Fergan, 1950e: 52). He was of the opinion that DP would be able to fulfill material and moral expectations of the people. However, his opinions regarding DP changed over time. Even though the Democratic Party was an emerging movement, it was ultimately a movement that was started by those who shared the common fundamental principles with CHP. When Celal Bayar expressed his intention to found a political party in his meeting with President İsmet İnönü, an agreement was reached in loyalty to the fundamental principles of the republic, including primarily the principle of secularism, and the Democratic Party was permitted to be founded. Even though it had a different outlook in Anatolia, the Democratic Party had a skeleton crew that was loyal to the founding philosophy of the republic.

Shortly after it came to power, the Democratic Party implemented certain practices to satisfy the criticism that had been made the one-party regime by the Islamists. One of those practices was the repeal of the decision to recite azan in Turkish and restoration of Arabic and the unique style of reciting azan. When this issue emphasized for years by Eşref Edip was resolved, he used the statement “*Just as the Prophet purged the Kaba of idols by conquest, the Turkish nation purged the political power of the idols by conquering it*” (Fergan, 1950f: 104). Restoration of azan to its original form, and facilitation of the freedom of worship to a certain extent had a significant influence on the authors and intellectuals of the time and on the public. As a matter of fact, certain reactions arose as well but when DP came to power, these reactions were not spoken out loud.

Despite the fact that Eşref Edip considered the end of CHP rule as a milestone, he maintained his distance to DP since he thought that the party did not fully comply with his mindset. He is seen to have maintained his distance despite his occasional critiques, suggestions, and even support. He particularly addressed Adnan Menderes in many of his articles. It is evident in

these articles that he made a distinction between Adnan Menderes and Celal Bayar.<sup>72</sup> He adopted a more distanced stance to Bayar: In his articles titled “To Adnan Menderes, the Honorable Prime Minister of the Muslim Turkish Nation”, he made suggestions and requests with regard to the problems of the world of Islam in particular. Having partially supported DP for the relief of religious restrictions, Eşref Edip put DP under a heavy criticism for keeping the article 163<sup>73</sup> in force since some Islamists were prosecuted for violation of this article. He even expressed his reaction clearly with the statement “*Certain incidents have clearly shown in time that there is not a difference of mentality and ideology between the Populists and the Democrats.*”(Fergan, 2014: 131). He especially criticized the attitude of Celal Bayar with regard to this subject, and claimed that he was a Freemason. Arguing that it became evident in time that DP was no different from CHP, he criticized DP for restricting religious freedom when DP passed the law no. 6187<sup>74</sup> in 1953: “*The nation fully understood that the spirit and the mindset remained the same. Only the chairs had changed. The only difference was that the Populists expressly sided against the spirit of the nation while the Democrats pursued hypocritical policies.*”(Fergan, 2014: 147). Eşref Edip was accusing the Democratic Party of pursuing hypocritical policies and he reached the conclusion that DP failed to realize the evolution expected from them, and that they were no different from the Populists (Fergan, 2014: 150).

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<sup>72</sup> Eşref Edip, in his articles he wrote, he claimed that Celal Bayar prevented especially the abolishment of the pressures on religious. In addition, after the coup d'état of May 27, he showed Celal Bayar as one of the reasons for the coup.

See. Eşref Edip Fergan, ‘İlahi Kanunlar Şaşmıyor’ (*Divine Laws Are Not Wrong*), Sebilürreşad Magazine, Vol:8, Issue: 310, İstanbul, 1960

See. Eşref Edip Fergan, ‘Açık Mektup- Demokrat Parti Reisi Muhterem Celal Bayar’a’ (*An Open Letter to Celal Bayar, the President of the Democratic Party*), Sebilürreşad Magazine, Vol:2, Issue:92, 1949

<sup>73</sup> It is the article in Turkish Criminal Law no. 765. Especially the cases related to the fight against reaction were set forth through this article. It was set forth as a serious threat risk to Islamists. It was abolished in 1991. The article is: “The person who makes propaganda or indoctrinates in order to adapt the social and economic or political or legal order of the government to religious principals or beliefs or for political purposes or in order to acquire and create political benefit by abusing religion or religious feelings or things that are considered sacred religiously (...) is sentenced to prison from five to ten years.”

<sup>74</sup> The law that a lot of people including primarily Bediüzzaman Said Nursi had been tried in court: “ARTICLE 1. – The person who under any circumstances makes propaganda or indoctrinates in order to acquire political or personal influence by abusing religion or religious feelings or things that are considered sacred religiously or religious books will be sentenced to heavy imprisonment form one to five years. If the act is committed by means of publication, the punishment to be resolved is increased by half.”

Although the Democratic Party promised libertarian economic policies and a more liberal government, it failed to keep its promise and appeared like the continuation of CHP. The military coup that was made on 27 May 1960 for the policies implemented by the Democratic Party was one of the dreariest events of Turkish political history. Despite the fact that Eşref Edip accused DP of running on the same political line as CHP, justifications such as anti-secularist statements, ending the fight among brothers and sisters, and poor government of the country were given for the ideological motivation of the coup. It was understood in time the true purpose of this coup which had an adverse impact on the attempts of democracy and demilitarization in Turkey had been re-establishment or updating of the regime (Ahmad, 2006: 156).

Eşref Edip supported the military coup immediately after it took place, and reached the conclusion that the coup would be good for the country. *“Justice is served one way or another. Those who turn their back to the people, leave the correct path, defy God’s will and believe in other gods, do oppression and tyranny, and do not take lessons from the past will only face abasement and frustration in the life and afterlife.”*(Fergan, 1960: 146). This statement indicates that Eşref Edip was disappointed with the policies implemented by DP. He argued that DP faced this end for not keeping its promises and imitating the policies implemented by CHP.

*“They did not keep their promise. Let alone abolishment of anti-democratic laws, they reinforced them with new ones. When our glorious army intervened with a great speed and ability, the nation and the country was saved from an absolutely terrific disaster without bloodshed and damage with the mercy and favor of god.”* (Fergan, 1960: 147).

As can be seen, Eşref Edip defined the coupist army as glorious and made praises. However, this support may be a cyclical one because he heavily criticized the coupe in the articles that he wrote later. One can think that there is confusion and a cyclical positioning may be the case. His following statement for the agents of the May 27 coup supports this idea:

*“A few people juggled to seize the power claiming that the constitution was violated. Then they granted themselves unprecedented rights with the new constitution that they drafted. They included in the Constitution terrific laws that restrict freedom of*

*worship. They made another law to ensure that no one can argue with those laws.”*  
(Fergan, 2014: 138).

In the aftermath of the seize of power by the Committee of National Unity (Milli Birlik Komitesi), despite the fact that the execution of Adnan Menderes and his friends met great anger among the people, it did not end up with demonstrations. The new constitution re-established the political atmosphere. Justice Party (Adalet Partisi, AP) was founded in 1961, and participated in government by a coalition with CHP under the lead of Ragıp Gümüşpala. AP managed to attract the grassroots of DP that had been closed. After the death of Ragıp Gümüşpala in 1964, Süleyman Demirel was elected the leader of AP, which came to power in the following election.

In addition to maintaining a distance to AP the way he had done to DP, Eşref Edip partially supported AP, hoping that the development expected by the people would be realized. *“The members of the Justice Party assumed office with praises to God’s name. They celebrated the Eid with a message that was full of verses from the Quran, and hadiths. This made Muslim believe that they made the right decision with voting for AP.”*(Fergan, 2014: 154). Eşref Edip argued that the people were convinced that the religious developments that DP failed to make would be achieved by AP. However, after finding out that these developments could not be made, he said that AP was another party that acted solely to defend the system, just as CHP and DP, maintaining that AP was no different from CHP and DP.

*“It is clearly seen that this perverted mentality that is in absolute contradiction to the spirit of the nation, which interprets and practices secularism as anti-religion, which started with the Edict of Reorganization, developed in Freemason lodges of the Union and Progress Society, practiced in the severest manner under the rule of the Populists, and maintained by Democrats and their successors, has been established more strongly and created a gap between the people and governors.”*(Fergan, 2014: 158).

Considering the ideas of Eşref Edip on political life, it is not possible to say that he clearly supported a political party. Despite the fact that he partially supported DP and AP, he maintained his distance to these parties. He even made heavy critiques. He considered himself an advocate of an impartial ideology, emphasizing that he advocated what is National and

Islamic. “First of all, I should say that I have never been involved with any political organization in the past or in the present. My 60 years in publication is a proof of it. We are completely impartial, and only interested in the actions, mentalities, and ideologies of political parties from national and Islamic perspectives.”(Fergan, 2014: 44). As can be seen, he considered himself an advocate of ideas above political life. Nevertheless, he did not refrain from supporting occasionally emerging political movements when their program gives priority to moral values. Particularly, the Nation Party (Millet Partisi), Islamic Democratic Party (İslam Demokrat Parti) and National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi) were among the political parties that received significant support of Eşref Edip.

The Nation Party was founded under the leadership of Field Marshal Fevzi Çakmak in 1948. Its first leader was Hikmet Bayur, and among its members were prominent figures such as Osman Bölükbaşı. According to Eşref Edip, the Nation Party was more sincere than DP with regard to the practice of secularism and freedom of religion (Fergan, 2014: 127). He argued that DP had a hypocritical policy particularly attributable to Celal Bayar. Regarding the Nation Party, on the other hand, he thought that the party could be a better opponent and become the only party that could fulfill the requests of the people if it had not been stopped. Claiming that DP sided with CHP to stop the Nation Party in its objective to establish freedom of religion, he considered this move as an indication of collaboration between DP and CHP. The Nation Party lost its popularity after the death of Fevzi Çakmak, and was closed for abuse of religion and reactionary.

One of the parties that were formed after the transition to multi-party rule was the Islamic Democratic Party. It was founded in 1951 by Cevat Rifat Atilhan who wrote many articles on Zionism and Freemasonry in Sebilürreşad. The party aimed to implement a policy based on sacred values on the principle that “*The rules and principles that do not comply with the sacred values of the nation will be abolished*”.<sup>75</sup> It was closed with the allegations of abuse of religion and reactionary. Eşref Edip and Sebilürreşad offered their support to the Islamic Democratic Party. Especially during the period of closure, Eşref Edip published articles that

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<sup>75</sup> At this point, this argument emphasized in the article that published in Sebilürreşad Magazine, can examine; See. ‘İslam Demokrat Partisi’ (The Islamic Democratic Party), Sebilürreşad Magazine, Vol:5, Issue:125, İstanbul, 1952.

support the party and suggested that antidemocratic practices be abandoned, suggesting that the closure of the party was an antidemocratic practice. Nevertheless, the Islamic Democratic Party was closed for being linked with the assassination of Ahmet Emin Yalman.

Penetration of Islamism into Turkish political life gained momentum after the emergence of the National Vision movement. Established by Necmettin Erbakan and his friends, the National Vision movement affected both politics and the political intellectual field in Turkey. Founded in late 1960s, the National Order Party emerged as the first party of this movement. Under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan, the party gave priority to national development and sacred values.

*“I have lost my sleep at this age for the National Order Party. We do not have to withstand the lesser of evil any more. Righteousness himself is here.”*<sup>76</sup>This statement of Eşref Edip is a good summary of the feelings of Eşref Edip for MNP. He offered much more support to MNP than the partial support that he offered to other parties. He was of the opinion that MNP would manage to achieve national and moral development in Turkey.

Eşref Edip offered a significant support to the National Vision movement. The discourses of National Vision movement were apparently affected by Eşref Edip and other writers of Sebilürreşad. Especially the fact that the concepts of Zionism, communism, and freemasonry were used as political discourse by Necmettin Erbakan is an indication that the National Vision movement was fed by the staff of Sebilürreşad. Also, the National Vision’s thesis of secularism was the concept of secularism described in the articles of Eşref Edip.

Eşref Edip offered his support to the efforts during the establishment of MNP, wrote the party’s manifesto with Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, and named the party. He proposed the name “Milli Nizam Partisi” during the establishment process, and his proposal was accepted.<sup>77</sup> Even this might give an idea about the relation between Eşref Edip and the National Vision movement. MNP was founded in 1969. Many Islamist intellectual writers were present and

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<sup>76</sup>This argument is highlighted by Süleyman Arif Emre in his work. See. Süleyman Arif Emre, *Siyasette 35. Yıl (35th Year in Politics)*, MG V Yayınları, 2014

<sup>77</sup> Recai Kutan highlighted this argument in his speech. See. Recai Kutan, ‘Erbakan’ı Anma Ve Anlama Toplantısı’ (Memorial and Understanding Day for Erbakan), Conference, Kayseri, 27.02.2014

offered their support in the first congress. Eşref Edip made significant contributions to the founding declaration of the party, and he was even asked to make a speech in the congress. However, since Eşref Edip had age-related health problems, he made a short greeting speech:

*“Chairman of the Congress (Gündüz Sevilgen) – Our Venerable Master Eşref Edip will start his speech.*

*Eşref Edip Fergan – I do not feel much well to speak. What I intended to say were already said. I beg your pardon please.*

*I greet you all with respect (a thunderous applause)*

*Chairman of the Congress (Gündüz Sevilgen) – As our venerable master Eşref Edip is tired and ill, he will not be addressing you any longer. However, our Youth Organization will publish what he intended to say into a book, which they will present to you. (Applause)”<sup>78</sup>*

Judging by all these, one can see the extent to which the movement of Islamism in Turkey, and particularly the National Vision movement have been influenced by Eşref Edip Fergan. To put it more simply, Islamism in Turkey was influenced by Eşref Edip and the staff of Sebilürreşad to a great extent.

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<sup>78</sup>For full of speech, can view this site; See. <http://muzafferdeligoz.blogcu.com/necip-fazil-ve-esref-edip-in-konusmasi/910936>



## CHAPTER THREE:

### BASIC POLITICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS OF EŞREF EDİP FERGAN

#### 3.1. Religion and Secularism

The concept of religion is one of the most important elements in the history of man. It is a powerful concept that shapes human life, social life, and even the existence of states. Many religions have passed throughout the history of mankind, and some of them still strongly exist. An etymologic and semantic analysis of the concept of religion reveals that it originates from the Arabic word ‘deyn’, which means ‘punishment, reward, obedience’.<sup>79</sup> It is stated that in the historical context, Turkish words such as ‘den, ilin, ten, tin’ denote the knowledge and discipline of body and soul, the self (Tümer, 1986: 214). In ancient Greek, the word “thrioheya” denotes both dread and respect. The religion is mentioned in many places in the Quran, which refers to concepts such as ‘directing, being directed, obedience, judgment, worship, Islam, sharia, custom, punishment, being accountable, nation’.

There are many definitions related to the concept of religion. It is seen that western and eastern thinkers have their respective definition of religion. For instance, an Islamic scholar Seyyid Şerif el-Cürcani defines religion as “divine law which calls rational people to internalize the truths revealed by the prophet”. Another Islamic scholar Murtaza Zebidi defines religion as “divine law that directs rational people to the good by their own will”. Western thinkers have also made different definitions of religion. Religion is defined as “a

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<sup>79</sup> At this point that can look at; TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam), Entry: ‘Din’ (Religion), p.312

system of rituals and beliefs that brings together a religious community” by E. Durkheim, and as “an attempt to save the soul” by Weber.<sup>80</sup>

‘The act of praying and beliefs within the framework of practices such as worshipping and rituals, with a supernatural, sacred, and moral content’ can be the general definition of religion. The element of religion, and many belief systems that can be classified as religion have existed throughout the history of mankind. In addition, the element of religion as phenomena that shape human beings and social structures from their foundations has always been a topic of debate.

In addition to the three divine religions – Islam, Christianity, and Judaism – many religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Shintoism are still in existence today. However, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism are considered the most emphasized religion systems in terms of their prevalence and power. They are frequently discussed in Europe and Middle East where Turkey is located. This not anything unique to modern times but a continuation of the debates, contradictions, and even holy wars in history. In this respect, one can say that religion remains in existence more strongly among societies and people in the current century.

Due to its unique geography, Turkey is in a location where Islam maintains its existence for a long time. Despite the fact that it is also influenced intensively by Christianity and Judaism, the influence of Islam on the region where Turkey is located is higher. One can see that this is caused primarily by the birth and spreading speed of Islam. Islam spread quickly in several continents after its birth in the Arabian Peninsula, and has taken place among important systems of religion. The region of Anatolia on which Turkey is located is under the influence of Islam for more than a thousand years. Due to the long-standing past of Islam, the main axis in the concept of religion and the debates on religion has been Islam in Turkey. It is still a current topic of discussion today.

It is seen that the debates on religion in Turkey became more frequent after French Revolution. These debates on many issues such as the place of religion in society, the impact of religion on political and economic development, and the impact of religion on thinking and

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<sup>80</sup> At this point that can look at; See. TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam), Entry: ‘*Din*’ (*Religion*) p.221

freedom of thinking remain current. One can see that these debates that started in 19<sup>th</sup> century still exist in a similar form. It is known that such debates have existed very intensively in Turkey especially after the Second Constitutional Era and Declaration of Republic.

The concept of religion has always been on the agenda of politics and intellectual debates on politics. Specifically the rise of power and welfare in the West, as well as the economic, political, and social problems have been discussed on the basis of religion. For instance, one of the hot topics of the Second Constitutional Era was whether Islam is an obstacle before development. While certain Westernist intellectuals thought that Islam is an obstacle before development, Islamist thinkers claimed the opposite (Kara; 2009: 234-264). Likewise, religion was considered the reason for underdevelopment and backwardness, and the policies were made on this basis after the declaration of republic.<sup>81</sup>

Islamists have brought the hottest topics of debate on religion to the agenda. They developed a system of thinking on the assumption that the rise of the West was a threat to Islam and did attempt to move Muslims away from their conscious and faith. The Islamists have tried to defend Islam against the West and to integrate all arguments of Islam in the foundation of their all systems of thinking (Kara, 1994: 37).

Eşref Edip was an Islamist thinker who expressed his ideas about religion. He expressed his opinions in the context of the relation between religion and politics in particular. As is the case in all Islamist thinkers, religion is an important matter in Eşref Edip. He built his life and system of thinking on the concept of religion. According to Eşref Edip, religion is above everything (Fergan, 1959: 4). Especially in political discussions, he emphasized that religion is above all systems of thinking and political arguments (Fergan, 1949c: 329). Since he was also a hafiz, he showed a sensitive attitude with regard to religion. Religion, i.e. Islam, is the source of human life and existence. In this respect, he always defended and gave prominence to the values of belief.

Eşref Edip tended to defend religion when he expresses his ideas about the concept of religion. He thought that an antireligious environment had been attempted to be created and Islam had

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<sup>81</sup>Policies implemented in secularism is an indication of this. It has been emphasized at several points in the thesis.

been under attack since the Edict of Reorganization. Stating that these efforts originate from Europe, he stated that they were made under the guise of ‘reform in religion’:

*“What is the intention of religious reformist with the reform? Amendment and alteration of the verses of Quran? Then the term ‘reform’ would not be appropriate; it would mean altering the religion and distorting Islam. Would assimilating mosques into churches, abolishing ruku and sujud in salah, bringing pianos, violins, and other instruments or choirs into mosques mean anything but turning Islam into Christianity in every respect?”* (Fergan, 1959: 6).

Eşref Edip argued that the efforts to distance Muslims to their religion under the guise of reform in religion had been executed by Freemasons and Christian missionaries. He further thought that those people made religion reform propaganda with ‘*Tartuffe co-conspirators*’ from Turkey in order to subvert Islam from inside (Fergan, 1959: 3). He also argued that this had been supported with certain operations conducted on the world of Islam, and that Western intellectuals studying the world of Islam pose dangers to Islam. He thought that these studies that are known as orientalism are dangerous to Islam (Fergan, 1955: 260-262).

When debates on religion are started, the concept that accompanies religion as the topic of discussion is ‘secularism’ in Turkey. Secularism is a topic of discussion in Turkish political life, which has been a hot topic since the Edict of Reorganization. The word ‘laiklik’ (secularism in Turkish) originated from the Greek word ‘laikos’ which means ‘a civil individual that is not a clergyman’. It was first used to denote the argument that those who are not a member of the clergy should be able to take place in the administration of churches during the fight against churches in 16<sup>th</sup> century. In general terms, secularism is defined as ‘not pertaining to religion’. It started to be used in this sense in France, and it gained prominence after French Revolution.<sup>82</sup>

Secularism is frequently used in the context of the relation between religion and politics due to its field of use. The idea that a religion or religions should not influence politics is emphasized around secularism, and an ideology that the state should be in equal distance to all religions is

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<sup>82</sup> At this point that can look at this work; TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam), Entry: ‘*Laiklik*’ (Secularism) p.62

expressed by secularism. Secularism is emphasized as a principle that is or should be taken as basis in government and is continuously brought into the forefront by Western countries.

Secularism has been a topic of discussion in Turkish political life since the Edict of Reorganization. As Ottoman Empire was among the countries that were affected the most by French Revolution, secularism emerged as a popular intellectual concept in addition to republicanism and nationalism. The idea that religion should have less influence on the state emerged among the intellectuals that received their education in Western countries, and certain ideas were expressed in this context. Secularism was one of the most important principles of the recently-established state after the declaration of republic.

A study of the discussions on secularism reveals that a popular controversy is present about the practice of secularism and what is understood by the concept. The severe practices that were imposed on the basis of secularism under one-party rule in particular called the concept of secularism into question. At this point, certain views have arisen that secularism is misunderstood and misapplied.

One of the commentators on secularism, Eşref Edip paid particular attention to it due to his Islamist personality, and emphasized that the practice and meaning of secularism were wrong. Eşref Edip argued that secularism was unfounded and imitated, and expressed his views as follows:

*“We borrowed secularism from a foreign country. What were the conditions that gave rise to this concept? Is our history, customs, belief, morals in any way related to theirs? Are the principles and provisions of Christianity of Western societies equivalent to those of Islam, the religion of Eastern societies? We accepted secularism and built an unfounded building without studying any of these, and in a despotic and imitated state of mind just as we do for any law and institution.”* (Fergan, 1949e: 315).

Also objecting the interpretation of secularism, Eşref Edip said: *“Secularism may be a feature of a state, not an individual. It is a method of government which can only manifest itself in the state. A state that accepts this kind of administration does not consider itself bound by the rules of any religion or sharia.”* (Fergan, 1949e: 315).

While Eşref Edip thought that secularism was interpreted inaccurately, he emphasized that it does not necessarily mean rejection of religion:

*“Do any of the secular states lack institutions that make decisions regarding religious affairs? Is secularism a way of government that is hostile to religion? Has religion become history in America and Britain – the most powerful states in the world? Are religious authorities and institutions not in the top position? True secularism is not hostile to religion.”*(Fergan, 2014: 107).

According to Eşref Edip, secularism was not understood and implemented as it was done in the West.

*"Everyone considers secularism as rejection of sharia, and hostility to it. This superstitious viewpoint leads the rulers to heresy, and the ruled to grief and doubt. The rulers are hostile to sharia. The people are hostile to this hostility. This leads to a hostile view of secularism as an institution that destroys religion and sharia. However, if secularism is viewed, shown, and implemented in its true sense, it will at least rule out such mutual hostilities"* (Fergan, 1949e: 315).

In a similar manner, according to Eşref Edip who argues that secularism attempts to oppress Islam:

*“Since the secular Republic of Turkey is not hostile to religion and it has not accepted communism as its form of government, there is a religion at the level of nation and individual. This means that religion has not vanished in Turkey as it has in Russia. The people embrace their religion, and I hope that it will continue to do so. This is already how it should be. This being the case, keeping religion out of life, considering it a fossilized thing of the past does not agree with neither scientific and legal thinking nor consistency.”* (Fergan, 2014: 107).

It is evident that Eşref Edip is not clear with secularism. He tried to reconcile secularism with sharia, and argued that secularism is not hostility to religion but it is implemented inaccurately. The fact that he advocated all principles of sharia and that he tried to reconcile it

with secularism may appear paradoxical but also it is fair to say that his ideas were not clear due to the political period in which he lived.

### 3.2. Constitutionalism

The word “meşrutiyet” (constitutionalism in Turkish) is derived from the Arabic root ‘meşrut’ which means “contingent” or “conditional”. The word ‘meşruta’ that is derived from this word gained the meaning of ‘property given for not being sold to any person’. This is where the word ‘meşrutiyet’ derived from. While ‘meşruta’ was used as a legal term, ‘meşrutiyet’ is a political version of it. In political sense, the phrase ‘hükümet-i meşruta’ started to be used to denote a government that is directed on certain conditions, i.e. 'constitutional monarchy'.<sup>83</sup>

Constitutionalism is used to denote a system of government. The Constitutional government is a mixed system where a parliament elected by popular vote is under the government of a non-elected head of the state (king, sultan). It implies a system under the leadership of a king or a ruler where the authority of the ruler is restricted by a parliament. In this respect, it is a system where the sovereignty is balanced between a group of elected people and a king or a ruler (Tekin, 2000: 146). Constitutionalism is a system of constitutional monarchy. It first appeared with Magna Carta on the stage of history, and received support in Ottoman Empire after French Revolution.

Constitutionalism is one of the most significant elements of the political life in the last years of the Ottoman Empire. Constitutionalism was given prominence as an important alternative political government mechanism when remedies were sought to help the state get over its condition and it was thought that more integration should take place with the West. In this period, the idea that the existing absolute power should share its sovereignty with a parliament formed by deputies who are elected by the people, thus facilitate a modern government system

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<sup>83</sup> ‘Hükümet-i Meşruta’ (Constitutional Government) is a booklet written by Esad Efendi.

See. Şükrü Hanioğlu, TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam), Entry: ‘Meşrutiyet’ (Constitutionality), p.388

was discussed. At this point, topics of debate on constitutionalism emerged and the concept was discussed by the supporters of constitutionalism in bureaucracy and intelligentsia.

In discussions related to constitutionalism, its opponents expressed their opposition in different respects. The critiques that constitutionalism had not had a field of application yet, it would not remedy the problems of the state, and it is un-Islamic were made. The most debated issue at this point is whether Constitutionalism is un-Islamic or not. Such debates were made in a religious manner by exchange of views or forming a council. Those who held the view that Constitutionalism was un-Islamic tried to support their views with reference to certain verses of the Quran. For example, they tried to make their point by referring to the fact that it would lead to inclusion of Christians and Jews in the parliament. They referred to the verse “*You who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you - then indeed, he is [one] of them...*” (Feyizli, 2008: 126) to argue that constitutionalism is un-Islamic, and Muslims should only engage in consultation and assemble with Muslims (Tekin, 2000: 152). Another objection is raised on the basis of the claim that the sultan, who was also the caliph, would be passivized. Emphasizing obedience to those in authority with reference to the verse “*You who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result.*” (Feyizli, 2008: 94), they argued that restricting the authority of the caliph would be disobedience to the holder of the authority (Kara, 1994: 109).

On the axis of this debate, the supporters of constitutionalism argued that constitutional government would not be against Islam, on the contrary, it would be similar to the system of government that was used during the time of Mohammad and the four caliphs (Kara, 1994: 109). In addition, they referred to certain verses of Quran, and hadiths in the same manner as the opponents of constitutionalism, to point make their point:

*“And those who have responded to their lord and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves, and from what We have provided them, they spend.” (Quran-Surah Ash-Shuraa,38)*



*“Consult among yourselves”, “Those who consult will not regret” (hadith)*

*“Knowledge is a well, and consulting is a bucket” (hadith)*

*“God and his Messenger do not need consultation. However, God gives my ummah his mercy in consultation. Those who consult find wisdom and truth. Whoever leaves it finds evil and does wrong.” (hadith)*

*“The surface of the earth is more favorable for you when you resolve your issues by consultation.” (hadith)*

The proponents of constitutionalism referred to the verses and hadiths mentioned above to point out that constitutionalism is not un-Islamic.

The debates on constitutionalism yielded result and the First Constitutional Era started with the declaration Constitution during the rule of Abdülhamit II. This process ended when Abdülhamit II dissolved the parliament on the pretext of war. The experience of the first constitution lasted short and ended up in failure. Refusal of the sultan to lose his authority had a great impact on this failure. In this respect, during the term of Abdülhamit II, especially in the last years of his reign, requests and efforts for a constitutional government gained momentum. The restrictive administration of Abdülhamit II caused constitutionalism to be more active.

In that period, debates on constitutionalism intensified and the necessity of constitutionalism became a current topic. However, intellectuals of different ideas reached an agreement on the necessity of constitutionalism. While Bediuzzaman Said Nursi advocated constitutionalism with the statement *“We intend to conserve and enroot constitutionalism with the power of sharia”*, Elmalılı Hamdi Efendi advocated it with the statement;

*“Today, we certainly see that survival of Islam depends on survival of the Ottoman Empire, and survival of the Ottoman Empire depends on continuation of constitutionalism and consultancy. Therefore, under current conditions, rejecting constitutionalism and consultancy is almost the same as rejecting Islam and humanity.” (Kara, 1994: 112).*

The necessity of constitutionality was discussed on the basis of freedom, justice, and a stronger government. In addition, intellectuals of the time tried to prove that constitutionalism was not against Islam but was one of the most suitable methods of administration. In this respect, particularly the Islamist thinkers participated in the debates, and almost all Islamist thinkers reached an agreement on declaration of the Second Constitution.<sup>84</sup>

It is seen that the rise of opposition made it compulsory to declare the Second Constitution. Circles with different mentalities reached agreement for declaration and necessity of the constitution, and played a role in it. It is also seen that the nationalists and the Islamists including primarily the supporters of Westernist reforms supported declaration of the constitution.

Especially in Second Constitutional Era, the concept of constitutionalism was taken as the opposite of tyranny (istibdat). This is primarily caused by the rule of Abdülhamit II. Considering that Abdülhamit II was also an Islamist, it is seen that the Islamists in the last years of the Ottoman Empire advocated constitutionalism. One can even see that they advocated constitutionalism by referring to verses of Quran, and hadiths (Kara, 1994: 37). At this point, it is fair to say that Islamists made a serious effort for acceptance of constitutionalism.

One of the Islamists who supported the Second Constitution was Eşref Edip. Then, he had recently graduated and was working on printing works. He was also in a close relation to intellectuals. His statement

*“We were yearning for freedom. Were we going to see it one day? Things we wanted to do were beyond counting! We were going to get into publishing business, fill our library with precious works, establish printing houses, publish, newspapers, magazines, and encyclopedias, work for publishing knowledge in our homeland, dedicate ourselves to the world of Islam, and dedicate our time to emergence of a prosperous development, and a sincere unity.”*(Arabacı, 2005: 96-128)

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<sup>84</sup> Some of these figures are Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı Efendi, Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, Mustafa Sabri Efendi, and Mehmet Akif Ersoy. (Kara, 1994: 35).

is important for revealing his ideas on constitutionalism and before it.

Eşref Edip sided with the proponents and supporters of constitutionalism. He thought that a constitutional administration would bring more freedom and liberty. However, he changed his mind in the light of the political developments in the historical process. He adopted a different attitude with regard to constitutionalism in his assessments after the declaration of republic. The style of government adopted by the Union and Progress Society, collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and practices of the republic era influenced in this change in his perspective.

Eşref Edip wrote in the articles he wrote in the post-republic era that constitutionalism was a trap set by the West to the Ottoman Empire. He also argued that the Union and Progress Society established their own regime of tyranny and oppression under the name of constitutionalism (Fergan, 1950a: 123). At this point, he maintained that constitutionalism, which he had once considered essential for freedom and liberty, became a regime that Europe utilized to destroy the Ottoman Empire.

### **3.3 Progress**

The word ‘Terakki’ (Progress) comes from an Arabic origin. It is used to denote progress, rise, or development. It was used more frequently during the time of Ottoman Empire compared to today. Progress was used frequently as a political concept in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. The reason for its popularity that time was to express transition from the current conditions to what should be achieved. In other words, the word ‘progress’ in the sense of a goal that should be attained. Its connotations include development, growth, or attainment of prosperity.<sup>85</sup>

The final years of Ottoman Empire were scene to a struggle against instability and crisis in all areas. In this period of accumulating problems in economy, politics, and society, the only way out was to take the West as an example and the desire to attain its powerful position. It was

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<sup>85</sup> At this point that can examine this work. See. TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam), Entry: ‘Terakki’ (Progress)

thought that the level of development attained by European countries in every respect from industry to science, education to transportation should be taken as example by the Ottoman Empire, and that this would be the only way for the Ottoman Empire to overcome its backwardness and solve its problems. In this respect, the concept of progress was a hot topic in the intellectual life of the Ottoman Empire. Almost all Islamists, Turkists, Westernists put a stress on the importance of ‘progress’, and showed it as the way to solve the problems. However, they were not able to reach an agreement on the characteristics of the progress, and had significant differences between among their interpretations of the concept (Doğan, 2010: 177-187).

While the Turkists and Westernists thought that ‘progress’ is a concept that shows the goal to be attained in any aspect from industry to science, culture to education, Islamists held the opposite view, arguing that it was acceptable to borrow the knowledge and science of the West but taking the West as an example in every respect would be imitation rather than ‘progress’. They emphasized that the original values should be kept and ‘progress’ could be attained only in this way. For instance, Mehmet Akif Ersoy argued that the West could be taken as an example in terms of its scientific, artistic, and economic levels of development to build a ‘progress’ on the values and culture of a society.<sup>86</sup> Namık Kemal held a similar view regarding progress. Mehmet Akif Ersoy and Namık Kemal share a common conception of progress, which involves taking the development level of the West as an example and building it on the values of the society. Namık Kemal thought that backwardness should be left as soon as possible and that ‘progress’ is essential.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Alınız ilmini Garb'ın, alınız san'atini; (Take the science of the West, and its art;) Veriniz hem de mesâînize son sür'atini. (Get to work around the clock.) Çünkü kaabil değil artık yaşamak bunlarsız; (For it is not acceptable to live without them;) Çünkü milliyeti yok san'atın ve ilmin; yalnız. (And arts and sciences do not have a nation.) Mehmet Akif Ersoy

See. Mehmet Akif Ersoy, '*Safahat- Süleymaniye Kürsüsü*' (*Safahat - The Chair of Süleymaniye*), Ed.:Ertuğrul Düzdağ, Sütun Publishings, İstanbul, 2011

<sup>87</sup> “They will say that we do not have anything to facilitate prosperity... We hadn't done anything; how could we have. Europe didn't become a community with its streets, ports, cities, towns! It was no different than our country one-two hundred years ago. With effort, why can't the things that came into existence there be done here?” Namık Kemal (Expressed: Doğramacıoğlu, 2011: 975-986)

Another issue around the topic of progress is whether Islam is a hindrance to progress. The idea put forward by French philosopher Ernest Renan that Islam is an obstacle before progress, and that Islam hinders development and modernization of the country and the society became a topic of discussion.<sup>88</sup> It was highly debated by Ottoman intellectuals, and while certain thinkers supported Renan, others opposed him. A contrast formed between the Renanian and Western-oriented perspective that viewed ‘progress’ with a positivist approach to Islam and the Islamist line of thinking that tried to refute this approach.

In this respect, the way of thinking in which the concept of ‘progress’ is associated with the West is evident in the following statement on the axis of positivist thinking, made by Abdullah Cevdet: *“There is only one civilization, which is the Western civilization. Our underdevelopment is caused by Islam. We must adopt all ideas of the west in order to progress. Even God himself may be abandoned if need be for this cause”* (Hanioglu, 1981: 183); and by Ziya Gökalp: *“We should fully adopt Western civilization in order to be secular and become a modern state.”* On the other hand, we can see that certain Islamist intellectuals argued that Islam does not hinder progress but encourages it. While Musa Kazım Efendi made the statement *“They say that Islam prevents progress. It is a slanderous claim. Islam does not hinder progress but it defends progress and motivates development because this religion integrates all procedures and principles that are necessary for a nation to progress and be civilized, and some of them are in line with the future”*(Bakırcı, 2004: 177-210), Mehmet Akif Ersoy said that Islam did not hinder progress, and that the mankind attained development and progress through Islam in the past. Another intellectual who made a struggle on this matter was Namık Kemal. He wrote a book titled ‘Defense against Renan’ to refute the ideas of Renan and tried to prove that Islam does not hinder progress. He gave examples from the history of Islam and verses from the Quran.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> At this point that this work has importance to understand the issue with wider perspective. See. Ernest Renan, ‘Islam and Science, Conference, University of Sorbonne, France, (English translation by Sally P. Ragep, McGill University 2011)

<sup>89</sup> Also Ziya Pasha criticised this issue to western thoughts. The following lines of Ziya Pasha in his Terkib-i Bend express his ideas about the matter:

İslam imiş devlete pabend-i terakki, (They say Islam hinders the progress of the state)  
Evvel yoğ idi işbu rivayet yeni çıktı (This is a new argument that did not previously exist)

Eşref Edip's attitude towards 'progress' was also on the axis of Islamic thinking.<sup>90</sup> He opposed the approach that interpreted progress as imitation of the West. While he emphasized the importance of progress, he thought that the original values should be maintained. He especially opposed the practices that were made under the name of 'progress' in the period of Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey and were formed on the way of thinking that considered Islam an obstacle before progress. He went on criticizing such policies after the declaration of republic: *"The missionaries of this superstitious mindset attributed the underdevelopment of the Turkish nation to Islam. They claimed that the Turkish nation would rise if they were to be kept away from their religion."*(Fergan, 2014: 45). This statement clearly indicates that Eşref Edip criticized the view that Islam is against progress, which had been held for the sake of 'progress'.

Especially in the republic era, Eşref Edip argued that Islam was attempted to be wiped out for the sake of 'progress'. He criticized the one-party regime on this:

*"If someone compared the place of Turkey for its level of scientific development in the world half a century ago to its current place, he would see that our missionaries of progress have not been able to achieve any progress relative to the general progress of the world. They turned their back to Islam on the pretext that it hinders progress but how many scientists have they trained at international scale? Have they won the Nobel prize?"*(Fergan, 2014: 45).

These opinions of Eşref Edip reflect his mind with regard to the claim that Islam hinders progress.

Regarding the relation between 'progress' and Islam, the statements of Eşref Edip against those who claimed that '*Islam hinders progress*' gained prominence especially in the republic era. In this context, he made certain statements that criticize the thesis that Islam suspends progress. *"They attributed the underdevelopment of the Turkish nation to Islam. They showed religion as a poison for civilized life. They claimed that the Turkish nation would progress if*

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<sup>90</sup> It is fair to say that Eşref Edip was greatly influenced by his friend Mehmet Akif Ersoy on this matter.

*they were to leave their religion. They set up their entire program on this view. All of their activities and operations served this purpose.”* (Fergan, 2014: 44).

### 3.4 Freedom

The concept of freedom has been a topic of discussion, around which various ideas have shaped for centuries. It has also been emphasized and discussed in modern ideologies. The word ‘hürriyet’ (freedom in Turkish) comes from the word ‘hurriya’ of Arabic origin. It stands for the state of not being a slave. The word ‘hürriyet’ that derived from it has a similar meaning. It is synonymous with another Turkish word ‘özgürlük’ of Turkish origin. A more comprehensive definition can be made as ‘*liberty, nobility, being free from the passions of the self; freedom of an individual, group, or organization to protect and use its legal rights*’.<sup>91</sup> Considered a fundamental human right today, the concept of freedom denotes the absence of material or moral pressures or restrictions on what an individual wants to do or wants to be.

In political sense, freedom forms a topic of discussion through ideologies in particular. While it emerged as one of the most significant symbols of French Revolution in 1789, intellectual and political debates that develop on the basis of modern ideologies have contributed to the development and political significance of freedom. Ideologies have presented the concept of freedom within their respective framework. In this respect, liberalism considers freedom a superior value of the individual. While conservatives advocate a more restricted definition of freedom, fascism rejects any kind of freedom. In socialism, there is a restricted concept of freedom where freedom of classes is given priority over freedom of individuals.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>At this point that can examine this work; TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam), Entry: ‘Hürriyet’ (Freedom), p.502

<sup>92</sup>At this point these works have importance and can examine to larger understanding.

See. Andrew Heywood, ‘*Political Ideologies (Siyasi İdeolojiler)*’, Palgrave Macmillan 5th Edition, 2012

See. Seydali Ekici, ‘Liberalizm ve Siyasal İslamcılıkta Özgürlük’ (Liberalism, and Freedom in Political Islamism), International Journal of Political Science Researches, July, 2015, Volume: 1, Issue: 1, p.102-112

At this point many prominent thinkers have developed their respective theories of freedom.<sup>93</sup>

The concept of 'freedom' emerged in Turkish political history in the period of Young Ottomans and thereafter. Freedom was among important topics of discussion in this period that is defined as late Ottoman intellectual and political life. The importance of the concept and idea of 'freedom' increased in that period that was fairly influenced by the intellectual aspects of French Revolution. The political and social structure of the Ottoman Empire had the most important impact on development of the idea of freedom. It was a closed and restrictive structure relative to Western societies that were developing and gaining strength in every respect. The increase in the number of intellectuals who had a contact with the West or were trained in Western literature in the final years of the Ottoman Empire created the assumption that this structure would not last. In this respect, the idea that the concept of 'freedom' would be the fundamental element of getting over the current situation was widely accepted, particularly by Young Ottomans. We also see that the name of one of the influential newspapers published at the time by Namık Kemal<sup>94</sup> and his friends was 'Hürriyet'. It is seen that prominent figures of Young Ottomans studied the idea of freedom around this newspaper (Öztürk, 1999: 57-69).

Throughout the Turkish intellectual history, the idea of freedom was rather used to express political demands. Later came the demands of individual and social freedom. Abolishing the current system of autocracy and a transition to constitutionalism with a constitution and parliament have priority. This involves political freedom rather than individual one. At that point, it is seen that the concept of freedom was used as the opposite of 'tyranny'. The existing

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<sup>93</sup> Isaiah Berlin who sets forth the liberty (freedom) concept in the context of positive and negative liberty in his 'two concepts of liberty' work appears before us as an important English thinker at this point. According to Berlin, negative liberty is the ability of the individual to choose freely without being subject to any external limitations. On the other hand, positive liberty is establishing the individual to be the master of himself by providing him with the financial possibility by others (generally the government) to make the individual more free. See Isaiah Berlin, *Two Concepts Of Liberty*, England, 1958

<sup>94</sup> Namık Kemal was a leading advocate of the idea of 'freedom' in late Ottoman period. As such, he expressed his views in a poetical manner in a eulogy titled 'The Eulogy of Freedom'.

Ne gam pür âteş-i hevî olsa da gavgâ-yı hürriyet (What if the cause of freedom were made of scary flames)  
Kaçar mı merd olan bir can için meydân-ı gayretten. (Does a courageous man run away from the field of effort for the fear of losing a life?) (Hürriyet Kasidesi (Eulogy of Freedom)-Namık Kemal)

See. <http://www.antoloji.com/hurriyet-kasidesi-siiri/>



system of autocracy was considered tyrannical, and a more liberal political administration was demanded. It is fair to say that this idea gained more popularity during the rule of Abdülhamit II. Accordingly, what gave rise to the First Constitutional Era was the idea of ‘freedom’ as well. In the process that continued until the Second Constitutional Era, the idea of freedom found a wider audience. In this respect, declaration of the Second Constitution was the achievement of the idea of freedom and those who supported it. From that point, the idea of freedom has been used to express individual and social demands during the war of independence and in the republic era. In the period preceding the Second Constitutional Era, the concept of freedom shaped around the concept of tyranny, and the discourses were developed in this direction. One can see that the concept of freedom was discussed in different aspects after the Second Constitutional Era.

Islamists also made certain statements and expressed their ideas about freedom. Islamists studied the concept of tyranny while addressing the concept of freedom, and tried to explain these concepts on a religious basis. In general terms, it is fair to say that Islamists considered sharia as the source of freedom. Musa Kazım Efendi expressed his views on the matter as follows “A (*group of saviors*) who know that this practice (*tyranny*) has nothing to do with religion, sharia, and humanity have worked tirelessly for years to end this illegitimate practice and finally managed to establish a fair government on the basis of a principle of freedom that is in compliance with both nature and sharia.”(Özdiñç, 2012: 298). It is emphasized here that the concept of freedom is not against sharia, and that it is important to establish an administration based on the principles of freedom. Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi made the following statement regarding freedom: “*Freedom is a blessing, an embellishment, the essence of humanity. It is the dignity, honor, spirit, and the reason for existence.*”(Özdiñç, 1999: 295). Islamists expressed and discussed these ideas more frequently after the declaration of the Second Constitution. Said Halim Paşa expressed the importance of freedom in a religious framework with the statement “*Freedom is a duty assigned to a Muslim by the religion that he believes in, and morality that guides him. Therefore, every Muslim is responsible for being free to the greatest extent possible.*” ( Halim, 2015: 189).

It is possible to see variations in the views of Eşref Edip on freedom. In the period before the Second Constitutional Era, he positioned himself among the opponents of Abdülhamit II due

to the restrictive and oppressive nature of his rule. Stating that freedom of expression and the press had been restricted at the time, he expressed his demands on the matter.

*“We were yearning for freedom. Were we going to see it one day? Things we wanted to do were beyond counting! We were going to get into publishing business, fill our library with precious works, establish printing houses, publish, newspapers, magazines, and encyclopedias, work for publishing knowledge in our homeland, dedicate ourselves to the world of Islam, and dedicate our time to emergence of a prosperous development, and a sincere unity.”*(Fergan, 1956: 199-200).

One can infer from this statement that he advocated freedom of expression and freedom of the press. In general terms, his views on the idea of freedom are consistent with the ideas of other Islamist intellectuals.

Eşref Edip advocated freedom of expression and freedom of the press in the final years of the Ottoman Empire, and articles in line with this ideas were published the magazine *Sıratı müstakim* that he owned. However, he defended the independence and freedom of his country, taking part in the activities in Anatolia for this purpose (Fergan, 2011a: 25).

Eşref Edip mostly advocated freedom of religion and conscience during the years he was active in publication. Specifically during the period of one-party rule after the declaration of republic, and even later, he pointed out the importance of the freedom of religion and conscience, and criticized those who restricted these freedoms: *“They talked about freedom of religion and conscience but interfered in religious practices. Have they not engaged in terrorist activities while talking about freedom?”* (Fergan, 2014: 100).

Eşref Edip also stated that his magazine *Sebilürreşad* was an ‘advocate of freedom’. It is seen that he made suggestions to the governors of the time on extension of freedoms: *“The Grand National Assembly should repeal all laws and practices against the freedom of religion and conscience, and democracy and secularism.”*(Arabacı, 2005: 96-128). Putting a stress on freedom of religion in another instance, he expressed his opinions as follows:

*“Any law that that is in contradiction with freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, democracy, and secularism should be amended. The laws against freedom of religion,*

*freedom of conscience, democracy and secularism will all be amended. Muslim Turks will pray, recite the azan and the name of God in the language they please just as Christians and Jews living in our country do.”* (Fergan, 1948: 3).

Eşref Edip’s perspective on the concept of freedom can be identified as freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion and conscience. In this respect, Eşref Edip can be said to have emphasized the concept of freedom.

### **3.5 The State**

State is an important concept in both political science and political philosophy. At conceptual level, it is the subject of intellectual discussions and views. The word ‘devlet’ (‘state’ in Turkish) is a word that was borrowed from Arabic. The word ‘tedavül’ (‘circulation’ in Turkish) that derived from ‘dület’ and ‘devle’ in Arabic correspond to the word ‘devlet’. At this point, the word ‘devlet’ stands for ‘that which circulates’, ‘passed from one hand to another’ or ‘turning over the power’ (Gözler, 2007: 6).

The word ‘state’ in English, ‘état’ in French, ‘stato’ in Italian, and ‘staat’ in German are the examples of the word in Western languages. Each of these words were derived from the Latin word ‘status’, which has a different sense from ‘devlet’ in Turkish. It has such meanings as ‘situation’ or ‘state of affairs’, which amounts to ‘alteration of state, transition to another state; coming alternately; circulation; defeating, gaining a victory’ (Gözler, 2007: 7).

The concept of state has many definitions. The most comprehensive definition in terms of political science is as follows: “*A state is a political organization that establishes the authority of a sovereign state within definite borders and implements its authority by means of a series of permanent institutions.*” (Heywood, 2006: 127).

Throughout the history of political thinking, different thinkers have come up with different theories and definitions of state. Thomas Hobbes defines a state as follows: “*The authority of a member of a large group to use the power and means of every member as he may deem fit, to cooperate in protecting the peace of every member, as granted by the covenants made among*

*the members of the group.*”(Hobbes, 2007: 127). Hobbes also uses the concept of state as the organization of political power that protects the existence of the individual. Rousseau defines the state as a political union that represents the common will of a society (Rousseau, 2006: 27) Rowhile Hegel defines it as the reflection of God on earth.<sup>95</sup>

The concept of state that is defined as mentioned above by Western thinkers is defined with a different perspective by the thinkers of Eastern, i.e. Islamic societies.

Thinkers of Islamic societies have adopted a different approach to the concept of state. In Islamic societies, there is a complex network of intertwined relations between religion and politics. This being the case, political concepts and ideas have been predominantly viewed on the basis of religion. The argument that Islam is comprised of rules that embrace all aspects of life is an important factor in this perspective. Al-Ghazali explains this attitude as follows: “*The laws of Islam have established the solutions to problems encountered by people. Religion and world, or religion and politics are not disconnected.*” (Taplamacioğlu, 1964: 82-97). As can be inferred from Al-Ghazali, politics and the concepts of it are considered with reference to religion. An intellectual life based on religion or provisions of sharia is present. The power or in more general terms, ‘state’ should rest on divine origins. While Ibn Taymiyyah argued that religion and state are inseparable, and law should rest on sharia, Al-Mawardi, in the same manner as Ibn Taymiyyah, maintained that the power should have divine origins (Şen, 2011: 130).

One can analyze the perspective of modern Islamist thinking on the concept of state by looking at the final years of the Ottoman Empire and post-republic period. Especially the Islamist thinking and intellectuals that had an influence on the final years of the Ottoman Empire reveal that they did not take the concept of ‘state’ as separate from Islam. Arguing that the ‘state’ apparatus should always exist for strengthening and enlarging the religion, Islamist thinkers held the view that the state should rest on religious rules and provisions. This is the

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<sup>95</sup>At this point that these works can provide better understanding.

See. TDV Encyclopedia of Islam, Entry: ‘Devlet’ (State), p.235

See Macit Gökberk, ‘Hegel’in Devlet Felsefesi’ (*Hegel’s Philosophy of State*), İstanbul Üniversitesi Felsefe Arşivi Dergisi (İstanbul University Journal of the Archive of Philosophy), İstanbul, 1946

reason why Islamists embraced the authorities of caliphate and sheikh al-Islam in Ottoman Empire (Halim, 2015: 215).

Due to the situation of the Ottoman Empire in its final years, Islamists tended to protect and save the 'state'. This was basically attributable to the fact that they internalized the state and considered the state an indispensable element of religion. Islamists who acted on this principle saw no harm in integrating with the state. It is seen that Islamists had the most important government posts and had a vision to have a voice in the state.

The following statement of Said Halim Pasha, an important statesperson of the Ottoman Empire, is important for reflecting the views of Islamists on the state:

*“Sharia is the origin and basis of the government in Islamic communities. The government is nothing but the practitioner and monitor of Sharia ... The parliament, legislation and execution are established separately in the political regime of Islam due to their properties and authorities. Thus, the power and influence required for the government is provided. If the state is organized this way, the spirit of Islam is satisfied, and all of its powers are united around a single purpose”*(Halim, 2015: 250).

As mentioned by Said Halim Paşa, the origin of the state should be Islam, and the state should be organized on the basis of Islamic principles. This approach was popular among Islamists of the time.

After the declaration of republic, the perspective of Islamists to the concept of state and their relationship with the state moved to another ground. Since the Ottoman Empire was organized in compliance with Islamic principles, Islamists did not have difficulty internalizing the state. For this reason, they maintained their distance to the new state organization after the declaration of republic. It is seen that the modernist and secular structure of the newly-established state affected the Islamists' views on the state. They continued to advocate the view that the state should be organized on the basis of religious laws.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, they

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<sup>96</sup> At this point; we can give examples of names like Mehmet Akif Ersoy , Eşref Edip Fergan , Said Nursi.

criticized the new state. They objected to abstraction of religion from public and social domain in the name of such concepts as secularism.

Despite the fact that Islamists adopted a critical approach to the state structure that emerged with the republic, they did not take a radical stance. In general, they thought that the government's practices were wrong considering the belief of Islam in the society but that those practices could also be changed. In other words, they thought that the antireligious practices would be abolished if the administrators are changed. In this respect, the general view held by the Islamists in Turkey was that they should hold government posts to transform the state. Accordingly, Islamist activities were seen in the political domain in order to govern and transform the state. An example of this attitude may be the following statement of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek: *“Islam is tightly bound to the state just like a soul is bound to a body; they never split and the body cannot exist without it. Is it possible for Islam, a religion that encompasses the entire universe, to leave out the state that is the material and moral value and volition of the masses?”* (Şen, 2011: 134). It is clearly seen that state is an important body for Islamists, and it is argued that the state should not leave out religion.

Eşref Edip also held the view that approached the concept of state through Islam. Within the scope of the ideal of Islamic Unity that developed in the final years of the Ottoman Empire, he argued that the state should be built on strong and religious foundations. He stated that Islam should penetrate into every aspect of life, and that it should be emphasized in every aspect of politics, society, and social life. Eşref Edip made his point with this statement:

*“Christianity is only made up of faith and morality. Islam, on the other hand, contains law and manners alongside with faith and morality. Religion is present in every aspect of life: sitting, standing, sleeping, shopping, performing a duty, fighting, making peace. In sum, religion is present in everything moral, conventional, economic, religious, political, or related to one's country. Just as nail cannot be removed from the flesh, religion cannot be considered separate from life.”* (Şen, 2011: 134).

While pointing out that state is an important organization, Eşref Edip argued that the state should be organized on the basis of sharia, and associated religion with state. He thought that an Islamic state organization was essential for continuity and strength of religion.

Accordingly, his views in the final years of the Ottoman Empire reveal that he linked the necessity of saving the state to the religion.<sup>97</sup>

Eşref Edip's perspective of state in pre-republic and post-republic periods is more distant and critical compared to other Islamists. He opposed the efforts to weaken the religion in the state but did not do it by a radical discourse. He attached importance to the existence of the state on the basis of the critique that the state is governed by wrong people. As was the case with other Islamic intellectuals, Eşref Edip held the view that the state should be transformed and a more Islamic government should be adopted. His consistent emphasis on Islam in his articles and books is an indication of this attitude.<sup>98</sup>

Eşref Edip's view of state includes a historical conception of state originating from the Ottoman Empire in addition to the emphasis on Islam. In a sense, it is characterized by the idea that '*Turkish nation which had been in the forefront of Islam should return to its glorious days*'. He does not take the state from its historical context while positioning it by religion.

Eşref Edip expressed his ideas on the basis of religion, state, and 'nation' – the only element of state. The predominant aspect of his ideas is the prerequisite of the existence of state for maintenance of religion. He considered it important to ensure existence of the state for the rise of the religion and facilitation of the Islamic unity. In this respect, one can say that he developed his ideas on politics and social life on the basis of religion, state, and nation: "*God shall protect our religion, state, and nation. He shall not deprive us existing into the future, and raise the glory of our state and nation.*" (Fergan, 2011a: 112).

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<sup>97</sup> This idea was put into practice during the years of the War of Independence in particular. Eşref Edip and Islamists saw the War of Independence as a 'jihad'. (Fergan, 2011a: 25).

<sup>98</sup> He puts an emphasis on 'Islamic Order' in almost all of his works.

See. Eşref Edip Fergan, '*Milli Mücadele Yılları*' (*The Years of the War of Independence*), Ed.: Fahrettin Gün, Beyan Publishings, İstanbul, 2011

See. Eşref Edip Fergan, '*Kara Kitap- Milleti Nasıl Aldattılar? Mukaddesatına Nasıl Saldırdılar?*' (*The Black Book - How Did They Deceive the People? How Did They Assault the Sacred Values of the Nation?*), Ed.: Fahrettin Gün, Beyan Publishings, İstanbul, 2014

### 3.6 Civilization

The concept of civilization embodies important topics of discussion in Turkey and in the world. The etymological root of the word ‘medeniyet’ (civilization in Turkish) is the Arabic word ‘medine’, which means ‘city’ in English. The word ‘medeniyye’ (urban) derived from the root ‘medine’. Ultimately, the terminological word ‘medeniyet’ which denotes the entire social, economic, political, and architectural reserve accumulated by a society or societies in the context of their urban life was derived from ‘medeniyye’. The word ‘uygarlık’ is used as its synonym in Turkish. In Western literature, we see the word ‘civilization’ that derived from the Latin word ‘civilis’ which means ‘urban’.<sup>99</sup> The first recorded use of the word is in France in mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. In Europe, the word ‘civilization’ was used to denote the changing way of life and society with the developments in technology and knowledge (Baykara, 1990: 1).

An examination of the historical development of the concept of civilization in the Ottoman Empire reveals that its first recorded use was in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and especially the ambassadors and students sent abroad made contributions to this concept. First used in the form of ‘sivilizasyon’ by Mustafa Reşit Efendi, one of the prominent statesmen who acted as an ambassador in France in the final years of the Ottoman Empire, the term started to be used in political and philosophical debates as ‘medeniyet’ – its current form in Turkish (Baykara,1990: 7).However, there is also another view that the concept ‘civilization’ was first used by Ibn-Khaldun (Şentürk, 2006: 89-121).

For information about how civilization was perceived, one may refer to the views of Mustafa Reşit Efendi who introduced this concept in the Ottoman Empire. Mustafa Reşit Efendi expressed civilization as ‘human education, and implementation of order’ in his own words. He borrowed the word ‘sivilizasyon’ from French. After this use, the concept of civilization was taken in a wider context to denote the collective experience of a society including social and economic developments. Several topics of discussion and study were suggested within the historical process that developed this way. It is possible to see that these discussions are relevant even today.

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<sup>99</sup>At this point that this work can provide more understanding. See. TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam), Entry: ‘Medeniyet’ (Civilization).



Ibn-Khaldun made contributions to the concept of civilization within a wider framework through the concept of 'umran'. As stated by Cemil Meriç, 'umran' means 'everything that a society creates; conventional and religious order, customs and beliefs. While this definition has a wider scope than civilization, it has a meaning that can be considered equivalent to that of civilization (Albayrak, 2000: 4).

On the other hand, Arnold Toynbee, a prominent historian, defines civilization as a 'type or stage of a culture that exists in a particular era. This definition bears similarities to the argument 'civilizations are born, grow, develop, and vanish' made by Ibn-Khaldun.

One of the intellectuals of the final years of Ottoman Empire, Said Halim Pasha defines civilization as the sum of material and moral values produced by a nation. While emphasizing that Islam is the foundation of the civilization, he states that religion and nation are the same things (Halim, 2015: 103). At this point, he makes a comparison to the West, arguing that Westernization means abandoning the original culture.

The debates on civilization among the intellectuals during the final years of the Ottoman Empire were usually made with comparison to the West. Abdullah Cevdet thought that the only existing civilization was the Western civilization, and that societies should be subject to the Western civilization. Ziya Gökalp focused on the distinction between culture and civilization while expressing his views on civilization. Ziya Gökalp argued that civilization is universal, and that they emerge from the cultures of societies. On the other hand, Nurettin Topçu argued that civilization is the technical pieces accumulated and provided by the mankind, and that culture and civilization are distinct from each other (Arslanoğlu, 2001: 243-255).

The debates of civilization occupied an important place among Ottoman intellectuals during the final years of the Ottoman Empire. It is seen that questioning of the current situation in that period spread to the concept of civilization. The main topic that stood out in that period was the comparison between the Western civilization and the Eastern, i.e. Ottoman civilization which was relatively underdeveloped. The underdevelopment and weakness suffered by Islamic societies brought the debates on whether to adopt Western culture to the Ottoman

Empire and other Islamic societies. However, there was another group of people, including Eşref Edip, who opposed the idea of being subject to the Western civilization.

Eşref Edip also approached the concept of civilization by comparison to the Western civilization. Eşref Edip argued that the current or future civilization should be based on Islam. He thought that a civilization that is not based on Islam is not acceptable. In this respect, he assumed the existence of a civilization of Islam which covers Ottoman Empire and other Islamic societies. Thus, he referred to the concept of civilization with reference to the Western civilization (Fergan, 1950a: 74).

According to Eşref Edip, inaccurate policies based on the assumption that the empire could solve its problems by taking the Western civilization as an example were implemented by Westernists in Reorganization and Constitutional Eras. The motive behind this was that the Western civilization wanted to establish its domination by weakening Islam. Eşref Edip stated that the technology and science developed by the Western civilization may be borrowed required for the conditions of the period. However, he underlined that the Western civilization should not be embraced since it would mean drifting away from Islam:

*“The only thing we expect from this group of people who are trained in the knowledge and civilization of the West is that they bring and perform the positive sciences, and the sciences that involve specific tools and arts, because our society is established on the strongest foundations. The general underdevelopment in our country is caused by our lack of knowledge in positive sciences and the sciences that involve tools and arts.”*(Efe, 2009: 136).

As can be inferred from here, Eşref Edip made a distinction between the technical knowledge and morality of the West, assuming that a distinction may be made between technical knowledge and morality, and that the technology, distinct from morality, may be circulated among cultures.

Islamism is an ideology that emerged in the face of the rise of Western civilization in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. Islamists tried to embrace and advocate the history and civilization of Islam against the rise of Western civilization. At this point, Eşref Edip felt the

urge to take a position against the Western civilization just as other Islamist intellectuals of the time did. The most important reason for this was the continuing increase in the support to the Western civilization, and propagation of the ideas and policies established by the West in the Ottoman Empire. At this point, it is worth noting that Eşref Edip was influenced by Mehmet Akif Ersoy who defined Western civilization as a “*Single-fanged monster*”.

Eşref Edip argued that the West altered the religious beliefs and institutions of Muslims in order to make them harmless to the West (Fergan, 1959: 13). Starting with the Reorganization, Reform and Constitution movements in particular, the West tried to capture Muslim societies and Ottoman Empire – one of the most significant Muslim societies – to instill Western culture and ultimately, weaken Islam (Fergan, 2009: 137-144). In this respect, it is fair to say that Eşref Edip adopted a perspective based on Islamic civilization and Western civilization to the concept of civilization. This perspective is evident in the Islamists of the final years of the Ottoman Empire and even in post-republic Islamists.

## Conclusion

Turkey is a dynamic country in terms of its political history and political thought. The period after the Second Constitutional Era is important for the intellectual life of Turkey. The political ideas that were expressed after the Second Constitutional Era laid the foundations of today's political life. The ideas that were put forward, including primarily Islamism, Westernism, and Turkism, have been adopted by the masses and affected the political life in Turkey.

Among the political thoughts that have been put forward, Islamism is particularly important. Although they have existed from the Second Constitutional Era but hindered with the policies implemented after the declaration of republic, it became an ideology that revived after 1970s and had an influence on the political life in Turkey. Especially with the emergence of the National Vision movement in 1970s, it gained more on practical basis. Persistence of Islamism in the face of the pressure and oppressive policies implemented in certain periods may be explained with the strong bonds between the people and Islam, and the efforts of Islamist intellectuals.

Specifically the efforts made through newspapers and magazines in the republic era strengthened Islamism. Sebilürreşad was one of the most prominent publications of this category. Owned by Eşref Edip Fergan, Sebilürreşad was the usual meeting point for Islamist writers and intellectuals. It started its publication life with the name of Sıratımüstakim in the Second Constitutional Era, and was later renamed to Sebilürreşad. The primary reason for Sebilürreşad to have an important place in the intellectual life of Turkey was its owner Eşref Edip Fergan. He took the magazine to a significant place in intellectual life from the day it was first released.

Eşref Edip was among the prominent figures of Islamist thinking particularly with his attitude in the republic era. He expressed his ideas more freely after he started to publish Sebilürreşad

again in 1948. He opposed the one-party rule and criticized the antireligious policies. He carried on his Islamist personality that gained after the Second Constitutional Era. In addition, he put a stress on the Turkish national identity as his family migrated from the region of Turkistan. In this respect, Eşref Edip Fergan can be defined as an intellectual close to Turkish-Islamist and nationalist-religious line of intellectuals. He managed to create a significant sphere of influence with his ideas. All Islamist movements in Turkey have been affected by the Sebilürreşad magazine of Eşref Edip Fergan. In this respect, he made a great contribution to Islamism.

The Turkish national identity occasionally emphasized by Eşref Edip is a nationalist ideology that was shaped by the historical memory of the Ottoman Empire rather than a racist nationalism.<sup>100</sup>

Nevertheless, he always gave priority to Islam in his articles, books, and columns. His fundamental idea was the Islamic Unity, which prescribes Muslims to unite, and be in a stronger and more effective position. While doing this, he challenges the West and Westernist ideologies.

Based on his positioning of Sebilürreşad, Eşref Edip is on the patriotic and Islamist line of thinking. In this respect, he laid the foundation for the ideas that deeply affected the Turkish political life. For instance, the National Vision movement was positioned on the Islamist line of thinking and greatly influenced by the arguments of Eşref Edip Fergan. Even today, the line of thinking that is influential in political life was nurtured by Eşref Edip Fergan and his magazine Sebilürreşad.

Eşref Edip objected specifically the ideas and lifestyles of Western origin. He defined the policies of Western origin as imitation, and expressed his views on secularism in particular. Pointing out that an attempt had been made to wipe out the values of the society that has a certain cultural heritage by changing and transforming it, and raised an objection to this attempt. He made his objections through the concept of secularism in particular. His

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<sup>100</sup> It is possible to see this idea in the works of Eşref Edip. Especially the emphasis on Islamic Union proves this idea of his.

objections were expressed in a similar manner later by different political movements. His views on secularism were taken as an example and turned into a discourse.<sup>101</sup>

From a general point of view, Eşref Edip is one of the prominent figures of the Turkist-Islamist line of thinking in Turkey. He spoke out his ideas in his articles and books has an impact in the intellectual life of Turkey. In this respect, an academic analysis on Eşref Edip, a prominent figure for Turkish political and intellectual life, is the main purpose of this study.



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<sup>101</sup> Especially the statements of National Vision Movement are parallel to Eşref Edip Fergan's ideas. For instance, Eşref Edip Fergan, in his articles, sets forth that especially Secularism concept has been misunderstood and misapplied. National Vision Movement brought almost the same statements regarding Secularism to the area of politics.

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