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MODERNIZING NEIGHBORS: TURKISH-IRANIAN RELATIONS FROM
THE INTERWAR PERIOD TO THE EARLY COLD WAR

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A Master's Thesis

by

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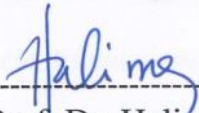
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ABSTRACT

MODERNIZING NEIGHBORS: TURKISH-IRANIAN RELATIONS FROM THE INTERWAR PERIOD TO THE EARLY COLD WAR

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After the establishment of the Turkish Republic and the Pahlavi dynasty, Turkish-Iranian bilateral relations reached their peak under the leaderships of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Reza Shah Pahlavi. Then, the premiership of Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran (1951-1953) was an era during which the bilateral relations were tested. This study deals with the factors behind these two distinctive periods in the inter-state relations. Taking into consideration the development of the nationalist ideology as an important political force in the hands of both the nationalist-modernist regimes of the interwar period and for Mossadegh's popular national movement, I have sought to explain the different articulations of the nationalist ideology in Turkey and Iran before and after WWII. As the findings of this study show, nationalism in interwar Turkey and Iran emerged as an official state ideology which aimed to establish state authority across the country. Each state's commitment to the idea of the nation-state

and to the sovereignty of the other proved to be significant in close relations. After WWII, Turkish nationalism evolved to take on an anti-communist identity. On the other hand, the rising tide of nationalism, anti-imperialism, and communism led up to the nationalization of Iranian oil in 1951. The early Cold War years marked a divergence in the interpretations of the nationalist ideology in Turkey and Iran, and ideological divergence contributed to the weakening of bilateral relations.

Keywords: Anti-imperialism, Communism, Iran, Nationalism, Turkey

ÖZET

MODERNLEŞEN KOMŞULAR: İKİ DÜNYA SAVAŞI ARASI DÖNEMDEN ERKEN SOĞUK SAVAŞ DÖNEMİNE TÜRK-İRAN İLİŞKİLERİ

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Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ve Pehlevi hanedanının kurulmasından sonra, Türkiye-İran ikili ilişkileri, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk ve Rıza Şah Pehlevi liderliğinde zirveye ulaşmıştır. Ardından İran’da Muhammed Mossadegh’in başbakanlık yaptığı yıllar (1951-1953), ikili ilişkilerin test edildiği bir dönem olmuştur. Bu çalışma, devletlerarası ilişkilerde bu iki farklı dönemin arkasındaki etkenleri ele almaktadır. Hem iki dünya savaşı arası dönemin milliyetçi-yenilikçi rejimlerinde hem de Mossadegh’in popüler milliyetçi hareketinde milliyetçi ideolojinin önemli bir siyasal güç olarak gelişimi ele alındığında, 2. Dünya Savaşı öncesi ve sonrasında milliyetçi ideolojinin Türkiye ve İran'daki farklı ifadelendirilmelerini açıklamaya çalıştık. Bu çalışmanın bulgularının gösterdiği üzere, iki dünya savaşı arası Türkiye ve İran’ında milliyetçilik, tüm ülke sathında devlet otoritesi kurmayı amaçlayan resmi bir devlet ideolojisi olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Her bir devletin ulus-devlet fikrine ve diğerinin egemenliğine olan bağlılığının yakın ilişkilerde önemli olduğu kanıtlanmıştır. İkinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan

sonra, Türk milliyetçiliği anti-komünist bir kimliğe bürünmüştür. Öte yandan, İran'da yükselen milliyetçilik, anti-emperyalizm ve komünizm eğilimleri, 1951'de İran petrolünün millileşmesine zemin hazırlamıştır. Erken Soğuk Savaş dönemi Türkiye ve İran'da milliyetçi ideolojinin yorumunda ayrılığa işaret etmiştir ve ideolojik ayrışma ikili ilişkilerin zayıflamasına sebep olmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Anti-emperyalizm, İran, Komünizm, Milliyetçilik, Türkiye

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NOTE ON TERMS AND SPELLINGS

My consideration throughout has been to convey the Turkish names and surnames in accordance with the adoption of the Surname Law on June 21, 1934. For dates before 1934, I have used only individuals' first name, with their surnames in parentheses at the first use. For the dates after 1934, I have used surnames.

I have tried to use English wherever possible, including for terms and source titles that are easily translatable. Where I have translated source names, the original is indicated at the end of the relevant entry in the footnotes and the bibliography. Where I have used a non-English word in the text, I have given an approximate English translation in the text.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an examination of the parameters that guided bilateral relations between Turkey and Iran during the first half of the 20th century. It seeks to provide an answer to the question: “What factors led diplomatic relations to reach their zenith under the leaderships of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) and Reza Shah and then come to a standstill during the premiership of Mohammad Mossadegh (1951-1953)?” The question is particularly interesting because many scholarly works have highlighted the similar paths towards modernization that Turkey and Iran took during the interwar years. Several comparative studies between Atatürk’s Turkey and Reza Shah’s Iran have stressed the fact that their modernization programs envisaged similar secular, Westernized, and nationalist outlooks.¹ While these studies have shed important insights into the administrations of Atatürk and Reza Shah, little has been done to analyze the interactions between the modernist-nationalist regimes of both states and the inter-state relations in the interwar period.

This thesis argues that there is nonetheless a tangible correlation between the construction of nationalist-modernist ideologies in Turkey and Iran and the foreign relations in both interwar period and the early Cold War years. The significance of the first half of the 20th century for Turkish-Iranian relations, following the

¹ See, for example, Touraj Atabaki and Erik J. Zürcher, eds., *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004); Touraj Atabaki, ed., *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007); Birol Başkan, *From Religious Empires to Secular States: State Secularization in Turkey, Iran, and Russia* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014); John R. Perry, “Language Reform in Turkey and Iran,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Aug., 1985): 295- 311.

First World War lies in the similarities in the particular definition of nationalism as a state ideology in both states. When the Second World War came to an end, on the other hand, nationalisms, or rather the formulation of nationalist ideologies, showed divergence in Turkey and Iran.

The early 1920s fundamentally changed the dynamics between what had been the Ottoman and Persian Empires. The proclamation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and the foundation of Pahlavi dynasty in 1925 signified the collapse of the old social and political orders in the defunct empires. Turkish and Iranian nationalisms constituted the official discourse in the establishment of new social and political systems in Turkey and Iran. These nationalisms had two similar key characteristics, both of which were affected by the experience of socio-economic and political crisis in the previous century.

The Ottoman and Persian empires, though not colonized politically, had long been exposed to the economic instruments of colonial rule. As the Anglo-Russian strategic struggle intensified in the Mediterranean and all along the way to India in the 19th century, the Ottoman and Persian empires could do nothing but follow policies of 'balance' and 'equilibrium'. These policies, moreover, proved ineffective when both empires witnessed nearly total state collapse during and after WWI. Therefore, the formulation of nationalist ideology by the Turkish and Iranian elites was shaped by the perception of foreign threat. The anti-imperialist sentiment that had become influential during the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1922) and in Reza Shah's efforts to break the power of Britain and its local clients in Iran later continued to have the underlying significance in the evolution of national reforms aimed at creating a national industry, education, judicial system and the others. Works that emphasize secularization, modernization, and Westernization sometimes

underestimate the fact that these programs were tools used to achieve a broader goal: stability and strength within the international system.

The transition from multi-ethnic empires to modern nation-states was the second constituent part of Turkish and Iranian nationalisms. Attempts to create a relatively homogenous and unified nation-state defined the scope and dimensions of the state-led modernization during the inter-war period. The governments in each of the two countries transformed existing institutions or created new national socio-political systems strictly within the national boundaries of the Turkish and Iranian states. A national-unified system was necessary to subjugate the local powers most of which had nominal loyalty to the central power while they were alleged to obtain security guarantees from Britain. Sheikh Khaz'al, an Arab tribal chief in the southern province of Iran, signed an individual pact with Britain following the discovery of oil.² The Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925 likewise was seen as a product of British meddling which threatened the authority of the Turkish government for the pursuit of preserving its traditional autonomy.³ Andrew Mango also claims that Mustafa Kemal gained firsthand experiences about the tribal leaders and the Kurds during his military services in Syria, Aleppo, in the 2nd Ottoman army in Diyarbakır and in Anatolia after 19 May 1919.⁴ For both rulers, national reforms for the sake of achieving uniformity against ethnic or tribal distinctions were one way of avoiding potential domestic threats. At this point, Westernization set the method for modernization whereas nationalism became its ideology. The project of

² Reza Sheikh & Farid Fadaizadeh, "The Man Who Would Be King: The Rise of Reza Khan (1921-1925)," *History of Photography*, 37:1 (2013): 110.

³ Robert W. Olson and William F. Tucker, "The Sheikh Sait Rebellion in Turkey (1925): A Study in the Consolidation of a Developed Uninstitutionalized Nationalism and the Rise of Incipient (Kurdish) Nationalism," *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 18, Issue 3/4 (1978): 197-198.

⁴ Andrew Mango, "Atatürk and the Kurds," in *Seventy-Five Years of the Turkish Republic*, ed. Sylvia Kedourie (London; Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2000), 4.

Westernization set the framework for the reforms in 1930s without disturbing national sensitivities.⁵ While civilized dress code, Swiss civil code, the adoption of international calendar all indicated the direction of modernization, equally important they helped remove the distinctions in appearance, in civil and public life.

The nationalist ideologies in Turkey and Iran in the interwar period, both of which embraced anti-imperialist aspects, rapid Westernization, and centralizing state-building thus shared much in common. Most importantly, Westernization, despite the anti-imperialist elements, was compatible with nationalist modernization. One of the first tasks of the Language Council in Turkey which was founded as a part of the efforts for the purification of Turkish language was to translate the French *Le Petit Larousse* to Turkish in 1928.⁶ Equally, the huge rail-road projects and establishment of industrial facilities in Iran for the sake of national development depended on Western technology and engineering.⁷

The nationalist-modernist ideology allowed Turkey and Iran to pursue their aims of being recognized by the other states as equal members of the international arena. Their blueprints for reform that were to lead to self-sufficiency with the help of national development schemes. Militarily secure and economically strong governments were closely connected with the need for greater external legitimacy. Reza Shah's state visit to Turkey in June 1934 was, by the same token, seen in Turkish quarters as demonstration of the success of these two-fold purposes. This important event in Turkey's relations with Iran was designed to display all the achievements of the state-led modernization of Turkey. Travel through Eastern

⁵ Dankwart A. Rustow, "Atatürk as Founder of a State," *Daedalus*, Vol. 97, No. 3, Philosophers and Kings: Studies in Leadership (Summer, 1968): 813.

⁶ İlker Aytürk, "The First Episode of Language Reform in Republican Turkey: The Language Council from 1926 to 1931," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, Vol. 18, No. 3 (2008): 284.

⁷ Ali Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921: The Pahlavis and After* (New York: Longman, 2003), 19.

Anatolian cities, to Ankara, which was the political center of the Turkish state, and to Eskişehir, Manisa, İzmir, Balıkesir where the anti-imperialist war had been fought represented the extent to which Turkey had so far succeeded in establishing the nation-state within the national boundaries.

The examination of the Turkish-Iranian relations in the aftermath of the Second World War that constitutes the second part of this thesis supports the idea of interwar similarity by showing postwar difference. The Second World War forced both Turkey and Iran to recognize their insecurity, but in different ways. Turkey faced a revived Soviet threat; Iran, however, had been invaded. Radical nationalism became a much more pressing ideological instrument used to justify Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh's oil nationalization policies in early 1950s but this nationalism was not one that would bring Turkey and Iran together around a shared understanding of common aims. In 1951, Iranian society was in ferment as historical social tensions melded with humiliating imperialist experiences in the struggle against the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. When this revolutionary ferment caused a serious crisis between Iran and Britain that ended with a CIA-MI6 joint operation in August 1953, it revealed that this nationalist ideology was not something compatible with the West in the context of the Cold War.

The high-level diplomatic relations between Turkey and Iran were almost frozen during the premiership of Mossadegh because Turkey was apprehensive about the political developments after the Oil Legislation Bill was approved in the Iranian Majlis in 1951. Turkey did not take any affirmative stance towards the oil nationalization movement, and Iranians protested via the Turkish ambassador to Tehran against Turkey's tacit pro-British position in the crisis. Here, the divergence in the interpretations of nationalism by the Turkish and Iranian governments became

apparent. This divergence emerged to the surface in 1950s. Turkey did not extoll the anti-imperialist motives of the oil nationalization movement. When the nationalization of Iranian oil resources was at the crux of the negotiations among Iran, Britain and the US at the end of 1951, the depiction of the issue in the Turkish press pointed to a very different picture. Turkey's handling of the problem was confined to the alleged affinity of Iran's nationalist ferment with Soviet communism. The Turkish press lacked any interpretation of the nationalization movement within the context of the particular articulation of Iranian nationalism.

This study focuses on this difference in the understandings of nationalism by making a comparative analysis of Turkish-Iranian relations in the interwar period and the Cold War. To find an answer to those afore-mentioned questions over Turkish-Iranian relations in different periods, the study provides a comprehensive literature review in each chapter rather than in the introduction. Turkish archival sources which were obtained from the Republican Archives of Prime Ministry (now the General Directorate of State Archives) and memoirs of statesmen were used to put these documents in context. Among primary sources, newspapers proved to be one of the most instructive sources. In order to understand the Turkish government's official line, the Turkish newspapers were helpful since the Turkish press only allowed for a rather limited public discourse especially after the passing of the Law on the Maintenance of Order in March 1925. English-language newspapers were used either from their translations obtained from the Turkish archives or from digital archives such as the *New York Times*. They indeed showed that the third parties had yet to perceive the new parameters in Turkish-Iranian relations as in the case of the Ararat Rebellion. For the Cold War period, the Turkish newspapers, which were the official

or semi-official press organs of the political parties, also provided insights into the official line of the many Turkish quarters.

This study is not about discussing ‘modernization’ in all its aspects, because examining it is beyond the limits of this study. It does not intend to discuss whether similarities in the application of major socio-economic and cultural reforms in Turkey and Iran during the interwar era occurred one way or another. The contribution of such studies to the study of foreign policy can be limited since they would tell little about the particulars of bilateral political relations. Moreover, as far as modernization can be considered an important parameter which guided the relations between Atatürk’s Turkey and Reza Shah’s Iran, the strategic impetus to conduct their own modernization projects by Atatürk and Reza Shah should be examined. The search for understanding how the modernist-nationalist ideology was formulated, then, would tell much about the domestic and foreign policy considerations.

The core of the thesis is divided into three chapters. The second chapter establishes the context of the transition from multi-ethnic Ottoman and Persian empires to the Turkish and Iranian nation-states during the 1920s and 1930s. This chapter discusses what the formation of the nationalist-modernist ideology meant to state-society relationship in the newly-established states. It points out how nationalism was articulated in a way that increased state domination over other societal actors. It shows that state-building and nation-building were mostly used interchangeably to emphasize that the issue of state authority was intertwined with the question of creating ‘national identity’ in this period.

The third chapter, which is devoted to the first episode of Turkish-Iranian relations in the 20th century, turns to the bilateral relations under the rule of Atatürk and Reza Shah. To better understand the significance of nationalism, this chapter begins with the TBMM Government's⁸ relations with Qajar Iran under its last Shah. It then focuses on two brief periods which were the diplomatic crisis during the Ararat Rebellion in 1930 and Reza Shah's official visit to Turkey in 1934. The aim of this chapter is to argue that the commitment to the idea of nationalism by Turkey and Iran, which was defined in terms of the inviolable sovereignty of the nation-state and a centralized state power, enabled them to engage in rapprochement.

The fourth chapter examines Turkey's relations with Mossadegh's Iran. This chapter begins with an explanation of the roots of change in Turkish and Iranian politics at the end of the Second World War. The first sub-section makes a comparison of the Turkish and Iranian domestic politics through examining the transition to multi-party politics in Turkey and the emergence of different actors in Iranian political scene. It argues that this period reveals the initial divergence between Turkey and Iran where the limited participation of societal actors in Turkish politics continued but the Iranian politics were gradually popularized. The second sub-section points to the effect of social changes on the evolution of nationalist ideology. In Turkey, the dominance of state-defined nationalism led to take its anti-communist stance. In Iran, the involvement of popular, radical groups left only a thin line between communism and nationalism. The aim of this last chapter is to focus on the discrepant views of nationalism in Turkey and Iran in order to further highlight

⁸ TBMM Government, referred to the Government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, was the name given to the provisional government based in Ankara between 1920-1923. The Grand National Assembly of Turkey officially announced the Republic of Turkey on 29 October 1923.

the significance of the shared understandings of nationalism in the interwar Turkey and Iran.



CHAPTER II

NATION-BUILDING AND NATIONALISM IN TURKEY AND IRAN

The modernization projects were one of the high political priorities in Turkey following the proclamation of Republic in 1923 and in Iran after the replacement of the Qajar dynasty with Pahlavi dynasty in 1925. Atatürk and Reza Shah as political pioneers of the ‘new’ and modernity in the Middle East were the symbols of their radical modernization drives, respectively in Turkey and Iran. This chapter explores the aspects of modernization in the newly-established nation-states because it shaped statecraft, domestic policy, and foreign policy. The two newborn nation-states of the post-WWI world started to build a friendly relationship in the early 20th century, even though both had a long history of warfare against each other. Unlike the long history of military confrontation and power struggle between the Ottoman and Persian empires, a new relation based on mutual trust and cooperation signified a rather abrupt change in the attitudes of the new leaderships of Turkey and Iran. ‘Cooperation’ was a ‘new’ policy instrument between Turkey and Iran, which the policymakers and the foreign policy elites of the former empires had largely ignored for more than four centuries. Their respective modernization drives played an important role in this. This chapter aims to present those elements of the socio-political transformation of the Turkish and Iranian states that facilitated ‘cooperation’ in bilateral relations.

General Hassan Arfa, who accompanied Reza Shah to Ankara in 1934*, describes Atatürk and Reza Shah as two leaders ‘alike in their ideals and in their extraordinary strength of character and the authority which emanated from them’.⁹ Pierre Oberling, when speaking about Reza Shah’s visit to Turkey in June 1934, mentions that the two leaders played endless poker games as they discussed the best ways to modernize their nations.¹⁰

The relationship between Atatürk and Reza Shah was associated with their modernization goals during Reza Shah’s historic visit to Turkey, regarded as perhaps the zenith of the friendship between the two rulers. Moreover, it was a kind of modernization which was understood as an ideal for the two leaders’ nations to draw abreast of the West. It is frequent to see references to commonalities in discussing their experiences of change in several fields, be it civil and criminal code, be it language or be it dress code and hat law.

Modernization, used interchangeably with the term ‘Westernization’ in non-European countries, was indeed an ideal to be set out to achieve in Turkey and Iran at the turn of the century. On the other part, the practice of modernization project in the Turkish and Iranian states from the onset of their foundations was the inevitable corollary of the question of ‘how to define national identity’ in the post-imperial context. When the catastrophe of the Great War, the Turkish War of Independence, and the major tribal conflicts in Iran came to an end towards the mid-1920s, Turkey and Iran had to find a way around the question of ‘Who are we?’

* General Hassan Arfa (1895-1983) was a senior army officer in the Iranian army. He was a member of the delegation that accompanied Reza Shah in his state visit to Turkey in 1934. Later, he became the Chief of General Staff between 1944 and 1946 under the rule of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

⁹ General Hassan Arfa, *Under Five Shahs* (London: John Murray, 1964), 246.

¹⁰ Pierre Oberling, “Atatürk and Reza Shah,” In *I. Uluslararası Atatürk Sempozyumu, Açılış Konuşmaları-Bildiriler, 21-23 September 1987* (Ankara: AKDİTYK Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 1994), 653.

The construction of national identity which had very much to do with the modernization project was a crucial issue for Atatürk's Turkey and Reza Shah's Iran during the interwar years. Dilek Barlas states that the question of 'how to make the new nation viable' still perturbed Turkish decision-makers in the 1930s, almost ten years after the War of Independence.¹¹ The situation in Iran was even worse, as people identified themselves with their tribes such as Lurs, Bakhtiyaris, Kurdish, Qashqai and the others, rather than with an Iranian national identity.

From this standpoint, the formation of the nation-state and its preservation throughout the 1920s and 1930s required a degree of external and internal political stability. Nation-building needed external stability since sovereignty against foreign security threats was the prerequisite for the establishment of the nation state.¹² It needed internal stability because the maintenance of integrity of nation was bound up with developing a common national identity. In order to achieve two aims -foreign and internal stability-, the blueprint was explicit: to establish state authority over the entire country.

Considering this, the idea of nation-building does not emerge as a part of modernization ideal, but it was, rather, a deliberative political project to protect security interests. In line with this argument, John Breuilly also treats nationalism as 'a form of politics' in the form of certain political behaviors. To him, studies examining nationalism only as the expression of national awareness, socio-economic

¹¹ Dilek Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy in Turkey: Economic and Foreign Policy Strategies in an Uncertain World, 1929-1939* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 112.

¹² Ibid. This helps explain why Turkey and Iran emerged as a pro status-quo states in their international relations after the WWI. For an in-depth discussion of Iran's relations with the USSR and Britain during Reza Shah rule, see Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *The Foreign Policy of Iran: A Developing Nation in World Affairs, 1500-1941* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1966). See also Aptülahat Akşin, *Atatürk'ün Dış Politika İlkeleri ve Diplomasisi* [Atatürk's Foreign Policy Principles and Diplomacy] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991).

structures or the cultural modernization program overlook the correlation among nationalism, politics and power in the modern state system.¹³ Nationalism and the formation of nation-state in Turkey and Iran, therefore, should be correlated to the concomitant efforts to establish state authority.

In this critical-historical juncture, post-WWI Turkey and Iran shared commonality in search for consolidating state authority and legitimacy of power domestically and internationally. The aim of this section is to analyze what the transition from empires to nation-states implies for the definition of national identity in Atatürk's Turkey and Reza Shah's Iran after the WWI and to elaborate on two actor's practices of nationalist project in the post-imperial context.

2.1 Kemalist Nationalism and Competing Nationalisms in Anatolia: '*Atatürk was not an Abdulhamid II*'

"How to save the Empire?" This had been the question the Young Ottomans asked in the past century. Turkism was one of the political solutions that they formulated, and it was the question of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Empire. The Kemalist regime was run by the political elites of the old order and so it is quite likely to discuss various ruptures in the transition from the empire to the nation-state and certain continuities in the minds of the Young Turk ideology. Of the continuities, nationalism was one which became the distinguishing feature among Ottoman intellectual circles, Young Turks and, later Republican elites. What was going to become different in the Turkish Republic was the fact that Mustafa Kemal rejected

¹³ John Breuilly, *Nationalism and State* (Manchester: Manchester University, 1993), 1-14.

Turkism at a very early stage with the National Pact.¹⁴ In Turkey, new Republican elites, immediately after the foundation of the Republic in 1923, started following through their national transformation. Mustafa Kemal and his close comrades felt the need to create a sense of national identity after gaining independence and to further a traditional and disunified society into a modernized nation. In the context of Turkish-Iranian relations, the transformation from Turkism as an imperial ideology to modernization project confined to the national boundaries of the new Republic signified a complete alteration of state-society relationship in Turkey and created a major common ground between Atatürk's Turkey and Reza Shah's Iran.

John Breuilly, in his classic book on the politics of nationalism, defines the cases of Turkey, China and Japan as a kind of loose anti-colonial nationalism which is 'reform nationalism.' An extensive network of economic patronage notwithstanding, the lack of political domination in the three countries gave rise to a different sort of antagonism against the foreign threat than an anti-colonial nationalist movement. It did not occur in the way of seizing control of state against Western powers but of reforming the existing state institutions to be competent enough to struggle against foreign threats.¹⁵

The reform movement in Turkey, interwoven with the ideology of nationalism, accordingly was a two-way street between the modernization ideal through transforming state institutions and the security interests to encounter with foreign threats. This dual feature of the reforms gave the Kemalist modernization and nationalism a more political and pragmatic character.

¹⁴ François Georgeon, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri: Yusuf Akçura (1876-1935)* [The Origins of Turkish Nationalism: Yusuf Akçura (1876-1935)] (Ankara: Yurt, 1986), 129.

¹⁵ Breuilly, 230. Breuilly did not include the case of modern Iran into the category of 'reform nationalism' in his classification but Pahlavi Iran could be added in terms of the reformist character of Pahlavi rule in the context of asserting greater security and sovereignty against Western powers.

In the name of ‘reform nationalism’, the Turkish case could be regarded as a true success story. In a decade, many major reforms were introduced in Turkey. The abolition of the caliphate was ensued by the closure of the all religious seminaries and the Sharia courts in March 1924; hat reform and dress code were introduced in November 1925; Swiss civil code and Italian penal code were adopted in October 1926; the Latin alphabet was introduced in November 1928; the religious titles were banned in November 1934. This chapter, moreover, tries to shed light on the change which all these reforms and many others brought to the state structure in Turkey. Reforming state institutions against internal and external threats following the description of Breuilly, it culminated in the Turkish state’s effort to build the state domination over the entire society.¹⁶

The changes in state-society relationship following the foundation of the Turkish Republic were the direct result of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and had two stages. The Lausanne Treaty and the subsequent Population Exchange Convention which was ratified on 23 August 1923 following the Lausanne Conference were a watershed moment for the new Republican elite of Turkey. It was the early phase of the nation-building in which the formation of nationhood had a ‘civic-territorial’ characteristic.¹⁷ As the second phase of nationalism, the Kemalist regime pushed through infusing a new identity in more ethno-linguistic terms especially in 1930s.¹⁸ It reveals the second differentiating point of the Kemalist nationalism from Turkism which was the excessiveness in the expression of

¹⁶ Frederick W. Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite* (Cambridge, MA; MIT Press, 1965), 40-42.

¹⁷ Yeşim Bayar, “In Pursuit of Homogeneity: The Lausanne Conference, Minorities and the Turkish Nation,” *Nationalities Papers*, 42:1 (2014): 108.

¹⁸ I borrow this formulation from Geneviève Zubrzycki’s analysis of ‘ethnic and civic nationalism’ in the construction of national identity. See Geneviève Zubrzycki, “‘We, the Polish Nation’: Ethnic and Civic Visions of Nationhood in Post-Communist Constitutional Debates,” *Theory and Society*, 30 (2001).

nationalism through instilling cultural and historical myths.¹⁹ In both stages, the practice of nationalism had political dimensions through institutionalizing the nationalist project in search for domestic legitimacy at home and also considering the international reconfiguration in its historical context of transition from empire to nation-state.

The early phase of Kemalist nationalism, although it was successful in waging an anti-imperialist war, was also a moment of burgeoning alternative nationalisms to the Kemalist regime in the same territory. Feroz Ahmad states that the alliance among the military and state officials, merchants, landowners from the countryside and the members of other professions formed a coalition in the struggle against the Western powers.²⁰ But interestingly, the Kemalist regime was influential in loosening the ties of that coalition. This was partly explained by the new regime's goal of creating a classless, unprivileged and integrated society.²¹ Inherently, the

¹⁹ Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 181-2. Earlier, the idea of nationalism embraced by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) stemmed from patriotism and from the endeavors to seek for a solution to overcome the Empire's dire situation in the presence of various secessionist movements. Nationalism was seen as an ideology which would be able to ensure the Ottoman territories remain intact with its various religious and ethnic subjects. For Ziya Gökalp, an influential Turkish writer and sociologist for the ideological development of Young Turk policies, nation either Turks or Kurds contained a cultural essence, not having an ethnic or political component. In Namık Kemal's famous play *Vatan Yahut Silistre* [Fatherland or Silistra], his message was about patriotism, defense of the state against the enemy- the Russians in 1854. The emotional patriotic appeals of the play were made to the Ottomans, not to the ethnic Turks. Heper claims that even Turkism in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars (1912-1923), which was a great shock to the Empire and the idea of Ottomanism, was not a counter-discourse to Ottomanism. The concept of nationalism, in the last analysis, embedded in the sentiments of solidarism along with the hatred of Western imperialism. See Metin Heper, *The State and Kurds in Turkey: The Question of Assimilation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 52; Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 158; Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Princeton, N.J.: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 331.

²⁰ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy, 1950-1975* (London: Westview Press, 1977), 7.

²¹ İsmail Beşikçi criticizes the Kardo movement of being the ideological official organ of this goal. According to him, the aim of the Kadro was to systemize the reform ideology and to create a Kemalism with a doctrinal content. See İsmail Beşikçi, *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası'nın Programı (1931)*

practical experience of nationalism as one of the six arrows would be against the feudal-religious structuring of the Ottoman system. When Kemalist nationalism created a burgeoning Kurdish movement in 1925, Robert Olson and William Tucker accurately describe the situation by stating that ‘Atatürk was not Abdulhamid II’.²² What the Turkish state encountered in Diyarbakır in 1925 was the clash between the maintenance of a traditional way of life in the periphery and the reluctance of the central government to give autonomy or a free hand to the local notables. Centralizing reforms were a direct menace to the power of local notables. No matter whether they had nationalist motivations or not, the consolidation of central power inherent in state-building was detrimental to the independence of Kurdish sheikhs who had exercised tremendous power for more than a century in eastern Anatolia. This time, the spark was the opposition against the ‘disestablishment of Islam’ for the outbreak of the Sheikh Said Rebellion, but at the same time it is reasonable to consider the resentment of the Kurdish notables over the conscription and taxation of the government.²³ In fact, the blurring lines between religious affiliations and socio-economic aspirations for the causes of the Rebellion revealed its significance in terms of state-society relations. The desire to bring the societal groups under the state control proved that the suppression of the rebellion had a meaning beyond secularism.

In early April 1925, the Turkish troops won a decisive victory over the rebels. Sheikh Said and his followers were prosecuted and hanged in June. Four months

ve Kürt Sorunu [The Program of the Republican People’s Party and the Kurdish Question] (İstanbul: Belge, 1991), 37.

²² Olson and Tucker, “The Sheikh Sait Rebellion,” 198. See also Johannes Glosneck, *Kemal Atatürk ve Çağdaş Türkiye III* [Kemal Atatürk and Contemporary Turkey III]. (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet, 1998), 16.

²³ Olson and Tucker, 200.

later, all the Sufi orders were closed down in Turkey. It was partly because of the fact that the Kemalist regime considered the *tarikats* (dervish orders) as an institution unique to the Kurdish nation.²⁴ It could be argued that the underlying reason behind the reforms made under the banner of secularism again reveals the Turkish state's aim to consolidate the state power against any autonomous structure. Gavin Brockett explains this situation as the efforts of the Kemalist elite to purge any political opponents in the form of collective action. The fact that either an institution like *the Turkish Hearths* or the religious establishment *tarikats* was not immune from the state's purge against the collective structures which would have share the state authority in public and private realms.²⁵

The process which began with the delivery of the Great Address (Büyük Nutuk) in October 1927 and accelerated throughout the 1930s can be considered as the second phase of Turkish nationalism in which the state monopolized the dissemination of the nationalist ideology through excessive form of cultural indoctrination. As in the case of early socio-economic reforms, it proves the Turkish state's free hand in determining the parameters of state-society relationship. The *Nutuk* epitomized the articulation of the nationalist discourse by introducing cultural myths and concepts.²⁶ The Turkish History and Language Theses of the 1930s could also be considered as a follow-up to these early endeavors to instill the nationalist ideology. Prior to the foundation of the Turkish Language Institute (TDK) in 1932, another institution, the Language Council was founded in 1926 under the auspices of the Ministry of Education in the political environment after the suppression of the

²⁴ Beşikçi, 94.

²⁵ Gavin D. Brockett, "Collective Action and the Turkish Revolution: Towards a Framework for the Social History of the Atatürk Era, 1923-38," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (1998): 47.

²⁶ Aysel Morin & Ronald Lee, "Constitutive Discourse of Turkish Nationalism: Atatürk's Nutuk and the Rhetorical Construction of the "Turkish People," *Communication Studies*, 61:5 (2010): 486.

Sheikh Said Rebellion in order to carry out semi-academic research to purify the Turkish language.²⁷ Later, the TDK took over the task of conducting linguistic researches. İlker Aytürk writes that the members of the central committee of the TDK was selected by Mustafa Kemal personally from the MPs and his close colleagues; members of its local branches were selected from the local People's Houses. The institute was financed directly by the state budget.²⁸

The intention behind the formulation of the Turkish History Thesis promulgated in July 1932 also served two purposes. It was a move towards creating a homogeneous Turkish nation-state by inculcating a sense of honor in the Turks. The foundation of the Turkish Historical Association in 1931 and the Language, History and Geography Faculty in Ankara in 1935 were similar attempts as a part of this cultural indoctrination. The thesis also asserted that the Turks were the first residents of Anatolia and it attached a priority to the Turks in Asia Minor over the Armenians and Kurds.²⁹

Greater emphasis on cultural and linguistic nationalism during the 1930s aside, it was also significant for Turkish nationalism since it demonstrates the state monopolization in the dissemination of the ideology in cultural realm as in other fields. Many state institutions were instrumental in the spread of the nationalist ideology in cultural sphere. Moreover, the People's Houses which replaced the Turkish Hearths in 1932 proved beneficial in the indoctrination of the nationalist ideology of the Kemalist regime. The Turkish Hearths founded in 1911 were headed

²⁷ İlker Aytürk, "The First Episode of Language Reform in Republican Turkey: The Language Council from 1926 to 1931," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, Vol. 18, No. 3 (2008): 279.

²⁸ İlker Aytürk, "Politics and Language Reform in Turkey: The 'Academy' Debate," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Vol. 98 (2008): 15.

²⁹ Clive Foss, "Kemal Atatürk: Giving a New Nation a New History," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 50:5 (2014): 828.

by the Turkists such as Ziya Gökalp, Fuad Köprülü, Yusuf Akçura and the others and had the same ideological function.³⁰ The succession of the People's Houses set a good example of the state's domination over social groups in the cultural realm as in the all other state activities. Consequently, the nationalist-modernist project in the political agenda of the Turkish elites for two decades encompassed two phases of nation-building efforts through creating a homogenous population associated with cultural and linguistic nationalism.

2.2 State-Nation Building in Iran

Reza Khan established the Pahlavi dynasty in December 1925 and he became the first Shah of Pahlavi Iran.³¹ Reza Shah during his almost 19-year career on the Iranian political scene as Army Commander, Minister of War, Prime Minister, Regent of Iran and eventually as the Shah of Iran marked a major breakthrough for the modern Iranian state. His policies had far-reaching repercussions on the configuration of Pahlavi Iran in almost all its specifics, viz., military, administration, economy and jurisdiction.

In the first quarter of the 20th century, Iran had witnessed challenges to its territorial integrity and sovereignty. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Iran was on the brink of total disintegration during and after WWI. Wishes and desires to reverse the decline and collapse of the country's power started to stir patriotic feelings at exactly this time. Reza Khan as an army officer in the Cossack Brigade

³⁰ Kemal H. Karpat, "The People's Houses in Turkey: Establishment and Growth," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 1/2 (1963): 56.

³¹ Gholam Reza Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 16-23. For a more detailed description of the pre-Pahlavi period see also Sîrûs Ghanî, *Iran and the Rise of Reza Shah: from Qajar Collapse to Pahlavi Rule* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998).

was not the sole person who was aware of the need to prevent the country from sliding into anarchy. Every Iranian student returning home from education abroad, as Hedayat wrote, “holds under his arms a thesis about the French Revolution and wishes to play the role of Robespierre or Danton.”³² Foreign presence in the country became a galvanizing and unifying force among nationalist intellectuals, ulama and some tribal notables.³³ Although nationalism in the form of anti-British sentiments started to emerge from its intellectual cocoon at that time, there was no an all-embracing Iranian nationalist ideology to speak of especially among popular classes and local notables.

However, this early disillusionment with the threat to sovereignty, the early nationalist movements, their failures and the lessons which Reza Shah took from these perceived failures had an influence on the formation of the Pahlavi nationalist discourse. Reza Shah’s response to these failures was to embark on a comprehensive reform program to establish a modern, centralized state able to control vast mountainous territories of Iran for the first time in its history. His second target, as a prerequisite of achieving the first, was to create a homogenous nation. This concomitant task of the configuration of the Iranian state and nation occupied the first position in the political agenda of Reza Shah between the two world wars. Indeed, Iranian nationalism shared commonalities with what John Breuilly describes as ‘reform nationalism’. Being an economically and diplomatically semi-colonized state during the previous century, Iran had a modernized nationalist ruler who sought for remedies for the countries’ domestic needs and foreign threats.

³² Quoted in Ali Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921*, 20.

³³ H. Lyman Stebbins, “British Imperialism, Regionalism and Nationalism in Iran, 1890-1919,” In *Iran Facing Others: Identity Boundaries in a Historical Perspective*, eds. Abbas Amanat and Farzin Vejdani (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 160.

The historian Ervand Abrahamian claims that state-building was the distinguishing characteristic of the Reza Shah era. He moreover regards any comparison between Reza Shah and his contemporary counterparts Atatürk or Mussolini as anachronistic since the latter inherited countries with centralized administrative networks incomparable to what Reza Khan took over.³⁴ It is accurate to say that the Iranian government had not had the authority beyond the capital, Tehran, by the 1921 Coup D'état. When Reza Shah was forced to abdicate his throne in 1941, however, he left a legacy of massive state apparatus. So, in this regard Reza Shah's rule was a central episode in modern Iranian history but his rule itself was also a product of the environment within which Reza Shah entered to the political stage.³⁵

2.2.1 A New Order amidst Disorder: The Novelty of Reza Shah's Politics

Iran's foreign relations and the internal situation defined at the turn of the century in terms of national sovereignty and domestic stability. Russian and British imperial interests in Iran from the beginning of the 19th century onwards resulted in the Qajar state's acquiescence to the Great Powers through granting diplomatic and economic concessions. Popular unrest with intensified foreign economic activities in the country created the stage for early signs of national awakening.³⁶ This popular opposition manifested itself in the Tobacco Revolt, against a tobacco concession

³⁴ Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 65.

³⁵ Atabaki and Zürcher use the term 'man of order' to describe the nature of Reza Shah's relationship with the middle classes and the intelligentsia during the chaotic atmosphere of the post-WWI Iran. According to them, both Atatürk and Reza Shah were born out of the failure of 19th-century endeavors to reform in Ottoman and Persian Empires and apparent threat of disintegration in the post-WWI Turkey and Iran. See Touraj Atabaki and Erik J. Zürcher, eds., *Men of Order*, 1-12.

³⁶ Ramazani, *The Foreign Policy of Iran*, 77.

given to the British and Constitutional Revolution of 1906 in late 19th and early 20th centuries.

To better illustrate the concerns over sovereignty and national independence in Iran, one comparison between the Constitutional movements in Ottoman and Persian empires can be productive -The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 in the Ottoman Empire was a movement for 'freedom', and it achieved this goal. But immediately after the traumatic Balkan Wars and the decisive loss in the WWI, the Ottoman State lost its 'independence'. The Constitutional movement in Iran, on the other hand, was not generated out of appeal for 'freedom'. The Constitutional Revolution was itself a movement for 'independence'. What brought diverse groups together against the Qajar state at that time was their 'nationalist' concerns over the status of Iran.³⁷

Nonetheless, the constitutional rule fell short of solving Iran's century-old problems and Iran lost its 'independence' as the Ottoman State did during the WWI. Iran, in the turbulent years from 1906 up until WWI, was exposed to ever-increasing Anglo-Russian rivalry in her territories following the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 which gave each side exclusive spheres of influence in southern and northern Iran.³⁸ While the British in the south and Russians in the north were consolidating their positions via multifaceted instruments of imperialism, they unintentionally contributed to Iranian nationalism in the neutral zone of central Iran among intellectual circles, the mercantile class and the ulama –the religious class-.

³⁷ Ibid, 83. Ramazani describes the nature of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran as *nationalistic* rather than *democratic*, taken the intensity of Anglo-Russian rivalry together with the increasing disillusionment among the social groups into consideration.

³⁸ Homa Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran: Despotism and Pseudo-Modernism, 1926-1979* (New York: New York University Press, 1981), 59.

Independent of foreign pressure and interference, the political situation in Iran was chaotic. Following the Constitutional Revolution, a civil war engulfed the country between the supporters of Mohammad Ali Shah with Russian support and the Constitutionalists.³⁹ The apparent breakdown of central authority due to the immediate effect of the civil war disturbed the delicate balance between the center and the periphery. The southern and northern local notables, nomadic people and intractable Kurdish tribesmen had always maintained loose ties with the center throughout much of Iranian history.⁴⁰ However, in terms of the center-periphery relations the outbreak of WWI could be considered as a death blow for Iran to its integral integrity and sovereignty against incursions of encroaching powers.

What prompted Britain to develop deeper connections with the southern Bakhtiari tribes, Kurdish tribes and Sheikh Khaz'al of Mohammarah, which was an important city for APOC in Khuzestan province, was threat perception of Britain resulting from the presence of a strong enemy in northern Iran and a weak central government to be a bulwark against it.⁴¹

The years after the October Revolution were a crucial period. Revolution changed the precarious balance in the Great Game played by tsarist Russia and Britain over Persia until Reza Khan was able to suppress a number of revolts in Gilan, Tabriz and Khorasan. The chaotic political environment emanating from the Constitutional Revolution was exacerbated by tense relations between Bolshevik Russia and Britain.

³⁹ Ali Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921*, 26.

⁴⁰ Kamran Matin, *Recasting Iranian Modernity International Relations and Social Change* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 35-40.

⁴¹ Stebbins, "British Imperialism, Regionalism and Nationalism in Iran, 1890-1919", 157.

The Bolshevik Revolution and the withdrawal of Russian troops from Persian territories signified a fundamental change for Britain's Persian policy. The fact that Russia, the traditional enemy of Britain, faded away from the political scene in Persia did not turn out to the advantage of British. On the contrary, the absence of Russia created a dangerous power vacuum for Britain which could simply be filled by other powers, namely Germans or Turks.⁴² As the protection of British interests in the region turned out to be more pressing, the British preferred to consolidate its base in southern Iran in order to protect its traditional route to India. The southern local landowners, most of whom were British protégés, were chosen as the effective collaborator in central government's stead, to this end.

By 1919, the British stranglehold on Iran was immense. Another British move to tighten their stranglehold on Iran, besides backing the southern Bakhtiari and Sheikh Khazal of Mohammarah, was to conclude the notorious Anglo-Iranian Agreement of 1919 with Prime Minister Vosuq al-Dowleh.⁴³

Consequently, the grave situation in Iran was combined with the compelling urgency of strengthening the state against the internal insurrections and foreign occupation. Of the other revolutionary nationalists of the time, Reza Khan was not the only person to comprehend the problem. But, 'by will and by circumstance'⁴⁴, he succeeded in eliminating his rivals, took the upper hand, and vanquished the separatist tribal rulers. What appears to have been Reza Khan's strengthening his own position in Iranian politics and establishing state control in every part of the country, was in fact appreciated by his supporters and met silently by the opposition.

⁴² Stebbins, 162.

⁴³ Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 78.

⁴⁴ Homa Katouzian, "Nationalist Trends in Iran, 1921-1926," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Nov. 1979): 548.

2.2.1.1 Nationalism versus Regionalism: The Early Military Campaigns of Reza Khan

The juxtaposition of the domestic rebellions and separatist movements threatening the territorial integrity of Iran with Reza Shah's subsequent tight state control demonstrates that the early 1920s was a watershed moment for modern Iranian politics. Reza Shah's rule with its modernist, nationalist and centralist ideology was different from the Qajars in many ways. The Qajars had been associated with the decentralized rule, multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic community and 'divide and rule' policy.⁴⁵ In the context of Turkish-Iranian relations, the true significance of this period lies in what Reza Shah did to suppress the major revolts which sought for either greater autonomy under the central rule or the complete takeover of the central power. Here, I will mention four prominent opponents of the Iranian state right before Reza Shah's ascendancy to the throne which were the Gilan (Jangali) movement, Khiābāni's revolt, the Kurdish Simko Revolt and Sheikh Khaz'al.⁴⁶ The aim of this section is to make a comparative analysis of the early nationalist/separatist movements, and thus to highlight that Reza Shah's own nationalist movement stood out because it focused on survival of a state that would have the sole authority to modernize and to create national identity.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Nikki R. Keddie, *Qajar Iran and The Rise of Reza Khan, 1796-1925* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1999), 87.

⁴⁶ Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), 119.

⁴⁷ An evaluation of the Pahlavi era in terms of the suppression of the local insurgencies is not free from politically-charged judgments and assessments. This approach overlooked the then state of affairs in Iran throughout the late 19th century and early 20th century. The domestic and international developments, developments which paved the way for the manifestation of various ideological nationalist blueprints for the future of the country, culminated in the internal rebellions but not all of those were necessarily separatist. Of the merits among her path-breaking works on the Qajar and Pahlavi Iran, Stephanie Cronin succinctly points out that the narrative of uniqueness of Reza's reformist and modernist rule neglects the different expressions of patriotism and the alternative political agendas for state-building efforts. See Stephanie Cronin, *Soldiers, Shahs and Subalterns in Iran: Opposition, Protest and Revolt, 1921-1941* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 4-8.

When Reza Khan entered the political scene in Tehran with the 1921 Coup, he had a long road ahead of him to consolidate his power. Having been born in a village of Mazandaran Province and joined the Iranian army in his early teens, Reza Khan did not have a regional power base like the antecedent dynasties that ruled Persia.⁴⁸ However, with his ascending role in the army as an army commander and his influence in civil politics as war minister, Reza Khan had an ace up his sleeve: Reza Khan did not have his tribe but he created his own tribe, ‘the army’.⁴⁹ This new power base from the coup until the coronation enabled Reza Khan to launch successful military campaigns in the northern provinces, the Kurdish region, and the British-controlled south.

Shaikh Mohammad Khiābāni in Tabriz and Mirza Kuchik Khan in Gilan were the other outstanding potential saviors of Iran, all of whom tried to restore order in their regions against civil war and foreign aggression.⁵⁰ There was a spectrum of political attitudes among these and other various regional movements from anti-imperialism to patriotism, or from the struggle against the corruption and tyranny of infamous Vosuq al-Dowleh cabinet to establish order and security against the ongoing chaos in the country. In fact, an analysis of nature of these movements is outside the scope of this study. The question that must be addressed is to describe the political circumstances under which the fortune of Reza Khan, who was later to found Pahlavi dynasty, enabled him to stand out amongst other ‘potential saviors’.

⁴⁸ Peter Avery, *Modern Iran* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1967), 212.

⁴⁹ Ali Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921*, 34.

⁵⁰ Avery, *Modern Iran*, 212. Avery did not include and Khiābāni’s movement in Azerbaijan in the context of Reza Khan’s rise. It may be because Khiābāni’s movement was suppressed by former Prime Minister Hassan Pirnia in 1920 before the 1921 coup d’état. Yet still, Khiābāni’s revolt must be seen in this context as another chapter of the chaotic transitional period following the Constitutional Revolution. See Homa Katouzian, “The Revolt of Shaikh Mohammad Khiābāni,” *Iran, Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*, 37:1 (1999): 170.

Mirza Kuchik Khan (1880-1921) who carried out the radical Jangali movement, like other nationalists, sprang from the ferment of 1915.⁵¹ Having fought the Russian troops in Iranian Azerbaijan until 1916, Kuchik Khan and his collaborator Ihsanullah seized power in Gilan province. Following the evacuation of Russian army from Gilan in 1918, the Jangali movement revived after the Anglo-Iranian Agreement of 1919 was signed.⁵² The aim of their movement was to embark on a social reform program and to resist foreign influence. Kuchik Khan was a deeply religious and nationalist leader⁵³ and the Jangali movement was an anti-imperialist movement in the combat against Britain.⁵⁴

As an anti-imperialist force against Britain, it is not surprising to see that Kuchik Khan came to the Bolshevik's attention.⁵⁵ Bravin, the first Soviet diplomatic agent in Iran who made contacts with Baku Bolsheviks and got in touch with the Jangalis, in a telegram to Chicherin, the Soviet commissar of foreign affairs, praised Kuchik Khan for being 'revolutionary and defender of liberty of Persia'.⁵⁶ The rapprochement between the Jangalis and the Bolsheviks was somehow the result of joint Russian-Iranian border in northern Iran, Kuchik Khan's counting on the support

⁵¹ Pezhmann Dailami, "Bravin in Tehran and the Origins of Soviet Policy in Iran," *Revolutionary Russia*, 12:2 (1999): 76.

⁵² Pezhmann Dailami, "The Bolshevik Revolution and the Genesis of Communism in Iran, 1917-1920," *Central Asian Survey*, 11:3 (1992): 52. For more details, see P. Dailami, "Jangali Movement," at: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jangali-movement>.

⁵³ Avery, 213-5.

⁵⁴ Dailami, "The Bolshevik Revolution", 66.

⁵⁵ The Jangali movement was a kind of collaboration of nationalist movement with the Bolshevik involvement which resulted in the establishment of the Soviet Republic of Gilan (1920-1921). However, partly because of the peculiarities of the politics in Transcaucasia and partly Soviet decision to abandon the policy of flirting with such movements and to improve relations with the Iranian Government, Mirza Kuchik Khan was left alone by the Bolsheviks in September 1921. Jangalis was repulsed by a division of Cossack Brigade. It was the victory of Reza Khan over one of the greatest threats in the wake of his rise to the throne. See E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923, Vol III* (London: Macmillan, 1950): 294.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 62.

of the Bolsheviks and the Bolsheviks' objective to spread the revolutionary ideology against the Western (particularly British) imperialism.⁵⁷

The Jangali movement in Gilan was put to an end following the 1921 Coup.⁵⁸ Shared similar goals with Pahlavi dynasty such as country's independence from foreign domination and progress notwithstanding, the suppression of Jangali movement was extolled by the traditional elites and new growing bureaucracy in Tehran.⁵⁹ For the former, Reza Khan was able to defeat a 'separatist' movement and Bolshevik infiltration.⁶⁰ For the latter, disillusioned intelligentsia and middle class gave reprimand for Reza Khan's efforts to sustain internal stability and to defeat separatism.⁶¹

Shaikh Mohammad Khiābāni and the movement he headed can be examined in the context of revolutionary-nationalist movements of Iran following the Constitutional Revolution. Khiabani was a democrat in Tabriz and demanded the rights of the Azerbaijani people.⁶² Khiābāni had been a Majlis deputy until 1911, then he established the National Democratic Party of Azerbaijan and seized power in Tabriz. The object of his revolt was the Vosuq al-Dowleh's agreement with the British. Having advocated the provincial autonomy, Khiābāni's movement was far from being separatists. His source of skepticism toward the central authority arose

⁵⁷ Soli Shahvar & Emil Abramoff, "Russian Archival Sources for the Study of the Iranian Communist Party: The Pre-Tudeh Years, 1917-1942," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 43:3 (2016): 379-80.

⁵⁸ Keddie, *Qajar Iran and The Rise of Reza Khan*, 85.

⁵⁹ Cosroe Chaqueri, *The Soviet Socialist Republic of Iran, 1920-1921: Birth of the Trauma* (Pittsburgh and London: University of Pittsburgh Press), 376.

⁶⁰ Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 36.

⁶¹ M. Reza Ghods, *Iran in the Twentieth Century: A Political History* (Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers; London: Adamantine, 1989), 98.

⁶² Farideh Koochi-Kamali, *The Political Development of the Kurds in Iran: Pastoral Nationalism* (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 87.

from his suspicion that no government should have the authority to negotiate and to reach an agreement with foreign powers without the approval of the Majlis.⁶³

Home Katouzian, on the other hand, states that Khiābāni's revolt, contrary to the prevailing view, did not appear as a reaction to the 1919 agreement. Neither was it a pro-Bolshevik and separatist movement.⁶⁴ His argument was indeed a reflection of the general situation in Iran in the early 20th century. The apparent breakdown of central authority in Iran during the WWI have explained, Katouzian argues that the centrifugal forces was on the rise, but the chaos especially in the center was the consequence of the Constitutional Revolution and the foreign occupation only intensified it. Therefore, Khiābāni's revolt was not directly opposed to the foreign powers, mainly the British, it was against the internal chaos. In his speeches, Khiābāni reiterated the need for firm rule, and put emphasis on greater discipline, order and security.⁶⁵ In many ways, Khiābāni, a *Democrat* deputy of the Constitutional period, was one of the 'potential saviors' to fulfill and actualize the visions of the Revolution.

Khiābāni's defiance of chaos and indiscipline in his nationalist movement indeed reflects the peculiarities of Iranian politics during and after WWI. It proves how patriotism or nationalism has appeared to be interdependent with both internal and external security threats. At the end, it was his bad fortune that Khiābāni himself turned out to be a rebel against the authority. Chaos was terminated, as Khiābāni wished, over the course of Reza Shah's 16-year rule.

⁶³ Avery, *Modern Iran*, 219.

⁶⁴ Katouzian, "The Revolt of Shaikh Mohammad Khiābāni," 155.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 159.

Following the establishment of internal order in the northern provinces, Gilan and Azerbaijan, Reza Khan managed to suppress the Kurdish Sheikh Simko revolt in 1922. The Kurdish populations that spread across the territories of both Ottoman and Persian empires had always enjoyed a considerable autonomy in eastern Anatolia and northwestern Iran. Therefore, Kurdish revolts became the epitome of the early 20th-century counter-revolutionary acts against the newly-established nation states' endeavors to have full control over their territories.⁶⁶ No matter whether Simko revolt was a resurgence of greater Kurdish autonomy in the region or another separatist movement⁶⁷, the response of the new Iranian army under the command of Reza Khan to Simko was intolerant. As it had been towards the nomadic tribes in the south –the Shahsavans, Lurs, Baluchis, Turcomans and Qashqais between 1922 and 1925.⁶⁸

The end of the autonomy of Sheikh Khaz'al Khan of Muhammarah, who had long been a British protégé in the oil-rich province of Khuzestan, also signified the height of Reza Khan's prestige and dominance in Iranian politics. When the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention had solidified the regional influence areas of Russia and Britain, the British found it useful to cultivate relationships with local actors to safeguard its interests in southern Iran. Sheikh Khaz'al, together with the Bakhtiari Khans, benefitted from British assurances for his autonomy between 1902 and 1914. In the absence of Qajar control over the state, those local tribal leaders served the purpose of protecting the interests of AIOC and the safety of the British trade route in the south against foreign attack.⁶⁹ Therefore, the move against Sheikh Khaz'al on

⁶⁶ For a detailed discussion of Kurdish tribal development before the 1921 coup, see Farideh Koohi-Kamali, *The Political Development of the Kurds in Iran*, 66-71.

⁶⁷ Ghods, 98.

⁶⁸ Ansari, 36.

⁶⁹ Stebbins, "British Imperialism, Regionalism and Nationalism in Iran, 1890-1919", 157-8.

6 November 1924 had a different dimension given the importance of his British backing. Sheikh Khaz'al couldn't resist the force that Reza Khan personally commanded and this time Sheikh did not have any British support.⁷⁰ This apparent policy change of British could be interpreted as being collaborated with the winning side given the upper hand Reza Khan gained vis a vis the southern tribes⁷¹. Since Reza Khan's centralizing policy was the exact opposite of British antecedent regional policy, whether it was a military or political victory for Reza Khan was an open question.

In any case, it was enough for Reza Khan to be seen as the man who ended the chaos resulting from the tribal separatism exacerbated by the foreign intervention.⁷² This chapter has examined the revolts of Mirza Kuchek Khan, Kurdish rebels, and the British-supported southern tribes in order to understand the extent and various dimensions of internal instability in Iran in the first quarter of the century. Moreover, it explains why a number of social classes and political elites acknowledged the early services of Reza Khan to his country through pacifying the armed tribes and enhancing central authority at the expense of separatism and foreign threat. Some political figures in the Majlis such as Mudarres, the leader of the Reformist Party, Suleiman Mirza Iskandari, from the Socialist Party and Mossadegh, antagonist for a new dynasty under Reza Khan esteemed his endeavors to the security of the country.⁷³

⁷⁰ Ansari, 37.

⁷¹ Houshang Sabahi, *British Policy in Persia, 1918-1925* (London: Frank Cass, 1990), 190.

⁷² For an elaborate account of the state of affairs in late Qajar era and Reza Shah rule, see Homa Katouzian, "The Revolt of Shaikh Mohammad Khiābāni," 155; Homa Katouzian, "State and Society under Reza Shah," in Touraj Atabaki and Erik J. Zürcher, eds.

⁷³ Ghods, 99.

2.2.1.2 Reza Shah's Iran

The way the new War Minister, Reza Khan, approached regional revolts was the foretaste of what was to come during his 16-year rule. Until his coronation in 1925, Reza Khan had managed to hold the power of army with considerable financial sources and had suppressed the aforementioned rebellions. Having put an end to internal warfare, Reza Shah's state-building efforts and modernist agenda took shape as to the political developments of the antecedent decades. That is, nationalism, which became the ideology behind centralization and modernization, was defined by 'the centrality of territory' as the official discourse of Pahlavi regime.⁷⁴ Reza Shah's nationalist discourse, which embraced less sophisticated and more practical nationalist views, aimed at the construction of a centralized state and the acquiescence of all populations and tribes into the incontestable power of the state.

As had happened in the early 1920s, the excision of tribal rule and autonomy turned out to become central to the state-building efforts.⁷⁵ Stephanie Cronin argues in her book that tribalism particularly at the given time was not confined to security issues. The tribal problem and the issue of the settlement of tribal nomads were in the forefront of politics.⁷⁶ It is due precisely to this fact that I will elaborate on those reforms which demonstrate the prolonged efforts to establish military and administrative authority over the tribes across the country.⁷⁷ These reforms also show

⁷⁴ I borrowed the phrase of 'the centrality of territory' from Chelsi Mueller. Chelsi Mueller, "Anglo-Iranian Treaty Negotiations: Reza Shah, Teymurtash and the British Government, 1927-32," *Iranian Studies*, 49: 4 (2016): 578.

⁷⁵ Stephanie Cronin, "Reform from Above, Resistance from Below: The New Order and Its Opponents in Iran, 1927-29," In *the State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*, ed. Touraj Atabaki (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 84.

⁷⁶ Stephanie Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran: Rural Conflict and the New State, 1921-1941* (London: Routledge, 2010), 1-15.

⁷⁷ Economic problems and reforms, for instance, occupied an important place in the political agenda of Reza Shah. Having monopolized the sugar, tea and tobacco in his early years, the Shah embarked on an ambitious industrialization program with domestic income. The number of people working in

one of the principal decisive factors influencing Turkish-Iranian relations during the interwar years which was the rural uprisings against the consecutive attempts of both states to increase state authority.

The other side of the equation was Reza Shah's modernization ideal. It is said that Reza Shah was virtually obsessed with his country's image in the West. To him, tribalism did not only create the biggest obstacle to domestic stability; he also regarded nomadism as the antithesis of modernity.⁷⁸

Reza Shah's nation-building project was closely associated with the advancement of the nation and progress. What John Breuilly described as 'reform nationalism' refers to the countries' desire to reform state apparatus in order to gain an equal foothold among other states. It brings us back to the second key component of the relations between Turkey and Iran: The two states' assiduous and diligent efforts to consolidate their precarious standing in international system through rapid modernization. Turkey and Iran, never colonized but long exposed to the European imperialism tried to secure the international recognition for their newly-founded state structures.⁷⁹

Social and economic reforms to achieve a unitary state control and greater homogeneity among the various subjects of the states herein had also an outward-looking, international perspective. This aspect indeed helps explain why a steadfast

the industry rose threefold in 10 years. The perilous conditions of road system were handled; the Trans-Iranian Railroad from Bandar Gaz on the Caspian to Bandar Shahpur in the Persian Gulf was built. See M. Reza Ghods, "Government and Society in Iran, 1926-34," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (1991): 221-226.

⁷⁸ Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran*, 16.

⁷⁹ For a similar discussion in parallel with the sartorial reforms, see Houchang E. Chehabi, "Staging the Emperor's New Clothes: Dress Codes and Nation-Building under Reza Shah," *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 26, No: 3/4 (1993): 222.

effort to modernize was made in both states, although it met with the fierce criticism and resistance of societal actors.

What is significant for the discussion of Reza Shah's Iran was that this feeling of (in)security and the modernization ideal were two sides of same coin. Because the latter, modernization ideal, has always been entwined with the former, security interests for much of the post-WWI era. Partly the Shah's relentless devotion to ensure internal stability and to unify the Iranian nation, partly his heartfelt desire to emancipate the Iranian nation and to restore national pride and honor in the eyes of international community culminated in the configuration of Pahlavi nationalist discourse.

Military and administrative reforms, as the continuation of military campaigns against tribal insurgency, were the anchor of Reza Shah's rule in the succeeding years. The army, which paved the way for his accession to throne, played a pivotal role during his reign. The key institution of Reza Shah's state and nation-building project was the army since the domestic order and neutralization of the tribes were essential to create modern state apparatus.⁸⁰

The purge being mounted against local rebellions between 1921 and 1925 resulted in the disarmament of many tribesmen in the north and south. Reza Shah, moreover, made impressive strides towards tightening his military authority in the provinces with deploying garrisons.⁸¹ By the same token, the following attempts and reforms were carried out and designed further to weaken tribal power and to strengthen central authority. Among them, the forced sedentarization of nomadic

⁸⁰ H. E. Chehabi, "The Pahlavi Period," *Iranian Studies*, 31: 3-4 (1998): 497.

⁸¹ M. Reza Ghods (1989), 98.

tribesmen was adopted to crush the autonomy of the tribes.⁸² The construction of new roads and the Trans-Iranian Railroad along the north-south line were built for the sake of internal security and policing the provinces in order not to resuscitate the local rebellions.⁸³

Unswerving determination to design tribal affairs in the second half of the 1920s manifested itself in the universal conscription of 1928. Building a standing national army relied on universal service was at the heart of state-building since it aimed to divest the tribes of their fighting power.⁸⁴ Asserting security in the turbulent regions aside, the conscription was an effective instrument for the formation of Iranian nation in many aspects. In the well-established regular army of 100.000 men with regular pay, Reza Shah would stir the patriotic feelings and revive national pride.⁸⁵ It was a deliberate move to blur the lines between the differences among different tribes and social groups, just like the introduction of the Pahlavi hat in August 1927 in place of distinctive tribal headgears. As a matter of fact, the 1929 southern rebellions fomenting significant confrontations between the army and the tribal forces mainly arose from the opposition against conscription and the sartorial reforms.⁸⁶

The administrative structure of the state was reorganized in line with increasing central authority over the tribal confederations. The state was separated into 10 *ostans* (provinces) and subdivided into *shahrestans* (counties), *bakhshs* and

⁸² Richard W. Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), 61.

⁸³ Ghods (1991): 220. See also Amin Banani, *The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961): 147.

⁸⁴ Cottam, 61.

⁸⁵ Cronin, "Reform from Above, Resistance from Below," 76.

⁸⁶ Chehabi, "Staging the Emperor's New Clothes: Dress Codes and Nation-Building under Reza Shah," 214.

dehestans.⁸⁷ In addition to the conscription and settlement policy, the Pahlavi state also created an administrative network on a more rational basis under the auspices of the Interior Ministry. Either military purposes or administrative control was indicative of how Iranian nationalism was built upon territorial integrity and integration among people without including an inclusive ideological narrative.

These all were indeed efficient steps to take because military confrontation between the state and the tribes continued up until 1930s, though to a lesser degree. Luristan was a region in the southern and southwestern Iran, which was inhabited by a number of tribes including Lurs, Bakhtiyari, Kuh Guliye, Mamasani and other smaller factions. Founded in 1184 as a local dynasty, Lurs had existed as a semi-autonomous polity until 1928 when Reza Shah's centralizing policy resulted in the subjugation of all the tribes of Luristan.⁸⁸ The military showdown against Luristan (1922-1928) and the diminution of the political power of the Lurs were a concatenation of early military campaigns and the quintessential example of the way Reza Shah implemented his program of centralization.⁸⁹

The rural uprisings of 1929 and the suppression were seen as another decisive moment for Reza Shah's rule as a portent of what was to come in its second decade. The effect on the Shah's mind of the breakdown of government control in southern Iran in 1929 was so traumatic that his rule turned into a reign of terror in 1930s.⁹⁰ The Shah's purge began with the arrest of Firuz Mirza in 1929, the minister of finance, who had been the member of the Shah's triumvirate in his early years. Then,

⁸⁷ Ansari, *Modern Iran Since 1921*, 56.

⁸⁸ Sekandar Amanolahi, "Reza Shah and the Lurs: The Impact of the Modern State on Luristan," *Iran & The Caucasus*, Vol. 6, No. 1/2 (2002): 199.

⁸⁹ See M. Reza Ghods, "Iranian Nationalism and Reza Shah," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (1991).

⁹⁰ Stephanie Cronin, "Riza Shah, The Fall of Sardar Asad, and the 'Bakhtiyari plot'," *Iranian Studies*, 38:2 (2005): 217.

simply no one, be they the other members of the triumvirate -Ali Akbar Davar, the minister of justice, and Teymourtache, the court minister-, be they the army officers, be they all the Bakhtiyari Khans who had been instrumental in the suppression of other tribes and had assumed hitherto a pro-regime stance- could not escape the arrests, executions, and mostly ‘the quicker and reliable method of secret murder’.⁹¹

To what extent the Shah’s fears of his life were justified is of course an open question. What we can have an implicit understanding was that Reza Shah aimed to create a modern centralized state and a full central authority over the entire population. This was a precondition for sovereignty and independence to him. Moreover, Reza Shah also had the perception that the tribalism -nomadism, banditry and so on- and modernity were inherently incompatible with one another. Thus, the official justification of this period as the struggle against Persian feudalism harbored the Shah’s sentiments of his country’s impression in the West, as well.⁹²

Here again, the twofold purposes of state-building in Iran: (1) to crush potential political or military rivals against the state authority, namely tribes and (2) to get rid of one of the obstacles which was seen as an ‘antithesis’ of modernization.

When we come to the cultural aspects of modernization, the twofold repercussions of the reforms were perceived explicitly. Central authority implied, to paraphrase Charles Tilly, cultural control⁹³ in terms of generating uni-ethnic, uni-linguistic and homogenous population. Accordingly, Reza Shah’s reforms in language, education, dress code and the others were carried out for greater control of the state over its populations. Social reforms in parallel with the severe need of the

⁹¹ Ibid, 244.

⁹² Ibid, 212.

⁹³ Charles Tilly, “States and Nationalism in Europe 1492-1992,” *Theory and Society*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1994): 140.

Iranian state were rapidly introduced. The foundation of the Persian Academy (Farhangestan) in 1935 which was the equivalent of the Turkish Language Institute, the implementation of compulsory primary education, the foundation of the Tehran University in 1935, the publication of official textbooks by the Ministry of Education, the introduction of European dress code in 1936 and many others, similar to reforms in Turkey, aimed at breaking the power of autonomous regional groups in the cultural realm and increasing national sensibilities as a part of state ideology.

2.3 “Acceptable” Nationalisms in Turkey and Iran

In an official dinner immediately after US President Gerald Ford’s visit to South Korea in November 1974, CIA agent Donald Gregg, who would later serve as US Ambassador to South Korea between 1989 and 1993, asked President Park Chung Hee whether he ever drew a comparison between himself and Atatürk, ‘the founder of modern Turkey’. When it was his turn to answer, Park said, “*I would like to do for Korea what he did for Turkey*”.⁹⁴ A parallel example was also provided by the article of Birol Başkan. He quoted from a cue in the award-winning movie *Syriana*, in which an American energy analyst Bryan Woodman met with the son of an Arab emir. In describing the young Cambridge-educated reformist Arab prince to his wife, Woodman told about him that he ‘could be like Atatürk’.⁹⁵

The reason behind bringing these two examples into this discussion is to show a belief over the modernization schemes of non-Western countries and over the

⁹⁴ Donald Gregg, “Park Chung Hee,” *Time*, August 23, 1999, <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2054405,00.html>.

⁹⁵ Quoted in Birol Başkan, “What Made Atatürk’s Reforms Possible?” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 21:2 (2010): 143.

role of Atatürk played as a precedent for those nations.⁹⁶ Based on the example of Atatürk, this belief indicated that the transition from an underdeveloped society into a modern nation with a specific aim of Westernization under a reformist, modernist ruler is actually a good thing. Interestingly, an explicit form of patriotism, nationalism or anti-imperialism in the leader's rule does not contradict with the target of Westernization. For instance, Atatürk's and Park's endeavor to strengthen their countries' power at the expense of the domination of the West had a deep sense of patriotism and understanding of Western imperialism. The aim to industrialize their countries and to modernize the institutions went hand in hand with the desire to break the power of the foreigners.⁹⁷

To what extent Atatürk was seen as the prime example of such a form of nationalist development by the West is an open question. However, it can be argued that Atatürk's nationalist agenda did not make trouble in his country's relations with the West. It was even compatible with the Turkish state's second established aim during the interwar years which was 'international recognition' and to gain an equal standing in international arena. Although it contained its own dilemma in the form of 'Westernization against the West'⁹⁸, the formulation of nationalist ideology under the leadership of Atatürk was a kind of 'acceptable' nationalism particularly by the West.

⁹⁶ Paul Gentizon, who was a Swiss journalist from *Le Temps* and was sent to Turkey for five years from 1922 to 1927, described Atatürk and his reforms as the symbol of the birth of a new Orient in social, intellectual, political and economic realms. See Paul Gentizon, *Mustafa Kemal and Uyanan Doğu* [Mustafa Kemal and the Awakening East] (İstanbul: Bilgi, 2001).

⁹⁷ Ezra F. Vogel, "Nation Rebuilders: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Lee Kuan Yew, Deng Xiaoping, and Park Chung Hee," in *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea*, eds. Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013), 514-5.

⁹⁸ I borrowed this phrase from Orhan Koçak. See Orhan Koçak, "Westernization against the West: Cultural Politics in the Early Turkish Republic," in *Turkey's Engagement with Modernity: Conflict and Change in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Celia Kerslake, Kerem Öktem and Philip Robins (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

The Westernizing aspect of Turkey's modernist and nationalist agenda was a political card for Turkey in her relations with the West. On the other hand, Turkish nationalism would be a real opportunity in terms of Turkey's relations with her eastern neighbors, namely with Reza Shah's Iran. Turkey insistently put emphasis on the anti-imperialist character of Turkish nationalism, and it became the linchpin of relations with the East during the interwar years. When Bilal Şimşir describes Atatürk as 'the hero of the East', he refers to the Independence War that Turkey fought against the imperialist West.⁹⁹ He ascribes the wide range of congratulatory addresses from India, Afghanistan, Iran, Morocco, Egypt, Azerbaijan, Tunisia and Ethiopia for the victory of the Turkish troops in 1922 to Turkish Ambassador to Paris Ferit (Tek) Bey to the Turkish victory over the Western colonization.¹⁰⁰

When Turkish Ambassador to Tehran Muhittin (Akyüz) Pasha, by the same token, reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1923 about the Iranian demonstrators carrying the posters of Atatürk¹⁰¹, the Turkish officials would have probably known the meaning that many Iranians attached to the anti-imperialist struggle in the embodiment of the Turkish leader. It is conceivable to argue that Turkish-Iranian relations during much of the 1930s would have benefitted from the same anti-imperialist language which did not necessarily mean a disassociation from the aim of modernization (interchangeably Westernization).

Consequently, the concordance among approaches toward the interpretation of nationalism in the interwar period was an opportunity for small and middle powers like Turkey. It enabled them to get involved in the relations among the world powers,

⁹⁹ Bilal Şimşir, *Doğunun Kahramanı Atatürk* [The Hero of the East Atatürk] (İstanbul: Bilgi, 1999), 197.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 215-222.

¹⁰¹ Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi; 30.10.0.0/260.752.5.

namely the Western world and provided common grounds to compromise with the other powers which had been exposed to the Western political or economic domination for centuries. It is important to indicate the consistency in the understanding of nationalist ideology in that period since the divergence in its interpretation during the Cold War among the Western Bloc and the Third World would re-establish the parameters of relationship between them. But during the interwar period, the articulation of nationalist ideology gave a greater leverage to Turkey both in conducting her relations with other countries and in keeping on course for the long-term goal to establish a modernized (Westernized) nation state.

CHAPTER 3

TURKISH-IRANIAN RELATIONS DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD: BETWEEN INTEREST AND IDEALS

In 1928, the new Iranian ambassador to Ankara's presentation of his credentials was a representative moment that tells us much about Turkish-Iranian relations in the interwar period. In presenting his letters of credence to the Turkish President Mustafa Kemal, the Iranian Ambassador Mirza Mehmet Khan Furugi made a speech about a new chapter in the history of Turkey and Iran, whose new rulers had embarked on actions to revive their respective countries and to follow policies to jointly consolidate the relations between the two states.¹⁰² The Ambassador insisted on the need for the Iranian and Turkish nations to come into their owns among the world's nations. When it was his turn to speak, Mustafa Kemal also recapped the two main points in response to Furugi's speech: common goals and purposes, and a quest for modernity and civilization that would attain for both a prominent position among the world's states.¹⁰³ Nation-building was the goal and the method of both states with a clearly expressed ideal of modernization during the interwar years. The interdependence of creating a nation and modern state at the same time makes these and other similar sentences often used by the Iranian and Turkish politicians throughout the interwar years more than gestures of goodwill. These 'incantations' chanted by the new rulers of Turkey and Iran embodied two inseparable aspects of

¹⁰² Bilal N. Şimşir, *Atatürk ve Yabancı Devlet Başkanları II* [Atatürk and Foreign Heads of State II] (Ankara: AKDYYK Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2001), 456.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 457.

Turkish-Iranian relations in the interwar era. The transition from multi-ethnic empires to nation-states and nationalism as the ideology of this transformation were understood and enforced in the same manner.

As discussed in detail in the previous chapter, nationalism emerged as a political project rather than an all-embracing ideology in Turkey and Iran in the first quarter of the century. It took the form of a greater role for the centralized state and, further, state-led efforts to create a homogeneous nation from the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-linguistic subjects of the defunct empire. Given the two-decade political and military turmoil, foreign occupation and the danger of internal disintegration into consideration, it would not be surprising to see that the nationalist project in both states became engaged on security matters. Having encountered common security challenges from the imperialism of the great powers and from the separatism of the internal power groups, Turkey and Iran both shared common security interests during the interwar era. Security interests became evident in the way that Turkish nationalism was delineated by its ‘geographical and demographic’ characteristics.¹⁰⁴ Iranian nationalism, in the same way, was clearly defined in terms of full sovereignty and territorial integrity.¹⁰⁵

As to the second aspect of nationalist project, the endeavors to ensure the security of their newly-established nation-states had always been entwined with the normative ideals of Atatürk and Reza Shah: which was to establish modern and

¹⁰⁴ Richard H. Pfaff, “Disengagement from Traditionalism in Turkey and Iran,” *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1963): 85. This policy orientation, moreover, had no irredentist claims with a clear dictum of ‘Peace at home, peace abroad’.

¹⁰⁵ For a discussion of the territorial scope of Pahlavi nationalist discourse, see Chelsi Mueller, “Anglo-Iranian Treaty Negotiations: Reza Shah, Teymurtash and the British Government, 1927-32,” *Iranian Studies*, 49: 4 (2016): 577-592.

secular states.¹⁰⁶ Centralization in the way to maintain the national security went hand in hand with this modernization goal.¹⁰⁷

The views of Mustafa Kemal and Reza Shah on modernity, as the Iranian Ambassador and Mustafa Kemal mentioned, were identified with Turkey and Iran's foreign relations, particularly with the West. The distinct position of Turkey and Iran in the world politics set the stage for another aspect of Turkish-Iranian relations. Having been the pawns in the Great Powers' imperialism for more than one century and having witnessed the failure of 'the policy of balance' and 'the policy of equilibrium', Turkey and Iran had to determine a different policy in the insecure environment of the interwar period which was to transform the state in order to secure it in the international system.

Rapid modernization, in that sense, was Atatürk and Reza Shah's response to their mutual security needs. Here is not the place to speculate about whether Atatürk and Reza Shah were sincere in transforming their respective societies. That is, modernization had been already set as an ideal in mid-19th century in the Ottoman and Persian empires. At the turn of the century, Mustafa Kemal and Reza Shah with their own visions for their countries' future emerged but their visions were somehow the solution to critical junctures that Turkish and Iranian societies stood at. One must consider the distinct positions of Turkey and Iran as have never been colonized but exposed to the economic penetration of Great Powers through various economic and diplomatic concessions which culminated in the invasion and destruction of the Ottoman and Persian empires. The precarious standings of Turkey and Iran in

¹⁰⁶ Andrew Mango, "Atatürk and the Kurds," 18. Mango also discusses that Atatürk's desire to create a modern state and to have absolute authority explain his opposition to the Kurdish attempts for provincial administration in the eastern Anatolia.

¹⁰⁷ Rudi Matthee, "Transforming Dangerous Nomads into Useful Artisans, Technicians, Agriculturalists: Education in the Reza Shah Period," *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 26, No: 3/4 (1993): 326.

international system at the turn of the century led the two states to strengthen their delicate memberships among the other states. Both states wanted to become accepted and recognized as the equal members in the international arena.¹⁰⁸

Security interests and modernization ideals jointly determined the similar articulations of nationalism in Turkey and Iran. While Turkey's and Iran's political pendulum had swung between security and modernity, the line between interests and ideals had frequently blurred. And, Turkish-Iranian relations in the interwar era had exactly lied at the intersection point where security interests and modernization ideals were blurred.

Two important political developments in Turkish-Iranian relations in this period gave the indication of how the bilateral relations were determined by the convergence of nationalist ideologies in the post-WWI context. The Ararat Rebellion, first encounter and first confrontation between new Turkey and new Iran demonstrates how demographic and territorial scope of nationalist ideology of both states had influence over their foreign policy orientations.¹⁰⁹ Secondly, Reza Shah's visit to Turkey, which was described as the heyday of Turkish-Iranian relations, and the meaning both states attributed to this visit prove how inseparable part modernization was for the nationalist project/ideology.

¹⁰⁸ Houchang E. Chehabi, "Staging the Emperor's Clothes: Dress Codes and Nation-Building under Reza Shah," *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 3/4 (1993): 222. See also Dilek Barlas & Serhat Gönenc, *Turkey in the Mediterranean during the Interwar Era: The Paradox of Middle Power Diplomacy and Minor Power Naval Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2010).

¹⁰⁹ This approach can give us a more elaborate understanding than what Ramazani describes as 'Reza Shah's good neighbor policy' and what Abdülhat Akşin states as Turkey's 'friendly relationship' with the neighbors as an extension of ideas developed in the dictum of 'Peace at home, peace abroad'. See Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *The Foreign Policy of Iran*, 269-272; Abdülhat Akşin, *Atatürk'ün Dış Politika İlkeleri ve Diplomasisi*, 190-201.

3.1 Turkey's Relations with Iran under the Last Qajar Ruler Ahmad Shah

The aim of this section is to argue that the foundation of nation-state led Turkey to prioritize the recognition of and respect to the idea of nation-state in her foreign relations. Turkey's relations with the Qajar Iran prior to the coronation of Reza Khan in 1925 and also the interactions between the Turkish officials and the War Minister Reza Khan reveal the importance of new understanding around the idea of nationalism. Ervand Abrahamian in his book on the Iranian history categorizes a different time period in framing the transition from the Qajar dynasty to the Pahlavi dynasty. Although the Iranian Majlis abolished the Qajar dynasty and deposed Ahmad Qajar Shah in October 1925, Abrahamian describes the Reza Shah era (1925-1941) along with the earlier five years.¹¹⁰ This categorization is, indeed, useful in understanding Turkey's relations with Reza Shah's Iran.

The new Turkey's military and political elites did not intend to perpetuate the old hostility which had prevailed between the Ottoman and Persian Empires for almost four centuries. The Turkish *National Pact* symbolized the Ankara elites' rejection of old imperial claims. The Caucasian region, Iraq-Iran frontier zone pertaining to the holy cities such as Karbala and the nomadic tribes in the eastern Anatolia had been the three mainsprings of Ottoman-Persian enmity during the previous centuries.¹¹¹ Under the auspices of *National Pact*, the first two were no longer a reason to confront Iranian neighbors and the tribal problem turned out to be a different source of conflict. Moreover, as several sources will show, the Republican elites of Turkey had knowledge about the political developments in Iran since the early 1920s. Besides having informed about the chaotic situation of Iran due to the

¹¹⁰ Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 65.

¹¹¹ See Mehmet Saray, *Türk-İran İlişkileri* [Turkish-Iranian Relations] (Ankara: AKDITYK Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1999), 75.

tribes and separatist movements, it seems that a growing sympathy with the War Minister Reza Khan existed on the Turkish side.

Turkey's relations with Qajar Iran date back to the times of the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923). In a memorandum dated 22 March 1922 describing his conversation with Iranian ambassador to Paris, Ferid Bey, the TBMM Government Representative to Paris, stated that the Iranian Ambassador conveyed Ahmad Shah's congratulations to the Ankara Government during a meeting in Paris where Ahmad Shah hosted the representatives of Muslim countries on the occasion of Nowruz. In response to the Iranian Ambassador, Ferid Bey asked him to have the Shah explain and affirm his opinions in favor of Ankara's national claims (National Pact) to French officials. Iranian Ambassador replied that Shah would tell the French President that the recognition of Turkey's claims by the European states was seen as necessary and imperative by Iran.¹¹²

Thereafter, we can understand from two documents, dated 28 June 1921¹¹³ and 12 November 1922¹¹⁴, that relations at the diplomatic level started between TBMM Government and Qajar Iran. Both states decided to send legations and ambassadors, and Turkey accepted that Iran would open a consulate in Trabzon.

These early mutual gestures of goodwill notwithstanding, the new Turkish nation-state's relations with the Qajar dynasty had been shaped by a tension and a sense of ambiguity arising from a series of unconscious (or maybe conscious) misunderstandings in diplomatic correspondences. On 22 December 1922, Iranian Prime Minister Ahmad Qavam, also known as Qavam os-Saltaneh, issued a

¹¹² Şimşir, 413.

¹¹³ Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi; 30.18.1.1/3.26.20.

¹¹⁴ BCA; 30.18.1.1/6.36.8.

statement about the appointment of Prince Mofakham-ed-Dowleh, former ambassador to the Ottoman state, as ambassador to Turkey.¹¹⁵ The Ankara Government felt uncomfortable with the mention of defunct Ottoman State in the telegram and, later on, with the delay in the submission of the Letter of Credence of the newly appointed ambassador.¹¹⁶ This demonstrates that early problems arose from the fact that both sides had not yet fully embraced nationalism. In order for change in this understanding to come, both states would need to cross the border crisis around Agrı in 1930.

More serious diplomatic crisis broke out on 27 August 1923 when Ambassador Mofakham-ed-Dowleh Ishak Khan presented his letter of credence to the President Mustafa Kemal. The letter, once again, contained clauses pertaining to the 'eternal friendship' and good relations between Iran and the Ottoman State. Yet, the leadership in Ankara expressed its discontent with the letter's failure to use the official name of the new Turkish state in the letter.¹¹⁷ This situation was swiftly interpreted by Ankara as Iran's hesitation to recognize the new TBMM government. Following the government's refusal to accept Ishak Khan formally till the original later arrive at Ankara, the Iranian ambassador decided to return to Iran on 30 August.¹¹⁸ A parallel example later was seen in the Iranian state's insistence on the use of the name 'Iran' instead of 'Persia' and both proved the priority that Turkey and Iran attached to the idea of nationalism.

Apparently, it could be understood how these letters and notes coming from Iran created a bizarre situation in Turkey under the new leadership. Taken into

¹¹⁵ Şimşir, 415.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 420.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 422-3.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 431.

consideration that the essential policy of the new Turkish state after the war was the international recognition and security¹¹⁹, any reference to the old regime as is the case for the Letter of Credence of the new Iranian ambassador which included the term ‘Devlet-i Aliyye’ manifestly served as a genuine irritant to the bilateral relations. Therefore, Turkey’s firm position on the rejection of the letter and the waiting for a more diplomatically worded one proved Turkey’s political priority in her relations with other states, particularly with Iran.

On the other side of the border, a puzzling combination of Iran’s attempt to establish diplomatic relations with new Turkey by sending an ambassador and the particular reference in the diplomatic correspondences to the relations with old empire on which Turkish national elites were trying to build the new Republic did raise question marks over Iran’s stance towards the TBMM Government. Muhittin (Akyüz) Pasha¹²⁰, Turkish ambassador to Tehran, in a report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated 14 March 1923, mentions that he was met with the demonstrators in his arrival to Tehran.¹²¹ He states that the demonstrators carried photos of Gazi Mustafa Kemal, cheered him and Turkish government, and showed respect for the representative of Turkey. At this very early time for modern Turkish-Iranian relations, the meaning of such public acclamation could be understood by the fact that Turkey was seen as a symbol of anti-imperialism. He also writes that the Iranian newspapers published articles praising Mustafa Kemal. Later, in another memorandum dated 30 August 1923 the Ambassador states that the word ‘Ottoman’ was so widely-used among Iranian officials, society and the press that even after 7

¹¹⁹ See Barlas & Gönenç, *Turkey in the Mediterranean during the Interwar Era*.

¹²⁰ Muhittin Akyüz served as the ambassador to Tehran from 7 February 1923 to 3 October 1925.

¹²¹ BCA; 30.10.0.0/260.752.5.

months, he had not yet been able to dismiss this word from their minds.¹²² All the more interesting, Muhittin Pasha, on Sept. 12, 1923 reports that the letter of credence was drawn up by Ahmad Shah, the Prime Minister and the Minister of War, Reza Khan, and the crisis arose from the fact that the Iranian Prime Minister did not have knowledge of the changes in Turkey.¹²³ The fact that the Qajar rulers did not keep abreast of the current developments, even a regime change in their neighboring country somehow shows that the misunderstanding between Turkey and Qajar Iran in early 1920s stemmed not from a purposeful but an unintentional manner.

The Ankara Government's relatively sound position of following the developments in Iranian politics, however, can be read through some letters of Turkish ambassador to Tehran Muhittin Pasha which provided Ankara with a sum of information on Iranian internal affairs, power elites and notable political players. Before the deposition of Ahmad Shah Qajar in October 1925 and the promulgation of the Pahlavi rule under Reza Shah Pahlavi in December 1925¹²⁴, Muhittin Pasha had already informed the TBMM Government on the rivalry between Ahmad Shah and the Minister of War, Reza Khan as early as 1923.¹²⁵ He explicitly described the then Ahmad Shah as a 'dishonest' sovereign whose reign began under the auspices of Russians and was engineering Reza's fall from power with Russian support. Having exhibited negative attitude towards the Iranian government, the Turkish ambassador spoke highly of Reza Khan, referring to him as the man who would undertake sweeping reforms in Iran and then, as the friend of Turkey.¹²⁶ In response to this telegram, we could see Ismet (Inönü) Pasha's letter which was asking for further

¹²² Şimşir, 428.

¹²³ Ibid, 432.

¹²⁴ Ansari, 25.

¹²⁵ Şimşir, 429.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 429.

information about a possible change in the political landscape of Iran and whether there was (or were) any state(s) which might support Iran in this direction.¹²⁷

At about the same time, a military intelligence report, dated 7 January 1924, warned of the relationship between the northern tribes and the Kurds in the preparation of an insurrection.¹²⁸ It could be interpreted that the War Minister Reza Khan was portrayed in the eyes of the veterans of the War of Independence in Turkey as a national leader who was struggling with foreign enemies and internal separatists.

Since 1924 onwards, it has been seen that emergence of nationalism as a state ideology became clear with the end of National Independence War of Turkey and the consolidation of Reza Khan's power in Iran. In that sense, a beginning of new phase in the relations also resonated with this new understanding. Meanwhile, Iranian War Minister, Reza Khan sent a congratulatory telegram to Mustafa Kemal for achieving peace at the Lausanne Conference with 'great sacrifices' and 'courageous efforts' of the Turkish nation.¹²⁹ Mustafa Kemal not only thanked Reza Khan warmly for his good wishes, but Ismet Pasha also asked the ambassador in Tehran to give support to him by all means.¹³⁰ From these mutual telegrams between the Turkish Embassy in Tehran and the Foreign Ministry, it is possible to infer that the Ankara Government in the early years of its foundation was not indifferent to the political situation in Iran. In two intelligence reports to the Ministry of Foreign affairs dated 8 and 9 November 1925, the news was sent about the proclamation of Republic in Iran and

¹²⁷ Ibid, 433.

¹²⁸ BCA; 30.10.0.0/260.752.10.

¹²⁹ Şimşir, 436.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 437.

Reza Khan being elected as the President.¹³¹ On November 7, a confidential letter was sent from the Ministry to the Turkish Embassy in Tehran that recommended Reza Khan to prefer being President to being shah. In other confidential letters from Memduh Şevket (Esental), the Turkish ambassador, he wrote that it was in our interest to recognize the government of Reza Khan no matter which form it would take.¹³² On December 27 immediately after the coronation of Reza Khan as the Shah of Iran, Memduh Şevket conveyed that in his conversation with him, Reza Shah said that he considered an ‘alliance and union’ between Turkish and Iranian governments necessary.¹³³

Turkish-Iranian relations witnessed rises and falls during the interwar years. But, the preceding five years were also indicative of an improving relationship between two regimes which was to adopt common domestic and foreign policy orientations. Taking the documents between the Turkish foreign ministry and the Embassy in Tehran into account, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that Reza Khan was perceived as a useful ally to collaborate well in advance.

3.2 The Ararat Rebellions of 1926-1930: Old Enmities and New Possibilities

Security concerns combined with the states’ persistent desire to modernize created the similarities between the political agendas of Turkey and Iran at the beginning of the 20th century. Although it is reasonable to stress the shared commonalities between Turkish and Iranian politics during the interwar years, interestingly, there were very few events to suggest that these similarities created

¹³¹ BCA; 30.10.0.0/260.753.40, BCA; 30.10.0.0/260.753.41.

¹³² Şimşir, 440.

¹³³ Ibid, 441.

many convergence points in bilateral relations. The period of Atatürk's and Reza Shah's rule witnessed two significant political developments which were the redrawing of the Turkish-Iranian border in 1932 following the Ararat Rebellions and the Shah's visit to Turkey in June 1934. Although limited in number, these reflected how Turkish and Iranian political elites approached foreign policy in similar ways as they built their new nation-states.

One of the political priorities for Turkey and Iran since the establishment of the nation-states was to establish modern and centralized administrations. At this point, Turkey and Iran not only shared similar methods and goals to achieve this aim, but they also witnessed similar challenges to what they tried to establish. Atatürk and Reza Shah in their respective countries was met with opposition towards their new regimes. The Ararat Rebellions were both acts against the Kemalist regime and at the same time they created a major political crisis between the two neighboring states. Moreover, Mustafa Kemal's and Reza Shah's dealings with this crisis strikingly showed that their nationalist ideology which was articulated by grave security concerns and territorial understandings impinged on the settlement of the crisis emanating from the Ararat Rebellions of 1926-30.

As mentioned above, border disputes had always been a problem for the Ottoman and Persian empires.¹³⁴ From a bird's-eye view, the 1930 crisis due to the Ararat Rebellions continued the previous border disputes, now between Turkey and Iran. However, similar political outlooks, centralization and the ideology of nationalism produced a similar approach to center-periphery relations in the Turkish and Iranian states.

¹³⁴ Mehmet Saray, Türk-İran İlişkileri.

The Ararat Rebellion was seen as being nothing short of a reaction to the degree of centralization of the Kemalist state. As Mesut Yeğen states, the new Republican government in Ankara had the project of establishing its power ‘from Edirne to Ardahan’ in 1920s. Centralization and consolidation of state power had been one of the crucial matters in the years between 1920 and 1940.¹³⁵ The Kurds constituted the essence of the problem for two reasons: First, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the definition of Turkish citizenship on religious grounds rather than ethnic¹³⁶, left Turkey with a considerable number of ethnically Kurdish Turkish citizens. Second, contrary to the aim of Kemalists to eradicate all the political, administrative and economic privileges of the periphery, the Kurds had maintained a loose politic-administrative relationship with the political center for centuries and they were intent on keeping that relationship.¹³⁷ The Ararat Rebellion had earlier analogies in the Bedirhan revolt of 1847 and the revolt of Sayyid Ubeydullah of 1880 in the preceding century, both of which represented the confrontation between the Ottoman centralization policies and the interests of two great families which had political control across a huge territory in southeast Anatolia.¹³⁸ This center-periphery tension continued to prevail in the 20th century. While appeal for Kurdish autonomy was evolving into an inclusive nationalist ideology at the first quarter of

¹³⁵ Mesut Yeğen, *Devlet Söyleminde Kürt Sorunu* [The Kurdish Question in the State Discourse] (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999), 135-136.

¹³⁶ Yeşim Bayar, “In Pursuit of Homogeneity: The Lausanne Conference, Minorities and the Turkish Nation,” *Nationalities Papers*, 42:1 (2014): 114. In the meetings of Lausanne Conference, the Turkish delegation reiterated that the Muslims in Turkey were not defined as minorities. The Turks and Kurds, ethnically diverse populations notwithstanding, were accepted as Turkish citizens. See Seha L. Meray, ed. *Lozan Barış Konferansı: Tutanaklar, Belgeler* [Lausanne Peace Conference: Transcripts, Documents] (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, 1969-1973).

¹³⁷ Yeğen, 134.

¹³⁸ Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 60. For a similar discussion of Ottoman Kurdish families, see also Metin Atmaca, “Resistance to Centralization in the Ottoman Periphery: The Kurdish Baban and Bohtan Emirates,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 55:4 (2019): 519-539.

the century, newly-established Turkish state kept expressing the Kurdish question as the problem of tribalism resonated with political and social repercussions, rather than an ethno-political issue.¹³⁹ This was, first and foremost, explicit in how Kazım Karabekir, the commander of the 15th Corps, the then strongest military service in Anatolia at that time, perceived the handling of the Kurdish question with regard to the tribal organization of the Kurds in the early 1920s.¹⁴⁰ The same language about the socio-political dimension of the Kurdish question can also be seen in the memoirs of İsmet İnönü, where security matters have been framed through the lawlessness and banditry starting with the outbreak of Sheikh Said Revolt all the way to the Dersim Rebellion of 1938. İsmet Pasha explicitly attributed both incidents in Ağrı and Dersim either to guerilla activities or the uneasiness of tribal and religious leaders (sheikhs), ‘to the dismay of the public’¹⁴¹

In Iran, the Kurdish nationalist movement is mostly associated with a later period, with the one-year-lived Mahabad Republic of Kurdistan (January-December 1946).¹⁴² But during the reign of Reza Shah (1925-41), Iran was exposed to armed conflict with the Kurds in the same Mahabad region, the northwestern Iran, albeit to a lesser extent than what Turkey encountered with in the interwar years. The local revolts in both eastern Turkey and northwestern Iran occurred within the same socio-political context. While Turkey was crushing the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925, Iran tried to suppress a revolt led by a Kurdish sheikh and tribal chief, İsmail Agha Simko. Religious or nationalist motivations aside, the Simko Shikak Revolt (1918-22 and 1926) epitomized an internal power struggle between a personal autonomous

¹³⁹ Yeğen, 139.

¹⁴⁰ Kazım Karabekir, *Kürt Meselesi* [The Kurdish Question] (İstanbul: Emre Yayınları, 2005), 45-78.

¹⁴¹ İsmet İnönü, *Hatıralar* [The Memoirs] (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınları, 1985), [page](#).

¹⁴² Michael M. Gunter, *Historical Dictionary of the Kurds* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 20.

authority with local and religious affiliations, and central authority.¹⁴³ The difference was that Iran did not witness another ‘Kurdish’ rebellion threatening the state control up until 1946 but unrest and tribal confrontation on Iran’s periphery told the same story, different political actors in late 1920s as in Turkey. In addition to the Kurdish tribes in northern Iran, the real threat to the Pahlavi rule came from the South. The military showdown against Lurs, Bakhtiyaris, Shaykh Khazal of Muhammarah, Qashqais and other smaller fractions (1922-1928) had aimed both at the diminution of the political power of the tribes and the breaking of their independent political connections with Britain. In a similar vein, when the Turkish state mobilized the Turkish troops against the rebels in Agri, Reza Shah, as Cronin describes, faced the ‘traumatic’ breakdown of government control in southern Iran in 1929.¹⁴⁴

The reconfiguration of center-periphery relations went hand in hand with Reza Shah’s uncompromising policies of forced sedentarization and westernization towards the tribal sheikhs and notables.¹⁴⁵ The endeavor to establish a massive state apparatus which was essential for the state’s supremacy over tribes culminated in the military confrontation between the state and the Lurs in the years between 1922 and 1928. Overall, the policies of modern Iranian state towards the traditional power groups –both the southern tribes and the northern Kurdish groups- embraced a

¹⁴³ Fereshteh Koohi-Kamali, “The Development of Nationalism in Iranian Kurdistan,” in *The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview*, eds. Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Stefan Sperl (London; New York: Routledge, 1992), 138. There is also a contrary argument about the expression of the objectives of the Simko revolt by the statist approach which overlooked the nationalist dimension of the movement. See Kamal Soleimani, “The Kurdish Image in Statist Historiography: The Case of Simko,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 53:6 (2017): 949-965. Having cited Eric Hobsbawm’s assertion about the interrelationship between nationalistic aspirations and tribal commitments, Mehmet Orhan discusses that resistance to central authority implicitly sufficed the Kurdish nationalist purposes in Turkey. See Mehmet Orhan, “Kurdish Rebellions and Conflict Groups in Turkey during the 1920s and 1930s,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 32:3 (2012): 339-358.

¹⁴⁴ Stephanie Cronin, “Riza Shah, the Fall of Sardar Asad, and the ‘Bakhtiari Plot’,” *Iranian Studies*, 38:2 (2005): 217.

¹⁴⁵ Kerim Yıldız and Tanyel B. Taysi, *The Kurds in Iran: The Past, Present and Future* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 12.

diverse range of changes in terms of the state's activities in Iranian periphery. Military struggle with the help of ever-growing modern Iranian army was one dimension. The other incorporated the creation of the state's administrative apparatus such as modern bureaucracy, government personnel instead of local intermediaries, development programs including transportation, roads, education and the wish to fully integrate the whole population.¹⁴⁶

In Turkey, the Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925, the Ararat Rebellions of 1930 and the Dersim Rebellion in 1938 were all significant internal security challenges to the Kemalist attempts to create a new nation-state. Comparing Iran's and Turkey's reactions to the demands coming from local autonomy, it would not be a stretch to say that this promptly turned into a concrete joint policy. Although we do not know for certain what was the landmark in the tacit understanding against the rebels around the Mountain Ağrı, it is not difficult to imagine that Reza Shah would think about the similar confrontation that two states lived through their peripheries.

When İhsan Nuri in collaboration with the Jalali Chief İbrahim Haski Talu revolted against the state, this time in Ağrı, this was the second illustration of how the local leaders and Kurdish aghas were disaffected from the Kemalist regime.¹⁴⁷ This clash was an indirect consequence of the Lausanne Treaty of 1923 which granted the new Turkish state exclusive right over its territories at the expense of the Kurdish chiefs' wish for self-rule or provincial autonomy.¹⁴⁸

The Ararat Rebellion differed from the previous Sheikh Said Rebellion since Turkish troops had to fight the Kurds in 1930 in Mount Ararat where the Russian,

¹⁴⁶ Sekandar Amanolahi, "Reza Shah and the Lurs: The Impact of the Modern State on Luristan," *Iran & the Caucasus*, Vol. 6, No. 1/2 (2002): 214.

¹⁴⁷ McDowall, 204.

¹⁴⁸ Andrew Mango, "Atatürk and the Kurds", 18.

Turkish and Persian frontiers were intersected.¹⁴⁹ The two Kurdish revolts could be read as the pains of change the newly-established Turkish Republic was going through in its early years. And, both were serious challenges to the nationalist ideology of the Kemalist regime which prioritized the unquestionable state authority across the country, in return the state's response to them was inflexible and decisive. The nationalist ideology in the interwar period Turkey was shaped by a special emphasis on external sovereignty and domestic territorial integrity. From this standpoint, the Ararat Rebellion did have more than local consequences and pitted the Turkish state against Iran.

Since late 1928, the Turkish state had started to struggle with Kurdish brigands and raiders in northeastern Turkey.¹⁵⁰ It was an external problem because Ankara alleged that these brigands entered Turkey from Iran. While the Turkish press repeatedly blamed Iranian authorities for allowing brigands to cross the border illegally and for not cooperating with Turkish authorities to encircle the rebels at the Mount Ararat district, there were also rumors about the assistance to the Kurdish rebels from neighboring countries.¹⁵¹

We could see that the tensions in the relations which were reflected in the newspapers aroused in diplomatic relations in 1929. In August 1929, Tevfik Rüştü (Aras) Bey wrote İsmet Pasha that a cessation happened in the Turkish-Iranian Border Commission¹⁵² and later, in September 1929 an intelligence report from the

¹⁴⁹ "Turks Fighting Kurds" The New York Times, 21 June 1930.

¹⁵⁰ BCA; 30.10.0.0/261.755.18.

¹⁵¹ "Turks Fight Brigands in North Kurdistan" The New York Times, 30 June 1930; "To Act against Raiders" The New York Times, 4 July 1930; "Links Colonel Lawrence to Kurdish Revolt" The New York Times, 9 July 1930; BCA; 30.10.0.0/83.549.3; BCA; 30.10.0.0/83.549.16. See also *Genelkurmay Belgelerinde Kürt İsyanları-II* [Kurdish Rebellions in the General Staff Documents] (İstanbul: Kaynak, 1992), 89.

¹⁵² BCA; 30.10.0.0/230.547.4.

province of Beyazıt to the Ministry of Interior mentioned the disquiet about a meeting among the Iranian representative to the commission and some Kurdish notables.¹⁵³ It is possible to observe Turkey's uneasiness about the Iranian state's attitude towards the Kurds and this seemed to perpetuate the centuries-old border disputes between Turkey and Iran. Moreover, non-cooperation of Iran could be interpreted as their less commitment to the idea of nation-state defined by sovereignty and territorial integrity.

On the other hand, the Turkish state was unwilling to overlook what they called brigandage or to share its authority with any local groups. Turkey took action for the complete suppression of all rebels in the mountain strongholds and increased its forces to 30.000 regular and 30.000 reserve troops in the region.¹⁵⁴ However, Turkey's unilateral action against the rebels did not bring successful results because Turkey did not possess all territories around Mount Ararat. Turkey requested for a boundary change in the Turkish-Iranian frontier¹⁵⁵ but Turkish troops already penetrated Iranian territory to pursue the Kurdish rebels without the approval of Iranian authorities.¹⁵⁶ Shortly thereafter the Ararat Rebellion was repressed by the heavy bombardments of Turkish troops and the border problem was settled with the signing of a border treaty between the two countries on 23 January 1932 and the Treaty of Security, Neutrality and Economic Cooperation on 5 November 1932.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ BCA; 30.10.0.0/112.753.14.

¹⁵⁴ "Turkish Forces Crush the Kurdish Uprising; Most of 15.000 Bandits Are Reported Killed" The New York Times, 14 July 1930; "Turks Ready to Move on Remaining Kurds" The New York Times, 27 July 1930.

¹⁵⁵ "To Ask Boundary Change" The New York Times, 15 July 1930.

¹⁵⁶ "Turks Invade Persia, Wiping Out Kurd Rebels; Report Nothing Left for Diplomats to Settle" The New York Times, 20 July 1930.

¹⁵⁷ İsmail Soysal, *Tarihçeleri ve Açıklamaları ile Birlikte Türkiye'nin Siyasal Antlaşmaları* [The Political Treaties of Turkey] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1983), 420-426.

The Ararat Rebellion can be regarded as a continuation of the relations of local powers with the state, in other words clash between provincial self-rule and the center. And, the crisis that arose from the Ararat Rebellion was a reminder of the old border problems that characterized the Ottoman-Persian relations. Reciprocal prejudices on both sides besides, and the fact that Turkey crossed the Iranian frontier and Iran seemed either helped armed Kurdish rebels or did not take measures against those helping the rebels could have exacerbated the border problem.¹⁵⁸ However, the settlement of this problem genuinely portended a new era in Turkish-Iranian relations. Even when we look at how these news were interpreted and circulated in the *New York Times* or in any other Turkish newspaper in the immediate pre-operation times, the recognition of the new phase Turkish-Iranian relations were entering was not yet clear by all parties. Judging by the available record and documents, on the other hand, they would reveal that the commitment to the sovereignty of nation-state by new leaderships in Turkey and Iran became instrumental in bringing two states into a negotiating table.

The Turkish state launched the third Ararat operation to suppress the rebellion in July 1930. Taking seriously what had been happening in the region for four years, Turkish military and political elites were aware that the status of borders allowed the illegal cross-border movements and they needed the cooperation of the Iranian state. But it is seen that the commitment of Iran to security of the borders and territories was still a question for the Turkish state towards the end of June. It means the

¹⁵⁸ Indeed, Turks and Iranians were on the brink of a war during the Rebellion. See “Turkish Troops Invaded Persia After Kurds; Outbreak of War at Any Moment Expected” *The New York Times*, 13 August 1930; “Breach Widens Between Turkey and Persia; Ankara Calls Envoy in Dispute over Kurds” *The New York Times*, 16 August 1930; “Persia Will Not Join Turkey Against Kurds” *The New York Times*, 20 August 1930.

settlement of the problem was far from being straightforward.¹⁵⁹ On the other hand, Turkey did not only demand Iran to use its territory to encircle the rebels around the Ararat Mountain, but also wanted to start negotiations for the redrawing of borders to prevent further brigandage. The appointment of Hüsrev (Gerede) Bey¹⁶⁰ as the Ambassador to Tehran was the sign for the determination of resolving the problem through diplomatic channels.¹⁶¹

We knew Atatürk's attitude towards the issue from his conversation with Hüsrev Bey in Yalova where Hüsrev Bey prepared to set forth for Tehran. With the permission of Mustafa Kemal, journalist Hakkı Tarık (Us) Bey took notes of the meeting and the next day, an article was published in the semi-official newspaper, *Vakit*.¹⁶² Contrary to what has been published in some newspapers about Iran, Atatürk stated his wishes for Iran to be a strong and consolidated state and he expressed confidence that his counterpart Reza Shah to knew that it was a new era for two states and they could solve this problem (the Ararat Rebellion) through joint collaboration. Although Turkey carried out a military cross-border operation to the apprehension of Iranian officials, Mustafa Kemal told Hüsrev Bey that he wanted the new ambassador to stay and settle the issue under the politics of 'peace and friendship'.¹⁶³

The perspective of Iranian officials was similar during the crisis. Even in the immediate aftermath of the entry of Turkish troops into the Iranian territory and the

¹⁵⁹ BCA; 30.18.1.2/12.45.18.

¹⁶⁰ For more information about the political life of Gerede and his role during the Turkish National Movement, see Günay Çağlar, *Hüsrev Bey Heyet-i Nasihası* (Ankara: AKDTYK Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1997)

¹⁶¹ BCA; 30.18.1.2/13.58.12.

¹⁶² "Gazi Hazretleri Şark Hadisesini Nasıl Telakki Buyuruyorlar?" [How Did Gazi View the Incident in East?] *Vakit*, 25 July 1930; Hüsrev Gerede, *Siyasi Hatıralarım I: İran, Ağustos 1930-1934* (İstanbul: *Vakit*, 1952), 15; Bilal N. Şimşir, *Bizim Diplomatlar* (İstanbul: Bilgi, 1996), 343.

¹⁶³ Gerede, 17; Şimşir, 344.

circulating news about a possible Turkish-Iranian war, a correspondence arriving from the Turkish embassy in Moscow reported that the Iranian Ambassador there gave a written notice to the newspapers denying the conflict between the two states and emphasizing Turkish-Iranian cooperation in the events of Kurdistan.¹⁶⁴ When the new Ambassador Hüsrev Bey presented his letters of credence to the Shah on 15 September, Reza Shah firstly congratulated the victory of the Turkish army in Ağrı. The point he put his finger on was the strengthening of friendship against ‘common enemies’¹⁶⁵. Reza Shah repeatedly said that he was following the ‘great’ reform and development program of Gazi Mustafa Kemal as much as he could.¹⁶⁶ Reza Shah criticized his caricatures in Turkish newspapers due to the alleged claims of his help to the Kurds, rather than commenting on the *de facto* situation in the frontiers after the operation of the Turkish army.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, not only did Reza Shah accept the unilateral action of the Turkish troops against the Kurds in Iranian soils, he also showed the similar attitude and confidence like Mustafa Kemal to the settlement of the border problem. Here, a conversation on the details of exchanges of territories in 1932 between Reza Shah and Hassan Arfa, the then Colonel and commandant of the Military Academy is worth quoting at length. Reza Shah said:

“You don’t understand me. It is not this or that hill which is important: it is the settlement, once and for all, of our frontier disputes with Turkey. The disagreements between our two countries in the past, which have always been to the profit of our enemies, must cease, and a sincere friendship based on

¹⁶⁴ BCA; 30.10.0.0/248.675.17, 6 September 1930.

¹⁶⁵ Hüsrev Bey did not give the names of what he or Reza Shah considered as ‘common enemies’. Following the Great war, within the insecure environment of interwar years the extent of this definition might be very broad for two newly-established states.

¹⁶⁶ Gereide, 68.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 70.

our mutual interests be established between Iran and Turkey. If we are allied and united, I do not fear anybody.”¹⁶⁸

This statement can be described both as Reza Shah’s appreciation of Turkish-Iranian friendship and further his commitment to the new structures which Mustafa Kemal and he were instituting in their respective countries. Firstly, state-centric and centralizing goals of new nation-states gave shape to both Turkey’s dealing with the Kurdish question and Iran’s response to Turkey’s action. Secondly, although it is unclear which enemies Reza Shah meant or whom he feared the most, his security concerns and his pursuit of Mustafa Kemal’s modernization path went hand in hand in this period.

Consequently, the operation of Turkish army towards the Kurdish insurgencies in Ağrı and Iran’s tacit support for Turkish troops to use Iranian territory to contain whole Mountain Ağrı resulted in the complete suppression of Ağrı revolts in September 1930 which had taken almost four years and caused several losses in economic and military terms. Reiterating what Reza Shah said, the mutual interests and the unity against ‘enemies’ became integral part of Turkish-Iranian relations in the interwar years. But first, Turkey and Iran concluded a border agreement in order to preclude the possibility of a future crisis in the frontiers after almost two-year so-called shuttle diplomacy.

In January 1932, Iran agreed to give the entire territory around Mountain Ağrı to Turkey in exchange for Kotur, a region near to Van.¹⁶⁹ On 23 January 1932, Turkey and Iran signed a Turco-Iranian Frontier Treaty and the Treaty of

¹⁶⁸ General Hassan Arfa, *Under Five Shahs* (London: John Murray, 1964), 231.

¹⁶⁹ Gökhan Çetinsaya, “Essential Friends and Natural Enemies: The Historic Roots of Turkish-Iranian Relations” *Middle Eastern Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2003): 124.

Conciliation, Judicial Settlement and Arbitration. A Treaty of Friendship followed on 5 November 1932.¹⁷⁰ Rouhollah Ramazani construes the three agreements in the aftermath of the suppression of the Ağrı Revolts as the new foundations of Iran's relations with Turkey.¹⁷¹ It is quite likely to say the same thing for Turkey's relations with Iran. The Kurdish rebellions constituted the first encounter and crisis between Turkish and Iranian state but as Robert Olson states, Turkish-Iranian cooperation against the Kurds became inherent in how Turkish and Iranian state defined nationalism in the post-WWI world¹⁷² which was to create a modern, centralized nation-state.

3.3 Reza Shah's Visit to Turkey in 1934: 'Exporting a Revolution'

Reza Shah's state visit to Turkey in June 1934 was a watershed moment for Turkish-Iranian relations during the interwar era.¹⁷³ When the Iranian Shah performed his 27-day long state visit to Turkey -it was his first and last overseas visit- this served several goals for Turkish and Iranian governments. However, in contrast to expectations, the visit had little concrete benefits for the two states. In other words, this visit did not develop a greater and inclusive economic cooperation as Turkey had long expected. Turkey made no bones about her desire to take a share in Iran's trade relations along Mediterranean. Iran had to go out to sea and this road could have been the Tabriz- Trabzon commercial road rather than two alternative routes through either Caucasia or Iraq, both of which were under the auspices of

¹⁷⁰ BCA; 30.10.0.0/230.547.9. See also İsmail Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Antlaşmaları*, 420-426.

¹⁷¹ Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *The Foreign Policy of Iran*, 272.

¹⁷² Robert W. Olson, *The Kurdish Question and Turkish-Iranian Relations: From World War I to 1998* (California: Mazda Publishers, 1998), 22.

¹⁷³ Hakimiyeti Milliye, "İran Şahı Hz." 17 April 1934; Cumhuriyet, "İran Şahı Hz.nin Memleketimizi Ziyareti" 26 May 1934; Milliyet, "Şahinşah Pehlevi Hz.nin Ziyaretleri" 31 May 1934.

‘unreliable’ imperial powers.¹⁷⁴ Nor was the Iranian side able to conclude its own ‘Balkan Entente’, or at least a military cooperation agreement with Turkey.¹⁷⁵ As Hassan Arfa wrote later in his memoirs, Reza Shah considered Turkey as a counterweight to Great Britain and Russia. He accepted the invitation of his Turkish counterpart and came to Turkey in order to win an ally.¹⁷⁶

There may be many reasons why two states did not achieve the results they long wished. Economically speaking, since Turkish economy and trade have been scourged by the collapse of equitable international exchange upon the Great Depression, the barter system offered by Germany enabled Turkey to recover its economy and pursue its development policy in the 1930s. Having imported manufactured goods including much of the necessary infrastructure and technical aid from Germany, Turkey got the opportunity to find a market to sell its raw materials and to increase its revenues of state monopolies. In 1936, so substantial were the share of Germany in Turkey’s foreign trade (49.5% of Turkey’s exports and 46% of the imports) that it started to contribute to an uneasiness for Turkish political elite about the German dominance in the economy.¹⁷⁷ It is possible to argue that the desire of the Turkish state to diversify its economic and trade instruments through Tabriz-Trabzon road or others was related with this uneasiness. As Jennifer Jenkins argues, German-Iranian economic relations were equally striking, with Germany’s share of

¹⁷⁴ Cumhuriyet, “Komşu İran’ı Bizim Denizlere İndirmeliyiz” 19 June 1934; Cumhuriyet, “İran’ın Transit Yolları” 20 June 1934. The construction of Tabriz-Trabzon road and a railway line had, in fact, been an integral part of Turkey’s relations with Iran during the 1930s. A reasonable amount of money was allocated for the construction in the first half of the decade and it was finally completed in 1936. The transit road which did not produce the intended results was closed after the Soviet invasion of Tabriz in the Second World War. BCA; 30.18.1.1/11.47.11; BCA; 30.18.1.1/23.13.18; BCA; 30.1.0.0/39.233.11; BCA; 30.10.0.0/168.171.1; BCA; 30.10.0.0/168.171.2; BCA; 30.10.0.0/71.465.1 and BCA; 30.18.1.2/82.3.6.

¹⁷⁵ BCA; 30.10.0.0/261.758.17. See also Gerede, 267-8.

¹⁷⁶ Arfa, *Under Five Shahs*, 244-6.

¹⁷⁷ Yücel Güçlü, “Turkish-German Relations on the Eve of World War Two,” *Turkish Studies*, 1:2 (2000): 84.

Iran's exports reaching 47% in 1941.¹⁷⁸ Iran and Germany were trade partners with the help of the famous clearing agreements of German Minister of Economics Hjalmar Schacht. Nevertheless, the reason for not developing integrated economic cooperation might be the fact that the dominance of Germany in Turkey's and Iran's economy was indeed very hard to break.

After addressing that this visit achieved remarkably little in material terms, its historical significance for bilateral relations necessitates a thorough analysis. The reason behind bringing it into the discussion in this study was that Reza Shah's state visit to Turkey marked the culmination of years of state and nation-building efforts of both Turkey and Iran. The self-definition of nationalism by Turkey and Iran, which was firstly seen in their allegiances to the settlement of the Ararat rebellion, was to establish state power in the domestic sphere with a modern centralized state apparatus. After four years from the settlement of the border problem, the 1934 visit was the manifestation of the similar outlooks that Atatürk and Reza Shah had for creating a modern nation state.

The signing of a Frontier Treaty and a Treaty of Friendship in 1932 were concluded a high-level visit of Turkish delegation, including Tevfik Rüştü Bey, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Celal (Bayar) Bey, the General Manager of Turkey İşbank, to Tehran in 1932. The Treaty ended the years-old border problem because the establishment of nation-states requires strict dividing lines between two states. Over the preceding two years, the hopes for further rapprochement remained unfulfilled but it continued. A possible visit at the common frontiers around Van was

¹⁷⁸ Jennifer Jenkins, "Iran in the Nazi New Order, 1933-1941," *Iranian Studies*, 49:5 (2016): 728. For detailed information about Iran's economic relations, see also Mary Yoshinari, "A Unique Event in Iran-Soviet Economic Relations: The 1935 Iranian Trade Delegation to the USSR," *Iranian Studies*, 49:5 (2016): 791-815.

planned in 1933.¹⁷⁹ Since Reza Shah expressed his desire to see his Turkish counterpart in Ankara, this visit was postponed for another year.

Reza Shah's 27-day long visit to Turkey involved many big cities including Ankara, Eskişehir, İzmir, Balıkesir, Çanakkale and Istanbul, which were the major cities for Turkey's anti-imperialist war.¹⁸⁰ The visit also encompassed a great number of diplomatic meetings among the Iranian delegation and Turkish President, Prime Minister Ismet Pasha, Chief of Staff Marshal Fevzi (Çakmak) Pasha, Speaker of the Parliament of Turkey Kazım (Özalp) Bey and many others. Little information concerning the content of these conversations is available, but it is self-evident that they all spent quite long time together and discuss their countries' current situation and future.¹⁸¹ Apart from that, the Shah's travel schedule included a wide range of programs from the visiting industrial facilities such as the construction of dam on the Aras river, drilling activities in Tuzluca, the Çubuk-1 Dam I on the Çubuk Stream in Ankara which was the first dam built in Turkey to the examination of the military factories. Reza Shah visited the girl's institutes, trade schools, Ankara Higher Agriculture College and Ankara Numune Hospital, the battlefields of National Struggle, the Dardanelles and Istanbul. It is quite interesting to imagine when Reza Shah listened to explanation made to himself about illnesses, germs and when he made examination with microscope in laboratories and operating rooms but these all could be read in the daily accounts of the visit. At every stop, Reza Shah and his companion either Gazi Mustafa Kemal or Ismet Pasha were greeted with acclamation and met by a choir of young girls in modern dress in accompaniment with singing

¹⁷⁹ Gerede, 270.

¹⁸⁰ *Ayın Tarihi*, No: 7 (June 1934), 7-42.

¹⁸¹ Arfa states in his memoirs that Reza Shah in his meeting with Marshal Fevzi Pasha supposedly talked about his wish for a military alliance with Turkey. According to Arfa, the reason why Turkey did not want to involve in an alliance in the east was his good relations with the USSR. See Arfa, *Under Five Shahs*, 252.

small verses and national anthems. Even when someone took a glance at the places Reza Shah during his visit, it would be easy to recognize why these locations would have been chosen by the Turkish state.

Turkey's organization of this visit reveals its historical importance, let alone the importance both Turkish and Iranian leader ascribed to it in political terms. These political intentions can be explained in two ways: firstly, this event was utilized by the two regimes as a representation of each's commitment and respect to the idea of the nation-state. By way of illustration, the Shah's arrival to Ankara was also designed for major celebrations and ceremonies. Afshin Marashi's analysis of those early ceremonies was indeed a new account and worth-mentioning to perceive the significance that Turkey and Iran attached to the cause of national sovereign states. Reza Shah and his coterie of 18 Iranian politicians and senior army officers started to their trip on June 10 and arrived Ankara on June 16.¹⁸² These 6 days were somehow another journey consisting of the eastern cities of Beyazıt, Iğdır, Kars, Erzurum, Gümüşhane, Trabzon where they took a ship to Samsun, from there they made a train trip to Ankara.¹⁸³

The Turkish state made extensive preparations for the welcoming ceremony for Reza Shah and his entourage.¹⁸⁴ All through the route of Iranian delegation from Iğdır to Samsun, Turkish and Iranian flags were raised and everywhere was embellished with triumphal arches. When the delegation crossed the border, they were welcomed by an honor guard to the accompaniment of 21-gun salute and the

¹⁸² For the coterie of Reza Shah, see *Ayin Tarihi*, No: 7, 12.

¹⁸³ Afshin Marashi, "Performing the Nation: The Shah's Official State Visit to Kemalist Turkey, June to July 1934," in *The Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Reza Shah, 1921-1941*, ed. Stephanie Cronin (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 106.

¹⁸⁴ BCA; 30.10.0.0/261.759.13. Hüsrev Gerece, *Siyasi Hatıralarım I: İran, Ağustos 1930-1934* (İstanbul: Vakıf, 1952), 263-275.

national anthems of each state. Reza Shah in his first and last overseas trip was met by a crowded Turkish military delegation. Marashi discusses that this border-crossing ceremony was a major part of the official visit for two reasons. Firstly, the 1934 visit was planned to honor the demarcation of the border-line successfully by the 1932 border treaty. Secondly, the transition from multi-ethnic empires to the nation-state in the aftermath of the Great War went hand in hand with the transformation of loosely demarcated boundaries into fully-fledged state boundaries reflecting the national sovereignty of individual states.¹⁸⁵ The national boundaries which separated two nation states aside, other national symbols such as national flag, national anthem and the troops were all present to reify the significance of idea of nation-state. When Gazi Mustafa Kemal in company with TBMM President Kazım Bey, Prime Minister Ismet Pasha and the Chief of Staff Fevzi Paşa welcomed the Iranian Shah Reza Pehlevi in Ankara train station on June 16, they were well aware of the shared commonalities of Turkish and Iranian interests in all likelihood in this critical transition period.

The program was surely the result of much planning. In his letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkish Ambassador Hüsrev Bey asked that attention be paid particularly to the eastern leg of the trip. Worried about the first impression which the eastern cities of Turkey would make on Reza Shah, Hüsrev Bey recommended detailed preparations along the road. His suggestion was the rehabilitation of the situation of the army officers, gendarmerie, local police and tax men and he stated that those people who were wearing the uniform of the Republic should have represented Ghazi Turkey through their dresses and appearances.¹⁸⁶ It

¹⁸⁵ Afshin Marashi, "The Shah's Official State Visit to Kemalist Turkey", 107.

¹⁸⁶ Gereke, 270.

was definitely not a comprehensive change but even a change in the appearances of the statesmen in the region would have proved the state power and central authority across the every part of Turkey which was the articulation of nationalism in interwar Turkey.

As to the secondary political significance of the visit, the correlation between modernization and nationalism enables to understand the political context within which Turkey and Iran rapidly implemented their modernization drives. Atatürk and Reza Shah were the reformers of their newly-established nation states but what they were achieving in their respective countries was not a cultural ‘renaissance’. As late-comers, the reformers of the 20th century had to create a state apparatus competent enough of securing the survival of new state towards internal and external threats. Centralization was one solution to the domestic autonomy-seeking ethnic or tribal groups and modernization was the other way to gain a strong, and most importantly equal, foothold among the other members of international arena. The need for multi-pronged strategies in the political agenda of the leaders might explain how centralization, modernization and nationalism inextricably intertwined with each other. Herein, modernization was an ideal and thus nationalism was the ideological dimension of this ideal.

At that stage, it was not coincidence that Ankara was willing to display its accomplishments made for the sake of modernization. As an indication of how Turkey approached the visit, İsmet Pasha in his memoirs stated that they tried to provide great ease for Reza Shah to observe and examine everything about Turkey in İzmir, Yalova and Istanbul, shortly everywhere Shah traveled.¹⁸⁷ Turkish statesmen also knew that Reza Shah was following ‘the successive and major attempts in the

¹⁸⁷ İsmet İnönü, *Hatıralar* [The Memoires] (Ankara: Bilgi, 1985), 268.

way of progress and civilization'. As Turkish ambassador Hüsrev Bey gave report about one of his early conversations with the Shah in September 1932, Reza Shah explicitly stated that he imitated Atatürk and recommended King Faysal to do the same.¹⁸⁸ It is obvious that Reza Shah did not even conceal that he followed the policies Mustafa Kemal pursued.¹⁸⁹ In return, every destination point of the visit was wisely designed to affirm the commitment of Turkey and to publicize the stage where Turkish state stood in the road to create a modern nation-state towards its eastern counterpart.

The goal of modernization with the ideology of nationalism had means of centralization throughout the second half of 1920s and 1930s in Turkey and Iran. Turkey was one step ahead of Iran because Iran did not go through its own 'Tanzimat' in previous century whereas Turkey had almost one-century experience in administrative centralization of the central government. Nevertheless, Turkey and Iran again had to face external enemies and domestic threats which undermined their rights as sovereign states during the 20th century. Both states had to face challenges rooted in the countries' periphery against the central authority in 1920s. The Ararat Rebellion was indeed one of them and their fight against the autonomous structures continued during much of the 1930s. Thus, it is not surprising to see that the visit to military academies and garrisons was, first and foremost, the integral part of the overall program. Reza Shah inspected the air headquarters in Eskişehir and İzmir, examined corps headquarters in Soma and Gaziemir, watched simulated military operations and a submarine dive throughout his tour in Turkey.¹⁹⁰ İsmet Pasha in his

¹⁸⁸ BCA; 30.10.0.0/261.757.26.

¹⁸⁹ BCA; 30.10.0.0/261.758.5.

¹⁹⁰ See also *Ayın Tarihi*, No:7, 28-31.

memoirs also wrote down that Reza Shah appreciated their experiences and privately consulted him about how to deal with reactionary forces.¹⁹¹

As stated above, the historical visit did not result in the tangible benefits. The Tabriz-Trabzon transit built in 1936 was short-lived. Reza Shah returned his country with an empty hand concerning a military alliance. His desired military pact was concluded later in 1937, in Tehran's Saadabad Palace among Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. The signing of the Saadabad Pact happened in a very different context than what Reza Shah hoped to sign in 1934. The Turkish state had not seen necessary to sign a military pact with Iran since the threat had not come from the East, and the Saadabad Pact was signed due to growing Italian threat in the Mediterranean. Hassan Arfa still regarded the 1934 visit as a success. Although Reza Shah did not obtain what he desired, an open and enduring friendship with Atatürk, overall, was important for him.¹⁹²

Taking Turkey's and Iran's approach to the modernization and bilateral relations together into consideration, a win-win situation in terms of Turkish-Iranian relations was highly visible. It is accurate to say that Iran was ready to adopt the Turkish model for its own modernization program and Turkey was willing to export its 'revolution'. Moreover, Turkey reaped the benefit of this visit to exhibit its newly-established modern nation-state.

It was always worth remembering the threat perception the Turkish and Iranian states had and the idea of modernization both countries defined during the interwar years. Thus, military aspects of this process help explain the similarities in terms of threats which Turkey and Iran encountered and their way of overcoming their

¹⁹¹ İnönü, 267.

¹⁹² Arfa, 252.

problems. As quoted from Olson at the beginning of this section, the Kurdish question for instance epitomized the self-definition of nationalism in Turkey and Iran. Their arduous efforts to create a 'modern' strong state were the main component of this definition. Reza Shah's visit to Turkey and the visit programme were a presentation of this sort of nationalism.

3.4 Conclusion: Shared Nationalisms and Relations with the West

'Reza Shah's visit to the Turkish President has a meaning more than a simple gesture of friendship'. This statement is from one of the articles which the Turkish government was reading and translating about the visit. In other words, the Turkish state paid attention to the visit's international repercussions, as well as its impact on the bilateral relations. The article published in the British newspaper *Near East and India* started with this sentence on June 21, 1934 on the day on which the Shah's visit to Ankara was in full flow.¹⁹³ The British weekly was surely right about the visit's significance. As suggested above, this meaning was more than military or economic repercussions in the bilateral relations. This being the case, Atatürk's Turkey and Reza Shah's Iran during the interwar years lived through similar experiences of instilling the ideologies of shared nationalism across two respective countries. The official nationalism, how Tanıl Bora defines Kemalist nationalism in Turkey, was a nation-state and modernist ideology. The idealist implications of this modernist ideology aside, Kemalist nationalism emerged as the ideology of 'state'

¹⁹³ For the French translation of articles published in the British press, see BCA; 30.10.0.0/261.759.10.

and ‘order’.¹⁹⁴ It was a ‘nation-state ideology’ in Turkey and Iran alike, since it comprised of consistent efforts of state and nation-building in the transition from Ottoman and Persian empires to the nation-states during the 1920s and 1930s. It was also a ‘modernist ideology’ because it was evenly important for them to be the equal members of the international system through adopting the universalized standards of the Western world.¹⁹⁵ Reza Shah’s visit was important because it created all about a win-win scenario for everyone involved in this equation.

First of all, the kind of nationalism which Atatürk and Reza Shah embraced and constructed Turkish and Iranian state upon it had common peculiarities. It set forth the terms between the state and its authority over the citizens within the existing state boundaries. In other words, it rejected an appeal for ethnic-based or Turanian politics and it was what differentiated Atatürk from his predecessors such as Enver Pasha.¹⁹⁶

Above all, a Foreign Office letter written to Prime Minister Ismet Pasha on Azeri Turks illustrates one of the defining moments of Turkish-Iranian relations in this new era. The report as to the Azeri Turks living in Iranian Azerbaijan suggested ways of forging cultural ties through Turkish publications. This report even reiterated the right of Iranian state over the use of any language in Iranian Azerbaijan and only concluded about indirect assistance to Azeris through cultural and literate activities.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Tanıl Bora, introduction to *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik, Cilt 4* [Political Thought in Modern Turkey: Nationalism, Vol. 4], ed. Tanıl Bora (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), 19.

¹⁹⁵ Afshin Marashi, “Performing the Nation: The Shah’s Official State Visit to Kemalist Turkey, June to July 1934,” 106.

¹⁹⁶ Abdülhâat Akşin, *Atatürk’ün Dış Politika İlkeleri ve Diplomasisi*, 191.

¹⁹⁷ BCA; 30.10.0.0/261.759.1.

The transformation in terms of state-society relationship which Turkish and Iranian state underwent had also impact on the bilateral relations. Both states abandoned the imperial policies of benefiting the military service of local power groups in the frontier regions. The Ottoman State followed this policy and benefitted from the presence of a large Kurdish army against Iran in early periods and later against Armenians.¹⁹⁸ Turkey and Iran likewise were for a long time troubled with the other's helping, if not fomenting, local rebellions against the state. In sharp contrast to the mutual distrust, the border crisis emanating from the Ararat Rebellion demonstrated to each side that this was indeed a new era in conducting diplomatic relations. Iran's firm position towards illegal crossing of the borders by the Kurdish tribes during the rebellion and its tacit cooperation with the Turkish government opened this new era. Reza Shah's willing attitude to the reform movement in Turkey and especially to the personality of Mustafa Kemal.¹⁹⁹

Reza Shah's visit in 1934 was eventually a win for the Shah himself since he enjoyed the privilege of being hosted in his only overseas trip in proper manner as far as diplomatic relations were concerned. British Near East wrote that Iranians regained their self-respect thanks to the treatment and hospitality of Turks, and they were proud of standing and talking in the same class with the British and the Russians.²⁰⁰ Given the century-old suspicion and apprehension about its imperial neighbors, what Reza Shah probably found in Atatürk was a staunch friend, if not an ally, and a model which can be more easily adopted in his own modernization drive. This relationship was also a second win for Turkey since being a model country for

¹⁹⁸ Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, 48.

¹⁹⁹ It was quite many times repeated either in the memoirs of Turkish Ambassadorship to Tehran or in his letters to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Reza Shah's admiration for Turkish modernization was well-known by Turkish political elites.

²⁰⁰ Quoted in Akşin, 196.

its newly-modernizing eastern neighbors was highly preferred in foreign relations. When Amanullah Khan, King of Afghanistan, had visited Turkey in May 1928, Turkish state literally used every means available to prepare Ankara, the new capital of the Republic of Turkey, for this ‘grand visit’.²⁰¹ While Turkey hoped Amanullah Khan to be the ‘Ghazi Mustafa Kemal of Afghanistan’, several correspondences were exchanged between Mustafa Kemal and the King about radical reforms, social customs and political situation of Afghanistan.²⁰² Long before the rapprochement between Turkey and Iran began, Turkey was playing the role of model country in her relations with Afghanistan. Indeed, such exchanges between Turkey and her eastern counterparts in diplomatic terms contradicted with their long-term aims of seeking an equal seat in international arena. While Turkey was assuming this leading role ahead of Iran or Afghanistan, it is very difficult to refer to a relationship among equals. But it might very much explain, beyond short-term economic or military benefits, the severe challenges of securing the modernization ideal and political interests in a new state. Overlooking this matter of equality in diplomatic affairs by Turkey and Iran somehow demonstrates the unique state of affair they had during the interwar era.

Reza Shah’s 1934 visit was very similar to that of Amanullah Khan in 1928 in many aspects. While modernization emerged as one of the essential policy goals in the political agenda of Turkish Republican elites, it gradually became an important diplomatic leverage in the relations with Iran. British *Near East* even attached priority the shared common modernization perspective of Atatürk and Reza Shah over both countries’ foreign policy issues. It explicated that the reason why Atatürk

²⁰¹ Bilal Şimşir expresses the situation by saying that Ankara was astonishingly renewed in one night, it was greened, its streets, trees were resurged. The *Ankara Palas Hotel*, the only modern hotel of Ankara was rapidly built. See Bilal Şimşir, *Bizim Diplomatlar*, 320.

²⁰² Bilal N. Şimşir, *Atatürk ve Yabancı Devlet Başkanları*, Cilt I (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1993), 32-34.

enhanced the relations with Iran and negotiated on the issue of borders was that he knew that the new founder of Iran took inspiration from Turkey as a modern state.²⁰³ British journal was mentioning the ‘leader position of Turkey in the Middle East’ and Turkey’s eager to utilize that position. The role that Turkey wanted to play and more importantly how this role was interpreted by her Western counterparts could be open to discussion. However, the translated articles of the British Press were sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Turkish statesmen were aware of the political repercussions of the historic visit. British *Daily Herald* interpreted the relations among Atatürk, Reza Shah and King of Afghanistan – maybe with King of Jordan Abdullah or Egyptian Fuat- in terms of a security perspective. Furthermore, the British journals were not the sole source from the foreign press. Other translated articles, this time from Turkish Embassy in Pest, also stated Turkey’s new role in the Near East in an analogy with Japan’s role in the Far East. Consequently, Turkey’s preparation for Reza Shah’s visit, the expression of the visit in both Turkish press and these aforementioned articles in the Western media all of which are reached in the Turkish archives, in other words Turkey was informed about how the foreign sources approached to this historic visit, clearly demonstrates that being a model country with its nationalist modernization program was a desirable position in her relations either with Iran or other eastern countries.

Another indication of the shared commitment of Turkey and Iran to the state sovereignty could be also attributed to the shared experiences of being the so-called semi-colonial countries of the previous century. Having been subordinated through capitulations and the economic burdens of Western imperialism during the 19th century, Turkey and Iran embarked on a number of national programs especially in

²⁰³ BCA; 30.10.0.0/261.759.10.

the economic field. Whereas Trans-Iranian Railroad, whose construction was relied on national capital, was seen as one of the major achievements of Reza Shah, the Turkish side sought to highlight its infant national industry throughout the 1934 visit in order to derive benefit from further economic cooperation between Turkey and Iran.²⁰⁴ Moreover, when the British-Iranian oil dispute was back on the front burner and resulted in another concession in 1933, a Turkish intelligence report from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Prime Minister stated that the use of national resources of Iran belonged to Iran, not to a foreign company.²⁰⁵

Taken these articles published in the Western media into consideration, it could be seen that the nationalist-modernist experiences that Turkey and Iran were living through were interpreted as acceptable version of nationalist self-definition. Therefore, the win-win scenario for Turkey and Iran, for the former as a model country and for the latter as a follower of that model, was also a third win for the West. Everyone here was pleased with Turkey's so-called leading position on the way to the modernization ideal, although this political goal encompassed certain nationalist articulations in itself. Indeed, it brings us to the main argument of this study: the self-definition of nationalism in Turkey and Iran during the interwar years included shared understandings of domestic and foreign policy orientations and it generated a special kind of relationship between these two modernizing neighbors. Moreover, the compatibility of this sort of nationalism with the ideal of modernization (changeably Westernization), gave Atatürk and Reza Shah upper hand for achieving their other political goal which was to attain an international recognition by the West.

²⁰⁴ Aydın Tarihi, 43.

²⁰⁵ BCA; 30.10.0.0/220.485.15.

CHAPTER IV

THE MOSSADEGH ERA AND TURKISH-IRANIAN RELATIONS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 1950s

The pursuit of bilateral relations was a key strategy of both Turkish and Iranian foreign policy during the interwar years. Both sides embarked on a new phase in which bilateral relations were identified with a constant rapprochement, if not a full-fledged cooperation. What enabled the relations to flourish during the 1930s and to reach peak with Reza Shah's state visit to Turkey in June 1934 was, as this study puts forward, the similar articulations of nationalist ideology adopted by Mustafa Kemal's Turkey and Pahlavi Iran. This sort of nationalism was, indeed, the two newly-established states' response to the domestic and international conditions through which they oversaw the transition from the multinational empires to the nation-states. Nationalist ideology paved the way for establishing state power and authority across the country with a more practical, less political approach in Turkey and Iran. Nationalism, in turn, helped create common ground for domestic and foreign policies with the specific aims of nation-building and modernization.

When the Second World War came to an end, it left many states with severe political and economic problems; it was also a decisive moment for Turkish-Iranian relations. After one decade of cordial relations, the outbreak of Second World War ruptured the relationship because the two states had to grapple with their own problems due to their strategic and geographic significance. The Turkish and Iranian states' relations vis-à-vis other foreign powers both during the war and in the first

few years of the Cold War determined their future course of actions. The second time period that this thesis examines in order to have a better understanding of the nature of Turkish-Iranian relations was from roughly the end of WWII to the infamous *Operation Ajax* in August 1953, which resulted in the overthrow of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh and the end of his popular nationalist movement. After embarking on a course of relations in the 1930s, the two states did not return to that course after WWII. This thesis argues that nationalisms in Turkey and Iran, or more precisely a particular articulation of nationalist ideology in Turkey and Iran thanks to which both states could establish their relations on a more solid ground during the interwar years, revealed a marked divergence in the early Cold War years. A new discussion of nationalism began in Turkey during the war years and revolved around the ideological tensions between Turanism-Nationalism and Communism. With the tacit acquiescence of the Turkish government in consideration of the power relations with the superpowers, nationalism assumed an anti-communist character in Cold War Turkey. The years following the Allied occupation of Iran during the Second World War, which brought an end to the 16-year rule of Reza Pahlavi and put his 22-year-old son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi into power, were greatly affected by domestic and international changes. The power vacuum that followed Reza Shah's departure culminated in the 'popularization of the politics' in Iran. The consolidation of the power of Communist Tudeh Party, the large coalition of National Front under the leadership of Prime Minister Mossadegh, and, most importantly, the oil nationalization act of the Majlis in March 1951 demonstrated that the nationalist ideology turned into an anti-imperialist movement in early 1950s. Whereas nationalism stood for anti-communist identity in Turkey, Iran experienced

an anti-imperialist nationalism which was, given the long association between communism and anti-imperialism, connected to communism in those years.

The sudden shift in the understanding of nationalism in Turkey and Iran in the early Cold War is the subject that this chapter probes. Moreover, this discussion will help explain why the diplomatic relations between Turkey and Iran ground to a standstill during the premiership of Mohammad Mossadeqh (1951-53). Given the fact that this era started with the afore-mentioned oil nationalization act in 1951 and that the escalation of the crisis ended with the 1953 coup organized by the CIA and the MI6, the divergence in the understanding of nationalism in Turkey and Iran explains Turkey's uneasiness about the developments occurring in Mossadeqh's era.

4.1 Turkey and Iran in the War

As stated above, the oil nationalization crisis during the era of the premiership of Mossadeqh was chosen in order to capture the different perspectives of nationalism in the Cold War. The reason behind bringing the foreign policies of Turkey and Iran both during the War and in its aftermath into discussion here was twofold: firstly, the evolution of the nationalist ideology in these states was not independent from what was happening pertaining to the international circumstances and secondly, in relation to that nationalism after the WWII was closely associated to the countries' relations with the superpowers. Nationalist ideology accordingly evolved into a much more political approach during the Cold War.

Turkish statesmen - Mustafa Aydın describes them as being 'skeptical and cautious' -had tried to maintain their neutral position between Germany, Britain and

Soviet Russia all the way through the WWII.²⁰⁶ Although the Anglo-Turkish Agreement of 1939 had brought Turkey's obligations into force in the event of an act of aggression in the Mediterranean, Turkey even hindered her commitment following the Italy's entry into the war, with the justification of Protocol 2 of the Treaty, to the apprehension of Britain.²⁰⁷ İnönü, in his opening speech of the legislative year on 1 November 1940, explicitly stated that Turkey wouldn't allow any of the belligerents to use her territory, sea, and airspace.²⁰⁸ It is known that many in Turkish quarters sympathized with the Germans and preserved economic and diplomatic relations in the aftermath of the Casablanca Conference right until 1944.²⁰⁹ Barutçu quotes Rauf Orbay saying that the initial danger would come to Turkey from Russia, the second danger was from Italy, and Germany was only in the tertiary position. Orbay's statement, indeed, promoted the idea that Turkey sought a German-British peace at the expense of the Soviets.²¹⁰ Necmettin Sadak, who had been the Deputy (1927-46) and served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the cabinets of Hasan Saka and

²⁰⁶ Mustafa Aydın, "Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Historical Framework and Traditional Inputs," *Middle Eastern Studies* (1999): 162.

²⁰⁷ The Protocol 2 of the Anglo-Turkish Treaty excused Turkey from every action that might draw Turkey into an armed conflict with the USSR. Selim Deringil, "The Preservation of Turkey's Neutrality during the Second World War: 1940," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (1982): 39-40.

²⁰⁸ *Tarihe Düşülen Notlar -1: Yasama Yılı Açılışlarında Cumhurbaşkanlarının Konuşmaları -1* [The Presidential Speeches in the Openings of Legislative Year] (Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 2011), 87.

²⁰⁹ Şaban Çalış, "Pan- Turkism and Europeanism: A Note on Turkey's 'Pro- German Neutrality' during the Second World War," *Central Asian Survey*, 16:1 (1997): 105. According to Millman, the alliance with Britain and France failed as opposed to Germany because Turkey's overdependence on Germany which was the backbone of Turkey's foreign trade and provided her with military supply. Brock Millman, "Essay and Reflection: Credit and Supply in Turkish Foreign Policy and the Tripartite Alliance of October 1939: A Note," *The International History Review*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1994): 70-1. Another factor that shattered Turkey's fragile confidence on her Western allies was the fall of Paris in 1940. Faik Ahmet Barutçu quotes İnönü as saying in the CHP group meeting that the planned joint declaration with the Allies was postponed because of the defeat of the French Government. Barutçu, who was a prominent Deputy from CHP, writes about İnönü's speech that Turkey was loyal to the Tripartite Agreement but the joint declaration in order to show that 'We are together' would be an unnecessary move. Faik Ahmet Barutçu, *Siyasi Anılar, 1939-1945* (İstanbul: Milliyet, 1977), 103-4.

²¹⁰ Barutçu, 107; Çalış, 110. For the detailed explanation of Turkey's wartime policy which prioritized national security and survival, see Brock Millman, "Turkish Foreign and Strategic Policy 1934-42," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (1995): 483-508.

Şemsettin Günaltay, stated that Hitler told the Turkish ambassador in Berlin about the Soviet intentions over the Straits as early as March 1941, as an harbinger of what was to come right after the end of the War.²¹¹

While Turkey's delicate foreign policy oscillated between Germany and the Soviets during the War, its ideological repercussions at home led to the revival of Turanism-Nationalist intellectuals during the War. The 1944 trials of nationalists happened in parallel with the defeat of Germany and prefigured the later purge against 'leftist' professors in Faculty of Languages, History and Geography Ankara in 1948. Although never became an official state ideology, the ideological conflict between nationalism and communism in those years was largely affected by the Turkish government's tacit tolerance towards them given the international political atmosphere.

Iran was once again exposed to the political calculations of the Great Powers which plunged the state into chaos in WWII. Iran was occupied by the Allied invasion on 25 August 1941. Having encountered little resistance from the Iranian army, British and Soviet troops entered Tehran on 17 September. In less than one month, the anchor of Reza Shah's authoritarian rule - the army- totally collapsed. Britain's aim to secure oil supply from the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) and to protect the route to India, and Russia's intention to preserve her traditional influence zone against Britain in the presence of Nazi threat played essential role in the invasion of Iran.²¹² Their alleged reason for the decision was the activities of the Nazi agents in Iran and the pro-Nazi attitude of the Pahlavi rule. Consequently, Iran got stuck in the middle of the interests of the great powers.

²¹¹ Necmettin Sadak, "Turkey Faces the Soviets," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (1949): 457.

²¹² Nikolay A. Kozhanov, "The Pretexts and Reasons for the Allied Invasion of Iran in 1941," *Iranian Studies*, 45:4 (2012): 493-6.

The significance of the invasion of Iran for our discussion was that the destruction of the Iranian army aside, the Allied powers also forced Reza Shah to abdicate in September 1941, replaced by his young son. Having been subjected to the heavy hand of Reza Shah's rule which almost totally degenerated in the 1930s, different political groups utilized the loss of power of the monarch.²¹³ Up until 1953 when Mohammad Reza Pahlavi consolidated his own grip on power following the 1953 coup, the political center of gravity was in the Iranian Majlis. Thus, unlike in Turkey where the state maintained control over ideological discussions, Iran's experience during the Second World War allowed more radical versions of nationalism to emerge. As Ali Ansari argues, young socialists, unanticipated products of the Shah's modernization project of a traditional country, started to constitute an important ideological group which were ready to oppose against the unquestionable authority of the monarch.²¹⁴ The establishment of communist Tudeh Party in 1941 and the formation of anti-monarchist National Front, both of which had influential in determining the orientation of the politics in early 1950s were the consequence of the circumstances Iranian states were going through during the WWII.

4.2 Transitional Period in Turkish and Iranian Domestic Politics

The roles that Atatürk and Reza Shah played in the development of modern Turkish-Iranian relations during much of the interwar years were undeniable. Unfortunately, Atatürk passed away in 1938 and Reza Shah had to abdicate his

²¹³ Roger Owen, *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 80.

²¹⁴ Ansari, 104.

throne in 1941. The architect of that period would be replaced by new political actors. The outbreak of WWII itself could be regarded as reasonable in terms of understanding the rupture in the relations. Thus, after the War, Mohammad Reza Shah expressed his opinions about the significance that he attributed to Turkish-Iranian relations. Quoting the Shah in his presentation of credentials, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, who was the Turkish Ambassador to Tehran between 1949 and 1951, said that the Shah had aspirations to continue the friendship and cooperation between Turkey and Iran that had prevailed in the period of his father and Atatürk.²¹⁵ Kadri mentioned politicians such as the Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Sa'ed Khan and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Hekmat-e Shirazi Ali Asghar Khan, who shared the opinions of the Shah about Turkey at that time.²¹⁶ In the same year, Mohammad Reza Shah during his official visit to Washington met with the Turkish Ambassador Feridun Cemal Erkin there. Erkin stated that in their long conversation the Shah talked about the similar external problems and severe political, economic and military issues which the two states encountered. The Shah offered a political scheme including Greece, Turkey and Iran and its benefits for the all parties, Europe and the US. While talking about his post-war plans for Iran, as well as Turkey, the Shah again referred to the historical meeting between Reza Shah and Atatürk.²¹⁷

Contrary to the Shah's understanding of the situation in Turkey and Iran from a foreign policy perspective, however, the early 1950s -namely, the premiership of Mohammad Mossadegh (1951-53) - showed little signs of rapprochement between

²¹⁵ Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Zoraki Diplomat* [Unwilling Diplomat] (İstanbul: İletişim, 2017), 297.

²¹⁶ Ibid, 298.

²¹⁷ Feridun Cemal Erkin, *Dışişlerinde 34 Yıl: Washington Büyükelçiliği II, 1* [34 Years in Foreign Affairs Policy: Ambassadorial Mission in Washington, Volume 2] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1986), 122.

the two states. Even, the political movement under the leadership of Mossadegh was met with apprehension and dismay in Turkish quarters. The politics pursued by Mossadegh, together with the communist movement, was seen as frightening because it might have drawn Iran into instability and internal turmoil from which the Soviets could draw advantage.²¹⁸

This study follows the argument that the juxtaposition of two very different periods of time necessitates a detailed scrutiny on Turkish-Iranian relations during the early years of the Cold War. One change in the post-War Turkey and Iran was about the political centers of the two states. Whereas 1950 was remarked as the end of the mono-party rule of the Republican People's Party in Turkey, the throne in Iran had already lost its absolute and sole authority with the other burgeoning power groups in the political system in mid-1940s. In many ways, it was a transition period for both countries. However, transition did not necessarily amount to overall changes in the entire political system. One difference between Turkey and Iran was that the transition to multiparty rule in Turkey did not cause a change in the elitist-bureaucratic characteristics of Turkish politics. On the other hand, the establishment of leftist parties and the formation of a broad-based political system in Iran provided new political actors with a degree of autonomy from the head of the state.²¹⁹ In this

²¹⁸ Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Türk-İran İlişkileri," in *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi* [Analysis of Turkish Foreign Policy], ed. Faruk Sönmezoğlu (İstanbul: Der, 2001), 139.

²¹⁹ Atabaki argues that the experiences of the Constitutional movements in Iran in 1905-06 and in the Ottoman Empire in 1908 were decisive in the scope and bounds of the political life in the following decades in Iran and Turkey. The intolerance of the Union and Progress Party resulted in the low-profile political parties without a certain autonomy from the elites in Turkey. As an example, the establishment of a worker's party happened in Turkey in 1946. On the other hand, the Constitutional Movement in Iran had a collective identity with the involvement of the reformist and leftist parties. Different political fractions in Iran had already interfered in the political scene in 1905. See Touraj Atabaki, "Time, Labour-Discipline and Modernization in Turkey and Iran: Some Comparative Remarks," in *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*, ed. Touraj Atabaki (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 16.

section, I intend to draw on this transition, which included changes, as well as stark continuities, in the domestic politics of Turkey and Iran in the early Cold War years.

4.2.1 Transition to the Multi-Party Politics in Turkey

The period of change came swiftly in post-war Turkey. İnönü in his presidential speech of 1 November 1945 alluded to the need for a new party in the political system and indicated a clear signal of change in the monoparty system of Turkey.²²⁰ The first opposition party, the National Development Party, established by an Istanbul industrialist Nuri Demirağ on 7 July 1945, did not make its presence felt in the 1946 and 1950 elections. On the other hand, actual opposition came from among the dissidents of the RPP members. The Democrat Party was officially formed on 7 January 1946 by Celal Bayar, Refik Koraltan, Fuad Köprülü and Adnan Menderes whose opposition to the Party became open during the discussions of the Land Reform Bill of 1945 and gradually grew.²²¹ Whereas the split within the RPP occurred due to the contention among the political figures, if not necessarily any ideological divide, the external factors such as the signing of the United Nations charter and the victory of the ‘democracy front’ in the WWII accelerated the transition to the multiparty system.²²² Accordingly, this section is about more of a continuity rather than change in the Turkish political leadership. Although the election of the DP as the ruling party in 1950 ended the 27-year RPP rule in Turkey, the new party was in some ways not that different from the RPP, where its members entirely gained their political maturity, in domestic politics and foreign policy orientation in many respects.

²²⁰ *Yasama Yılı Açılışlarında Cumhurbaşkanlarının Konuşmaları –I*, 125.

²²¹ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy, 1950-1975* (London: Westview Press, 1977), 12-3.

²²² Kemal H. Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi: Sosyal, Ekonomik, Kültürel Temeller* [History of Turkish Democracy: Social, Economic, Cultural Foundations] (İstanbul: Timaş, 2015), 225.

In foreign policy, a Western-oriented approach had been already adopted by the RPP. Having declared war on Nazi Germany on 23 February 1945, one day later Turkey signed the UN Charter. In the presence of the Soviet demands, however, Turkey had to wait a bit longer for American and British support. In 1947, the Truman Doctrine pledging financial aid to Turkey and Greece was the sign of firm US support and it was welcomed more for its reassurance. Turkey's membership to the Council Europe in August 1949 also strengthened her ties institutionally with the West.²²³ The forging an alliance with the United States was also one of the main pillars of Turkish foreign policy from 1946 to 1952. The dispatch of the *USS Missouri* to bring the corpse of the late Turkish ambassador Münir Ertegün in April 1946 was regarded as American support by Turkey, although but for its timing, the event did not promise any concrete help in the face of Soviet demands for the revision of the Montreux Treaty and the eastern borders.²²⁴ However, ceaseless efforts to strengthen this fragile relationship was put forward by Turkey in the following 6 years. The RPP Government expressed its firm intention to become one of the original signatories of NATO in 1949. The Menderes government in 1950, likewise, decided to respond to the call for the support to the Korean War, foreseeing that it would help them in their resolute pursuing NATO membership.²²⁵ As it is seen, Turkey's implacable quest for attaining membership in the Western world's post-war framework proved how the foreign policy orientation maintained a continuity independent from the policies and strategies of the governing parties.

Later, in a conversation between Bayar and İnönü, Bayar asked his predecessor why

²²³ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 313.

²²⁴ See Gül İnanç & Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Gunboat Diplomacy: Turkey, USA and the Advent of the Cold War," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 48:3 (2012): 401-411.

²²⁵ Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Turkey's Quest for NATO Membership: The Institutionalization of the Turkish-American Alliance," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 12:4 (2012): 399-400.

the RPP Government did not join NATO. Having replied as ‘They didn’t invite us, so we didn’t join’,²²⁶ İnönü’s short answer demonstrated that the thorny road towards NATO membership was an important part of the continuity in Turkish foreign policy.

The repercussions of the emergence of opposition parties in Turkish domestic politics in 1946 and the end of the RPP mono-party rule were equally significant for understanding Turkish-Iranian relations in that era. Taking the intensity of the relations with foreign powers in the aftermath of the War into consideration, a certain degree of persistence in foreign policy could be regarded as plausible. Moreover, the limited social and economic scope of Turkish politics, within which political wrangling among political parties occurred, caused an actual continuation in domestic politics in late 1940s and early 1950s. This could be considered as the defining parameter of Turkish-Iranian relations of that era.

As Kemal Karpat argues, the disagreements and splits among the political parties established after 1945 were the consequences of rifts between the deputies due to personal disputes, rather than ideological cleavages. Therefore, these political parties were established in the National assembly, not among the public.²²⁷ In referring to their first meeting in Ankara for a new party (the Democrat Party), Zekeriya Sertel was saying that what he, Adnan Menderes, Celal Bayar and Tevfik Rüştü Aras agreed on in 1945 was democracy, and they all got their fingers burnt by the single party and the ‘single Chief’.²²⁸ In this respect, Feroz Ahmad’s description of the Democrat Party as the reformist faction of the RPP and its political programme as the replication of the RPP rule seems reasonable; according to him, this fact is

²²⁶ Quoted in Erkin, *Dışişlerinde 34 Yıl*, 102.

²²⁷ Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi*, 469.

²²⁸ Zekeriya Sertel, *Hatırladıklarım* (İstanbul: Gözlem, 1977), 253.

attributed to the nature of Turkish politics which had very narrow socio-economic base up until the 1960s.²²⁹ One of the implications of this continuity in terms of the state-society relationship, therefore, would be the state elites' upper hand in the statecraft and the formation of political discourse.²³⁰ The critical milestone for state-society relations in Turkey, as Kemal Karpat argues, was not the multi-party rule but the Revolution of 1960. Only after 1960, a new political structure which embraced a certain degree of political socialization challenged both the interpretation of Kemalism and the bureaucratic-military ruling elites.²³¹

4.2.2 Popularization of Politics in Iran: Majlis, National Front, Tudeh

In the years after WWII, Iran experienced an exceptional "popularization of politics". Compared to Reza Shah's rule with an iron fist and Mohammad Reza Shah's military dictatorship which he began to establish following the CIA-MI6 covert operation in 1953, the period 1945-1953 was an exception to the Pahlavi rule in Iran (1925-1979). Statecraft which had exclusively belonged to the throne was affected, if not completely headed, by a number of political actors other than the court in the years between 1941 and 1953. In the previous decades, Iranian nationalism, the ideology of the state-building and nation-building including judicial, administrative and economic fields, had been articulated by Reza Shah in the ascendancy of his triumvirate - Ali Akbar Davar, Firuz Mirza and Taymourtash. In the 1930s, this system had degenerated as Reza Shah expunged his all close

²²⁹ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy*, 13.

²³⁰ For instance, Ümit Cizre makes a discussion over the secular identity of the state in the mono-party and multi-party systems of Turkey. Since the Turkish state had the supremacy in the official public sphere, the state's stance toward religion showed a continuity in the transition to multi-party system. See Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, "Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (1996): 231-251.

²³¹ Kemal H. Karpat, "The Military and Politics in Turkey, 1960-64: A Socio-Cultural Analysis of a Revolution," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 75, No. 6 (1970): 1678.

associates and achieved absolute power.²³² The implication of the change in the country's political center of gravity was that the understanding of nationalism also diversified into different forms and meanings by different political actors.

Partly due to the young shah's ascendancy to the throne in a sudden manner and partly at the urging of external powers, the political system was formed around the office of prime ministers and the Iranian Parliament, the Majlis. In 1946, Ahmad Qavam came to prominence with his diplomatic skills when Iranian state got stuck in northern separatist regimes and severe Soviet pressure for an oil concession.²³³

Having invaded during the war by the British and the Soviets, Iran had to struggle with the subsequent problems when the War ended. Iran struggled with the movements of autonomy of the Two Provinces, Azerbaijan and Kurdistan during the 1946. The establishment of two separatist regimes -Azerbaijan People's Government headed by Ja'far Pishevari in Tabriz and the Republic of Mahabad in Kurdish region- in the mid-1940s seriously endangered the Iranian state's ability of controlling of its territories in northern Iran. At the time, the Iranian government negotiated an oil concession with the Soviets and, in fact, had strong reason to believe that the Azerbaijani and Kurdish question had far-reaching repercussions for the Soviets' non-compliance to the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from the Iranian soil after the war. In the face of separatist movements in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan in north, Iran's largest tribe Qashqai revolt in south, daily demonstrations of the Tudeh Party in Iran's major cities and Russian pressure on the Iranian Majlis to submit the oil and aviation agreement, the Prime Minister Ahmed Qavam had nothing to do, but asked for either United States and United Nations assistance. After learning US decisions to

²³² Ali Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 70-71.

²³³ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 62-3.

give credit and extensive assistance and the ambassador Allen's supporting statement about sending forces to Azerbaijan, Qavam sent the army to Azerbaijan in December 1946, the army entered Tabriz (Azerbaijan) and the Republic of Mahabad was surrendered.²³⁴ The configuration of the Cold War politics in 1946 in Iran aside, the foundation of the two separatist nationalist republics with the backing of the Soviet army also complicated the evolution of politics in Iran in the early 1950s. Firstly, it showed that Iran was again an area in which alternative nationalisms emerged in one territory through threatening the state control. Secondly, the Communist infiltration into the establishment of two independent states later affected adversely the delicate balance between the Communist Tudeh and the nationalists.

While Iran saw 5 cabinets in the 30 months following the fall of Qavam, the oil dispute was one of the most critical issues of the 16th Majlis and claimed one prime minister's life on March 7, 1951.²³⁵ The assassination of General Ali Razmara by a member of the Fadayan-e Islam organization occurred in a time when the oil legislation bill was quite high on the agenda of the Majlis and Mossadegh, the leader of the National Front, was spearheading a demonstration of 12,000 people in support of the nationalization of Iranian oil.²³⁶ This incident can explain how an underground organization, the Parliament and a popular political party had their share in the oil crisis. Oil legislation was passed on 15 March in the Majlis. The short-lived premiership of Hossein Ala (12 March-27 April 1951) was likewise melded with the oil nationalization crisis.

²³⁴ See Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 383-399; Kamali, *The Political Development of the Kurds in Iran*, 116-120.

²³⁵ Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, *Answer to History* (New York: Stein and Day, 1980), 84.

²³⁶ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 265.

With the election of Mossadegh (28 April 1951-19 August 1953) as prime minister, a man whose rule was mostly associated with street demonstrations and protest strikes, politics in Iran was truly ‘popularized’. Mossadegh, who was accused by the Shah of refusing all solution plans from the AIOC, the World Bank, Eisenhower and the others now campaigned for the complete nationalization of the Iranian resource.²³⁷ Moreover, the political center was no more the Majlis, but the streets, during his premiership.²³⁸

The establishment of the Tudeh Party (the Party of the Iranian Masses) 13 days after Reza Shah’s departure by 27 members of the famous 1937 arrests and its expansion in the mid-1940s proved one of the most significant elements of the Iranian politics.²³⁹ As George Lenczowski wrote in late 1946, “The future of Iran, indeed its very existence as an independent political unit, has come to be closely dependent upon the course taken by the young but powerfully supported communist movement of that country.”²⁴⁰ While the nationalist ideology radicalized around the oil nationalization in Iran and had increasingly anti-imperialist language, the Tudeh Party had emerged in 1941, embracing the ideas of the protection of constitutional rights and laws, independence of judiciary and, most importantly, ‘national independence from all forms of imperialism’.²⁴¹ Echoing its name, the Tudeh established the United Central Council of the Unified Trade Unions of Iranian

²³⁷ See Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, 85.

²³⁸ Abrahamian, 267.

²³⁹ A law in 1931 prohibited all forms of collective ideologies, namely socialism and communism in Iran. Following a student demonstration in Tehran College in 1937, 53 people most of whom came from Persian-speaking families living in Tehran and studied higher education were persecuted for being members of communist organization. See Ervand Abrahamian, “Communism and Communalism in Iran: The Tudeh and the Firqah-i Dimokrat,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1970): 298.

²⁴⁰ George Lenczowski, “The Communist Movement in Iran,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January, 1947): 29.

²⁴¹ Abrahamian, 285.

Workers with near 355.000 members. So immense was its influence over Iran's working class that the British embassy in Iran mentioned the impact of the Tudeh on the oil workers' strikes in 1946 in Abadan, in the traditional power base of Britain in Iran.²⁴² However, an assassination attempt on the Shah in 1949 introduced a brief interlude in this popular era. The Tudeh Party was banned in mid-1949 during the period of martial law and transformed into a clandestine organization. On the other hand, what Lenczowski claimed was indeed right. The actions the Tudeh now took as an underground organization, as well as what it did not do, became decisive in the turbulent era of oil nationalization between 1951 and 1953.

4.3 Diverging Perceptions on Nationalism in Turkey and Iran

Before the WWII, nationalism had been articulated in similar ways as a result of the concurrence between external forces and internal dynamics in Turkey and Iran. The factors which influenced the self-definition of nationalism had been anti-imperialism and state-building, and nationalist ideology was confined to the exclusive sphere of state activity. However, Turkey and Iran underwent changes in their foreign policy orientations and in the dynamics of their internal politics in the early Cold War years. It would be difficult to claim that the nationalism which had once been part of the official discourse was not affected from the changes in foreign and domestic policy. Following a brief examination of the political realms in Turkey and Iran, this section is dedicated to the scrutiny of different interpretations of nationalism in parallel to the changes in the domestic political arena.

²⁴² Rowena Abdul Razak, "The British, the Tudeh Party and the 1947 World Federation of Trade Unions' Visit: Battle for Labor Reform in Iran," *Labor History*, 60:2 (2019):98-9. See also Osamu Miyata, "The Tudeh Military Network during the Oil Nationalization Period," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (1987): 313.

4.3.1 Anti-Communist Nationalism in Turkey

From its moment of birth, one of the defining characteristics of the Turkish Republic was Turkish nationalism. For the definition of Kemalist nationalism and state-society relationship, it was not the matter of the Democrat Party coming the power or the RPP government staying in. Different, critical interpretations of nationalism also started to emerge since the outbreak of the WWII, and they were indeed challenging the official state discourse which had rejected an expansionist approach and irredentist claims beyond the borders of the Turkish Republic. The main feature of nationalism which emerged during and after WWII, although it was not entirely an alternative ideology to Kemalist nationalism, was its Pan-Turkist, Turanist character.²⁴³ Moreover, this sort of nationalism found its meaning in the tension between nationalism and communism. As will be seen, nationalist ideology lost its anti-imperialist language and transformed into an anti-communist movement in Turkey in the 1940s. It was not a grassroots movement given the limited socio-economic scope of Turkish politics; instead it was partly intellectual, partly journalistic activity. When it comes to the importance of anti-communist nationalism for Turkish-Iranian inter-state relations, we need to fully understand the Turkish state's tolerant, if not supportive, stance towards these nationalists. In the Cold War environment, it is due precisely to this fact that Turkey's approach to another articulation of nationalism which emerged in Iran with a specific focus on nationalization issue will reveal how different understandings of nationalism in Turkey and Iran caused frictions in bilateral relations.

Several non-governmental organizations became prominent in the history of Turkish nationalism. *Türk Derneği* (1908), *Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti* (1911), *Turkish*

²⁴³ Jacob M. Landau, *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 111.

Hearts (1912), *Milli Türk Talebe Birliği* (1929) were all the short-lived cultural associations which served as the transmission of the message of nationalism.²⁴⁴ Since *Turkish Hearts* embraced Pan-Turkist ideas and the Republican government rejected the expansionist claims of the WWI years, they were officially closed in April 1931.²⁴⁵ They were supplanted by the People's Houses in 1932, the RPP's own vehicle for disseminating the message of the Republican government.²⁴⁶ This was also the indication of the Turkish state's determination to preserve the sole authority over the articulation of state ideology, including nationalism. Yet, the political atmosphere of the WWII gave Pan-Turkist ideology a unique opportunity to re-flourish and to increase the publications of Turanist authors and journalists. It was widely argued that the dissemination of Nazi ideology throughout the war and the existence of political circles who had a pro-Nazi attitude in the RPP Government had influence on the spread of pan-Turkist/Turanist ideas at home. Many scholars approved the Turkish state's acquiescence of the Pan-Turkist ideas in early 1940s in parallel to the signing of the German-Turkish Treaty of Friendship in 1941.²⁴⁷ Niyazi Berkes claims that the affinity between the government and the pan-Turkists came into light when an article assaulting the leftist journal *Yurt ve Dünya* was published in 1943 firstly in the Turanist newspaper *Tasvir*, later in the journal *Çığır*, which was

²⁴⁴ See İlhan Darendelioğlu, *Türkiye'de Milliyetçilik Hareketleri* [Nationalist Movements in Turkey] (n.p.: Toker, 1975).

²⁴⁵ Kemal H. Karpat, "The People's Houses in Turkey: Establishment and Growth," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 1/2 (1963): 57-8.

²⁴⁶ Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1965), 112.

²⁴⁷ İlker Aytürk, "The Racist Critics of Atatürk and Kemalism, from the 1930s to the 1960s," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (2011): 316. See also Niyazi Berkes, *Unutulan Yıllar* [Forgotten Years] (İstanbul: İletişim, 1997), 280; Günay Göksu Özdoğan, *Turan'dan "Bozkurt"a: Tek Parti Döneminde Türkçülük, 1931-1946* [From 'Turan' to "Gray-Wolf": Turkism During One-Party Period, 1931-1946] (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001), 142; Süleyman Tüzün, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türkiye'de Dış Türkler Tartışmaları* [Discussions on the Turkish Diaspora in Turkey in the Second World War] (Isparta: Fakülte Kitabevi, 2005).

known for advocating the RPP government.²⁴⁸ Thus, the proliferation of numerous publications which advocated pan-Turkist opinions with the increasing voice of anti-leftist and anti-communist stance continued. 1944 was the climax of the Turanist assault on leftist intellectuals. Nihal Atsız, Turkish nationalist author, wrote two open letters to Prime Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu about the leftist activities of the supporters of communism in Turkey by giving the names of Sabahattin Ali, the Minister of Education Hasan Ali Yücel, Pertev Naili Boratav, Sadrettin Celal and the others.²⁴⁹ The height of its pressure on the government aside, 1944, was also a turning point for the pan-Turkist nationalism in Turkey because the government stopped tolerating the nationalist movement. İnönü in his famous 19 May speech explicitly accused the Turanists of turning the Turkish nation against its neighbors and described them as ‘anti-establishment’.²⁵⁰ 47 leading Turanists, namely Nihal Atsız, his brother Nejdettin Sançar, Zeki Velidi Togan, Hasan Ferit Cansever and the others, were prosecuted and they were sentenced to imprisonment in March 1945. The Government dropped a bombshell on the Turanist intellectuals but the 1944 trials were interpreted by both the nationalist and leftist intellectuals as the efforts of the Government to find a scapegoat after the defeat of the Nazis in 1944 in order to exculpate the Government which pursued a Turanist policy during the War.²⁵¹ The Turanist intellectuals who were under the pressure of the Government were bewildered, unsure of the differences between their ideas and that of the Government. For example, ideas like those of the pan-Turkists could be found in Prime Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu’s famous speech which asserted that Turkism was an issue of blood as well as culture

²⁴⁸ Berkes, 280.

²⁴⁹ Darendelioğlu, 102-123.

²⁵⁰ Ibid, 132-4.

²⁵¹ Uğur Mumcu, *40’ların Cadı Kazanı* [The Witch’s Cauldron of the 1940’s] (İstanbul: Tekin, 1995), 63; Berkes, 282; Sertel, 243-4.

or the ideas in the book ‘Atatürk’s Revolution’ of Mahmut Esat Bozkurt which were studied in universities.²⁵² Samet Ağaoğlu also writes about a conversation between Memduh Şevket Esendal and İnönü in which upon the detention of the nationalists, the former as a nationalist asked İnönü for the same treatment. İnönü in his answer to Esendal stated that their aim was not to advocate nationalism, but their eyes were on the RPP’s seats.²⁵³

When the Turanist movement and the Government’s positioning vis a vis the Turanist nationalism were taken into consideration in the context of the 1944 trials, it reveals firstly that the 1944 trials were not the result of an inherent contradiction between the Turanist nationalists and the Government. It was not an ideological move but a political one in the context of the re-orientation of the Turkish foreign policy following the defeat of Nazi Germany. Secondly, İnönü’s afore-mentioned answer to Esendal somehow proved the inflexibility of the Turkish Government towards alternative interpretations of state ideology. Although Turanist nationalism was not a mass movement from below, the demonstrations and student protests during the lawsuit of Atsız-Sabahattin Ali were enough for the state to take actions against collective political activities.

Thus, months after the court decisions for 47 Turanists were finalized, the military court of appeal overturned the decision in October 1945 and several deponents such as Fevzi Çakmak, Memduh Şevket Esendal, Numan Menemencioğlu, the governor of Istanbul Lütfi Kırdar were called to testify before the judge. Then, the testimony of the governor of Istanbul alone on December 24, 1946 was found sufficient. On March 3, 1947, the military court returned an acquittal for all

²⁵² Alparslan Türkeş, *1944 Milliyetçilik Olayı* (İstanbul: Kutluğ, 1975), 23.

²⁵³ Samet Ağaoğlu, *Demokrat Partinin Doğuş ve Yükseliş Sebepleri: Bir Soru* [Reasons for the Birth and the Rise of the Democrat Party: A Question] (İstanbul: Baha, 1972), 105.

respondents.²⁵⁴ Consequently, the pressure of the government to the Turanists came to an end after two-year trial experience.²⁵⁵ Uğur Mumcu wrote that an investigation for the members of the court was launched in 1947.²⁵⁶

İlker Aytürk claims that the 1944 trials were targeted to destroy the alternative explanations of Turkish nationalism and, moreover, the Government's tolerance to them in 1947 was related with the Turkish state's general policy towards the nationalists in using them as a bulwark against the leftists in the Cold War era.²⁵⁷ The Turkish state did not show much tolerance towards the leftists. The ideological dispute between Turanists and the leftists appeared in the incident of *Tan*, which was a newspaper and printing house owned by Zekeriya Sertel. One group of Turanist university students in December 1945 launched protests against the first volume of the journal *Görüşler* in this printing house. Its cover page included the names of a number of people such as Bayar, Menderes, Köprülü, Pertev Boratav, Niyazi Berkes, Behice Boran, Sabahattin Ali and the others. The leftist professors Boratav, Berkes and Boran were later purged from the Ankara University the Faculty of Language, History and Geography (DTCF) in 1948. According to Niyazi Berkes, Sertel was attributed to his leftist ideas and the initial letter of *Görüşler* "G" was depicted by people as similar to the sign of the hammer and sickle.²⁵⁸ Zekeriya Sertel wrote in his memoirs that the policemen were mere spectators when the student group plundered the printing house.²⁵⁹ The accuracy of the historical account, although the Turkish left was affected largely from the Cold War environment, is not of prime importance

²⁵⁴ Darendelioğlu, 156-9.

²⁵⁵ For detailed explanation on the proceedings of the trial, see Nejdett Sançar, *1944 Irkçılık Turancılık Davası: Mahkeme Günlükleri* (İstanbul: Bozkurt, 2018).

²⁵⁶ Mumcu, 87.

²⁵⁷ İlker Aytürk, "Nationalism and Islam in Cold War Turkey, 1944-49," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 50:5 (2014): 697.

²⁵⁸ Berkes, 354.

²⁵⁹ Sertel, 259.

here, but the great segregation between nationalism and leftist-communist ideologies helps to explain how it gradually culminated in the development of anti-communist characteristic of the nationalist ideology.

4.3.2 Anti-Imperialist Nationalism in Iran: Nationalization of Iranian Oil in 1951

When the Allied troops entered Iran on 25 August 1941 and put an end to the rule of Reza Pahlavi, it had consequences that were more than just a change in the throne. For the past 16 years, Reza Shah had monopolized the state authority which was almost unchallenged or shared by any other political actor in Iran. Ali Ansari depicts this era in Iranian history as ‘personalization of politics’ where the formulation of politics including state management, modernization and most importantly, the definition of nationalist ideology was determined within the body of the *Shahanshah* (king of kings).²⁶⁰ Once the Shah was gone and Mohammad Reza Pahlavi’s power was weak in 1941, it would be unavoidable that new political actors filled this power vacuum and began to have a voice in the formulation of nationalist ideology. The grinding experience of foreign invasion during the War together with the increasing socio-economic strain generated by the war conditions paved the way for the creation of the Communist Tudeh Party.²⁶¹ Having been depicted in the British Foreign Office correspondences by the early 1950 as ‘the most organized

²⁶⁰ Ansari, *Modern Iran*, 72-3.

²⁶¹ Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 60. The foundation of two independent republics in 1946 –the Democratic Republics of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan- by leftist nationalists Ja’far Pishevari and Qazi Muhammad was obviously self-contradictory in the leftist front. Pishevari was a member of the Communist Party of Iran since its foundation in 1920; he later joined the Tudeh in 1940s but maintained an independent line. The Soviets’ support to Pishevari and Qazi, also to use them as a trump card, in order to obtain an oil concession from Qavam’s Government indeed created a paradox among the leftist nationalists. The Tudeh Party was established against foreign imperialism, namely the British. The Soviets’ inclination towards the northern separatists rather than the Communist Tudeh would cause disappointment among the members of the Tudeh. Yasmine Mather, “Iran’s Tudeh Party: A History of Compromises and Betrayals,” *Critique*, 39:4 (2011): 614

political structure in Iran which would be able to stage a communist coup'²⁶², the Tudeh Party was one of the most prominent political actors in both the 1940s and during the era of Oil Nationalization. Embracing a Marxist language and pro-Soviet stance aside, the Tudeh Party represented one fraction in post-War Iranian politics which was evolving to adopt an anti-foreign, particularly anti-British, position. Tudeh was the anti-imperialist left in the political spectrum in which the prevailing political current was nationalism by the end of the Second World War.²⁶³

Mohammad Mossadegh's popular movement under the large coalition of National Front was the other political current which shaped the nationalist ideology in Iran. The popular movement was an eclectic mix of several political groups. *The Iran Party* with liberal and social-democratic tendencies comprised of young educated technocrats. *The Toilers Party of the Iranian Nation* (Zahmatkishan) involved a splinter group of the Tudeh Party, including important left-wing figures such as Dr. Baqa'i and Khalil Maleki who had broken away from the Tudeh following the internal conflict emanating from the Azerbaijan crisis. The other socio-political classes –*the Bazaar* and the religious class, namely *the Society of Mujahidin of Islam* led by Ayatollah Kashani- gave support to the National Front in the pursuit of anti-imperialism and patriotism.²⁶⁴ By sheer force of its compelling anti-imperialist discourse, the National Front had managed to draw the support of very distinct political actors.

²⁶² Quoted in Steve Marsh, *Anglo-American Relations and Cold War Oil: Crisis in Iran* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 43.

²⁶³ Majid Yazdi, "Patterns of Clerical Political Behavior in Postwar Iran, 1941-53," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (1990): 284.

²⁶⁴ See Homa Katouzian, *Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 1990), 86-90.

Mossadegh, who born into a rich aristocrat family, French-educated lawyer, then was disqualified from politics due to his opposition to Reza Shah, had been a prominent figure in the political arena in Iran, but his power reached its zenith when he was leading the movement for the nationalization of Iranian oil. Initially, the purpose of the National Front was to form a constitutional and democratic government. According to Mossadegh and his associates, the precondition of a democratic regime was sovereignty and independence.²⁶⁵ When the oil proposals revising 1933 Anglo-Iranian Oil Agreement turned out to be the most crucial issue in 1950, the National Front which had constituted a small minority in the traditional class-dominant 16th Majlis (Feb 1950-May 1951) effectively managed to put pressure on the Majlis. Having gradually adopted an anti-imperialist tone, Mossadegh directly made eloquent appeal to the masses and demanded the complete transfer of the rights of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company to the Iranian Government. While this anti-imperialist discourse was shaping the nationalist ideology, Mossadegh was appointed as the Prime Minister following the assassination of General Ali Razmara.²⁶⁶ Therefore, the premiership of Mossadegh which was identified with the mass demonstrations, strikes and popular protests started in 1951.

Seeking for the negative equilibrium between Iran's traditional imperial enemies Britain and Russia, Mossadegh was an anti-communist. Mossadegh preferred not the settlement of the dispute with Britain but American support for the nationalization decision politically and financially. Tudeh's activities which had been an underground organization after the ban on the party in 1949, was able to engage in

²⁶⁵ Homa Katouzian, "Mosaddeq's Government in Iranian History," in *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran*, eds. Mark J. Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004): 5.

²⁶⁶ Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 266-7.

new activities because of the freedom brought by the new government.²⁶⁷ However, there was one fundamental difference in the policies of Mossadegh and the Tudeh network which was the fact that the Tudeh was against both the British and American policy in Iran. In 1951 when Mossadegh was insistently seeking US support, it was impossible to speak of an alliance between the National Front and Tudeh. The change in the Tudeh's approach towards Mossadegh came only in 1952 but this change was still far from a fully-fledged coalition. Eventually, the Tudeh's precarious support of Mossadegh and its withdrawal in August 1953 could be considered significant because of its impact on the failure of the nationalist movement.

Iran was walking a tightrope between nationalism and socialism in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The nationalization of the Iranian oil industry was widely affected by this delicate balance. In any case, the history of this crisis was written mostly through perceptions rather than facts. The Soviets' suspicion of Mossadegh due to his relations with the US resulted in Molotov's incomprehension of the anti-colonial national liberation movement and an early example of Third World nationalism in Iran.²⁶⁸ Perceptions, again, shaped the understanding of the Soviet Union, Britain, the US and Turkey towards Mossadegh's Iran.

4.4 Turkey's Relations with Iran during Mossadegh Era

The premiership of Mohammad Mossadegh opened with the nationalization of Iranian oil in 1951 and ended with his overthrow by the CIA-MI6 joint *Operation Ajax* in August 1953. Of the most remarkable periods in Iranian politics, Mossadegh

²⁶⁷ Richard Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran* (s.n: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), 216.

²⁶⁸ See Artemy M. Kalinovsky, "The Soviet Union and Mosaddeq: A Research Note," *Iranian Studies*, 47:3 (2014): 401-418.

drove the project of the nationalization of the British Oil Company (AIOC) by sheer force of his popularity among the Iranian masses together with the anti-imperialist current of the various political actors. His short-lived rule, however, underwent serious political and economic strains due to the deteriorating relations with Britain and the US, and the subsequent heavy economic crisis after the economic sanctions imposed on Iran. The domestic and international problems the Iranian state faced in that period inevitably would have impact on Iran's bilateral relations with other countries. Turkish-Iranian relations also came to a standstill in this era. The absence of any high-level diplomatic contact between the administration of Menderes and Mossadegh aside, both states signaled official displeasure with the foreign policy each government was pursuing. The Iranian state expressed its dismay and concerns over Turkey's pro-British attitude by the Iranian ambassador to Ankara in October 1951.²⁶⁹ Turkey likewise had deep reservations about what she called as 'extreme nationalism' in the National Front of Mossadegh.²⁷⁰

Turkey was uncomfortable with the sort of nationalism when this abstract ideology became concrete in Iran's struggle for the nationalization of its oil industry in early 1950s. This statement might be quite telling because the bilateral relations in the past had improved thanks to the similar articulations of nationalist ideology under the administrations of Atatürk and Reza Shah. Then, it would be plausible to inquire the breakdown of Turkish-Iranian relationship in the change of the formulation of nationalism in both states. Most of this chapter has focused on the change in the domestic political sphere in Turkey and Iran, for this reason. I believe that the course of action followed by the Turkish state in domestic and foreign policy in the early

²⁶⁹ Sedat Simavi, "İran'ın Protestosu," *Hürriyet*, October 5, 1951.

²⁷⁰ Çetinsaya, 139.

Cold War years largely affected Turkey's understanding and interpretation of the developments in Iran since the outbreak of the oil crisis in 1951. Although Turkey's official stance towards Iran remained indifferent, the Turkish mainstream media's coverage of the events in Iran had been far from affirmative.²⁷¹

Turkey's reading of the events and developments in Iran as to the oil nationalization period reveals two significant parameters of Turkey's and Iran's divergence on the interpretation of nationalism. Firstly, nationalist movement in Iran was a grassroots movement in all its parts in the early 1950s. It turned out to adopt a language which one way or another, the communists, one fraction of the religious establishment and the Iranian masses could share. On the other hand, the transition to multi-party politics in Turkey was not a socio-political transformation of the political realm. When the debates on nationalism in that period were taken into consideration, they were confined to the ideological disputes between the Turanist and leftist intellectuals and did not involve class representation. That is, the state-society relationship in Turkey remained in its limited scope and as an inevitable consequence of this continuity, Turkey's approach to a movement which took its root from the mass appeal with the involvement of different social classes, in the case of Iran, would be a decisive rejection.

²⁷¹ The newspapers covered in this research are mostly *Milliyet*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Zafer* and *Kudret*. Most of the mainstream Turkish press continued to express largely the official position of political parties after transition to multi-party rule. What had changed is that these newspapers diversified in parallel with the foundation of new political parties. Whereas *Milliyet* under the editorship of Ali Naci Karacan was known with its affinity to the ruling Democrat Party, *Cumhuriyet* supported the Democrat Party in its early years and reflected the general state ideology. The newspaper *Zafer* was the official media organ of the Democrat Party and Mümtaz Faik Fenik, the DP's Ankara Deputy (1950-57), was the editorial writer of the newspaper. The newspaper *Kudret* was the official newspaper of the opposition *Millet Party*. See Hıfzı Topuz, *Türk Basın Tarihi* (İstanbul: Remzi, 2003); Nuran Yıldız, "Demokrat Parti İktidarı (1950-1960) ve Basın," *Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*, Sayı: 1-4, Cilt: 51 (1996): 481-505.

Since the oil bill came to the Iranian Majlis in March 1951, the Turkish press laid emphasis on the threat of the political and civil disorder which was mainly created by the ‘communist and religious’ provocations. The 23 March editorial article in *Milliyet* appears in the immediate aftermath of the Majlis’ approval of the oil legislation bill, emphasized the political instability and the anarchy fomented by the Soviets.²⁷² What paved the way for instability was the oil workers’ strikes in Abadan, the oil-rich province of Iran where the AIOC was operating, and the walkout in Isfahan which was another industrially-developed province of Iran. The news also involved issues about the fundamentalist religious organization *Fadā’iyān-e Islam* and possible assassination plans which would exacerbate the political crisis in the country.²⁷³ In another editorial article by Ali Naci Karacan in *Milliyet*, he interpreted the recent events in Iran as one of the political disputes which the Soviets instigated and organized through the hands of either the Tudeh or the *ulema* in last 10 years. He claimed that the Iranian Majlis made the decision for the nationalization under the impact of the political atmosphere generated by these two groups.²⁷⁴ Mümtaz Faik Fenik, the DP Deputy (1950-1957), in an article in the newspaper *Zafer* wrote about the collaboration between ‘black fanaticism and red provocation’ in a comment of the assassination of the Iranian Prime Minister Ali Razmara.²⁷⁵ The interesting point that must be addressed in these news and articles is how little they contained any remark about the main subject which was the oil legislation bill. In

²⁷² “İran’da Neler Oluyor?” *Milliyet*, March 23, 1951.

²⁷³ “İran Çok Karışık Günler Yaşıyor” *Milliyet*, March 28, 1951; “İran’da Karışıklık Devam Ediyor” *Milliyet*, March 29, 1951; “İran Vahim Günler Yaşıyor” *Milliyet*, March 31, 1951; “İran’da 12 Bin İşçi Grev Haline Girdi” *Milliyet*, April 2, 1951; “Fedayan-ı İslam Tehdidi” *Milliyet*, April 22, 1951; “İran’da Talebe Nümayişi” *Milliyet*, April 23, 1951; “İran’da Dahili Buhran Gelişmeleri” *Milliyet*, May 16, 1951; “İran-İngiltere İhtilafı Gün Geçtikçe Vahim Bir Hal Alıyor” *Milliyet*, May 23, 1951; “İran’da Yüz Bin Kişi İngiltere ve Amerika’yı Takbih Etti” *Milliyet*, May 24, 1951.

²⁷⁴ Ali Naci Karacan, “İran’da Oynanan Büyük Facia” *Milliyet*, April 18, 1951.

²⁷⁵ In *Ayın Tarihi*, 100. Mümtaz Faik Fenik, “Tahran Suikastının Geniş Manası” *Zafer*, March 12, 1951.

part, this can be explained by the fact that the early 1950s were a time when the passing of the bill had yet to turn into an international crisis among Britain and Iran, and involving the arbitration of the Truman Government. In fact, the negotiations between Britain and Iran continued up until September 1951, although they were not without interruptions. The settlement plans with the arbitration of the special representative Averell Harriman who was directly assigned by the US President Truman were still on the table in July and August.²⁷⁶ However, it was noticeable that the newspapers, rather, tenaciously highlighted the extreme nationalist elements in Iranian politics, the presence of communists, and street demonstrations. Popular mass demonstrations were certainly peculiar to the politics in the premiership of Mossadegh and throughout the oil nationalization period. On the other hand, the Tudeh Party did not even provide a tacit support to the popular movement under the auspices of the National Front.²⁷⁷ Mosaddegh's relations with the US for either the solution of the oil dispute or the replacement of the US personnel in the Iranian oil industry during 1951 led the Tudeh Party to label him as a US puppet from the start of the oil crisis. The change in its attitude towards his movement came only in 1952. Although we can assume that Turkey did not have the knowledge of the balances among the domestic groups in Iran at that time, the point every article stressed was

²⁷⁶ "Harriman Bugün Temaslara Başlayacak" *Milliyet*, July 15, 1951; "Harriman İngiliz-İran İhtilafını Halledemedi" *Milliyet*, July 18, 1951; "Harriman İran'daki Durumu İyi Görmüyor" *Milliyet*, July 20, 1951; "Harriman Müzakere İmkanları Arıyor" *Milliyet*, July 22, 1951; "İran-İngiliz İhtilafı Hal Yoluna Giriyor" *Milliyet*, July 24, 1951; "İran'ın İngiltere'ye Müzakere Teklifi" *Milliyet*, July 25, 1951; "İngiltere, İran'ın Teklifini İnceliyor" *Milliyet*, July 26, 1951; "Harriman Londra'da Temaslara Başlıyor" *Milliyet*, July 29, 1951; "Harriman İhtilafın Halli İçin Çalışıyor" *Milliyet*, July 30, 1951; "İngiliz-İran Görüşmeleri İçin Müspet Adım Atıldı" *Milliyet*, July 31, 1951; "Petrol İhtilafı Hal Yoluna Girdi" *Milliyet*, August 1, 1951; "İngiltere Yakında İran'a Bir Heyet Gönderecek" *Milliyet*, August 2, 1951; "Harriman'ın Tavassutu Müspet Netice Veriyor" *Milliyet*, August 5, 1951; "Petrol Müzakereleri Dün Akşam Başladı" *Milliyet*, August 7, 1951; "Petrol Müzakeresi" *Milliyet*, August 9, 1951; "İngiltere'nin İran'a Vaki Yeni Teklifleri" *Milliyet*, August 14, 1951.

²⁷⁷ Cottam, 216.

communist infiltration and incitement in the demonstrations.²⁷⁸ In such a description, there was no place for the meaning of the nationalization within the general nationalist current. “The Communist propagandists, who know the abuse of the public emotions very well, display their all skills to overthrow the state through the brilliant formulas like religious or national interests.”²⁷⁹ In such statements, there was no room for what the national interest really meant to, when it was reduced only to the tool of propaganda. Turkish statesmen and, even the people who were leading the nationalist current in Turkey did not approach to the oil issue in terms of its unifying force for very distinct social classes.

In the interwar period, Turkey placed the country’s anti-imperialist struggle at the forefront in her relations with Iran and Afghanistan, but in 1951 when Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın wrote about Iran in the newspaper *Ulus*, which had been the semi-official newspaper of the RPP, he stressed that the public outcry in Tehran streets in support of the Soviets and communism suggested the possibility that all of the Iranian nation had lost their minds.²⁸⁰ This reveals the second distinctive characteristic of articulation of nationalism in the context of Cold War: nationalism was much more ideological in that period and the foreign relations with the Great Powers had influence on the direction of the nationalist ideology. We can observe this in the racist-Turanist trials or the DTCF events in the 1940s Turkey, how the interpretation of nationalism was reduced into an ideological dispute between the nationalists, and the left-leaning intellectuals who embraced Marxist collectivist ideologies. The situation in Iran was, rather, the convergence between the

²⁷⁸ In Aydın Tarihi. Ömer Sami Coşar, “İran’da Karışıklık” *Cumhuriyet*, April 14, 1951; Mümtaz Faik Fenik, “İran’daki Vahim Hadiseler” *Zafer*, April 19, 1951; “Amerikan Hadisesi” *Cumhuriyet*, June 3, 1951.

²⁷⁹ “İran’da Dahili Buhran Gelişmeleri” *Milliyet*, May 16, 1951.

²⁸⁰ In Aydın Tarihi. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “İngilizlerin Yerine Rusları Getirelim” *Ulus*, July 9, 1951.

nationalists and the communists in the struggle against British imperialism. The National Front and the communist Tudeh Party indeed did not form an alignment in the oil nationalization period, but the same anti-imperialist language they adopted against Britain cultivated an image of ‘communist-nationalist cooperation’. This understanding in the Cold War logic of the day, in fact, helped Britain bring the US into the conflict in 1953. Similarly, Turkey’s approach towards the national movement under Mossadegh’s leadership could be construed in Turkey’s understanding of Iranian oil crisis through the influence of the Soviets.

Turkish media’s coverage of this period accordingly was about the Soviets’ expansionist desires in the Middle East and Asia. Referring to the events in 1946, the Soviets’ support to the foundation of two socialist republics in northern Iran, Turkish sources regarded the oil nationalization as a product of the Russian plans over Iran.²⁸¹ During 1951, when several solutions were provided either by the US mediation or Britain’s appeal to the International Court of Justice of the UN Security Council²⁸², the Iranian state declared its rejection of the court decision and claimed that the oil dispute was between Iran and a private company.²⁸³ The British also tended to conveniently misunderstand the oil issue and the Iranian authorities’ demands. The British newspapers and diplomats depicted the current events in Iran as a situation that would be the second Korea in the Middle East. The former British

²⁸¹ “İran’da Neler Oluyor?” *Milliyet*, March 23, 1951; “Rusya’nın Ortadoğu ve Asya’daki Emelleri” *Milliyet*, April 2, 1951; “İran’da Oynanan Büyük Facia” *Milliyet*, April 18, 1951; “Sovyetler İran Hududuna Geniş Ölçüde Asker Yığıyor” *Milliyet*, June 7, 1951; “İran İcap Ederse Ruslarla İş Birliği Yapacağını Açıkladı” *Milliyet*, June 17, 1951; “İran Komünistlerin Eline Düşebilir” *Milliyet*, September 23, 1951.

²⁸² “İngiltere Hükümeti Lahey Adalet Divanı’na Başvurdu” *Milliyet*, June 23, 1951; “Petrol İhtilafı Güvenlik Konseyi’ne İntikal Edecek” *Milliyet*, July 3, 1951; “Adalet Divanının Kararı” *Milliyet*, July 6, 1951; “İran, Lahey Adalet Divanı’ndan Çekilecek” *Milliyet*, July 9, 1951.

²⁸³ The Iranian Ambassador to the US Nasrullah İntizam stated that the dispute was not between Iran and Britain, but between Iran and a private company. “İran, Truman’ın Teklifini Reddetti” *Milliyet*, July 11, 1951.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Anthony Eden expressed that the Iranian oil crisis posed a danger for the free world more than the Korean War.²⁸⁴ To what extent such fears were justified is of course an open question today. What is of far interesting point was that the Turkish press also portrayed the crisis through an oversimplified Cold War logic. *Milliyet* cited the British *Sunday Times* in saying that the Soviets supported financially the disorder created by some Iranian nationalists.²⁸⁵ The *Ulus* daily, the official newspaper of the Turkish government before WWII, published articles about whether the British would intervene Iran or what the Soviets' counteraction would be according to the 1921 Treaty which gave the Soviets the right to send troops to Iran in the involvement of a third party.²⁸⁶

Turkey's reductive interpretation of the oil issue by a Cold War logic also became evident when Turkey overlooked the new neutral front in the Third World. Third World nationalism had not emerged from its cocoon yet in 1951 but Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın wrote on December 1951 that Ayatollah Kashani's planning of an Islamic conference which included all the representatives of Islamic world from Morocco to Indonesia was 'child's play'. According to him, the formation of a third group vis a vis the Western Bloc and the Soviets would open the Near East countries to Bolshevism.²⁸⁷ Sedat Simavi in *Hürriyet* noted that the "insanity" in the Middle East in the name of nationalism and patriotism was associated with Moscow.²⁸⁸

On the other hand, Turkey did not explicitly pursue a pro-British stance in the oil crisis. What Turkey anticipated was a reconciliation between Iran and Britain. It is possible to follow the expectation created in Turkish quarters when Truman

²⁸⁴ "Harriman Bugün Temaslara Başlayacak" *Milliyet*, July 15, 1951.

²⁸⁵ "Harriman İngiliz-İran İhtilafını Halledemedi" *Milliyet*, July 18, 1951.

²⁸⁶ In Ayın Tarihi. Ahmet Şükrü Esmer, "Petrol Çıkmazı" *Milliyet*, September 8, 1951.

²⁸⁷ Ibid. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Tahran'da İslam Kongresi" *Ulus*, December 4, 1951.

²⁸⁸ Ibid. Sedat Simavi, "İran'ın Hali" *Hürriyet*, December 15, 1951.

attempted to mediate between the two states. The worst scenario for Turkey was the failure of the negotiations and the possible replacement of the US with the Soviets in political and economic realm.²⁸⁹ Thus, this worst scenario became the reality in August 1953 and resulted in the overthrow of Mossadegh's government.

As discussed above, Turkey's approach to the rule of Mossadegh and his national movement was mostly shaped by caution and apprehension. On the other hand, this study tries to make an analysis of the early years of the crisis because so long as Turkey's institutional alliance with the Western Bloc strengthened, Turkey's attitude towards what was happening in Iran at the zenith of the crisis in 1953 might be construed as a sign of Cold War politics. However, when the AIOC was still functioning with its British personnel, the settlement plans were still on the table and when Mossadegh made the state visit to the US for seeking solution during 1951, the coverage of the Turkish media could have involved different interpretations of the crisis, most importantly its anti-imperialist aspect of the oil issue. The absence of such explanation reveals that the articulation of nationalism during the Cold War Turkey was not discussed on the ground of anti-imperialism.

²⁸⁹ "İngiltere-İran İhtilafı Daha Ziyade Büyüyor" *Milliyet*, September 20, 1951; "İran'da Rus Emelleri" *Milliyet*, September 23, 1951; "Yeni Rus-İran Ticaret Anlaşması" *Milliyet*, September 24, 1951; "Petrol İhtilafı ve Amerika" *Milliyet*, September 27, 1951; "Rusya, Güvenlik Konseyinde İran'ı Destekliyor" *Milliyet*, October 2, 1951; "Ruslar İran'a Sokulmak Gayretlerini Artırdılar" *Milliyet*, October 6, 1951; "İran'da Komünistlerin Faaliyetleri Genişliyor" *Milliyet*, November 5, 1951;

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Turkish-Iranian relations reached an unprecedented level for a brief period from early 1930s until the outbreak of the WWII. Atatürk and Reza Shah developed relations built upon cooperation and friendship for 10 years. The particularity of this relationship stems partly from the meaning which both rulers had attributed to it during their times and partly from the fact that their relationship, even in its zenith, did not culminate in any concrete step towards cooperation. Although the Saadabad Pact was signed among Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan in 1937, the political circumstances had much to say about the increasing Italian aggression in the Mediterranean, rather than Reza Shah's desire in 1934 to establish a military alliance with Turkey. In the absence of cooperation in either economic or political fields, the common denominator was the rule of Atatürk and Reza Shah and their modernist, secular and national outlooks in shaping the domestic polity and conducting foreign relations. When the two leaders left the scene, their departure undermined the foundation of Turkish-Iranian bilateral relations.

This thesis argues that the novelty of Turkish-Iranian relations during the interwar period arises from the shared understandings of nationalism when the two states went through the transition from the multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-sectarian empires to the modern nation-states. Nationalism as having a much more

pragmatic character in line with that transition became the state ideology in the implementation of new social, economic and political reforms. It aimed to establish the central power and to strengthen the state authority across the Turkish and Iranian territories. It allowed the reconfiguration of the Turkish state's relations with the feudal and religious establishment of the old order. Therefore, the state's consistent efforts to establish its authority from Edirne to Kars led to change in the old state-society relationship. When Reza Shah came to power in 1925, he also had to rule in a country whose surface area was almost half of the that of Western European countries with only few hundred kilometers of road and with little domestic legitimacy over the local power groups. When considered from this aspect, the Turkish and Iranian states did not only envisage similar centralizing policies, but also faced similar challenges to central power. The two states' interpretation of nationalism and their commitment to the idea of nation-state became evident when the resistance from their peripheries to central authority emerged in 1920s. The Ararat Rebellion of 1930 brought Turkey and Iran into conflict over a border dispute due to the irregular movement of nomadic tribes along the frontier. This study argues that the significance of the Rebellion in terms of Turkish-Iranian relations was the new perspective Turkey and Iran adopted towards the national and international problems. In the past, the local rebellions had been utilized by each empire against the other, the settlement of the border problem emanating from the Ararat rebellion proved how the new understanding over nationalism affected the bilateral relations. With the establishment of the Turkish and Iranian nation-states at the first quarter of 20th century, the loyalty to national sovereignty and territorial integrity was a threshold by the new administrations. The rebellion was a threat to the both ideas and

it had to be settled. The border dispute was settled because each state gave importance to the other's sovereignty over its territories and citizens.

The foundation of state authority over a homogenous population also went hand in hand with the question of creating a national identity. Therefore, the transition to the nation-state required a degree of homogeneity in economic, social and political policy areas. Reza Shah's historic visit to Ankara in 1934 was significant in terms of Turkey's exhibiting the success of the reform period with a specific focus on Westernization to her eastern neighbor. The *Economist*, upon the Shah's visit, described Atatürk and Reza Shah as two oriental leaders who strove for modernizing their countries. It stated that the goal of the 1934 visit was to show the whole world that they were becoming closer to the Western world.²⁹⁰ This does much to explain the spectacular ceremonies and dinner receptions with overwhelming majority of foreign guests and diplomats.²⁹¹ Having addressed common political interests of Turkey and Iran without necessarily signing of a pact, *Near East* wrote that if the Shah had the similar peaceful foreign policy orientations as Turkey had, it would create a valuable base for the peace in the Western Asia.²⁹²

When the Second World War came to an end and the Cold War started to remap the dynamics between nations, nationalism was not confined to the domestic statecraft or search for consolidating national identity. The articulation of the nationalist ideology was directly affected by the states' power relations with the Great powers. This raises the question as to possible explanations underlying the discrepancy in the understanding of nationalism between the interwar period and that

²⁹⁰ Ö. Andaç Uğurlu, ed. *Yabancı Gözüyle Cumhuriyet Türkiye'si* [Republican Turkey through the Foreign Eyes] (İstanbul: Örgün, 2003), 385.

²⁹¹ Marashi, "Performing the Nation", 107.

²⁹² Uğurlu, 390.

of the Cold War years. The discussion over establishing national economy in 1930s had appeared in a very different context from the one that prevailed in early and mid-1950s, such as in the case of oil nationalization crisis of 1951 and the Suez crisis of 1956. Different from Third World nationalism, the endeavor to create a modern state with a specific emphasis on national industry, education, language and so on in Kemalist Turkey and Pahlavi Iran was much more compatible with the two states' consistent desire to be recognized by the international system, particularly by the Western world. Moreover, two leaders' modernization drive was unquestionably a nationalist one. It had anti-imperialist aspects, too.

A similar anti-imperialist language which was also capitalized on by Mossadegh in his popular nationalist movement in 1951 was the breakdown of the shared understandings of nationalism among Turkey, Iran and the West. Covering of the Turkish press during much of 1951 demonstrated how Mossadegh's movement was met by chagrin and apprehension by the Turkish quarters. 1951 was deliberately chosen to lay stress on the changing perceptions about nationalism in the context of nationalization of Iranian oil. At the very beginning of the approval of the Oil Legislation Bill by the Iranian Majlis, the political crisis between Iran and Britain had yet to deteriorate and the solution plans with the mediation of the Truman government were still on the negotiation table. However, it is not possible to read or observe any conceptualization of the national movement within the context of nationalism and anti-imperialism. Turkey's attitude was shaped by the perception of the movement through its alleged communist sentiments which muddled the waters, to the detriment of Mossadegh's government.

This study tries to explain this apprehensive perspective to the Iranian government at that time by the two changes in Turkish domestic and foreign policy.

Turkey's pro-German war policy during the WWII had an impact on the flourishing of the nationalist ideas among the intellectual circles. In the immediate aftermath of the War, the Soviet pressure on the Turkish government also became decisive in the state's approach towards the Turkish left. While the ideological tension between Turkish nationalists and left was gradually transforming into a showdown, the Turkish state's relations with the Soviets and engagement in the Western bloc resulted in the state's tolerance of the activities of the Turkist intellectuals against communism. Therefore, it is not plausible to expect Turkey, by the same token, to affirm an anti-imperialist campaign in Iran which had appeal both the communist Tudeh and the nationalist coalition.

The second aspect of the dynamics of the relations was about the growing revolutionary ferment in Iranian streets during the oil crisis. The nationalist-modernist ideology in the interwar period had allowed the Turkish state to establish its authority over the society. Nationalism was a state ideology which fell exclusively under the auspices of the regime. The Turkish press expressed a negative depiction of the oil protests due to the involvement of political actors -the emphasis was particularly on the ulama and the workers-. Nationalism was a state ideology which the Turkish state shared similar understandings with the Iranian state in the interwar period, not with the other political actors of Iran. After the WWII, the limited political scope within which the Turkish politics were conducted was second factor affecting Turkey's attitude towards Iranian anti-imperialist struggle fomented in the Iranian streets.

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