

*Research Article*

# **Ideological Quest in Nationalist China: Kemalism and the “New Life Movement”**

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**Abstract:** In this study, firstly, the culture policies implemented by Chiang Kai-Shek who the leader of the authoritarian-nationalist single-party government in the Republic of China, under the name of "New Life Movement" were examined. Seeking a new path for China in which outside the existing political systems in the Western world, Chiang examined Kemalism and the Republican People's Party (RPP) as examples and drew attention to the connections between his own ideas and Kemalism. The administrators of these republican regimes sought modernization formulas that were suitable for their own historical conditions, and the Chinese leadership saw Kemalism as the ideology closest to themselves. The interest of the Guomindang (GMD) to the RPP included the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), in the person of Mao Zedong, into the discussion of Kemal Atatürk and Kemalism. In this article, Chiang Kai-shek's political-cultural manner and writings on the citizen project are examined together with the objections of Mao, accompanied by the visits of the representatives of the Republic of China to Turkey and the "Turkey and RPP instructions" conveyed to them by the GMD center, and discussed in comparison with RPP policies in Atatürk's period.

**Keywords:** China, Chiang Kai-shek, New Life Movement, RPP, Kemalism

## **Milliyetçi Çin’de İdeolojik Arayış: Kemalizm ve “Yeni Hayat Hareketi”**

**Öz:** Bu çalışmada, ilk olarak otoriter-milliyetçi tek parti yönetiminde Çin Cumhuriyeti’nin kültür politikalarını “Yeni Hayat Hareketi” üzerinden uygulamaya koyan Başkan Chiang Kai-shek’in bakış açısı incelenmiştir. Batı

dünyasındaki mevcut siyasal sistemler karşısında yeni bir yol arayan Chiang, Kemalizm'i ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'ni bir örnek olarak incelemiş, kendi düşünceleri ile Kemalizm arasındaki bağlara dikkat çekmiştir. 19. yüzyılda kapitalist dünya ekonomisinin parçası haline gelmiş iki imparatorluğun bakiyesi üzerinden kurulan bu cumhuriyet rejimlerinin yöneticileri, kendi tarihsel koşullarına uygun modernleşme formülleri aramışlardır. Bu arayışta Çin liderliği Kemalizm'i kendisine en yakın ideoloji olarak görmüştür. Guomindang'ın (GMD - Çin Milliyetçi Partisi), Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'ne (CHP) olan ilgisi, Mao'nun şahsında Çin Komünist Partisi'ni de Kemal Atatürk ve Kemalizm tartışmasına dâhil etmiştir. Böylelikle Kemalizm, Çin siyasetinin tartışma konularından biri haline gelmiştir. Bu durum daha ziyade, Türkiye'de CHP ve Kemal Atatürk'ün eylem ve düşüncelerine yön veren bir ideoloji olarak kabul gören Kemalizm'in uluslararası etkileri açısından dikkat çekicidir. Makalede Chiang Kai-shek'in siyasal-kültürel tutumu ve yurttaş projesi üzerinden yazıları, Çin Cumhuriyeti temsilcilerinin Türkiye ziyaretleri ve kendilerine GMD merkezinin ilettiği "Türkiye ve CHP talimatları" eşliğinde, Mao Zedong'un itirazlarıyla beraber incelenmiş, Kemalizm ve tek parti dönemi CHP siyasetleriyle mukayeseli olarak tartışılmıştır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Çin, Chiang Kai-shek, Yeni Hayat Hareketi, CHP, Kemalizm

## Introduction

Shortly after the death of Dr. Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), the leader of the Guomindang (GMD – Chinese Nationalist Party), who played a critical role in the collapse of the Qing Dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China, Chiang Kai-shek, who successfully emerged from the clique struggles within the party and broke the alliance Dr. Sun had established with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), embarked on the construction of an authoritarian single-party regime. Chiang, who suppressed the leftist tendencies of the GMD and pulled the Party into the right-wing political arena, took advantage of the Soviet Union's lack of faith in the CCP, provided the support he desired in the international arena, and reinterpreted Dr. Sun's revolutionary program, which he called the "Three People's Principles," while maintaining his claim to be a follower of Sun, and on the other hand, he tried to bring together Sun's nationalism, which was increasingly taking on a socialist aspect, with the right-wing political agenda. Chiang, who prioritized alliances with Western democratic states, primarily the United States of America (USA), against Japanese expansionism, and while constructing the ideological construction of

the GMD and the type of citizen he wanted to create, much as emulation Italian fascism, which was an ally of Japanese militarist nationalism, but it is not possible to openly say that he was inspired by it. In addition, Chiang's adoption of the role of an authoritarian-nationalist Bonaparte rather than a fascist, and his promise of democracy in China's political future, albeit a distant goal, has kept a certain distance from fascism. It is noteworthy that he resorted to Kemalism as an international ideological basis while defending the right-wing interpretation of the GMD's programmatic text, "The Three People's Principles (nationalism, the rights of the peoples, and the well-being of the peoples)" (Weaver, 1939), and while implementing the "decent citizen" project he called the "New Life Movement." China's search for a connection with "Kemalism," which was reinforced by the visits of Chinese politicians and statesmen to Turkey in the 1930s, initiated a discussion in which Kemalism and Kemal Atatürk were at the center, with the involvement of CCP leader Mao Zedong (1893-1976) in the subject.

In this study, while discussing China's ideological quests and cultural policies in the center of Chiang's decent citizen project "New Life", it was tried to explain how Kemalism was seen as a model in China, thousands of kilometers away beyond national borders. However, it was emphasized that Chiang and the right wing of the GMD did not view Kemalism in all its aspects, but they approached it in line with their own political-ideological needs.

### **Chiang's Cultural Policy: "New Life Movement"**

Chiang Kai-shek is a typical example of the right-wing nationalist politician who emerged in the oppressed world of the 20th century: Anti-communist; yearning for a soldier-nation, loyal to tradition but using it selectively for his own authoritarian regime and nation-building; anti-imperialist in rhetoric but a British-American collaborator in practice; the leader of an elitist single party that wants to keep the masses out of politics; a Bonapartist who is careful to protect the interests of the big bourgeoisie, foreign capital and landowners while preserving the relative autonomy of the political sphere; an autocrat who speaks of the goal of a democratic society in an uncertain future but who, for now, establishes tutelage over society in order to raise the "decent citizen" that he thinks should be in perfect shape (Ulusoy, 2023).

The "culture" movement he called "New Life" and his book *China's Destiny* published in 1943 are two important reference sources that guide us in

understanding Chiang's world of thought. Of course, when analyzing the world of thought of a political leader, it is more correct to focus on his practice rather than his words. However, it is also extremely important to identify the harmony and contrasts between words and actions. In particular, the difference between his statements and his practice in *China's Destiny* does not go unnoticed.

It can be said that Chiang had two reasons for starting the "New Life Movement". The first was to implement his project of transforming the masses into soldiers-nation through the instruments of power; the second, unlike during Dr. Sun's era, due to GMD could not maintain its connection with the masses, was to prevent the disintegration of the patriotic ranks that he had not yet been able to consolidate by breaking the influence of the CCP, which maintained its ties with the masses.

In 1930's Chiang, who was caught between the Japanese invaders and the communist political opposition, thought of turning this situation into an opportunity for the ideological-cultural front he had opened. Under normal circumstances, China was not a country where the masses would docilely submit to any kind of autocrat after May 4<sup>2</sup> and the New Culture Movement. However, internal and external threats, as in many countries, became a justification for narrowing down the civil sphere, excluding the masses from the political sphere, and legitimizing authoritarian rule. Despite Japan's occupation of Manchuria, Chiang, who spent all his energy on destroying the communists, responded to the objections rising from all over the country and within the party with "New Life", which his ideological-cultural mobilization.

"New Life" can be seen as a blending of Neo-Confucianism, Protestant ethics and the pathetic understanding of citizenship inherited from it. In this respect, it can be said that Chiang tried to find a compromise between East and West, tradition and modernity, Confucianism and Methodism. Indeed, the reflection of these in his daily life practice is clear. Chiang is a very good calligrapher who is interested in Tang Dynasty poetry, a traditionalist who attaches importance to the Confucian concept of "Junzi" (gentleman - perfect person); a modern man who wants to follow the West in political terms, a baptized Chinese who lives a Western-style life with his socialite family.<sup>3</sup> He is

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<sup>2</sup> The anti-Japanese patriotic movement, which started at Beiyan (Beijing) University in Beijing on May 4, 1919 and spread throughout the country, is a very important historical event that later led to a major breakthrough in modernist thought in China's politics and culture and shaped China's future.

<sup>3</sup> The Protestant Soong family, one of the richest in China, has a significant place in Chinese politics through their marriage ties. The eldest sister, Soong Ai-Ling, is the wife of the Prime Minister of the Republic of China, the great banker H.H. Kung; the middle sister, Soong Ching Ling, is the wife of

also passionately attached to discipline, control, order, in other words, the militaristic understanding. Although he does not speak a Western language and, except for his short stays in Japan and Russia, has never been outside China, he thought that he had overcome the problem of socializing with foreigners with his American-educated wife who speaks a foreign language very well. While he could wear Sun Yat-sen clothes on one side, he can take photos with a cane in his hand and a fedora on his head on the other (Schell – Delury; 2013).

The May 4 Movement directed the nationalist reaction against the imperialist states, as well as China's traditional institutions and Confucianism. But Chiang, passionately drew nationalism to tradition, and the right-wing GMD members, primarily Dai Jitao (1891-1949), made peace with Chinese tradition. During this process, Chiang accepted Dai Jitao and other right-wing GMD theorists' Confucian reinterpretation of Sun's Three People's Principles (Schell – Delury, 2013). This situation also reveals the ideological aspect of Chiang's alliance with those who continued the legacy of the traditional bureaucratic elites and the large landowners in the countryside who were extremely loyal to traditions.

Before the "New Life Movement", Chiang was re-shaped administrative and curriculum of school that is most important socializn tool, and so initiated nation-building activities. In 1928, the Nanking Government decided to attach missionary colleges and foreign schools, including universities, to the Ministry of Education. The government, which also required the principals of these schools to be Chinese, also removed the religious courses based on Christian theology taught in these schools from among the compulsory courses and arranged the curriculum in order to raise generations of Chinese nationalists on the basis of Chinese nationalism. In particular, with the reform carried out in 1933, it was decided that the Three People's Principles would now be taught in all schools. It was emphasized that universities, whose incomes were increased and strengthened with this reform, had important duties in nation-building. The curriculum was standardized and unity of education was given great importance (Sun, 1986).

The communists also had no objection to the establishment of unity in education. However, when the reproduction of the Three People's Principles with a right-wing political perspective began to be supported through education curriculum, important literary figures such as Lu Xun (1881-1936) and

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Dr. Sun Yat-sen; and the younger sister, Soong Mei Ling, is the wife of Chiang Kai-shek. Their brother, T.V. Soong, is the architect of the Republic of China's economic policies, and the family has been among the most important financiers of the GMD.

Mao Dun (1896-1981), who were already disturbed by the oppression, the compromise with the landlords and the tendencies from Chinese nationalism to Han chauvinism, with intellectuals and writers who supported the CCP and the Left GMD, organized a Literary Front (Lee, 2013). It was a great misfortune for Chiang to have an opponent like Lu Xun, especially when Lu's influence on university youth was considered. Mao Zedong said the following about Lu Xun in those days:

"Lu Hsun was the greatest and the most courageous standard-bearer of this new cultural force. The chief commander of China's cultural revolution, he was not only a great man of letters but a great thinker and revolutionary. Lu Hsun was a man of unyielding integrity, free from all sycophancy or obsequiousness; this quality is invaluable among colonial and semi-colonial peoples. Representing the great majority of the nation, Lu Hsun breached and stormed the enemy citadel; on the cultural front he was the bravest and most correct, the firmest, the most loyal and the most ardent national hero, a hero without parallel in our history. The road he took was the very road of China's new national culture." (Mao, 1975).

Under these conditions, Chiang increased the pressure on intellectuals and students and decided to start the "New Life Movement" with the aim of breaking the radicalism of these groups (Dirlik, 1975). Chiang explained the reasoning behind the "New Culture Movement" (Dirlik, 1975), which was officially declared to have begun in Nanchang, Jiangxi, on February 19, 1934, with the following words:

"The general psychology of today's people can be described as soulless. What is evident in behavior is that they are unable to distinguish between good and bad, what is public and what is private, primary and secondary. Failure to distinguish between good and bad leads to confusion between right and wrong. Failure to distinguish between public and private leads to irregularities in the use of public funds. Failure to distinguish between primary and secondary leads to failure to place the first and the last in the correct order. As a result, officials tend to be dishonest and greedy, the masses to become undisciplined and callous, the elite to become corrupt and ignorant, the rich to live in extravagance and luxury, while the poor to become miserable and rebellious, which naturally leads to the breakdown of social order and national life. Therefore, we are in no position to prevent or cure natural disasters, internal disasters, and external invasions. The individual, society, and the entire country are suffering... In order to improve the life of our nation, to preserve the existence of our society, and to improve the livelihood of our people, it is imperative that these unhealthy conditions be eliminated and a new and rational life be started." (Chiang, 1934).

To eliminate these problems, Chiang resorts to the four fundamental virtues of Neo-Confucianism, but reshapes them according to the conditions of the time. He tries to respond to the emphasis of the leftist understanding of the period on infrastructure with the typical approach of right-wing conservative movements that say "morality and spirituality first." It is also very natural for Chiang, who is obsessed with discipline, order and stability, to resort to Confucianism. The Confucian family and state imagination, which can be reconciled quite easily with the patriarchal discourse of nationalism, also supports Chiang's position as the head of China, which he imagines as a patriarchal family (Spence, 1990). Besides, the difficulty of producing social consent in a system where he tried to respond to the needs of the big comprador bourgeoisie in a semi-feudal country, which was as underdeveloped, and in which he favored the landowners whom he saw as essential to guaranteeing his power, forced him to resort to Confucian principles centered on "loyalty". According to Chiang:

"The New Life Movement aims to promote an orderly life guided by the four virtues of *li*, *yi*, *lian*, and *chi*.

...Those who violate these rules are doomed to failure, and nations that neglect them will not survive.

There are two types of skeptics:

First, some think that the four virtues are merely rules of good conduct. No matter how good they are, they are not enough to save a nation whose knowledge and technique are inferior to others.

Those who hold this view do not seem to understand the difference between matters of primary and secondary importance. People need knowledge and technique because they want to do good. Otherwise, knowledge and technique will only be used for dishonorable deeds. *Li*, *yi*, *lian*, and *chi* are general rules for the community, the group, and the entire nation. Those who do not follow these rules will probably use their knowledge and skills to the detriment of society. Therefore, virtues can not only save the nation, but also rebuild it.

Secondly, there is another group of people who claim that these virtues are mere formal refinements, useless in coping with hunger and cold. ...when these virtues prevail, even if food and clothing are insufficient, they can be produced. If the granary is empty, it can be filled by human labor. On the other hand, when these virtues are not observed, if food and clothing are insufficient, they will not be made sufficient by fighting and robbery, or if the granary is empty, they will not be filled by stealing and begging." (Chiang, 1934).

According to Chiang, *li* - principle: organized attitudes (discipline); *yi* - proper: correct behavior (being able to distinguish good and bad, Chinese etiquette); *lian* - clear: clear discrimination (separating good and bad); *chi* - self-awareness: It is understood as awareness that actions are in accordance with the

other three principles. Advocating that people should have military awareness, Chiang said, "If a country cannot protect itself, there is always a possibility of losing its existence. Therefore, our people need to receive military training. As a start, we should acquire the habits of orderliness, cleanliness, simplicity, frugality, speed and clarity. We should maintain order, pay attention to organization, responsibility and discipline, and be ready to die for the country at any time" (Chiang; 1934).

What does the soldier-nation individual who is ready to devote himself do in his daily life, what kind of a citizen is he? To give a few examples from the "New Life": He is anti-communist, patriotic, salutes the flag, values loyalty, respect, personal hygiene, is thrifty, modest, polite, spends his free time not with demoralizing songs but with athletics that will develop his body and arts that will raise national morale, pays attention to sexual abstinence, does not use opium (Chiang, 1934).

When we look at the behavior and way of thinking preached by Chiang and Soong Mei-ling, the ethical and political world of the "good citizen" is shaped by Chiang's Confucianism and S. Mei-Ling's deep Christian moralism. Time magazine did not miss his the Methodist tone in the "New Life":

"What Chinese officialdom needed, the Generalissimo & Mme Chiang had decided, was a big dose of the castor oil of Puritanism. The tablespoon with which they dished this out they called the New Life Movement, and with every ounce of Nanking's authority they dosed all China. Batch after batch of local mayors and magistrates were ordered to Nanking, drilled and exhorted there in the primary decencies—to stop wiping noses on sleeves, to stop taking bribes from litigants. They were warned that he who did not practice the new Puritanism might expect the worst—and this was no empty threat." (Time, January 3, 1938).

From the time the "New Life Movement" was declared, it was attempted to spread throughout the country through various organizations under the close control of the army and the GMD (Dirlik, 1975). Dirlik states that "the 'politicization' (cheng-chih-hua) of the people and the 'awakening' of their consciousness (chuiehhsing)" was an accepted goal of the New Life Movement (Dirlik, 1975). If Dirlik defines the intense anti-communist propaganda of the movement and the "Blue Shirts" (Society for the Application of the Three People's Principles), which checked whether people behaved in accordance with the "New Life", inspired by the example of the Italian Black Shirts, as a process of "politicization", then we can perhaps evaluate this together with the goal of Italian fascism, "a society melting into the political sphere". Because there is no data available to see this as democratic politicization. Moreover, if we consider



this process together with the transformation of the GMD into an elite-bureaucratic mechanism disconnected from the masses, it would be more accurate to evaluate it as an attempt to determine a political attitude that will enable the people to become "decent citizens" who act with a sense of responsibility, rather than to become the subjects of politics.

Chiang's most important work is *China's Destiny* (*Zhōngguó zhī mìngyùn*), prepared with the help of editor Tao Xisheng and published in 1943. The work was published in New York in 1947 with Philip Jaffe's comments and notes under the title *China's Destiny & Chinese Economic Theory*. Despite his regime's close alliance with the British and Americans, a passionate political and economic discourse of complete independence dominates this book (Chiang, 1947). Keeping the memory of a century of national humiliation alive, Chiang did not neglect to use the slogan "never forget national humiliation", urging generations of Chinese not to compromise on the policy of a fully independent and unified China (Chiang, 1947; Schell-Delury, 2013). American foreign service officer John S. Service, who read the book in Chinese, called it "Chiang's Main Kampf" and evaluated it as "a bigoted, narrow-minded, extremely nationalist effort to blame foreign aggression for all of China's problems" (Service, 1974).

Chiang, who was "furious" against those who called him a dictator, claimed that he was only exercising "necessary tutelage" until Chinese society was ready, and that he did not approve of the Blue Shirts and that they ended their activities in 1938 when they were only a few hundred strong (Taylor, 2009). Taylor, who provided this information, also emphasizes Japanese customs as one of the sources of the "New Life." Considering the influence of these customs and especially the bushido tradition on Japanese militaristic fascism, the degree of sincerity of Chiang's words is debatable, to say the least. In this respect, when considered together with his thoughts and practice, Friedrich Jr. Wakeman's definition of "Confucian Fascism" is noteworthy (Wakeman, 1997). However, when we consider the subtle distinction between authoritarian nationalism and fascism, and evaluate its developmentalism, cultural conservatism and militaristic nationalism together, it is possible to say that he is an "authoritarian rightist" and that he is trying to establish a regime in line with this.

### The Kemalism Debate in China

There had been a debate in China that Chiang Kai-Shek and the GMD take Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the CHP as examples. Mao Zedong's words are especially important in this regard. However, before this, it would be useful to

look at the statements of the GMD leaders and the Republic of China officials during their visits to Turkey.

Hu Hanmin (1879-1936), one of the sharpest rightists of the GMD who visited Turkey in 1928, emphasized that Turkey should be taken as an example (Demircan; 2021-2022). The first official visit from China to Turkey was made in 1930 by a military delegation consisting of General Vonk Moo Song, Colonel Cenk Kay and Pilot M. V. Chio. The delegation stated that "All of China follows the Turkish youth and revolutions with great interest and appreciation" and emphasized that Chinese intellectuals "know and love Mustafa Kemal as the greatest saint" (Demircan, 2021-2022). The most interesting visit is that a civilian delegation visited Ankara on June 14, 1934. They want to benefit on Türkiye example for "New Life Movement" and they said that Turkey was the country they paid the most attention to (Demircan, 2021-2022). If you pay attention, this visit was made at a time when the regime in Turkey, especially in the provinces, established the People's Houses (1932), implemented the university reform (1933) - which is the same date in China - and almost completely eliminated civil organizations, in an environment where Kemalism was taking shape as a doctrine, the nation-building program was accelerated with theories of history and language, and the attempt at multi-party political life was abandoned for a long time. This period is the period when the CHP most strictly implemented its "decent citizen" project and "nation-building" efforts, and cultural policies under an authoritarian regime. In 1938, the newly appointed Chinese Chargé d'Affaires M.D. In an interview with Cumhuriyet newspaper, Tounng stated that Chiang Kai-shek always remembered Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his revolutions with admiration (Demircan, 2021-2022). According to Prof. Pen, who came to Turkey in 1937 upon the request of the League of Nations and the Chinese Administration, Turkey is the only example of China (Demircan, 2021-2022). He Yao Zu, the first Chinese ambassador to Turkey appointed in 1935, also emphasized the similarity of the Three People's Principles with the Kemalist program (Fidan, 2019). The Chinese government asked He Yaozu to seek answers to three questions in Turkey:

- "1. How did Turkey remain neutral as a country between fascism and communism and create its own cultural world?
2. Despite the fact that Turkish politics resembles autocracy and a single-party dictatorship, the existing parliament and its activities continue. What can you say about this?
3. Turkey's economic development began very recently, how did the economy improve and living standards increase?" (Fidan, 2019).

These questions show that China is seriously examining the CHP administration and Kemalism as a program and practice. In fact, CCP leader Mao Zedong, who was aware of this effort, also joined the discussion. In his speech titled "On New Democracy" in 1940, Mao Zedong said:

"Even though the petty Kemalist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie did emerge in Turkey after the first imperialist world war and the October Revolution owing to certain specific conditions (the bourgeoisie's success in repelling Greek aggression and the weakness of the proletariat), there can be no second Turkey, much less a "Turkey" with a population of 450 million, after World War II and the accomplishment of socialist construction in the Soviet Union. In the specific conditions of China (the flabbiness of the bourgeoisie with its proneness to conciliation and the strength of the proletariat with its revolutionary thoroughness), things just never work out so easily as in Turkey.

Did not some members of the Chinese bourgeoisie clamour for Kemalism after the First Great Revolution failed in 1927?

But where is China's Kemal? And where are China's bourgeois dictatorship and capitalist society? Besides, even Kemalist Turkey eventually had to throw herself into the arms of Anglo-French imperialism, becoming more and more of a semi-colony and part of the reactionary imperialist world.

In the international situation of today, the "heroes" in the colonies and semi-colonies either line up on the imperialist front and become part of the forces of world counter-revolution, or they line up on the anti-imperialist front and become part of the forces of world revolution. They must do one or the other, for there is no third choice." (Mao, 1975).

Mao Zedong analyzed the world as divided between the Reds and the Whites (League of Nations) in the 1930s. Of course, this view cannot be seen as very accurate at a time when Nazism and fascism were on the rise. Mao's claim that Turkey threw itself into the arms of Anglo-French imperialism and almost became a part of the semi-colonial and reactionary imperialist world is also not true. Mao must have been referring to Turkey becoming a member of the League of Nations and especially the Turkey-England-France Alliance of October 19, 1939. How could explain Mao from this perspective that the "Non-Aggression Pact" that the USSR signed with Nazi Germany on August 23, 1939? Or as of 1941, to Allians against Mihver? Of course, it may be a bit too much to expect a man who fought in the Yenan Mountains to fully comprehend and analyze the international arena. But it is clear that Mao's main concern was "within." It is clear that Mao said these words regarding the GMD's desire to establish a country by taking Kemalism as an example.

Is Kemalism, which attracted the attention of the GMD as a third way between communism and fascism in those days, really sufficient to explain Chiang's ideology? It would be right to open the discussion by giving the answer from the very beginning: Chiang is a statesman who is much more to the right of Mustafa Kemal, and much more dependent on the Chinese ruling classes and Western states. However, if we consider that Kemalism also has "wings," it is necessary to say that there are many commonalities that bring Chiang, who is much more to the right of Mustafa Kemal, together with "Right Kemalism," as well as obvious differences between them. Indeed, the relationship Chiang established with ancient Chinese political traditions, discussed above, is foreign to Kemalism, first and foremost as a method.

Chiang harshly criticized the May 4 and New Culture Movement, which was seen as a historical turning point in China's reckoning with tradition, when many modern political movements, especially Marxism, came into being in China, and which was called the "Young China" period, praised by Dr. Sun, due to their intense attacks on China's traditional institutions and thought system (Fenby, 2019). He distanced himself from Sun's revolutionism not only in terms of program and implementation, but also in his perspective on China's recent history. In this context, there is a major difference between him and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the leader of the Turkish Revolution, primarily in terms of "revolutionism". However, Kemalism also compromised with the notables and landowners in order to achieve the political and cultural revolutions it aimed for, in the absence of social classes that would lead modernization. The removal of the tithe tax was a move made to prevent the landowners from clashing with the regime and to gain their support, the largest source of income that Turkey could save for its national development (Karaömerlioğlu, 2009). In addition, despite various attempts at a multi-party life, the Kemalist regime was also determined to keep the society under "guardianship" until it reached the economic and cultural stage it envisioned. Especially in the 1930s, by closing down all civil and democratic institutions, it made serious interventions through education and culture policies in order to produce social consent, build a nation and raise decent citizens. Similar to China, the rejection of political freedoms and the rejection of aesthetic autonomy went hand in hand (Koçak, O., 2009). The CHP, as an elitist party that was completely disconnected from the mass line, integrated with the state. The "One party – One ideology – Eternal Chief" trilogy reflects the political character of this period (Koçak, C., 2009). While the notables were supported to create a national bourgeoisie, the 1924 Constitution did not recognize workers' rights to strike, collective bargaining, unions and other forms of organization.

With these characteristics, it can be said that it overlaps with the practices of the GMD and Chiang.

The Right Kemalists have come to life as a political wing that tries to establish ties between Kemalism and the religious and traditional political-cultural codes that the regime wants to ignore, and as a supporter of economic liberalism. They stand out with their reaction against the economic attitude and cultural tendencies of Left Kemalism, especially the land revolution. Indeed, this wing, which established its own political organization under the roof of the Democratic Party (DP), takes Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the Republic as its main reference even during the period when it is most in conflict with the Republican People's Party (CHP) (Öğün, 2000, p. 312; Çınar, 2013). In this respect, they resemble Dr. Sun, Chiang, who adopted his programmatic "Three People's Principles" albeit with a right-wing interpretation, and the GMD, as well as their positioning themselves on the basis of right-wing political-cultural values. The similarity cannot be overlooked in the social class level they are allied with. However, the Right Kemalists give more importance to the 1920s, which coincide with the liberal-populist openings in economic terms, rather than the 1930s, when the corporatist tendency was dominant (Bora-Taşkın, 2002). In addition, the liberal-populism of Right Kemalism is much more democratic than Chiang's, with its loyalty to parliamentary democracy, provided that it is in harmony with the established order of the state, as in the example of Süleyman Demirel (Bora, 2023).

## **Conclusion**

Chiang's "New Life Movement" was defeated by the CCP's "New Democracy", which had raised the poor peasantry and gained the support of the working class, students and intellectuals in the cities. Essentially, Mao Zedong and the CCP, who set out with a democratic revolution program suitable for Chinese conditions, implemented an all-out modernization program in the first six years of the 1949 Revolution, including the land revolution that the Kemalist Revolution in Turkey desired but failed to achieve. Chiang, on the other hand, maintained his authoritarian single-party rule with right-wing nationalist political-cultural policies, but also in coherent with the Western camp after World War II, and maintained his power on the island of Taiwan by claiming that his regime was the legitimate Chinese regime, without resorting to creating a mass cultural movement. Although Turkey and Taiwan positioned themselves as allies of the US and Turkey did not establish direct contact with the People's

Republic of China until 1973 in accordance with US policies and continued to recognize Chiang's Republic of China, Chiang and his team no longer mentioned Kemalism as an "ideological" source.

In the political climate of the 1930s and 1940s, the political elites of the Republic of China put "Kemalism and the CHP" on their agenda as a model for their countries where pre-industrial social patterns were dominant and who wanted to carry the modernization process to success with a third path alternative to socialism and capitalism. It is known that the leaders of countries such as Iran and Afghanistan, where the productive forces were not developed and the ideal of modernization was defined through a nationalist discourse, were interested in Turkey and Kemalism in certain aspects during the same period and came to Turkey. However, the broad scope of Chiang's view of Kemalism and the CHP, who did not have direct contact with the Turkish leadership, is striking.

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