

## From an Unknown Territory to a Nation's Motherland: An Analysis of the Memoirs of the Republic's First Generation of Intellectuals

### Bilinmeyen Topraklardan Anavatana: Cumhuriyetin İlk Aydın Kuşağının Anılarının Analizi

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#### Abstract

This article aims to analyze the memories and autobiographies of six intellectuals who witnessed and contributed to the foundation of the Turkish Republic and played important roles in the cultural policies of the era of the early Republic of Turkey. In the analysis, the sociological concept of generation is utilized as a conceptual framework. Characterizing a group of people that not only share approximating birth dates and locations but also have experienced similar historical moments or political and socioeconomic transformations as a generation, this article regards Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, Süleyman Edip Balkır, İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Ahmet Emin Yalman and Hasan Âli Yücel as members of the same generation. An in-depth analysis of the memoirs and autobiographies reveals two common themes among these people's memories: first, because they were born and grew up on the western side of the Ottoman lands, they were all strangers to Anatolia before World War I or the foundation of the Republic; and, second, all six intellectuals believed in the fact that the path of turning Anatolia into a modernized and secularized homeland passed through education. Their strangeness to Anatolia and the importance of education for its socio-cultural development were highly related because the transformation of Anatolia through education not only aimed to create a homeland but also ended the strangeness between these intellectuals and Anatolia.

**Keywords:** Generation, Intellectual history, Memoirs, Early republican period

#### Öz

Bu makale Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluşuna tanıklık etmiş ve katkıda bulunmuş ve erken cumhuriyet döneminin kültürel politikalarında önemli roller oynamış altı aydının anılarını ve otobiyografilerini incelemeyi amaçlıyor. İncelemede kavramsal çerçeveyi kuşak kavramı çiziyor. Kuşak kavramını sadece benzer tarihlerde aynı coğrafyada doğmuş olmak değil benzer tarihsel an ve sosyoekonomik dönüşüm süreçlerini deneyimlemek üzerinden ele alarak, Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, Süleyman Edip Balkır, İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Ahmet Emin Yalman ve Hasan Âli Yücel'i aynı kuşağın üyeleri olarak değerlendiriyoruz. Bu isimlerin anı ve otobiyografilerinin derinlemesine analizinde ortaklaşan iki ana tema öne çıkmaktadır. İlki Anadolu'ya yabancıdır, çünkü bu isimler Osmanlı topraklarının batısında doğmuşlardı ve Anadolu ile tanışıklıkları I. Dünya Savaşı ya da cumhuriyetin kuruluş dönemlerine denk düşüyordu. İkinci ortak temaya Anadolu'nun kalkınması ve aydınlanmasının yolunun eğitimden geçtiğine inanmaktadırlar. Bu entelektüellerin Anadolu'ya yabancılıkları ve eğitime verdikleri önem de birbiriyle ilişkilidir, çünkü eğitimle Anadolu'nun dönüşümü anavatanın kalkınmasını sağlamanın yanı sıra, bu isimlerin Anadolu'ya yabancılıklarının da sona ermesine katkıda bulunacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kuşak, Düşünce tarihi, Anılar, Erken cumhuriyet dönemi

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## Introduction

This article traces the general attitudes of six intellectuals who were influential in politics and education in the early Republic of Turkey, by analyzing their memoirs and autobiographies. While there are plenty of memoirs and autobiographies by the founding members of the Turkish Republic, the number of social science studies that analyze the sociological characteristics of this generation has remained inadequate. One example of this paucity of literature is penned by Erik Jan Zürcher. While analyzing the Young Turks of the late Ottoman Empire who became the founder elites of the Republic in his renowned article “Who Were the Young Turks? The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk’s Turkey,” Zürcher (2010a, pp. 106-107) assembles a representative sampling of thirty-six individuals who served in at least a quarter of the cabinets of the first twenty years of the Republic, played influential roles for the army, and were close to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk since his childhood or army days. Geographically, 35 percent of them were born and raised in the Ottoman Balkans, 20 percent were from the Aegean region, 20 percent were from Istanbul, and 11 percent were from other cities of the Marmara region. Zürcher asserts that these birth places can be assessed as an integrated zone with Europe, where the literacy rates and material and cultural development were completely different from Anatolia. It was striking that only 14 percent (5 individuals) of the founder elites originated from Anatolia, which was considered the heartland of the new Republic. In addition to the geographical alienation, nearly all the leaders of the Republic came from urban environments and 75 percent of them were educated in military or civil colleges.

After analyzing the socio-cultural background of the founding generation, Zürcher (2010b, p. 113), in another article, underlines two important features of the mindset of the founding generation: the role of education and the perspective of Anatolia. Both Young Turks and Kemalists owed their careers to their education. Therefore, they believed that education, which had changed their lives, could produce progress and enlightenment for the whole country. They portrayed themselves as the educators of a backward population. As mentioned above, Anatolia was a strange geography for the founding generation, most of which had Balkan origins. After the loss of their ancestral land, they had to settle in Anatolia. Anatolia was designed as the homeland of Turkishness and heartland of the new Republic (Zürcher, 2010b, p. 120). The founder elites, who were strangers or *yabancı* to this homeland, thought to transform and enlighten Anatolia through education.

This study will take Zürcher’s analysis as a starting point, especially his focus on the strangeness of Anatolia and the role of education, but will follow a different path in terms of sampling and methodology. Zürcher has chosen historical figures who had been very influential in the political life of the early Republic. He has adopted a methodology that is based on the analysis of birthplaces and educational statuses. This article, however, will engage in a qualitative analysis of a generation by scrutinizing the memories and autobiographies of several figures, who had been at the periphery of the political sphere but at the center of the intellectual domain of the early Turkish Republic. In order to give due to the qualitative methodology, a limited number of memories and autobiographies will be analyzed in depth.

In this regard, Şevket Süreyya Aydemir’s *Suyu Arayan Adam (The Man in Search of Water)*, Ahmet Emin Yalman’s *Gördüklerim Geçirdiklerim (Those I Have Seen, Those I*

*Have Experienced*), Hasan Âli Yücel's *Geçtiğim Günlerden* (*Days That I Have Passed by*), İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu's *Hayatım* (*My Life*) and Süleyman Edip Balkır's *Bir Köy Öğretmeninin Anıları* (*Memories of a Village Teacher*) will be analyzed as memories and autobiographies in this article. Besides these, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu will also be a part of the analysis with his novels *Yaban* (*The Stranger*) and *Ankara*.

First, we will introduce the concept of generation, which equips us with a framework that enables us to analyze several people who were born in a similar geography and around close dates as a group. A theoretical debate on how to use this concept reveals the fact that a generation is bound by not only a shared birth time and geography but also shared periods of social change and trauma. The memories of the republic's founding generation, who witnessed wars, experienced migration, went through radical socioeconomic and political transformations, and actively contributed to the foundation of the republic, will provide us a basis on which we can analyze this historical process through an inside reading. Similar to Zürcher's analysis, an in-depth study of these memories has depicted that, first, Anatolia was a strange geography for these people. They were born in different geographies and became familiarized with Anatolia during the War of Independence or after the foundation of the Republic. Second, the praxis that defined their relations with this new and unfamiliar homeland was education. While they were striving to get to know and understand Anatolia, they were aware that they shouldered a new responsibility to turn this land, strange to them, into a homeland for the nation. According to them, the tool that would shake off the centuries-old stagnancy and lead Anatolia to the path of modernization was education. These people were not only witnesses of history but also active agents in history. Moreover, they shared the experience of not only decline and trauma but also novelty and future projections. These facts made this group of people a generation that connected the past to the present and the future.

### **A Prelude to the Sociological Concept of Generation**

In social science research the theoretical tool of generation is a slippery slope that may lead researchers to false generalizations. Designating certain general characteristics for several people who happen to live in the same period may pave the way for conclusions too neat and interpretations too symmetrical. However, using generation as an analytical tool should not be cast aside, for it may provide significant generalizations about the relevant period. In other words, its strength lies in its weakness, and this article aims to use this precarious analytical tool with utmost caution.

The first thing to do is to define this ambiguous conceptual tool. Karl Mannheim (1952, pp. 288-289), a prominent sociologist, in his 1923-dated essay, called "The Problem of Generations," states that a generation is not a "concrete group" as measurable as family but a "social category" that several people fall into because they share "similar location" within a social entity. Generation is an ambiguous concept. It does not have straight edges or a concrete existence. Families are gathered through bloodlines, organizations around causes and statutes, and neighborhood communities through physical adjacency. However, as Mannheim (1952, pp. 288-289) states, generation is not a "concrete group" that people choose through "proximity or rational will," i.e., not an assembly that is formed "through naturally developed or consciously willed ties". As a "temporal abstraction" (Berger,

1960, p. 14), the only common perceptible string that ties the concept of generation to the tangible life is age; though the unlikelihood of squeezing all age contemporaries into one generation or the inability of some age contemporaries to form a memorable generation adds up to the fact that age is an unstable ground to emplace the phenomenon. However, while the bonds between individuals within the same generation are not as concrete as blood relations, generation is still an objective social reality (Mannheim, 1952, pp. 288-290):

Generation location is based on the existence of biological rhythm in human existence – the factors of life and death, a limited span of life, and ageing. Individuals who belong to the same generation, who share the same year of birth, are endowed, to that extent, with a common location in the historical dimension of the social process.

Therefore, generation is primarily a biological concept linked to the time of birth. It is a matter of life and death: “The most elemental fact of human life is that some [people] die and others are born” (Gasset, 1958, p. 41). One after another, various lineage-age groups producing offspring trail each other. In this so-far never-ending journey, different age groups in human societies have formed different generations. In *Webster’s New International Dictionary of the English Language* (1957, p. 1044), among many definitions, generation is defined as (1) an “act or process of producing offspring; procreation,” and (2) “the average lifetime of man, or the ordinary period of time at which one rank follows another, or father is succeeded by child; an age.” However, in the human world of complexities, biological age and life-span, progeny and engenderment compose only some of the many aspects of the notion of generation.

The sociological concept of generation transcends “the biological rhythm of birth and death” (Mannheim, 1952, p. 290). This biological cooccurrence turns into a sociological reality only if it corresponds to a historical and sociological coexistence. Mannheim (1952, p. 6) asserts that “[t]he *sociological* problem of generations... begins at [the] point where the sociological relevance of... biological factors is discovered.” As the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1993, p. 95) further suggests, the phenomenon of generation is not biologically but socially determined. Biologically coincident age contemporaries, who have experienced the same historical circumstances, and who have socially shared similar lifestyles, aspirations, oppositions, and fears, form a generation.

Returning to Mannheim’s “problem of generations,” the notion of a common “location” appears as a key concept in the article which acts as a socio-historical glue holding the members of a generation together. Regarding generation as one of the dynamics of socio-historical development and an important tool for social classification, Mannheim (1952, pp. 290-291) thinks that a generation rises upon “a similarity of location of a number of individuals within a social whole.” Being born around the same year to the same socio-historical and cultural context, and experiencing a similar world in the formative years of youth, the members of a generation share “certain definite modes of behavior, feeling and thought.”

However, for Mannheim (1952, p. 290), “a common location in the historical dimension of social process” does not suffice to explain the whole generational tableau. First of all, a shared location does not supply people with a consciously-belonged entity in which they actively join. Like in class position, one cannot end one’s membership in a particular

generation by appending a conscious signature on the contract. Second, people in the same socio-historical location might compose diverse “generation units” (Mannheim, 1952, p. 304), differentiated “by their geographical and cultural location; by their actual as opposed to potential participation in the social and intellectual currents of their time and place; and by their differing responses to a particular situation” (Pilcher, 1994, p. 483). If one assumes that each epoch has a distinct mentality, a *Zeitgeist*, one cannot expect this mentality to create in every living human mind the same responses against, and thoughts and aspirations about the particular socio-historical situation (Mannheim, 1952, p. 313). Concurrently, “the assumption that even dramatic events will be interpreted in the same way by all members of an age group, with the consequence that the same lessons will be adduced, seems implausible.” (Holsti and Rosenau, 1980, p. 19). These two points have led Mannheim (1952, p. 303) to conceptualize a more complex and explanatory notion of “generation as actuality,” defined as a conscious “*participation in the common destiny of [the] historical and social unit*” of the shared location:

Mannheim characterizes... shared location as an unconscious and inactive one, as opposed to a “generation as actuality,” whereby members have a “concrete bond” through their exposure to and participation in the “social and intellectual symptoms of a process of dynamic destabilization,” such as in time of war. Mannheim expresses the difference between basic “generational location” and “generation as actuality” as that of potentially being capable of being “sucked into the vortex of social change” and in actually participating in the “characteristic social and intellectual currents of their society and period” (Pilcher, 1994, p. 490).

This notion of actual participation in the shared experience of social change coincides with a third point indicating generational location's insufficiency as an explanatory concept: all people who share a social location do not form a generation, at least a distinguished one. The Great Depression or the 1960s certainly ring bells in one's mind, but not every decade or epoch has left a mark of equal profundity in history. Mannheim (1952, p. 309) states that:

... not every generation location – not even every age-group – creates new collective impulses and formative principles original to itself and adequate to its particular situation. Where this does happen, we speak of a *realization of potentialities inherent* in the location, and it appears probable that the frequency of such realizations is closely connected with the tempo of social change.

The above-mentioned point reveals the fact that dealing with the sociological concept of generation requires the answer to one other question: Why do “generations arise during certain periods in history but not in others” (Braungart and Braungart, 1986, p. 217); What does make some epochs special? June Edmunds and Bryan S. Turner (2002) stress the mobilization opportunities of a period, which enable people to actively engage in the production of a brand-new social and cultural fashion peculiar to the specific generation.

This question of appropriate periods for the formation of a generation urged some scholars to enlist the steps of the process through which distinctive historical generations have appeared. For example, sociologists Ron Eyerman and Bryan S. Turner (1998, p. 96) enumerate six conditions for a generation to arise: (1) the shared experience of a traumatic incident like disaster, war, or massacre, (2) “cultural or political mentors” theorizing the particular traumatic incident and the opposition against the dominant power and culture,

(3) a profound demographic change disturbing the allocation of societal resources, (4) epochal changes, which lead the society from success to failure, failure to success, (5) the existence of holy sites, or what Pierre Nora (1996) calls “*lieux de memoire*,” that maintain “a collective memory of utopia,” and their origins, heroes, struggles, and (6) the feeling of a shared luckiness among people, who regard themselves as the true members of their generation. As to this *formula*, people who witnessed the hard times of the Great Depression gathered around the shared experience of this trauma and affected by ideologists and activists opposing the dominant system have assembled around the memory of “Black Tuesday” as a generation. Similarly, Woodstock has acted as a sacred realm holding the 1960s’ generation together. For Mannheim, the actualization of a distinct generation through the constitution of a concrete bond between the members is most likely to take place, when these members are “exposed to the social and intellectual symptoms of a process of dynamic de-stabilization,” i.e., social and cultural change. In order for an age-group to create its own meanings, aspirations, interpretations, and, struggle methods, it must experience a quick and profound social transformation (Mannheim, 1952, p. 303, p. 310). In a similar vein, some generational theorists, emphasizing the dynamism of social change, have regarded the conflict of generations as the motor force of historical development. Rudolf Heberle (1951, p. 125) links generation gap to social change, and states that “[t]he differentiations *between* generations are likely to be greater in periods of rapid social change than in periods of slow and gradual change.”

The question of the reason for unique periods in history generating generations has especially been the area of interest of scholars specialized in generational politics and political generations. According to Richard G. Braungart and Margaret M. Braungart (1986, p. 207) the only sociologically valid type of generation is the political generation composed of age contemporaries collectively struggling for social, cultural, and political change. Braungart and Braungart (1986, pp. 217-218) emphasize that these generations’ distinctive presences correspond to unique periods in history:

From a generational perspective, the dynamics of the formation of political generations appear to be that historical circumstances (especially population growth, urbanization, industrialization, economic depression, unemployment, technological change, nationalism, and cultural change) and mobilization forces (organized networks, solidarity, charismatic leadership, intergroup competition, and conflict over political goals) have combined during certain periods in history to form active political generations.

Based on this line of thinking, this article analyzes several memoirs as subjective narratives from the early Republic of Turkey, which have the potential to complement, question, or resist official narratives. We aim to analyze the individual experiences of several people from the early Republic of Turkey by clearly scrutinizing their social backgrounds, places of birth, and economic statuses, for these larger sociohistorical entities shape a generation’s biographical and autobiographical narratives.

### **The Generation of the First Intellectuals of the Early Republic of Turkey**

Generation is a collective issue, in which a group of people share a similar social location, past, beliefs, choices, lifestyles, and future projections. Like every collectivity, a generation is built upon an umbrella identity that is molded by a sense of belonging. This feeling of collective attachment translates into a social, historical, political, cultural,



and even linguistic togetherness that renders singularities into collectiveness, in which “I” is simultaneously “we” (Nora, 1996, p. 526). However, as stated, when a generation is considered not only a biological but also a social entity, it becomes clear that not every period in history could create memorable generations. Yet, we can easily assert that the founding members of the Turkish Republic who were born between the 1880s and 1900s definitely formed a generation. These people experienced the euphoria of a revolution that transformed the empire from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy and later the disappointment with the unfulfillment of their expectations, lost the geography in which they were born and raised – their homeland – in the Balkan Wars, witnessed the fall of the empire which they strived hard to protect in World War I, fought the War of Independence and consequently founded a new republic out of a fallen empire, struggled to sustain this new state whose demography changed radically due to deportation and population exchange, and switched from being the saviors of a declining empire to becoming the pillars of a newly-founded republic. They were active agents throughout this overwhelming wave of political, demographic, and socioeconomic transformation: the last generation of a dying empire and the first generation of a rising republic.

The intellectuals that we analyze for this article wrote or published their memories or narratives at different times. Karaosmanoğlu's novels *Yaban* and *Ankara* were written in 1932 and 1934, respectively, in the early Republican period. Thus, carrying a heavier emotional baggage, they reflect both the enthusiasm and disappointment of the moment. Baltacıoğlu, too, wrote his memories within the early Republican era. He published his memoirs as a series of articles in the *Yeni Adam* magazine between 1938 and 1941. The fact that he wrote his autobiography within the temporal limits of the early Republican era might be the reason why he generally abstains from mentioning politics in his memories. Yücel's book *Geçtiğim Günlerden* is based on the recompilation of his memoirs written in 1952, whereas the memoirs of Yalman and Balkır were written in the late 1960s. Aydemir's *Suyu Arayan Adam* was first published in 1959. The memoirs and biographies of this generation of intellectuals reflect their efforts to not only write their personal histories but also remember the era and events that underlined their personal histories – the second constitutional period, the First World War, the War of Independence, and the era of the early Republic. For these four intellectuals, this act of remembrance and narration happened in the 1950s and 1960s, which was a period of rapid socioeconomic transformation for Turkey.

The appearance of these memoirs contributed to the creation of the generation of the first intellectuals of Turkey because a generation is more the present's creation than a past phenomenon. In an article on the collective memory of Che Guevara, sociologists Jeff A. Larson and Omar Lizardo (2007, p. 432) state that “[b]ecause they must be created and recreated, collective memories of the past are subject to the social forces of the present. Because they empower collective identities and animate action, they themselves are social forces of the present.” Given the assertion that memory is a work of the present, moreover that “generational views are... under constant review and discussion in the present” (Bodnar, 1996, p. 636), it is safe to state that a generation is nothing but a retrospective “organization of collective memory” (Eyerman and Turner, 1998, p. 93). Following this point of view, the members of each generation are the organizers of their

own generation. Through the lenses of collective memory, the emergence of a generation happens at the point of the “generation becoming aware of its historicity” (Reulecke, 2010, p. 123). In other words, the members of a generation become their generation’s own creators. As Nora (1996, pp. 528-531) asserts, the generational “play goes on, and it is up to each generation to rewrite its generational history.” In the meantime, subjective and individual memories turn into a historical narrative, everyone becoming “his or her own historian.” Therefore, in the autobiographies of the intellectuals of the early Republic of Turkey, we witness not only a writing of the period’s history, but also the self-formation of a generation through the construction of this historicity in the 1930s, 1950s, and 1960s.

Zürcher (2010a, pp. 171-172) has built up a profile for Young Turks by listing their common characteristics. These people were all Muslim men born between 1875 and 1885. They were all born in cities to educated families in the Balkans, Aegean region, or Istanbul. They all had been educated in Westernized schools of higher education. After their education, they all worked in civil service. While our sample is not as neat as Zürcher’s, we, too, can detect certain common characteristics. The six intellectuals that we analyzed were born between 1886 and 1902. They all were educated in Westernized public schools. They all worked in public service. They all witnessed and participated in the radical transformations of their age. Last but not least, they all were intellectually influential people who left their traces in the intellectual and educational history of Turkey.

To begin with, İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu was born in 1886 in Istanbul. He attended Vefa High School (*Vefa İdadisi*) and then graduated from the science department at Dârülfünûn. After his graduation, he was sent by the state to Europe to conduct research in the area of pedagogy. He was the dean of the Faculty of Literature at Dârülfünûn between 1920 and 1923 and the president between 1923 and 1925. After the university reform of 1933, he was disaffiliated from the university; however, his influence over the intellectual sphere continued through journals, especially the periodical of *Yeni Adam*. He was reinstated as a professor at the Faculty of Language, History, and Geography at Ankara University in 1942 and became the deputy between 1943 and 1950 (Baltacıoğlu, 1998).

Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu was born in 1889 in Cairo, but he was originally from a wealthy family in Manisa, a city in the Aegean region. He dropped out of law school in Istanbul to professionally engage in literature. On the one hand, he was a diplomat and deputy. On the other hand, Karaosmanoğlu penned several novels and stories, which have been socially and intellectually influential not only in the early Republic but also even today (Aktaş, 2014, pp. 9-34). Hasan Âli Yücel was born in 1897 in Istanbul. Like Baltacıoğlu, he also attended Vefa High School. After high school, he graduated from the Teachers’ Training College of Cağaoğlu (*Cağaloğlu Darülmualimîn-i Aliyye*) and department of philosophy at the Faculty of Literature at Istanbul University. He worked first as a teacher and then he served as the Minister of Education between 1938 and 1946, which allowed him to actively shape the Turkish educational system. Besides his contributions to education, the translations of world classics that he commissioned during his service as a minister also have contributed to the Turkish intellectual sphere (Bora, 2021).

Şevket Süreyya Aydemir was born in the same year as Yücel, in 1897, in a city approximately 240 kilometers away from Yücel’s, in Edirne. He was born to an



impoverished family. He first attended military school, then transitioned to a non-military one. He had his higher education in Russia. He worked as a bureaucrat in public service. He joined a group of intellectuals along with Karaosmanoğlu who published the *Kadro* journal (Aydemir, 2004). Süleyman Edip Balkır was born in 1902 in Bursa. He graduated from teachers' training college in Bursa and then worked as a teacher and an educational inspector. He was the founding president of the Arifiye Village Institute (Balkır, 2022). Lastly, Ahmet Emin Yalman was born in 1888 in Thessaloniki. After being educated in Thessaloniki, he attended the German school in Istanbul. He worked as a translator at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After finishing his undergraduate studies at Columbia University in the area of sociology and history, he also completed his doctoral degree. After 1907, he engaged in journalism and published newspapers, such as *Vakit*, *Vatan*, *Tan*, and *Yeniden Vatan* (Yalman, 1970a).

All six intellectuals worked in the civil service which allowed them to influence public affairs, the intellectual sphere, or the educational system. As civil servants, i.e., teachers, professors, bureaucrats, inspectors, and translators, they left their intellectual and political footprints in the period of the early Republic. Three of them had a greater say in politics: Baltacıoğlu was elected as a member of the parliament for two terms between 1943 and 1950; Karaosmanoğlu worked as a parliamentarian and a diplomat for many years; and Yücel, besides serving as a minister, was elected as a member of the parliament in 1935. Yet, while these six individuals shared certain characteristics, they also had their differences in terms of birth dates, professions, or interest in politics.

If the concept of generation was merely handled as a biological entity determined by a shared geography and birth time, we would not be able to review these six intellectuals as members of the same generation. While Yalman, Baltacıoğlu, and Karaosmanoğlu were born in the second half of the 1880s, Yücel, Aydemir, and Balkır were born either in the second half of the 1890s or at the beginning of the 1900s. Yet, as mentioned, Mannheim states that being born around the same time is not sufficient to form a generation; co-experiencing significant socioeconomic changes, political ruptures, wars, demographic transformations, or industrialization processes assembles a group of people into a generation. In other words, generation is not only a biological but also a socio-political phenomenon. In addition to being born around the same time, also going through the same social traumas, being affected by the same socioeconomic processes, and having similar fears and dreams bring people together under the same roof of generation. Following this discussion, the memoirs and autobiographies that are analyzed for this study reveal a generational pattern, i.e., a convergence of memories of the six intellectuals who were born in different decades. In this regard, similar memories and narrations of significant events by these six intellectuals despite their diverging birth times and experiences show us that these people became a generation through experiencing not only the same events but also similar feelings. One example is the shared enthusiasm for the proclamation of the second constitutional era and a co-experienced change of sentiments from enthusiasm to disappointment afterward.

The constitutional movement, which was specifically effective in the Balkan provinces, under the leadership of the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti* or CUP) led to the proclamation of the second constitutional period in 1908. Freedom,

equality, fraternity and justice became the slogans of the constitutional regime against the absolute monarchy of the period of Abdülhamit II (Kansu, 2005). New methods of political participation like strikes and boycotts were developed, many newspapers were published, and associations and political parties were established in the first years of constitutional period (Çetinkaya, 2004). However, this liberal political environment did not last long. On one hand, the 31 March rebellion aiming to overthrow the constitutional regime demonstrated the weakness of the social base of the new regime, and on the other, the fierce rivalry between the CUP and the Party of Freedom and Accord (*Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası* or PFA) prioritized the power struggle over social transformations and liberties, a tendency that was symbolized with undemocratic elections and political assassinations. After the loss of lands during the Balkan Wars, the CUP seized power with an armed raid on the Sublime Porte (*Bâb-ı Âli Baskını*) in January 1913 and formed a single party regime. Both the loss of lands and the single party regime of the Unionists turned the hope of transformation created by the constitutional period into disappointment (Ahmad, 1969).

The proclamation of the second constitutional period has similar connotations, albeit varying weights in the memories of all six intellectuals. In Baltacıoğlu's memories, political developments mostly remain in the background rather than dominating the narrative; yet, Baltacıoğlu (1998, pp. 83-84), born in 1886, remembers joy and celebrations in the streets of Istanbul during the proclamation. Yücel (1990, pp. 139-141), born approximately a decade after Baltacıoğlu in 1897, also remembers the celebrations that brought joy and liveliness to Istanbul. Yücel adds a dimension of equality to his memories because for him constitutionalism would create equality in society: even the children of the Sultan's aides would be equal with other children at schools. Yücel's contemporary, Aydemir (2004, pp. 44-46), too, narrates the joyful celebrations in the streets of Edirne, to which he also joined, at the beginning of the constitutional regime. Yalman (1970a, pp. 62-65), who was born two years after Baltacıoğlu in 1888, uses similar terminology in his narration of constitutionalism bringing joy and liberty to the streets of Istanbul; additionally, his profession as a journalist led him to recount the progressively liberalizing publishing and journalism under the constitutional order.

While they were born in different decades, Aydemir, Yücel, and Yalman's disappointment with the process of constitutionalism, though originating from different reasons, converge in memory. Yücel's father, who had not been a member of the CUP, was demoted from being an inspector to a postal officer after the proclamation and was suspended when he refused the demotion. Although the suspension negatively affected the family's living standards, Yücel continued to support the Unionists. However, he also criticized the Unionists for showing their generation what freedom was and taking back that freedom before everyone could sufficiently enjoy it. Therefore, according to him, the freedom of constitutionalism was not genuine because it could be granted or taken back (Yücel, 1990, pp. 143-151). Aydemir's account is more pessimistic. He narrates that the constitutional period commenced with the slogans of liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice, but in the process first lost fraternity and later equality and justice, thus degrading into the slogan of "either freedom or death" during the Ottoman-Italian War in Tripoli and the Balkan Wars, but then freedom also lost its meaning, and the only thing that remained

was death (Aydemir, 2004, pp. 47-48). Yalman (1970a, p. 77) asserts that the joy of liberty in constitutionalism was damaged by political ambitions. The competition between the CUP and PFA, the unsuccessful armed insurrection of March 31 aiming to overthrow the constitutional regime, and political assassinations ended the hope of freedom in the country. Under these unhopeful circumstances, Yalman decided to go abroad for his graduate education.

The fact that these intellectuals, who were born in different decades and had different experiences, narrate significant fault lines in history such as the proclamation of constitutionalism and the process afterward with similar emotions, interpretations, and sometimes even with similar wording shows that these people belong to the same generation. The joy they felt during the proclamation of constitutionalism, the sorrow they endured during World War I, and the agency they shouldered within the new Republic gathered them together as a generation. To be clear, this convergence in memory and sentiment by no means meant uniformity in life and memoirs. Concerning memoirs, for instance, in Baltacıoğlu's (1998) memories political developments remain in the background. Although he was a member of the parliament in the 1940s, politics was not the main determining factor. Aydemir (2004), too, gives politics and political events a secondary place in his memories, unless they affected society and his life; he rather focuses on his "search of water," which coincided with the demise of an empire, the foundation of a Republic, and building of a nation. On the contrary, Karaosmanoğlu's political memories (1991a) are full of events and the tension of real politics; yet, his novels (1986; 1991b) provide a stage for his sociological observations and analyses.

Mapping a genealogy of a generation based on this heterogeneity in memories is beyond this article's modest area of analysis. Yet, generations open ground for generalizations. This article now proceeds to discuss two common elements – which Zürcher (2010b) has elaborated in his article – that surface in these memoirs and autobiographies: the strangeness towards Anatolia and education as a means to develop and create a homeland from Anatolia.

### **Territory Unknown: A New Motherland**

Zürcher's analysis about birthplaces applies also to our sample of six intellectuals. The birthplaces of six intellectuals – Istanbul (x2), Edirne, Thessaloniki, Bursa, and Manisa (While Karaosmanoğlu was born in Cairo, he was a member of a wealthy family from Manisa and spent his youth between Egypt, Manisa, and Izmir) – were clustered in Western Anatolia and the Balkans and differed from most of Anatolia, which would become the mainland of the republic, geographically and culturally. These six historical figures were born in the Marmara region, Aegean region, and the Balkans, which had weak cultural and economic ties to Anatolia. Considering it as a whole, this was the territory on which the Ottoman State established its economic and cultural relations with European countries; therefore, this region had a consistent socioeconomic and cultural integrity. Thus, the loss of a part of this region, the Balkans, in the Balkan Wars and World War I was both an economic loss for the new Republic and a social trauma for its founders (Zürcher, 2010a). For instance, the loss of the Balkan lands was an agonizing trauma for Aydemir (2004, pp. 53-54), although the city where he was born and raised – Edirne – remained a part of the Turkish territory after a short loss in the First Balkan War.

After the loss of lands in the Balkans and Arab Peninsula in the Balkan Wars and World War I, Anatolia became the mainland of the new Turkish Republic. The generation of the founders of the republic strived to protect, understand, and rebuild Anatolia as the motherland of the new state, even though Anatolia was a strange land to them (Bora and Şen, 2009, pp. 1152-1153). As Aydemir (2004, p. 54) states, high-rank state officials of the period of the early Republic mainly were strangers to Anatolia, which was considered as the new and real base of the Turkish state and people. Moreover, Anatolia could not fulfill the political expectations of this mostly Rumelian generation. While evaluating the *Suyu Arayan Adam*, François Georgeon (2003, p. 36) identifies Aydemir as one of the emigrant intellectuals who took refuge in Anatolia as the new heartland of Turkishness because it was the only homeland that remained in their hands.

As discussed below, this feeling of strangeness towards Anatolia is a common theme in the memoirs and autobiographies that are analyzed in this article. Nevertheless, the founders of the republic, including the six intellectuals analyzed here, strived to transform this strange land into a Turkish homeland. As Zürcher (2010a, p. 120) states, “[t]he feeling that Anatolia was the ‘Turk’s last stand’, the homeland that had to be secured at all cost, underpinned Unionists and, later, Kemalist attempts to homogenize the population of Anatolia and turn it into a land for Turks only.” The tools of demographic homogenization such as deportation and population exchange gave the new Republic a Turkish character. The founders of the Republic considered education as one of the most efficient weapons to provide this new character with a national spirit.

Baltacıoğlu’s first encounter with Anatolia took place during World War I in 1917. He visited Izmir, Ankara, Afyon, and Konya as the secretary of the National Board of Education and Morality (*Milli Talim ve Terbiye Cemiyeti*). He gave lectures and collected ethnographical data. A more consistent and comprehensive acquaintance happened during the War of Independence. Accepting the call from Hamdullah Suphi, Ankara government’s Minister of Education, Baltacıoğlu went to Ankara in 1921; he was assigned the duty of giving lectures in the cities of Nevşehir, Kırşehir, Kayseri, Sivas, Tokat, Amasya, and Samsun on the subjects of Turkishness and Anatolia. This was one of the earliest attempts of the people, who after fighting the War of Independence would establish the Republic, to get to know Anatolia and introduce themselves to Anatolia. Baltacıoğlu discovered Anatolia while he was giving those lectures. He appreciated the architecture in Niğde and Hacıbektaş, likened Tokat’s geographical features to Switzerland, and above all faced Anatolian peasants for the first time. He was very impressed with the fact that they did not comprehend reality through concepts as academics did, but grasped reality through simple experience (Baltacıoğlu, 1998: 240-257). For Baltacıoğlu, Anatolian peasants were the natural teachers of life. This revelation would affect the pedagogical approach of Baltacıoğlu and lead him to adopt the principle of education by practice. This pedagogical approach later would be adopted by the Village Institutes.

Karaosmanoğlu’s (1991b) observations of Anatolia in his novel *Yaban* differ from Baltacıoğlu’s positive experiences. *Yaban*, which was published first in 1932, is based on Karaosmanoğlu’s observations during his work as an official inspector in Anatolia in 1921 (Aki, 1960, p.120). Ahmet Celal, the main character of the novel who was born and raised in Istanbul as the child of a pasha, loses one of his arms in World War I. After

the war, he settles in a village by the Porsuk River, where one of his subordinate soldiers lives. This was Ahmet Celal's first encounter with the Anatolian people. Although the village is occupied by Greek forces, the peasants do not show any opposition to the occupation. Here, Ahmet Celal realizes that these people have not had any concept of homeland beyond their fields. These people, who have been enslaved by bigotry and hearsay, live in a distant era from the intellectuals of the country as if they have been frozen at a point in time. Karaosmanoğlu's observations in *Yaban* are the manifestation of an intellectual's disappointment with Anatolia and its people.

Balkır's memories go parallel with Karaosmanoğlu's observations in terms of the Anatolian people's reaction against foreign occupation. Differently from Karaosmanoğlu's, the events that Balkır narrated did not occur at a place strange to him. During the War of Independence, he was working as a teacher in Bursa where he was born and raised. Balkır (2022, pp. 70-78) narrates that the religious officials in the village where he has taught have got wealthy by supporting the Greek occupants and blamed patriots, who have opposed the occupation and strived to lift the morale of the locals, for irreligiosity. Balkır himself had become a target of the local armed groups supporting the occupation and had to leave the village.

Within the context of meeting Anatolia, Aydemir's memories provide vivid narratives. About his first encounter with Anatolia as a soldier afield in World War I, he writes "Our feet now touched the land. This land was bare and harsh. Yet, this was our land." For Aydemir, who fought as a soldier at the Caucasian front, Eastern Anatolia geographically was very different from Thrace. However, meeting the Anatolian people was much more striking than meeting the Anatolian geography. Soldiers, who perceived Turkishness as an insult, could not name their religion as Islam or know their prophet and this puzzled Aydemir (2004, pp. 102-104).

When he got sentenced as a political prisoner, prison became the second area in which he could get to know the Anatolian people closely. He narrates his observations on Anatolian peasants again very vividly:

Infertile land, seminomadic peasantry, ceaseless jostles and scuffles caused the border lines of fields, pastures, and farms to constantly change. Then, power relations and conflicts of coercion. Dynasties, sheiks, religious orders and, finally, a government and an order of law which functioned with their cogwheels clashing. Above all, unprecedented backwardness and primitiveness. It was obvious that the clay of blood that is called the Turkish nation was pressed, ruined, and changed shapes in a centuries-old disorder that had been called order. The laws of the land were antiquated and inappropriate. The order of family was complicated. Religious law became a toy in the hands of the mullahs in villages acting as paid servants to village headmen and ignorant muftis in towns. Dervish lodges and religious orders already have been corrupted, fallen. The government and the people remained ununited. This society was destitute and in need of a revolution. Not a demolishing one turning everything upside down, but a clearing and organizing revolution... (Aydemir, 2004, p. 392).

Despite their great disappointment with the Anatolian people, both Karaosmanoğlu in his novel and Aydemir in his memoirs assert that not the Anatolian people but intellectuals are to be blamed for this disappointment. Ahmet Celal's disillusionment with Anatolian peasants who guide occupants, run away from soldiers, and serve religious men is agonizing; however, he abstains from blaming peasants and puts responsibility on

intellectuals who have not been able to reach these peasants socially and intellectually (Karaosmanoğlu, 1991b: 110-111). Similarly, Aydemir (2004: 106-108) apologizes to soldiers on the World War I front who have been unaware of their religious and national identities because it is the state that has not provided them with schools and mosques. According to Aydemir, the state was responsible for the agony of the peasants that he encountered in prison. His solution to this socioeconomic agony was a statist revolution which would be unradical (not socialist) but reconstruct the system. In this regard, in the 1930s, Aydemir and Karaosmanoğlu crossed paths with each other in the foundation of the journal of *Kadro*, which proposed a third way of development that was neither socialist nor capitalist (Tekeli and İlkin, 2003). The name of the journal implied that the country needed a *cadre* that would realize this proposed way of development. This was, in fact, a yearning for a new cadre or a new generation of intellectuals that would enlighten Anatolian people and reconstruct Anatolia as a homeland.

What is intriguing in these memories about Anatolia is that all these intellectuals' encounters with Anatolia occurred at the time of World War I or afterward. This was a time when it became clear that the empire would collapse and the new state that would be established after the War of Independence would accept Anatolia as its center. The intellectuals of the late Ottoman Empire witnessed the disintegration of a state and the homogenization of a population; this historical disruption led them to dream and strive for a new homeland – unknown – with a new people – unmet. A number of intellectuals of the early Turkish Republic, such as Baltacıoğlu, turned this strangeness into a new pedagogical understanding. However, some intellectuals, such as Karaosmanoğlu and Aydemir, not only struggled to build a new republic and turn it into a homeland for all but also suffered from a grievous disillusionment with this new homeland and its people. The Anatolian people they had just met were mostly insensitive to foreign occupation; they were indifferent to the outside world that remained distant from their narrow horizons. They were unaware of the fact that Izmir, Diyarbakır, Samsun, and Sivas were not disconnected lands, but parts of the same homeland. Time and place in Anatolia were frozen. In Karaosmanoğlu's (1991b, pp. 172-174) terms, Anatolia seemed and felt like a cemetery for living people, for the ill and the elderly, for deficient people as if they were hammered and amputated by barbarians. For this reason, it was only the land that could be salvaged. The people living on this land had to be remade (Karaömerlioğlu, 2006, p. 158). The question here was how to create a unified nation out of Anatolia's disunited, battered, and ignorant people. The answer that these six intellectuals gave to this question was education. A new nation would be created through education and the main agents in this mission would be intellectuals of the new Republic. In other words, education would be a weapon in the hands of the intellectuals to build a new people and, thus, turn Anatolia from an unknown territory to a beloved homeland.

### **A Familiar Front: The Weapon of Education**

The intellectuals of the early Republic of Turkey proposed education as a cure for both overcoming their strangeness to Anatolia and turning it into a motherland for the new Republic. Yet, education already had been a familiar tool for a number of these intellectuals before they met Anatolia. The founding generation of the republic built their



lives and careers on the Westernized education they received. Therefore, they believed in the power of education for the development and enlightenment of the country and portrayed themselves as the educators of a backward population (Zürcher, 2010b, p. 113). When he was an exile on the island of Malta, Yalman (1970b, p. 20) witnessed the French authorities' tendency to close down modern Westernized schools in the territories they occupied and he deduced from this tendency that education was theoretically the basis of national spirit. Similarly, for Balkır (2022, p. 217), education was the utmost tool to awaken the peasants and develop their socioeconomic statuses. Correspondingly, the fifth part of Balkır's memoirs is titled "In Order to Awaken the Village" with reference to İsmail Hakkı Tonguç (1939).

Aydemir considered education as a social cure as well. In the years that he followed the ideal of Pan-Turanism, Aydemir dreamt of a utopic university city, where intellectuals would learn not only scientific knowledge but also the spirit of the Turan ideal and establish the land of Turan based on this education (Aydemir, 2004, p. 155). The tool of education which was dreamt to be used to establish a Turan homeland could well be used to build an Anatolian one.

In his biography of Hasan Âli Yücel, Tanıl Bora (2021, pp. 238-239) also analyzes the importance of education and culture in the minds of the Republic's founders. In the early years of the Republic, socioeconomic constraints limiting the possibility of economic reforms or welfare policies led the Kemalists to consider culture as the basis of society. In such a context, culture combined with education became the foremost element of accumulation that would create human resources eligible for modernization. Anatolian human capital would be developed and modernized through education. First as a teacher, then as a Minister of Education, Yücel was one of the significant followers and implementers of this vision of education. In this regard, in the First Congress of Turkish Publishing (*Birinci Türk Neşriyat Kongresi*), Yücel asserted that only an intellectual class could enable the Turkish world to experience a Renaissance; such an intellectual class would appear only after all society read, thought, and was educated.

The common attitudes of Yalman, Balkır, Aydemir, and Yücel asserting the importance of education were not isolated. The early government of the Republic adopted education and cultural reform as a policy to unite, modernize, and secularize the Anatolian people. In the early regime of the Republic, People's Houses, which were directly linked to the single-party government, aimed to propagate the modern and secular values of the newly established Republic to the people and to fill the gap between the intellectuals and the people through educating society. People's Houses attempted to create modern public spaces in Anatolian cities by publishing periodicals, organizing conferences, staging theatre plays, and delivering literacy courses (Yeşilkaya, 2002, pp. 114-115). Academic studies on People's Houses, even though they criticize or support this historical experience, emphasize that these houses aimed to educate people to overcome the alienation between the masses and the new Republic (Şimşek, 2002; Toksoy, 2007; and Çeçen, 2018). Ultimately, People's Houses were incapable of bridging the gap between the masses and intellectuals and solving educational problems. One of the reasons for this failure was that they were not designed to train educators. The experience of Village Institutes between 1940 and 1954 struggled to overcome this problem by educating peasant children as

teachers who would educate their fellow villagers. Like People's Houses, institutes were also planned to revive Anatolian villages through education (Ateş, 2021; Karaömerlioğlu, 2006; Kirby, 2000).

The Village Institutes, which came into effect during the ministry of Yücel, aimed to develop the human capital of Turkey through the principle of education by practice. Correspondingly, Yücel describes institutes as "human factories" (Bora, 2021: 335). Balkır also contributed to the Village Institutes' practice as the founding president of the Arifiye Village Institute. His memories also touch upon educational practices and targets before the establishment of the institutes. The courses, which originally aimed to train corporals and sergeants who returned to their villages, were transformed into more institutionalized educational courses. These courses were designed to raise students from villages as teachers to be assigned to their own villages. Balkır was the principal of the training courses that raised village teachers first in Mahmudiye / Eskişehir (for children from Eskişehir, Afyon, and Ankara) and then in Kastamonu (for children from Zonguldak, Sinop, and Kastamonu). In these courses, peasants not only learned to read and write and the basic knowledge of history, math, etc., but also modern agricultural techniques. Teachers who graduated from these courses would build schools in their own villages. Education was the most effective tool to create rural development by educating villagers and utilizing rural resources (Balkır, 2022, pp. 294-365).

Balkır's memories make it clear that educational practices in the early era of the Republic were not restricted to lectures in classes. Educational practices had a significant role in the rebuilding of Anatolia. Balkır's wife delivered tailoring courses for women in Mahmudiye. Teachers and students of the Mahmudiye educational course drained marshes that were infested with mosquitos in order to provide a healthier living environment. Similarly, in Kastamonu, the bricks that would be used to construct the school building were made by teachers themselves; this was celebrated as "a great initiative: an epic brick story" (Balkır, 2022, p. 307). Balkır's experiences from the 1930s would turn into the more institutionalized practice of the Village Institutes in the 1940s.

Balkır's memories as an educator indicate that the founders of the Republic considered education as a significant tool to rebuild Anatolia and turn it into a motherland. Education meant learning not only how to read and write, but also to acquire skills in modern agricultural techniques to use the soil more efficiently, to remove unhealthy environmental conditions that lowered living quality, and to carry out production that civilization necessitated. The area where the Arifiye Village Institute would be established was likened to a cemetery due to the existence of mosquitos and bedbugs; the Arifiye Village Institute had transformed this "cemetery" into an education center by rendering the environment healthy and bringing education to its people (Aydoğan, 2020, p. 45).

The initiative of education that would illuminate Anatolia with a national spirit necessitated the presence of an intellectual class. In his novel *Yaban*, Karaosmanoğlu narrates how Anatolia turned into a land of darkness, barrenness, and despair in the absence of such a class. In another of his novels depicting a utopia, called *Ankara* (Karaosmanoğlu, 1986), he recounts how Anatolia has been transformed in the presence of an intellectual class after the foundation of the Republic. In the first part of the novel, during the War of Independence, Selma and her husband Nazif has moved from Istanbul to Ankara;

however, life in Ankara is hard as compared to the vivid life in Istanbul. Meanwhile, Selma meets Major Hakkı, who has been fighting in the War of Independence. Hakkı symbolizes the national will that carried out the national struggle and Selma's affair with Hakkı is an indication of her union with this national spirit. The second part of the novel is a stage for the relationship of Selma and Hakkı in the first years of the Republic. After the war, Hakkı puts on civilian clothes and the war hero degenerates into a self-seeking bureaucrat. The third part of the novel portrays Ankara of the 1930s and focuses on the marriage of Selma and Neşet Sabit. Neşet Sabit is an ideal prototype of the generation of intellectuals, whose lack has been desperately felt in *Yaban*. Anatolia has been developed by statist reforms and construction operations. The whole of Anatolia has been connected via iron nets of railways. The whole of Anatolia has been developed by implementing particular development plans for different regions. The central Anatolian economy is based on animal husbandry and artisanship, whereas Western Anatolian villages have reached the level of the European ones. Peasants no longer burn turds to get warm, have thrown away the fezes on their heads, and become modernized in human affairs as a consequence of this material and cultural transformation. Ankara has been transformed from a barren town with no electricity and running water to a modernized city abounding with musical, cultural, and sportive activities. Selma is no longer a stranger to Ankara, which symbolizes Anatolia, but a proud and hardworking member of this city, country, and nation. *Ankara* is a utopia of a new Anatolia transformed and modernized through education. (Karaosmanoğlu, 1986).

Karaosmanoğlu wrote *Ankara*, two years after *Yaban*. *Ankara* is an assertion that it was the existence of intellectuals like Neşet Sabit that led to the transformation of Anatolia from its dark and stagnant state in *Yaban* to its modern and civilized form in *Ankara*. Education was the most efficient way for the realization of this fictional transformation and the intellectuals that are analyzed in this article had the necessary means. Yücel was the Minister of Education, Balkır was the principal of the Arifiye Village Institute, Karaosmanoğlu was one of the most famous writers of Turkish literature in the early period of the Republic, and Baltacıoğlu was an academic. The reconstruction of Anatolia through education and their active agency was the most efficient way to develop a familiarity with Anatolia as well. Education was necessary not only for the development of Anatolia but also for the overcoming of the strangeness of Anatolia.

### Conclusion

This article aimed to scrutinize the memories of six intellectuals who played important roles in the cultural life of the early history of the Republic. While analyzing their memories, the term generation was employed as a conceptual framework. Generation is a biological concept linked to the time of birth; however, this article used this concept in a broader sense. Concerning Mannheim, it is asserted that actual participation in the shared experience of socio-political change is an important criterion for being a member of a generation. Historical moments of socioeconomic or political transformation, accompanied by shared experiences, feelings, ideas, future projections, or traumas, provide an appropriate ground for the emergence of a generation. In this regard, the founding members of the Turkish Republic who were born between the 1880s and 1900s

formed a generation. These people experienced a revolution that transformed the empire from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy, endured wars that lasted for approximately a decade and witnessed the fall of the Ottoman Empire as a result of these wars and the birth of the Turkish Republic. They not only witnessed great demographic and geographical changes but also actively participated in the building of a new state.

The memories and autobiographies of Aydemir, Balkır, Baltacıoğlu, Karaosmanoğlu, Yalman and Yücel indicate some ruptures and continuities. While Aydemir's *Suyu Arayan Adam* excellently reflects the political quests of his generation, Baltacıoğlu's autobiography limitedly dealt with the political developments of the period. Whereas Yalman's memories cover nearly all of his life, Yücel's memories are limited to his childhood and youth. Despite these dissimilarities, two important themes come to the forefront within these memories: these intellectuals' strangeness to Anatolia and the role of education in socio-cultural development.

In parallel with Zürcher's above-mentioned analysis of the geographical origin of the Young Turks and the founding generation of the new republic, these six intellectuals, who were born and grew up in the western part of the empire, were not familiar with Anatolia. Meeting with Anatolia in the second half of the 1910s (during or after World War I) is one of the common themes in all of the memories. Furthermore, this strange geography would be the homeland of the new republic. These intellectuals strived to overcome both their alienation from Anatolia and the socio-economic backwardness of this geography. Due to their cultural capital, these intellectuals underlined the role of education as a cure for the socioeconomic backwardness of Anatolia. Their memories imply that the enlightenment of Anatolia via education was important not only for Anatolia's development but also for the overcoming of their strangeness to this geography. Developing Anatolia socioeconomically, reconstructing it as a modernized and secularized country, and turning it into a motherland for all: the mission shouldered by the founders of the Republic was hard and the solution they came up with was cultural revolution through education.

#### Endnotes:

- 1 "Ayaklarımız artık toprağa basıyordu. Bu toprak çıplak ve haşındı. Fakat ne yapalım ki bizim toprağımızı buydu," translation ours.
- 2 "Kısır toprak, yarı göçebe bir köylülük, birbirleriyle hiç durmadan itişen, kakaşan ve böylelikle de sınır çizgileri her gün değişen tarlalar, meralar, çiftlikler üzerindeki kavgalar. Sonra nüfuz ve zorbalık çekişmeleri. Hanedanlar, şeyhler, tarikatlar ve nihayet, çarkları birbirine çarparak işleyen bir hükümet ve kanun düzeni. Hepsinin üstünde de, hepsine damgasını vuran görülmemiş bir gerilik ve iptidailik. Görülüyordu ki, adına Türk milleti denilen soy hamur; yüzyıllardan sürüp gelen ve adına düzen denilen bir düzensizlik içinde eziliyor, bozuluyor; şekilden şekle giriyordu. Toprak kanunları eskimişti ve uygunsuzdu. Aile nizamı karıştı. Şeriat köyde köy ağasının ücretli uşağı olan molların, kasabada cahil müftünün oyuncağı haline gelmişti. Tekkeler, tarikatlar zaten tefessüh etmiş, bitmişti. Hükümetle halk henüz kaynaşmamıştı. Bu cemiyet, bir inkılabı muhtaçtı. Yıkan ve altüst eden değil, fakat temizleyen ve düzenleyen bir inkılabı," translation ours.

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