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Bergson and Politics: Ottoman-Turkish Encounters with Innovation

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Bergson and Politics: Ottoman-Turkish Encounters with Innovation

~ NAZIM İREM ~

ABSTRACT *This article seeks to explain how Bergson's philosophy was translated into a genuine political position in the Ottoman-Turkish context. I first overview the impact of Bergson's philosophy on continental politics at the beginning of the twentieth century; I then try to explain how Bergson's philosophical claims acquired definite political connotations; and lastly, I aim to display how political Bergsonism became a border language between republican radicals and conservatives in Turkey in the 1920s. I argue that, at the crossroads of all currents of European modernity, political Bergsonism heralded the birth of a new vision of conservative modernity that molded the underlying values and principles of the transformation of Turkey into a modern society.*

THE TRANSFORMATION OF BERGSONISM INTO A POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

In his thought-provoking book, *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (1993), Mark Antiff describes how Bergson's philosophy gained popularity in France at the turn of the century. He explains how Bergson's theories of intuition and *élan vital* influenced not only the artistic and philosophical currents of the time but also the political notion of the individual, the collective consciousness of a class or race, and the esprit of the nation itself. Movements such as Futurism, Cubism, and Fauvism were much influenced by a Bergsonian understanding of modernism. Antiff argues that the anarcho-individualism of Gino Severini and anarcho-syndicalism of other Futurists or Puteaux Cubists, who embraced a leftist discourse of celtic nationalism, had their roots in Bergson's philosophy. Different artistic and political groups, whether on the right (e.g., royalists/nationalists in France) or on the left (e.g. George Sorel's anarcho-syndicalism) all utilized Bergsonian themes—especially its organicism.¹ Political Bergsonism, he argues, became the arena of conflicting ideals of leftists, reactionaries, and conservatives. Antiff also charts the postwar legacy of Bergson's actionist-intuitionist philosophy in



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fascist ideologies in France and Italy and its role in the transformation of an anti-capitalist critique into a politics of reaction.²

At the core of Bergson's political philosophy lies its anti-scientism, which, by the turn of the century, had stimulated the critique of Enlightenment-based liberal progressivism. It was this attack on scientism that helped to shape the agenda of nationalist and conservative politics, especially so after the devastation caused by World War I, which signaled the end of the liberal promise of progress. Thus Bergson's philosophy played a central role in the intellectual revolt against any kind of universalism, Spencerian liberalism, or Enlightenment rationalism, and captivated the European public in the early decades of the twentieth century. Bergson, however, unlike Sorel, Mosca, Heidegger and other modernists, did not turn his criticism into a faith in fascism as a means of transcending the promise of freedom of liberal modernity.³ Yet, his criticism of mechanism and determinism was utilized by fascists and conservatives of the day to argue that Western technology, values, and political institutions were outmoded. His anti-intellectualism, anti-scientism, and critique of rationalism therefore captured the attention of fascists, voluntarist-leftists, and conservatives. Still, his faith in the possibility of creating a new philosophy of freedom was seen, especially by American pragmatists like William James, as the last resort for remedying Western decadence. Though his philosophy was partly inspired by anti-liberal and elitist currents of the time, Bergson himself remained a democrat and liberal of the classic type, à la Smith or Spencer.

Bergson's anti-scientism, blended with Romanticism, was the source of a new aestheticism that was based on a new conception of the human being as an intuitively creative free agent. In his new aesthetic vision human beings could regain the freedom denied to them in a determinist-mechanical universe. One of the reasons for Bergson's strong impact on European culture was precisely his new aesthetic conception of humanity, which proposed artistic creation as the model for all human activity—including politics. Thus the catchwords of his philosophy—*individuality*, *originality*, *creativity*, and *authenticity*, all of which conveyed a basic trust in human creation, will and freedom—heralded a new philosophico-political outlook that renounced all forms of materialism, positivism, relativism, and determinism.

Bergson's emphasis on intuition as a non-scientific path to knowledge was an attempt to save philosophy from subordinating itself to a purely rationalistic, positivistic science. Since the major limitation of empirical science was that it denied that truth could be reached intuitively, the revival of philosophy as an alternative way of attaining knowledge would guarantee creativity, invention, and renovation.⁴ Bergson's anti-intellectualism was thus largely based on his romantic and aesthetic vision of philosophy. To him, the main task of philosophy was to capture the endless flux and growth of reality. But because the artist, in the process of artistic creation, was fully engaged with reality, the creative artist became for Bergson the action-model that was most relevant and applicable to politics, morality, and religion.⁵

To defend human creativity and freedom Bergson thus rejected all mechanical-deterministic theories of change, including Darwin's and Spencer's evolutionary theories, all of which subordinated human creativity and freedom to the laws of nature. Teleological views of change, time, and history were all but dismissed on the same grounds—for setting artificial aims for humans and nature by ignoring creative acts of will. Similarly, the rationalistic bias of deterministic theories of change was challenged for

not taking into consideration the creative potentiality of nature. In *Creative Evolution* (1907), Bergson extends his theory of duration, as developed in his philosophy of mind in *Time and Free Will* and *Matter and Memory*, by generalizing it into a cosmology of biological evolution. Tackling the concepts of evolution, Bergson shows how both mechanistic (Neo-Darwinian) and finalist (Neo-Lamarckian) theories fail to account for the diverse creativity of nature.⁶ The related theme of the subordination of individual creativity to the social organism found expression in political Bergsonism as the rejection of all forms of vulgar organicism, including solidarism in politics, Marxist historical determinism, and liberal cosmopolitanism's unilinear view of evolution.

What made Bergsonism a highly popular philosophico-political theory was its emphasis on human creativity and freedom. In fact, Bergsonism was seen as a new philosophy of freedom, which, by totally rejecting the mechanical laws of nature and history, privileged the creative acts of human beings. According to Bergson, the result of applying the laws of causality to history was a denial of human freedom, which is why he dismissed the deterministic idea that the future was the product of the past. For him, what truly characterizes change is originality and indeterminism, suggesting that his views of history were an extension of his original philosophy of time. History was the experience of real time, so any form of determinism could therefore be seen as the arbitrary application of retrospective logic to the free movement of life. Thus the central terms of Bergson's philosophy of history—*indeterminism*, *creativity*, and *freedom*, which carried political connotations—challenged both Marxism and all forms of liberalism. Similarly, he attacked all strict teleological and fatalistic theories of human nature. Finally, Bergson's mystical notion of creative evolution—elevating human beings to the status of creators who are responsible for their actions—inspired a modern spiritualist challenge to religious orthodoxies.

The politicization of Bergsonian philosophy in France and later on in other European countries, as well as in Ottoman-Turkey in the 1920s, was the result of its reaction to the then dominant theory of Comtean positivism. Contrary to this scientific theory, Bergson's ideas seemed like a new creed of freedom, one of the aims of which was to restore trust in politics through a particular conception of heroism and creative politics. Bergsonian heroism privileged the creative actions of great statesmen and heralded the possibility of developing a more open type of society. Although political Bergsonism also appealed to anti-liberal and undemocratic movements in Europe, it at the same time revived faith in democratic and liberal ideals, as became apparent in the case of Ottoman-Turkey in the 1920s.

POLITICAL BERGSONISM AND TURKISH CONSERVATIVE MODERNISM

Bergson's impact on republican politics in Turkey reached its apex in the 1920s, during and after its War of Independence. Leading Bergsonians—the philosopher Mustafa Şekip Tunç, the first to introduce Bergsonism to the Turkish public, the leading nationalist-Turkish politician Ahmet Ağaoğlu, the well-known man of letters Peyami Safa, and the educationist İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, first rector of Dar'ül Fünun (Ottoman University) during the Republican period—were all committed to the nationalist ideals of the War of Independence fought against the Allied Forces (of WWI) that occupied the Ottoman

Empire which took side of the Central Powers. The response of these public figures to the daily events that unfolded during the War of Independence between 1919 and 1922 strongly politicized their Bergsonian views. Thus Bergsonism entered Turkish intellectual life as a liberation philosophy heralding the victory of the creative nationalist forces against the mechanical civilization of the West, represented by the occupying forces. Interestingly, Bergson had himself used the very same argument during WWI to convince the American public that Germany represented a mechanical force pitted against the creative forces of Europe.

In 1923, with the establishment of the Republic, Turkish politics entered a new phase. In 1929, within a single decade, the ruling Republican intelligentsia had completed its radical Westernization program under the tutelage of the newly established nation-state, based on the positivist foundational ideology known as “Kemalism.” In the newly created state, science became a new means for tackling economic and social backwardness and ultimately for modernizing the traditional Ottoman-Islamic society. The revolutionary rationale of Turkey in the 1920s and early 1930s thus represented a deliberate interference in the process of social change under the guise of scientism, where “creative spontaneity” seemed to be sacrificed for the “rational organization” of society in accordance with the requirements of civilizing modernism as defined by the ruling modernizing elites.

The aim of the hard-core Republican positivist ideology of the modernizers was to refashion the existing social, political and economic order inherited from the Ottoman regime in accordance with the requirements of reason and science, for the revolutionary cadres saw religious institutions as the cause of societal irrationality responsible for Turkish backwardness. For them the traditions, beliefs, and daily practices of Ottoman-Islamic society, the source of a religion-inspired world-view, had to be crushed by the new agents of modernism, nationalism, and scientism. Indeed, by the replacement of the Ottoman-Arabic script with the Latin alphabet in 1928, five years after the establishment of the Republic, the Turkish Revolution began to transform itself into a cultural revolution. New cultural and scientific institutions were established to substantiate Republican cultural nationalism. The new science, sociology, was treated as the “queen of the sciences,” and its methods were exploited to provide scientific evidence for the existence of the nation, the inevitability of modernization, and the irrevocable passing of traditional society. Thus what made scientism the orthodoxy of the day was the politicization of positivism as the grammar of cultural change that set down the principles of the good life and of a just and legitimate government.

During the revolutionary period, from 1923 to 1931, social, economic and political reforms all aimed to westernize and modernize the Turkish society, were launched, creating a fundamental political cleavage among the defenders of the Republic of all kinds—including hard-line positivist modernists, Marxists and Socialists, liberals—and Ottoman-Islamic traditionalists. Yet, the new life-metaphysics, which originated at the cultural institutions of the Republic and disseminated through the intellectual/political activities of its protagonists, was ironically influenced much from Bergsonism and French spiritualism. By introducing philosophy, as mode of experiencing and thinking about the sacred, and as a new language for expressing the states of religiosity, the new Bergsonian republican life- metaphysics paved the way for the development of modernist forms of

Islamism against the traditional formalist Islamic *Kelam* schools that molded the Ottoman-Islamic religious orthodoxy.

The secular elites, while challenging the religious status quo, felt the need to defend and conserve Turkey's political and cultural achievements. It is here that political Bergsonism and the new Bergsonian life-metaphysics played a role in that it provided the philosophical rationale for formulating a republican conservative stand. In their attempt to formulate a new philosophy of life for the Republic some moderate republicans, liberal in their cultural outlook, yet republican in their political orientation, drew on Bergson's criticism of modernism and began to turn their attention to non-positivistic movements such as French spiritualism (Boutroux and Ravaisson), German Romanticism and historicism, and American pragmatism (William James and John Dewey). In their effort to create an alternative vocabulary they began adopting Bergsonian terms such as *life*, *duration*, *intuition*, *multiplicity*, *élan vital*, *open/closed morality*, *dynamic/static religion*, and *creative evolution*.⁷

In the 1920s Turkey thus experienced the same cleavage that had occurred in France in the 1890s between Bergsonians and Durkheimian positivists. As the crossroads of spiritualism, metaphysical realism, and romantic-culturalism, Bergsonism provided a vivid and critical alternative to positivist republican modernism. Bergsonian republicans therefore challenged both positivist radicalism and formalist religious orthodoxy. Bergsonism thus offered Turkey's secular elites a new orientation that justified the spontaneity of change and preservation, the necessity of religiosity as a form of spirituality, the spontaneous creation of the new from the old, the futility of social engineering, and the need for a strong charismatic leadership. It challenged the scientific rationalist spirit of the Revolution. Bergsonian groups, unlike the religious reactionaries, did not resist Republican political and cultural reforms but rather justified the revolutionary movement by articulating its principles and ideals with political Bergsonism. It was thus the Bergsonian-inspired affiliation to Kemalism that ushered in a new political style by the end of the 1920s.

With its emphasis on the spontaneous creation of life forces and the need for metaphysics and religiosity as a higher state of intuitive knowledge, political Bergsonism also appealed to social conservatives who sought to preserve religion as a form of spirituality. Turkish nationalists, on the other hand, were mainly attracted by three aspects of Bergsonism: firstly, its emphasis on action, time, and culture "as socialised time always actualised in experienced duration... in motion, in a state of change, yet grounded in experienced time and driven by *élan vital*"; secondly, its pragmatism, taking the form of anti-intellectualism, which, "in place of abstraction posited concrete life as it was lived"; and thirdly, Bergsonian actionism that criticized all-encompassing ideologies and philosophical systems. Indeed, Bergson's criticism of European modernity made him the hero of the day in standing up against Marxism and, to some degree, against classical individualism and classical liberalism. It was thus that the Bergsonian arguments about freedom and duration as the manifestation of "creativity whereby a new and unpredictable entity appears at each and every moment... and duration as history, experience and anticipation... past, present and future"⁸ were posed against the superficiality of the artificial—the chronological time of scientific rationalism. The philosophy of time and freedom thus transformed Bergsonism into a border language between radicals, who were trying to free themselves from the burdens of the past, and

nouveaux republican conservatives, who were trying to extend the past into the present as a form of historical experience.

For radicals and moderate republicans political Bergsonism, the hybrid language that blended spiritualism and romanticism, therefore marked the birth of a new philosophico-political consciousness of conservative modernism that embraced the achievements of modernity but remained critical of its rationalist-based ethos.⁹ This consciousness was gradually shaped by the collective actions of the loosely grouped Turkish intellectuals who participated in the cultural and political life of the new Republic through various discussion platforms, teaching and research activities, and through their dominant position in the publishing industry. It was through these intellectuals—among them the founders of the *Turkish Philosophy and Sociology Association* in the late 1920s (revived in the late 1930s as the *Turkish Philosophy Association*) along with those who published the journals *Kültür Haftası*, *Yeni Adam* and *İnsan* in the 1930s and 1940s—that Bergson’s ideas were disseminated across Turkey’s intellectual circles as an alternative to the dominant positivist social theory of Kemalism.

Positioned within the ranks of the secular intelligentsia, these conservatives proposed an alternative Kemalist modernism, trying to project its future course and to assess its impact on society. Bergsonism was adopted to support the non-teleological change-oriented politics of the time by virtue of its emphasis on creative evolution, spontaneity, and authenticity. Omnipresent rationalist revolutionism was rejected because it prioritized theory over action and determinism over freedom. These republican-secular groups rejected progress under the banner of science and technology but nevertheless embraced the achievements of modernism, thereby transforming Bergsonian romanticism into a culture-oriented politico-philosophy that privileged existence in and through time and accepted tradition as the manifestation of the collective experience of the nation. Thus tradition, conceived as social memory, was posed against all forms of evolutionary radicalism that neglected the authenticity of spontaneous cultural creation. The result of these developments was to put the Bergsonian critique of evolution into the service of cultural nationalism to counter liberal and left-wing cosmopolitanisms.

The republican conservatives’ version of political Bergsonism aimed, in effect, to safeguard Turkey’s cultural heritage at a time of accelerating westernization. It challenged the dominant trend of imitating the West in the name of progress, by posing the question “Which West?”. On the one hand, there was the Anglo-American West, shaped by Enlightenment rationalism that had evolved into Europe’s technical and cultural modernism. Yet, there was, on the other hand, another trend, a Western undercurrent that was shaped by romanticism, spiritualism and Bergsonism, and its alternative vision, namely conservative modernity, which sought to remedy the Western decadence caused by unchecked rationalism.

So what the republican conservatives found in Bergson’s philosophy was ultimately a guide for participating in the creation of the Turkish nation. Thus, for example, at the Ninth Philosophy Congress of 1937 (also known as “Descartes Congress”) Mustafa Şekip Tunç, a leading Bergsonian, concluded his talk on the influence of Descartes’s rationalism on continental philosophy and politics, by pointing out its shortcomings and announcing that “today, modern Turkey is molding itself on the path described by Mr. Bergson.”¹⁰ Republican conservatives had thus successfully transformed Bergsonism into a political force with a potential to mold the Turkish transformation according to the precepts of the

Western undercurrent that was opposed to rationalist politics, elitist vanguardist politics, and the more extreme varieties of totalitarianism.

The republican conservatives advocated an actionist, romantic, personalist, and moralistic stand in politics, the aim of which was to historicize the rootless Kemalist vision by rearticulating it in terms of a philosophy of time. The Bergsonian understanding of time as experience was used to re-traditionalize Kemalist modernism and to redirect Islam, seen as a form of religious cosmopolitanism, on the path of national development. In the 1930s, the public debate between the Marxist-inspired writers of the influential journal *Kadro* [The Cadre] (1932–35) and Bergson-inspired conservative Kemalists indicated that the claims of the republican conservatives had acquired political force not only as an alternative conception of conservative modernism but as a new form of political rhetoric—anti-positivist, anti-materialist, and anti-Pan-Islamist. Diverse critics of positivism were thus united around political Bergsonism,¹¹ the new ideology that could foster national regeneration by raising awareness of the evils of rationalist modernism.

Creativity, élan, vitality, and the Bergsonian conception of tension were used, in varying degrees, to explain the underlying causes of the dynamism of modern society, while affirming the possibility of establishing a genuinely free society. Ultimately, Bergsonian conservatives were trying to replace positivist evolutionism with an alternative creative evolutionism. Their new life metaphysics, contrary to positivist Kemalism, rejected science as the only means of directing change or of explaining all spheres of human life.

The Kemalist idea of a “transcendentalist state,” as delineated by Metin Heper in *State Tradition in Turkey* (1985), consolidated the peculiar power relations between the Kemalist state and society, privileging the state before society and society before the individual.¹² These power relations paved the way for the collectivist tendencies that fostered populism and solidarism, as formulated in the 1910s by Ziya Gökalp, a leading ideologue of the Ottoman Party for Union and Progress. Both Peyami Safa and Mustafa Şekip Tunç drew on Bergson in their criticism of the Unionists’ and Kemalists’ vulgar organicism that promoted society before the individual, and the latter’s duties to the collectivity before his/her freedom. Bergsonian conservatives, in contrast, promoted personalism, which seemed a more balanced approach, a middle-way between solidarism and individualistic liberalism. Thus, for example, the Bergsonian distinction between the inner and outer self was used by conservative social critics to safeguard individual freedom by making the inner self intact. Though the outer self could be shaped by society or state, the inner self was the indeterminant realm of freedom. On this ground, republican conservatives tried to demonstrate the futility of any top-down social engineering policy that aimed to mold the individual according to a preordained cultural model imposed by the state and argued that all top-down attempts for creating modern man were destined to become philosophies of oppression, because of their denial of the idea of the indeterminacy of the inner self. Even though, inspired by Bergson, the republican conservatives presented a comprehensive challenge to the moral assumptions of utilitarian-rationalism, Kemalists and Marxists, still, accused them for being the “shy liberals” of the new Turkey, because of their personalist understanding of individual.

At a time of rapid social, political, and economic change, everything that had once been accepted as right and just was now being questioned. Social reforms were

particularly dreaded by the Bergsonian conservatives who proposed their own form of traditionalism based on the historical and cultural foundations of society. They saw society as a dynamic, creative tension-ridden whole that follows a spontaneous and unique path of development. Against the state-centered view of the dominant groups, their social theory defended a society-centered approach to change.

These intellectuals proclaimed their revolutionary faith in transcending the dualisms that had surfaced in Turkey since the beginning of westernization in the early nineteenth century. They believed that the experience of conflicting identities (old vs. new; Eastern vs. Western) could be replaced by authentic national forms, which is why they paid particular attention to the social ills they identified in modern society. By turning to traditional identity, as in Safa's literary criticism of mimetic modernism, they sought to uncover the causes of social alienation. They wanted people to become aware of the destructive and erosive effects the Kemalist overconfidence in reason had on the traditional conduct of daily life. They saw the Kemalist model of civilizing politics as an example of forced-modernism, the utopia of an alienated intelligentsia that was imposed on society by the use of state power. Similarly, they argued that the Kemalists' search for order solely in the political sphere threatened to deepen the alienation between the people and the state.

What the conservatives basically objected to was the conception of the state as an instrument of rational control over society, though they deemed the new nation-state to be an institution of momentous importance. Baltacıoğlu's action-oriented educational philosophy, Tunç's critique of positivist progressivism, and Safa's criticism of rationalism, were all intended to show that the threat to the revolutionary movement arose from its attempt to realize the ideals of civilizing modernism by going beyond the phenomenal world. This project, they warned, would lead to the creation of an omnipotent state aiming to mold the indeterminate realm of culture and history. Although they realized that the nation-state was the new locus of worldly power, they believed that the legitimacy of a political regime did not stem from the rational basis of political institutions but from the vital forces of society that had crystallized its beliefs and customs. In their political vocabulary, *nationalization* meant the localization of the institutional structures of modernity. This demanded a new approach—which Bergsonism could provide—to understanding the dynamics of collective life as revealed through the social order of the nation. Thus, inspired by Bergson's philosophy of change, these republican conservatives did not totally oppose the arguments for social reforms. What they proposed was a bottom-up model of change that could mobilize collective creative processes, but did not impose ready-made formulas on them.¹³ This approach to social change also explains their support of the nationalist-culturalist politics of the time.

Bergson's philosophy of time was also adopted to counter the reactionary religious politics of Islamism and future-oriented utopianism of Kemalist revolutionism. Indeed, in the early Kemalist era, political and intellectual groupings presented themselves either as the defenders of the past, the Ottoman-Islamic past in the case of reactionary Islamism, or as the owners of the future, like the Kemalist radicals. Both movements saw the present as a transient, turbulent stage. Islamism viewed it as a deviation from the practices, values, and norms of the Golden Age of the Prophet, while Kemalists tended to see it as a moment of transcendence in the revolutionary process of modernization. For Bergsonian conservatives, however, the present was the moment of real creativity, an indeterminate

extension of the past: the historical moment that held great promise for the future. For them the aim of politics was therefore pragmatic—not to design the future or to revive the past, but to govern the present.

Bergsonian conservatives' sensibility to cultural questions stemmed from their ambition to transform forced-modernism into a spontaneous creative force. Bergson's concepts of tension, conflict, creativity, and spontaneity were assimilated into their peculiar republican conservative conception of society and politics. Their studies in literature, sociology, and philosophy, showed the discrepancy between the image of society in the grand narratives of Westernization, Islamism, and/or Kemalism, and the actual reality. Safa's conservative Bergsonian literature, to borrow the phrase from Michel Foucault, was an archeology of the present, a search for the layers of the past intertwined with the present.¹⁴ More precisely, conservative literature aimed to show how the present could be constructed as the extension of different pasts. The multiplicity of experience in the present could explain the multiple images of the past. These tension-ridden cultural forces manifested themselves as a clash between different forms of social existences. Inspired by Bergson, the republican conservatives created an original ideology based on the synthesis of past and present, old and new, East and West, Turkish and Islamic.

Political Bergsonism therefore offered a middle way—between reactionism and radicalism. Its adherents were neither fully subordinated to the new state nor did they initiate a reaction against the Kemalist Revolution. Instead, through their projects and activities, they became the “moral and cultural innovators” of the nation, the formulators of a new cultural synthesis. They were responsive to symptoms of moral, social, and political decadence on the one hand, but had full trust in the future possibilities of Turkey as a unique synthesis of Western civilization and national culture, on the other.

For the republican conservatives, political ideologies could not be treated as universally valid sets of principles and procedures. Ideologies were the product of specific cultural systems and were designed to meet the needs of the society in which they were born. They were therefore not necessarily relevant to other times or other places. An imitative political approach that aimed at imposing a rationalist ideology with a claim to universal validity would therefore provoke excessive utopian radicalism or a reactionary clinging to tradition.

In conclusion, the mimetic model of modernism provoked different reactions in societies that adopted Western practices in a top-down manner. In the case of Ottoman-Turkey, it provoked a religious reaction, which led to the attempt to revive the Great Islamic Tradition as an end and value in itself. It also resulted in an upsurge of imitative westernization project(s) which became an asset only for the alienated intellectuals. Bergsonian conservatives, in contrast to these, sought the middle way not only between progressives and reactionaries, but also between socialism and liberalism.

For the republican conservatives the Turkish Revolution was a historic opportunity for putting Bergsonism-inspired conservative modernism into practice, and as such they symbolized the third alternative for modernizing societies. As noted by Safa, Kemalism did not emerge from “the book” but from the necessities of life; neither did it develop in accordance with the precepts of a preconceived utopian social model.¹⁵ Political Bergsonism thus provided a ready-made corpus for adopting a critical modernist stand. With the transition to multiparty politics in the mid-1940s, the central claims of republican conservatism gained wider acceptance as a new policy framework for the

opposition, which finally assumed power in the 1950 elections and continued to rule until 1960 when it was ousted by the military.

NOTES

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9. See Nazım İrem, "Turkish Conservative Modernism: The Birth of a Nationalist Quest for Cultural Renewal," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34 (2002): 87–112.
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11. Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Türkiye'de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi* [History of modern thought in Turkey], 3rd ed. (İstanbul: Ülken Yayınları, 1992), 375–82.
12. See Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Walkington, UK: The Eothen Press, 1985).
13. İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, *Demokrasi ve Sanat* [Democracy and art] (İstanbul: Sanayi-i Nefise Basımevi, 1931), 33.
14. See David Couzens Hoy, ed., *Foucault: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 27–41.
15. Peyami Safa, *Türk Devrimine Bakışlar* [Views on the Turkish revolution] (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat A.Ş., 1938; rpt., 1990), 107–11; 193–97.