

Between 1939 and 1941 An Evaluation on C.H.P. Conference Series and Social Darwinism Within the Framework of Efforts to Transform Society

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Abstract

This study attempts to analyze the “C.H.P. Conferences Series” organized by the leading academics of the period across the country at a time when the codes of the Republic of Turkey were being rewritten from the perspective of Social Darwinism, one of the dominant paradigms of the period. The study focuses primarily on the intellectual currents that shaped the C.H.P. Conferences. Social Darwinism, which became a dominant paradigm in the West in the period between the two world wars, left its mark on the relevant period, although it was applied in different ways in various countries. In Hitler’s Germany, in particular, it became state policy and the whole of society was sought to be shaped by this idea. In Germany and other countries, science was used as a legitimizing basis. Eugenics, the most popular concept of Social Darwinism, sterilized people, banned interracial marriages and reduced and defined human biology. In Turkey, the newly established regime and its elites turned towards the West, saw it as a target and tried to build their society accordingly. This situation was idealized as “contemporary civilization”. In the three-year period between 1939 and 1941, a group of leading academics of the period launched a mobilization under the name “C.H.P. Conferences Series” in order to accustom society to their ideas and ideals. In these conferences, it can be seen that an attempt was made to explain all aspects of social life to the participants within the framework of the evolutionary paradigm, the scientific language of the time, and its main extension, Social Darwinism. In this study, after first presenting the various reflections of the relevant paradigm in the West, the works that were later published in twenty-four fascicles were subjected to a qualitative analysis within the concepts of social Darwinism and the relationship between them was tried to be revealed. In this way, the direction of social change in the Single Party Period is attempted to be understood.

Keywords

Political History; Single Party; Evolution; Social Darwinism; C.H.P. Conference Series; Eugenics

Highlights

- Social Darwinism, one of the dominant approaches in the West between the two world wars, C.H.P. Trying to understand its impact on the Lecture Series.
- C.H.P. The Conference Series is a large organization using Community Centers, attended by the majority of the leading scientists and thinkers of the period.
- C.H.P. In order to understand the approaches of the speakers in the Conference Series, an attempt was made to understand them within the conceptual world of Social Darwinism, which was dominant in the West in the same period.
- Many social Darwinist arguments are based on C.H.P. It was openly defended by the thinkers and scientists in the Conference Series and was described to the society as a “new life”.

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1939 ile 1941 Yılları Arasında Toplumu Dönüştürme Çabaları Çerçevesinde C.H.P. Konferanslar Serisi ve Sosyal Darwinizm Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme

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Öz

Bu çalışma, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kodlarının yeniden yazıldığı bir dönemde, dönemin önde gelen akademisyenleri tarafından ülkenin dört bir yanında düzenlenen "C.H.P. Konferanslar Serisi"ni, dönemin hâkim paradigmalarından biri olan sosyal Darwinizm perspektifinden incelemeye çalışmaktadır. Çalışma öncelikle C.H.P. Konferanslarını şekillendiren entelektüel akımlara odaklanmaktadır. İki dünya savaşı arasındaki dönemde Batı'da egemen bir paradigma haline gelen Sosyal Darwinizm, çeşitli ülkelerde farklı şekillerde uygulanmış olsa da ilgili döneme damgasını vurduğu görülmektedir. Özellikle Hitler dönemi Almanya'sında devlet politikasına dönüştürülmüş ve tüm toplum bu düşünce üzerinden şekillendirilmeye çalışılmıştır. Almanya ve diğer ülke uygulamalarında meşrulaştırıcı dayanak olarak bilim kullanılmıştır. Sosyal Darwinizm'in en popüler kavramı olan öjeni ile insanlar kısırlaştırılmış, ırklar arası evlilikler yasaklanmış ve insan, biyolojisine indirgenerek tanımlanmıştır. Türkiye'de yeni kurulan rejim ve onun elitleri Batı'ya yönelmiş, onu hedef ve ideal olarak görmüş ve kendi toplumunu bu doğrultuda inşa etmeye çalışmıştır. Bu durum "muasır medeniyet" olarak idealize edilmiştir. Dönemin önde gelen bir grup akademisyeni, toplumu kendi düşünce ve idealleri doğrultusunda inşa etmek amacıyla 1939-1941 yılları arasındaki üç yıllık dönemde "C.H.P. Konferanslar Serisi" adı altında bir seferberlik başlatmıştır. Bu konferanslarda toplumsal yaşamın tüm dallarının dönemin bilimsel dili olan evrimci paradigma ve onun en önemli uzantısı olan sosyal Darwinizm çerçevesinde katılımcılara anlatılmaya çalışıldığı görülmektedir. Bu çalışmada öncelikle ilgili paradigmanın Batı'daki çeşitli yansımaları sunulduktan sonra yirmi dört fasikül şeklinde yayınlanan eserler sosyal Darwinizmin kavramları dâhilinde nitel bir incelemeye tabi tutulmuş ve arasındaki ilişki ortaya konmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu sayede Tek Parti Dönemi'ndeki toplumsal değişimin yönü anlaşılmasına çalışılmak istenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Siyasi Tarih; Tek Parti; Evrim; Sosyal Darwinizm; C.H.P. Konferanslar Serisi; Öjenizm

Öne Çıkanlar

- Batı'da iki dünya savaşı arası dönemde hâkim yaklaşımlardan sosyal Darwinizmin C.H.P. Konferanslar Serisindeki etkisini anlamaya çalışmak.
- C.H.P. Konferanslar Serisi dönemin önde gelen bilim ve düşünce insanlarının büyük çoğunluğunun katıldığı Halkevlerinin kullanıldığı büyük bir organizasyondur.
- C.H.P. Konferanslar Serisi'nde konuşmacıların yaklaşımlarını anlamak için aynı dönem Batı'da hâkim olan sosyal Darwinizm kavram dünyası dahilinde anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır.
- Pek çok sosyal Darwinist argümanın C.H.P. Konferanslar Serisindeki düşünce ve bilim insanları tarafından açıkça savunulduğu ve topluma “yeni yaşam” olarak anlatılmıştır.

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Giriş

The Republican People's Party (C.H.P.) is undoubtedly one of the pioneering institutions of the radical social, political and intellectual changes in Turkey after the Republic of Turkey. Perhaps it is the most important one. The Party, which gave its name to the Single Party Era, is an organization that has been integrated with the state for a long period of time, staffed by the founding team/elite of the state. For these and many other reasons, it has much more meaning than a party for the political and intellectual life of Turkey. Thanks to the power of integration with the state, it has been the pioneer of many transformations with the ideology of the period. It played an important role in the attempt to eradicate all that belonged to the previous era and to rebuild the new era with the ideal of the level of "contemporary civilization" (TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, 1 Kasım 1926) as Atatürk called it. Therefore, analyzing the content of the Party's activities is of great importance in understanding the thought of the period.

Like the Republican People's Party, another important institution of the One Party Period was the People's Houses or Halkevleri. People's Houses, whose aim was to bring the official ideology of the period together with the society and to make it accepted, were the social extension of the Party and even the state (Timur, 1994, 288-290; Özdemir and Aktaş, 2011, 244). It is also seen that they were directly authorized in many laws enacted during the Single Party Period. In the mission of shaping society not only intellectually but also physically, it assumed direct official duties and was authorized (Beden Terbiyesi Kanunu). It also hosted many activities in order for the state mind of the period to reach the provinces and to implement/adapt the reforms to practical life there.

Although the Republican People's Party and the People's Houses appeared to be immanent and embedded with the state for a long period, they were involved in different organizations as institutions in their own right. These organizations were not outside the ideology of the period, but rather within and for it. The aim was to ensure that the idealized "scientism" (Hanioglu, 2011, 59) of the period was understood and accepted by the society. What this ideal and ideology was is discussed in different ways. For a better understanding of this debate, it would be appropriate to analyze the dominant paradigm of the period and its reflections on the world of thought.

For the level of "contemporary civilization", that is, "modern civilization" idealized in the Single Party Period, the perception of the dominant system of thought in the Western societies of the period is very important. Because at that time, the symbol and even the qibla of contemporary civilization was the Western countries and therefore the other name of this process was "Westernization". The West, which many Eastern societies, especially Turkey, are trying to emulate, has emerged at the end of a centuries-long process with its own unique experience. Western societies overcame the feudal period, which was dominated by the institutional church for more than a thousand years, through social, political and intellectual transformations such as the Reformation, the Renaissance, the French Revolution and the Enlightenment, and the unchanging religious paradigms of scholastic thought were replaced by methods based on experimentation and observation, in other words positivist methods. This method is basically a method used by natural sciences. The method of the natural sciences eventually spread to the social sciences and

thus everything about life was tried to be explained with certain methods (Yılmaz - Yazıcı, 2016, 59-60). The theo-centric form of explanation, which centered on God, was replaced by the nature-centric, which was dominated by natural scientific methods. This method has permeated every field related to human beings, and human beings have been defined not as created beings, but as beings reduced to their biology and formed through evolution. As the perception of the past and present of man, whose beginning has changed, has changed, so has his perception of the future (Ergün, 2022a, 25).

Some of the Western thinkers who pushed God out of the ontological center developed the theory of evolution as an alternative paradigm of existence. According to this theory, the living world was not created, but rather came into being through various biological and historical developmental stages from the most primitive/primitive to the most complex/complex. The evolutionist paradigm's approach to social sciences/fields, in which the whole living world, including human beings, is defined as a field of war/struggle in which continuity is ensured by natural selection/selection and life is defined as the survival of the fittest, is called social Darwinism (Hodgson, 2004, 448). This idea, which reduces the human being to a warrior and biological being, has turned into the ideal of creating the most perfect human being with eugenics. With the First World War, the meaning that the natural selectionist evolutionary paradigm attributed to life caused Enlightenment values to be questioned. This led to the belief that human beings whose biological codes had been exposed could be rebuilt (Ergün, 2022a, 34-35). Thus, it was believed that the "ideal human" could be recreated biologically and physiologically, and policies and legal regulations supporting this situation began to be produced, and science was used as a tool to legitimize this situation. In the process of creating the ideal human being, many inhuman events took place in the West and this process was also one of the most important causes of the Second World War. For this reason, Erick Hobsbawm described this period not as "contemporary civilization" but as "the age of catastrophe" and even "the dark age" (Hobsbawm, 1995, 19).

In the same period of time, a new state was established in Turkey after the proclamation of the Republic, the scientific and cultural codes accumulated over centuries were turned upside down, and a revolution of mentality was experienced beyond the political revolution. In a way, this was an attempt to create a *tabula rasa* (blank slate). After the First World War, continental Europe entered the age of catastrophe. Young Turkey was searching for the "new man" of its modernity in such an environment. For the "new Turkey" has burned its ships and embarked on a path of no return. In the catastrophic age of the West, idealized as a contemporary civilization, Turkey tried to reinvent itself. At the same time, in Turkey of the 30s, Charles Robert Darwin became one of the main reference points in science (Toprak, 2022, 2-13). Darwinism has been used as an important "scientific" basis for constructing both history and the future (Toprak, 2012: 358-360). In this period when biological Darwinism came to the fore, social Darwinism also found its own areas of discussion and even living spaces.

It is only natural that the ideas of the period were reflected in the Single-Party regime, which took Western civilizations as an example with the ideal of being contemporary in the catastrophic age of the West. The main problematic of this study is whether the C.H.P. Conference Series (1939-1941), which was organized through the People's Houses throughout the country in the late 1930s and early 1940s, when the power of the Single

Party period was at its peak, was influenced by the idea of social Darwinism. The fact that no study has been conducted on the C.H.P. Conferences Series, which was held between 1939 and 1941 and later printed/published in 24 fascicles, is among the unique values of this study. The evaluation of this series of conferences within the social Darwinist framework, which was a dominant paradigm in Western countries of the period, is also very important in terms of better understanding the thought of the period. In order to explain this situation in a holistic manner, it is very important to explain how Darwinism and social Darwinism emerged in the West, what kind of debates they caused in the intellectual field, and what their social and political responses were. The research method will be to investigate the influence of social Darwinism, one of the dominant paradigms of the period, in the C.H.P. Conferences Series, which was held throughout the country with the ideal of changing the social thought structure of the Single Party period, which experienced a process of Westernization with the debates in the West in the same period.

1. Purpose and Method

The main purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of social Darwinism, one of the dominant paradigms of the period, on the C.H.P. Conferences Series, which was held in a mobilization atmosphere during the Single Party Period, the time period in which the founding codes of the Republic of Turkey were constructed. Because it is not possible to think that social Darwinism, which permeated many areas from scientific discussions to state policies in the Western world in this period, would not be reflected in the Single Party Period and its most important project initiatives, the C.H.P. Conferences Series, which wanted to Westernize in the same period and strived to transform society within this framework. The seriousness of this situation is better understood when we consider the fact that the intellectual movements emerging in the West in the same period were taken with great interest on the basis of scientific legitimacy and applied to Turkish society. In this context, examining the relevant series of conferences, which included the most important scientists of the country at the time, which were held all over the country and which carried the ideal of offering people a new model of life, is also very important in terms of understanding today.

While carrying out this study, first of all, various definitions of Social Darwinism in the relevant literature were tried to be given. Then, it was tried to explain what kind of reflections this approach has in scientific, social and political fields in different Western countries. Although there are differences between countries in the West, it has been tried to show that social Darwinism found a response in a wide range of areas, from the world of thought of the period to state policies. Because this approach has seen different applications in various Western countries. Ultimately, C.H.P. was one of the most comprehensive social transformation initiatives of the Single Party period, which carried the ideal of Westernization. The Conference Series was subjected to qualitative analysis in this context. It is understood that it was a large project that spanned between 1939 and 1941 and was carried out all over the country, aiming to change and transform society in the context of the world of thought of the period. The relevant lecture series has been published in twenty-four fascicles. Examining this historical text within the framework of social Darwinism, which has been important in the Western world for a long time, has a very

important place in the context of understanding the “founding values”. While conducting this analysis, the main arguments of Social Darwinism in the relevant texts are approaches such as that humans emerged through evolution, eugenicism, that is, raising healthier generations through racial breeding, that life is a battlefield, that humans are a result of their biology, and that the concepts of god and religion are the invention of human fears. It was used to scan relevant texts. Scientific discussions and practices in the West and C.H.P. an attempt has been made to re-veal the relationship between the Conference Series. Efforts have been made to explain this situation through concepts such as language, human being, the meaning of life and religion, which constitute the human world of meaning. Because a person’s perspective on these concepts will greatly affect the practice of making sense of life and living, it has been deemed very important to monitor the change in these concepts.

Social Darwinism, which has caused various scientific debates and practices in different Western countries, is C.H.P. after revealing the impact of the equivalents in the Conference Series in the context of the world of concepts, an attempt was made to evaluate how they paved the way for today’s discussions. The main purpose of this study is to clearly demonstrate that the C.H.P. Lecture Series seeks to transform society from a social Darwinist perspective. The main purpose of this study is to clearly demonstrate that the C.H.P. Conference Series seeks to transform society from a social Darwinist perspective. Because, an attempt has been made to seek answers to the questions of what the “founding values” discourse, which is one of the topics of discussion in today’s Turkey, corresponds to and whether it is a solution or a historical period from which today’s discussions arose.

In this study, a case study, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used to analyze the impact on Turkey of the fundamental changes in the modern period and its aftermath, which were reduced to the biology of human beings in the West with the theory of evolution, in the context of the C.H.P. Conference Series. Case study is a research design in which the researcher analyzes a situation, event, action, process or one or more individuals in depth and is used in many fields, especially in evaluation processes. Situations are limited in time and action, and researchers collect detailed information over a long period of time using a variety of data collection methods (Creswell, 2014). Case studies are used in research to describe the details that make up an event, to develop possible details about an event, and to evaluate an event. For this study, the C.H.P. Conference Series was evaluated in the context of the basic concepts and approaches of social Darwinism. It should also be noted that the titles of the academics mentioned in this study and the institutions in which they work will be given based on the information in the relevant texts.

2. From Darwinism to Social Darwinism in the West

The transition of the authority to produce knowledge from clergy to scientists in the Western intellectual tradition is one of the biggest breaking points of this tradition. With this change at the end of a long process, the “grand narrative”, that is, the central position in making sense of life, was transferred from the divine to the human or natural. In other words, the method used to recognize nature was also used to make sense of life. This transformation has meant that the explanation of life has been explained not by otherworldly but by earthly means. Human beings, too, have had their share of this way of explaining life; they have been transformed into a biological creature whose purpose is to

survive at the end of the evolutionary process, rather than a created being who must live in accordance with the purpose of creation.

The use of natural scientific methods to make sense of the world of existence has led to the definition of human beings by reducing them to their biology. Because according to this approach, man is not the servant of the Creator, but the product of nature/nature. Charles Robert Darwin was the most important person to bring this idea to the masses. When Darwin published *The Origin of Species* in 1859, it was not the first time he mentioned the theory of evolution. Many thinkers before Darwin, including his grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, and Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, had already thought about evolution. What made Darwin different was that he presented the previous ideas more systematically and in accordance with the scientific methods of the time (Doğan, 2012, 46). For this reason, *The Origin of Species* had a great resonance and led to debates that continue to this day. In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin claimed that all living species, except human beings, came into existence through natural selection and struggle in an evolutionary process in a system in which the strongest would continue to live (Darwin, 1976, 86-87). In 1871, he included human beings in his theory with his work *The Descent of Man* (Darwin, 1975, 8). With this work, the dimension of the debate changed and became more heated. Because Darwin answered the question of how human beings came to be in a world without a creator in a way and gave a position to the scientific approach against religion.

Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) was as influential as Darwin in popularizing the natural selectionist approach to evolution. In his work *First Principles*, Spencer claimed that there is an evolutionary “law” in all of life, from sociology to anatomy, astronomy to biology, religion to economics (Spencer, 2009, 17-24). Spencer claimed that thanks to natural selection, the best survive, that society tends to constantly improve, and that societies, like the structure of the organism, will improve over time with healthier individuals (Crook, 2007, 30-36). According to some thinkers, Spencer’s survival of the fittest and Darwin’s natural selectionist approach, which Darwin referred to and was influenced by many times, formed the basis for Nietzsche’s idea of the “superhuman” and even led to the emergence of racism and Nazism (Dobzhansky, 1959, 112).

The transformation of the ontological reality of human beings into a biological rather than a theological issue has also changed the answers to questions such as who human beings are and how they should live. In other words, the theory of biological evolution expanded its scope and began to permeate social sciences and fields. The adaptation of Darwin’s theory of evolution to social sciences and fields was called social Darwinism (Hodgson, 2004, 448). The content of Darwin’s works also played an important role in the diffusion of this theory into social fields (Ergün, 2022b, 8-9). As a result of these discussions, every field related to human beings was affected.

3. Social Darwinism in “Modern Civilization” in the Interwar Period

Eugenics is the most important of the approaches put forward to “better” human beings, who have been “freed” from God and reduced to their biology, and which has made social Darwinism visible in the social and political sphere. The main purpose of this idea, which was put forward by Darwin’s cousin Francis Galton, is to accelerate the process of human evolution, which is thought to progress slowly through natural selection (Dennis, 1995, 246-

247). In order to accelerate the development of human beings and society, this approach, which includes many bio-social interventions, including preventing the birth of fetuses that may be born “defective”, sterilization of individuals with physical, mental disabilities, even criminals, and the prohibition of marriage between individuals of different races, has been implemented in different ways in various countries of the world. This idea was also implemented as the official state policy of Nazi Germany in the period between the two world wars. In the eugenics program implemented in Nazi Germany, people with physical and mental disabilities were first sterilized and then systematically killed between 1939 and 1941. The persecution of European Jews after 1941 was based on similar motives (Heywood, 2013, 218). For the same reasons, the Sterilization Act of July 14, 1933 in Germany permitted the compulsory sterilization of those who were “hereditarily ill”, i.e. congenitally weak-minded, schizophrenic, manic depressive, suffering from Huntington’s chorea, hereditary blindness or deafness. Between January 1934 and September 1939, some 320,000 Germans were forcibly sterilized under the Sterilization Act. From June 1935 onwards, abortion was made compulsory for pregnancies of up to six months if, under the relevant law, “health courts” deemed pregnant individuals to be “hereditarily ill” (Geary, 2000, 60).

In the first half of the 20th century, while Germany was trying to biologically shape the human being reduced to flesh, blood and bone, the situation in America was not much different. America was experiencing a social Darwinist experience of its own. Jack London, one of the powerful writers of American literature, conveyed social Darwinism to his readers in his novels. With his works such as *The Call of the Wild*, *White Fang*, *Martin Eden* and *Before Adam*, London brought the idea of social Darwinism to the masses (Ergün, 2021, 81-84). London even had an evolution debate with the then American president Theodore Roosevelt, and London accused Roosevelt of not fully understanding the evolutionary paradigm based on natural selection (Berliner, 2008, 52). Roosevelt, whom London accused of not fully understanding evolution, wrote a work titled *The Strenuous Life* in which social Darwinist arguments were put forward (Roosevelt, 1902, 20-21). The social Darwinist approach, which pitted literary figures against politicians, permeated many areas of social life in America, including the banning of interracial marriages. The Anti-Miscegenation Laws, which actually date back to 1861, were strictly enforced in the interwar period. It was spread across 14 states of the USA and tried to prevent the white race from intermarrying with other races and being subjected to “racial degradation”. Those who married despite the law were punished with various prison sentences and fines (Barnett, 1964, 95-96).

Henry Rutgers Marshall (1852-1927), an American psychologist who lectured for years at important universities such as Harvard, Columbia and Yale, analyzed the similar characteristics of human beings with animals in his 1916 work *War and the Ideal of Peace* and described human beings as “a fighting animal” (Marshall, 1916, 95). Like Marshall, James Rowland Angell (1869-1949), a well-known figure in the field of contemporary psychology who served as the President of Yale University between 1921 and 1937, described man and his brain as an “unplanned hereditary type” (Crook, 1994, 133). The claim that man has no divine purpose and is a biological being who fights to live is also defended as a truth by the founders of modern psychology. Sigmund Freud, one of the leading thinkers among the founders of modern psychology, stated that the genealogy of human beings is not a special and privileged creation, but belongs to the animal kingdom (Freud and Einstein, 2010, 20),

and that wars are inevitable because humans have the need to hate and destroy (Freud and Einstein, 2010, 29).

Social Darwinism, the foundations of which were laid in England by Darwin and Spencer, and which influenced social sciences and shaped the social sphere with the efforts of thinkers such as Galton, has been responded to in different ways in various parts of the world, and France has been one of the countries participating in the theoretical debate. In the literature, in France's experience of social Darwinism, there are not many policies that directly affect social life as in the model countries such as the USA and Germany. At least, examples that can be characterized as state policy are almost non-existent. However, in the intellectual context, there are discussions in the same period. France became acquainted with the theory of evolution through Jean-Baptiste Lamarck's (1744-1829) idea of "adaptation to conditions", which he defended in his work *Philosophie Zoologique* (Zoological Philosophy) written in 1809 (Lamarck, 1963, 49; Bowler, 2003, 78). This influence of Lamarck caused Darwinism to be less influential in France than in other Western countries. However, since it was one of the dominant ideas of the time, it is not out of the question that it was not influenced. The most important reasons that pushed French thinkers towards the theory of natural selectionist evolution and social Darwinism were their defeat against Germany in 1870 and the questioning of their relative backwardness among Western societies (Doğan, 2012, 113). Edmond Demolins, one of the most important thinkers of France, who was under the spell of winning, growth and progress, as well as the fear that he would perish if he lost the battle/struggle for life, wrote a work titled *The Reasons for the Superiority of the Anglo-Saxons* (*A Quoi La Superiorite Des Anglo-Saxons*) in 1887, and in the Darwinist language of the period, he suggested that young people should be raised in accordance with the struggle for life (Demolins, 1899, 1). In France, the idea of social Darwinism spread among young people and in 1878, two young people killed an old woman for her money. One of these young people gave a lecture on Darwinism before the murder, and in his speech he emphasized that in a world where resources are limited, it is normal/natural/natural for the weak to defeat the weak. The youth's lawyer, referring to Darwinism, argued that the youth were influenced by this heretical idea and that is why they were inclined to such behavior (Clark, 1984: 47-50).

French intellectuals who wanted to achieve superiority developed IQ (Intelligence Quotient) tests to determine the state of mind as well as the physical condition in eugenics, one of the main arguments of social Darwinism. It is seen that these tests became widespread with two French thinkers, Alfred Binet (1857-1911) and Theophile Simon (1872-1961), who conducted the first intelligence test in 1905 (Dennis, 1995, 246). These tests are still quite common today.

When it comes to French social Darwinism, Gustave Le Bon (1841-1931) is certainly at the top in this regard. Another important characteristic of Le Bon is that he had a significant intellectual influence on both the late Ottoman intellectuals and the founding elites of the Turkish Republic (Ülken, 2005: 250). Le Bon, whose intellectual arguments are quite compatible with both biological and social Darwinism, argues that no institution, especially the state, should interfere with the natural selection process that is valid in nature, and that the current level of civilization was achieved through natural selection (Clark, 1984, 134). Le Bon, who thinks that it would be enough to look at nature to understand this situation,

thinks that nature is not tolerant towards the weak and that the weak are doomed to perish. He argues that only physical and intellectual strength should be respected, and that human intelligence is inherited because of its connection with certain substances in the brain and that the structure of the brain and skull is important (Le Bon, 2001, 239). Le Bon, who thinks that the conflict between human beings will continue and even intensify in the future as in the past, sees the struggle of nations against each other as so absolute that he thinks that the war will not end even if one of the parties is destroyed (Le Bon, 2001, 242). It can also be said that Le Bon, like many thinkers mentioned above, laid the foundations of the clash of civilizations and confrontational society approaches. If fighting is a consequence/requirement of human nature, the oppressor would be as victimized as the oppressed and subjected to his own nature. These approaches, which can be explained by the historical reality of Western societies, later spread to many Eastern societies, especially Turkey. One of the texts that best describes this circulation is the C.H.P. Conferences Series, which lasted for three years and featured prominent academics of the period.

4. C.H.P. Conferences Series and Social Darwinism

It is seen that the West has been experiencing and discussing the approaches that reduce human beings to their biology and try to shape social life accordingly, and their socio-political reflections, which started in the late 19th century and increased at the beginning of the 20th century. In the same period, it is almost impossible for the founding elites of the Republic of Turkey, who took the West as their qibla and guide and saw its modernization as the absolute truth and compulsory direction, not to be affected by these debates and events. However, the historical roots of the issue naturally go back to the late Ottoman period. In this regard, Atila Doğan's *Ottoman Intellectuals and Social Darwinism* is very important and mind-opening. It explains in detail how the ideas that would later spread to the Republic of Turkey sprouted and grew among the intellectuals of the Ottoman state (Doğan, 2012).

The theory of natural selectionist evolution, which had its roots in the late Ottoman intellectuals, and social Darwinism, which was an attempt to adapt it to social life, found a place in various works of the Single Party period. Among these works, there are many historical texts ranging from textbooks to academic journals, congress presentations to parliamentary minutes. One of the most notable works among these is the C.H.P. Conferences Series. Under the leadership and organization of the C.H.P., prominent academics and scientists of the period made presentations to the public on various topics hosted by People's Houses across Turkey. Between 1939 and 1941, within the scope of this three-year project, Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Konya, Adana, Samsun, Samsun and Gaziantep were identified as the cities where conferences were held. However, it is also possible that there were other cities. These conferences were later published in 24 fascicles. These conferences were intended to explain to the public what life is and how it should be lived. They covered a wide range of topics from language to international relations, from biological and social Darwinism (evolution) to family relations, from law to history. Due to the subject matter of this study, the relevant works will be evaluated within the framework of social Darwinism.

In a way, this series of conferences is one of the important indicators of the new state's efforts to create its new people. Scientists who adopted the current direction of the country

mobilized for the realization of mental and then social transformation. The important scientific issues of the period were shared with the society and the reasons for the transition to a new form of life were tried to be explained. Here, the evolutionist paradigm, which was the language of science of the period, was one of the important pillars of many explanations. From language to philosophy of life, from religion to law, many issues were explained with an evolutionist approach. In this context, for a better understanding of the subject, the series of conferences will focus on the concepts of language, human, meaning of life and religion.

4.1. Language: A Prerequisite for Progress and Evolution

When the C.H.P. Conferences Series is analyzed, it is seen that the emphasis on *istihale* and *tekâmül* come to the forefront regardless of the subject on which the scientists speak. While *istihale* means change of form or metamorphosis, *tekâmül* means evolution. At the same time, and especially in the scientific language of the period, *istihale* is used in the sense of species distinction in the evolutionary process, the separation of higher species from lower species (Wells, 1962, 11-12; Kansu, 1932, 273; Arsal, 1932, 351). Ragıp Özden, Professor of Linguistics at Istanbul University's Faculty of Literature, in his presentation titled "The Present Situation of our Language" in the context of the C.H.P. Conferences Series, characterizes the process as variation and evolution (*istihale* and *tekâmül*) in the social sense (Özden, 1939, 6-7). The biological explanation is such a dominant discourse in the literature that this is clearly evident even in matters related to language. Therefore Özden states: "The science of language - like animal biology, which generally divides animals into two main groups: 'with ribs' and 'without ribs' - divides languages into 'grammatical' and 'ungrammatical'" (Özden, 1939, 14). This can be seen as both an extension of the social sciences' emulation of the natural sciences and an indication of the dominance of evolutionist literature over other scientific fields.

In an environment where language was shaped by the evolutionary literature of the period, it is understandable that every field that this language came into contact with also had its share of this change. Since language is also one of the ways in which the mind appears, it will be sufficient to look at its language to understand the mental world of both the period and the individuals. Moreover, considering Martin Heidegger's paradigm/approach that "language is the house of being" (Heidegger, 2013: 5), it is very important to trace the changes in language in order to understand how the person, society and the period are re-created. Language also contains important evidence to understand how periods and individuals create and construct themselves and their periods. When language, which is the home of existence, changes, it is certain that the human being, its carrier, and all social areas related to it will also undergo change.

4.2. Human: A Living Being Reduced to Its Biology

One of the most prominent characteristics and activities of the One Party period and regime is the effort to create a human being suitable for the new regime. While creating this new human being, the ontological past of human beings is sought to be reconstructed. In this context, the most popular and valid narrative of the period, the theory of evolution, took center stage. This narrative is quite evident in the C.H.P. Conferences Series. Scientists from many different scientific fields have presented this as an absolute truth in their

conference presentations. However, it is not enough for human beings to be created as a result of an evolutionary process and for this idea to be taken for granted. Because the Single-Party regime has no time to wait for the natural and evolutionary process to invent/construct its new human being. It wants to accomplish a lot in a little time. The answer to this desire is social Darwinism and its most popular concept, eugenics. Eugenics is a concept developed by Darwin's cousin Francis Galton and defined as eugenics, which was implemented as a state policy by Adolf Hitler. The Single Party regime coincided with this period, and it was clear that the new qibla was the West. For the ruling elites of the new state, Hitler's Germany and other "modern" civilizations of the period should be taken as an example, and the state should ensure the continuation of the strong in society and the end of the weak, as in Germany. This idea is clearly manifested in the C.H.P. Conferences Series.

Muzaffer Süleyman Şenyürek, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the Faculty of Language, History and Geography at the time, in his conference presentation titled "The Evolution of Man", has no doubt that man was formed in an evolutionary process. He expresses this clearly. According to him, the science of anthropology has already proven this. The ancestor of man is definitely the ape and for him this is a non-debatable issue and "there is no doubt". The human generation gradually evolved, first the legs grew longer, man gained the ability to stand on two legs, then his hands grew longer and he learned to make tools with them. This is the result of hundreds of thousands of years of evolution (Şenyürek, 1940, 23-29).

Another noteworthy point in Şenyürek and other conference presenters is that they often use the concept of evolution instead of evolution. In the related texts, it is clearly seen that many issues related to evolution are explained using the concept of evolution. The evolutionary process or, in the words of the conference presenters of the time, evolution is a slow process that can take hundreds of thousands of years for some serious changes. However, according to some thinkers of the period, there is no time to wait for this process. Fahrettin Kerim Gökay, Professor of Mental Diseases at Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine, draws attention to this situation in his presentation titled "Will and Nerve Soundness". In fact, according to him, this is what the "new scientific truth" proves. This new truth is eugenics. People already use eugenic methods on plants and animals and get positive results. The same methods should be applied on humans by the state. According to Gökay, Germany (Hitler) uses this method and gets very good results. This practice is not a choice but a national duty to protect the Turkish generation and society. According to him, this duty primarily belongs to the People's Houses (Gökay, 1940a, 11-15). In another lecture, Gökay explains the importance of physical fitness with the phrase "A sound body has a sound mind" (Gökay, 1940b, 3). Therefore, Gökay says: "The essence of soundness of mind begins with the seed. It is necessary to ensure that one's parents are strong so that Turkish children are prepared for the struggle of life with strength" (Gökay, 1940b, 8). For Gökay, the basic principle of social Darwinism, the idea that life is a field of struggle and the strong will survive, is a truth, and generations should be formed and raised in accordance with this "truth". In another presentation, this "truth" was explained by different people as "discovered by Darwin and made available to people by Galton" (Sarâ, 1940, 30).

B. Sadi Irmak, Associate Professor of General Physiology at the Faculty of Medicine, Istanbul University, argues that the “truth” attributed to biology but manifested in eugenics was applied in the “contemporary civilizations” of the period. He argues that these countries have used eugenic methods in different ways and have become strong societies as a result. Irmak openly advocates for the state to take over selection for social progress in Turkey as in other “civilized” states (Irmak, 1940a, 32). For Irmak, eugenics should be used not only for racial breeding but also to solve different problems of society. Because in another presentation, Irmak argues that “criminality is a bio-social phenomenon”. According to him, it is sufficient to “observe the biological, anthropological and social status of each neighborhood in the same way in order to reach a nationwide judgment about criminality” (Irmak, 1940b, 49-50). In this way, physically and mentally weak people who are likely to commit crimes in the society will be identified, and it will be easier to prevent them from committing crimes (Irmak, 1940b, 58-59).

Vasfi Raşit Sevig, Professor of Roman Law at Ankara Law Faculty, thinks like Gökay and Irmak, and in his conference presentation titled “The Republican People’s Party and the Family”, he argues that the eugenic methods used by Germany at the time, which had previously been used to breed animals, were “scientific” and that these methods should be applied on humans by the state. For him, this was not a preference, but “a scientific necessity to keep the Aryan race pure and preserve it” (Sevig, 1939, 10).

Another person who thinks that eugenics is a necessity is Mazhar Osman Uzman, Ordinary Professor of Mental Diseases at Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine. In his presentation titled “Eugenics”, Uzman takes this approach one step further. For him, eugenics is not only a biological issue, but also a “modern truth that plays important roles in sociology, economics and politics”. Because, according to Uzman, “sick arms and crooked heads are dry crowds, useless beings” and a loss to the state budget (Uzman, 1939, 3). With eugenics, which he took in hand and considered as a modern truth, Uzman explained the “weak” individuals in society, both physically and mentally, in a pejorative language:

The roles that these cripples play in free life: begging, swindling, stealing, prostitution, assault and murder, are more common among men with weak minds, weak wills and distorted thoughts... Each of them will raise a few more cripples like himself... The fools, because they are easily carried away by their sensual feelings and the excesses of lust, do not pay attention to calculations and books, marry and multiply like rats (Uzman, 1939, 4).

For these and similar reasons, the Expert advocates that the state should encourage the reproduction of the physically fit members of society, and prevent those who are not. For Uzman, it is impossible for those who are “degenerate” to become extinct through natural death, and Turkey, like Germany, should take matters into its own hands. According to him, Germany (during the Hitler era) has benefited greatly from these policies and society has been satisfied. According to Uzman, it is not enough to stop the reproduction of the unhealthy ones; the healthy ones should be encouraged to do so, and a “bachelor tax” should be levied on those who are healthy but do not marry (Uzman, 1939, 7-11).

The practices of Hitler-era Germany influenced the thought constructs participating in the C.H.P. Conferences Series to such an extent that many practices of social Darwinism, which manifested itself as eugenics, were presented as scientific truths and various academic figures constantly called the state to duty in this direction. Hüseyin Cahit

Oğuzoğlu, Professor of Civil Law at the Ankara Faculty of Law, argued in his presentation titled “Ehemmiyeti Nesebin Ehemmiyeti in Civil Law” that the state should take urgent action to ensure the survival of the strong and the elimination of the weak (Oğuzoğlu, 1939, 64). Prof. Dr. Ömer Celâl Saraç, who thought like Oğuzoğlu and served as a member of the Ministry of National Education’s Education and Training Department and as a dean, suggested taking Germany and Italy as an example and considered it necessary to replace “God is kind” with “rationalism” in the matter of childbirth. By rationalism, he means Malthus’ population theorem. For Saraç, this theorem, which is a sine qua non of liberalism, should be applied to society by the state (Saraç, 1939, 51-60).

When the C.H.P. Conferences series is analyzed, the idea of social Darwinism is so widespread among the presenters/speakers that there is no sign of doubt in their presentations. The biological being called man has emerged through evolution, the forces of nature are his main creator and the rules that apply in nature should be adapted to social life. With one difference, however, and that is the acceleration of the principle of survival of the fittest by the state in order to raise a good generation (Yalım, 1940, 68-76). Just as the thinkers of the period cited Germany as an example in their desire to raise a strong generation, they also directly referred to the competition of the liberal economy as the economic equivalent. Thus, a strong society would emerge not only physically but also economically. In fact, according to the thinkers of the period, liberalism, which is scientific and derived from the laws of nature, gives the right to “domination of the economically strong over the weak” (Abadan, 1939, 7-14).

4.3. The Meaning of Life: The Biological “Grand Narrative”

In the C.H.P. Conferences Series, which spanned the years 1938-1940, in which the leading academics of the period were mobilized, Halkevleri provided venues and conferences were held all over the country, it is clearly evident that the evolutionist paradigm was put at the center and creation was excluded. Since natural laws are slow to work, the state is explicitly given the authority to create “new human beings” through the social Darwinist methods of the period. In the related conferences, it is seen that the state tries to produce answers to the ontological problematic of the human being that the state has the authority to recreate. In this regard, Sabri Esat Siyavuşgil, Associate Professor of General Psychiatry at Istanbul University, stated in his presentation titled “Folklore and Psychology” that the authority to give meaning to life was clearly in the hands of anthropologists and ethnographers. Because, according to him, these new scientific disciplines prove that “the stages of evolution between the primitive state of every society and its present state are all links in the same chain of being” (Siyavuşgil, 1939, 39).

Taking Siyavuşgil’s approach one step further, Mazhar Şevket İpşir, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Istanbul University’s Faculty of Literature, in his presentation titled “Philosophy of Life”, argues that religion itself is clearly sophistry and that life has found its true meaning thanks to the evolutionary paradigm. İpşir argues that thanks to modern science, these myths have disappeared, philosophical ideas mixed with superstitions have been replaced by evolution, the first traces of life began with the vegetable world, and thus the meaning of life can be understood correctly. He argues that many of the meanings of life that prevail in society today are the legacy of “the first man’s fear of a vague conception of the universe” (İpşir, 1939, 51-52). This approach is almost identical to the explanation

used by both Darwin and Sigmund Freud, one of the pioneers of evolutionary psychology, to describe the behavior of today's humans (Freud, 2011a, 78; Darwin, 1897, 336). According to this approach, primitive people came up with the idea of religion and creator out of fear of not knowing the world, but as science developed, people became sure of their fears and no longer needed religion and creator to make sense of life. Because, according to İpşir, man's relationship with life consists of an effort to dominate it and this is the meaning of life (İpşir, 1939, 56). In this endeavor, man found the new "true" meaning of life through the newly developed natural sciences and abandoned the old one:

...by returning to our initial question, we can also give a scientific answer to the question of the meaning and purpose of life. The various stages of organic life have shown us that life rises in a continuous evolution, always creating more and more perfect forms... For the same reason, we cannot accept religious conceptions of life mixed with the myths of original sin and expulsion from paradise. Those who think like this are those who have not recognized the highest form of life manifested in man (İpşir, 1939, 57-58).

Hilmi Ziya Ülken, Associate Professor of Philosophy at the Faculty of Letters of Istanbul University, argued in his presentation titled "The Idea of Natural Law" that in order to make sense of life correctly, one should focus "not on the nature of things, but on the signs and symbols that show the development and evolution of things". Pierre-Simon de Laplace (Unat, 2020, 10), who argued that the creator should no longer be involved in explaining his theories, was an exemplary figure for Ülken. Ülken, who thinks that the meaning of life lies in the laws of nature, argues that these laws lead one to monism. According to Ülken, "it is impossible to separate the essence and existence of things" (Ülken, 1939, 62). Ülken's approach that the laws of nature lead to monism essentially belongs to Ernst Haeckel, the leading representative of German materialism and social Darwinist. For Haeckel, the soul is also a material phenomenon. At the same time, Haeckel explains all spiritual phenomena related to religion with matter and calls this new religion monism (Haeckel, 2014, 99-110).

In the process in which life was reinterpreted by putting matter and natural laws at the center, the answer to the question of what this new interpretation would do is attempted to be given in the presentation titled "An Objective View of Human Vital Manifestations" by Hayri Kaleli, Associate Professor of the Faculty of Medicine at Istanbul University at the time. According to Kaleli, the inconceivable wonders of the laws of nature enlighten human beings and thus "make the whole of life available to man by giving him the power required by the struggles in the fight for life" (Kaleli, 1940, 35). In the struggle for life, thanks to the natural sciences, man will both have the power he needs and be able to dominate nature. In other words, the right to give a new meaning to life will have passed to social Darwinist paradigms.

4.4. Religion: Biological Narcissus Syndrome

In the C.H.P. Conferences Series, all branches of the human being are clearly attempted to be redefined and given meaning. They want to impose a new language, a new perception of the world and a new vision of life on the new human being. However, the most ancient characteristic of man is that he has a religion, and religion is as old as man. This issue has not been left out in the Conferences and a new religion has been invented for the new human being in accordance with the natural selectionist theory of evolution, also known as social Darwinism, which is spoken of as the laws of nature. As in other social and ontological

phenomena, this religion is the same as that of the “contemporary civilizations” of the period, which is the new qibla of the regime.

In his presentation titled “Some Sociological Studies on Law and the State”, Nail Hüseyin Kubal, Associate Professor of Public Law at Istanbul University, argued that in the new world, reason was “deified” and the individual was over-valued, which led to significant progress. For him, the field of reason is “only the field of natural sciences” and thanks to reason, “the divine origin of political power and force is not accepted” and the superiority of natural sciences is accepted. The new system is, in Kubal’s terms, the system of the supernatural, that is, of the superhuman. Theology should be left behind and the laws of nature based on hierarchy should be the cornerstone of the new system (Kubal, 1940, 55-61). For Irmak, who thinks like Kubal, “there is only one religion, and that is to believe in the supernatural”. According to him, “people with weak will to live created the idea of God”. Thanks to new knowledge, there is no need for imaginary Gods, there is only one creator on earth and that is the supernatural (Irmak, 1939a, 85). According to Irmak, it is the laws of evolution, which operate in line with the laws of nature, that bring human beings to this stage. For Irmak, power is more precious than anything else and according to him, “the only function of the mass is to give birth to and obey the supernatural... The supernatural is the goal of life” (Irmak, 1939a, 82). Irmak argues that those who are powerless continue their existence by inventing religion and creators, and argues that with the destruction of this idea, they will no longer have the right to live. In addition, according to him, all the ideas and traditions that stifle the human need to search for truth should be exposed and discredited, and especially religious fanaticism should be fought. In his view, the so-called humanitarian institutions are organizations that shelter the weak, harbor the captives and thus prevent the growth of the strong man. Therefore, there is no place in the new world for these ideas or for the weak who create a living space through them for the man who takes the authority of godhood in his hands (Irmak, 1939a, 81-82).

As Irmak rejects the old gods and proclaims his new religion in which the human being, called fevkalbeşer, is god, he also thinks about his worship. For Irmak, the new worship of god-human is sports. Here again, the country he takes as an example is Hitler-era Germany. If Irmak wants to create a new nation in Turkey, he must be able to fill people into stadiums like in Germany and make them do sports, even if it is compulsory. Because for Irmak, the new world has a new worship and that is sports, and stadiums are the place to fulfill it. Sports is very important for eugenics, but even more important for Irmak is to bring it to the stage of faith and to succeed in instilling it in the whole society (Irmak, 1939b, 69-73).

Irmak made his presentation on sports as a matter of religion and faith in 1939. What is interesting is that in 1938 a legal regulation called the Physical Education Law was enacted. With this law, sports were made compulsory from provinces to villages, local administrative authorities from governors to mukhtars were given the authority to supervise, and the People’s Houses were authorized by the law to organize sports for the public (Beden Terbiyesi Kanunu, 1938, art. 1-14). While the Physical Education Law was being discussed in the parliament during the proposal stage, the then Minister of Interior (Deputy Interior Minister) Şükrü Kaya, while explaining why the law was necessary, emphasized that the new regime, whose mind they were trying to recreate, also wanted to create the body of the new people. Because according to him, “every regime has found a citizen type worthy of

itself". The Single Party regime also wants to find and create its own type of citizen. According to him, the citizen type of "Atatürk's regime, the regime of the Kemalist revolution" would be created with this law (TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, 1938, 487).

Conclusion

The elites and intellectuals of the young Republic wanted to enlighten their society in the light of "science" and to advance their state under the guidance of contemporary civilizations. In order to achieve this, in order to make this ideal popular, they used all the means and institutions that determine social life. Many studies such as the C.H.P. Conferences Series were carried out and national education curricula were redesigned. However, the West, which was idealized at the time, is living in what Eric Hobsbawn calls the age of catastrophe. Science was a tool of social engineering, racism, imperialism and eugenics projects. The elites and intellectuals of the young Republic accepted what was happening in the West at that time instead of evaluating, criticizing and critically revising it. For these reasons, it has turned into the source of many of today's problems, rather than producing solutions for today. It is possible to see from the C.H.P. Conferences Series the origins of many debates that are still ongoing today. What is meant by returning to the founding codes in Turkey today, what is meant by the ideal of governing the state and society with the "supreme truths of science", and whether evolution should be included in the curriculum of national education textbooks clearly show that there are debates that have been handed down from those times to today.

Between 1938 and 1940, the C.H.P. Conferences Series, which spanned a period of three years, was a kind of mobilization launched by the new regime to spread its ideas to the grassroots, to the masses. It is clear from their words that the scientists of the period were the volunteer soldiers of this mobilization. The new regime is primarily trying to develop a new language of thinking, understanding and explanation. By language here, we mean both the material domination of language through the alphabet revolution and the construction of a new narrative language and the secular and evolutionary language of science that was dominant in the West. Thanks to the dominance of language, everything about human beings and the world of existence could be redefined. The theory of natural selectionist evolution, the dominant paradigm of the period, clearly manifests itself and the general public is tried to be persuaded with a "scientific/scientific" language about social Darwinism and its spillover into the social sphere.

In the C.H.P. Conferences Series, where the influence of evolutionary theory and social Darwinist approaches is clearly seen, it is clear that the first goal is to create a new human being based on this paradigm. The meaning of life for this new human being is also explained, and it is understood that the issues of religion, faith and worship are also redefined through related theories and approaches.

Social Darwinism, which emerged in the West and has been applied in different ways by various states, has also found important counterparts in Turkey. The C.H.P. Conference Series, one of the most important indicators of this, is not an ordinary academic activity. It was organized with a sense of mobilization under the leadership of a party integrated with the state. While the state was trying to detach its society from the "old", which it characterized as evil, it wanted to build a "new" thought in its place. To this end, it first

wanted to change the mental paradigm and the “grand narrative” of the society, and then to shape social life accordingly in an average period of three years. This is clearly evident in the presentations made. The C.H.P. Lecture Series is the most concrete example of an attempt to recreate a society. In this regard, one witnesses the use of social Darwinism, which was the dominant paradigm in the West during the same period, as a yardstick. In this Lecture Series, human biology is clearly defined, life is presented as a field of struggle/war, natural selection is sought to be adapted to social life, and eugenics is proposed for the advancement of social life.

When viewed from today’s perspective, it is seen that ideas that involve the violation of many human rights, especially fundamental rights and freedoms, are openly defended in the C.H.P. Conferences Series with the ideal of “scientific truth” and being “modern”. Because this is also the situation in the “modern” states that the new regime takes as an example and considers as a new qibla. It is even much worse. Because the issues that the Turkish intelligentsia usually discussed at the intellectual level and tried to convince the society about were put into practice by the state in the West at that time. People were taken to concentration camps, interracial marriages were banned, sterilized and even killed. In addition, social Darwinism was used as a source of “scientific” legitimacy for Western countries, especially Britain, to exploit different countries, especially Africa.

The new regime established in Turkey and its new elites openly emulated, envied and wanted to imitate the West in this process, but due to lack of knowledge and inexperience, they generally found the field of application at the level of ideas. Perhaps the lack of knowledge was for the good of society. It reduced the spread of basic human rights violations and massacres practiced in the West at the time. However, the intellectual transformation that took place in that period is still the reason for the existence of many chronic debates within Turkish society today. Therefore, when thinking about the “founding codes of the Republic” approach that is defended today through certain symbols and slogans, it is important to keep in mind that we are talking about a period of time with practices that even in the West today are characterized as the dark (catastrophic) age.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the social Darwinism approach was intellectually quite widespread among the intellectuals of the young republic. In fact, it would not be wrong to say that it was so widespread that they wanted to transform their society in the context of this approach. Nevertheless, when we look at the literature, it is seen that this approach is not mentioned much in the context of the approaches on which the foundation of the republic was based. It is interesting that an approach that was used by the leading scientists of the period as a measure to transform society by spreading to all four corners of the society has very little place in the literature. However, the answer may be just as simple. Because social Darwinism was characterized as evil after the Second World War, no one wanted to be associated with this approach after the war. Therefore, the literature in this context has not developed much in Turkey. However, it should be noted that the number of studies trying to understand the Single Party Period with this approach has increased recently.

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