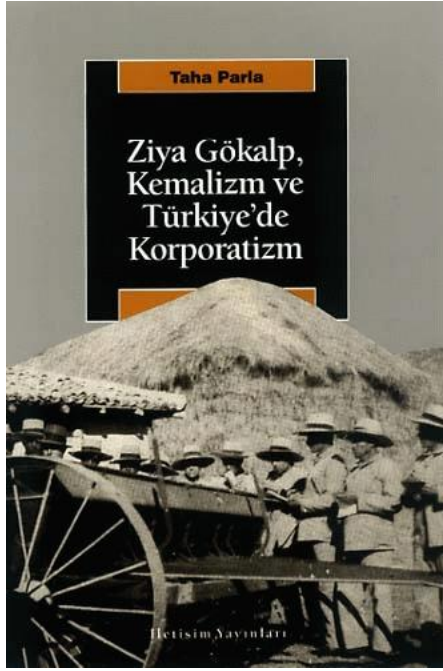


## BOOK REVIEW

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**Book Title:** *Ziya Gökalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye'de Korporatizm*

**Author:** Taha Parla

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### SUMMARY OF THE BOOK

The book's subject matter is Ziya Gökalp as an ideology producer, thinker, and contributor to the formulation of republican ideology. The author limits his approach to Gökalp's political theory.

Firstly, he describes the historical and social milieu in which Gökalp's political theory was shaped. Then, he narrates Gökalp's life attaching particular importance to his political career. In the third chapter, the intellectual progress of Gökalp is explained. Fourthly, he focuses on Gökalp's social and political philosophy considering all of the main components of his political thought. In this sense, "culture" and "civilization" distinction; cultural Turkism; moralist Sufism/Islamic mysticism; corporatism; and finally, his synthesis in the label of "social idealism" (*içtimai mefkurecilik*) are explained. Then, the author attempts to ground Gökalp's political theory on social foundations in the light of corporatism. In the sixth chapter, Gökalp's definition of politics and his political organization theory are discussed concerning the early republican political environment. The seventh chapter covers the problems of Gökalp's political

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theory with particular emphasis on political economy. Finally, the repercussions of Gökaldian political thinking on Turkish political structure are discussed.

## **MAIN ARGUMENT OF THIS REVIEW**

As far as I am concerned, the writer blows up Gökald out of proportion. The writer claims that Gökaldism is very influential in Kemalist discourse, and even the left movements seem to emerge out of it. I approach such a claim critically. In this sense, I evaluate Gökald's exaggerated contribution to Kemalism by focusing on corporatism.

## **ELEMENTS OF ZİYA GÖKALP'S POLITICAL THEORY**

Ziya Gökald was among "Young Turks". But "Young Turks" was not an identical, homogeneous group. There were irreconcilable political ideas in this group.

For Şerif Mardin, Young Turk thought was not a partisan of freedom; its point of departure was "logic of the state". For Mardin (1995), it was not democratic, though. It had an ambiguous "populism" involving lack of confidence in people, it was a bureaucratic conservatism, it was not radical despite some ideas about reformation from above, and it was authoritarian and usually had proto-fascist components. Young Turks were anti-parliamentary, elitist (Parla, 2001, pp. 49-50). For Taha Parla, all these are foreign to Gökald's thoughts.

For Parla, the primary source of inspiration of Gökald was Emile Durkheim, and in this tradition, Gökald developed a solidaristic-corporatism that was relatively democratic and pluralist. There are also elements acquired from Rousseau and Kant. Gökald's synthesis is based on the elements derived from Durkheim, Rousseau and Kant in the name of "solidarism". The other aspects of his synthesis are cultural Turkism and moralist Sufism. In Parla's point of view, Gökald's thought was more contemporaneous than traditional and more universalist than nationalist (Parla, 2001, pp. 51-52).

### **Argument on Corporatism**

Parla argues that the pioneer and authority, even today, in the field of corporatist thought in Turkey is Ziya Gökald. According to Parla, philosophy of public administration, almost all political movements, parties, military, classical Kemalists, "Kemalist left", "social democrats" (DSP-SHP), left groups are corporatist in the last instance. However, in my opinion, this claim is assertive. Therefore, I would like to outline Parla's argument on corporatism in general.

Parla's explanation and discussion of corporatism involve some methodological errors. Simply, corporatism is reduced to corporations or occupational groups in Parla's systematization. For Parla, as economic life developed, corporations became important in societal and political affairs, and corporatism emerged from this process (Parla, 2001, pp.87-90). However, in corporatism, the major source is not "corporations" but the word "incorporation" (Williamson, 1989, p. 9).

The second aspect of this mistreatment is that in both Parla's and Gökald's conceptualization, there is no room for the working class while corporations are in the first place. Furthermore, for Parla, due to developing a corporatist view, republican ideology, as well as Gökald, excluded social classes and stuffed corporations in their place. But Marco Wilke treats classes as strategic actors in corporatism. Moreover, in his conceptualization, centralized collective bargaining is an essential tool of corporatism. Thus, socialist (democratic socialist) parties and trade unions are inevitable elements of this system (Wilke, 1991, pp. 38-49). But how could this "fact" be treated as "fact" in a conceptualization in which there is no place for them "in fact"?

Parla furthers his assertive claims on these ailing grounds that since the institutional structures are corporatist in Turkey, the political-ideological centre has been in “right”. His reason was simple: corporatism is anti-Marxist and anti-liberal. But this argument is nothing more than a piece of nonsense. First of all, from a Marxist point of view, ideology and politics belong to the superstructure. The primary determinant is not superstructure, but base, which is economy (and classes). But here, Parla treats the political/ideological level as a major determinant and attributes the backwardness of socialism and liberalism in Turkey to it.

As the extension of this approach, he commits to another methodological error by identifying corporatism compared to socialism and liberalism. However, corporatist studies usually involve the conceptualization and identification of it in relation to pluralism, as corporatism results from the decrease in the number of parties (parts) involved in the decision-making process in pluralism. For Williamson, the definition of pluralism is the diametric opposite of that of corporatism (Williamson, 1989, p. 11). Philippe Schmitter states the evident reason in launching his model of corporatism as such:

One purpose in developing this elaborate general model, beyond that of describing the behaviour of certain number of political systems which have interested me, is to offer to the political analyst an explicit alternative to the paradigm of interest politics which has heretofore completely dominated the discipline of North American political science: pluralism. (Schmitter, 1979, p. 14)

I think the quoted passage from a “real” authority on the field of corporatism is sufficient to illustrate the difficulty in the corporatism debate of Parla. But the last point that has to be mentioned is the schematization of Schmitter of corporatism. It is treated as a tripartite system (Wilke, 1991, p. 52) of state-labor unions-business/industrial organizations. In Schmitter’s categorization, there are two kinds of corporatism: state (fascist) and liberal (societal). However, Parla categorizes it as fascist and solidaristic corporatism and tries to show it as it cannot take a liberal phantom.

Due to the methodological constraints of “corporatism” counted above, the position held by Şerif Mardin may be less problematic. For Mardin, the significant element of Turkish politics is the French originated doctrine of “solidarism” adopted by Young Turks in the 1910s. Mardin argues that:

This (solidarism) was a programme that kept some of the features of the older Ottoman/Islamic culture in the sense of their affirmation of a sense of community responsibility and idealized conception of civil intercourse as free of conflict. Solidarism as an ideology was taken over by the more secular founding fathers of the Turkish Republic, who made it the ideological foundation of the republican society in 1923. (Mardin, 1995, p.294)

### **Differentiating Between Culture and Civilisation**

The most crucial reason why Turkism started as a movement of ideas with studies in literature, history and language is seen as the deterioration of unity and traditional values in society. Since Turkish intellectuals defended this view, the Turkist intellectual movement was first embodied in their writings, articles and works (Macit, 2011, p. 280). Ziya Gökalp brought a distinguished approach among these intellectuals through the concepts of “Turkification”, “Islamization”, and “Contemporaryisation”. He states that these three currents, which he describes as “I am from the Turkish nation, I am from the Islamic Ummah, and I am from the Western civilization”, complement each other. Gökalp makes a definition that separates culture and civilisation from each other. Culture is national because it is in the shadow of a nation’s religion, morality, law, customs and traditions. It reflects the essence of the nation. On the other hand, civilisation is based on material goods such as technology and knowledge and is international. Emphasising

that being included in Western civilisation does not mean living in international life and losing national values. Ziya Gökalp advocates that only scientific achievements are to be taken from Western civilisation. Islamic religious beliefs and adherence to Turkish traditions, and customs, which are other elements of culture and social structure, are not contradictory to the material aspect of the Western civilisation (Sarıay, 1996, p. 41). Gökalp also distinguishes Turkism and pan-Turkism (Turanism), accepting Turkism as the unity of Anatolian Turks and seeing it as a realised ideal. He defines Turanism as the unity of all Turks in the world, and, for him, this is an attractive dream and an ideal that is difficult to realise (Konuralp, 2013, p. 65).

### **Kemalism and Gökalpism**

In light of this theoretical arguments, I would like to evaluate the relation between Kemalism and Gökalpism by taking into consideration the accounts of the author as well. In this sense, my central question is whether Gökalp could be seen as an ideology producer in the early republican period in a highly extravagant manner proposed by Parla.

The acceptable answer for me could be derived from the work of Tekeli and İlkin's on "Kadro". They state that Gökalp undertook a role as an ideology producer during the Union and Progress (ITC) period. But in the early republican era, Gökalp's attempts to take the same role resulted in disappointment. Since the "Kadro"ists knew this fact, they did not request the same position (Tekeli and İlkin, 2003, p. xiv).

The very existence of some parallelism between Gökalpism and Kemalism may make Gökalp a significant source of Kemalism in the eyes of some scholars. However, contradictory positions in the main domains of thought prevent me from adopting the same approach.

Concerning the concept of "nationalism" in Gökalp and Kemalism, there are contradicting aspects as well as similar ones. In Niyazi Berkes' account, we see the emphasis on contradictory points. For Berkes, Gökalp's distinction between "hars" (culture) and "medeniyet" (civilization) was no more valid in the early republican era. Parla states that Gökalp's synthesis relied on this distinction, and culture constitutes the moral and esthetical dimension of civilization, while science and technology form the material aspect. More specifically, it is reduced to "national" culture and "universal" civilization. But as Berkes rightfully puts it, there is ambiguity in the differentiation between the national and religious aspects of "national" culture or traditions. For Berkes, this problem arose from the very same usage of "milli" (national) and "dini" (religious) till *Meşrutiyet*. This causes pain between "national" and "contemporary" (Berkes, 2005, p. 529).

Also, although there are some cultural elements in it, nationalism of Kemalism seems to be broader and more inclusive than Gökalp's "cultural Turkism". This is evident in the broad definition of the Turkish nation proposed by Atatürk: "The people that establish the Republic of Turkey is called the Turkish nation." Berkes, too, emphasizes the importance of "culture" in Gökalp's definition of "nation". For example, while the "nationality" meant "race" for pan-Turkists of ITC, such as Akçura, it meant "culture" for Gökalp (Berkes, 1964, p. 345).

In due course, contrary to Parla's claim that Gökalpism was prevalent in the Turkish left, following Atatürk's territorial nationalism conception, *Anadoluculuk* (Anatolianism), a left-oriented literature current, developed Gökalp's critique and antithesis (Atabay, 2003, p. 515; Konuralp, 2009, p. 37).

Concerning secularism, for Berkes, there is a considerable difference between Kemalism and Gökalpism. But this point is a bit complicating. He presents Gökalp as the major figure of

secularization in the *Meşrutiyet II* (1964, pp.411-428). Concerning the early republican period, he tries to show how the political philosophy of Gökbalp remains behind of secularism movement of the Republic. He states that Gökbalp's distinction between culture and civilization contradicts reality concerning the question of religion. He also argues that Atatürk's approach to this question is similar to Tevfik Fikret's "deism", not Gökbalp's sociology (Berkes, 2005, p. 541).

The other contradictory aspect of Kemalism and Gökbalpism is reformism. As Parla puts it, for Gökbalp, radical parties are considered "harmful" for the future of societies. In this sense, Gökbalp was against radical reforms (2001, p. 152). For Parla, the republican movement of Atatürk was not revolutionary; it was only "transformative". The absurdity of this argument is very explicit. There is no meaning in labelling a movement as "not" revolutionary that, at least, removed patrimonial rule of sultanism and religious state of Ottoman Empire from history. Berkes also explains the factors that made these changes "revolutionary" in detail (Berkes, 2005, pp. 523-526).

The former leader of the Republican People's Party (CHP), Bülent Ecevit, describes the Turkish Revolution as "continuous revolutionism" (*sürekli devrimcilik*). For Ecevit, the revolutionism of Atatürk has two directions: concrete and abstract dimensions. The concrete dimension covers the reforms made when Atatürk was alive. The abstract dimension means the progress of the Turkish nation in revolutionary steps, not evolutionary ones. Abstract dimension also requires infrastructural revolutionism. Ecevit states that continuous revolutionism is relevant to keep Atatürk's revolution alive (Ecevit, 1973, pp. 17-35).

Gökbalp argues that "Turks are "etatist" from the base. They expect every novelty, from the state. Furthermore, in Turkey, the state makes the revolution" (Parla, 2001, p. 201). "Etatism provided the CHP with a powerful instrument for the reinforcement of its policy of cultural reform as it gave the government extraordinary leverage over the economy" (Karpas, 1991, p. 56). This idea is consistent with Gökbalp's thought. In his economic policy, Gökbalp proposed a "state capitalism" (Parla, 2001, pp. 195-196). He proposes the principle of "national economy" by making use of Friedrich List's thoughts on creating a "national bourgeoisie" (Konuralp, 2009, p. 33; Konuralp, 2013, p. 65; Ünüvar, 2008, p. 33).

But, despite that idea, for Parla, Gökbalp never idealized an extreme etatism in which the state becomes the sole determinant of economic activities. Corporations have considerable autonomy in his economic policy (Parla, 2001, pp. 201-202). Also, for Parla, Gökbalp did not have a theory of a single party and an authoritarian state (Parla, 2001, p. 174). But for Karpas, "(etatism) became the most important of the six (arrows) and served as the doctrinal basis for the increases in government and party authority." He also adds that "there were efforts to merge party and state" (Karpas, 1991, p. 56). For Karpas, despite that kind of attempts of Recep Peker,

Mustafa Kemal, once apprised of the real situation, decided to correct the authoritarian excesses of the party and the regime. A certain softening began... one can never claim that he wanted to establish a dictatorial regime in Turkey. On the contrary, his aim was to found a pluralistic, democratic political and social system, although he believed that a period of strong rule was necessary to establish the necessary institutional foundations. (Karpas, 1991, p.58)

However, for Parla, that is not the case. He furthers his merciless and unjust claims that while Gökbalp proposed a single-party rule for a short period, Kemalists made a continuous single-party rule (Parla, 2001, p. 163).

Ellen Kay Trimberger characterizes the Turkish Atatürk revolution as a “revolution from above” in which the state gained dynamically autonomous power (Skocpol, 1985, p. 10). This was revolutionary as it removed the political base of the Ottoman notables and economic power of the foreigners stemming from the capitulations by using state power (Trimberger, 1978, p. 3; Konuralp, 2016, p. 90). This also means that etatism provided more grounds for such revolutions.

## CONCLUSION

In this review, I mainly focused on corporatism and the differentiation between Kemalism and Gökaldpism. However, the subject matter is much broader than the limits of this work. Although too many points are left untouched, I think my main point is clarified to a certain extent.

The difficulty of the author in praising Gökaldpism over Kemalism resulted in absurdities in many respects. But it is incontestable that in making such comparisons and evaluations, there is an urgent need for bearing in mind that the two levels of analysis were and could never be equal. Whereas one is a thinker, the other is a man of action, a statesman who should consider the balances, conditions, and impediments. However, there is no such account in Parla’s book.

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