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**Se dire conservateur dans la Turquie républicaine:
islam, politique et genre**

The Progressive Republican Party of 1924-25: Reactionaries, Conservatives, or Moderates?

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The Progressive Republican Party of 1924-25: Reactionaries, Conservatives, or Moderates?

Erik-Jan Zürcher

- ¹ In the Kemalist republic of the nineteen twenties and thirties, the term “conservative” was not used much in the political debate. Just as the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress had done, particularly after the failed counter-revolution of April 1909, the Kemalists tended to define those who fundamentally opposed their regime, as “reactionaries” (*mürteci*) and the politics they stood for as “reaction” (*irtica*). The notion of “reaction” held strong religious connotations. It was not just reaction, it was religious (Islamic) reaction and the label was used to denounce much broader movements of resistance to, respectively, the Unionists and the Kemalists, and depict them as being fundamentally against the constitutional order of the state. This was the case at the time of the “31 Mart” insurrection of 1909, whose instigators were denounced by the Unionists as “*erbabi irtica*” (lords of reaction) and during the (primarily Kurdish nationalist) Sheykh Said rebellion in early 1925. The same terminology was also used during the Menemen incident in December 1930, but with more justification, as the perpetrators of the attack on the government’s representatives in the town of Menemen, the self-proclaimed “Army of Islam” were indeed reactionaries with as their stated goal the overturning of the republic.¹
- ² The Kemalist regime defined itself as a revolutionary one, albeit one that brought about revolutionary modernisation in an orderly and top-down fashion – “*inkılap*” (the word used for the orderly revolution of the planets) rather than “*ihtilâl*” (riot, or rebellion, the Ottoman word used for the French revolution). In its efforts to legitimize its actions and mobilize support for these, it created an antithesis between its own progressive and enlightened character and this concept of the religiously inspired reactionary, who aimed to take Turkey back to a dark past. In this conceptualisation, the people was assumed to be almost a tabula rasa, an innocent “*masum halk*” that, due to its lack of education, could be either guided towards modernity by an enlightened elite (the

münevver, later *aydın*) or led astray by reactionaries. The consequence of this thinking was that an accusation of *irtica* was the definitive means to exclude people and groups from participation in legitimate politics.

- 3 The reason why the Unionists and the Kemalists thought in these rather black-and-white terms of enlightened versus reactionary is not hard to find. It is directly related to the way their worldview and political outlook were formed under the influence of the republicans of the Third French Republic, the political current that would ultimately crystallize into the Radical and Socialist Radical Party in 1901.
- 4 Although France once again became a republic in 1871, even twenty years later that republic lacked a loyal opposition. The secularist (*laïque*) republicans who dominated the political landscape were not opposed by conservative republicans, but by a mixture of clericalists and monarchists whose loyalties were divided between Legitimists, Orleanists and Bonapartists, but who certainly were not attached to the republican constitutional order. They really *were* political as well as religious reactionaries, as the Boulangist movement of the late eighteen eighties and their heirs in the Dreyfus Affair of 1895 would show.
- 5 The Young Turk activists and publicists of the first generation, who provided the ideological inputs for the later Unionists and Kemalists, people like Ahmed Rıza and Abdullah Cevdet, were eyewitnesses to the struggles between the French republicans and their clericalist and monarchist opponents, because many of them actually lived in Paris for some or all of the time in the period between 1889 and 1908.
- 6 As I suggested in a short article in 1990 and as Remzi Çakırlar is demonstrating conclusively, and in much greater depth, in his current Ph.D. research (a cotutelle of the EHESS and Leiden), the French Radical Party deeply influenced the Young Turks. Of the main characteristics of the Radical ideology: republicanism, laicism, solidarism and nationalism, three would ultimately end up in the 1927 programme of the Kemalist Republican People's Party as its guiding principles. Solidarism was not included, but it influenced the Kemalist concept of "*halkçılık*" (populism) that was the fourth principle defined in the party programme. From 1931 these four principles would form part of the "Six Arrows" of the Republican People's Party.
- 7 The clearest proof of the way the Kemalist thinking about the concepts of "reactionary" and "conservative" was indebted to the French example is in Recep Peker's well-known *İnkılap Dersleri Notları* ("[Student] notes on the Classes on Revolution") of 1935 (Peker 1935). This may be considered an authoritative treatment of the subject, as it was based on corrected student's notes taken during classes given by the secretary-general of the Republican People's Party, who had been instructed by the president, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, to give these classes on the Turkish revolution at the universities of Ankara and Istanbul in the academic year 1933-34.
- 8 On page 73 of the booklet, Peker has this to say about "reactionary parties":

"Of these reactionary parties, the ones that are clericalist have primarily taken up a position against the *radical* parties that cherish laicist principles. But just as the clericalists and monarchists joined forces before the rights and liberties of man were recognised, monarchist and clericalist parties that are born in the age in which liberal thinking exists have become mutually supportive sources of reaction against the parties based on positive and progressive thinking."
- 9 In Peker's eyes, political conservatism (with the exception of the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom) is no more than a sham. His paragraph on "Conservatives and

Moderates” deserves to be quoted in full, because it gives us a very clear insight into Kemalist thinking on the issue:

“Facing the liberal, democratic, republican and radical parties that have come out of the revolution of freedom there are reactionary parties that have been founded against the ideas that these represent. Nearly everywhere these take on the name of conservatives and moderates. Under these names they pretend to be creating obstacles from soft materials that are not always immediately visible, to those who want to progress; to be making progress more difficult and acting as a brake on the speed of progress. In their words and in their programmes, they adopt a tone that will please people in the middle, such as adjusting the rate of speed of progress, which in their eyes would be considered dangerous. *In reality, these are the most dangerous reactionaries, hidden under an exterior that pleases those who are not wide awake.*”

- 10 Obviously, the equation of conservative with reactionary deligitimizes all political conservatism as it assumes that the reactionaries disguised as conservatives are undermining the republican constitutional order and therefore are essentially traitors, who can be prosecuted under the Law on High Treason (*Hıyaneti Vatan Kanunu*) of 1920, which had been modified to include agitating for the restoration of the monarchy as a treasonable offense on April, 15th, 1923 (Finefrock 1976: 191-109).² In this context it becomes easy to understand why there is so little evidence of expressions of conservatism in the early republic. In the revolutionary climate in Ankara, conservatism was seen as a cloak for reactionary activity (aimed at the restoration of the Ottoman sultanate) that was punishable by death.
- 11 “Reactionary” was also the tag that was used to eliminate the Progressive Republican Party (Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası) that forms the subject of this article. As there are now several studies covering the history of the PRP (Zürcher 1991; Yurdsever Ateş 1994) there is no need to treat the party’s history in detail here. A brief summary should suffice.
- 12 As is well known, the PRP was formed by a number of former military leaders of the national resistance movement after World War I, who felt that Mustafa Kemal Pasha’s increasing monopolisation of political power after 1922 constituted a threat both to them and to the democratic order in Turkey. Among this group were four top generals of the army that won the war of independence.
- 13 The former leaders had been given seats in the National Assembly in the elections during the summer of 1923 on the basis of their status as heroes of the war of independence, but they had not had a say in the composition of the list of candidates for this election, which had been drawn up by Mustafa Kemal alone. They also had not been consulted on the decision to proclaim a republic (with Mustafa Kemal as president) in October 1923, and they saw the abolition of the caliphate in March 1924 as removing the last check on the president’s power.
- 14 During the summer of 1924 this group held consultations in which some prominent former Unionists, notably the former Finance Minister Mehmet Cavit Bey, also took part. Sensing the danger, the president launched a pre-emptive strike, when, with the support of the Minister of War, Fevzi Çakmak, he forced the generals to choose between retaining their military commands and their seats in the assembly. They chose the latter, but this in one go deprived them of their influence on the army (though not, of course, of their prestige in army circles).

- 15 In November 1924, the party was officially founded as the *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası* (Progressive Republican Party) after a period of intense speculation in the press, during which it was rumoured that the new party's name would be *Cezri Cumhuriyet Fırkası* – Radical Republican Party, a name that leaves no doubt at all about its source of inspiration. The name that was chosen eventually was highly significant, too. The “progressive” part of it clearly sought to counter any suggestion that the founders of the new party (who were known to have been opposed to the abolition of the caliphate) were conservative or even reactionary, but of course in Turkish the name, which literally means “Progress-loving” could also be read as a reference to the now defunct *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti* – the Committee of Union and Progress. In that sense it was an implicit challenge to Mustafa Kemal and his circle, because it could appeal to the rank and file of the old CUP who made up the core of the *Halk Fırkası*, Mustafa Kemal's party.
- 16 The second part – Republican – likewise served to counter any accusation that the party's founders were monarchists, but the use of the term republican was especially galling to the Kemalists because their party, the governing *Halk Fırkası* (“People's Party”) did not incorporate the term “republican” in its name until November, 10th, 1924.
- 17 When the PRP was launched there was an expectation in the media that a large part of the parliamentary faction of the People's Party might cross the floor, but Mustafa Kemal Pasha handled this danger very adroitly. He replaced İsmet, who was seen as his right-hand man, if not his puppet, with Fethi, who was an old friend of Mustafa Kemal's, but who had been a member of the CUP's inner circle and had long been known as a moderate and a democrat. Fethi was personally on good terms with most of the opposition leaders, including Cavit. Publicly, the president of the republic himself also took up a conciliatory attitude, even though – as we know now (Zürcher 1991: 60-62) – he privately held a very dim view of the opposition, seeing them as even reactionary monarchists, masquerading as republicans.
- 18 At the same time the internal discipline within the People's Party was strengthened, with all debate now relegated to the closed sessions of the fraction, rather than to the full sessions of the national assembly. In reaction to the founding of the PRP the term “Republican” was now added to the name of the People's Party as well.
- 19 The combination of a public display of conciliation and moderation with imposition of strict party discipline stemmed the flow of defections. Therefore, the PRP always remained a small, even if quite vocal, minority in parliament with 32 out of 150 seats.
- 20 In March 1925 the eruption of the Kurdish şeyh Sait rebellion a month earlier was used to clamp down on the opposition. İsmet was reinstated as prime minister, martial law was declared in the east of the country, the existing High Treason law was adapted to include the “political use of religion” as a treasonable offense, and a new “Law on the Maintenance of Order” (*Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu*) gave the government unlimited powers to prohibit all organisations and publications it deemed a danger to public order. This made the functioning of any opposition practically impossible, and in June 1925 the law was used to ban the PRP on the grounds that the article six of its party programme – that declared the party had respect for religious beliefs – “had been used to gain support for the propaganda of *reactionaries* who pretend to save the country from atheists.” (my italics)

- 21 The leaders of the PRP would all be among the accused during the political trials that followed an attempt to assassinate Mustafa Kemal Pasha in Izmir in 1926. Although most were acquitted, it marked the end of their role in public life.
- 22 We see, therefore, that the description of the party as a reactionary movement, or at least as an organisation that encouraged and enabled religious reactionaries, is as old as the party itself. It was perpetuated in the official historiography of the single-party period. The 1931 textbook for secondary schools *Tarih Vol. IV* essentially repeats the argument of the 1925 verdict: The fact that the PRP included a reference to respect for religion in the programme could only have acted as the raising of a standard for religious reactionaries to rally under (*Tarih Vol. IV* 1931).
- 23 The textbook also tries to show the insincerity of the PRP leaders by quoting not just from the official party programme, but from earlier drafts that had been used as evidence by the Independence Tribunal that tried the party's leaders in 1926. In the first draft of article four the party had announced that "the party has accepted the principles of liberalism and democracy, but because the strength of these principles rests on the opinion and morals of the public and on the national conscience, we will be mindful of their perfection in the application." In the eyes of *Tarih* this rather circumspect phrase means that "the readiness and the ability of the nation are denied, and the revolutionary actions are rejected in a way that encourages the reactionary minds" (*Tarih Vol. IV* 1931: 189).
- 24 When we combine the two texts that are products of official Kemalism in the nineteen thirties, the history textbook and Peker's *İnkılap Dersleri Notları*, we thus see that the PRP was defined as a current that enabled political reaction in a context in which political reaction was defined as the very antithesis of the political radicalism of the Kemalist revolution and in which the possibility of legitimate political conservatism was denied.
- 25 Of course, with the advent of multi-party democracy in Turkey, and in particular from the nineteen sixties onwards, historiography became much more pluriform. In the realm of history teaching, however, both in schools and universities, the tropes of Kemalist historiography survived for much longer and were even reinvigorated after the military interventions of 1971 and 1980 that sought to reinstate Kemalism as a hegemonic ideology. The treatment of the Progressive Republican Party reflects this.
- 26 Suna Kili, in her much-used textbook *History of the Turkish Revolution* of 1982 has the following to say (Kili1982: 161):
- "Although the party announced in its programme that in general it adopted the principle of republicanism, liberalism and democracy, it also announced in the same programme that it was respectful to currents of thought and religious beliefs. In the party organisation all those who were against the revolutionary steps taken at the time, all the extreme conservatives (most of them old Unionists) came together."
- 27 Here the accusation goes beyond the notion that the party's position on religious beliefs encouraged reactionaries. The party members themselves are characterised as counter-revolutionary "*aşırı tutucular*" (extreme conservatives), which seems to be equivalent to "reactionaries."
- 28 Toktamış Ateş, in his equally widely used textbook of the same title from 1980, says of the origins of the PRP opposition (Ateş 1980: 282): "The steps taken by Mustafa Kemal and his friends created a real panic in some circles." He sees the emergence of the PRP

as the outcome of these fears. On the issue of the party's openness to reactionaries, he has the following to say:

“When we try to evaluate it after more than half a century in the conditions of today, we have to emphasize that, even if the PRP was genuine on the subject of siding with the republic and the reforms, its existence and strength reinforced those who were against these. It encouraged them to oppose the republic and to resist the reforms.”

- 29 Clearly more balanced than Kili's treatment, Ateş does not pronounce on the intentions of the PRP leaders, but instead focuses on the effect of their actions. In doing so he subscribes to the argument in the original government decision of 1925 and verdict of 1926 that the PRP's statements enabled the reactionary opponents of the republic.
- 30 For a long time, therefore, the political character of the PRP has been defined in the context of a black-and-white opposition between radical/revolutionary on the one hand and reactionary on the other. It has been interpreted either as an extreme conservative/reactionary movement itself or as one that – intentionally or not – enabled and encouraged reactionaries. This historiographical tradition originated in the early single-party state of 1925-1935, but because of the hold of the Kemalist elite on state-funded education, it survived in textbooks for another fifty years after the introduction of multiparty politics.
- 31 By the nineteen nineties the room for different historical interpretations in Turkey had clearly grown, but even as late as 1998 a prominent Kemalist historian like Sina Akşin still echoed the verdict of the independence tribunal of 1925, when he wrote that the leaders of the PRP, by stating that the party respected religious beliefs, “could be expected to develop into a centre of attraction for all kinds of conservatives” (Akşin 1998: 180-181).
- 32 To summarize: The notion that the PRP was a vehicle for reactionary politics is well established in Turkish historiography, and it can be explained both from the arguments used to close down the opposition party in 1925 and from the conviction, expressed by Recep Peker, that conservatism was really only reaction in disguise. But what if we free ourselves from the persistent reactionary/revolutionary dichotomy and in the context of this special issue on Turkish conservatism ask the question: to what extent was the Progressive Republican Party of 1924-5 in fact a *conservative* party? In the following I will try to answer this question on the basis of a reading of the statements published by the party itself.
- 33 As the PRP had a short life of just over six months, cut short by the introduction of the Law on the Maintenance of Order and martial law after only four, tracing the voting record of the PRP deputies in the national assembly is of limited use. We have, however, at our disposal three detailed documents published by the party on its launch: party statutes, a manifesto and a party programme. The last of these offers us a very clear view of the ideological character of the party (Zürcher 1991: 138-139).
- 34 Articles one and two emphasize the principles, both of the state (“a republic based on popular sovereignty”) and the party (“based on liberalism and democracy”).
- 35 In articles four and five, the PRP defines itself as being strongly constitutionalist – any limitations on the liberty of the people can only be imposed within the limits of the constitution, and the constitution can only be changed with a clear mandate from the people.

- 36 Separation of powers is emphasized: judges cannot be removed from their position (article 10), civil servants cannot become party members (article 13) and – most important of all – the president of the republic will lose his seat in parliament on election (article 12).
- 37 The party favours a small state. Article nine even says: “The tasks of the state will be reduced to a minimum.”
- 38 Taken together, the party programme thus gives quite a sharp definition of the ideological position of the PRP: it is a classic liberal, republican and constitutional party in the tradition of European liberalism of the 19th century. In a way, that is not surprising. We know from contemporary reports and memoirs that the programme was drawn up by the former Unionist finance minister Cavit Bey and General Kazım Karabekir, one of the heroes of the independence war. The section on principles clearly bears the imprint of the former, who had been one of the few real liberals within the inner circle of the CUP before 1918.
- 39 The – relatively long and detailed – chapters on the economy and on finance also clearly come from Cavit, who was one of the very few experts in this field in Turkey at the time. They also reflect liberal ideas. Private initiative and entrepreneurship will be encouraged, free trade principles will be combined with limited protection for local industry, and the growth of state monopolies is rejected. Karabekir’s hand is visible more in the sections on education and social affairs.
- 40 There is nothing in the programme, or indeed in the manifesto, to suggest that the founders of the PRP were politically or philosophically conservative. If they had been, following Mannheim’s analysis of modern conservatism (Mannheim 1927: 68-142 and 470-495), one would have expected to see reference to historical legitimation of institutions and practices, rather than to universal principles, as well as advocacy of continuity with the past. One would expect the rejection of abstract notions and ambitious programmes, and the expression of the view – either explicitly or implicitly – that society works as an organism rather than as a mechanism. In a conservative ideology distinction rather than equality would be preferred, and the value of religion would be highlighted.
- 41 Of all these elements, the only one we can find a trace of in the programme of the PRP is religion. It is referred to in the sixth article, which states “the party respects religious beliefs and convictions.” As noted earlier, this is the article that was used by the government and its independence tribunals in 1925 to attack, and ultimately close down the party. The party chairman, Kazım Karabekir, defended the inclusion of the article as an expression of a sentiment of true secularism (in that it uses the plural). Nevertheless, it is perhaps not too far-fetched to see in this article a kind of dog whistle that was designed to attract those who already had strong doubts about the religiosity of the Ankara leadership and the president in particular. If so, it was a political ploy to attract support. It did not constitute an argument in favour of the importance of religion as one of the underpinnings of the social order. Opportunism rather than conservatism.
- 42 Of the other elements that characterise modern conservatism, we find no trace. The programme (and the manifesto) are explicitly based on abstract principles – sovereignty, democracy, liberalism, general liberties, civil rights – that clearly belong

to the family tree of the enlightenment and the French Revolution. This would have been anathema to any true conservative.

- 43 Another way to try to answer the question is to understand “conservatism”, not as a philosophical position such as the one Mannheim writes about, but as a *relative* position in the political spectrum. As I have noted before, this is what Frederick Frey does in his *Turkish Political Elite*, when he describes the PRP leaders as “post-independence conservatives” (Frey 1965: 327). According to Frey, nationalist movements have a tendency to split once independence is achieved, because the aim of the movement is “essentially negative and self-terminating.” After independence, divergent views on what the future should be, come to the fore. Frey sees the “short and unhappy career” of the PRP as the final stage, and resolution, of this phase in the political development of Turkey after the end of the independence war. So far, the analysis is, I think quite apposite for the PRP. Clearly, the PRP founders stood for a somewhat slower and less radical pace of change, which took into account the readiness of the population to accept it. The draft versions of the programme show this, and so does a diplomatic report of November 1924, in which Adnan Adıvar, one of the founders, and his wife Halide Edip are quoted as saying that “things have gone too far.”³ This would seem to make the party moderate, however, rather than conservative.
- 44 Although some of the party founders were on record as having been supporters of the constitutional monarchy earlier (as were all Unionists), by 1924 they accepted the proclamation of the republic and the abolition of sultanate and caliphate (but the changes to the High Treason law of 1923 would of course have made them liable to prosecution had they not done so). The programme shows, however, that they *did* oppose the idea of concentration of power in the hands of a revolutionary leadership, as well as an increased role for the state, the merging of state and party, and economic nationalism. In 1924 these were still issues that were debated, but the imposition of the Law on the Maintenance of Order in the period 1925-29 then largely stifled the debate and after the eruption of the world crisis, Turkey did indeed move quickly into the direction the PRP had opposed. It is likely that, with the PRP in government, different choices would have been made, particularly in the economic sphere. But these were, in a manner of speaking, differences of opinion within the family. They were about ways and means rather than about the fundamentals. That is not surprising, as all of the PRP founders had been members of the Committee of Union and Progress – just like the vast majority of their opponents in the RPP and this organisation (founded, after all, at the centenary of the French Revolution in 1889) never had had a conservative worldview. There were certainly moderates and radicals within the CUP core but hardly any conservatives.
- 45 The split in the nationalist movement in 1924 was therefore not one between progressives and reactionaries as Kemalist historiography would have it, and not even one between progressives and conservatives in an ideological or philosophical sense. It was a split between two wings of the same movement and that was a movement that took its cue from the secularist French radicalism of the *fin de siècle*. The split can be described as one between a moderate and a radical wing, but it is important to note that the moderates of the PRP were not primarily motivated by ideological factors, but by political and personal ones. Both the party programme and the statements of the party founders and the newspapers that supported them (the vast majority of the

Istanbul press) make it clear that the one single factor that motivated them most was apprehension about the emergence of a personal dictatorship in Ankara.

- 46 To understand this, we have to realise that in the PRP different elements came together. One was that of the former military and political leaders of the independence movement: Kazım Karabekir, Ali Fuat [Cebesoy], Cafer Tayyar [Eğilmez], Refet [Bele] and Rauf [Orbay]. They resented the way they had been excluded from consultations on the proclamation of the republic (and the subsequent election of Mustafa Kemal to president), the move of the capital from Istanbul to Ankara, and the abolition of the caliphate. They also resented the way positions of power came to be occupied more and more by people (like İsmet, Şükrü [Kaya], Recep [Peker], or Ali [Çetinkaya]) who had transferred their earlier allegiance to either Enver or Talât to Mustafa Kemal, and who owed their position to him. The pashas undoubtedly saw themselves as persons who worked WITH Mustafa Kemal, where these others worked FOR him. One can argue that the position of Kazım Karabekir cs was linked to a sense of entitlement – they expected to be consulted on the basis of who they were and what they had done for the country, rather than for any formal reasons.
- 47 The other element in the leadership of the PRP consisted of civilians who had previously been prominent in the inner circles of the CUP like Cavit, but also Sabit [Sağiroğlu] or Dr. Adnan [Adivar], and the newspaper editors who supported the party – people like Hüseyin Cahit [Yalçın], Velid Ebüzziya or Ahmet Emin [Yalman]. These seem to have interpreted the gradual power grab of Mustafa Kemal and a close circle of collaborators, largely with a military background, in 1923-24 as a repetition of the developments of ten years earlier, when the CUP had established essentially a one-party dictatorship after the coup d'état of January 1913. Their assessment of the personality of Mustafa Kemal Pasha certainly played a role in this. He was known within Unionist circles as extremely ambitious. In his private diaries Cavit had expressed himself scathingly on the character of the future president as far back as 1917.⁴
- 48 The emphasis in the party programme on separation of powers, direct elections and creating a non-political presidency and civil service all formed part of the genuinely liberal and democratic outlook of the party, but at the same time it also offered the best possible opportunity to dilute Mustafa Kemal's power. Here, the ideological outlook and the underlying motivation of the party's founders coincided.

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NOTES

1. For a discussion of the concept of *irtica* see: Azak 2010: 15 and 31-43.
2. After the şeyh Sait rebellion broke out, the law was amended to include the political use of religion among the treasonable offenses.
3. PRO/FO 424/261 (Confidential Print) 24.11.1924 (Lindsay to Chamberlain).
4. Cavid's diary, quoted in Bayur 1983 [1967]: 161-162.

ABSTRACTS

This article tries to make sense of the ideological position of the Progressive Republican Party of 1924-5. It does so by making two separate points.

Firstly, it argues that, under the influence of the politics of the French Third Republic, the early Kemalists, like the Unionists before them, had a strong inclination to see all those who opposed their own revolutionary radicalism as reactionaries rather than as conservatives. Because conservatism was defined as reaction-in-disguise it could not gain legitimacy as a political current. The historiographical tradition based on the dichotomy of radical/reactionary that the Kemalists established during the single-party period had a long-lasting effect in the way the PRP was viewed.

Secondly, the article asks the question what is the result if we free ourselves from the Kemalist view of the PRP as reactionary (or enabling reactionaries) and try to determine whether the party was in fact truly conservative. On the basis of the party's own programme, the conclusion is that it is quite far removed from philosophical conservatism and can be better characterised as the moderate and liberal wing of the same radical current the Kemalists themselves formed part of.

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