The years 1923-1926 form one of the great watersheds in the history of the emergence of modern Turkey, together with the period of the establishment of multi-party democracy and of Turkey's entry into the Western alliance (1946-1952). In the years after 1923 the Turkish nationalist movement, which had fought to safeguard the integrity and independence of the Turkish, or more exactly the non-Arab Muslim parts of the Ottoman Empire, evolved into a movement with the more far-reaching goal of radically transforming and modernizing Turkish society and culture. At the same time the rather amorphous but democratic political structure of the nationalist movement gave way gradually to a monolithic power structure dominated by the radical wing of the movement under Mustafa Kemal Pasha Atatürk (1881-1938).

This change came about neither quickly nor smoothly. It involved the elimination of rival power centres within the nationalist movement and in several cases these offered stubborn resistance. The last instance of serious resistance within the national movement, which was at least potentially dangerous to Mustafa Kemal's leadership and position, was the formation of the Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası (Progressive Republican Party) in November 1924. This party offered a serious challenge to the Kemalists until it was closed under the Takrir-i Sükün Kanunu (Law on the Maintenance of Order), which made impossible any kind of legal political opposition in Turkey in June 1925. The political purges following the Izmir conspiracy in 1926 were aimed at the final discrediting and elimination of all those whose status or influence might enable them to challenge Mustafa Kemal's authority, among them, the former leaders of the Progressive Republican Party.

---

1 The National Pact (Misak-i Milli), which was adopted by the nationalists in the last Ottoman parliament as their official programme in January, 1920 explicitly demands an independent and united existence for the "Ottoman Muslim majority", while demanding a plebiscite for the Arab provinces under occupation. Cf: Smith, 154-155.

2 For the best description of this process, see: Tunçay, 27-183.

3 The purges are described extensively in Kandemir, Izmir and in Zürcher, Factor, 142-167.
In general histories of the Turkish Republic the Progressive Republican Party is treated as hardly more than a footnote, and even in more specialized works on the period the attention devoted to it is slight. No monographs on the party are known to exist, either in Turkish or in a Western language. The reasons for this situation are probably threefold. In the first place, the Progressive Republican Party existed officially for seven months only and was active during only five of them. It never won an election, formed a government or even succeeded in having any legislation of its own passed by the National Assembly. Secondly, there is an overwhelming tendency among historians of the period—both in Turkey and abroad—to see events, and especially political conflicts, through the eyes of the victor, i.e. Mustafa Kemal. As we shall see, his is a very partisan view. Thirdly, those Turkish historians, few in number and largely outside the historical establishment, who have been able to shake off the conventions of Kemalist historiography and to take a fresh look at the history of this period, are either conservative popular historians like Kandemir or Kutay, who fit more easily into the category of journalism than into that of the professional historians, or members of the political left and much more interested in social history and/or the history of the elimination of the political left in the twenties than in that of the rather conservative opposition embodied by the Progressive Republican Party.

Nevertheless, in my view the episode of the party deserves our attention. Not only because it was the first opposition party of the Turkish Republic, but also because it was the first time a credible alternative to the radical and authoritarian Kemalist line presented itself. Perhaps it was also the last time for many years that Turkey’s political elite could have opted for a different pace and maybe even a different kind of reform and development, more in line with the policies adopted in the fifties and sixties.

In his *Party Politics in Egypt. The Wafd and Its Rivals 1919-1935*, Marius Deeb, basing himself mainly on the work of Robert Michels, Maurice Duverger, Edmund Burke and Max Weber, argues that, to get a clear picture of the significance and the characteristics of any given party, that party should be analysed in terms of three main determinants, which are: principles (expressed in the party programme), organisation and social basis.\(^4\) Although the

\(^4\) Deeb, 3-6.
source materials and data on the Progressive Republican Party impede a thorough analysis of each of these three aspects, they have been the categories which were kept in mind during the writing of this study. Nevertheless, this study remains the work of a historian and not that of a political scientist, as will be apparent throughout.

This attempt to write the history of Turkey's first opposition party has been organised as follows: After an introduction into the history and the historiography of the power struggle which took place within the Turkish national movement during the years of the fight for independence (1918-1923) in chapter one, chapter two is devoted to the rising tensions within the movement after the proclamation of the republic in October 1923, which eventually led to the formal split in the governing People's Party and the establishment of a parliamentary opposition. Chapter three is concerned with the actual history, the rise and fall, of the Progressive Republican Party, its activities in the national assembly and in the country, after which chapter four examines the political aims of the party as they appear in the party manifesto and its programme, in order to establish the place of the PRP in the political spectrum and to find out about the origins of its ideas. In the conclusion (chapter five) I shall look at the power-base of the party, its chances of success and the reasons for its failure. The text is followed by two appendices, in which the most important texts of the period are given in translation (appendix A) and a chronological table for the years 1923-1925 is added (appendix B). Finally, a survey of the sources used and an index are supplied.

Due to professional and personal circumstances, the gestation period of this book has been inordinately long. Parts of this book have been presented as papers at the two colloquia on the history of the later Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic in Paris (January 1985) and Leiden (April 1987), the congress of the CIEPO in Pecs (September 1986), the congress of the Turkish Historical Society in Ankara (October 1986), the Atatürk symposium in Ankara (September 1987) and during a guest lecture at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London (June 1987). A synopsis of the results has been presented during two lectures for BILAR in Ankara and Istanbul in the Spring of 1989. The remarks of many colleagues during formal and informal discussions following the reading of these papers have been very helpful in shaping this study as it is presented now.

Nijmegen, December 1989.