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The Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli Dergah

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This entry examines the closure of the Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli Dervish Lodge (Dergâh), a site of great importance and sanctity for Alevi-Bektashis, under Law No. 677 on the "Abolition of Dervish Lodges and Shrines" enacted on 30 November 1925, alongside all other Sufi orders and institutions. It further explores the subsequent positions and responses of the Bektashi successors (Babagân and Çelebis) as well as Alevis. Despite its heterodox characteristics, Bektashism had been regarded as a legitimate Sufi order throughout the Ottoman period—from its foundation up until 1826, and informally until 1925—largely through its lodges and, centrally, the Hacı Bektaş Dervish Lodge. With the official closure of the lodge in 1925, however, its legitimacy was entirely abolished, effectively placing Bektashism in the same legal and social category as Alevism, which had never been recognised by the authorities and had long been marked by heterodoxy.

Nevertheless, the closure of the order and its central lodge did not signify the end of Bektashism. While the competition over material and symbolic representation between the Babagân and the Çelebis came to an end, both groups continued to uphold the spiritual legacy of Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli through the informal continuation of the dedebaba and postnişin positions among their respective followers outside the institutional framework of the lodge. Alevis, meanwhile, came to integrate the figure of Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli into their broader struggles for identity formation and recognition. Particularly after the site was reopened as a museum in 1964, the Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli Dervish Lodge began to gain new significance as a central site of pilgrimage. Through commemorative ceremonies and festivals, the Dergâh evolved into a focal point for Alevi communities—a space where religious rituals are practiced alongside the articulation of social and political demands.

Alevism and Bektashism: A Conceptual Distinction

Although the phrase "Alevi-Bektaşi," frequently encountered in both written and spoken form, may suggest a unity or sameness, it in fact refers to two distinct and internally diverse communities with different historical and social trajectories. Alevism, as far as is known, is the name that began to be used in the 19th century to describe

what was previously known as Kızılbaşlık. Bektashism, on the other hand, is the name of a Sufi order that derives its name from Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli and is considered to have been institutionalised by Balım Sultan—referred to as the *Pir-î Sâni*—approximately two centuries after Hacı Bektaş's death. Bektashis are generally divided into two major branches. The first consists of those who, based on the *Vilayetname*, assert that Hacı Bektaş was *mücerred* (celibate), and who therefore claim that Bektashism is not inherited through bloodline but rather attained through initiation (*intisap*) and spiritual guidance (*irşat*). These are referred to as *Babagân* or *Babalar* and represent the tarikat-based (order-based) Bektashi group. The second branch comprises those who claim genealogical descent from Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, presenting themselves as his *bel evladı* (spiritual or symbolic children). This group, known as the *Çelebiler*, are also recognised under this designation by certain Alevi groups they engage with.

The Position of the Dergâh in the Ottoman Period and the 1826 Rupture

Although Alevis and Bektashis differ institutionally, structurally, and administratively, they share many commonalities in terms of belief and spiritual orientation—one of the most significant being their shared reverence for Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli as *pir*. The spiritual centre for Bektashis is the Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli Dergâh, also referred to as the *Pirevi*. The central question that eventually led to the split between the Babagan and Çelebi branches of the order revolves around whether Hacı Bektaş was ever married—and thus whether he had a bloodline—and, more critically, over which group held legitimate authority over the Dergâh.

According to the Babagan, legitimate representation began with the position of *Dedebaba*, the spiritual deputy of Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, a line that started with Sersem Ali Dedebaba, a halife of Balım Sultan, in 1551 and continued in the *Pirevi* in Hacıbektaş until the closure of the dervish lodges in 1925. The Çelebis, in contrast, trace their legitimacy to an earlier period: specifically to İskender Çelebi (1512–1548), the eldest son of Kalender Çelebi, and later to his younger brother Yusuf Bâli Çelebi (1516–1568), who both held the roles of *postnişin* (spiritual successor) and trustees (*vakıf mütevellisi*) of the foundation. This dual leadership of the Dergâh between the Babagan and the Çelebis persisted until 1826, when the Bektaşi lodges were closed following the abolition of the Janissary Corps. Sultan Mahmud II allowed the Hacı Bektaş Dergâh to remain open, but from that point onward, appointed Nakşibendi sheikhs to manage it. As a result, the competition for authority and representation within the Dergâh now included not only the Babagan and Çelebis but also the Nakşibendi sheikhs.

Even though the Bektaşi order was officially banned in 1826, Bektashism as a tradition

did not disappear, and relations between the Ottoman state and the order continued. The Ottoman authorities implemented a special policy specifically for the Hacı Bektaş Dergâh, allowing Bektashi representatives to remain at the site in exchange for compliance with the new regulations. Revenues from the endowment (*vakıf*) were distributed among the Babagan, the Çelebis, and the Nakşibendi sheikhs. The continuation of informal relations between the state and the officially banned order suggests a flexible state policy aimed at maintaining control over Bektashis through the Dergâh. Despite this, the Ottoman authorities never officially recognised any Bektashi group and instead maintained oversight and balance through the appointment of Nakşibendi sheikhs.

Unlike the Bektashis, the religious organisation of Anatolian Alevis was based on the *ocak* system. These *ocaks* were divided into two main groups: those that operated independently and those affiliated with the Hacı Bektaş Çelebis. While the *dedes* of the independent *ocaks*, especially in Eastern Anatolia and Dersim, acknowledged Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli as *pir* and *serçeşme*, they had no formal ties to the Çelebis or the Dergâh. In contrast, the *dedes* affiliated with the Çelebis would receive *icazet* (authorization) at specific times of the year from the Çelebis residing in Hacı Bektaş, in order to perform their religious duties. They would also pay a fee to the Dergâh, known as the *kara kazan hakkı*, to serve their affiliated *talips*.

Available historical records indicate that Alevi *ocak-zâde dedes* began to travel to the Hacı Bektaş Dergâh in Kırşehir from the early 19th century to obtain or renew their *icazetname*. From that point onward, the Dergâh increasingly became a focal point for Alevi communities across Anatolia. Thus, the bond between Alevis and Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli stems from their recognition of him as *pir* and, for some, from their incorporation into the *ocak* structure via the Çelebis.

The Founding of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal’s Visit, and Emerging Expectations

Following the discussion of the meanings attached to Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli by Alevis and Bektashis in terms of *pir*, *ocak*, and *dergâh*, this section focuses on the position of the Dergâh during the early years of the Turkish Republic and the National Struggle. The relationship between Alevis and Bektashis and the Republic of Turkey dates back to the War of Independence. In an effort to include Alevis and Bektashis in the struggle, Mustafa Kemal visited the Hacı Bektaş Dergâh—a site of great spiritual significance for both groups—on 23 December 1919. Aware of the Dergâh’s dual leadership, Mustafa Kemal held separate meetings with both Çelebi Cemaleddin and Salih Niyazi Dedebaba, the representative of the Babagan branch. As a result of these meetings,

he received full material and moral support from both factions. The Dergâh subsequently issued calls for support to other affiliated lodges and groups across Anatolia, many of which responded positively, aligning themselves with the National Struggle under Mustafa Kemal's leadership.

While this general support from Alevis and Bektashis is widely acknowledged, it is important to note that there were also acts of resistance to the National Struggle from within both communities, though these are typically regarded as exceptions. One influential factor in the support of Alevis was Çelebi Cemaleddin's declaration of Mustafa Kemal as the *mehdi*. Beyond this, it was widely believed among some Alevis that Mustafa Kemal was a manifestation (*tecelli*) of either Ali or Hacı Bektaş, having undergone *don değiştirme* (transfiguration). The fact that Mustafa Kemal's father was named Ali Rıza further reinforced the belief that he might have Alevi or Bektashi roots, and this contributed to his sacralisation and presentation as a Bektashi figure. From this perspective, some interpreted his visit to Hacı Bektaş not simply as a political gesture, but as a confirmation of his affinity with Bektashism and of the privileged status of their community. However, this visit—like his appeals to other religious groups—was in fact a strategic move to secure broad-based support for the National Struggle.

The general support given by Alevis and Bektashis to the National Struggle continued during the implementation of the revolutionary reforms that aimed to create a modern society following the war. One of the primary reasons for the community's support of the Kemalist regime was the belief that the Republic would put an end to the Alevis' historical problem of marginalisation. Reforms such as the abolition of the caliphate and Islamic law in 1924, the removal of Islam as the state religion, and other measures promoting secularism likely fostered hope among Alevis that the state would adopt a neutral stance toward them.

Whereas Alevism had long been regarded as un-Islamic and illegitimate under the Ottoman Empire, it was now highlighted under the banner of "Turkishness" and made to appear compatible with the Republic's nationalist ideology. Notably, a discourse initiated during the Committee of Union and Progress era by Baha Sait—which presented Alevism and Bektashism as the "true religion" and "authentic Turkishness" by emphasising its Central Asian roots outside Arab and Persian Islamic influences—was carried into the Republican period. On the one hand, Alevis were valorised as representing the "essence of Turkishness"; on the other hand, they were still excluded from the dominant Sunni-Hanafi understanding of Turkish identity. Despite some of their cultural features being reinterpreted as modern and as a counter to Islam under Arab influence—now considered reactionary—their heterodox

character continued to pose an obstacle to their full legitimacy. This ambiguity marked the beginning of the complex and often contradictory relationship between Alevis and the Kemalist regime in the Republican era.

The 1925 Law on the Closure of Dervish Lodges and the End of the Dergâh

Although the removal of Islam as the official state religion in 1928 appeared to mark an end to the religious legitimisation of political authority, the reforms of the Republican period, in practice, often aimed at incorporating religion into the state structure. On 3 March 1924, the same day the Caliphate was abolished, the Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Teşkilatı*) was established. The Kemalist regime, with its claim to be modern and unitary, sought to build a society closed to all forms of separatism, and therefore ignored religious and sectarian pluralism. In practice, however, Hanefi-Sunni Islam was elevated—if not officially, then implicitly—to the status of a state religion. The closure of all Sufi orders through the Law on the Abolition of Dervish Lodges and Shrines on 30 November 1925 effectively reinforced the state's monopoly over religion. These measures, often interpreted as anti-religious, were not directed against Islam per se, but rather seen as efforts to neutralise religious reactionism by endorsing Sunnism on behalf of the state.

Despite the significant support Alevis and Bektashis had offered to the War of Independence and to the young Republic, they were not granted a privileged status, as some had expected. The new regime did not afford Alevis any special recognition—neither as a community, nor as a religion, nor in the political sphere. Some circles even argue that the new regime engaged in discrimination against Alevis. In contrast, more moderate perspectives suggest that the exclusion of Alevis from the bureaucratic and religious structures of the Republic may have reflected a continuation of Ottoman political traditions, rather than a consciously designed policy by the Kemalists. According to this view, it is not that the founding cadre of the Republic deliberately excluded Alevis, but rather that they failed to decisively break with the Ottoman legacy.

Putting aside debates over whether the Kemalist regime discriminated against or favoured Alevis and Bektashis, it must be noted that it did treat them equally—at least in one regard: the closure of all dervish lodges, including Bektashi tekkes, through Law No. 677 on 30 November 1925. In accordance with this law, titles such as *baba*, *dede*, *seyit*, *mürşit*, *derviş*, and *halife*, which were part of Alevi and Bektashi tradition, were equated with terms like *fortune teller*, *sorcerer*, *amulet-maker*, and *healer*, and were likewise banned. For the second time since 1826, Bektashi lodges were officially closed—this time including the central lodge, the Hacı Bektaş Dergâh, which had

previously been spared.

In justifying the closure of tekkes and zaviyes, it was argued that “there exists a fundamental contradiction between the state’s foundational principles and the tekkes; a state progressing toward stability cannot tolerate such medieval-style (*kurun-ı vüsat*) institutions.” The aim, it was said, was to prevent such structures from being manipulated for political, sectarian, or ignorant ends. Yet the fact that Bektashism—often associated with modernism—was also targeted by these accusations and measures initially caused some confusion among Bektashis, though many ultimately received the reforms favourably. For instance, in a 1931 article in *Yenigün* newspaper, a Bektashi named Ziya Bey commented that the abolition of Bektashism, like other Sufi orders, did not disturb Bektashis. He argued that the aims and principles of the Republic were compatible with Bektashi ideas and expectations. According to Ziya Bey, the closure of tekkes and zaviyes was a necessary step toward civilisation and modernity, and it would allow Bektashis to live out their already modern identity more freely in social life.

However, the realities of lived experience did not align with Ziya Bey’s optimistic vision. For instance, Bektashi *Halife Baba* Teoman Güre stated in an interview that, following the closure of the tekkes and zaviyes, *Meydan* rituals—traditionally held in Dergâhs—began to be conducted in private homes. Due to the secrecy and fear caused by the ban, doors and windows were kept tightly shut, which led to public suspicion and even slander. On the other hand, another Bektashi *Halife Baba*, Turgut Koca, viewed the closure of the tekkes more positively. He argued that performing rituals in homes helped facilitate Bektashi education and practice, making it more accessible to women and children alike.

The Impact of the Dergâh’s Closure on the Communities

Secrecy and Continuity Among Bektashis

Prior to the closure of the Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli Dergâh in 1925, dervishes and *babas* from the Babagan branch resided at the site. The Dergâh’s spiritual and administrative structure was organised around a set of residential units, each represented by a *baba*. At the top of this hierarchy stood the *Kiler Evi Babası*, who also held the highest spiritual authority as *Dedebaba*. Following him in order were the *Aşevi Babası*, *Ekmek Evi Babası*, *Mihman Evi Babası*, *Dedebağı Babası*, *Hanbağı Babası*, and *Balım Evi Babası*. Rituals conducted at the Dergâh were always led by these *babas*; the Çelebis were not involved in such activities. Their responsibilities as trustees (*mütevelli*) included providing food and lodging for the poor and for pilgrims, as well as overseeing the repair and maintenance of the structures within the *Pirevi*.

In addition to its spiritual functions, the Dergâh also operated as an economic institution. According to data from 1925, it owned extensive lands, farms, livestock, and mills. Some sources report that the annual income of the Dergâh exceeded 15,000 gold coins. A portion of this income was allocated to the Çelebis as their *Evladiye Tevliyet Hissesi*, another portion was used for maintenance and repairs, and the remaining share was distributed among the *babas*. Additional insight into the financial structure is provided by architect Hikmet, who had been at the Dergâh shortly before the closure to supervise the construction of a guesthouse. He noted that the cultivation of the Dergâh's lands and agricultural operations were the responsibility of the *babas*. The Dergâh's budget was also supported by *nüzûrat*—an annual monetary contribution from each Bektashi—and *zühûrat*, the donations and offerings left by pilgrims during their visits.

Following the closure decree in 1925, the Dergâh's lands were transferred in 1926 to the Kırşehir Special Administration with the aim of establishing a model farm. Personal belongings and artefacts located at the Dergâh were inventoried by representatives of the Ministry of Education and the Directorate General of Foundations. Many of these items were initially transferred to a warehouse in Ankara and later to the Ethnography Museum; however, numerous valuable carpets, objects, and books disappeared during the process.

On the day of the Dergâh's official closure, Salih Niyazi *Dedebaba* and *Bektaş Baba*, who resided there, were forced to leave. From then until 1930, Salih Niyazi continued—albeit unofficially—to serve as *Dedebaba* from Albania, where he lived until his death in 1941. From 1941 to 1960, Ali Naci Baykal assumed the role of *Dedebaba*. The official banning of the Bektashi order in 1925 prompted the community to adapt to the new legal environment and take necessary precautions to avoid prosecution. While the order withdrew from political life, Bektashism did not come to an end. The *Dedebabalık* institution and the symbolic post of Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli were preserved and maintained outside the Dergâh. The Bektashi community did not allow the spiritual lineage to lapse.

Political Presence and the Postnişinship Among the Çelebis

The closure of the Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli Dergâh in 1925 affected the Çelebis differently. As they were not residents of the Dergâh and did not perform rituals there, they were not benefiting from its privileged position as a space where religious ceremonies could be conducted freely. Thus, the spatial restrictions imposed on the Bektashis after the closure were already a reality for the Çelebis. Veliyeddin Ulusoy, a traditional representative of the Çelebi lineage, recalls that the family faced severe pressure

following the closures. He recounts that the local district officer would frequently raid their premises, and that *ocak* leaders affiliated with them had to carry out their annual visits under harsh conditions and in great secrecy, often at night. Despite such efforts, many Alevi *dedes* fell victim to this repression—some were imprisoned, others had their beards forcibly shaved. Ulusoy states that this pressure continued until the 1960s, at which point, with the help of family members, organisations like the Hacı Bektaş Tourism Promotion Association were formed, gradually shifting the situation.

Despite these difficulties, the Çelebis retained their hereditary influence among the Alevis throughout much of the Republican era—up to the 1970s—and remained active in Turkish politics. They produced numerous members of parliament through parties such as the Republican People's Party (CHP), the Democrat Party, and the Unity Party (TBP). In contrast to the Bektashi orders, which withdrew from public life, the Çelebis assumed active political roles, drawing on the symbolic and genealogical legacy of Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli. Although not officially recognised, they have continued to maintain the traditional postnişinship as his successors.

Alevi Identity Formation and New Meanings

Apart from the restrictions mentioned by Ulusoy—such as the challenges their affiliated *dedes* faced during annual visits to the Dergâh—the Alevis were not directly impacted by the 1925 closure of the Bektashi lodges and the Hacı Bektaş Dergâh. The Alevi tradition, already shaped by its intrinsic sense of secrecy, maintained this characteristic until the 1960s. However, the social, political, and economic transformations that occurred from the founding of the Republic up to that decade contributed to Alevism gradually becoming visible in the public sphere. In this period of emerging identity politics and demands for recognition, Alevis began to reinterpret the figure of Hacı Bektaş in religious, cultural, social, and political terms.

Following the reopening of the Dergâh as a museum in 1964, it increasingly became a centre of pilgrimage for many Alevis. Alongside its religious significance, it evolved into a venue where collective social and political demands were articulated. Hosting annual commemorative ceremonies and festivals, the town of Hacıbektaş and its Dergâh have also become subjects of symbolic appropriation and manipulation by the state and political parties in line with their ideological agendas.

Beyond their social, political, cultural, and economic roles, *tekkes* and *zaviyes* also served as institutions conferring religious and spiritual legitimacy to their communities. Within this framework, despite its heterodox character, Bektashism was considered a legitimate *tarikat* from its foundation until 1826, and informally until 1925, largely through its network of lodges and, centrally, through the Hacı Bektaş

Dergâh. After the 1925 closures, this legitimacy was completely revoked, and Bektashism came to share the same unofficial status as Alevism, which had never been officially recognised due to its heterodoxy. Nonetheless, the closure of the order and its central *tekke* did not mark the end of Bektashism. The competition for representation and financial control between the Babagan and the Çelebis may have ceased, but the symbolic authority of Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli has continued to be upheld by both branches, through the roles of *dedebaba* and *postnişin*, sustained among their own communities outside the Dergâh.

Museumisation in 1964 and the Transformation of the Public Sphere

Alevis, for their part, have engaged with the figure of Hacı Bektaş as part of their broader struggle to construct and assert their communal identity. In particular, the reopening of the Dergâh as a museum in 1964 marked a significant turning point, accelerating its transformation into a central site of pilgrimage. Through annual commemorations and festivals, the Dergâh has become a site of attraction for Alevis—a space not only for the fulfilment of religious rituals and practices, but also for the articulation of social and political demands.

While the path and legacy of Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli have continued—albeit unofficially—through his spiritual heirs, the Babagan and Çelebi branches, the historical heritage of the Dergâh has also been actively embraced by Alevi communities. In recent years, a new discourse has emerged within these communities: that “the Dergâh rightfully belongs to the Alevi people and should be returned to its true custodians.” This claim reflects an evolving desire not only to reclaim symbolic ownership, but also to assert a stake in the governance of the Dergâh in the present.

Conclusion

The historical trajectory of the Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli Dergâh reveals not only the transformation of a sacred site, but also the internal dynamics of representation between the Babagan and Çelebi factions of the Bektashi order, the indirect but meaningful ties established by Alevi communities to the Dergâh, and the evolving distance maintained by the state toward religious institutions. The closure of the Dergâh in 1925 effectively marked the termination of this multi-layered structure. In the aftermath, the Babagan continued their practices in private settings, while the Çelebis sustained their lineage-based legitimacy through political engagement. For the Alevis, the Dergâh has come to signify not an institutional centre per se, but a spiritual and symbolic hub whose public significance has steadily grown.

From the 1960s onwards, the process of museumisation repositioned the Dergâh as

not only a relic of the past but also a focal point for contemporary debates over representation and belonging. Alevi claims to rightful ownership of the site have increasingly drawn on this historical background. In this light, the Dergâh continues to function as a deeply layered space, situated at the intersection of religious, political, and cultural imaginaries—just as it has throughout its history.

Endnotes

[i] See Melikoff, “The Bektashi Order and Groups Affiliated with Hacı Bektaş: An Overview of the Problem.” *Uyur İdik Uyardılar*, pp. 21–27.

[ii] Although there is no definitive historical information about Balım Sultan, sources indicate that in 1501, he was sent by Sultan Bayezid II from the Seyit Ali Sultan Lodge in Dimetoka to the Pir House in Hacıbektaş as a spiritual guide. Many innovations are attributed to the era of Balım Sultan. The institution of celibacy is also believed to have originated with him. See Baha Sait, “Balım Sultan Erkanı,” *İttihat ve Terakki’nin Alevilik Bektaşilik Araştırması*, p. 130; Birge, *Bektaşilik Tarihi*, p. 65. However, Ulusoy argues that Sersem Ali Dedebaba was appointed to the Hacı Bektaş Lodge in 1552 and that the institutions of celibacy and the dedebabalık (grand mastership) began and became a topic of debate from that point. Ulusoy, *Hacı Bektaş Veli ve Alevi-Bektaşi Yolu*, p. 83. (For an example involving debates on celibacy, see Ahmedi Cemallettin Çelebi, *Müdafa*).

[iii] See Gölpınarlı, *Vilayetname*, pp. 64–65.

[iv] While the Bektashis of the order (Tarikat Bektashis) do not accept the Babagan–Çelebi division within Bektashism and claim only they are truly Bektashi, they also emphasise that Bektashism is distinct from Alevism (from an interview record with Teoman Güre Halifebaba). In contrast, the Çelebis do not separate Bektashism from Alevism and refer to themselves as Alevi–Bektashi. (See Ulusoy, ibid., p. 107; also from an interview record with Veliyeddin Ulusoy). For examples in the literature employing the Çelebi–Babagan classification, see Atalay, *Bektaşilik ve Edebiyatı*. Also, Noyan, who himself was a Bektashi Dedebaba, uses the same classification: *Bektaşilik Alevilik Nedir?*, p. 20. Many researchers today adopt the same classification. For example, see Küçük, *Kurtuluş Savaşı’nda Bektaşiler*, pp. 28–29.

[v] For example, Atalay argues that the main cause of the conflict between the Babas and Çelebis was a struggle for power and leadership (ibid., p. 29). Another example: Koşay (1926) notes that after World War I, the Dedebaba of the Pir House applied to the government to build a guesthouse at the Lodge, and the Çelebis, as rivals to the Babas, tried to block this construction to avoid being overshadowed, but failed. Koşay,

“Hacı Bektaş Tekyesi,” *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, p. 365.

[vi] Noyan (1963) states that the grand mastership (Dedebabalık) was not a post officially granted by the government, but in the past, there was a deputy of the Dedebaba in Istanbul who maintained relations with the Sheikh al-Islam and state authorities (*Hacı Bektaş’ta Pirevi ve Diğer Ziyaret Yerleri*, p. 10). He also provides a list of Dedebabas starting with Sersem Ali Dedebaba in 1551 and extending to himself in 1960 (1995: pp. 52–53).

[vii] Ulusoy lists the succession of post-holders (postnişin) and trustees (vakıf mütevelli) at the Hacı Bektaş Lodge, starting from İskender Çelebi, the son of Kalender Çelebi, up to Veliyeddin Efendi, the last post-holder and trustee before the lodge’s closure in 1925 (p. 82).

[viii] For official correspondences between the state and the conflicting power claims among the Babas, Çelebis, and Naqshi sheikhs as evidence that the Ottoman state unofficially maintained relations with an officially banned order, see Kılıç, *Osmanlıdan Cumhuriyete Sufi Geleneğinin Taşıyıcıları*, pp. 49–52.

[ix] Kılıç, ibid., p. 52.

During this period, the allocation of lodge revenues to relevant parties was as follows: each year, the Naqshi sheikh received 4/15 of the vakıf (endowment) income—amounting to 7,400 kuruş; the same amount was allocated to the Babagan dervishes. Another 4/15 of the vakıf income was to be saved in a treasury for the necessary maintenance and repairs of the Lodge. The remaining 20% of the revenue was designated for Hamdullah Çelebi, who had previously been exiled and was pardoned in 1833–34. See Faroqhi, *Anadolu’da Bektaşilik*, p. 75.

[x] Kılıç, pp. 52–53.

[xi] Yaman, *Kızılbaş Alevi Ocakları*, p. 59.

[xii] Yaman, ibid., p. 50.

[xiii] Karakaya-Stump, “The Bektashi Lodges in Iraq,” *Belleten*, p. 719.

In another study, Karakaya-Stump outlines the process of Alevi ocaks affiliating with the Çelebis as follows:

“A division emerged among the Kızılbaş due to the efforts of the Çelebi Bektashis, resulting in tarikçi (ritual stick users) and pençeci (hand gesture users). Under the slogan ‘Serçeşme Hacı Bektaş’tır’ (The Main Source is Hacı Bektaş), Bektashis

encouraged Kızılbaş communities, who were organised around dede ocaks, to connect directly to the Hacı Bektaş Lodge. They also urged them to abandon the use of the ritual stick (tarik/erkân), made from branches of certain trees and regarded as a pagan symbol, and to adopt the use of the pençe (open hand gesture) instead. As a result of these efforts, some Kızılbaş communities who previously used the tarik and were affiliated with dede ocaks began to use the pençe in their rituals and recognised the Hacı Bektaş Lodge as their ocak."Karakaya-Stump, "A Critical View on 19th Century Missionary Records About Alevism and the Story of Ali Gako," *Folklor/Edebiyat*, p. 321.

[xiv] For differing accounts in memoirs of Mustafa Kemal's visit to the Hacı Bektaş Lodge, see: Kansu, *Erzurum'dan Ölümüne Kadar Atatürk'le Beraber*, pp. 492–495; Önal, *Hüsrev Gerede'nin Anıları*, pp. 148–150; Şapolyo, *Kemal Atatürk ve Milli Mücadele Tarihi*, pp. 154–156; Lüle, *Ali Çavuş*, pp. 65–67.

[xv] Noyan (1995) states that following the visit, Salih Niyazi Dedebaba handed over to Atatürk the beds, blankets, mattresses, and food stores from the Lodge. Ata claims that the Lodge donated 1800 gold coins to Mustafa Kemal. See *Alevilerin İlk Siyasal Denemesi: (Türkiye) Birlik Partisi*, p. 33. In contrast, Kansu does not mention these donations and instead writes that Mustafa Kemal gave 50 liras each to the Babas and servants present when leaving the Lodge. See Kansu, ibid., p. 496. Veliyeddin Ulusoy, the traditional representative of the Çelebis today, stated in an interview that during this visit, Cemaleddin Çelebi likely gave Atatürk all he had, including a highly valuable gemstone the family had kept as insurance since the Balkan War. See *Radikal* newspaper, 9 November 2009.

[xvi] Schüler, *Türkiye'de Sosyal Demokrasi. Particilik Hemşehrilik Alevilik*, p. 161; Ata, ibid., pp. 34–35.

[xvii] The Koçgiri Rebellions of 1920, which broke out primarily in the Yozgat Çapanoğlu region, Yıldızeli in Sivas, and Zile in Tokat, and were heavily influenced by Kurdish nationalist motifs—though involving Alevi groups—undermine the general belief that Alevis made an unconditional alliance with Mustafa Kemal. (For more on these rebellions, see: General Staff War History Directorate, *Türk İstiklal Harbi*). For examples of anti-National Struggle figures and activities among the Bektashis, see Küçük, *Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Bektaşiler*.

[xviii] Bardakçı writes that Cemaleddin Efendi instilled in his family the belief that Mustafa Kemal was the Mehdi, the true saviour, and later spread this belief among the Alevis loyal to him. He claims this belief helped prevent the 1921 Koçgiri uprising from spreading westward into Sivas, Tokat, Amasya, and Çorum. See *Alevilik Bektaşilik Ahilik*, pp. 51–52. On the contrary, Hüsamettin Ertürk asserts that Cemaleddin Çelebi

proclaimed himself as the Mehdi, and Mustafa Kemal ordered him to take corrective action. See *İki Devrin Perde Arkası*, pp. 472–474.

[xix] "Don değiştirme" (metamorphosis): In Alevi belief, it refers to the soul's transformation from one form to another or from one vessel to another during one's lifetime. See Ocak, *Babaîler İsyanı*, p. 82. For claims that Mustafa Kemal was seen by Alevis as a manifestation of Ali or Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, see Öz, *Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Alevi-Bektaşiler*, pp. 15–16.

[xx] This belief remains widespread among Alevis and Bektashis today. Küçük notes that aside from an unreferenced claim by Kinross that "in his youth he attended a Bektashi ritual in Salonika," there is no evidence of Mustafa Kemal being a Bektashi or attending Bektashi rituals. He finds it more plausible that Mustafa Kemal preferred the Mevlevi order, considered more upper-class. See Küçük, ibid., p. 205. For responses to speculations about whether Mustafa Kemal was Alevi or Bektashi, see Bahadır, *Cumhuriyetin Kuruluş Sürecinde Atatürk ve Aleviler*, pp. 9–19.

[xxi] Schüler, ibid., p. 162; Küçük, ibid., p. 130. In his memoirs, Mazhar Müfit Kansu, who was part of the delegation during this visit, states that Alevis, numbering in the millions, could not be neglected and that the visit was necessary and important to win them over (p. 492).

[xxii] Schüler, ibid., p. 162.

[xxiii] Aktürk, "Türkiye Siyasetinde Etnik Hareketler 1920–2007", *Doğu Batı*, p. 55.

[xxiv] Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya Alevi Hareketinin Siyasallaşması*, pp. 44–45.

[xxv] Ibid., p. 46.

[xxvi] Ibid., p. 46.

[xxvii] Nevertheless, the First Grand National Assembly included 27 Alevi deputies in total, six of whom were Kurdish Alevis. Apart from Cemaleddin Çelebi, the Kırşehir deputy who also served as Deputy Speaker of the Assembly, two Bektashi Babas also took part in the first parliament. Considering the total Alevi population within Turkey, Alevis were underrepresented in this parliament. Moreover, the elected deputies were largely chosen from among landowners, tribal chiefs, and influential religious leaders. Their selection was due not so much to their Alevi identity but to their potential to mobilise a significant following. (See: Aktürk, ibid., p. 53; Massicard, ibid., p. 47). Indeed, in his memoirs, Kansu supports this interpretation by stating that Cemaleddin Çelebi's appointment as deputy and Deputy Speaker in the First Parliament was

“probably due to necessity.” See: Kansu, ibid., p. 492.

[xxviii] Annemarie Schimmel believes that *Nur Baba*, Yakup Kadri’s 1922 novel criticising the degeneration of Bektashi lodges, may have influenced Mustafa Kemal’s conviction about the necessity of closing the Bektashi lodges. See: Schimmel, *İslamın Mistik Boyutları*, pp. 332–333. However, this remains a personal opinion and cannot be substantiated. Indeed, after closing the lodges, Mustafa Kemal invited Ali Nutki Baba and Haydar Naki Baba to the presidential residence. During the conversation, he asked Ali Nutki Baba whether Yakup Kadri’s novel character “Nur Baba” was modelled after him. Ali Nutki Baba responded that he had lived a modest life among his followers and had led an even quieter life after the lodges were closed. Following this, Mustafa Kemal invited Yakup Kadri to join the conversation, which continued pleasantly. Not long after, Ali Nutki Baba was appointed District Governor of Mucur, and Haydar Naki Baba was appointed Director of the Vegetable and Fruit Market in Kadıköy. For more details, see: Borak, *Atatürk ve Din*, pp. 103–105; Öztin, *Mustafa Kemal’den Atatürk’e*, pp. 127–128.

[xxix] For the full text of the law, see: Kara, *Din Hayat Sanat Açısından Tekkeler ve Zaviyeler*, p. 362.

[xxx] Kara, ibid., p. 269.

[xxxi] Koşay, “Tekke ve Türbeler Kapandıktan Sonra”, *Güzel Sanatlar*, p. 2.

[xxxii] Among Bektashis, there is a belief that Mustafa Kemal closed the Bektashi order not out of intent but to avoid appearing biased while closing other orders, and that had he lived longer, he would have reopened the order. (From an interview with Teoman Güre). For example, Noyan (1995) recounts that during a trip to İzmir before the Hatay affair, Mustafa Kemal met Mümtaz Bababalım, son of former Denizli MP Hüseyin Mazlum Baba, and proposed that the Bektashi order be revived under a new regulation adapted to contemporary needs. However, the Hatay affair and Atatürk’s illness interrupted this process. See: Noyan (1995), ibid., p. 97.

[xxxiii] Ziya, “Bektaşilik”, *Yenigün*, 8 March 1931, p. 9.

[xxxiv] *Meydan* is the term used for both the location and the ritual gathering among Bektashis. Also see: Korkmaz, *Alevilik-Bektaşilik Terimleri Sözlüğü*, under the entry “meydan”.

[xxxv] From the interview conducted with Teoman Güre on 28 June 2009. In the same interview, Güre shares the following anecdote: “After the lodges were closed, a Bektashi gathering was held at the home of Emine Beyza Hanım in Balıkesir. Once the

meydan was completed, everyone was sharing conversation and drinking dem. Neighbours informed the authorities, claiming that a ‘mum söndü’ (immoral gathering) was taking place. The gendarmerie raided the house and took everyone into custody. To protect the *Yol*, Emine Beyza Hanım accepted the charges, was first sent to public health authorities and later arrested. The next day, newspapers ran the headline ‘brothel raided’. Upon reading this in the press, Mustafa Kemal, who had previously met Emine Hanım, recognised her and ordered that the mistake be corrected.”

[xxxvi] Quoted by Turgut Koca in Küçük, ibid., p. 196.

[xxxvii] Since the office of *Meydan Evi Babası* was banned in 1826, this role began to be fulfilled by the *Kiler Evi Babası*. See: Koşay, “Bektaşilik ve Hacı Bektaş Tekkesi”, *Türk Etnografya Dergisi*, p. 25.

[xxxviii] Visitors from both the Çelebi and Baba branches could not stay at the Lodge; only babas and dervishes resided there. See: Koşay, ibid., p. 22.

[xxxix] Noyan (1963), ibid., p. 10.

[xl] Koşay, ibid., pp. 22–23.

[xli] See: Bardakçı, *Kızılbaşlık Nedir?*, p. 16.

[xlii] Architect Hikmet, “Bektaşilik ve Son Bektaşiler”, *Türk Yurdu*, p. 315.

[xliii] Öztürk, *Türk Yenileşme Çerçevesinde Vakıf Müessesesi*, p. 410.

[xliv] Noyan (1963), ibid., pp. 90–91.

[xlv] Noyan (1995), ibid., pp. 52–53.

[xlvi] The Bektashis’ adaptation to the new conditions after the closure of the order and the precautions they took are exemplified in the oath text issued upon the election of Mustafa Eke as Dedebaba in 1998. The full text is therefore presented below. (Koca, *Es-Seyyid Halife Koca Turgut Baba Divanı*, pp. 357–359).

İLAN-I ŞAHİKA (Declaration of Eminence) The individuals whose names, signatures, and seals are listed below, and who are authorised to determine identity and supervise the “Bektashi Cultural Institution,” traditionally depicted as “Tarikat-ı Bektaşiye,” declare the following in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Turkey:Firstly, with full adherence and approval of the Law No. 677 dated 30 Teşrinisani (November) 1341 (1925), published in the *Resmi Ceride* (Official Gazette) issue 243 on 13.12.1941, titled “On the Closure of Lodges and Shrines and the

Abolition of Certain Titles and Positions," including the provisions of Article 5438:

The Republic of Turkey and its Nation constitute an indivisible UNITARY whole.

The spiritual and bodily identity, ideas, views, and the behaviours and expressions articulated in the *Great Speech* (*Nutuk*) by the Great Leader Gazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha (also known as ATATÜRK) are foundational.

The principle of a democratic, secular, and legal state as outlined in the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey cannot be compromised.

The Turkish people and the Turkish army, which constitute the Republic of Turkey, form an indivisible whole.

The Dede Baba who governs the Bektashi Cultural Institution MUST BE A CITIZEN OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY.

The Halife Babas of the Bektashi order, whose signatures, names, and seals are below, swear upon their honour and dignity to uphold and protect the above-stated provisions.

In summary: To prevent the abuse of Pir legacies by unqualified persons or institutions, until a (Mücerred) Dede Baba is appointed, İzmirli Mustafa Eke Halife Baba Erenler has been authorised by us and unanimously appointed to the office of Dedebaba as (Sertarik).

[xlvii] In fact, the Bektashis' withdrawal from politics began in 1826. Faroqhi notes that the abolition of the Janissary Corps and the massacre of many of its members pushed the Bektashis into political isolation, turning them into a cautionary tale (*ibret-i âmiz*). See: Faroqhi, ibid., p. 181. Ziya Bey also comments that after the blow struck by Mahmud II against the Janissaries and the Bektashis, Bektashism turned away from politics and transformed into a social and humanistic form. See: Ziya, ibid., p. 9. Up until 1826, the Bektashis, who were under the protection of the central state due to their traditional structure, generally remained aligned with the state and away from opposition. This attitude largely continued into the Republican period, with some exceptions.

[xlviii] For example, Cemaleddin Çelebi complained that while the Bektashis could easily perform their rituals despite the presence of Naqshbandi sheikhs, they themselves were forced to conduct theirs in secret due to lack of government permission, which led to gossip among the public. See: Bardakçı, *Kızılbaşlık Nedir?*, p. 48.

[xlix] Interview records with Veliyeddin Ulusoy and Hürrem Ulusoy (23 July 2009). Also see: *Radikal* newspaper, 9 November 2009.

[l] For the Ulusoys' involvement in (T)BP politics, see: Ata, ibid., pp. 178–181.

[li] For example, many associations bearing the name Hacı Bektaş were established in the 1960s. Among them were the Hacı Bektaş Culture and Solidarity Association and the Hacı Bektaş Tourism and Promotion Association. Also, during this period, Hacı Bektaş nights were organised in Ankara, and cem ceremonies were held in his name. See: Sümer, *Hacıbektaş Derneği Bülteni*, pp. 16–17.

[lii] For a study on this topic, see: Salman, *Alevi Bektaşi Kimliğinin Kuruluş Sürecinde Hacı Bektaş Veli Anma Törenleri*.

[liii] For a study addressing such functions of tekkes and zawiyas, see: Ocak, "Zaviyeler", *Vakıflar Dergisi*.

[liv] See: *Alevi Çalıştayı Birinci Etap Alevi Örgütleri ve Temsilcileri Toplantısı Değerlendirme ve Öneri Raporu*, pp. 47–48.

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