

## **BRIEF REMARKS ON MUSTAFA KEMAL AND REZA SHAH**

*By Dr. Ismet GIRITLI*

Professor of Law at the Istanbul University

At 9.05 A.M on each November 10, activity in Turkey comes to a halt. Traffic stops. Automobile occupants get out and stand quietly at attention. For five minutes the whole country remembers in silence the moment of death of M. K. Atatürk; Creator and the first President of Turkish Republic.

Ataturk died in 1938. Modern Turkey is peopled mostly by a generation who knows him only through books and education. Yet his picture is everywhere. The guiding policies which he laid down, have fundamentally been followed. The creation and preservation of a territorially limited national state for the Turks; the formation of a Turkish national consciousness; the Westernization not only of material life but of institutions, minds and customs; the development of the economy; an avoidance of class divisions; a devotion to republican form of government; and finally the pursuit of peaceful foreign relation.

As late Lord Kinross put it in his book entitled "Rebirth of a Nation; Kemal Ataturk"; "Mustafa Kemal was the man with eastern temperament and western mind. He was a man wedded to his career and his country. Mustafa Kemal was a man of decisive action. His first great achievements were in the heroic mode in fashioning an army, a movement and a nation from the debris of the shattered Ottoman Empire and driving the invaders from the national soil. Yet it is not in these achievements, great as they were, that the true greatness of Ataturk lies; rather does it lie in his realization that the military task was completed and another very different one remained. In 1923 at the moment of his Triumph there were many opportunities

which might have tempted a military commander to seek more glory, But he renounced them all.

The next task was at home, there still remained the problem of rebuilding the country. It is the supreme merit of Kemal Ataturk that he the victorious hero, in a society where the military virtues were the only universally accepted standard, became a civilian President and setting aside his uniform appeared to his people in a top hat and evening dress. Thus Ataturk made it clear to his people that war ended; and that time had come for urgent task of developing the country.

The Turkish revolution that began in 1919 was a reaction against the threat of dismemberment and loss of independence. In its first phase it had reorganized the Turkish forces as well as the Institutions of Government in Asia Minor; because the Sultan and his government in Istanbul were considered captives of the Allied military administration. This phase was followed by the war of Independence after which Turkey emerged victorious and signed the treaty of Lausanne. The third phase after 1922 consisted of the series of political, legal, social and cultural transformations and reforms.

This Revolution is called "Kemalist Revolution" on account of the outstanding leadership assumed in all three of its phases by Mustafa Kemal. Turkey's secularist-modernist policy was also shared by Reza Shah, the Great of Iran. Both countries having a cultural basis different from the Arab country, could easily afford to follow a secular policy without fear of self-destruction.

The ideological message of Kemalist Revolution was symbolized by the (six arrows) of what came to be called "Kemalism". Mustafa Kemal had opposed rigid ideology as limiting freedom of action. But with the complexity in early 1930's of the problems, defined doctrines were needed. With Fascism arising on one front, and Communism on the other, it was important for the Turks to show the world that they wanted neither of them. Hence the more flexible ideology of Kemalism, whose principles had the merit of being forged not from theories but from ten years practical experience. Mustafa Kemal was zealous to point out that his Etatism was based on no socialist theory. Communism he maintained had failed to achieve its aims and promises. Liberalism too was dead. Turkish Etatism was leaving state control with a personal enterprise (mixed economy).

In many ways the Kemalist Revolution has remained unique and different. It inspired leaders everywhere to follow M. Kemal.

The Kemalist Revolution in the first place was not only the product of defeat, but mainly the outcome of a national crisis in which the independence and territorial integrity of Turkey were at stake. Turkish national pride was especially shocked when Greece was awarded a part of Western Turkey and landed its troops in Izmir on May 15, 1919 with the help and cooperation of Britain. Four days later M. Kemal was to land in Samsun to inaugurate the war of independence.

The Kemalist revolution in the second place did not begin with a coup d'état to overthrow the sultan and his regime. M. Kemal as a general belonged to the ruling elite and if the revolution ended with the Sultan's overthrow this was the result of many developments. The relation between the Sultan and the nationalists deteriorated after the applied military occupation of Istanbul on March 1920, when several nationalists and deputies were arrested and exiled; Parliament was disbanded and a (fetva-legal ruling) was issued declaring M. Kemal and nationalists as rebels and considering it as religious duty to kill them.

The Kemalist Revolution in the third place was not entirely the work of the military and the system of rule it established was not strictly military. The revolution rested from the very beginning on popular support; its government functioned through legal and constitutional procedures and its decisions were made by representative assemblies for a strong popular base and for this reason it held the Congresses of Erzurum and Sivas. In both Congresses M. Kemal became president by election. When the GNA met in Ankara on April 1920, he again was elected president. On January 1921 a constitution was passed describing the Government of the GNA. The assembly was the supreme Instrument of Government. It selected the members of the cabinet.

A fourth consideration on the Kemalist Revolution relates to the role of the military in politics and in this M. Kemal had learned from the experience of the young Turks. In the days of his opponent Enver Pasha, powers had been concentrated in military hand and corrupt

army personnel had interfered in Administration, M. Kemal had the conviction and expressed it as early as 1909, that officers should withdraw from party politics.

A fifth and unique characteristic of the Kemalist Revolution is that although its leaders were capable of winning victories against hostile foreign forces, they had the wisdom and the insight in the midst of their success, to abstain from expansionist ambitions or from attempting to occupy lost territories and to renounce the old dreams of Pan-Turanism or Pan Turkism.

A last consideration in the Kemalist Revolution relates to the nature of the Kemalist reforms and to the one-party rule, under M. Kemal. Modernization for him was to be achieved by westernizing and secularizing Turkish society by freeing the country from the Arab sphere of culture. However the secularism of the Kemalist revolution should in no way deny the fact that Islam continued to be an essential ingredient of Turkish Nationalism. The new nationalism in its attempts to create a distinctive Turkish past promoted theories concerning the origins of the Turks and their language.

Mustafa Kemal renounced all Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkish aims and ambitions and tried to foster "the sense of identity" of the Turks with the country they inhabited. This concept of "new-west-European type of Nationalism" was and is adopted by the Turkish Constitutions of 1924 and 1961. "Every individual who is bound to the Turkish state by ties of citizenship is a Turk". K. Ataturk was no less a radical social reformer in his approach to social change than his contemporary Lenin.

Ataturk differed from Lenin however in several respects. He rejected Marxist ideology as a mean of reconstruction of Turkey. His approach was empirical. He wanted to remould Turkish society according to western systems and practices and their pluralistic characters. He was an educated Turk, impressed by the French Revolution and by the philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment. He was not a revolutionary Marxist or a romantic admirer of those who fought the ruling classes at the barricades.

The two dominant beliefs of his life were in the (Turkish Nation) and in (progress). The future of both laid in civilization which

for him meant The Modern Civilization of the West. But his realistic Nationalism was well aware that a mere façade of modernization was worthless and that fundamental changes were necessary in the whole structure of society and culture.

The period of its one-party rule was one of the training and of preparing the socio-economic foundations of democracy. In his epilogue Lord Kinross states "Kemal Ataturk had created a new Turkey. What Ataturk left to Turkey, he had freed was strong foundations and clear objective for her future growth. He gave her not merely deniable institutions but a national ideal rooted in Patriotism. The logical outcome has been the emergence of the Turkish Republic as a reliable ally of the West. Such was the life's achievement of Mustafa Kemal, Father of the Turks".

## II

I am sure that each of you know more than me about Reza Shah of Iran. But being in Iran and addressing to such distinguished gathering I would like briefly to stress his contribution and to establish similarity and parallel existing between Mustafa Kemal and Reza Shah the great.

To me Reza Shah, now justly named "The Great" was one of the outstanding figures in Iran's long history. He is rightly regarded as the founder of modern Iran. In the words of H.I.M Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi "It was my father who led us Iranians into the new age". Intensely patriotic, he was keenly aware of Iran's glorious past and was determined to bring about a national revival to unify the country and to put an end to internal disorder. Reza Shah created a large army. He looked for friendly relations with neighbours. Boundary disputes with Irak and Afghanistan were settled amicably and in July 1937 a non-aggression and consultation pact was concluded between Irak, Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan. It was signed at the Royal Summer Palace in Teheran and is known as the (Saadabat Pact) after the name of the Palace.

Like Ataturk, Reza Shah also brought to an end the system of Capitulation. Up to the World War II, the history of Iran is the history of the great reforms of Reza Shah. He instituted a new civil

and criminal code based mainly on the french models and in spite of the opposition of the religious leaders the judicial authority of the clergy was taken away.

Reza Shah's other accomplishments may be divided into economic and social. In 1927 a National Bank was founded. In the field of transportation the most spectacular achievement was the construction of the Trans-Iranian Railway. Nine sugar factories were erected. Factories for matches, glass and many others were built. The metric system of weights and measures was introduced.

Social reforms were mainly directed towards the emancipation of women and abolition of many discriminatory practices against them. The Teheran University was founded and women were made eligible to study there. Large sums were spent in schools and hundreds of advanced students were sent to Europe for further studies and training.

I simply want to point out the fact that M. Kemal and Reza Shah were founders of Modern Turkey and Iran, they were great leaders, patriots, great soldiers and reformators and above everything very close and good friends. In 1934, when I was 10 years old boy I saw K. Ataturk first time in my life. He was (43) sitting in an open car next to Seza Shah (46) who was paying a cordial visit to stanbul Roth were smiling and waving their hands to warmly welcoming their huge crowd.

If you allow me I would like to read you, two or three paragraphs from my book entitled "Superpowers in the Middle East" which covers my lectures I have delivered at Georgetown University, School of Foreign Affairs in Washington D.C during the 1971-1972 academic year.

Chapter V of this book entitled "Soviet efforts to neutralize Turkey and Iran" and I quote while world attention is focused on the Arab-Israil dispute it is too often forgotten, that the Soviets are trying to make substantial gains in Turkey and Iran; two of the most important countries in The Middle East, generally regarded as Western clients. Since 1965 a determined Soviet effort has been made to neutralize Turkey and Iran. Their respective detentes with the USSR, have been due in the past, to American foreign policy decisions, as

well as to a combination of skillful Soviet diplomacy and military strength.

The experience of the brief Indo-Pakistan war in 1965 in which the U.S adopted a neutral position and froze U.S armies aid to Pakistan, in spite of the fact that Washington and Rawalpindi were military allies, reinforced the Shah's conviction that Iran should try to reduce its dependence on U.S military supplies. Turkey and Iran are excellent mirrors of the changing balance of the Middle East. Traditional Turkish and Persian suspicions of their powerful neighbour Russia, not all together faded away. The mythical will of Peter the Great of Russia bade his successors "to approach as near as possible to Constantinople and India".

The Bolshevik Revolution hardly changed Russian policy toward the Middle East. As early as in 1918, Lenin's representative K. Kroynovski, asserted that the Middle East and India were Russian principal objectives. Persia was the only path open to India.

The Soviets, who were unable to achieve their objectives in the Middle East through the Turks and Persians have elected to concentrate instead on the Southerntier of the Arab countries. The fact that this approach has been succeeding may have induced both Ankara and Teheran more recently to mend their fences with Moscow as acts of prudence.

Turkish and Iranian governments are eager to have as much Western aid and protection as possible, but they also realize that the Soviet Union has finally succeeded in outflanking the Northerntier as a result of her advance in the Arab world. The change in the foreign policy of Turkey and Iran stems not from resentment against the west so much as from the shift in the balance of powers in the area.

And I strongly believe that the present situation in our area once again proves the necessity of closest Turkish-Iranian cooperation, similar to that of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and Reza Shah the Great's,