

KEMALISM AS AN IDEOLOGY OF MODERNIZATION

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The most succinct definition of the goals and methods of the "Kemalist Revolution and Ideology" is that, using a rational and scientific approach, it strives to transform Turkish society in every field into a contemporary, modern society. Thus Kemalism is an ideology of modernization. Indeed some famous political scientists maintain that "Modernizing Nationalism" is the most wide-spread ideology in developing countries like Turkey and that Kemalism was the first application of this ideology. Modernizing Nationalism today stands in sharp contrast to such rigid ideologies as Marxism, Marxism-Leninism, National Socialism, being a mild and flexible ideology, a way of life. This ideology is comprised of such principles as secularism, realism, empirical rationalism and rationalism. It is my contention, too, that Kemalism is a democratic modernization ideology, incorporating these and similar principles, and based on the national sovereignty. This paper will attempt to elucidate and evaluate this view. The Kemalist ideology has an economic program as well which is expressed in the State-ism (or Etatisme) principle.

Kemalist ideology is best characterized by its rational, scientific actions and outlook. This means it assumes that national and international problems can only be solved through an rational, scientific and pragmatic approach, not through emotional and dogmatic stances, nor through prejudices and doctrinal models. For this, starting by the centenary of Atatürk's birth, I believe that this method should be applied immediately to national problems like tourism, energy and rapid population growth etc...

First of all, it should be stressed that Kemalism is not a rigid doctrine. In fact, we know that Mustafa Kemal himself fundamentally opposed dogmatic and totalitarian doctrines such as contemporary Marxism-Leninism, Fascism and National Socialism for the reason that they blocked dynamic action. Kemalism, a rational, empirical, pragmatic ideology, is the underlying foundation to the establishment of the modern Turkish state and the whole of the acts and life style resulting from its implementation.

In considering this definition, it is usual practice to divide contemporary political ideologies into two categories: totalitarian and democratic. Marxism-Leninism is a totalitarian ideology of the left; National Socialism and Fascism, of right. All social justice-freedom regimes of today, ranging the political spectrum from "left of center" to "right of center" and including that of Democratic Socialism, have rational empiricism and pragmatism, not dogmatism, as a democratic ideological framework. Kemalism declares that reason (*ratio*) is the proper guide. Inspired by the National Sovereignty and human rights principle of the 1789 French Declaration on the Rights of Man and Citizens, it is clearly among the democratic ideologies, which are national and pragmatic rather than among the dogmatic and totalitarian ones.

Representatives of "Pragmatism", to replace inalterable, rigid and therefore dogmatic terms of Fascism ("the people", "the state", "the leader", "race", etc.) and of Communism ("class" and "class struggle", etc); exchanged "experimentation" for "absolute truths"; in short, truth was accepted as being based on the observations and findings of reason and science, and consequently to change overtime.

Mustafa Kemal, as leader who in the twenties and the thirties saw the consequences of Fascist and Communist doctrines, rejected both doctrines. Atatürk chose a path which would meet Turkish needs in light of reason and science, rather than one dictated by doctrine and a set party program. Atatürk's "principles" on which he founded the Republic of Turkey, the Modern Turkish State, born out of its Independence War, are encased in certain ideological slogans: Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Secularism, State-ism and "Revolutionism-Reformism" which have become symbolized as the "six arrows". Particularly during the one-party period following the War,

the principles came to be known as Kemalism; however they do not comprise the whole of Kemalist ideology.

Undoubtedly, these principles, born out of the needs of Turkish society cannot be construed in their dictionary meanings. Atatürk elaborated them in both his speeches and his policies. In analyzing them, they should not be separated on from another for they are elements making up a whole. The world view we know as Kemalism arises out of the consequent harmony, unity and consistency resulting from the interplay of these elements.

Kemalism, which stands for revolt against dogmatism, for reason, means continual modernism and progressiveness. The ideological crises that have confronted first Liberalism and later Marxism-Leninism have even resulted in the contention that rigid and dogmatic ideologies may have reached their end. For example, Soviet leader Khrushchev's pragmatism in approaching Marxism-leninism was labeled "revisionism" by the then Chinese leaders. Now even the Chinese have leaned toward pragmatism, rather than dogmatism, in their policies since Mao's death.

Most conspicuous among these who maintain that Kemalism is not an ideology, are those who wish to create an ideological vacuum in Turkish society, hoping then to fill the void with their own brand of foreign ideology. The efforts of proponents of out-dated dogmatic and totalitarian ideologies ranging from Marxism-Leninism to National Socialism and from Capitalist Liberasim to Theocracy, and thus the enemies of Kemalism, in creating a political vacuum in Turkish society should of course be countered.

In addition to this group, another denies that Kemalism is an ideology, construing ideology to mean only rigid ideology. They either don't know or ignore the fact that today there are pragmatic and democratic ideologies which oppose dogmatic and totalitarian ones. Among these flexible, pragmatic ideologies which can be thought of as ways of life, Kemalism has a solid place¹.

As I stated at the beginning of this paper, the clearest definition of the goals and methods of the Kemalist Revolution and its ideology

1) İsmet Giritli, *Kemalist İdeoloji - Siyasal ve Ekonomik Yönleri*, İstanbul, 1981.

is that it attempts to transform Turkish society in all fields into a modern society. Thus, Kemalism is a modernization ideology. Paul E. Eigmund, Jr. has edited a collection of speeches and writings of national leaders in various countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America entitled "*The Ideologies of The Developing Nations*". In the forty page introduction, he noted that "Modernizing Nationalism", the prime ideology among developing countries, with its focus on national development and industrilization, owes more to Atatürk than to Marx. Since this ideology is both pragmatic and largely concerned with modernization, he finds its superior to Marxism-Leninism. The writer adds that the party program, called Kemalism, of the Atatürk-Founded Republican People's Party was the first application of the ideology of Modernizing Nationalism².

Prof. Masakazu Yamazaki of Osaka University, believes that Modernization is different from rigid ideologies like "Socialism", "Communism", and "Right-Wing Consercvatism" in that it is a mild and flexible ideology; a way of life. He states that this Modernization ideology is a strengthening philosophy for us all. He identifies Secularism, Realism, Empirical Rationalism, and Nationalism as some of the basic principles on which it rests. He writes that its other foundations of ideology of modernization still need to be identified³. It is obvious that Kemalism, which incorporates such characteristics, is a Democratic ideology based on the National Sovereignty principle.

The basic conflict in our age is fanned by the incompatibility between Aggressive Totalitarianism and Democracy, that is a free way of life. Today Communism has replaced Fascism, which until recently was the major threat to freedom. Violence and Terror-reflected first in the slavery and concentration camps of Totalitarian Communism and Fascism and then in genocide-are the basic trademarks of totalitarian regimes, stemming from their unacceptable fanatical ideologies. Even more striking than certain differences in the social, political, and economic systems of Totalitarianism are their

2) Paul E. Sigmund Jr., *The Ideologies of the Developing Natons* 1963.

3) Masakazu Tamazaki, *The Second Phase of Modernization*, Japan Escho, Vol. VI, No. 4, 1979.

different ways of life derived from their completely opposite beliefs and values. As all ideologies in a broader sense express a way of life, Kemalism, too, is more than just a social, political or economic system.

It is important to remember while presenting Kemalism as a Democratic ideology that it is based on reason and science, or, in other words, on Rational Empiricism.

As Maurice Duverger and Bernard Lewis, as well as many other foreign scholars have explained, the real purpose of Atatürk's one-party authoritarian regime was to create the proper environment for Democracy to flourish in. Even those, like H. C. Armstrong, who have openly and hostilely called Mustafa Kemal a "dictator", admit that the regime was unique and that it removed the possibility of a similar dictatorship ever again being formed.

Just as Dogmatic Liberal Capitalism, which believed that everything in economy was arranged by an "invisible hand", suffered a death blow in the late nineteen twenties, paving the way for massive economic crisis and moving aside for "Mixed Economies".

Karl Marx's predictions of a class struggle have again and again failed to be realized. Communists have only come to power through overthrowing the government. Communism has resulted in the World's most horrible despotism.

In no developed industrial society has there been an instance of Marx's predicted Proletarian Revolution; on the contrary, workers have shared in the general prosperity of the society, even becoming partners in the factories and compaines where they work.

In short, Marxism, too, like all other rigid and dogmatic ideologies, has fallen into great error and confusion. Take Yugoslavia in 1947 and China in the early nineteen sixties. They separated from the Moscow Church in order to pursue national independence and interests. Nationalism have overcome the class struggle. Is not Eurocommunism, a movement which has recently arisen in countries like Italy, France, and Spain, but another reflection of the cracking in Marxism-Leninism ideology?

On the other hand, the Kemalist Revolution, the movement led by Mustafa Kemal not only to prevent the dismemberment of Turkey

but also to procure the possibility of developing and strengthening the free life idea, the movement supported by the whole framework of the Kemalist ideology, is a resistance movement against dogmatism. As it is based on rationalism, it will always continue to be contemporary and progressive.

Atatürk foresaw events that took place in Europe during the Second World War, as leftist and rightist ideologies, taking full advantage of all the freedoms granted by their Constitutions, destroyed democratic regimes. Rejecting Western-type full pluralism that allows all political groups from the extreme left to the extreme right, he favored instead a limited political pluralism under which Fascist-Communist and religious views and parties are banned.

In brief in my paper, I have tried to show that Kemalism, an ideology of national modernization; that is a democratic and non dogmatic ideology based on pragmatism. I believe that Kemalism can provide a sound model for total (political, economic and cultural) modernization for developing countries.