

# ATATÜRK'S REVOLUTIONS AND MODERNIZATION

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After having won the Turkish Struggle for Independence, the most important question for Atatürk was freeing the Turkish society from the darkness surrounding it, and showing it the contemporary ways of life. For this reason, the Great Man had made the following statement right after the military victories: "The first phase of the National Struggle is over. Now the second phase starts!" The target was to modernize and reach the level of contemporary civilization in the shortest possible time. It was necessary to break the chains which had retarded the society's progress, and to remove the obstacles preventing its advancement. Atatürk's principles had been set down for this end. In the light of these principles, it was necessary to make great reforms without losing time and to render them the underlying rules of the Turkish nation's way of life. So, Atatürk's revolutions have accomplished this enormous task.

Studying Atatürk's revolutions in: (1) Political, (2) Social, (3) Legal, (4) Cultural, and (5) Economic spheres will help us to comprehend them better. These revolutions, springing also from Atatürk's principles form a whole pursuing the same objective, and they cannot be separated from each other just as the said principles themselves.

## POLITICAL REVOLUTIONS:

The inauguration of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, and following it, the adoption on 20th January 1921 of the new constitution resting on national sovereignty, the abolition of the sultanate on 1st November 1922, the proclamation of the Republic on the 29th October 1923, the abolition of the caliphate on 3rd March 1924, the abolition of the Ministry of Şer'iyeh (Muslim Canon Law affairs), the separation of religions and state affairs from each other in the light of the principle of secularism, and finally the inclusion of the principle of secularism in the Constitution on 5th February 1937 are the major revolutions accomplished by the Turkish Revolution Movement in the political sphere.

*The abolition of the sultanate:* The Ottoman sultanate was united with the caliphate in 1577, and the Sultan's will had gained an entirely theocratic character ever after. This system of government lasting for centuries was a form of rule which had no doubt seized the rights of the nation transferring the sovereignty of the nation to a single person. The Parliaments inaugurated following the reforms of Meşrutiyet I and Meşrutiyet II (i.e. the Constitutional reforms) had not been long-lived, and the sovereignty had been kept in hand by the person carrying the title of sultan and caliph. The losses suffered by the nation due to this form of rule were unthinkable great. In fact, this government which had exploited the ignorance and fanaticism of certain circles in order to protect its own existence had lately become the most detrimental enemy of the nation. This government made efforts aiming at sabotaging the national struggle by coming to an agreement with the enemies; by so doing, it had condemned the nation to death and it had eventually signed the Treaty of Sèvres; and all these had finally led the sultan's régime even to high treason. In spite of all these evil actions, the invitation extended after the great victory won in Anatolia by the Entente Powers to the Sultan and his government to participate in the peace talks as if they had had a share in this victory, made it compulsory to abolish this régime as soon as possible. As a matter of fact, all modern states were getting rid of monarchic governments resting on the sovereignty of an individual or group, and these states were marching towards republican régimes resting on the sovereignty of the nation. It was natural also for the New Turkish State to adopt this form of government. The Grand National Assembly finally put an end to sultanate on 1st November 1922 by its historic decision which separated the sultanate from the caliphate abolishing the former.

The sultan's régime became history upon the abolition of the sultanate and the destiny of the Turkish nation was unconditionally entrusted to the nation itself.

*The Proclamation of the Republic:* The Treaty of Lausanne was signed on 24th July 1923 and the independence of the new Turkish state was recognized. Following the formation of the second Turkish Grand National Assembly, it was now the turn to pronounce the definite name to be given to the régime already in existence, and to elect the president of the new state. This office had been held, until then, by Atatürk in his capacity as the President of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. On the

other hand, some foreign countries were waiting for the announcement of a more clear definition of the régime of the new state in Turkey to ratify the Treaty of Lausanne. Thus, following these developments resulting from internal and external circumstances, the Republic was proclaimed in the evening of 29th October 1923. Hence, the name of the form of government of the new state was made public in all its clarity.

Upon the proclamation of the Republic, the rule stating that "The sovereignty unconditionally belongs to the nation" was taking its place in the state administration in its most striking form and the way to democracy was being drawn in a more illuminated manner.

Atatürk, at the time he proclaimed the Republic, was of the opinion that all the rules of democracy would be carried out in due time. His fundamental purpose was to render the Turkish nation use its political rights as it wished and to make the pluralistic democracy workable in the country. As a matter of fact, two major tests made in his time for a multi-party system indicate this point; but, in this period during which great revolutions aiming at modernization were realized, the opposition parties, although they had good intentions, soon became the focal points of secret activities due to reactionary circles joining them or because of those seeking an opportunity to overthrow the republican régime. Thus, in a period of yet unfavourable circumstances, the multi-party system was postponed willingly or unwillingly until a later time. So, one should interpret the Atatürk's period and the single-party government dominating this period as an interval of time aiming at taking Turkey to the pluralistic democracy and removing the future obstacles in the path of such régime, and for this end attaching importance to the social and political education of the people.

*The Abolition of the Caliphate:* In spite of the abolition of the sultanate and the proclamation of the Republic, the caliphate was continuing to exist, which, in fact, was entirely unnecessary. And the caliph, exploiting this situation, did not abstain from displaying an image as if he represented a separate power against the Republican régime; he organized showy ceremonies in İstanbul, and belittled the funds allotted to him from the state budget. Such attitudes incited those circles that were against the reforms, to move, and a certain section of the press was driven into attitudes taking sides with the caliph. However, the mission to be accomplished was the protection -against all kinds of dangers- of the young

Turkish Republic which was founded upon great sacrifices. Now, it was necessary to decisively solve the caliphate question. Finally, the caliphate was abolished by a law passed on 3rd March 1924 and the last caliph was deported.

The Turkish Republic took another major step on the way to secularism; because, "a republic accompanied by a caliph" was out of question in a system of government resting on the sovereignty of the nation. The abolition also of the article running as "The religion of the Turkish Republic is the Muslim religion" by a modification put into effect in the Constitution in 1928, and the rearrangement of the oath taken by the President and the deputies were the great advances achieved on the way to secularism. Finally, the secularism took its place in the Constitution on 5th February 1937 as one of the fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic.

#### SOCIAL REVOLUTIONS:

The participation of the women in social life, the recognition of their being on equality with men regarding the civil and political rights, the modernization of dress, the closing of tekkes (dervish monasteries) and türbes (mausoleums), the passing of the surname law, the abolition of the use of certain lâkaps (nicknames) an unvans (titles), and the adoption of international time, calendar, numerals and units of measurement are the major contemporary efforts achieved by the Turkish Revolution Movement in the social sphere.

*The Rights of Women:* The fundamental condition for setting up the contemporary "state of law" is to recognize and respect the social, cultural and political rights of women like those of men in the society. This was the path and method leading to modernization and transformation into a contemporary society, because in one sense, the rights of women were an inseparable part of the human rights as well. Because, man and woman had molded the concept of mankind together, and this concept had gained sense when both sexes were considered together. Thus, the Atatürk's revolutions guided by such understanding accorded the Turkish woman the social and political rights that had been neglected for centuries. The realization of these rights was an ardent desire of Atatürk. The Great Man believed that "the utilization of social and political rights by women" was "necessary for the happiness and respectability of mankind,"

and he wished to see "the Turkish woman lend her hand to the world women and strive together for the world peace and security."

The rights of the Turkish women, were realized in the environment of a social heritage where the women were not included in the total, in population censuses, the haremlık and selâmlık (women's and men's apartments in a Muslim house) prevailed in the family life, and the women's eyes were kept away from the outside world by a veil. Passing from the theocratic to a secular state rule and adoption of the qualities of the latter have been the major factor in the accomplishment of this great revolution which we call women's rights. It was due to this reform that the Turkish woman achieved her social and political rights before many a country's women.

If the Turkish women have risen today from behind the latticed windows (of the old style Muslim houses) they never deserved, to chairs in the university, platforms in the courts and rostrums in the parliament, they certainly owe far this, as far as these advances are concerned, to the Turkish Revolution Movement which actually introduced a new era. Our women have gained these rights, not as a favour, but rather as a right in return for an honourable duty. In this respect, the rights of the Turkish women represent before the civilized world, the great contemporary efforts determining the value that Atatürk's revolutions have assigned to the human element.

*The Hat and Dress Revolution:* The contemporary garments were the most natural sign of being civilized. It is for this reason that Atatürk attached great importance to the hat and dress revolution among the modernization efforts. The dress which existed until then was neither national nor civilized. The headgears such as fes (fez), kalpak (fur hat), külâh (conical hat), takke (nightcap) or sarık (turban) and dresses of all kinds going with them like cübbe (robe worn by imams, cadis etc. with full sleeves and long skirts), ceket (jacket), şalvar (baggy trousers), potur (full gathered knee-breeches worn with tight leggings) and pantolon (trousers) gave a confused view of our society as far as its outer appearance was concerned. However, the Turkish nation, determined to modernize its thinking and mentality, should have proved this, also in its actual life and outer appearance. In fact, some renovations had been attempted in the past in respect of headgear and dress, but these efforts were not successful as required since the old and new practices were kept to survive side by side.

It was due to the hat and dress revolution realized in 1925 that our society adopted its contemporary mode of dress and showed its quality of acting together in unity with other nations as far as its way of life was concerned. In this respect, the hat and dress revolutions have been great and sensible efforts representing a change from style into matter, an opening out towards contemporary thinking in regard to the mentality they set forth, and an integration with contemporary thinking.

*The Closing of Tekkes, Zaviyes and Türbes:* The tekkes (dervish monasteries) of the Ottoman era indoctrinated a philosophy of resignation requiring no physical efforts; however, taking men away from the present world in which they lived to the next world while they lived would not agree with the requirements of contemporary life. The society needed a new energy and required new efforts; and the contemporary life invited men to work and get the remuneration of this work in the present world, i.e. while they lived. Whereas the türbes (mausoleums) were transformed by türbedars (custodians of türbes) into a focus where it was tried to derive benefits from the spiritual existence of the dead, and their help was expected in the materialization of gains without exerting any physical endeavours.

The Turkish Republic could no more be a country of şeyhs (sheikh, i.e. head of a tarikat or dervish order), dervishes and mürits (followers). Thus, the closing of tekkes, zaviyes (small monasteries) and türbes, and the abolition of türbedarlık (türbedarlık: office of a türbedar; türbedar: custodian of a mausoleum) and certain unvans (titles) on 30th November 1925 by a law were justified on such grounds.

*The Passing of the Surname Law:* It was adopted by the "Surname Law" passed in 1934 that every Turk would have a surname other than the given name, and the surname would follow the latter. Thus, the family heads would have a common name indicating the family unions they formed.

The surname law prevented the confusion of names in the society doing away with as well those out of place and showy attributes used in front of the names. Now, every Turk carried the surname of the family he belonged to, and the daughters adopted the surnames of their husbands after they were married. Following the issuance of this law, also Mustafa Kemal, the creator of the Turkish Revolution Movement, was granted by a law the surname "Atatürk".

The "Surname Law" has been an important revolution in our social life, in that, it prevented the confusion of names in all kinds of formalities.

*The Abolition of Lâkaps and Unvans:* Another law passed in 1934 abolished such lâkaps (nicknames) and unvans (titles) as Efendi (title given to literate people, members of the clergy, army officers up to major), Bey (Sir), Paşa (Pasha), Ağa (Agha), Hacı (Hadji), Hoca (Hodja), Hafız (one who knows the whole Koran by heart), Molla (chief judge; doctor of Muslim law), Hazretleri (His Excellency) etc., and it was adopted that the citizens would use and be called only by their given names and surnames in the official formalities.

*The Adoption of International Time, Calendar and Numerals:* The adoption of international time, calendar and numerals has made it easier to establish contacts with the civilized world; the time, calendar and numerals used in the Eastern world were not similar to the time, calendar and numerals used in the civilized world; and this practice created confusion in our relations with the civilized world.

Atatürk, observing this fact, made great efforts to adopt the practices of the contemporary world also in the fields of calendar, time, numerals, and units of length and weight. The Hicrî and Rumî calendars (lunar and solar calendars calculated from the beginning of the Muslim era) were discarded and the Christian calendar was adopted. The old Turkish way of calculating the time of the day was replaced by the international method; the international numerals replaced those of the Arabs. Such units as arşın (a measure of length of about 28 inches), endaze (a measure of length of about 26 inches), okka (a weight of 2.8 pounds) and dirhem (400th part of an okka) were replaced by those of the metric system.

#### LEGAL REVOLUTIONS:

The discarding of the old legal mentality based on şariat (canon law) which did not conform to the present requirements of the society, the abolition of Mecelle (an Ottoman code derived partly from Muslim canon law) and adoption in its place of a secular legal system, and the putting into force under this system the contemporary codes such as the Civil Code, Code of Obligations, Commercial Code and Criminal Code constitute the major reforms accomplished by the Turkish Revolution Movement in the legal sphere.

Atatürk has clearly indicated the place, significance and direction of the laws in the Turkish Revolution Movement. According to him, the path to be followed was the path of civilization; the laws would be designed so as to meet the contemporary requirements and the real needs of the nation. Because, the government machinery of a civilized state could not function on the basis of old laws. The Ottoman legal system had been indifferent to the rapid progress witnessed in the recent centuries full of renovations, and had not been able to strip itself of the laws of şeriat (canon laws) of the old times. Although great reforms such as Tanzimat (political reforms of Abdülmejid in 1839 and the period following), and Meşrutiyet I and Meşrutiyet II (Constitutional Periods of 1875-1876 and 1908-1918) had been accomplished, the contemporary steps in the legal sphere were not taken as required, and in spite of the existence of the new courts, the şer'iyе courts (canonical courts) also survived. It was only the Atatürk's revolutions which abolished this duality and showed the only path to modernization. The Civil Code, Criminal Code, Code of Obligations and other laws have been the secular laws based on contemporary thinking that met the needs of our society in the best possible way. Thus, the renovations achieved in the legal sphere have been the major efforts symbolizing the contemporary character of the Turkish Revolution Movement.

#### REVOLUTIONS ACCOMPLISHED IN THE FIELDS OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND ARTS:

The unification of education on the basis of a national, democratic and secular programme of education, the university reform, the replacement of the Arabic alphabet by the new Turkish alphabet, the purging of our language from foreign words and helping it to achieve its identity, the freeing of our history from false ideas and establishing it on solid foundations, the determination -in all its clarity- of the proper place held by the Turkish nation in the history of world civilization and the developments achieved in the fine arts following the foundation of the Turkish Republic are the major revolutions accomplished in the cultural sphere.

*The Unification of Education:* It was necessary to design a national, democratic and secular programme of education after the establishment of the New Turkish State. In order to realize this objective, the "Law on the Unification of Education" was passed on 3rd March 1924.



The medrese (seminaries) had already become institutions only of theocratic teaching entirely shut to innovations starting from the mid-eighteenth century. Although some efforts were made from time to time to correct these institutions, no positive results were obtained. However, great advances were achieved in recent centuries in sciences. In this period, the Harbiye (Military College), Mülkiye (School of Political Science), Tibbiye (College of Medicine) and Mühendishane (School of Engineering) were set up while medrese (seminaries) continued to exist. This duality survived until 3rd March 1924, the date on which the Law on the Unification of Education was adopted. It was by this law that all institutions of education in Turkey were attached to the Ministry of National Education based on the principle of the unity of education; medreses (seminaries) were closed being replaced by schools of the Republic giving a contemporary, notional and secular kind of education. The purpose followed was to give the same kind of education to the Turkish children of school age, and to raise them to become republican, nationalist, secular and modern citizens.

In addition, the schools run by foreigners were put under state supervision, thus, they would not be given any more the possibility of exerting adverse effects on the national culture, and conducting and education weakening the national feelings. And it was stipulated in the above-mentioned law that the primary education would be conducted entirely in the Turkish schools.

Beyond these renovations in primary and secondary education, great efforts were made in the field of higher education. The university reform realized in 1933 laid the foundations of the national and contemporary Turkish university. Thus, the university has embodied a new mentality and a dynamic structure.

*The Adoption of the New Turkish Alphabet:* While it was necessary for Turkish language to have been written in an alphabet peculiar to itself, it was written in Arabic characters and in Arabic alphabet for many centuries. However, this alphabet and this script were far from expressing the richness and vastness of the Turkish language. It was due to this neglect that the Turkish language had become a tongue which would not be written and spoken according to its own rules and had been subjected to the influences of the rules of Arabic and Persian. Hence, the adoption of the new Turkish characters has been a great revolution since it was a return to our national identity also in the field of script.

*The Language Revolution:* Atatürk attached great importance to the Turkish language since language was an instrument of expressing the national culture, and one of the most solid foundations of the national unity. In the days of the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish language had become a confused tongue having almost lost its identity due to Arabic and Persian words frequently used in the circles of the Ottoman court, and their utilization also by intellectuals close to such circles. So, it was necessary to make the language regain its identity, and to free it from the captivity of foreign languages. For this end, the Turkish Linguistic Society was founded and scientific researches were launched.

The adoption of the new Turkish characters and the language revolution have certainly played a significant role in the rise of the literacy rate in a short time. Thus, these reforms have also marked the great efforts exerted in the path of returning to our national culture and developing this culture accordingly.

*The National View of History and the Turkish Historical Thesis:* Before Atatürk, the Turkish history was treated as the history of a dynasty, and it was started from the foundation of the Ottoman state; or it was let to dissolve in the history of Islam; however, the role played by the Turks in this history was not properly set forth since the ümmet (community of the same religion) conception was the dominant understanding of the times. The history of the Turks before the Ottoman period and especially prior to their adopting the Muslim religion, and their rich culture and literature in that era were overlooked. Seljukian historians as well, like the Ottoman historians, had left in the dark that part of the Turkish history preceding theirs, and had not gone further behind the history of Islam. Yet, it was necessary to set up the Turkish history on solid foundations, to study in this history the true paths of course and advancement of the Turks originating from Central Asia, and to ascertain the role of Turks in this path as regards the world history and their proper place in the chain of civilization. And the credit for accomplishing this scientific task would go to the Turkish Revolution Movement. For this end, the Turkish Historical Society was founded and vast researches were undertaken on the Turkish history.

The Turkish historical thesis was set up not on the familiar ümmet history but on the nation's history adopting Turks to be the assential element. This thesis which was developed starting from 1930, paved the way

in Turkey in those years for significant scientific researches. The First and Second Historical Congresses held in 1932 and 1937 respectively witnessed extensive discussions with participation also of foreign scholars and tried to unearth the realities.

According to the Turkish historical thesis, the first settlers of Anatolia in the pre-historic times had been descended from ancestors living in Central Asia. The Turkish nation of the present day, after having created in pre-historic times a great civilization in Central Asia, had been forced, because of geographical necessities, to migrate, and had taken the routes leading them towards Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Egypt and Europe, and these lands as well had witnessed the staging of the new phases of civilization. Hence, Central Asia which was the mother country of the Turks featured to be a cradle of civilization in the history of mankind; because, it was impossible not to observe its traces somehow or other, or not to feel its influences on the following civilizations.

*The Developments Achieved in the Fine Arts:* The fine arts were also accorded great importance in the Republican era. According to Atatürk: "The successes achieved in the fine arts were the most absolute evidence that all the revolutions were successful". It was on the basis of this view that great achievements were recorded in the contemporary sense in all branches of art, with music, painting, sculpture and architecture taking the lead.

#### ECONOMIC REVOLUTIONS:

Following the foundation of the Turkish Republic, one of the points or perhaps the first point to be accomplished in the path of civilization was economic development. In this respect, the attempts made to give a new life to the Turkish nation, the laws, rules and regulations passed or issued in regard to national economy, the big investments protecting the interests of the nation, and the large plants set up all of which rested on a poor economic inheritance taken over by the Republican administration were the major tasks accomplished by the Turkish Revolution Movement in the economic sphere.

The economic policy also of the Turkish Revolution Movements, sprang not from a doctrine but directly from the realities of the country and the needs of the nation which was also the case in regard to policies in other fields. Atatürk expressed this point saying: "Especially the princi-

ples on which economic activities are to be laid will be specified on the basis of every sort of knowledge, by directly smelling the soil of our country and by listening to the conversations of the people actively engaged in working on the land. The same view shall also prevail in the fields of industry and trade."

The abolition of the capitulations by the Treaty of Lausanne was a revolution by itself for the new Turkish state. The capitulations had chained up the development for years and had incessantly exploited the nation and state to the detriment of national economy by keeping the interests of the aliens in the foreground. The external debts of the Ottoman state had functioned in such a way as to do harm to our independence and to require the aliens intervene in our fiscal affairs. These debts also were subjected to restrictions in the Treaty of Lausanne, in a way preventing the conditions of repayment from adversely affecting our independence; because, the new state did not wish to repeat the old mistakes and to be dragged into blind alleys.

When economic life was mentioned, the Turkish Revolution Movement considered the agricultural, commercial and industrial activities and the entire public works to be a whole which could not be thought of as separate entities. Under this view, all major efforts were made to develop the Turkish economy, and a new economic era was started. In all these developments the state and the individual performed their duties in agreement with Atatürk's concept of *étatisme*, not in a manner contradicting each other, on the contrary, complementing each other. With regard to economy, the planned development was attached importance, and the first and second five-year development plans were put into effect in 1933 and 1937 respectively.

In this period, the agriculture was adopted to be the basis of the national economy. Hence, the agricultural development was attached great importance. All measures whether technical or legal, were taken to increase the quantities harvested of agricultural products, raise their quality and reduce their costs of production. And every agricultural family's owning an adequate piece of land on which they could work and earn their living, was taken to be one of the fundamental measures to increase the production of the country.

The abolition of the *âşar* (tithes) in 1925, has marked a great advance in respect of bringing relief to peasants. In the Ottoman period, the

peasants were under the obligation of delivering one tenth of their produce to the state, and this tax was called "âşar". This system springing from the şariat (canon law) which had survived as a practice for centuries, had prevented the poor Anatolian peasants from standing on their own feet; because, whether the peasants harvested crops or not, they were obliged to pay this tax with no change in its amount. The persons called mültezim (farmer of taxes) would visit the villages every year and lay hands on the crops in which case the right of objection was out of question. The institution of iltizam (farming of taxes) had completely deteriorated in the course of time, and it had become a duty offered to the persons favoured by government authorities. The mültezims (farmers of taxes) who had undertaken this task by paying a certain amount of money would not have refrained from treating the people cruelly. The Republican administration has made a great effort in the agricultural field by putting an end to this unjust system of taxation and replacing it by an equitable one.

The national trade was attached great importance in the Republican era. In order to support small traders and industrialists, the credits they needed were given to them on easy terms and at lower interest rates. Great efforts were made in internal and external trade to render the labour exerted by the producers more profitable. The industrial activities were also attached importance. These activities were supported on a large scale by passing in 1927 the Law on the Stimulation of Industries. All sorts of industry, whether large or small, were developed. In areas where the capabilities of individual enterprises to set up large plants were exceeded, such plants were established through public investments; meanwhile, also large factories were set up to meet the needs of the army for implements. Great progress was achieved in the exploitation or operation of mines, forests, roads, highways, seaways or airways.

Along with all such activities, the activities in regard to public works were accelerated as well. In this respect, Atatürk said: "It is necessary to render this vast country prosperous. This people is obliged to become rich. If the country is not rendered prosperous or this people is not rendered rich, and if they tell you that it is still possible to survive, don't ever believe them!" Large scale reconstruction activities were launched depending on the then budgets of the Republican administrations, paying great attention to making savings. Highways, railways, bridges and dams

were constructed, and brand new cities were erected in the Republican Turkey.

#### MODERNIZATION IN THE LIGHT OF ATATÜRK'S THINKING

Atatürk pointed to achieving and even going beyond the level of contemporary civilization as the goal of the Turkish nation. Because, Atatürk agreed that the modernization of the Turkish Society was, above all, a "matter of life" and a "struggle for existence". He said : *Our great task is to raise our stock to become the most civilized and prosperous nation*". And he indicated this point to be the "dynamic ideal of the Turkish nation". It is for this reason that Atatürk, in almost all his speeches, is heard to attach importance to and emphatically dwell upon the concepts of civilization and modernization.

Modernization, defined in general terms, is the endorsement, in all respects, of the requisites of our times, of acting in conformity with and the fulfilment of these requisites. In other words, it is the introduction or the ability of being introduced from both mental and institutional points of view, of a society to a new manner of life required by contemporary age. Progressive countries mark a certain level in representing the era in which they live by displaying political, social, cultural and economic advances. And this level is called the "level of contemporary civilization". Whether a country or nation is contemporary is measured by its closeness to the level of contemporary civilization and its inclusion in the realm of this civilization. Atatürk meant the same point when he said: *"Countries are different, but there exists only one civilization, and for a nation to progress, it must take part in that unique civilization."*

Atatürk defined civilization as the product of advances achieved by a nation in state, intellectual and economic life. He said that this interpretation of civilization was equivalent to culture which he expressed as "hars", and that it could not be separated from the latter. The words "national culture" were employed in a wide sense in his statement: *"We shall raise the national culture beyond the level of contemporary civilization."* Also meant in this statement was the level achieved by the Turkish nation in state, intellectual, and economic life, i.e. the Turkish nation's own civilization. According to Atatürk: *"the life, the worth, and the rights to freedom and independence of all nations in the world are only proportionate to their past and future achievements in the field of civilization. The nations deprived of their capability of*

*creating products of civilization are condemned to being stripped of the freedom and independence,*" in which case, "it is vitally important to walk successfully in the path of civilization."

Thus, in the light of these realistic thoughts, the most vital question concerning the Young Turkish Republic's "struggle for existence", after the War of Liberation, was to develop Turkey and raise her to the level of civilization to which she was entitled. On the other hand, all the world wanted to see and received the new Turkish State —whose independence had been confirmed in Lausanne following the great military victories— with its contemporary qualities. An internally oriented Turkey, away from the innovations of the contemporary age and the blessings of civilization, would certainly not be respected nor held in esteem as is due by world standards. On account of the observation he made of this fact, the great leader said: *"We want to modernize our country. All our efforts are directed towards setting up a contemporary and western government. Is there a single country —with the desire of entering the realm of civilization that has not turned to the West?"* Thus, with this statement he gave utterance to his aspirations for modernization.

What could then be done? the task to be undertaken was the following: Contemporary nations had gained their contemporary qualities, only by getting rid of all kinds of dogmatic elements and by accepting the guidance of the principles of science and technology. Thus, the only guide that would lead the Turkish nation in all fields and carry it to the level of contemporary civilization was science and technology. One could not talk about progress in any field unless one accepted the guidance of science and technology by actually following their methods and principles. In this respect, searching for a guide other than science and technology, according to Atatürk, was heedlessness, ignorance and deviation. So, Atatürk's model of modernization is based, in essence, on this foundation.

The Great Leader gives a summary of his ideas in this respect, as follows : *"We cannot shut our eyes and assume that we live in isolation. We cannot fence off and live without having any contacts with the world. On the contrary, we shall live on the scene of civilization as a progressive and civilized nation. Such life is possible only through science and technology. We will take the science and technology from any country wherever they may be found, and put them in the heads of all individuals of the nation. There is no condition or reservation concerning the*

*adoption of science and technology*". Such are the immortal words of Atatürk pointing to us the path and the method of modernization.

If we were to draw a picture describing our society and social structure right after the War of Liberation, it would be noted that this picture was not to be so cheerful. But, in spite of all these difficulties, we all know how Atatürk struggled and made extraordinary efforts to create a contemporary society.

At the time when Atatürk started the movement for modernization and introduced his great revolutions, Turkey was far behind the west as a result of the neglect of centuries. He himself state this fact as well, in a speech he made in 1925 : *"Let us not cheat ourselves! The civilized world is far ahead. We have to catch it and enter the realm of civilization!"* Indeed, there was a wide gap, in those years, between the western civilization and ours. The country was entirely neglected and ruined. Means of communication, highways and vehicles were extremely limited in number. Especially, our economic life lagged far behind the world standards. The economy required great national efforts, in a country which had come out of a war of life and death, and had just gotten rid of financial capitulations.

Our legal system was based on the principles of shariat (Muslim canon law) and Mejelleh (the Ottoman civil code derived partly from Muslim canon law). However, it was necessary to adopt a secular legal system meeting the daily requirements, and to enact and execute new laws for the fulfilment of this objective. Still in the same years, a radical revolution was required in respect of national education and cultural life. The great mass of people had not yet enjoyed attending a school nor having an education. Literate people were rare. A national and secular education system was required in the light of science and technology to train the young generations in view of contemporary requirements.

Our university which was to lay the foundations of the Turkish science, then called Darülfünun (Abode of sciences), required a radical re-organization in the western sense. It was of vital importance from the standpoint of Turkish revolutions, to free the darülfünun from its oriental character by modernizing it and by making it acquire a national character and the qualities of a western university.

Another social problem was the exclusion of the Turkish women from social life as a result of the neglect which lasted for centuries. The



women were even deprived of enjoying social and legal rights let alone political rights. However, it was necessary for both sexes, men and women alike, to take steps and to proceed together up in the path of civilization.

In spite of all these deficiencies and difficulties, Atatürk had observed and felt that in the struggle for civilization, it was fundamentally important to abolish above all the existing order which prevented modernization, and to institute in its place a secular and democratic social order which would pave the way for a human manner of life. However, this requires a change in mentality. From this point of view, every revolution realized in Atatürk's time at different agencies and institutions of the Turkish society is essentially based on the revolution undertaken in thinking. Atatürk's revolutions are, in fact, a "revolution in thinking" or a "revolution in mentality." This mentality is to free oneself from all kinds of superstitions, to adopt the contemporary thinking, and to proceed in the path of reason and science.

Atatürk's revolution and principles form the most important element of the Turkish modernization movement, in other words, they are the underlying force of that movement. Because, Atatürk's revolution and principles embrace the paths of reason and logic that will raise Turkey in the shortest time to the level of contemporary civilization. As a matter of fact, Atatürk also states as follows : "The underlying purpose of the past and present revolutions we have achieved is to transform the people of the Turkish Republic into a society civilized in all respects. This is the fundamental principle of our revolutions". Thus, revolutions realized for this end, under the leadership of Atatürk ensured the new Turkish State's taking a contemporary shape and the Turkish society's gaining a civilized character in all respects.

Atatürk's revolutions display an interrelated whole. All the revolutions, rooted in this whole depend essentially on some change in mentality. Such mentality requires proceeding in a path of reason free from all sorts of dogma. The most important difference distinguishing Atatürk's revolutions from the reform movements which had taken place in our history is that his reforms are set up on a secular foundation. The modernization efforts dating from Tanzimat (the political reforms of Abdulmejid in 1839 and the period following) or even before, to the period of Atatürk were conceived of under a theocratic state and social order and the said efforts

were attempted under that order. However, Atatürk's revolutions differ fundamentally from the reform movements attempted earlier in our recent history due to his adoption of the secular social order and the need for it as the medium and base for such revolutions.

Another point which distinguishes Atatürk's revolutions from the earlier reform movements is that his revolutions were initiated with full faith and definite determination. Such faith and determination had originated from the fact that the mentioned innovations would meet in the most appropriate way the needs and desires of the Turkish nation on the way to modernization. Atatürk's revolutions were completely rooted in our social structure in a short time because of mentioned qualities.

Atatürk's concept of modernization then represents a whole with its political, social, cultural and economic aspects and forms a series of principles and revolutions based on a rational line of thought. However, the most important characteristic of this whole, is its protecting, in the process of modernization, its national character, and its watching closely over its self-identity while adopting innovations. Atatürk's concept of modernization was not to blindly imitate the west nor blindly follow suit. The important point here is, not to lose the national character, or with still a better expression, to melt the contemporary renovations in the national structure in the process of both mental and institutional westernization. Atatürk has expressed this point when he said : *"We are not taking the western civilization for the sake of following suit. We take from that civilization and adopt those useful points which we consider fit and suitable for our structure within the bounds of world civilization."*

In this sense, the Turkish modernization movement under the leadership of Atatürk was a return to the long forgotten Turkishness as well as to western civilization and western technology. Because, the Turkish nation, in spite of its setting up great civilizations in the past since ancient times, and its rendering great services to humanity, had lagged behind the west, not due to faults it committed but owing to some political and social factors and impediments it faced in recent centuries. However, at one time, the West had lagged behind the Turks. Thus, the Turkish modernization efforts reset the civilized qualities of the Turkish nation in motion. As a matter of fact, Atatürk expressed, in all its clarity, the national character of the Turkish modernization movement when he made the following statement in his decennial speech: *"Never do I doubt that the long forgotten great civilized quality and great civilized capability of the Tur-*

*kish nation shall rise through its advances henceforth as a fresh sun in the future's lofty horizon of civilization.*" Thus, we conclude that Atatürk's concept of modernization was inspired perhaps by any model following a rational, logical and scientific line of thought, however, its basic substance and fundamentals were derived from within, and its genuine objective was determined by considering its specific needs and requirements.

It will be useful to point out still another point among the characteristics of Atatürk's concept of modernization. And it is this: Under Atatürk's concept of modernization, one finds the fundamental concepts of independence, sovereignty, and rights and freedoms, each qualifying the state, nation and individuals respectively. Only is this kind of environment and with such qualities shall civilization prove to be worthwhile when the humanity point of view is taken into consideration. Otherwise, a mandatory modernization deprived of independence and sovereignty or a totalitarian modernization deprived of human rights and freedoms cannot be considered to be the contemporary progress nor can it represent a contemporary life. The most outstanding characteristic of Atatürk's concept of modernization is its quality of being open to progress under a secular and democratic social order.

Atatürk's method of modernization depends on the principle of "carrying out many a great task in a short time." The measure of time, according to Atatürk, must be envisaged "by taking into consideration the contemporary concept of speed and movement but not by following the benumbing mentality of the past centuries." So, it is a principle in Atatürk's concept of modernization to consider the steps taken in the path of modernization to be short and deficient, and to proceed by taking steps constantly growing longer and more fundamental. Atatürk's thinking which adopts that science is the best guide in life shall remain valid also in the future as at the present time, on the way to modernization, since it highly esteems science and rationalism. As a matter of fact, the Great Leader pointed to us the path to be followed when he made the following statement: "*Sciences are a torch kept in hand and mind by the Turkish nation in its march on the way to progress and civilization.*"

A great distance has been taken in this respect, indeed. The country has been brought from an era to a new age. And this modernization is going on different areas today. However, the target has not yet been attained. And our ideal is such that the Turkish nation shall definitely achieve its goal that Atatürk has shown it, in this illuminated path.