

T Ü R K T A R İ H K U R U M U

BELLE TEN

Cilt : XLVI

Nisan 1982

Sayı : 182

THE CALIPHATE and ATATÜRK'S *INKILÂB*

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My focus in this paper will be on how Atatürk's *inkilâbs* or "revolutions" actually constituted one total revolution during which the events occurred in sequence as links of one whole historical process. I believe most of the historians of Atatürk's revolution are often too dependent on his historic speech, *Büyük Nutuk*, which he delivered after the major *inkilâb* was already completed in 1927. The *Nutuk* is one and undoubtedly the most important source for the period. But basically it was delivered before a party convention for explanation and justification of the *inkilâb* and the tactics used for its victory.

It will be seen that historically the separation of the Caliphate from the Sultanate and the abolition of the latter set off a sequence of events and movements which led to the major *inkilâbs* including the abolition of the Caliphate and other secularizing reforms in the period 1922-1927.

The most urgent problem subsequent to victory over the Greek army was to make the allied powers recognize the objectives of the Independence War in a formal treaty. This in turn raised the fundamental question of the country's regime: who was going to represent the Turkish state in the coming peace conference. The claim of the Sultan's government to this effect triggered the great *inkilâb*. Mustafa Kemal reacted by declaring that absolute sovereignty of the Turkish state is embodied in the Grand National Assembly (GNA). Only three days after the Sultan's claim, Kemal proposed to the GNA the separation of the Caliphate from the Sultanate and the abolition of the latter (November 1, 1922). A fortnight later the Sultan Vahideddin fled aboard an English warship, still with the claim of being the Caliph of the Muslims of the world. A new Caliph, Abdülmecid Efendi, was elected by the GNA. Then the question came up whether the new Caliph was to be considered the head of the state and would enjoy political power in the Turkish state. The question was asked by many deputies including the *hocas*, Muslim clerics, and the most influential nationalist leaders and

companions of Kemal, Rauf, and Refet. At the GNA, Kemal stressed that the Turkish nation now replaced the state of Osman in sovereignty and took its destiny in its own hands. "National sultanate and sovereignty," he said,¹ "is embodied only in the GNA composed of the representatives of the nation. As to the question of the future of the Caliphate, history gives examples of the Caliphate continuing side by side with the Sultanate. Now that the Sultanate is gone the Caliphate will stay as the spiritual and religious center of the whole Muslim world. The Sultanate now is replaced by the powerful body of the delegates of the nation and from now on it will be able to take care of the nation's affairs towards a *modern* prosperous society." In these words Kemal declared the fundamental revolutionary change in the regime of the country and summarized its future policy. There was no place for the Caliphate in the new Turkish state. The expression, "national sultanate" was chosen by him to argue that sultanate meant secular sovereignty and now it was assumed by the nation. The Caliph's position in the Islamic community was interpreted in a quite unusual way. It was presented as a purely spiritual dignity as in Christendom. And actually those who tried to support Kemal in the press compared the Caliph to the Pope.

Before the GNA proceeded to elect a new Caliph, Kemal saw to it that the candidate to the post, Abdülmecid, son of Sultan Abdülaziz, vowed by signature that he agreed to this interpretation. The document signed contained the following points: Abdülmecid shall bear the title of Caliph of all Muslims. The manifest that he was going to publish to the Muslim world was instructed to him emphasizing the fact that the election was duely made by the representatives of the nation, that is, by the GNA². Thanking the Muslims all over the world for their support to the Turkish nation in its struggle for independence and to the Ottoman dynasty which he said had always been the defender of Islam he added that "the high office of the Caliphate and in particular the exalted duty of the *imâmet*, which is a trust by God, asked for their continued support. He signed the manifest as *Halîfe-i Muslimîn*, the Caliph of the Muslims and *Khâdim al-Haramayn al-*

¹ *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, vol. I-III, İstanbul: Türk İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Yayınları I, 1945, s. 270; *Hilâfet ve Millî Hâkimiyet, hilâfet ve millî hakimiyet meseâli hakkında muhtelif zevâtın makâlât ve mütâliâtından mürekkep bir risâledir*. Ankara: Matbuât ve istihbârât müdiriyet-i umumiyesi neşriyatından no. 32, 1339/1923, 216

² Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Nutuk*, II, İstanbul: Türk Devrim Tarihi Enstitüsü, 1961, 696; Utkan Kocatürk, *Atatürk ve Türk Devrimi Kronolojisi*, Türk İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Yayınları, Ankara 1973, 238

Sharîfayn, the Servant of the Two Holy Cities of Islam³. In a message to the press he asserted that the Caliphate is a trust (without mentioning whose trust) and would be happy to perform thereby a service to the nation "like other citizens"⁴. Although the idea of *imâmet* and that of God's trusteeship could not easily be reconciled with the nationalist interpretation of the Caliphate, in his letter to the GNA the newly elected Caliph agreed that the election was made "in accordance with the Constitution which guarantees absolute sovereignty of the Turkish nation."⁵ Contradiction was apparent and both sides, the *inkilâbcis* and *hocas* began a heated controversy on the question as to whether the Caliph could remain as a simple spiritual dignitary in Islam, whether he could receive his authority from a community or from a group, and whether the acts of the GNA could be valid without his ratification. All these points were raised in treatise published by Hoca Şükrü Efendi, deputy of Karahisar. He claimed that according to Islamic principles the Caliph should be the head of the Islamic state or the head of the GNA, and that his ratification was necessary to make the acts of the GNA valid laws for the community or nation⁶. However, some other *hocas* supported the nationalist interpretation an *inkilâbcis* joined them in using as an argument Islamic law and history^{7a}. Ağaoğlu Ahmed, referring to the Islamic sources, *hadîth* and *siyar* and recognized authorities on Islamic sciences, said that the prophet himself made a clear distinction between worldly affairs and religion, and that, in early Islam, under the first four rightly guided Caliphs, between 632 and 661 A.D., the Caliphate was elective and the affairs of the Islamic community were taken care of by consultative bodies as in a republican government and that a republican government conforms best to the spirit of Islam. In brief, Ağaoğlu found all the principles of the Kemalist revolution in early Islam-republicanism, national sovereignty, liberty, equality and brotherhood, and even populism. He identified national sovereignty with *icmâ-i ümmet*, consensus of the community. He asserted that the Caliphate belongs originally to the *umma*, Islamic community as a whole, and the Caliph has to be elected by its delegates. The concept of divine monarchy, he argued, comes from Persian tradition, and is totally foreign to the original Islamic spirit

³ *Hilâfet ve Millî Hâkimiyet*, 211-12

⁴ *Ibid.*, 214-15

⁵ *Ibid.*, 215

⁶ F.C. "Hoca Şükrü Efendiye Cevap", *Hilâfet ve Millî Hâkimiyet*, 177-85;

^{7a} Hoca Ubeydullâh, "İslâm'da Hilâfet", *ibid.*, 186-90

and practice ^{7b}. Rasih Efendi, a hoca, Muslim scholar and GNA deputy, emphasizing the important place of social action in Islam, asserted that exercise of political power is to be entrusted as a trust (*emânet*) to the most capable person or body for the good and salvation of the Islamic community. The most important thing is to defend and maintain the independence of the Muslims. Islam, he said, is incompatible with bondage. Islam is based on the absolute equality of Muslims. Brotherhood and equality are the foundations of the Islamic community. Islam commands management of their affairs in *shûrâ*, that is in consultation. Citing verses from the Qur'an in his article he asserts that government by a body elected by Muslims is the only valid form of government based on Islamic foundations.⁸ Many *hocas* using exclusively Islamic arguments supported Hoca Rasih's view.⁹ Later Mustafa Kemal was going to use all the Islamic arguments to defend absolute sovereignty of the nation as represented at the GNA against those who advocated sovereign rights of the Caliph in the Islamic state¹⁰. Rasih Efendi's emphasis on independence of the Muslims was particularly important in support of Mustafa Kemal's authority, and Islamic leaders in India would wholeheartedly espouse these Islamic arguments of the nationalists. It should be noted that later Kemal sent a delegation under Rasih Efendi to India.

It is almost needless to add that Islamic arguments for modernization were not new in Turkey or in the Islamic world in general. The so-called modernists had been advocating, on the same basis, reforms in Islamic state and society such as constitutionalism for more than half a century¹¹. The movement had gained momentum among the Turkish ulema and intellectuals during the second constitutional period¹².

Ziya Gökalp, the spiritual father of Turkish nationalism, joined in the controversy over the Caliphate. Sociologically, he said¹³, national consciousness is a higher stage in social evolution and basic social reality is nationality while the *umma*, the religious community embracing many

^{7b} Ağaoğlu Ahmed, "Tarihi Celse", *ibid.*, 11-32

⁸ Hoca Rasih Efendi, "İslâm'da Hâkimiyet ve Te'sis-i Hükûmet", *ibid.*, 33-49

⁹ Hoca Ubeydullâh, "Hilâfet-i Sahiha", *ibid.*, 50-54

¹⁰ Bak. meselâ, *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, 62-3, 37, 144-46

¹¹ H.A.R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, Chicago 1947; "İslâm" *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition, vol. IV, 141-71; Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, New York: Anchor Books, 1968,

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¹² Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Türk Düşünce Tarihi*

¹³ "Hilâfet'in Hakiki Mâhiyeti", *Hilâfet ve Milli Hâkimiyet*, 1-10

nations, brings an additional identity to the individual. Turkey reached to the stage of national consciousness during the war of independence. The Caliph as the head of the religious community, he continued, has to be exclusively a religious authority and spiritual guide. His claim to have a political authority in a nation-state can only lead to conflicts detrimental to both nation and religion. As Islam and *umma*, he argued, are also social and religious realities, a Caliph as the head and symbol of them is necessary for the unity of Islam. In his earlier writings¹⁴ Gökalp had warmly advocated "the re-opening of the gate of *idjtihâd*" for modernizing the Islamic community as far as worldly affairs were concerned. At any rate, Gökalp had exerted a strong influence on the *inkilâbcis*' concept of a secular state and law. *Hocas* as well as *inkilâbcis* writers were concerned with keeping the Caliphate in the custody of the Turkish nation during this period because the English were trying to assume the role of the protector of the Caliphate and were in favor of the idea of recognizing Sherif Husayn of Mecca, a descendant of the Prophet, as the supreme Caliph of the Islamic world. Against this plan the Turkish press argued that the Caliphate can exist and survive only with the support of an independent and strong Islamic state. Islamic leaders in India, notably Maulana Mehmed Ali, Amir Ali and the Agha Khan publicly supported the Turkish nationalist view that only the GNA of Turkey had the right to elect the Caliph, and denounced the English plan as an interference in an internal affairs of Muslims¹⁵.

The question of the Caliphate was further complicated by becoming an issue of power politics among the nationalist leaders. According to the report given in Atatürk's speech in 1927, Rauf, then prime minister told him that "it is difficult for us to make ourselves masters of the general situation; this can be secured by a higher office and the sublime dignity which everybody generally considers to be unapproachable. This office, this dignity and the attempt to substitute it by a body of a different character would lead to disappointment and disaster. This is not to be thought of."¹⁶ The attitude which Rauf, Refet, Kâzım Karabekir and others were going to take later on clearly showed that what they really wanted was to prevent Kemal's taking over the control of all state power. Collective leadership of the Independence War was going to split up over the issue of the political form which the

¹⁴ See. Z. Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilisation*, ed. and trans. Niyazi Berkes, London 1959

¹⁵ *Hilâfet ve Millî Hâkimiyet*, 129-64

¹⁶ Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *A Speech*, Leipzig 1929, 573

country was going to take. Now Kemal created an inner circle around him with his closest comrades İsmet, Fevzi and Kâzım (Özalp) to further the *inkilâb*. Incidentally, the word *inkilâb* chosen by Kemal for the revolution he was leading originally meant transformation or radical change without violence. In carrying out the revolutionary changes Kemal's tactic was to introduce them through the acts of the GNA which, he always asserted, was the only and absolute holder of national sovereignty. Actually this was his only source of legitimate power and support in using the state power first against foreign enemies during the Independence War and then against his opponents during the revolution in the period 1922-1924. In 1923, when he found a potential opposition in the GNA, including some of the army generals, on the issue of the powers of the Caliph, he decided to create a political party and to gather the nation around himself as *halâskâr ghâzî*, the saviour of the fatherland¹⁷. Rauf and other generals had reminded him that at the beginning of the Independence War they had declared before the nation that they were fighting to deliver the Caliphate from captivity. Now Kemal was going directly to the nation to seek its support for the *inkilâb*.

Kemal's political campaign in western and central Anatolia in January-March 1923 was designed to back up the Turkish delegation at the Lausanne peace conference as well as "to exchange views," Kemal said, "with people on the questions concerning the present and the future."¹⁸ This campaign was to have a tremendous significance for the events to come in Turkey in the following years¹⁹.

In Izmit he rejected the idea that the Caliph should be considered as the head of the state or a dignitary with any political responsibility. He argued that since the greater part of the Muslim world was at the moment under foreign domination, the GNA took the Caliphate under its protection until the time when other Muslim countries became independent and gave a definitive form to the Caliphate. In the meantime, he said, the new Caliph Abdülmecid will be wise enough to realize his real position and cautious enough not to cause a crisis by an inappropriate action or behavior. All along the campaign he addressed himself to two different groups separately, the *halk*, common people, artisans, peasants, landowners and farmers on the one

¹⁷ The most important source: Atatürk, *A Speech*, 570-90; Ali Fuat Cebesoy, *Millî Mücadele Hatıraları*, İstanbul 1953; idem, *Siyasî Hatıralar*, 2 vols, İstanbul 1957, 1960; Mahmut Goloğlu, *Devrim ve Tepkileri, 1924-1930*, Ankara 1972, 57-84

¹⁸ *Söylev ve Demeçler*, II, Ankara 1959, 49-50

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 50-164

hand, and, on the other, *gençler* or *münevverân*, that is students and the intellectual elite. But this cleavage he observed between two sections of the Turkish nation was wrong; the intellectuals should go to people and try to eliminate the alienation by evaluating popular national culture²⁰ an idea that will give rise in later years to the *Halk-evleri*, that is people's houses and other populist movements in Turkey. He saw that this cleavage between *halk* and *münevver* could be fateful for the entire *inkilâb* and for the changes he was planning to introduce in the future. Later, in 1924, by suppressing the religious schools along with the Caliphate and establishing one secular educational system he believed that he would create one Turkish nation. In the meetings in every city he visited the *hocas*, clerics came forward as the spokesmen of the *halk*, people, a function established in the traditional Ottoman society. Questions posed by both groups centered around the position of the Caliph and Islam within the new state. Since Kemal's opponents claimed that the Caliphate could not be separated from the state and the new Caliph had to assume real responsibility in the state the future of the Caliphate had become the most fundamental and emotional issue across the country.

In his answers to *hocas*, Kemal used the religious arguments forwarded by the Islamic modernists saying that Islam originally depended on consultative government, and the community's sovereignty was an essential principle in early Islam²¹. He said also that sovereignty was later usurped by despots with a theory totally foreign to the original Islamic precepts and thus the exercise of absolute sovereignty by the GNA only means the reestablishment of this right²². But on the other hand Kemal must be aware that the use of Islam for the *inkilâb* was contradictory. The *hocas* were using it confidently against the *inkilâb* before a religious mass ready to listen. On this platform no real agreement was possible, for the reactionary *hocas* were talking about the Islamic *umma*, or community ruled by the Religious Law and its administrator the Caliph, while the *inkilâbcis* were considering the people as a nation whose government was based on the national will. In the press at the same period Ağaoğlu Ahmed was severely criticized and ridiculed by the conservative *hocas* for defending the *inkilâb* on the same Islamic sources²³. In his speeches Kemal carefully distinguished the

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 140

²¹ *Ibid.*, 63

²² *Ibid.*, 145; cf. Ağaoğlu Ahmed, *ibid.*, 11-32

²³ See *Hilâfet ve Millî Hâkimiyet*, 191-207

modernist *hocas* by calling them "the enlightened ulema" while he accused the conservatives of following the example of those ulema who served despotic Caliphs for their own personal interests. Kemal talked about conservative *hocas* as a class with vested interests in defense of the traditional order²⁴. Many of them actually made up part of the powerful body of notables in the provinces. He denounced them as enemies of the nation fomenting against the *inkilâb* which had restored the nation's sovereign rights. Thus, the question of the Caliphate became a cover for the power struggle between the *hocas* who were the spokesmen of the old regime and the *inkilâbcis* who were determined to change Turkish state and society towards a modern nation-state.

Kemal emerged as a radical revolutionary when he was speaking to the youth and *münevvers*, an elite with secular and professional education, during the campaign. In Konya, a city known traditionally as being unsympathetic to the Ottoman dynasty, in an emotional speech Kemal declared that "if they (the supporters of the Caliphate) make a wrong move he shall consider it not only an opposition against his personal beliefs and goals but a conspiracy and a deadly danger against the life and existence of his nation. When this happens the only thing that he and his comrades sharing his ideals have to do is to pass to action and fight until their total destruction."²⁵ This speech was published in the official newspaper, *Hâkimiyet-i Milliye* (26 March 1923). This was a declaration of war against those who hoped to create a movement against the *inkilâb*. Confrontation was inevitable. But it was also essential to save the country from an internal struggle at a time when debates crucial for the future of the nation were being carried on at the Lausanne peace conference. This was the purpose of the political campaign and Kemal used every argument to win over public opinion for his cause. In addition to the notion of the supremacy of the national sovereignty he opened an intense campaign to discredit the Ottoman dynasty and history. He reminded people how he Sultan-Caliph had then organized "the armies of the Caliphate" against the national movement and used Greek aircraft to drop *fetvâs* on the nationalist forces condemning nationalist leaders as rebels. Historically the Ottoman Sultan-Caliphs, he said, had always acted as despots and, abusing the good faith of the Turkish people they had wasted Turkish blood across remote frontiers for their vanity²⁶

²⁴ *Söylev ve Demeçler*, 144

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 146

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 100-106, 121

With a personality combining the idealist and statesman, Kemal was at the same time a strategist, and a pragmatic politician. He asserted in his speeches to the youth that the *inkilâbcis* definitely were going to win the struggle. The assurance came from the fact that he had full control of the armed forces. What distinguished Turkey at the time from other Islamic countries was that a westernized military elite trained in the professional secular schools took the leadership of the radical modernization process, and the Independence War had produced a leader with incomparable charisma and ability. Leadership of the military elite for modernization had become a tradition in Turkey since Süleyman Pasha's coup of 1876 and particularly the second constitutional revolution in 1908. At the beginning of his campaign on January 18, 1923 at Izmit he warned his opponents. "Those who achieved the *inkilâb*," he declared, "have all the necessary power to crush the reaction... It should be clearly understood that the moment a dangerous situation is caused by a dignitary or a person, then, theory stops and action starts."²⁷ During the same campaign he promised to the reserve and regular army officers as well as to the professional elite that the government shall take measures to improve their welfare²⁸.

When he was back in Ankara from the tour he had the GNA pass a law to the effect that anyone acting contrary to the GNA's decision on the abolition of the Sultanate and the legality of the acts of the GNA shall be sued under the law of treason to the country²⁹.

This political campaign of Kemal in early 1923 has a crucial significance not only for his major *inkilâb* with the radical changes in the political order of the country, but also for publicly expressing the changes Kemal and his *inkilâbcî* companions were planning for the future. First and above all he made it perfectly clear that the GNA representing national sovereignty was the only source of political power in Turkey and no political responsibility was going to be accorded to a member of the Ottoman dynasty under whatever name or office. He declared the Ottoman state dead and replaced by a new Turkish state. This declaration would logically lead to the promulgation of the republic and the abolition of the Caliphate. On January 16, 1923 in an interview with newsmen he declared that "in order to lead the nation and the country to the level of modern civilization and human progress the government and people have to make rapid and long

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 64

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ See Kocatürk, *ibid.*, 252

advances." He spoke of equal rights for women, use of simple Turkish by the preachers at the mosques, and having a modern appearance in attire. At Bursa in a talk with people he said, "any nation claiming to be a civilized, progressive and developed nation is definitely to make statues" and there is nothing, he asserted, religiously wrong in this³⁰. The reason for the Prophet to prohibit making statues, he further argued, was necessary in those days to fight idolatry. Today, he said, I cannot imagine any Muslim Turk looking at a statue as an idol. Our nation shall make beautiful statues and this will not make them less Muslim³¹. Kemal found justification and impetus for his plans of the most radical legal reforms when the allied powers at Lausanne stubbornly resisted the abolition of the capitulations on the grounds that Turkey was a backward country and still under Islamic Law. Kemal immediately set up a committee for legal reforms and the Turkish delegation declared that Turkey was under way to adopt European laws in civil matters soon³². The convocation of a conference in Izmir on national economy also coincided with the claims of economic independence of Turkey and abolition of capitulatory ties³³. It is very interesting to observe the paralellism between Turkish claims to be a fully independent modern nationstate and as such to ask equal treatment at Lausanne, and Kemal's promises of taking radical measures to modernize Turkey during his Anatolian tour in 1923.

While he rejected the attitude of the western powers toward his nation, he at the same time had come to the realization and deep felt belief that an independent existence for the nation absolutely depended on complete modernization, and that there is no more fundamental principle than the law of survival in this world. "The law of *Inkilâb*" he declared at Izmit, "is above all existing laws."³⁴ It was impossible for him to subject the nation to a law, even when this law was in the scriptures, if eventually it led to a servile existence in this world. His whole philosophy of life was based on the Darwinian theory of survival. The pragmatic outlook on life with a belief in the decisive role of actual power for survival is the key to understanding Atatürk's personality, and his tactics in politics and *inkilâb*. In his speeches he always stressed that life is struggle, and that success in this struggle depends

³⁰ *Söylev ve Demeçler*, 127, 133, 151

³¹ *Ibid.*, 66

³² Cemil Bilsel, *Lozan*, II, İstanbul 1933, 79-118

³³ *Türkiye İktisat Kongresi, 1923-Izmir, Haberler-Belgeler-Yorumlar*, ed. A.Gündüz Ökçün, Ankara 1968: Atatürk's opening speech, 246, 253

³⁴ *Söylev ve Demeçler*, 63

on being prepared for struggle. In 1923 at Akhisar for instance he said, "Every nation in this world wants to survive and survival depends on struggle... this country shall definitely become a modern, progressive and developed one. This is a struggle of survival for us."³⁵ If we are to define Kemalism in terms of a social doctrine we may find it in social Darwinism.

Representing all the traditional forces in the country, the Caliphate had the potential to become the center of reaction to the *inkilâb* and to the modernizing reforms of the future. Kemal expressed the concern during his campaign that the supporters of the Caliphate had plans to bring back the Sultanate.

Always in his logic of struggle for survival, the reaction to the *inkilâb*, he said, is a conspiracy against the life and existence of the nation and the *inkilâbcis* should use every means to overcome it. The incidents leading to the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 are well known.

A rather practical matter, the question of *who* actually was the head of the state, came to the fore when the allied powers at Lausanne made it an issue. Conservatives turned their eyes naturally to the Caliph. Subsequently, Abdülmecid's behavior and the attention he was getting in the country and abroad led the *inkilâbcis* to make a revolutionary move although it was as always achieved through the GNA. Seven months after Kemal's tour in Anatolia, and three months after the signing of the peace treaty, the Republic was promulgated by the GNA and Kemal was elected its first president. İsmet became prime minister. This new *inkilâb* further estranged the Rauf group from Kemal, and when the rumours of the Caliph's resignation spread, the opposition beseeched him not to do it because this as Lütfi Fikri, chairman of the Istanbul bar, put it, "would thrust the world into a calamity."

A letter supporting the Caliph written by the Indian Muslim leaders to İsmet Pasha was published in an Istanbul newspaper before it reached the addressee. This as well as Rauf's visit to the Caliph in Istanbul, made Kemal and İsmet decide to make the final move and abolish the Caliphate through the GNA. In the following four years the GNA enacted revolutionary laws designed to complete the secularization of the state and society which actually constituted the logical consequences of the revolutionary *elan* and of the great *inkilâb* which took place in the period 1922-1923. All the pre-requisites for a nation-state were formally enacted and promulgated³⁶.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 93

³⁶ Kocatürk, *ibid.*, 260-66, and the sources referred to there; and Goloğlu, *Ibid.*

What was accomplished by the abolition of the Caliphate and the immediate measures of secularization was a radical revolution. As Count Ostrorog, a judicial consultant to the Ottoman government and a close observer of the changes in Turkey in 1924 pointed out³⁷, this was "one of the most considerable events that has happened in the history of the East since the fourteenth century."

The abolition of the Caliphate on March 3, 1924 and the suppression of an insurrection in Eastern Anatolia in the following year marked the final victory of the *inkılâbîs* over the religious establishment. But secularization introduced by the unification of public instruction under a secular administration and promulgation of the Swiss civil code as Turkey's law in 1926, meant a much more radical revolution for Islam. Free from the intricacies of the Islamic theology and jurisprudence the *inkılâbîs* went further and asserted that religion is only a matter of the conscience of the individual. In his speech before the abolition of the Caliphate Kemal declared that "For salvation in the next world and happiness in this world of the nation it became imperative to move decisively and without delay to free our consciences and religious beliefs which are sacred and sublime from politics and from all its accretions which have proved to be only an instrument for all kinds of shady and unstable games of interests and ambitions."³⁸ "The word of Revolution was not pronounced" Count Ostrorog observes³⁹, "but activities soon manifested themselves that were indeed not Evolution but such a Revolution as the world of Islam had never seen... what has been done is somewhat more than reform, something that tends to revise fundamental tenets supported by an established doctrine and an ancient observance, not reform but reformation.... It may even become the starting-point for an important renewal of Islamic thought developing on terms of an independent liberal exegesis."

Half a century has passed since Kemal's revolution but Count Ostrorog's hope has not been realized. On the contrary the reaction came in its most fundamental form aiming at subjecting the state and society more than ever to the *Shari'a* as established by the great *imâms* of the eighth and ninth centuries. Those governments which followed even partially Kemal's revolution and modernization program have been either totally destroyed or forced to change their policies.

³⁷ Count Léon Ostrorog, *The Angora Reform*, London: University of London Press 1927, 14

³⁸ Atatürk, *A Speech*, 576-78; Kocatürk, *op.cit.* 266: *Zabıtlar Ceridesi*, Devre II, cilt VIII, 3-6

³⁹ Ostrorog, *op. cit.* 70

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was a statesman but above all a revolutionary who believed that rapid modernization was a matter of life and death for his nation, and that could be achieved by revolution legitimized by the modern principle of national will against a concept of divine authority. His modernization pattern can be classified in the terminology of political scientists as a forced one from above by a modernizing leader. "Man" as C.E. Block observes in *The Dynamics of Modernization* (1957), "is not a captive of history despite the undeniable persistence of historically evolved traditions... The character of the policies of modernization adopted and the way that they are implemented depend to a considerable degree on leadership." But, he added, "instant modernization is not within the realm of possibility." Modernization is the end result of an historical process of a more or less long period. It was not an accident that Turkey could achieve the most radical revolution in modern Islam, and is today the least affected Muslim nation by the upsurge of Islamic fundamentalism. By revolution and with the strong backing of a group of *inkilâbcis* as well as with the approval of a large section of the population, Atatürk was able to eliminate the control of a powerful clerical hierarchy and to introduce the legal and political conditions for rapid social development and modernization.