

AN OVERALL VIEW OF STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN TURKEY: THE REPUBLICAN ERA (1923 – 1983)

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I. THE OTTOMAN HERITAGE

*The age of Jem has passed,
The cup alone in use remains
Nâbi*

Any comprehensive research about The Republican Turkey has got to start off with a brief analysis of the Ottoman Turkey for the very simple reason that the contemporary Turkey is what is left, both geographically and historically — and for that matter in its entirety — out of the Ottoman Empire, after the decisive defeat of World War I.

With this contention before concentrating fully on our selected focal point, namely that of structural changes¹ in the Republican Turkey it is apt to mention briefly some of the salient features of the later years of the Ottoman Empire. An Empire which had reached its peak in the XVI. Century, surpassed the other major European powers economically, militarily, technologically and culturally, but lost its superiority in the last two centuries of its 627 years reign due to multifarious factors generated both within and without and finally disintegrated into more than two dozen nation states, The Republican Turkey being one of them(*).

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1 It is not our intention here to discuss the semantic origins and evolution of the "structural change" concept. This could be a subject matter for another paper. It suffices to say that what is meant by "structural change" here is the composition of new combinations in the various spheres of societal life - which in varying degrees - seems different than the previous one. This definition as it can be seen has a clearly distinctive sociological overtones and covers both "growth" and "development", however they may be defined by the academic profession.

* Those nation-states, in alphabetical order, are: 1) Albania, 2) Algeria, 3) Bulgaria, 4) Bahrain, 5) Cyprus, 6) Egypt, 7) Greece, 8) Hungary, 9) Iraq, 10) Israel, 11) Jordan, 12) Kuwait, 13) Lebanon, 14) Libya, 15) Morocco, 16) North Yemen, 17) Oman, 18) Oatar, 19) Romania, 20) Saudi Arabia, 21) South Yemen, 22) Syria, 23) Tunisia, 24) Turkey, 25) The United Arab Emirates, 26) Yugoslavia.

Crisis within the Empire were felt by the Ottoman rulers throughout the late XVIII, XIX, and early XX. centuries and need for reforms and change were admitted undisputed and — to use the precise term as conceived by the Ottoman elite — a long series of Westernisation attempts were carried out desperately from around 1720's until the Empire's dissolution around the 1920's. The main break at those attempts were, without any doubt, the relentless and continuous warfare that the Empire found itself engaged in with the many old and emerging Western powers. To cite all but one striking example starting from 1908 until 1923 first the Ottoman Empire and then after 1918 her unyet claimant successor the National Struggle Movement were warring in many fronts with different powers. And when all had finally ended, in Lewis's words (1901, 241).

"There was indeed little room for hope. Exhausted by almost continuous warfare, the once great Ottoman Empire lay Supine in defeat..... The Country was shattered, improverished, depopulated and demoralized. The Turkish people beaten and dispirited....."

It must be added, however, that even the reform and Westernization efforts which were carried out at the intervals were basically misconceived.

With hindsight economic and social issues and economic expansion in particular should have been the prime concern. Instead, military, judical and political reorganisations and fragmentary reforms in the same fields were given the utmost priority which by the nature of their piecemeal applications generated new instabilities.

Thus when eventually dissolved in 1923, at least two different but related sets of problems, one economic and the other social and cultural, were left - with cumulative side effects - to the newly born Republican Turkey with the prevailing condition depicted so succinctly by Lewis in the above paragrah.

The first of those problems were essentially centered around the issues of non-industrialisation, premodern agricultural structure, the dominance of low-productivity urban economic activities, absence of a viable skilled-labour force, absence of indirgeneous entrepreneurial and managerial skill pool, etc.

The second set of problems arose mainly from the perpetual quest for a new socio-political and cultural identity. Here the fundamental issues were how to catch up with the European superiority; how to reshape the transformation of the Turkish people into a new mold and probably the last but by no means the least, how, between the two cultures and two civilisations - the Islamic and European - to choose and formulate and/or synthesize a new cultural identity.

Beset with these forbiddingly difficult problems, the new "Republican Turkey" of Kemal Ataturk attempted to transform its economically traditional and pre-industrial and culturally dualist-partly traditional and Islamic and partly quasi-western - structures into a fully - Western one.

II. TOWARDS A NEW STATE AND, A NEW STRUCTURE

The peace treaty of Lausanne, signed on 24 July 1923, confirmed the very existence of the new Republican Turkish State on an international level. For Kemal

Atatürk, who was now the first President of the Republic, the turn had come to embark on the grand Westernisation programme touched upon above.

The programme, as it is depicted below, was put in force immediately; its completion, however, as envisaged by the founder of the Republic has not yet been realised even after the sixty years of determined pursuance. What has been achieved and what has not, in terms of transformation and structural change, will be observed after the close examination of the process during the Republican era up to the 1980's. This we intend to do in the time periods of decades since it seems that the Republican transformation process has passed through a socio-political and economic multi - phase which crudely outlined might be classified. Into what I would call - the "Turkish Transformation Decades".

The Turkish Transformation Decades

These are the decades which characterise the Republican years from its incipience to date and can be analysed under seven headings.

1) 1920's: Decade of political, social and cultural Westernisation; Liberal experiments in economic development policies.

2) 1930's: Decade of economic "Etatism" (statism) and the extension of socio - political and cultural Westernisation.

3) 1940's: The autarchic economic etatism and transition to democracy later.

4) 1950's: Decade of political and social liberalism; "mixed - economy" development.

5) 1960's: Decade of pluralist democracy and "planned mixed - economy" development.

6) 1970's: Decade of political instabilities and the continuation of the "planned mixed - economy" development.

7) 1980's: Decade of "trial with the free - market economy", new military intervention and new - style democracy.

These decades, however, within themselves can be divided into three categories:

A- The Formative Years: 1920's and 1930's: Of the transformation decades which started in the 20's, the first two, could aptly be termed as the formative years. For these two decades under the unfaltering direction and guidance of Atatürk did succeed in reshaping and recreating a new outlook for the newly set state.

B- The Transitional Years: The decade followed Atatürk's death in 1938 and lasted until 1950's, under the one-party rule of İsmet İnönü could, conveniently be called as transition years in the sense that the decade witnessed a swift and hectic change in many respects towards its closing years.

C- The Maturing Years: Post - 1950's: The decade starting with 1950 can best be described as the maturing years for the very reason that although faced with many crises, the Republic continued to take the certain mold that was anticipated for it by its founders early in the 1920's.

Now, a concise accounting of those transformatory decades will be in order.

A- THE FORMATIVE YEARS

1) 1920's

Ataturk's reformist outlook was noticed even during the turmoils of the war years. The sound establishment of the Republic, however, provided a much firmer outlet and opened the doors to ensuing waves of socio-political and cultural revolutions.

The Sultanate, that conspicuous feature of the Ottoman establishment, was already abolished-only nineteen days after the armistice-in 1922, even before republic was acclaimed. That however, was only the beginning of a long and difficult process. The decade, in its remaining seven years, witnessed the following fundamental institutional and cultural changes:

- i. 1923, The acceptance of Ankara as the new capital city.
- ii. 1923, The founding of the (official ruling) people's party.
- iii. 1924, The abolition of the Caliphate (The Ottoman Sultan's nominal religious suzerainty).
- iv. 1924, The closure of the religious schools and courts.
- v. 1924, The new Republican Constitution accepted.
- vi. 1925, Suppression of religious orders and expropriation of their wealth.
- vii. 1925, Prohibition of fez and other traditional costumes and replacement of European headgears and dresses instead.
- viii. 1925, Change of Old Muslim Calendar and Clock.
- ix. 1926, The Wholesale Change of Islamic Legal Codes and the acceptance of
 - a) The Swiss Civil Code
 - b) The Italian Penal Code
 - c) The German Commercial Code
- x. 1928, The replacement of the old Arabic-based Turkish script with the Latin alphabet.
- xi. 1928, Campaign for the elimination of Arabic and Persian originated vocabulary from the Turkish Language.
- xii. 1928, The replacement of Arabic numerals with Western numerals.
- xiii. 1929, The abolition of Arabic and Persian (as foreign languages) teachings from the middle school curricula (Ergin, 1978, 217-237; Lewis, 1961; Safa; 1938).

By the end of the decade, as the above catalogue shows, the cultural and institutional set-up of the Turkish Society had been thoroughly altered from the above. The economic set-up, however, remained intact and inactive. In February 1923, a high-level "economic congress" was held in İzmir with instructions - from Atatürk - to outline the economic policy to be implemented by the Republican Government.

The "İzmir Congress" favoured a liberal economic policy on Western lines which was implemented by the government until 1931. The policy meant that economic activities and Turkish industrialization efforts were, in effect, left to Private Enterprise. But lack of both private capital of a viable magnitude and/or entrepreneurial talent pool hindered the efforts of economic development. In addition, the "Great Crash" of 1929 in the Western World brought about a worldwi-

de conjunctional drawback to the development efforts thus started. At any rate, it became obvious that Atatürk's main concern, in that decade, were cultural changes and the consolidation of Westernisation rather than economic expansion.

The domination of non-economic issues, throughout the 1920's can also be attributed to the fact that "economic advancement" was conceived as a natural extension of socio-political reforms. Hence, social and cultural reforms were carried on in the second decade of the republic as vehemently as before (Safa, 1938).

2) 1930's

In the 1930's, Atatürk's Westernisation reforms were almost completed with the following major changes:

- i) 1931, Adoption of the Western metric system.
- ii) 1932, Arabic praying forms replaced by Turkish.
- iii) 1934, The assumption of surnames (instead of the old system).
- iv) 1935, Designation of Sunday as the weekly rest-day.
- v) 1936, Founding of State Academy for Western Classical Music.

But the decade has a distinctive place in the Republican era, also for its "economic advancement model" accepted in 1931, which is widely known as "DEVLETÇİLİK = ETATISM or STATISM". With Etatism, the state now assumed full responsibility and initiative for Turkish economic development, the private sector having been designated a secondary role.

Etatism described as such was not a pseudonym for socialism. The importance of private sector activities were to be dominant in the areas where private sector had shown poor performance and deficiencies. In policy application, this meant that the state would no longer provide incentives for the private sector whatever the field of activity.

Etatism, in its basic outline, was nothing more than a framework for industrialisation. Agriculture did not have any important place in this framework, or "advancement" concept whatsoever (Eröz, 1982; Lewis 1968; Kongar, 1976, Türkdoğan, 1982).

As an industrial economic development model Etatism development zeal slowed down and never again revived as adamantly and as strictly as before. In this, the shadow of the second World War and major changes in the governmental cadres after Atatürk's death played significant roles.

B- THE TRANSITIONARY YEARS

3) 1940's

The 1940's are marked for their autarchic etatism in the economic sphere and involuntary adoption of Western democracy in the political sphere in the second half of the decade.

Although Turkey did not take part in the War, its effect (of the War during the inter-war years) was as harshly felt in Turkey as in the participant countries. The mobilisation of human and material resources in readiness for any attack put the economy under considerable strain. To this were added the passive and autar-

chic attitude of the government with regards to economic policies. For this reason the decade is well remembered for its austerity measures, shortages, long queues and rationing.

It is mainly due to the discontenting feelings of the War years that a political opposition gained a speedy momentum, both on the political and economic front against the dictatorial government of İsmet İnönü immediately after the War ended.

The timing of an organised opposition was very opportune, for at the end of the War İsmet İnönü - till then the absolute power holder - declared Turkey to be on the side of the Allies. In practice. What that meant was that transition into Western - type democracy was now inevitable.

Thus against the pressures within Turkey and from outside İnönü accepted to act upon the rules and institutions of such a democracy. As a result, on 7 January 1946, the Democrat party, the first true opposition party-was allowed to be founded, On the 21 July of the same year the first elections were held. The ruling RPP (Republican People's Party) government and its leader, İnönü, did not fulfil their promise. The elections were extensively rigged and force used to suppress the opposition sympathisers. Even so, the six month old opposition Democratic Party won 61 seats out of the total seats of 464. Notwithstanding all the abuses of power and repression, the opposition Democrat Party under the leadership of Bayar and Menderes grew much stronger in the ensuing years (Karpat; 1967).

On 14 May 1950 the first free and democratic elections were held. The results were stunning. The Democrat party had won 396 seats out of 472 seats, leaving only 68 seats to İnönü's Republican Peoples Party, 1 seat to the other opposition, Nation Party, and 7 Seats to the independents (Kongar, 1976; Karpat, 1967).

C- THE MATURING YEARS: POST - 1950's

4) 1950's

The free elections of 1950, and the assumption of power by the Democrat Party is regarded in Turkish socio - political history as a turning point - a bloodless people's revolution - for the very reason that did it not only end İnönü's autarchic and dictatorial rule, but it also ended the twenty - seven years rule of "military - cum - bureaucratic elite".

The Democrat's much hailed promise was to break the bureaucratic barriers of the previous administration and open the doors of the state to people's easy access. More fundamentally, however, the Democrats started a new are of political and social liberalism.

The Democrat Party's development strategy was essentially based on the assumption that industrialization would be led by the private sector. Consequently, the private sector's share of manufacturing output increased from 40 per cent in 1950 to 55 per cent in 1958 (Asfour et. al. 1975: 2). The private sector also expended its share in total investments. During the decade its investment share was around 53 per cent, leaving some 47 per cent to the public sector (Singer, 1977). Thus the Turkish private sector obviously gained a genuine impetus by the democrats development strategy. This strategy, however, did not exclude the state inter-

vention. On the contrary, along with the booming private sector, the state enterprises too expanded throughout the decade. This co-existence of the private and public sectors in the economy meant that Turkey was now experimenting with a mixed - economy model of development.

Social liberalism of the Democrat's, on the other hand, helped towards the formation of - to borrow Lerner's concept - a more emphatic society (Lerner, 1958)*. It must be added, however, that the process of the formation of such a society took the following three decades to be completed.

5) 1960's

The decade started with the dramatic *coup d'etat* of 27 May 1960.

In the later years of the 1950's, the Democrat Party's development successes had turned sour with high inflation rates, stagnation in the overall economic activities, and chronic foreign exchange crises.

The economic bottlenecks coupled with the political unrest instigated by İnönü and his RPP, paved the way for an army intervention. On 27 May 1960, an army take - over took place, which was followed by a seventeen month interim period during which Turkey was ruled by governments of various military - cum - technocrat teams. In October 1961, free elections were held and a peaceful transition to multi - party Democracy achieved (Hale, 1976; Cohn, 1970).

The 1960 coup and its shortlived transitional regime introduced two fundamental concepts into the post - 1960 Turkey: first, the concept of proportional representation for the electoral system, and second, "Planned Economic Development".

With the first concept, Turkey entered the "Pluralist - democracy" period of coalition governments, - except for the six years between 1965 - 1971 during which a simple party government, namely that of Justice party, was achieved. With the second concept, a planned development period started in earnest.

The planning concept, as the product of the 1960 *coup d'etat* was - as it was then claimed - a rational reaction against the illdirected, low - level economic growth of the Democrat Party. Although the claim was challenged fiercely and shown to be not strictly correct, the concept of planning, it self was being accepted by all the political parties and firmly established into the "political economy" of the post - 1960 governments.

The plan did not bring any radical alternatives to the development model set prior to the 1960's. It did not attempt to dispense with the private sector, for instance. It even further stressed the importance and hence attainment of free market economy and the price mechanism (FFYDP, 1963; Bridge et. al. 1975). It did, nevertheless, introduce one novel concept into the development strategies to be followed. That was the concept of "social Justice". The true content and impli-

* Lerner (1958, 50) defines "empathy" as "... the capacity to see oneself in the other fellow's situation. This is an indispensable skill for people moving out of traditional setting." put differently empathic society is a "participant" society.

cations of the "social justice", however, has since been a matter of differing interpretations and arguments. For some it has meant "more equal distribution of income". Yet for some others it has meant the goal of broadening economic development such that more and more people will be able to benefit from education, health facilities, housing, etc. (Bridge et. al. 1975). The latter interpretation can be attributed to the Justice Party, which gaining two of the elections in the 1960's with clear parliamentary majorities ruled the country and implemented the development plan programmes in these lines effectively until 1971.

The two plan periods in the 1960's and early 1970's strengthened even more the "mixed economy structure and strategy" that was evolved in the 1950's. The only difference between the 1960's, and 1970's has been not economic, but political.

6) 1970's

Due to unending student unrests in the campuses, extreme leftwing urban guerilla activities in the major cities and division within the Justice Party ranks, an indirect army putsch took over on the 12 March 1971. Although the army forced the existing government to resign, it did not dissolve the parliament. Instead, a parliamentary, but non - partisan, government was formed to deal first with the anarchic situation prevailing in the country, and secondly to fulfil the "social justice" goal within the "planned economic development" strategy.

The semi - military regime of 12 March 1971 lasted until October 1973, but during the short period of these three years, governmental crises followed one another, and four different governments - derived mainly from the parliament, but loosely tied to the parties - assumed power. Although the political instabilities affected the economy, especially, in the earlier times of this transitional period, The Third Five Year Development plan was prepared and accepted without any delay.

In October 1973, free elections were held, which brought with it a permanent political crisis into the Turkish political scene by not producing a clear majority. The coalition governments that followed, ruled the country in an atmosphere of political uncertainties, nobody daring to estimate how long each government would last.

The early elections in June 1977 resulted in a similar predicament. The last three years of the decade witnessed three different governments following each other. Political Instabilities, and social unrest reached damaging proportions. Thus at the close of the decade, Turkey shuddered with the feelings of uncertainties in all the spheres of the societal life.

7) 1980's

In the very first year of the decade Turkey experienced a new military take-over on 12 September 1980. The Parliament was immediately dissolved and all political activities banned.

At the start it seemed that the new military regime was very mild in its outlook and philosophy. As time passed it became clear, however, that behind the mild appearance the National Security Council - which had the effective power under the figurship of General Kenan Evren, held a rather radical view which aimed

at fundamental institutional changes. The institutions to be changed were the ones which characterised the post - 1960 era and which were believed to be the main causes of the above - mentioned ills*.

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* Due to the limitation of space only the first part of this article is being published here, in this present volume. The second part is to be published in the succeeding volume.