

# BRIQ

Belt & Road Initiative Quarterly



# Centennial Legacy of the Kemalist Revolution for the Developing World

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Turkish Revolution that  
Shook the World

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## Principles of Publication

At a time when US ambitions for a unipolar world order have lost their appeal, a new order is taking shape thanks to the multipolarization of world politics and the acceleration of cooperation between developing countries, rejecting the globalism of imperialist states. Under these conditions, the new agenda of global cooperation should respond to the needs and aspirations of developing countries seeking joint development and solidarity under the guidance of public-driven projects. In particular, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) -put forward in 2013 by Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China- provides a suitable opportunity and a sound foundation for the implementation of this new agenda of global cooperation.

BRI is an epoch-making move to re-implement the concept of the Silk Road, which dates back 2,000 years, to a time when China was immensely contributing to global prosperity and the development of trade and cooperation. The revival of this concept entails a much more comprehensive approach that also incorporates rail and sea transport, and digital systems.

BRI proposes to bring together over 60 countries across Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America –together accounting for nearly half of the world's gross domestic product– for prosperity and development at the initiative of China. Unlike the Western-centered world order, BRI seeks peaceful collaboration for improving global trade and production towards common goals for humanity. It firmly rejects crude imperialist exploitation. Two thousand years ago, the Silk Road was a conduit for the flow of gunpowder, spices, silk, compasses and paper to the world. Today, it offers artificial intelligence, quantum computers, new energy and material technologies, and space-age visions to developing countries. In addition, the New Silk Road provides incentives and opportunities for the development and implementation of bio-economic schemes in stakeholder countries against the threat of climate change and other environmental threats that bring the entire ecosystem to the brink of extinction.

Türkiye has a significant role –real and potential– in accelerating South-South cooperation. Türkiye is conveniently located as Asia's farthest outpost to the West. It assumes a critical position as a pivotal country on BRI's North-South and East-West axes. However, China's development and BRI's contribution to the future of humanity have remained to a large extent underrecognized and superficially evaluated in Turkish academia, media, and politics. This is mainly because Türkiye's academics, media professionals, and policy makers have been observing China using Western sources. In the same manner, China and BRI's other potential partners have been viewing Türkiye through a Western lens.

BRIQ has committed itself to developing an in-depth understanding of the present era, with a particular emphasis on the new opportunities and obstacles on the road to the New Asian Century.

BRIQ assumes the task of providing direct exchange of views and information among Chinese and Turkish academics, intellectuals, and policy makers. In the meantime, this journal will serve as a platform to bring together the intellectual accumulation of the whole world, especially developing countries, on the basis of the Belt and Road Initiative, which presents a historic opportunity for the common future of humanity.

BRIQ is also devoted to publishing research and other intellectual contributions that underline the transformative power of public-driven economies, where popular interests are upheld as the basic principle, ahead of individual profit. The fundamental tasks of BRIQ are to demonstrate how BRI can contribute to the implementation of this public-driven model, and to help potential BRI partners -including Türkiye- to realize their real potential.

BRIQ stands for the unity of humanity and a fair world order. It will therefore be a publication for the world's distinguished intellectuals, especially those from Eurasia, Africa, and the Americas: the defenders of a new civilization rising from Asia on the basis of peace, fraternity, cooperation, prosperity, social benefit and common development.



## Submission Guidelines

BRIQ features a broad range of content, from academic articles to book reviews, review essays, interviews, news reports, and feature articles.

The Editorial Board can issue calls for papers for special issues and invite authors to contribute manuscripts; however, it also welcomes unsolicited submissions.

Submissions are invited in English or Turkish. All submissions are to include a short biography (150-word limit) and should be sent as Microsoft Word attachments to briq@briqjournal.com. Articles or other content that have been previously published or are under review by other journals will not be considered for publication.

BRIQ follows American Psychology Association (APA) style, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, <https://www.apastyle.org> and uses American English spelling.

BRIQ applies a double-blind review process for all academic articles.

Academic articles should be between 5000 and 9000 words in length, including abstracts, notes, references, and all other content. Please supply a cover page that includes complete author information, and a fully anonymized manuscript that also contains an abstract (200-word limit) and five keywords.

Book reviews should not exceed 1,000 words; review essays covering two or more works can be up to 3,000 words.

News reports consisting of brief analyses of news developments should not exceed 1,500 words; feature articles combining reporting and analysis can be up to 3,500 words.

Please contact the Editorial Board for interview proposals.

# EDITORIAL

## Kemalist Revolution at 100: A Blueprint for the Developing World

What is the contextual relevance of the concepts and agenda set forth by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, often referred to as the "living revolutionary leader"? How does the praxis of the Kemalist Revolution continue to inform our understanding of progressive change in the developing world? In this issue, we delve into a thought-provoking inquiry to initiate a comprehensive dialogue surrounding the implications of the Kemalist legacy in addressing the pressing challenges confronted by developing nations.

What strategies can developing nations formulate to foster progressive change? Valuable lessons can be drawn from the experience of pioneering countries in Asia, Africa, and South America that play a pivotal role in shaping a new global order. In particular, the ensuing perspectives provide an indispensable comprehension of the matter: "Nurturing autonomy while confronting the hegemonic policies of imperialist states, refraining from intervening in the internal affairs of sovereign states, embarking on distinctive paths of development tailored to the unique demands of each nation, mutually assessing the strengths of national entities to bolster cooperation founded on equality and mutual benefit, ultimately fostering well-being and harmony on both domestic and global scales." These ideals also serve as a poignant reminder that we are currently living in an era of imperialism and revolutions for national liberation.

After enduring the loss of millions of lives in two partitioning wars driven by imperialist motives, humanity is now facing the challenge of averting further instances of imperial aggression on a global scale. Within this context, there is a strong and compelling need to establish a new world order characterized by peace and harmony. This imperative has taken on a heightened significance for the nation-states of the developing world.

It is widely recognized that the ascent of neoliberalism in the 1980s, followed by the establishment of a globalist imperialist order from the early 1990s onwards, has perpetuated a neocolonialist approach toward developing countries. However, in the present day, the emergence of multipolarity is precipitating the erosion of the foundations supporting both neoliberalism and the globalist imperialist order. This evolving landscape offers developing nations an environment conducive to safeguarding their national sovereignty and integrity, while also fostering sustainable development. Nevertheless, the response of imperialist globalization to the rise of multipolarity introduces the risk of escalating conflicts on a global scale. To avert this danger, nation-states must chart a course grounded in their endogenous capabilities and collaborative efforts with like-minded nations facing similar circumstances.

Amidst these complex circumstances, despite occasional setbacks at specific junctures, the historical course of the Kemalist Revolution under Atatürk's leadership, accompanied by its Six Arrows Programme and significant accomplishments, emerges as a potential blueprint for developing nations. The enigma behind the triumph of Türkiye's revolution a century ago, in conjunction with the achievements observed in present-day China, sheds light on the contemporary imperatives of developing societies. Both the Kemalist and Chinese revolutions, characterized by unique historical trajectories, socio-economic levels, and stages of nation-building, underscore the importance of fostering an economy driven by state-guided mixed policies and establishing a system deeply rooted in the shared welfare of the people.

As the 20th century was dawning, it was the Kemalist Revolution that paved the way for the formation of a nation-state from the remnants of the fragmented Ottoman Empire, which had been subjected to the ravages of imperialist powers. Atatürk's revolutionary agenda, encapsulated by the Six Arrows - Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Statism, Laicism, and Revolutionism - embodies the principles born from the very praxis of revolutionary transformation. The foundation of a unified framework encompassing economics, domestic and foreign policy, security, and culture, vital for developing nations, finds its roots in the Kemalist revolutionary model. This model, the first national liberation revolution in the oppressed world, evolved over time to meet the evolving needs of both the state and society.

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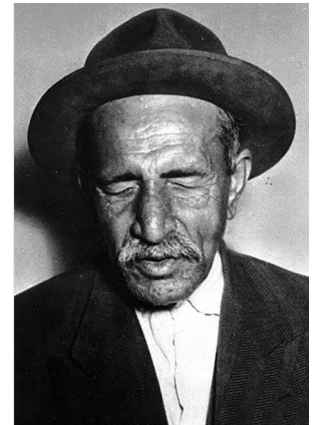


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# “We Celebrate It's Centenary” Turkish Revolution that Shook the World



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**CÜNEYT AKALIN\***

Prof. Dr.

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*\*Cüneyt Akalın was born in Istanbul in 1945. After completing his primary education in Ankara, he graduated from Galatasaray High School in 1965. He continued his education in the USA for one year. He entered the Ankara University Faculty of Political Sciences and graduated in 1969. Later, he started his doctoral studies. He worked in publishing houses and Journals as a reporter, foreign policy writer, research page editor, and sports editor in Hürriyet, Cumhuriyet, and Aydnlk newspapers. He continued his doctoral studies at Istanbul University. He worked as a lecturer at Galatasaray University and was promoted to associate professor in years. He worked at Marmara University's Faculty of Communication and Fine Arts. After retiring from Marmara University, he taught at Arel University. At the same time, he continued his freelance journalism activities. Akalın has many scientific-political articles published in various journals, more than 10 book translations from English-French to Turkish, and many copyrighted works.*

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## ABSTRACT

The effects of the Turkish Revolution were not limited to the Turkish people; it had worldwide consequences. Türkiye became the pioneer and symbol of the rise of the oppressed peoples of Asia-Africa and Latin America. Another dimension of the worldwide importance of the Turkish Revolution is that it entered into a unity of fate with the Soviet Revolution. During the years of the Turkish War of Independence, most of the Asian, African and Latin American countries were living under the colonial yoke. Mustafa Kemal Pasha lit the torch of independence as he advocated the principle of full independence. The model created by the Turkish Revolution meant a lot for the peoples of the oppressed world. Mustafa Kemal Pasha created great excitement, especially in the Islamic world. His name was referred to as “fearless, the invincible man”. The nationalist program of the revolution deeply affected the social structure of Asia by shaking up the large masses of peasants, laborers, women and even tribal people.

**Keywords:** M. Kemal Pacha, Turkish National Liberation War, Turkish Republic, oppressed world, Gandhi-Nehru- M. Kemal Pacha solidarity

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## Introduction

FIRST OF ALL, WE SHOULD POINT OUT that the effects of the Turkish Revolution were not limited to the Turkish people but had worldwide consequences. Türkiye became the pioneer and symbol of the rise of the oppressed peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Another dimension of the worldwide importance of the Turkish Revolution is that it entered into a unity of fate with the Soviet Revolution, which was a breaking point of history in the 20th century. The two revolutions were in solidarity, they supported each other.

A distinction must be made when examining the worldwide effects of the Turkish Revolution. During the years of the Turkish War of Independence, most of the Asian, African and Latin American countries were living under the colonial yoke. The torch of independence lit by Mustafa Kemal Pasha, who advocated for full

independence, had to shine like a sun, the arm and wing of imperialism had to be broken, and freedom had to prevail on earth. The message reached all directions and shook the world. More importantly, the model created by the Turkish Revolution became an example for the peoples of the oppressed world.

The Soviet Revolution could not be a development-progression model for oppressed countries. On the other hand, the Turkish Revolution was viable with the conditions of oppressed countries, and promised salvation in colonial, semi-colonial, and semi-feudal countries under the yoke of imperialism. It should be emphasized that the interaction of the Turkish Revolution, especially with the Indian national movement, played a very important role in the collapse of British colonialism and inspired salvation movements in China (within the CCP) (Nehru, 2016; Mao, 1976; Demircan, 2021/2022; Alan, 2020).

After the Sakarya victory of the Turkish Army (September 1921), the name Mustafa Kemal created great excitement, especially in the Islamic world. His pictures were hung in shops and everywhere from Algeria to Indonesia, sermons were read in mosques, his name was referred to as “fearless, the invincible man” (Koloğlu, 1994), and he was hailed as the “New Selahattin Eyyubi”.

It should be noted that the imperial attack targeting Türkiye, the successor of the Ottoman state, which was the guardian of the Islamic Caliphate for 400 years, caused a particularly strong reaction in the Islamic world. Islamic countries other than Iran groaned under the colonial yoke at that time. Western imperialists both exploited and humiliated these countries. The arguments of “Asian despotism” and “Anti-democratic character of Islam” tied the hands of the intellectuals of Islamic countries. The nationalist program of the revolution not only affected the intellectuals but also affected the social structure of Asia by shaking up the large masses of peasants, laborers, women and even tribal people.

After the Turkish Revolution, Asia was no longer be the old Asia.

The Republic of Türkiye, which was declared in October 1923 and gained a completely secular character with the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, opened new horizons to the Islamic world.

The Turkish Revolution cracked the old world with the Soviet Revolution. The idea of the Republic, which came from China with Sun Yat Sen, spread rapidly in the world with Mustafa Kemal Pasha. The Turkish Revolution is, in a way, the Asian leg of the French Revolution, which brought ‘equality, freedom and solidarity’ to the West. The Turkish Revolution shaped the map of Western Asia and re-established the balance of power.

## **The Interaction of the Turkish Revolution with the Soviet Revolution**

In February 1917, the uprising that broke out in St. Petersburg and Moscow, which first resulted in the overthrow of the Tsardom and then turned into a great social revolution with the October Revolution, was watched carefully by the intellectuals and progressists of Türkiye. Turkish-Tatar revolutionaries living in Russia also played partial roles in the Soviet Revolution, but the opinion of Turkish revolutionaries in Anatolia towards the Soviet Revolution.

After World War I, the imperial powers tried to prevent Turkish-Russian cooperation. Under these circumstances, Mustafa Kemal and his allies understood the importance of the Soviet Revolution well. The unilateral withdrawal of the Soviet forces from the Anatolian lands they occupied and their declaration of the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement, which divided the Turkish-Ottoman state, greatly impressed the Turkish nationalists. Journalist Falih Rıfkı Atay, one of Atatürk’s close colleagues, expresses this fact clearly:

“If Lenin had not overthrown Tsarism, if Russia had not reached its glory days. Istanbul would be Russian. One wonders if we should put a bust of Lenin in an Istanbul corner”(Atay, 1969).

The fate of the revolutionaries of the two countries first converged in the Caucasus. The Entente forces tried establishing a Caucasian wall based on pro-Western Dashnak (nationalist Armenians) and Menshevik Georgians to keep Baku oil away from Russians and prevent the Anatolian movement from uniting with the Soviets.



On March 31, 1922, Afyonkarahisar, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the delegation from the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. From left to right: Chief of Staff of the Western Front Command Asım Gündüz, Commander of the Western Front Major General İsmet İnönü, Soviet Russian representative K.K. Zvonarev, Soviet Russian Ambassador Semyon Aralov, Representative of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic İbrahim Ebilov, and Commander of the First Army Ali İhsan (Afyon Kocatepe University, 2023).

Mustafa Kemal Pasha saw the collapse of the Caucasus Great Wall as necessary for the victory of the War of Independence. Mustafa Kemal's plan was "to save Izmir (Western Anatolia) by creating a foothold in the East (Caucasus)."

The two revolutions supported each other and conducted joint military operations. General Kazım Karabekir, the commander of the Turkish forces in Eastern Anatolia, explains this situation as follows:

"Today, we have no choice but to work hand in hand with the Bolshevik armies for the liberation of Anatolia. (Karabekir, 2000:665)."

M. Kemal Pasha, in the telegram he sent to Lenin on April 26, 1920, called for "joining their military forces with the Bolsheviks", demanded that "Azerbaijan and Georgia be forced to join the Soviet Republics", and proposed a joint operation

against Armenia (Atatürk, 2002c:114). This telegram was the first foreign policy action of the Turkish National Assembly (Meclis) (Perinçek, 2016:51). Dashnak Armenia was destroyed as a result of Turkish-Soviet cooperation. The Soviet leaders, especially Stalin, supported the operation of the Turkish armies towards Armenia. The Turkish-Soviet alliance in the Caucasus was strengthened with the signing of the Moscow Agreement on March 16, 1921, and especially the Treaty of Kars on October 13, 1921. The only way for Russian-Turkish cooperation through the Caucasus was the liquidation of Dashnak Armenia. The news that heralded the meeting of the Turkish and Soviet armies in Nakhchivan on August 14 was met with applause in the Parliament in Ankara (Atatürk, 2002d:174). On the other hand, Turkish and Soviet forces also cooperated in Georgia and Dagestan.

The Turkish-Soviet Agreement of March 16 1921, was the first document signed by the Turkish government with a great Western power.

In the meantime, it should be noted that the Soviets provided financial and military aid to Türkiye upon the request of M. Kemal Pasha. The gold was transported to Anatolia by land via Erzurum and by sea over the Black Sea. In his speech of thanks when M. Kemal received the incoming gold from the ambassador, Aralov, he said, “It is a great blessing for us, but the heart of the Russian people is more valuable” (Perinçek, 2016:67).

### **Friendship with the Soviets became the basic principle of Turkish foreign policy until World War II.**

An important step of the Turkish-Soviet military alliance was the visit of the Soviet delegation headed by General Frunze to Ankara in December 1921. Mustafa Kemal Pasha and Frunze dealt with military issues. The remarkable aspect of the meeting is that M. Kemal shared some secrets with Frunze that he did not reveal even to the deputies (Perinçek, 2016:79).

Another remarkable event in terms of military cooperation is that M. Kemal Pasha invited the Soviet ambassador S. Aralov, the Azerbaijani ambassador İ. Abilov and the Russian military attaché Zvonaryev to the Western Front on March 27 1922, before the Great Turkish Offensive.

According to British archival documents, the Parliamentary government secretly agreed with the Soviet government on defense and attack issues before the Great Offensive (Perinçek, 2016:79). During the preparations for the Great Offensive, photographs show Soviet commanders with M. Kemal Pasha.

Atatürk emphasized the common goals of the Turkish Revolution and the Soviet Revolution: “The armed national uprising movement that emerged in Anatolia was very similar to Soviet Russia in political positions and targets” (Kemalist Eğitim Tarih Dersleri, 2001:59).

The Soviet government recognized the Ankara government with the Moscow Agreement signed in March 1921. This act, which meant great support for the national government, relieved Ankara and increased its self-confidence. Türkiye and the Soviet Union maintained close relations in troubled years until 1932, when the Soviet Union was recognized by the USA and accepted into the League of Nations. Ankara would represent the SU in international relations (Perinçek, 2016).

Friendship with the Soviets became the basic principle of Turkish foreign policy until World War II. After the 1929 world crisis, the Turkish economy, which turned to statism, both received economic aid and switched to a planned economy with the support of Soviet experts. The Soviet Delegation, participating in the ceremonies of the 10th anniversary of the Republic, was greeted with cries of “Priездim” (you brought blessings) (Cumhuriyet Gazetesi, 1933).



### Interaction with India

More support for the Turkish National Struggle came from India. The prevailing opinion is that the aid came from Indian Muslims. However, when the Indian national struggle is examined closely, it should be noted that the National Struggle received great support from the non-Muslim segments of Indian society, especially Hindus. Even more important was the contribution that the interaction with Ankara has contributed to the unity of India.

Interest in Türkiye in India increased at the end of the 19th century. The emergence of British aspirations in India increasingly shaped the Indian national movement. It is

no coincidence that the founding of national parties<sup>2</sup> in both countries coincided with the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution.

### National Unity in India

The foundations of the Hindu-Muslim union of the two major factions in India were laid in 1916, during the world war. At the Lucknow Congress of the National Congress Party, the two sections reached an agreement on the essence of the Constitution. According to Nehru, the Muslim handshake with the Congress Party was largely the result of the anger at the British attitude towards Türkiye (Nehru, 2015:131).

World War I ended with the victory of Britain, but uncertainties and chaos appeared in many areas.

### **Those who led the Caliphate Movement aimed to obtain results in favor of Türkiye/Muslims by putting pressure on the British authorities before the Peace Conference.**

Although British Prime Minister Lloyd George stated on January 5, 1918, that they “do not intend to deprive Türkiye of its Turkish-dominated capital and its lands in Asia Minor and Thrace”, the British presence behind Emir Hussein’s rebellion deepened the suspicions of Indian Muslims (Yılmaz, 2008:129). The election of Muhammad Ali as the president of the “All India Islamic Union”, followed by Dr Ansari’s submission of Muslim demands to the Governor-General in India at the end of 1918 initiated attempts against the British. The massacre by British forces in the Sikh holy city of Amritsar in April 1919 intensified the national reaction. The Greek landing of troops in Izmir on May 15, 1919, angered the anti-British, especially the Muslims. The national poet of the Indians, Dr Muhammad Iqbal, glorified the national struggle, in which he had confidence in its victory, with the feeling that “the Turkish lion will awaken, roar again, will make the enemy tremble”. Beginning with the line “May God Help Him”. He continues his poem, “Address to Kemal Pasha”, “Jump wherever your horse goes, don’t think, we are often dulled in these squares because of precaution” (İkbal, 1956:87-88).

### **The Meaning of the Indian Caliphate Movement**

As the National Struggle intensified in Türkiye after the occupation of Istanbul by the Allied Powers and the imposition of the Treaty of Sèvres, a movement began in India with the slogan of “Justice for Türkiye” grew stronger (Şimşir, 2009:205).

The Indian Caliphate Movement made great moral and material contributions to the National Struggle in Türkiye. Although it was started by Muslims, the material-spiritual support was given by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. It came from all the Indian people. The support given to the Chalifat Movement is the foundation of the national program and the beginning of the cooperation (Sarkar, 2007:144). The principles of the Indian Caliphate Movement were developed by the brothers Mohammed and Şevket Ali, who came to Anatolia during the National Struggle period and met with Mustafa Kemal on December 7 1920 (Yılmaz, 2008:106).

Those who led the Caliphate Movement aimed to obtain results in favor of Türkiye/Muslims by putting pressure on the British authorities before the Peace Conference (January 1919). The “Caliphate”, which became active in the middle of 1919, demanded that the status of the Ottoman State be preserved as before the war and that Istanbul, the center of the Caliphate, should not be touched. The movement became stronger with the contributions of the Indian Ulema Society, a powerful religious-political organization, with a wide network of madrasahs and mosques.

At this point, Gandhi, the leader of the Congress Party, stepped in. He supported the



Compiled by  
Col. Lawrence Martin

FIGURE II. TURKEY IN 1920

Map of the remaining territories of the Ottoman Empire under the Treaty of Sèvres. (The Williamstown Institute of Politics, 1921)

initiative by joining the Central Committee of the Caliphate Movement. India's resistance was no longer unique to Muslims. According to one Indian writer, "If the Hindus joined the Muslims, it was because their Asian character, Chinese and the Japanese were also upset. It wasn't their religion that got hurt, it was their Asian pride." (Metta, 1921)

The "Caliphate" began to exert pressure on England to get their demands accepted: by sending delegations, making written applications, and organizing opposition. At the congress convened under the presidency of Gandhi in Bombay on August 2, 1919, the oppression of Greece in Türkiye was commemorated with hatred, and a mobilization was declared to help the Turks. The Caliphate

Committee convened in Delhi on November 23 1919, and took an open stance against the British for the first time.

From the first conference held in Delhi to the Bombay Conference (February 1920), when the declaration of the Caliphate Movement was published, significant donations were collected from the public to support the Turkish War of Independence.

On January 19, 1920, the text jointly signed by Gandhi, Muhammad Ali, Şevket Ali and M. Ali Jinnah addressed the Indian Governor General as "Muslim - Indian we stand shoulder to shoulder, we blame the British" (Koloğlu, 2007:7). Gandhi saw support for the Caliphate Movement as a movement to build national unity.

The signing of the Treaty of Sèvres, which the British imposed on the Ottoman government on August 10, 1920, accelerated the unity in India's political classes. The Muslims had no choice but to join Gandhi's anti-British "Non-Cooperation" movement. In the conditions of the day, the case of Türkiye stood out. The Caliphate Congress convened for the second time in Nagpur on December 26, 1920, with a large crowd of approximately 15,000 people. "Congress recognizes that unless major mistakes committed are corrected, there is no way for India to be satisfied. The caliphate issue, the Punjab issue and the restoration of damaged national pride. After that, he agrees that independence is the only way to prevent the repetition of similar mistakes (Yılmaz, 2008)." Gandhi's warm relations with the Indian masses caused M. Ali Jinnah to withdraw from politics. Jinnah, who became passive after the Nagpur Congress, immigrated to London.

**Gandhi said that the British policy of India could only be answered with an internal revolution and called the Indians to desert the Anglo-Indian army.**

Ankara (Mustafa Kemal Pasha) evaluates the February 14, 1921 process as follows: "The incident taking place in India is the most important issue of today. (...)The murderous and brutal action taken by the British against a national manifestation in Punjab, on the other hand, the partition of Türkiye and the proposed treaty opened the eyes of Indian politicians. (Yılmaz, 2008)"

After the Nagpur Congress, general strikes (hartal), layoffs and riots gained momentum again. In Kolkata, the student strike grew day by day. Domestic stores and shops were closed in Delhi. Workers working in oil wells also participated in the strike (Yılmaz, 2008:123).

The British promised autonomy to India in February 1921.

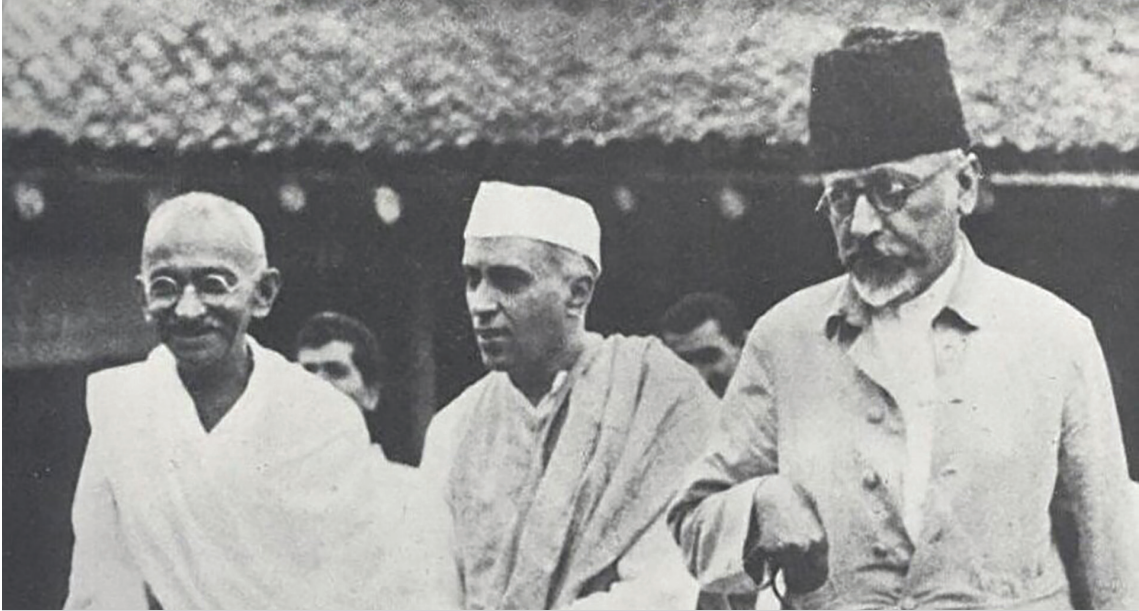
The latest situation in India was explained in the newspaper *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* dated March 4, 1921: "Indians strongly criticize the cruel policy pursued by European states against Türkiye in the Indian Assembly" (Yılmaz, 2008:126).

At the end of 1921, the situation in India took a dire turn against the British. The expectation of rebellion increased in the British colonies. Gandhi said that the British policy of India could only be answered with an internal revolution and called the Indians to desert the Anglo-Indian army (Yılmaz, 2008:127). The Indian National Congress convened in Ahmedabad on December 27 1921, congratulated Mustafa Kemal Pasha for the Sakarya Victory and stated that "Indian people will continue to help in the preservation of Türkiye's independence" (Yılmaz, 2008:128).

The victory of the Turkish Army on August 30 created a great impact in India. The victory was celebrated with ceremonies for days. Mustafa Kemal Pasha became a symbol of independence for Indian Muslims and Hindus.

More striking is what happened before September 9. Friday, September 8, is a day of worship in India. Mosques were illuminated in the country after the Friday prayer, God was prayed to for the victory of the Turkish army, and "Zindabad<sup>3</sup> Mustafa Kemal" was written on the walls of the mosques. Çotani once again





Leader of the Indian Independence Movement, Mahatma Gandhi; India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru; Member of the Indian Khilafat Movement, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. (Gandhi Museum, 2023)

congratulated “Mustafa Kemal Pasha and his victorious armies” with emotional words in the telegram he sent just after September 9. In the Çanakkale and Izmit regions, Indian soldiers exiled to the front on behalf of the British escaped from their armies and joined the Turkish army with the rank of officer (Hülagü, 1999).

In the All India Islamic Union Congress convened on January 27 1923, the victory of M. Kemal Pasha was mentioned: “The sword of Mustafa Kemal Pasha succeeded what we could not achieve with calls and prayers for four years.”

The Indian Caliphate Movement, besides paying special attention to Türkiye, also supported the anti-imperialist struggles of other peoples. Condemning the British to send Indian troops to China, the Movement

declared its support for the freedom struggle of the Chinese people at the Lucknow Congress (Bengalee Newspaper, 1927).

### Financial aid for Indian Muslims

Indian aid was not limited to solidarity and pressure on the British. The aid campaign for the Turks continued throughout the National Struggle. Research indicates that Indian aid amounted to 675,000 Turkish liras. The first aid of Indian Muslims reached Ankara in February 1922. Mustafa Kemal Pasha, in his telegram to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, mentioned the first aid from India: “144,440 Ottoman lira were received, which is the equivalent of 26,000 British lira which were sent from India to help Türkiye” (Atatürk, 2002e:266).

## Afghanistan Reality

Afghan lands witnessed great conflicts between Britain and Tsarist Russia in the 19th century. Emanullah Khan of Afghanistan, who gained limited independence from England after the world war, aimed to preserve the independence and modernize the country. Afghanistan and Türkiye were in search of support against the British. The Soviet Revolution relieved both countries.

### **Treaty of Moscow (1921), was the first international agreement signed by the Ankara government.**

The Turkish delegation, who went to Moscow to sign an agreement with the Soviets, also signed an agreement with Afghanistan. This agreement, which preceded the Treaty of Moscow (1921), was the first international agreement signed by the Ankara government. The relations established by the Ankara government with Afghanistan and Indian Muslims disturbed Britain and were an important achievement of Turkish foreign policy (Oran, 2022:209).

### **Reflections in Iran**

Iran, which connects Asia to Europe on the East-West axis, is similar to Türkiye in historical and geographical terms. Strong state tradition and wealth in thought and language have always made Iran important in history. The difference between Iran from other Islamic countries is that it has preserved its independent existence.

Like Türkiye, Iran could not keep up with the imperialism of capitalism that developed in the West in the 19th century and became semi-colonial. Iranian

intellectuals found the solution in modernization. The 1906 Constitutional Revolution brought the basic principles of modernization to the country: parliamentary dominance, democratic rights, and central government. Turkish and Iranian intellectuals cooperated in the process of leading to the constitutional government.

The Iranian Constitutional Revolution did not succeed for various reasons. Then, the increasing imperial appetite upon the discovery of oil in the Persian Gulf caused the north of the country to be occupied by Russia and the south by the British during the First World War. World War I increased poverty in Iran, and local riots exacerbated the difficulties. The view that these difficulties could only be overcome by establishing an independent state and making Western institutions and understandings dominant became stronger among Iranian intellectuals. The victory of the Turkish Revolution left deep scars.

The strong modernization movement carried Reza Shah first to the Ministry of War and then to power to prevent instability. The advocates of modernization were the ideas whose foundations were laid with the Constitutional Revolution. Reza Shah was pro-modernization, but timidity about Türkiye among the intellectuals also affected the Shah. The distant attitude of Turkish nationalism towards religion, although it influenced Iranian intellectuals, the abolition of the Sunni Caliphate by the Turkish Republic created relief among the Shiites. Still, the Shiite mullahs were ambivalent towards the secular Turkish nationalists' attitude towards religion.

The Turkish administration overcame Iran's shyness by following constructive policies in the 1920s. The "Friendship and Security Agreement" signed in 1926 eased the relations between the two countries and improved mutual trust (Oran, 2022).

The Shah, who abolished the capitulations in 1928, suppressed the opposition of the ulama inside. The



A snapshot of a conversation between Iran's Shah Reza Pahlavi and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk during Shah Reza Pahlavi's visit to Türkiye in Turkish Press (Cumhuriyet Newspaper, 1934).

visit of Iranian Shah Reza Pahlavi to Türkiye in 1934 brought relations to the next level. Having reached Trabzon via Tabriz in June, the Shah met with Atatürk and other Turkish leaders in Ankara. Atatürk was very respectful to the Shah, and the Shah, who was impressed by what he saw, extended his visit, which was planned as a week, to two months.

On his return, he tried to apply what he saw in Türkiye in his country, but he encountered resistance from the mullahs. The "Kashf-i Hijab Law", which forced the security forces to remove the veils by force, was enacted in 1936 (Gökalp & Georgeon, 2007).

As World War II approached, Iran would be invaded from the north and south

once again, and upon the Shah's rapprochement with Germany, the Shah would

be forced to leave his throne to his son (Abrahamian, 2009).

## Western Asia - Arab World

The shocks of the Turkish Revolution were felt most in the Islamic world. Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, and Hijaz shared the same fate with the Turks until the last moment. Iraq and Syria, which joined the Ottoman Empire after Yavuz Selim's campaign to Iran and Egypt in the 1510s, continued their existence as Ottoman provinces until the 20th century. This union was broken by the ambitions of the Anglo-French imperialists to dominate the Middle East.

The discovery of oil resources in the Persian Gulf at the beginning of the 20th century whet the appetite of British imperialism. France had its eyes on the Eastern Mediterranean.

Britain and France agreed with Russia and shared the Ottoman lands in Western Asia with the Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916.

In September 1918, when the Ottoman forces were defeated and left the Syrian territory, France filled the void and invaded Syria. The atmosphere changed radically after France's imperial intention, which emerged quickly. The Paris Peace Conference and Versailles Treaty (1919) finalized the entry of Iraq and Palestine under the British mandate and Syria-Lebanon under the French mandate. This meant their separation from the Turks.

According to the Arab- British historian Albert Hourani, "Arab nationalism was greatly influenced by the Young Turks, especially the success of K. Atatürk" (Koloğlu, 1994:371). II. After World War II, when Anglo-French colonialism was defeated and liquidated worldwide, the Arabs, in the process, attained the national state they longed for.

## Syria

Post World War era was years of turmoil. Syrian nationalists took an ambivalent attitude towards the Turks in the face of the promises of the French. However, when they noticed that France would not leave their country, they asked the Turks for help in resisting the invaders. M Kemal Pasha was against the French Mandate in Syria initially. Still, he prioritized the Turkish national struggle since the Turks were in serious trouble (Perinçek, 2015:123-159).

Proposals for Türkiye and Syria to form a confederation were put forward in those years. Although the leaders of the National Struggle were not against it, they adopted the attitude of "first Syria to form an independent Arab state then to consider unification in the Confederation" (Atatürk, 2002b:354).

During the arrival of M Kemal Pasha in Mersin (south of Türkiye) in 1923, Syrian Muslims, carrying black flags, shouted, "Turkish-Arab Friendship; Don't forget your Syrian compatriots, save us," M. Kemal Pasha, who received the Syrian delegation, said that "it is unacceptable for a country that has been part of the Ottoman state for centuries to groan under the yoke of foreigners" and said: "I want Syria to determine its own destiny. (Şimşir, 1999)"

## **The charter of the BAAS Party, prepared by Michel Aflaq in 1951, opened new horizons for Arab societies.**

Syria, an old Arab country, is one of the countries that was most affected by the construction of the Turkish Republic. In particular, the principles of independence and secularism inspired Syrian progressives. The basic principles of the BAAS Party, which led the national struggle, were "Unity" (unity of the Arabs), "Liberty" (liberation from the colonial yoke) and "Socialism" (populism, statist national economy). According to Wallachia-Bitar, who advocated that sovereignty should be taken from God and given to the people, the Arab nation showed continuity in history. What had to be done was to ensure the resurrection. The charter of the BAAS Party, prepared by Michel Aflaq in 1951, opened new horizons for Arab societies. The reason why the party gave special importance to secularism was to increase the resistance of the nation against colonialism. The French sowed the seeds of new problems by forming separate religious



The intellectual father of Ba'athism ideology and the Ba'ath Political Movement, sociologist Michel Aflaq (first from the right in the front row), alongside the members of the July 14, 1958 Revolution in Iraq (TRT, 2020).

constituencies. Muslims, Greek Catholics and Orthodox, and Jews were compelled to vote for their religious group (Nehru, 2016:805).

National integration consisted in opposing sectarianism. The BAATH Party opposed the distribution of seats in the Parliament according to beliefs. On the other hand, he accepted Islam as one of the basic elements of Arab identity.

According to Michel Aflaq (Christian Arab origin), "Socialism was the religion of life, its victory over death. He was struggling for life by giving jobs to everyone, revealing everyone's talents" (Tibi, 1998:290).

According to Wallachia, the unified Arab society would gain a new identity and establish a morally ideal socialist society. Between 1948-51, the party carried its activities outside Syria under the slogan "a united Arab state". It was effective in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq.

## Iraq

Iraq, which is on the way to India and has rich oil deposits, was targeted by the British during the First World War. "In World War I, the British made Iraq the base of their operation against Türkiye" (Nehru, 2016:818). The Turks were driven north, and the British entered Baghdad and reached Mosul. At the end of the war, the whole of Iraq was occupied by Britain.

Iraq, separated from Anatolia after the War, was given to the British mandate with the Paris Agreement (1919). In other words, the partition designed with the secret Sykes-Picot in 1916 was implemented after the War.

"The surrender of Iraq's mandate to the British led to strong protests in the early 1920s, gradually becoming an uprising. The uprising in Iraq was crushed largely with the help of Indian troops" (Nehru, 2016:818).

The Iraqi uprising was suppressed by Britain partly by force, partly by the promise of independence.

Britain forcibly suppressed the resistance, “British planes established the power of London with bombs” (Nehru, 2016:819). Turkish commander Özdemiş Bey, sent to Revandüz to organize the struggle, started to fight against British forces. He came into contact with Kurdish tribes. Upon gaining certain successes, the British government not only started an intense air bombardment in the Kurdish region of Iraq but also brought the issue to the diplomatic field, prevented the demarcation of the border in the Lausanne Treaty (1923) and took Kirkuk and Mosul outside the Turkish borders. Türkiye’s proposal to hold a plebiscite for Mosul and Kirkuk was rejected by the British-influenced League of Nations (Oran, 2022).

### **The ideas of Confederation with Türkiye were discussed among Iraqi Arab nationalists and Syrian Arab nationalists, but these ideas could not be implemented.**

Continuing its well-intentioned efforts after the Treaty of Lausanne, Türkiye officially recognized Iraq. In 1926, the “Turkish-Iraqi Border and Good Neighborhood Agreement” was signed with Britain and Iraq. Britain concluded the operation to break Iraq out of Anatolia. Arab nationalism continued on its path. Nehru noted that in the 1920s-30s Britain “used airplanes as a ‘police force’ in semi-colonial countries” (Nehru, 2016:821). He underlined that it was “cheaper and more receptive, but terribly cruel and deadly”. The ideas of Confederation with Türkiye were discussed among Iraqi Arab

nationalists and Syrian Arab nationalists, but these ideas could not be implemented (Ataturk, 2018).

Hard and bloody struggles occurred in Iraq between those who advocated rapprochement with Türkiye and those subject to British control.

Republican Türkiye gradually developed its relations with Iraq, which gained partial independence. King of Iraq Faisal visited Ankara in July 1931 upon the invitation of Türkiye. Atatürk congratulated Iraq, which was accepted as a member of the League of Nations in 1932 (Ataturk, 2002f:28).

Arab nationalists, whom the British managed to suppress for a long time, destroyed the kingdom with a coup in 1958 and declared the republic.

### **Egypt**

Egypt, which unites West Asia and Africa, is one of the region’s most important countries with its geography, history, and central position among the Arabs. Egypt preserved these characteristics within the Turkish Ottoman state as well. Egypt connected the Turks with Africa and the Indian world through the Red Sea. In the 1878 Berlin Congress, the British imperialists allegedly seized Egypt and Cyprus temporarily as a price for supporting the Ottoman Empire. In World War I, they used Egypt as their main base for regional conflicts. Arab sources confirm that the Turkish national awakening shook Arab intellectuals.

The awakening in Egypt developed parallel to that in Türkiye. Saad Zağlul Pasha, who rose from the peasantry, defying the British in 1881-82, made attempts for independence. With the approach of peace in 1918, the nationalists became active again. The WAFD Party was formed at this time. Saad Zağlul and other leaders were once again arrested. The arrest sparked a bloody riot. The city



Gamal Abdel Nasser Hussein (left), who served as Egypt's second president between 1956 and 1970, at the Bandung Conference, where the Non-Aligned Movement was founded in 1955. (Xinhua, 2015).

of Cairo and some centers fell into the hands of revolutionary committees (Nehru, 2016:786). Then protesters changed tactics and switched to passive resistance. When the actions were successful, the “partial independence” granted by the British government in 1922 was proposed to Egypt. Egypt rejected it because London was putting forward conditions against partial independence.

After a while, power was transferred to King Faruk with the new Constitution imposed on Egypt, and the British continued their activities and interventions.

### **Gamal Abdel Nasser and Arab Nationalism**

Gamal Abdel Nasser was born on January 15, 1918, in a poor neighborhood of Alexandria, where his father was a post office worker. He was named Gamal (Cemal, in Turkish) after the Ottoman governor of Syria, Cemal Pasha.

While serving in Sudan, he founded the secret Free Officers organization to end British rule and kingdom rule, together with three officers (Zekeriya Muhyettin, Abdulhakim Amir, and Enver Sadat) whom he befriended.

The Free Officers junta seized power in a bloodless coup on June 23 1952, and overthrew King Faruk. Power passed into the hands of the Revolutionary Command Council under Nasser. In June 1953, the Republic was proclaimed, and a treaty was signed with Britain about evacuating the Suez Canal.

**The Non-Aligned Movement, which he led with Nehru and Tito, was very influential in the second half of the 20th century.**

During his presidency, Gamal Abdel Nasser initiated a series of radical reforms in the country. He started with land reform. When the loan request for the dam designed to be built in Aswan was rejected by the US and UK, he nationalized the Suez Canal, which was under British control. The expropriation of other British and French companies followed the takeover of Suez.

Britain, France and Israel launched a joint military operation against Egypt. Israel attacked Egypt. British and French air forces bombarded Egyptian airfields. The crisis ended with the United Nations' decision to cede control of the Suez Canal to Egypt. Nasser consolidated his power. He became respected as the leader of the Arab world. The Non-Aligned Movement, which he led with Nehru and Tito, was very influential in the second half of the 20th century.

Gamal Abdel Nasser is Mustafa Kemal of Arab world.

## Algeria

Located in the middle of the North African coastline, Algeria is the most populated of the North African countries, with a population approaching 45 million. Algeria's past is intertwined with the Umayyads, the Mamluks, and the last 500 years of history with the Turks. The calendars show the year 1830 when the Algerian province, which was connected to the Ottoman Empire by Turkish sailors in the 1530s and ruled by the Turkish-origin "Dayi"<sup>4</sup> sent from the center, namely Istanbul, was torn from the Ottoman lands by the French colonial administration.

Due to the revival of Arab Nationalism after the First World War, especially after the Turkish and Soviet Revolutions, Arab nationalism started to rise in Morocco, Syria, Egypt, and North Africa. French/Western sources have always sought the influence of the French left at the root of this rise. Even a superficial study reveals that the Turkish Revolution is the main source of inspiration for the struggle for nationhood in Algeria, although the French Left has a share. Haji, one of the pioneers of local nationalism, states that the idol of the national awakening was Mustafa Kemal Pasha.

During the First World War, the colonial powers took action against the "Sick Man", that is, the Ottoman state, which held the Arab Near East (Maşrik), which includes Palestine. Then the Turkish national struggle began. Stating that Türkiye was discussed in every corner at Telemesen at that time, Mesali El Hac describes the happiness he felt when he received the news of victory from Anatolia with these words: "Mustafa





Even a superficial research reveals that the main source of inspiration for the struggle for nationalization in Algeria is the Turkish Revolution (United World, 2022).

Kemal Pasha's military achievements had great repercussions in the Islamic world, they encouraged the people. We admired the photographs of Turkish soldiers and Mustafa Kemal that we saw in the newspapers, and we cut these pictures and wore them like a magic talisman" (Gökalp & Georgeon, 2007:178).

In 1927, Messali El Hacı developed the following program with his friends:

- Independence of the three North African countries
- Distribution of land to the Fellahs (poor Arab peasants)

- Creation of a national assembly based on universal suffrage

- Priority to the Algerian state in the public services (Banking, mining, railways, ports) it holds (Gökalp & Georgeon, 2007).

The Algerian People's Party was established in 1937 as a continuation of the Mesali El Hacı' movement. The period was the rule of the moderate Popular Front in France. The Popular Front took a softer approach to anti-colonial movements. The Algerian flag was waved on the streets of Algeria for the first time.

During World War II, when France was defeated in front of Germany and the country came under the rule of the Vichy Regime, the “homeland defense” discussions intensified in France.

**From the notes of Mesali Haji, independence in his country, it is seen that the Turkish Revolution left deep traces, especially in Algeria and Tunisia.**

After World War II, the liquidation process of colonialism created great dynamism in Algeria. The nationalist trend led by Ferhat Abbas and the Islamist trend of Sheikh Abdulhamid Bin Badis united under the roof of the National Liberation Front. Front lead the Independence Movement to victory after bloody conflicts. Charles de Gaulle, who formed a government with wide powers due to the crisis, turned to find a political solution to the problem. The Republic of Algeria was proclaimed, and France was expelled.

It is evident from Mesali Hac's notes, who first raised the flag of independence in his country, that the Turkish Revolution has left deep traces, especially in Algeria and Tunisia.

### **Libya**

Ottoman territory Libya was attacked by Italians, intending to expand in 1912. Some

Turkish volunteer officers went to Libya to organize the resistance, but the Turkish government dealing with the Balkan War could not protect Libya. Libya fell under Italian occupation. However, the Libyan people did not accept this invasion. The Libyan ruler Sheikh Sunusi took refuge in the Ottoman state and voluntarily participated in the Turkish national struggle (Erdaş, 2023).

On the other hand, a patriot named Ömer Muhtar started a new resistance movement in Berka against Italy in 1922. He carried out successful raids with the guerrilla forces he gathered from the tribes living in Cebelü'l-Ahdar and inflicted heavy losses on the Italian forces. Despite the cessation of aid from Egypt and Syria, he continued his resistance with the help of the villagers until 1931. On September 11, 1931, he was wounded in a battle and was taken prisoner by the Italians. Sentenced to death by a war tribunal headed by the Italian general Graziani and hanged in Saluk. (Kavas, 2007).

### **Echoes of Turkish Victory in the Oppressed Countries**

The Turkish Revolution is the first example in which a country defeated in World War I tore up the agreement imposed by the victors. In this respect, it created a shock in the international arena.

The reactions of the world of the oppressed rose after the Great Victory and the



Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East. On the podium (second from the left) N. Narimanov, G. Zinoviev, K. Radek. Baku, September 1920 (Azerbaijan Presidential Library, 1920).

#### Proclamation of the Republic.

The turning point in the War of Independence was the Great Offensive. Nehru describes his feelings after the Battle of Sakarya as follows:

“I remember very well how delighted we were when we heard about Mustafa Kemal’s great expressed struggle against the Greeks. I mean the war he won in Afyonkarahisar in August 1922. Many of us were in the Lucknow

District prison, and for the victory of the Turks, we decorated our prison barracks from right and left with whatever we could find, and we tried to light up that evening, albeit in a dim way” (Nehru, 2016:51-52).

Muslims and nationalists worldwide, including Azerbaijan, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Kenya, and Croatia-Bosnia, celebrated Turkish revolutionaries through telegrams (Şimşir, 2009:216).

## Declaration of the Republic


The victory of the National Struggle should be welcomed with great joy, especially by the oppressed, by the people who suffered greatly from the persecution of the Great Powers. Equally important is that Türkiye overthrew the sultanate and started to build a republic. Upon the proclamation of the Republic, the Indian Caliphate Central Committee stated the following in its message to Gazi Mustafa Kemal dated November 13 1923:

“We regard the establishment of the Republic as a great honor and respect for the progress of Islam... Indian Muslims recognize the Republic of Türkiye as the hope of Progress-i Islam” (Şimşir, 2009:228).

The Turkish Republic was the second Republic in Asia after the Chinese Republic.

The proclamation of the Republic was welcomed not only in the world of the oppressed but also by Western countries with the peace and tranquility it brought to the region.

M. Kemal Atatürk did not hesitate to heal the wounds. After the Lausanne Peace, he extended his hand to Greece. As a result, Greek Prime Minister Venizelos and Ataturk were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Sadabat Pact signed between Türkiye-Iran-Iraq-Afghanistan with the efforts of Atatürk in 1937 brought peace to a geography that was turned into a bloodbath by the British-French imperialists, and West Asia turned into a lake of peace on the eve of the upcoming world war. 

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Selahattin Eyyubi is the commander of the victorious Muslim army during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Crusade.

<sup>2</sup> Indian National Congress Party (1885), Turkish Union and Progress Party (İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti) (1889)

<sup>3</sup> Zindabad: Long live

<sup>4</sup> “Dayı” is the name given to Algeria’s Turkish governor.

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# The Kemalist Revolution and Asia



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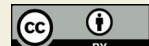
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## ABSTRACT

The Turkish revolution is a model that emerged from a struggle against imperialism, proving that God is not British, and aiming to establish a system based on capitalist principles favoring the interest of the people. The Chinese model, under the leadership of Sun Yat Sen, similarly fought against imperialism and colonialism, following the Kemalist Revolution's path. Under the guidance of the Communist Party, they continued with a National Democratic revolution. Today, these two countries, both fighters in their own right, holding the two ends of a path and sharing a similar fate, yet differing in aspects ranging from economic development to their response to the COVID-19 pandemic, is not a mere coincidence. The leader of the defense of their respective homelands at that time saw the global polarization clearly and proposed a solution: "Against the harmful group that has afflicted us... There is a common front that separates the East from the West, stretching all the way from the North to the South. To be able to defend on this front, it will require the genuine and sincere solidarity of nations that have become each other's allies... However, the states participating in this solidarity must be individually strong, fortified with the idea of independence." This understanding is a stance against the enmity and division imposed by imperialism. Success has always and will continue to come through this path. The political stance, culture, and understanding targeted today also stem from this standpoint. The coming century is a time to rewrite history from Asia to Africa and Latin America. The key to success lies in our hands.

**Keywords:** Turkish Revolution, Kemalist Revolution, Atatürk, Türkiye, Asia.

THE GEOPOLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF the early 20th century underwent a profound transformation, driven by a series of impactful revolutions that reshaped global dynamics. One revolution's outcome catalyzed the next, establishing a momentous chain of events from the Balkans to the Pacific.

The annals of this epoch bear witness to a sequence of pivotal episodes: the Russian Revolution of 1905, the Iranian Revolution of 1906, and the Turkish Revolution of 1908, each compounded by the conflagration surrounding Tripoli, the Balkans, and the Dardanelles. These occurrences were subsequently paralleled by the Chinese Revolution of 1911. These preludes set

the stage for two seminal triumphs in the struggle against imperialism and archaic institutions: the October Revolution of 1917 and the Republican Revolution of 1920.

These early successes in the endeavor to dismantle imperialistic structures and antiquated systems served as a prologue to the potential birth of an unprecedented global order. As the 21st century dawned, a quartet of nation-states, namely Türkiye, Russia, China, and Iran, once again assumed a prominent position in shaping the contours of this developing world paradigm. These entities stand not only as active participants in the struggle but also under the scrutiny of international discourse.



Atatürk and King Amanullah Khan of Afghanistan, 1928, Ankara (TCCB, 2023).

The aforementioned states share several salient attributes, including a robust lineage of imperial and state traditions. Their historical trajectories have borne witness to experimental endeavors that facilitated the dismantling of antiquated norms and the establishment of novel paradigms. Moreover, they possess a reservoir of capability, erudition, and cultural heritage that positions them as potential agents of transformative change.

### **Past Trends are Unsustainable**

Today, major upheavals are taking place in the world and in Türkiye. A new world order is being established. There are huge economic and social problems, and past trends are unsustainable. This time the Atlantic system has reached a dead end. The imperialist-capitalist system is now incapable of providing solutions.

“The sun beginning to rise from the high horizons of the future is the fortune of the nations of Emerging Asia. The fact that this fortune will never again be shrouded in black clouds depends on the care and sacrifice of the

nations and their pioneers.” This is how the Kemalist Revolution views the past and the future. During the visit of Afghan King Amanullah Khan and his wife in May 1928, President Mustafa Kemal said in his speech at the dinner: “What strange manifestations of history, what meaningful coincidences and similarities of world events.” What is this meaningful coincidence? We are witnessing something similar today. In 1919, “While they were fighting for independence in the middle of Asia, we were fighting here in the east of Europe, in front of the eyes of the entire civilized world, shielding our breasts against the blows struck against our independence and freedom.” Nine years have passed. But the leader of the Revolution, of course, looked to the past for the future:

“For nations in love with independence and freedom”, those days should always be remembered, not as a time of suffering but as “a time of vigilance”. For “there are fundamental and vital principles for nations that have realized in their conscience the true nature, the broad meaning and the high value of independence and freedom.” He emphasizes them one by one in his speech:



“...Never to tolerate any violation or limitation of independence and freedom at any cost and any price, to keep independence and freedom protected to the fullest extent, and if necessary, to shed the last drop of blood of the last individual to set a glorious example in the history of humanity. Only those nations that are ready and able to make all kinds of sacrifices for the sake of this principle can be considered as a society worthy of the respect of civilized humanity.” (Atatürk, 2007a:126-127).

It is the most important definition of the path to success. History has also proven it. Today, nations that know the true meaning and value of their independence and freedom will adorn history with a new example. Together they will be the founders of a new world.

### Valuing National Freedom

The Turkish nation is a freedom lover. At no time in its history has it allowed colonizers on its soil, nor has it been subjected to the imperialist yoke. After the First World War, among the *defeated states*, only Türkiye made the defeated states accept its national independence and sovereignty, national borders, and economic and social demands. Moreover, at that time, there was an occupied center of the Empire that had fully surrendered to the imperialist states. On October 30, 1918, the Mudros Armistice Agreement signed by the Istanbul government disbanded its army. On August 10, 1920, its lands were divided with the Treaty of Sèvres. That nation rose up and brought both imperialism and medieval institutions to their knees. The great Parliament of the nation was established in Ankara on April 23, 1920. The provisions of Sèvres, consisting of 13 chapters and 433 articles, were now considered invalid.

### Our Source of Strength

İsmet İnönü was the representative of that courageous Parliament at Lausanne. He said, “They had unjustly denied us the right to live. We went to express that we were capable of living. We wanted only this. We were in the strongest position for this. We pursued this goal until the end.” In an interview on TRT on October 15, 1973, İnönü quoted Lord Curzon saying in Lausanne: “We are not satisfied with the Treaty of Lausanne. We could not get anything we said. You are buying a ruined country. Aren’t you going to rebuild it... with what... how... will you do it. He has the money... and I have the money.”

He was referring to Joseph C. Grew, the US observer. And then he adds: “You will come, you will ask for money, you will kneel, and I will take out of my pocket all that you refuse and show you!” İnönü never forgot Curzon’s words throughout his political life.

At that time, he responded: “What we want here is to provide all the conditions for an independent, civilized state. Let us ensure this. Let there be peace; if I come to you, you can do whatever you want!”

### The Turmoil They Rely On

A journalist asked İnönü in a program on TRT: “What were they counting on when they said these words?” İnönü’s answer clarifies the methods and hopes of the imperialists even today. “They thought that the revolutions could not be carried out and that there would be turmoil in Türkiye.”

“Amid this turmoil, the justice advisors thought that the cabotage rights would only last for two years, and in short, that the other issues related to the capitulations would drift away on their own and the old regime would be restored.



Atatürk and Turkish citizens  
(TTK,2023).

“This hope lived with them until the end. But it appeared in my mind as a constant danger. It remained alive and fresh, and I began to govern with it in mind. ‘İsmet Pasha always governs with the mindset of Lausanne. However, the world has changed,’ and all kinds of breaches were opened with an indiscriminate financial policy. This is where the real mistake was made.”

“Naturally, we did not take a gram of gold from the Ottoman Empire. When we left power in 1950, the Central Bank had a gold treasury that Türkiye had never seen (122 tons of gold). We left it like that. Everything has changed” (Kal, 1973).

### **The Target was the Kemalist Revolution and its Program**

Indeed, the world had changed. After the Second World War, the expansionism of US imperialism, which did not see the war on its territory but was on the winning side, knew no boundaries. After the 1950s, with two American coups in 1970 and 1980, 10 years apart, the Turkish people were pressed to give up their *National Democratic Revolution to break away from their history*, as the CIA Station Chiefs put it, and to abolish *national borders*. With the *New World Order, Globalization, and Integration with the World Economy* programs, the independence and

sovereignty of the country were attempted to be taken over economically and culturally. The target was the principles and program of the Kemalist Revolution. This threshold had to be crossed to dominate the world. This program had to be abandoned.

### A Meaningful Milestone

The theoreticians of scientific socialism who witnessed the Kemalist Revolution, as well as the leaders of the countries that put the experience of scientific socialism into practice in many different countries, recognized this reality at that time and attached importance to the contribution of the Turkish Revolution. For the world revolution, the Kemalist Revolution was a significant turning point. As Atatürk said, the Kemalist Revolution was not only for Türkiye. It would determine the fate of the geography behind us. It was going to be long and difficult. The imperialists knew this too.

### The Target is the Whole East

Mustafa Kemal was aware of this responsibility. He would accomplish a difficult task because he analyzed imperialism correctly, a key that would open the door to success a century later.

Already in 1921, he was analyzing the future as follows: Anatolia, just like on the map, “is in a position where the whole of Asia, the whole World of the Oppressed, is moving towards the world of oppression. In this position, Anatolia is exposed to all oppressions, attacks, and assaults. Anatolia is wanted to be destroyed, trampled, and torn apart, but, gentlemen, these attacks are not limited and restricted to Anatolia. The general target of these attacks is the whole East. Anatolia is defending itself with its entire existence against all kinds of attacks and assaults and is confident that it will succeed.

With this defense, Anatolia is not only doing its duty for its own life, but perhaps it is building a barrier against the attacks against the whole East. Gentlemen, these attacks will, of course, be broken. All these assaults will surely come to an end. Only then will true tranquility, true prosperity, and humanity prevail in the West, in the whole world” (Atatürk, 2003:50-51).

### Same Goal a Century Later

A century later, we face similar tasks. The rise of Asia will also save the West. Indeed, at that time, the Turkish Revolution was closely watched by all Asian countries, which, step by step, raised the flag of struggle against colonialism.

The word *constitutionalism* (meşrutiyet) in Turkish comes from the Arabic root meşrut, which means *conditional*. However, it entered political history for the first time in the Ottoman Empire as a form of government, a definition of government. This is the definition given in the article *Meşrutiyet* in the Ottoman-Turkish Dictionary:

“A name given to the legal and political period in Türkiye that began with the Constitution of 1876 and continued with the 1909 amendments.”

Later, the concept spread as “the method of governing by law under the presidency of the monarch”. Dictionaries also give these two meanings. For example, the concept of “constitutionalism” first entered Iran in a sense close to this definition with the reports of Mirza Hussein Khan Sipahsalar, who served as the Iranian Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. He used the word *Meşrutiyet* to mean *the participation of the people or some classes of society in state affairs*. Later, however, Iranian Constitutionalists preferred to use its English equivalent in Persian as *constitution government* (Dilek, 2007).



Atatürk made a speech on the 10th anniversary of the Republic, 29 October 1933 (ATAM, 2023).

This can be counted as one of the characteristics of the Turkish Revolution. We know that the leader of the revolution later took a special interest in our Turkish language, devoted a lot of time and effort to it, and resisted imperialism in that field as well. It is an important building block that makes a nation a nation. The Language Revolution is one of the deep-rooted and important aspects of the Kemalist Revolution.

### **Distinctive Features in the Struggle Against Colonialism And Imperialism**

Indeed, from India and Afghanistan to North Africa, Latin America, West Asia, and the Arab countries, one can detect the impact of the Turkish Revolution. The success or failure of the uprisings against colonialism and imperialism in these countries is explained by taking the Turkish Revolution as a criterion. As a matter of fact, we

know that even in the prisons of these countries, this kind of accounting was done. For example, Nehru found the principle of *secularism* of the Turkish Revolution distinctive in this respect.

Indian Muslims had been following the Turkish revolutionary movement since the *Young Turks*. During the Russian War of 1877-78, prayers were offered in mosques in India and relief funds were collected for the wounded (Güngör, 2001:325).

Mahatma Gandhi was very impressed by the 1908 Freedom Revolution and the opening of the Parliament and considered the Turkish presence a strong state in Europe (Wasey, 2002:248-249).

However, the fact that they were under the tutelage of British colonialism made a significant difference from the Turkish Revolution. They saw the Caliphate as a symbol of their independence movement and religion as decisive for continuing their unity and culture.

Before the First World War, they telegraphed

Talat Pasha for the Ottoman Empire to remain neutral and asked him to “prevent the outbreak of a war that would force Indian Muslims to be disloyal to the Caliph and Britain”. When the National Struggle began to part ways with the Istanbul government, a “day of prayer for the honor of the Caliph” was declared for the Muslim population. Hindus were also united in their support and participated in fasting and prayers. As the process progressed, some said they would boycott British goods if they did not sign a peace treaty and tried to convince the Sultan to support Mustafa Kemal (Çöhçe, 2002:151-165).

### The Solution

When the war was won against Western imperialism, Mustafa Kemal was declared a national hero. Although the abolition of the caliphate shook relations, the fact that, for the first time, a Muslim country brought the West to its knees at Lausanne had a great impact in India, and ideas such as “there is no need for a caliphate anyway, or Mustafa Kemal should be the caliph” emerged. It was finally decided that Türkiye should be supported for its economic development and achievements. Ultimately, it was concluded that for India to gain its freedom, it was necessary to do as Mustafa Kemal had done and find radical solutions.

Jawaharlal Nehru emphasized that the most important factor underlying Mustafa Kemal’s success was the secular revolution and that this was the only way to achieve unity in a country where religious and cultural divisions existed. Women’s rights, the unity of education, and the separation of religious and secular affairs were decisive. He argued that reforms could be expected to last forever (Sadıq, 1981:224-226).

### Principles of the Kemalist Revolutionary Program

The National Democratic Revolution Program of the Kemalist Revolution also developed and progressed to overcome the obstacles. The 1930s were a significant turning point in Türkiye’s political and economic history. Both the developments in the world and Türkiye’s experiences of the previous decade necessitated an accounting by the Kemalist government. The young Turkish Republic endeavored to increase production to consolidate its independence on economic foundations. They had seen the decisive power of the economy and economic independence during the National Struggle.

In his opening speech to the Parliament on March 1, 1922, the leader of the revolution devoted much space to the economy. However, he started with the question: “Who is the owner and master of Türkiye?” The parliament responded: “The peasant, the true producer!”

“The struggle against imperialism and the sultanate has now defined the fronts. Türkiye is a *nationalist* country. And the economic aim of the Grand National Assembly is to achieve its welfare. The reason for our misery and disaster today is that we do not know this fact” (Atatürk, 2003:279).

Who is responsible for our misery and disaster? The Sultan’s administration. Then the work should start from there. The first separation happened on April 23, 1920. Sovereignty was taken from the sultan and given to the nation. Then the Republic was declared on October 29, 1923. This is written at the beginning of the principles. It states that the State of Türkiye is a Republic. This is the form of the state. It is a state regime. It is a definition of power. It is a definition of sovereignty and sanction power.

### Preserving the Revolution for Eternity

“We recognize individuals as part of the people, and consider them to be from and for the people, who accept absolute equality before the law and do not grant privilege to any individual, family, class, or community” (Atatürk, 2007b:154).

**“There is no privilege for individuals or classes in our system. Our laws apply and take effect equally and fully on all citizens.”**

According to the Kemalists, *Populism* is not a theoretical work of our noble spirit. It has not been incorporated into principles based on emotions, nor is it a work of compassion. Populism was researched by asking what needed to be done to protect Turkish independence forever, and the principle of populism was adopted by determining the necessary conditions. They saw populism as a prerequisite for the nation’s salvation, for living independently and humanely.

Şükrü Kaya briefly defines populism amidst applause in the Assembly: “Our populism is a system that goes toward the people, not for the people; it is a system that is by the people and with the people. This system aims for the direct administration of the country by the people. There is no privilege for individuals or classes in our system. Our laws apply and take effect equally and fully on all citizens. There is no legal offense that one will not be held accountable for after obtaining knowledge.”

### Strong Economy, Strong State

“Life means economy. To build a strong state to live, economy is essential.” In this context, “One of the important goals of our economic policy is to nationalize the economic institutions and enterprises that directly concern the general welfare, to the extent allowed by our financial and technical capabilities” (Atatürk, 2003:280).

The *state-centered system* applied by Türkiye is not a translated system of ideas put forward by socialist theorists since the 19th century. It is a system that emerged from Türkiye’s needs, a unique system for Türkiye. State intervention in property relations is necessary for this reason. *Mixed economy!*

The foundations of the National Democratic Revolution are strengthening, and construction is ongoing. However, without secularism, you get stuck, unable to overcome problems. How will you implement statism? Land ownership, feudalism, and religious leadership are issues. They are all part of a whole, connected to the struggle against imperialism and our independence.

On February 5, 1937, a bill was introduced by Malatya Deputy İsmet İnönü and 153 colleagues, and some articles of the Constitution were amended. And the six principles became constitutional articles. The Republic of Türkiye is *Republican, Nationalist, Populist, Statist, Secular, and Reformist*. The official language is Turkish. The capital is Ankara. Purpose:

The Grand National Assembly of Türkiye regards protecting its life and independence as its sole and sacred aim, liberating its people from the domination and oppression of imperialism and capitalism, and making the

true owner of will and sovereignty (Atatürk, 2002:323).

This government was established because our national sovereignty was in danger. Its owner is our nation. Unconditionally! Thus, the Assembly and the Deputies will exercise this authority (Atatürk, 2003:120).

The Turkish People's Government is administered by the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye. In provinces, they are elected by the people's general vote. They represent not only that province but the entire nation. The army is solely the army of the GNA. The President of the GNA is also the President of the Council of Ministers (Atatürk, 2002:324).

### **The Cause and Legacy of Victory**

After the Turkish nation's Independence was achieved, a state system was established that would not return to such hardships and dangers. The principles and programs to be implemented in this state system were determined. These were not merely done to adapt concepts prepared by scholars in their cells, in their sensitive consciences and minds. They are the implementation of a march based on reality. The principles of our Republic were thought out and applied on the battlefields. "The cause and the legacy of victory!" It is based on the necessities of life. It is not based on statistics; the aim is not to apply specific formulas perpetually. This is the essence of revolutionism. Some "good" laws gather dust behind library showcases. There are perfect systems that have not found an application area and opportunity. They are perfect! But only on paper! Kemalist Revolution states, "The best law is the one that suits the nation best."

### **Two Models in History**

The Turkish Revolution was the first successful revolution in the oppressed nations of the world. Its principles are symbolized by arrows. The tips of the arrows are open toward the future. They are like the rays of the sun that illuminate endlessly into eternity. In history, two models have emerged in this field. One is the Turkish Revolution. A model that opposes imperialism, proves that God is not English, and tries to develop a system based on independent people and capitalism that supports the oppressed in this world. The other is the Chinese model. After a struggle against imperialism and colonialism similar to the Kemalist Revolution, under the leadership of Sun Yat Sen, the Communist Party continues the National Democratic Revolution.

The fact that these two struggling countries hold the two ends of a road and share a similar destiny, yet have differences in economic development and their response to COVID, is not a coincidence. After World War II, the Chinese Revolution continued. The Kemalist Revolution fell under the influence of the expansionist goals of the USA. It experienced deviations and blockages from the National Democratic Revolution Program. The Turkish Revolution will overcome today's difficulties by moving further and further in the direction indicated by the arrows. In the coming century, we will lead the establishment of a fully independent, more egalitarian, and brighter Türkiye and world.

### **Like-Minded Countries**


Mustafa Kemal Atatürk stated on March 3, 1922: "Aggressive, invading, and hostile states consider the earth their mansion and regard

humanity as enslaved beings condemned to work for their ambitions. (...) They accept the humane and just principles they declare not because they find them acceptable but to isolate the masses of humanity that they have kept under the chain of oppression for years and to continue to hold them in easier captivity by isolating them from all their weapons.”

### We Will Write a New History

As the leader of the defense of the homeland, Atatürk also saw and proposed a solution to the polarization in the world at that time: “Against the group that has come from harmful and poisonous minds and has attacked us. (...) A common front separates the East from the West and extends from the North to the South. Defenses on this front will be possible with the genuine and sincere solidarity of nations that have become likeminded with each other. (...) However, the states involved in this solidarity must be strong on their own, each with strong independence ideas, and well-established and equipped.”

This understanding is also a stance against the enmity and division imposed by imperialism. The path to success has passed through here and will continue to do so. Today, the targeted political stance, culture, and understanding are the same.

In the 1920s, he said, “Türkiye will not follow the demands of existing history books, but the genuine necessities of history. (...) We will tear them apart and create a new history” (Atatürk, 2004). The century ahead is the time to write a new history from Asia to Africa, from Latin America and beyond. The key to success is in our hands. 

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# Atatürk'ün Bütün Eserleri (Collected Works of Atatürk)



**Documents of the Oppressed World's First Successful Revolution and Intellectual Advancement**

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Director of the Russian House of Culture, Historian  
**Assoc. Prof. Dr Aleksandr Sotnichenko**

# "The Atatürk model: An inspirational achievement in independence and development"



*Born on February 1, 1977. In 1998, he graduated from the Eastern Faculty of Saint Petersburg State University, and in 2002, he defended his doctoral thesis, "The Development of the Geopolitical Space of the Ottoman Empire, 1839–1908." From 2000 to 2017, he was a lecturer at the Faculty of International Relations at Saint Petersburg State University. He has published many articles on Turkish history, Russian-Turkish relations, and Middle Eastern politics. Between 2017 and 2021, he worked as an undersecretary at the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Ankara. Since 2021, he has been the President of the Russian Cultural and Scientific Center (Rus Evi Ankara).*

**“Let’s look at the explanations and statements made by Mustafa Kemal throughout his life. We can say that some of his theses positively and negatively affected the developing Russian-Turkish relations. But a very important detail should never be forgotten: In the Republic Monument in Taksim Square, right next to Atatürk, we see that Semyon Aralov, the first ambassador of Soviet Russia to Türkiye, is located. The order of Gazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha himself erected this monument. For this reason, we can state that Atatürk left a legacy to the Turkish people not to forget the close friendship and brotherhood established with Russia. Regarding developing countries, Atatürk is an exemplary leader who laid the foundations of the industrial transformation that economically developed Türkiye, an agricultural country as of the first half of the 20th century. The effects of his actions are also strongly felt in the global political processes of the 21st century.”**

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**Director of the Russian House in Ankara, historian Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aleksandr Sotnichenko, answered Işıkgün Akfırat’s questions.**

***What impact did the War of Independence and the Republican Revolution achieved under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal have on world history?***

**Aleksandr Sotnichenko:** Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s strong personality, outstanding leadership qualities and the indelible mark he left in world history can never be forgotten. As a leader, he achieved the impossible, creating a powerful nation-state at a time when almost no one in the world believed in the future of the Turks. The state founded by Mustafa Kemal set an example for all oppressed states and peoples who would struggle against Western Imperialism. In addition, Mustafa Kemal Pasha set enormous goals for his country, which he ruled with superior success without a doubt. He put forward achieving the contemporary civilization mission as a national cause.

Throughout the 20th century, many leaders in Eastern and Latin American countries tried to follow his path and imitate him. However, in practice, none of them even came close to Atatürk’s achievements. The War of Independence waged by the Turkish People against the occupying forces after the First World War resulted in the tremendous victory of the Turkish Nation, which the Western states tried to erase from history. This is such a great victory that it is rarely seen in history. In the War of Independence, Mustafa Kemal showed his strategic genius and attempted to cooperate with Russia, which was labelled as Türkiye’s traditional enemy. Soviet Russia, which at that time was ruled by completely renewed cadres in political terms, also aided Türkiye, which had shown its determination and had the potential to defeat the forces of the occupying Western states that were many times superior to itself.



Taksim Republic Monument, 1936. At the Republic Monument in Taksim Square, we see that Semyon Aralov, the first ambassador of Soviet Russia to Türkiye, , right next to Atatürk. This monument was built by the order of Gazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Eski İstanbul Fotoğrafları Arşivi, 2023).

### Türkiye and Russia: A Cooperation Model Coming from History

*In the 1930s, we saw that Türkiye succeeded in developing close cooperation with the Soviets. Are there any lessons to be learned from this cooperation model today?*

**Aleksandr Sotnichenko:** Yes, indeed, especially during the Mustafa Kemal period, the cooperation between Soviet Russia and the Republic of Türkiye was very high. During this time, the two friendly and neighboring countries continuously tried implementing joint projects based on mutual benefit. Therefore, huge investments were made.

By the way, I believe that it is necessary to men-

tion a very important detail: Soviet Russia, while helping independent Türkiye, never tried to make it dependent on itself and did not try to exploit Türkiye's human and natural resources as some Western countries did later. The projects that Russia is currently carrying out in Türkiye are being realized on the same principled basis. Therefore, we can say that the model in question has become a traditional approach for our joint work. The main thing for us is to share our technology and knowledge with the friendly and brotherly Turkish People. This is why we invited 350 Turkish students to study in Russia with scholarships this year. In turn, we are learning many new things from our Turkish partners who are operating in Russia.

*What does Mustafa Kemal mean for Turkish-Russian friendship and the developing world countries from past to present?*

**Aleksandr Sotnichenko:** Let's look at the explanations and statements made by Mustafa Kemal throughout his life. We can say that some of his theses positively and negatively affected the developing Russian-Turkish relations. But a very important detail should never be forgotten: In the Republic Monument in Taksim Square, right next to Atatürk, we see that Semyon Aralov, the first ambassador of Soviet Russia to Türkiye, is located. The order of Gazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha himself erected this monument. For this reason, we can state that Atatürk left a legacy to the Turkish people not to forget the close friendship and brotherhood established with Russia.

Regarding developing countries, Atatürk is an exemplary leader who laid the foundations of the industrial transformation that economically developed Türkiye, an agricultural country as of the first half of the 20th century. The effects of his actions are also strongly felt in the global political processes of the 21st century.

### **Atatürk's Foreign Policy in a Multipolar World**

*How would you evaluate the importance of Mustafa Kemal in terms of the construction of a multipolar world?*

**Aleksandr Sotnichenko:** First, it is necessary to note that a multipolar world

order is potentially more unstable than a unipolar or bipolar world order. However, multipolarity is much more beneficial for countries called "semi-periphery states" in the terminology put forward by Immanuel Wallerstein, the famous theorist of the world systems approach. Among the countries mentioned are Russia and Türkiye. In a multipolar world order, these countries can choose their own free will with whom to cooperate, regardless of the views of a few hegemony. Yes, it's very difficult. Yes, it requires serious mental effort, political effort, and diplomatic skills, but humanity can only advance this way.

Now, if you like, let's take Türkiye under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as an example: Türkiye, which Atatürk personally directed and managed, played the whole game by its own rules, although it was included in the international system that prevailed in the first half of the 20th century. Yes, Türkiye had a very difficult road. However, despite this, it did not bow to any external power and achieved the goals set by Mustafa Kemal Pasha for that period.

Pursuing a resourceful and independent foreign policy, Türkiye succeeded in gaining new allies such as Soviet Russia and reconciling with its old enemies, Britain and France. This interaction has become a driving force for the economic development that the country has recorded in the following years. Mustafa Kemal himself laid the foundation of the multi-vector foreign policy that Türkiye is currently embracing.

### Exhibition on Atatürk in the Russian House in Ankara

*As the Russian House of Ankara, have you ever held any activities related to Mustafa Kemal? For what purpose did you do it?*

**Aleksandr Sotnichenko:** Of course! We have organized several activities related to Mustafa Kemal and continue to do so. For example, artists from Russia participate in a large exhibition organized by our friend Ahmet Şahin every year on October 29, Republic Day, at the Ankara Orange Blossom Art Gallery. In addition, the world-famous Russian painter Konstantin Miroshnik also made great portraits of Mustafa Kemal Pasha. The works in question are currently on display in our Russian House.

This year, as you know, we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye. For the 100th anniversary, we designed and printed a wonderful agenda compiled from Semyon Aralov's memories of Türkiye-Russia friendship and Mustafa Kemal. This agenda also includes sketches by the famous Russian painter Yevgeny Lansere, who accompanied Aralov during his mission to Türkiye in 1922. Among them, there is a very unusual portrait of Mustafa Kemal.

Recently, the employees of the Russian House made a great video for Instagram. The content, which was prepared in Turkish and addressed to young people, explains that almost all the paintings and graphic works in the Anıtkabir Museum Complex, Mustafa Kemal's eternal resting place, were made by artists from Russia. This post of ours was liked and watched a lot.

*Finally, could you briefly introduce yourself and the Russian House to our readers?*

**Aleksandr Sotnichenko:** I am a doctor of historical sciences and an associate professor at St. Petersburg State University. I have taught various courses in Oriental Sciences and International Relations at the Faculty of International Relations of St. Petersburg State University, of which I have been a member for many years. But five years ago, limiting my theory-based work, I switched to practical application and started working at the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Türkiye. For the last two and a half years, I have been the president of the Russian Culture and Science Center, also known as the Russian House of Ankara.

Our corporate activities are similar to Yunus Emre Institute's in many ways. We strive to establish strong relations between two great countries with a common historical and cultural past, especially in the humanitarian field. For this purpose, we organize exhibitions of the works of Russian artists, organize cinema days where Russian films are shown, send successful Turkish students to our country's best universities with scholarships and support our compatriots residing in Türkiye. Our business is not about politics; it is completely culture and art-oriented. That is, we concentrate on interpersonal-human relationships because we believe that a strong bridge of mutual understanding and solidarity between the two peoples can be established through direct open communication channels between both ordinary citizens and state elders. 🌸

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# An Analysis on Cai Hesen's Türkiye Writings




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## ABSTRACT

Türkiye and China are two oppressed nations that shared the same fate at the beginning of the 20th century. Both nations wanted to eliminate imperialism's exploitation and stand up by achieving their democratic revolutions. The victory of Türkiye against imperialism in the War of Independence and the development of friendly relations with the Soviet Union were followed with interest by the leaders of the Communist Party of China (CPC). The successful Turkish Revolution aroused the idea that it could set an example for China among the early CPC leaders. For this reason, communists in China followed the Turkish Revolution closely and tried to apply it to the Chinese Revolution practice. Cai Hesens, the leader and theoretician of the CPC in the founding period, was especially interested in the Turkish Revolution. Cai Hesens published his views on the Turkish Revolution in his articles in the CPC's publication, *The Guide Weekly* (向导 Xiangdao), and influenced the CPC's leadership. In this study, the articles of Cai Hesens, a key theorist in the early stages of the CPC who evaluated the Turkish revolution and its impact on the CPC cadres, are discussed.

**Keywords:** Cai Hesens, China, Communist Party of China, Turkish Revolution, Türkiye

## Introduction

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA (CPC) was closely interested in the Turkish Revolution despite the long distance between Türkiye and China. It is particularly interesting that this interest in Türkiye and the Turkish Revolution was in the early period of the CPC. Early Chinese Communists seemed interested in Türkiye's victory over imperialism and its friendship with the Soviet Union. Despite this, studies, especially in Türkiye, have ignored this interest, and only two translation studies have been made about this period.

Two articles written by Cai Hesens and Gao Junyu, CPC cadres, were translated from Chinese to Turkish. The first of these, Cai Hesens's article titled "We Wish Victory

to the Turkish Nationalist Party", written in 1922, was translated into Turkish by Giray Fidan in his book, *The Chinese Guests of the Republic*. The other is Gao Junyu's article "The International Value of the Victory of the Turkish National Army", published in September 1922 and translated into Turkish by the *BRIQ Journal* (Alan, 2020).

On the other hand, this issue has been valued in China. The article "The impact of the Turkish Revolution on the CPC during the critical period of the Guomindang-Communist cooperation decision-making process" by Wu Haiyong (2013) in China is highly valuable. In his article, Wu focused on the role played by the Turkish revolution in creating the CPC's united front with the Guomindang (GMD) and gave examples, especially from the writings of Cai Hesens.

Sun Menglin and Huang Zhigao's (2019a) article "Role Models and Lessons: The Concerns of Early Chinese Communists about Türkiye's Revival- In the Background of National Revival Thoughts" examined how the Turkish revolution set an example for CPC leaders and the reasons and concerns of CPC leaders for their interest in the Turkish revolution. Another study is Huang Zhigao's (2010) article "Observation and Reaction of the Communist Party of China to Turkish Revolution During 1921-1925". In his article, Zhigao evaluated the CPC's observations on the development of Turkish-Soviet friendly relations during the War of Independence to the GMD-Soviet cooperation.

**Türkiye's victory over imperialism and the realization of a revolution that abolished the monarchy aroused an interest in the Turkish revolution among China's progressive intellectuals.**

Studies in China on this subject are not well known in Turkish academia since they are in Chinese, and there is no English source on the subject. Studies in Türkiye have not been directed to question the reasons and roots of the CPC's interest in the Turkish Revolution. In studies in China, the role of Cai Hesen, who focused on understanding the Turkish revolution, and his influence on the CPC have not been emphasized.

At the beginning of the 20th century, western powers defined the Ottoman Empire as a "sick man" at one end of Asia. Similarly, the Qing Dynasty at the other end of Asia was defined as a "sick man". Kang Youwei (Chinese: 康有為), a Chinese statesman and reformist who visited

the Ottoman Empire in 1908, wrote in his travel book that "The Ottomans and China are in the same situation, Europe has long viewed the two as the 'Sick Men' of the East, but it is unclear which will die first." he stated. In his travel book, in which he stated the similarities between the Ottoman Empire and China, Kang underlined that the only solution to prevent the collapse of the state was revolution (Fidan, 2013: 24).

While the imperialist countries occupied the Ottoman Empire after the loss of the First World War, China was also a semi-colonial state of the imperialist countries. Although the revolution took place in 1911, it was interrupted. After the warlords seized power in China in a short time, a struggle continued among the people against both imperialist exploitation and warlords. When Mustafa Kemal Atatürk went to Samsun on May 19, 1919, Chinese youth also showed resistance against imperialism on May 4, 1919.<sup>1</sup> Even today, May 19 is celebrated as Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day in Türkiye, while May 4 is celebrated as Youth Day in China.

The resistance of Türkiye and China against imperialism started in similar periods. Türkiye's victory over imperialism and the realization of a revolution that abolished the monarchy aroused an interest in the Turkish revolution among China's progressive intellectuals. The early leaders of the CPC, Cai Hesen, Gao Junyu, Li Dazhao, and Chen Duxiu, took an interest in the Turkish revolution and hailed Türkiye's achievements. Especially Cai Hesen, who was among the first CPC leadership staff, wrote four articles about Türkiye and emphasized that the Turkish Revolution set an example for China. This study examines Cai Hesen's writings on Türkiye and the impact of the Turkish revolution on CPC cadres.



Cai Hesen  
(Zhongguo Qingnian Wang, n.d.)

### **Cai Hesen's Revolutionary Struggle and Role in the CPC**

Born in Shanghai on March 30, 1895, Cai Hesen (Chinese: 蔡和森)<sup>2</sup> was an important ideologue during the birth of the CPC. At the same time, Cai Hesen was a close friend of Mao Zedong, whom he found valuable in his intellectual life, discussed and even played an important role in Mao's Marxist-Leninist path. As one of the CPC's founders and most important theorists, Cai significantly contributed to theory, strategy, and propaganda in the early CPC era. It was even said that "Hesen is the theorist and Mao is the realist" (Ven, 1991: 32). Cai Hesen

exchanged letters with Mao Zedong and had much intellectual sparring during his study in France. Cai's letters hold special significance in the history of Chinese communism because they played a critical role in the development of Mao's thought (Ven, 1991: 35). Deng Xiaoping said about Cai Hesen: "Comrade Cai Hesen was one of the prominent leaders of our party in the early days. He made significant contributions to the Chinese revolution. Chinese people will always remember him!" (People's Daily, 2015b).

Two places are important in the development of Cai Hesen's intellectual life. The first is the years he spent at the Hunan First Normal School in Changsha (1914-1917), and the other is the year he spent in France (1920-1921). After Cai developed his intellectual and organizational skills at Hunan First Normal School, he met communism and improved himself on Marxism-Leninism and the revolutionary party model in France. With the transformation of Hunan First Normal School, which underwent a series of educational reforms at the beginning of the 20th century, Cai encountered new Western ideas at school. The school had a highly developed pedagogy, and Cai particularly enjoyed reading about the reformist intellectuals of the turn of the century (Levin, 2019:309). Cai was a student of Yang Changji, an expert in neo-Confucianism and Western ethics in Changsha, who became a professor at Peking University in 1918. Cai Hesen first appeared with Mao Zedong, Xiao Zisheng<sup>3</sup> (萧子升 1894-1976; also known as Xiao Yu 萧瑜) and his younger brother Xiao Zizhang (萧子璋 1896-1983; also known as Xiao San 萧三) in Changsha.



In the winter of 1917, the leaders of CCP, Mao Zedong and Cai Hesen, initiated the organization, New Society Study Society (Xinmin Xuehui). In the picture, Mao Zedong is fourth from the left in the back row, Cai Hesen is the first from the right in the back row. Changsha, November 26, 1919. (Zhongguo Qingnian Wang, n.d.)

He emerged as a youth leader during his years at the First Normal School<sup>4</sup>. During this period, the two very close friends, Cai and Mao, formed an intellectual model that reflected their later political personalities. While Mao took a heroic path to serve China, which was more inclined to follow the path of the “Great Men”, Cai emphasized the education of the masses and the strengthening of their rights and freedoms. There was also a philosophical difference between the two. While Mao valued Confucius and Mencius,

Cai valued the less popular, utilitarian philosopher Mozi (Levin, 2019: 309). In 1918, before the May 4th Movement, Cai Hesen and Mao Zedong organized the New Citizen Study Society (Xinmin Xuehui 新民学会) to renew academics, improve behavior, and improve people’s traditions. Later, 73 of the 78 members of the New Citizen Study Society joined the CPC and became the first party members. Mao and Cai joined the May 4 Movement. Cai, however, went to France shortly after the May 4th Movement for a study program.

Cai closely felt the ideological turmoil in Europe following the October Revolution in Russia and the workers' movements in various countries during his time in France in the early 1920s. He quickly translated Marxist theoretical classics into Chinese, summarizing the experiences and lessons of the Communist Parties of various countries. He examined the Marxist-Leninist theory of party building, especially the experience of the Bolsheviks (People's Daily, 2019, and Chunqi, 2020: 60-61).

### **Cai Hesen was the first to propose the name "Communist Party of China"**

After seriously examining communism and the Russian Revolution, he saw that his previous intellectual beliefs were insufficient and started to define himself as a Marxist after the summer of 1920 (Liu, 2006: 107). Some young Chinese intellectuals had met the revolutionary ideas of Marxism and Leninism in France. Many of the CPC's leadership, such as Cai Hesen, Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yi, and Xiang Jingyu, were educated in France. Between 1919 and 1921, approximately 1500 Chinese students were educated in France. Wang Guangqi, founding member of the Young Chinese Association, explains this situation: "The Chinese who go to the US to study are fascinated by the money-worshipping philosophy, and when they return to China, they will bring the American capitalist

model. Especially the Chinese who go to America live comfortably by receiving scholarships from the government. But those educated in France make their own profits in factories. He said that while students in the US were learning capitalism, students in France were learning about labor and the working classes." (Bailey, 1988). Students studying in France were not in comfortable conditions. It is understood that their education while working increased their awareness of labor and their interest in the struggle for labor.

Cai's years in France developed him theoretically and broadened his horizons. On September 16, 1920, Cai Hesen, traveling in France, wrote a letter to Mao Zedong openly proposing to "formally establish a Communist Party of China" in China, discussing in detail the theory, policy, and principles of party building. Cai Hesen was the first to propose the name "Communist Party of China". On December 1, 1920, Mao Zedong wrote a letter to Cai Hesen and other New Citizen Study Society members in France expressing his approval of Cai Hesen's proposal to form the party. Mao Zedong wrote to Cai Hesen on January 21, 1921, "Your letter is very insightful, and I agree with every word. At the party level, Mr Chen Zhongfu and the others are already organizing." (Tao, 2015: 125-126). During his stay in France, Cai Hesen put forward an ideological proposal for establishing the CPC in line with Lenin's party-building principles and party-building theory and played an important role in the party's founding.



In July 1920, Cai Hesen, along with Xiang Junyu and other members of the Xinmin Society who remained in France, took a group photograph. (Zhongguo Qingnian Wang, n.d.)

On July 23-31, 1921, with the participation of 12 delegates representing different parts of the country (Mao Zedong, Dong Biwu, Chen Tanqiu, He Shuheng, Wang Jinmei, Deng Enming, Li Da, Liu Renjing, Chen Gongbo, Li Hanjun, Zhanng Guotao and Zhou Fohai), the first CPC National Congress was held in Shanghai. On July 31, 1921, the CPC was officially established.

Cai Hesen was not in China when the CPC was established. After returning to China in the winter of 1921, he was elected as a member of the Central Executive Committee at the first congress of the Communist Youth League on May 5, 1922. In July of the same year, Cai Hesen and his wife, Xiang Jingyu<sup>5</sup>, were elected to the Central Executive Committee at the CPC's Second National Congress. Cai was responsible for the propaganda and organizational work of the Central Executive Committee. He made important contributions to the party's organizational structure, ideological

structuring and working style. He also played an important role in the consolidation and development of the party. Additionally, Cai worked to establish an organization of the CPC in Europe with Xiang Jingyu, Zhou Enlai, Zhao Shiyan, Deng Xiaoping, and Li Fuchun.

Hesen always attached great importance to the theoretical work of the CPC. He said, "A revolutionary party cannot be without a revolutionary theory. That is why a revolutionary party must not only have good organization and good policies, but also a revolutionary theory to unite its ideas before leading the revolution on the right path." (People's Daily, 2015a). Regarding the founding of the CPC, Mao Zedong said, "History has proven that Comrade Cai Hesen's forward-thinking party-building ideas were in line with the actual situation of the Chinese revolution and played a strong role in promoting the party-forming activities of the early communists in China" (People's Daily, 2015a).

Cai Hesen was the editor-in-chief of the weekly newspaper “*The Guide*” (Chinese: 向导 Xiangdao), which started its publication on September 13, 1922, and was the first publication of the CPC. *The Guide* was the theoretical organ of the CPC during its founding, and Cai was the Editor-in-Chief of *The Guide* for more than three years, from September 1922 to October 1925 (Aizhi, 1981:54). Hesen was also the first to publicize the CPC’s slogan “Down with international imperialism” in China. In China, concepts such as “imperialism” and “warlords” were foreign terms. Until then, many Chinese did not know what “imperialism” was (Nanyang Hi-Tech Industrial Zone, 2021). In its manifesto, *The Guide* made clear the purpose of the newspaper’s publication: “Resist the aggression of international imperialism”, “Destroy the warlords who hinder peaceful reunification”, and call on all citizens to fight for “unification, peace, freedom and independence”.

### **The Guide played a guiding role in bringing about the revolution by spreading the CPC’s line, principles, and policies.**

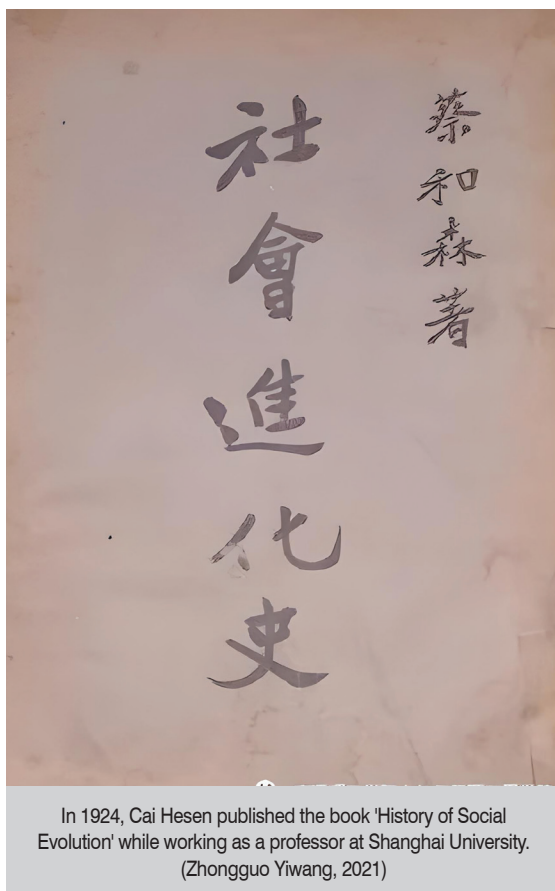
Of the 201 issues published, Cai Hesen edited 116 articles and wrote 134. *The Guide* played a guiding role in bringing about the revolution by spreading the CPC’s line, principles, and policies. In a short time, *The Guide*’s circulation increased rapidly, and from a few thousand copies to more than 100,000 copies, it created a light in the reader (Tao, 2015: 125-126). The content of the 16-page *The Guide* consisted of columns such as “China Weekly”, “World Weekly”, “Correspondence”, “Reader’s Voice”, and “What to Say”.

After establishing the united front between the

CPC and the GMD, *The Guide* continued to advocate the CPC’s united front policy, the alliance with Soviet Russia proposed by Sun Yat Sen, and support the development of agriculture and industry (The Paper, 2021). Briefly, the Directory was a weekly publication where current events in China and the world were analyzed, and the Chinese revolution was discussed. In particular, *The Guide*’s articles supported the workers’ and peasants’ movement to follow anti-imperialist and anti-feudal policies to bring about the national revolution formulated by the CPC’s Second National Congress (The Paper, 2021a).

Hesen worked day and night to ensure *The Guide* could be published on time. When he was tired in the middle of the night, he would lie on his bed with his clothes and rest for a while. After waking up, he would get up and immediately go to work at the desk. Among the early leaders of the CPC, Cai Hesen was a particularly hardworking and determined leader, known as a “workaholic” who forgot to sleep and eat (Libo, 2021).

Cai Hesen was also an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology at Shanghai University. He taught the history of social evolution at Shanghai University in 1923 and first attempted to disseminate, nationalize and popularize the Marxist materialist view of history (People’s Daily, 2015a). In 1924, he compiled and published “The History of Social Evolution” in Shanghai. In his book, Cai used Engels’ “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State” and social Darwinism to illustrate the inevitable laws of social development. (USTB Committee of the Communist Youth League, 2021; Guangming, 2005). This book is the first history of social development written by the Chinese based on Marxist historical materialism and is the basis of such works. In addition, Shanghai University was the left wing of the Guomindang and an important center of activity for the CPC (Ven, 1991:152).



In 1925, Cai Hesun joined and led the May 30 Movement.<sup>6</sup> On behalf of the CPC, Cai Hesun published “The CPC Announces its Resistance to the Barbaric and Brutal Massacre of Imperialism”, which quickly spread the struggle to Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and other cities, and called on all workers and peasants in the country to unite against imperialism. In October of the same year, he was appointed by the CPC Central Committee and went to Moscow to attend the sixth extended meeting of the Comintern Fifth Executive Committee. At the end of 1925, he gave a long lecture, “The Development of the History of the CPC,” at Sun Yat Sen University in Moscow. In his speech, Cai made a

deep analysis of the nature of the Chinese Revolution, the historical tasks of the CPC, and the role of classes in the revolution. He defined the proletariat as “the vanguard of the revolution” and the peasantry as “the ally of the working class”. This was the first study on the history of the CPC (Nantong Institute of Technology, 2021).

In 1927, the united front disintegrated when Chiang Kai-shek massacred CPC members in Shanghai.<sup>7</sup> In July 1928, Cai was elected as a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee at the CPC’s 6th National Congress in Moscow. He stated that an armed struggle should be carried out in the countryside, and an army should be established (Deng, 2015).

At the end of 1928, he was appointed to go to Moscow as a member of the CPC Comintern. At the beginning of 1931, Cai Hesun returned to China from the Soviet Union to join the work of the CPC. The CPC Central Committee sent Hesun to organize the disbanded Guangdong Provincial Party Committee. He was working from Hong Kong, as the situation in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, was difficult to rectify. However, in June 1931, Cai Hesun was betrayed by a traitor named Gu Shunzhang and was arrested by the British police in Hong Kong. The British authorities handed him over to Guangzhou. Tortured in Guangzhou prison, Cai Hesun did not bow down and died in Guangzhou at 36 on August 4, 1931 (Communist Party of China, 2022).

Cai Hesun was a person whose life was a glorious struggle and who lived only by fighting for the cause of revolution.



### **Cai Hesen's Evaluation of the Turkish Revolution and His Impact on CPC Cadres**

At the beginning of the 20th century, getting China back on its feet had become the mission of China's progressive intellectuals and people. Because of the May 4th Movement in 1919, all segments of the Chinese people sought national liberation and development calls. This prompted Chinese progressive intellectuals to think about the future of China.

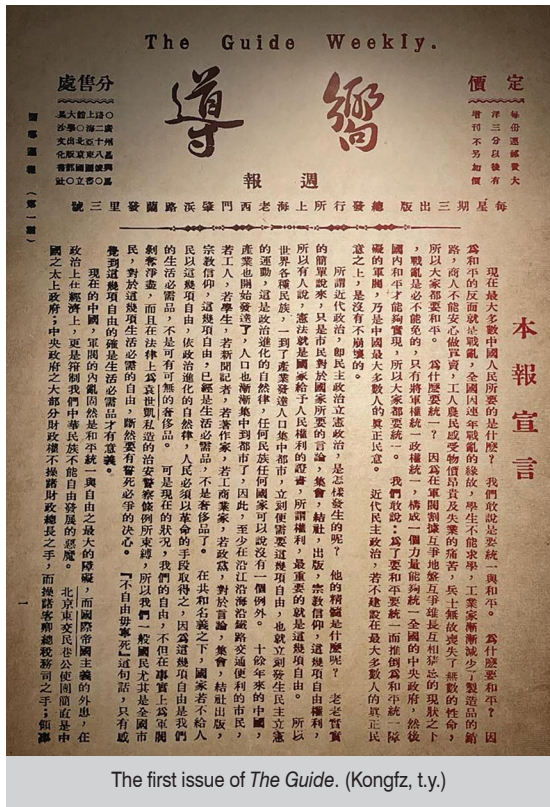
**Cai thought that the Turkish Revolution's elimination of feudalism and imperialism would set an example for China's resurgence.**

After the May 4th Movement, as Li Dazhao, Chen Duxiu, Cai Hesen, and other early Chinese communists sought the path to national rejuvenation, Türkiye, also known as the "sick man of Asia", suddenly stood up, and this was the spirit of rejuvenation the early Communists had been waiting for. The fact that Türkiye, known as the "sick man of the Near East", and China, known as the "sick man of the Far East," shared the same fate prompted the early Chinese communists to follow Türkiye's changing direction (Sun Menglin and Huang Zhigao, 2019a: 12). Li Dazhao was interested in the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 and the Committee of Union and Progress, based on the similarity between the Turks and the Chinese, two deep-rooted nations. He was interested in the Turkish Revolution, thinking that the Turkish Revolution's elimination of feudalism and imperialism would set an example for China's resurgence (Sun Menglin and Huang

Zhigao, 2019b).

The early communists in China believed that youth was the power of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and that the Soviet Union supported the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The fact that the War of Independence in Türkiye resulted in a strong reconciliation of all classes under the leadership of the national bourgeoisie in an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution caught the attention of the CPC leaders. This created an important precedent for the Communists in China to conduct a comprehensive anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolutionary movement to achieve full independence and rejuvenation (Sun Menglin and Huang Zhigao, 2019b).

Cai Hesen focused on the similarity of the situation in Türkiye with China. For this reason, he put Türkiye and countries such as Iran and China on the side of the oppressed nations where the nationalist movement rose against imperialism. Cai Hesen, in his letter to Mao Zedong on August 13, 1920, evaluated the situation of the revolutionary movement in the world on four occasions. He listed them as follows: 1) The places where the proletarian revolution was victorious: Russia; 2) The places where the proletarian revolution continued or failed: Central European countries and the defeated countries of the Balkans; 3) The countries where the proletarian revolution was pregnant: the five big countries that won the war; and 4) The class consciousness rose countries, countries where nationalist movements were thought to lead to being Bolshevik: Iran, Türkiye, India, Egypt, Korea, and China (Hesen, 1983). Cai believed the rising nationalist wave against imperialism in Türkiye and China would ultimately serve the socialist struggle.



The first issue of *The Guide*. (Kongtz, t.y.)

At the Second National Congress of the CPC held in Shanghai on July 16-23, 1922, Cai Hesen analyzed China's politics and economy and proposed the slogan of defeating imperialism and warlords. Qu Qiubai, on the other hand, compared the second congress with previous meetings of revolutionary groups in the Far East and emphasized the importance of the strategies proposed by the second congress to form a united front. On August 28-30, 1922, at the West Lake in Hangzhou, representatives of the Comintern, Marin<sup>8</sup>, Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao, Cai Hesen, Gao Junyu, Zhang Tailei, and others, held a special meeting as the Central Committee. After two days of discussion, the guidelines for the CPC's participation and cooperation with the GMD were determined.

The West Lake Conference<sup>9</sup> was closely related to the War of Independence in Türkiye. Here, the CPC's War of Independence in Türkiye and Türkiye's cooperation with the Bolsheviks set an example for the "confused" leaders of the CPC. For example, the success of the Turkish revolution and the evaluations of Türkiye were influential in the change of opinion of one of the CPC's founders and the first CPC secretary, Chen Duxiu (陈独秀), about the Guomindang at the West Lake Conference (Haiyong, 2013: 23-24). The unification of all national classes in Türkiye by uniting against imperialism showed the importance of forming a united front with the Guomindang. A Comintern representative was present at the West Lake Conference. Comintern representative Marin explained the importance of forming a united front between the CPC and the GMD, giving examples from the Turkish revolution (Sun Menglin and Huang Zhigao, 2019a: 13). Additionally, the gains of cooperation between Türkiye and Soviet Russia set a positive example for the CPC leaders.

CPC cadres enthusiastically welcomed the success of the Turkish War of Independence on September 9, 1922. Cai Hesen, in his article in *The Guide*, hailed Türkiye's victory as "a message of the liberation of the oppressed nations"; while Gao Junyu, one of the CPC leaders, evaluated in his article published in *The Guide*, "Türkiye has won a victory that has an international value and strikes a blow to imperialism" (Alan, 2020). In 1922, the representative of the Comintern, Marin, emphasized the similarities between the nationalist movement led by Mustafa Kemal and the Guomindang in his article on

the “Fifth Year of the Russian Revolution” in *The Guide* and summoned the Guomindang to make the Chinese revolution successful (Haiyong, 2013: 23). The fact that the CPC leaders and the Comintern representative welcomed Türkiye’s victory shows that it is a reflection of their belief that Türkiye’s victory would also achieve success in Chinese revolutionary practice.

**Notably, the Turkish revolution’s success came to the Chinese revolutionaries’ agenda in their meetings with the Soviet representatives.**

Anatoly Gekker, the Soviet military attaché, who came to meet with Sun Yat Sen in Shanghai on September 26, 1922, after the West Lake Conference, also mentioned the example of the Turkish revolution. Gekker emphasized that nationalists from different views united against foreign invaders in Türkiye and stated that Mustafa Kemal’s victory was Russia’s victory. Despite the claim that Russia cannot help other countries, he focused on how concrete the cooperation between Türkiye and Russia is. Gekker emphasized that a coalition of nationalist forces should be established in China first. Then an effective resistance organization against imperialist powers should be organized with Russian help (Party History Research Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, 1997: 217).

Notably, the Turkish revolution’s success came to the Chinese revolutionaries’ agenda in

their meetings with the Soviet representatives. In these meetings, the military aid the Soviets could make to China and the situation in Türkiye were compared. This situation shows why the Chinese revolutionaries followed the Turkish-Soviet friendship with interest. For example, Chen Duxiu, in his article “October Revolution and China’s National Liberation Movement”, mentions that the Soviets rushed to aid oppressed countries such as China, Türkiye, Iran and Egypt. Duxiu stated that all the oppressed nations should unite to crush imperialism. He emphasized that the claims made about the Soviet invasion of China are fabrications, giving the example of Türkiye. He noted that Türkiye achieved success against imperialism with the support of the Soviets and that the Soviet Union never harmed Türkiye’s heritage (Zhigao, 2010: 123).

At the same time, Cai was the first person to come up with the concept of a “*Paper Tiger*”. Cai used the term paper tiger to describe those who ignore the public and try to intimidate the masses violently (Zunhua, 2015). This concept was later used frequently by the leader of the Chinese Revolution, Mao Zedong, and Chinese leaders. Cai first described paper tigers in the reactionary bourgeois of Greece, who cooperated with England, in his article titled “Greece in the Revolution” in the 13th issue of *The Guide* dated December 13 1922 (Hesen, 1978: 132-134). Later, in the 88th issue of *The Guide*, dated October 1924, he considered the Chinese bourgeois, who cooperated with British imperialism, as paper tigers. CPC cadres, especially Mao Zedong, stated that imperialism and all reactionaries were paper tigers.



A photograph of the gathering on the third anniversary of the appointment of representatives of the Guomindang and CCP, with Sun Yat Sen as the President of the Revolutionary Government in Guangzhou, on May 5, 1924.

The event took place at Sun Yat Sen's residence in Shanghai.

Mao Zedong stands second from the left in the back row.

The CPC's interest in the Turkish Revolution continued after the victory of the War of Independence. For example, Chen Duxiu, in his article written in 1924, praised the abolition of the caliphate and the reform process in Türkiye. He stated that the GMD should follow reforms like Türkiye after the war was won against imperialism and warlords in China (Zhigao, 2010: 122).

During the First United Front between the CPC and GMD, Mao Zedong was acting head of the Guomindang Central Propaganda Department from 1925 to 1927. He presided over propaganda related to promoting the national revolution. The first united front period between the CPC and the GMD, the

report of the CPC propaganda bureau on May 19, 1926, suggested that a book titled "Collective Essays on National Movements" should be written as one of the tasks to be done in the new period to provide education for party members (Schram, 1994: 373-385).

The book, which was edited by Mao Zedong and consisted of 5 chapters, was planned to include Türkiye's National Revolution section in the world revolutionary movements section. Shen Yanbing (Chinese: 沈雁冰)<sup>10</sup> was appointed compilation officer in Shanghai and was responsible for collecting manuscripts for the series in Shanghai and sending them to Party members for free reading after printing.

Shen Yanbing noted in his memoirs: “This ‘National Movement Series’ set was of great educational importance to both the Guomindang and the Communists at that time.” However, the collapse of the united front between the CPC and the GMD in 1927 left the book incomplete. Some parts of it were written, but no data could be found on the part where Türkiye’s struggle for independence took place. The fact that the CPC and GMD members included the Turkish Revolution in the book prepared for their education proves that it profoundly affected the early communists.

### Cai Hesen's Writings on Türkiye

In the articles written in *The Guide*, Cai discussed workers’ movements and national movements in different countries (“Workers’ Movements in France”, “The Political Situation in England”, “The New Situation in the Greek Revolution”, “The Balkans and Bulgaria”, and “Türkiye’s War of Independence”) and the political situation in China (“Chinese Workers’ Movement Policy”, “The Situation of Peasants and Workers in China”, “Foreign Powers”, “The Middle Class and the GMD”, “Guangdong Peasants’ Movement”, “What is the GMD Left?”, and “Sun Yat Sen’s Death and the National Revolution”). He often wrote about international events such as the Lausanne Peace Conference in the 1920s (“The Question of Reparations and Imperialism”), especially the plans of the British and US imperialists (“Current Situation and Imperialism”, “New and Old Tactics of Imperialists Against China”, “Imperialism and Warlords”, and “To Suppress Revolutionary

Forces”). He commented on international events in his writing and gave a lot of space to the struggles against imperialism and imperialism in various countries.

Cai Hesen wrote four articles on Türkiye: “We Wish Victory to the Turkish Nationalist Party” (September 1922), “Türkiye and International Imperialism” (November 1922), “The Sole Supporter of the Turkish Nation at the Lausanne Conference” (December 1922), and “The Lausanne Conference and Türkiye” (December 1922). Cai closely examined the struggle against imperialism in Türkiye when the resistance against imperialism in China was on the rise. In particular, he considered the abolition of capitulations and full independence stance of Türkiye in the Lausanne negotiations important for China because its semi-colonial state since the Opium Wars brought the slogan of full political and economic independence to China’s revolutionaries.

Cai Hesen, in the last paragraph of his article titled “Unity, Debt and Guomindang” (Hesen, 1978: 64-69), written in September 1922 after the West Lake Conference, states that Türkiye achieved a revolutionary success in its war against imperialism. He emphasized that it should be introduced in China. He defined the essence of the struggle in China as the elimination of imperialism and feudalism. Although Cai mentioned Türkiye very briefly in this article, it is understood that the CPC leaders followed Türkiye closely, and Türkiye was discussed at the West Lake Conference. The example of Türkiye seems to have significantly impacted the establishment of a united front between the CPC and the GMD for the CPC leaders.



From the meeting of Sun Yat Sen (second from the left), Soviet Union's military advisor in China, Vasily Blyukher (first from the left, stayed in China from 1924 to 1927), and other Soviet advisors. (1924)

In his article titled “We Wish Victory to the Turkish Nationalist Party”<sup>11</sup> (Hesen, 1978: 81-85) in September 1922, he briefly summarized Türkiye’s process from the First World War to the War of Independence and stated that Türkiye’s victory was a hope for all oppressed nations. In his article, Cai also emphasized the similarity between the Guomindang and those led by Mustafa Kemal. In his article, he says: “How similar are the Chinese Nationalist Party (Guomindang) and the Turkish Nationalist Party, which have been fighting the imperialists in the Far East for the last 30 years, and how important this scene is for the oppressed nations! Look, our 400 million brothers, the oppressed Turks won a great victory against the imperialists! Their nationalist parties set them on the road to victory! While we envy them, we should also learn from them. Call on our party (Guomindang) to cooperate with Soviet

Russia against the imperialists oppressing China! (...) Long live the victory of the oppressed Türkiye!”

Cai emphasized that Türkiye’s victory was the most important historical event after the Russian Revolution and underlined that it set an example for millions of oppressed nations. In addition, Cai emphasized that his friendship with Soviet Russia had a great share in Türkiye’s success in the War of Independence against imperialism.

Cai’s inclusion of Türkiye in the first issues of *The Guide* and the joy of Türkiye’s success indicates the interest in the Turkish revolution. In his article written in October 1922, he emphasized that Sun Yat Sen and Mustafa Kemal were a part of the independence movement. In his article titled “Sino-German-Russian alliance,” he says: “Sun Yat Sen is a revolutionary of the Chinese national independence movement, just as

Mustafa Kemal was a revolutionary of the Turkish national independence movement, although he was not a communist or a 'radical' movement." (Hesen, 1978: 88-93).

Cai emphasized that just as Mustafa Kemal's policy was the only policy for Türkiye's independence, Sun Yat Sen's policy was the only policy suitable for China at that time. Referring to Sun Yat Sen's letter to Dianxin Bao (电信报), Cai stated that the alliance between Germany, Russia and China was based on an independent basis. Cai wrote, "Dr. Sun also believes that since the founding of Soviet Russia, one of the greatest historical threats to China's political independence and territorial integrity has been removed. While the labor and peasant government remain true to its 'non-imperialist' policies, Russia has nothing to fear from a democratic China." Cai continues: "Can China have equal status by crawling under imperialist Britain, the US, France and Japan, or can it achieve equal status by joining forces with non-imperialist Germany and Russia?"

### **"I wonder how we Chinese feel when we see the demands of the Ankara government?"**

In his article titled "Türkiye and International Imperialism" in November 1922, Hesen stated that the abolition of the sultanate, which had become an instrument of imperialism, dealt a blow to British imperialism. He stated that the US implemented an open-door policy against Türkiye to gain in the Lausanne Conference.

At the end of his article, Cai appreciated the determination of the Turkish side in the National Pact, Greece to pay compensation to Türkiye, the abolition of the capitulations, the redefinition of the Iraqi borders, Türkiye's demand for complete financial, political and economic independence, sovereignty over the straits and the nationalization of the railways. After writing Türkiye's demands, Cai ended his article with the following sentence; "I wonder how we Chinese feel when we see the demands of the Ankara government?" (Hesen, 1978: 112-113). Cai was inviting the Chinese to follow the path of the Turkish revolution.

In his article titled "The sole supporter of the Turkish Nation at the Lausanne Conference", written in December 1922, he stated that the Entente Powers opposed the participation of Soviet Russia in the Lausanne Conference because they aimed to intimidate Türkiye at the table. Cai Hesen stated that with the participation of Soviet Russia in the Lausanne Conference, the aggressive rhetoric of the imperialists increased, and the US and France displayed a hypocritical attitude by appearing in favor of Türkiye's independence. Cai underlined that Türkiye's only friend during the Lausanne talks was Soviet Russia. Cai ended his article: "All imperialist powers are cruel to suppress the Turkish national liberation movement. Thus, the only supporter of the Turkish nation at the Lausanne Conference was the socialist laborer Russia. Workers and peasants in Russia are strong defenders of the independence and freedom of the Turkish nation and Turkish sovereignty over the Straits." (Hesen, 1978: 128-129).

In Cai Hesen's article titled "Lausanne Conference and Türkiye" (Hesen, 1978: 139-149) in the same month, Türkiye's five conditions in the Lausanne Conference were evaluated: 1) the national borders of the Pact, 2) the compensation payment of Greece, 3) abolition of capitulations, 4) Iraq's border problem, and (5) Türkiye's demands for complete financial, political and economic independence. Cai Hesen ended his article by saying, "The diplomatic relations between Russia and Türkiye are very close, and the relations between Russia and Türkiye have not been shaken, even though the Western European powers have tried their best to wear them down. The future of the country is quite bright. This is the old policy and new tendency of the Mustafa Kemal government, which was deceived, oppressed and humiliated by international imperialism and the Lausanne Conference! It is the bright future of Türkiye's national liberation! As long as the Kemal government resists imperialism! Soviet Russia wants to help him!"

**Cai emphasizes that imperialism is the enemy of peace and oppressed nations all over the world.**

Cai, especially in these two articles, focused on the benefits of establishing a friendship with the Soviets for China. It seems that

he wrote this article to encourage the progressives within the CPC and the GMD to cooperate with the Soviets. Considering that cooperation talks were held between Sun Yat Sen and Soviet representatives during this period, Türkiye was a concrete example at that time.

In an article he wrote in January 1923, Cai emphasizes that imperialism is the enemy of peace and oppressed nations all over the world and that the world has entered the era of national revolutions: "The only way to save the peoples of the world, especially the workers, peasants and oppressed nations, from the terror of capitalist imperialist war is to advance together the revolution and the national revolution of the East. Attempt to bring about world revolution. Since the last imperialist world war, Russia's territory, constituting one-sixth of the world, has fallen outside the sphere of capital imperialism, and Soviet Russia has been consolidated in these five years. Revolutions (Türkiye, India, Egypt, Korea, and China) are also rising gradually, and Türkiye and India's national movements are on the way to victory and expansion day by day. This is the process of the collapse of the old world and the day-to-day birth of a new world. Therefore, the proletariat of Central Europe and the oppressed nations of the Near East are working hard to maintain and consolidate the German-Russian-Turkish alliance. All patriots in China should stand up and call for a Sino-Russian-German



alliance!” (Hesen, 1978: 156-164). In his article, Cai interprets the revolutionary wave in Türkiye as the rise of an oppressed nation in common with China. In particular, he stated in his article that the wave of national liberation had begun in the world. He argued that this revolutionary wave would lead to a new world order. Cai also tried to show the importance of being in the right alliance positions in foreign policy for the success of this revolutionary wave.

Cai Hesen, in his article titled “The Murder of the Russian Ambassador in Lausanne and the ‘Civilization’ of the Capitalist Countries”, written in May 1923, mentions that the murder of the Soviet ambassador was an imperialist conspiracy (Hesen, 1978: 213). Cai writes that the imperialist states acted barbarously under the name of civilization. He emphasized that the imperialist states were uncomfortable after the Soviets defended Türkiye’s rights during the Lausanne Conference, especially the British, French and Italian representatives.

Vorovski, Ambassador to Rome, represented the Soviet Union at the Lausanne Conference convened on April 23, 1923. Vorovski traveled from Rome to Lausanne and settled in the Cecile Hotel with his two secretaries. When the imperialists’ efforts to remove Vorovski from the Conference failed, an anti-Bolshevik hitman of Russian origin assassinated Vorovski on May 10, 1923. Cai wrote on this subject: “At the last Lausanne

meeting, the meeting fell apart when the Allies were unable to crush Türkiye as they wished, due to the participation of Soviet representatives. The Allies did not invite the Soviets to the meeting, but the Soviet Union sent its ambassador to Italy, Vorovski, to attend the meeting. That’s why the evil of the oppressed nations, the Entente imperialists, emerged through assassination. This vile, barbaric, illegal and savage trick is to express the ‘civilization’ of the capitalist powers!” (Hesen, 1978: 213). Cai tried to show that Western states resorted to various tactics to weaken Türkiye’s hand at the Lausanne Conference. In fact, in this article, Cai tried to emphasize that the civilization of the West has become barbaric by addressing the intellectual classes in China who see Western civilization.

Cai Hesen, in his article written in September 1923, mentioned Türkiye in two sentences in one paragraph. Cai wrote: “The Guomindang must ruthlessly resist British and all foreign imperialist aggression before Cao Wu overthrows Chen Jiongming’s warlords and rules China. How could Turkish Nationalists overthrow the Istanbul government (like the Chinese government in Beijing) and rule Türkiye without first resisting British and Greek aggression?” (Hesen, 1978: 244). It shows that the essence of the Turkish revolution was a successful war against imperialism and that this is an example for China.


The last article Cai mentions about Türkiye is “Sun Yat Sen’s Death and the National Revolution”, written after Sun Yat Sen’s death in 1925. In this article, Cai Hesen stated that it was necessary to discuss the Chinese revolution process after Sun Yat Sen’s death (Hesen, 1978: 364-373). He evaluated the Chinese revolution as a part of the world revolutionary movement, like Türkiye, Iran, India, Egypt and all other revolutionary movements. He says that the main purpose of the Chinese Revolution is to defeat imperialism and fight the warlords inside China. Cai emphasized that Sun Yat Sen symbolizes the Chinese nation’s struggle against imperialism and warlords. He underlined that after Sun Yat Sen’s death, the Chinese revolution could be achieved by striving to continue the policy of cooperation with the Soviets, such as the Turkish revolution, to ensure its success.

### Conclusion

In the early days of the CPC, Cai Hesen played an important role in determining the party’s theory and strategy. Despite his young age, Cai improved his knowledge of Marxism, Leninism, and imperialism. With his experience in theory and strategy, he served as the editor-in-chief of the CPC’s first publication, *The Guide*. Additionally, Cai’s theoretical background significantly impacted the ideas of the CPC’s early leadership. Remarkably, he included the Turkish revolution in 4 of his 134 articles in

*The Guide*. In addition, he briefly mentioned the Turkish Revolution in 6 of his articles.

Cai, a leading CPC cadre, was particularly interested in the Turkish Revolution and Türkiye. Cai’s interest in the Turkish revolution is based on the idea that Türkiye’s successful struggle against imperialism can set an example for China. It is evident from the analyses of the Turkish Revolution that the struggle against imperialism was emphasized. In all his related articles, he emphasized the importance of Turkish unity against imperialism on the domestic front and cooperation with the anti-imperialist forces abroad.

In his writings, Cai stressed that these two strategies were crucial to the success of the Turkish Revolution. As he explained, this strategy is the only path to achieving China’s independence and ensuring the revolution’s success. Consequently, the CPC formed a united front with the GMD and cooperated with the Soviets. Through his articles in *The Guide*, he attempted to influence the ideas of CPC and GMD leaders. In light of this, Cai recognized the similarity between Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s revolutionary cadres and the Guomintang. Therefore, when discussing Mustafa Kemal, he considered it a Turkish nationalist party and identified it with the Guomintang in China. Combining Türkiye’s success against imperialism with the strategy of forming a united front between the CPC and the GMD, it has also revealed a vital strategy for the Chinese revolution. 

## Notes

- 1- May 4 Movement (Chinese: 五四运动): Despite China's participation in the First World War, Germany's colony in Shangdong was given to Japan in the Treaty of Versailles, with the surrender of the Beiyang government (1912-1928). This situation drew the reaction of the Chinese youth, and more than 3,000 young people from Peking University and other universities protested the event with the slogans "Fight for full independence, get rid of the traitors inside", "Don't sign Versailles", and "China belongs to the Chinese" on May 4, 1919. This movement, which started with student demonstrations in Beijing, increased the nationalist and anti-imperialist wave. Since 1950, May 4 has been celebrated as a youth day in China..
- 2- Cai Hesen also used the name Cai Linbin.
- 3- He is the person Nazım Hikmet met and became friends at the Communist University for Laborers of the East in Russia and wrote the poem "Jokond ile Si-Ya-U" on his behalf.
- 4- Hunan First Normal School "Normal (师范)" universities in China are institutions that provide teacher education. It can also be translated as Hunan First Teacher's School.
- 5- Xiang Jingyu (1895-1928) was the only woman among the founding members of the CPC and the first woman elected to central committee. She was the wife of Cai Hesen.
- 6- More than 2,000 Chinese students protested on May 30 after a Chinese worker was killed at a Japanese factory in Shanghai on May 15, 1925. When the protests got out of control, the police in the international enclave opened fire on the students and many lost their lives. The protests turned into anti-imperialist and labor actions. Shanghai University also played an important role in the May 30 movement.
- 7- On the orders of Chiang Kai-shek, on April 12, 1927, more than a thousand CPC members were arrested, 300 people were executed, and more than 5,000 disappeared. This event is also known as the Shanghai Massacre.
- 8- The Comintern representative, Marin, is known to the Chinese as Ma Lin. Marin's real name is Henk Sneevliet, a Dutch communist.
- 9- On August 28-30, 1922, the Central Executive Committee Plenum at West Lake in Hangzhou is also known as the West Lake Conference.
- 10- Also known as Mao Dun, Shen Yanbing was the Minister of Culture of the People's Republic of China from 1949 to 1965.
- 11- In 1922, the Association for the Defense of Rights in Anatolia and Rumelia was conducting the War of Independence under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal. The People's Fırka was established on September 9, 1923, as a continuation of the Association for the Defense of Rights in Anatolia and Rumelia and the Group for the Defense of Rights in Anatolia and Rumelia in the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye. Mustafa Kemal, on the other hand, used the name "People's Fırka" for the first time on December 6, 1922. Cai Hesen named it the Turkish Nationalist Party in his article because it was fighting for independence under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal.

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# Nationalism within the Ummah A Discussion of Atatürk in the Works of Kazi Nazrul Islam



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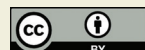
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## ABSTRACT

The Muslim rule in the Bengal Delta began with Turkish Ikhtiyār al-Dīn Muhammad Bakhtiyār Khaljī of the Ghūrid army of Afghanistan. The Ottoman Caliphate was established in today's Türkiye during the same century. The foundation-stone of warm relations between the Bengali Muslims and the Turks was laid then, and it remains intact after many ups and downs. When the Bengali Muslims agitated against the Colonialist British during the early 1920s, the independent and sovereign Ottoman Empire was considered the Guardian of Islam and became their source of inspiration. Consequently, when the Ottoman Empire was disbanded after the First World War, massive mobilizations intended to protect the Institution Of Khilafat spread over the Islamic world. This unique episode is recorded as the Khilafat Movement in history. However, after the Turkish hero Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (19 May 1881-10 November 1938) had disbanded the caliphate, the Khilafat Movement in the Former Mughal Empire ended. Like other Muslims worldwide, many Bengali Muslims failed to endorse Mustafa Kemal's reforms, which had been an issue of discussion and debate around the Muslim world due to disbanding of the 600 years-old Ottoman Empire. However, the situation changed when many Bengali Muslim intellectuals supported the Turkish hero. Kazi Nazrul Islam, the National Poet of Bangladesh, was the pioneer among those who supported Kemal Atatürk in Bengal. He, who declared a do-or-die revolt against the British colonial rule in the Former Mughal Empire, was mesmerized by Atatürk's heroism. This paper intends to study the factors behind Kazi Nazrul Islam's fascination with Atatürk.

**Keywords:** Mughal Empire, Bengal Muslims, Enver Pasha, Caliphate Movement, Mustafa Kemal.

KAZI NAZRUL ISLAM WAS JUST EIGHTEEN when he joined the British-Indian army. It was 1917, and the conflict between the two superpowers of the European continent, the British Empire and the German Empire, was near an end. The Ottoman Empire joined this war for their ally, the Germans. They fought against the British, French and Russian empires. Under this circumstance, a Muslim student in 10th grade from a remote country area of Bengal province of the former Mughal Empire

ignored the fear of death and signed his name. The British Empire put the Bengali Muslims fought against the Ottoman Empire, which was the Hope for All Muslims worldwide. The Ottoman side was successful in this war. They foiled the joint attack by the navies of Britain, New Zealand and Australia in the Dardanelles Strait, the entrance to the capital Istanbul. Mustafa Kemal, the future hero of the Turkish people, was the successful leader of this war. His reputation spread during that time.

# Kriegsbilder

Beilage der Linzer „Tages-Post“.

Verantwortlicher Schriftleiter für Oesterreich Dr. Richard Schubert in Linz.



The Victory of Kut Al-Amara, the arrival of Turkish Army reinforcements led by the sacred flag. 1916, war illustrations, design by Bruno Richert, Austrian State Library (Inaltekin, 2016).

On another battlefield, the Ottoman army captured the 8,000-strong British Army garrison in Kut, 160 km (100 mi) south of Baghdad, including the British commander Major General Charles Townshend. This battle is known as the Siege of Kut al-Amara (7 December 1915 – 29 April 1916), also

known as the First Battle of Kut. Following the surrender of the garrison on 29 April 1916, the survivors of the siege were marched to imprisonment at Aleppo. Historian Christopher Catherwood has called the siege “the worst defeat of the Allies in World War I” (Catherwood, 2014:51).



Ten months later, the British-Indian Army, consisting almost entirely of newly recruited troops from Western India, conquered Kut, Baghdad and other regions in between in the Fall of Baghdad.

**During the fall of Kut al-Amara, the British-Indian army was under strain due to a lack of manpower.**

During the fall of Kut al-Amara, the British-Indian army was under strain due to a lack of manpower. The British government used to recruit soldiers from Indian provinces. They had no plan to recruit soldiers from Bengal. Their excuses were, “Bengalis are not good warriors”, “They are not a martial or warlike race”, etc. After the First War of Independence of 1857-1858, this British suspicion of Bengali Muslims is thought to have grown. But after the defeats of the Brits in several battles, India’s pro-British leadership wanted Bengalis included in the forces of the British Empire. Finally, by 1916, the British government agreed to form a double company with Bengali troops.

### **Bangali Paltan**

At the beginning of the First World War (1914-1918), the Bengalis began to be recruited for the Indian Army. In the process, many non-combatant soldiers and skilled and unskilled laborers were also recruited from Bengal. Towards the middle

of 1916, the British Government decided to create a regiment of Bengali soldiers and its first unit was called the *Bengali Double Company or Bangali Paltan*. These Double Companies, each consisting of 228 soldiers, were made part of the Indian Army. On 7 August 1916, Governor of Bengal Lord Carmichael announced the formation of these companies at the concluding session of the Legislative Council in Dhaka (Huq, 2021).

### **Why Kazi Nazrul Islam Joined the Anti-Ottoman War**

The question is, why did the fiercest anti-British Kazi Nazrul Islam fight against Germany, i.e. Türkiye, for the Brits? One answer could be the high-profile propaganda campaign of the British government. Kazi Nazrul Islam’s friend Sailajananda Mukhopadhyay also went to be enlisted in the war. We can look at some words in his testimony. He wrote, “The effort to motivate the Bengali youth is going on continuously.” In his words, “...there are new posters in the town. Big posters of various colors are being pasted in the town’s alleys. How strange are the pictures, how strange are the postures, and how strange were their language! And how many strange words are being written!” Sailajananda also said: “Who says Bengalis are not warriors? Who says Bengalis are afraid? It is the duty of the nation to remove this disgrace, and only the youth of Bengal can do it. Jump for the lion’s share. Join Bangali Paltan! Damn it” (Mukhopadhyay, 1968:138).

Sailajananda Mukhopadhyay's statements reveal that Kazi Nazrul Islam and he had signed up together in the newly formed 49th Bengali platoon. But, according to Sailajananda's words, he became 'unfit' due to the 'plot' of his 'wealthy next of kin' meaning maternal grandfather, and 'Nazrul went at first to Nowshera, then to Karachi.' (Mukhopadhyay, 1968a:17).

And a little later, Sailajananda wrote, "I know the story of Nazrul's deepest pain in life. Mixed with that pain was the irrepressible love of adventure of youth. So, abandoning everything with a smile, he too jumped into this death sacrifice" (Mukhopadhyay, 1968b:153).

However, Sailajananda himself points out that the real reason for Nazrul Islam's going to war lies elsewhere. Sailajananda wrote:

"The English are at war with Germany. This is all we know at the time. None of us are happy with the English nor have the necessary devotion to the king. However, I asked Nazrul why we were going to fight for the English against its enemy Germany.

Nazrul said, 'Do you know that war is a science?

I said, 'I know!'

- 'We will learn that science.'

I said, 'They will push you towards death after enlistment.'

- 'Doesn't matter.'

- 'Then a shot from Germany, then finished'

- 'Will die? That's enough! Fighting and dying – great fun. I will die after killing.'

What a joy Nazrul had!" (Mukhopadhyay, 1968c:138).

Later, Sailajananda informed us, "Nazrul will learn warfare and form a large army in India, then drive the English out of the country - he told me about his secret intention one day"

(Mukhopadhyay, 1968d:139).

At that time, it should be noted that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was also touring Gujarat villages and towns, inviting the Indian public to join the British war. Gandhi became quite famous in India during this period. His Satyagraha<sup>1</sup> at Bihar's *Champaran* and Gujarat's *Khera* spread his fame abroad. However, he was still not awarded the title of *Mahatma*.

Gandhiji accepted it as part of his duty to recruit soldiers for the war on behalf of the British government. At first, he tried in Gujarat, then went to his workplace in Khera. Gandhiji wrote, "If I want soldiers, where else can I go without going to Khera? If I do not invite my own companions to be the first sepoys, then who will I invite?" (Gandhi, 1966:327-328).

### Russian Revolution vs. Ataturk's Revolution

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad, one of the founding members of the Communist Party of India and a close friend of Kazi Nazrul Islam wrote, "The truth is that the October Revolution and the Red Army's struggle in this Russia had resonated in Nazrul Islam's mind. So he deliberately made Baluchistan the scene of his stories because the borders of the Soviet land can be reached very easily from Baluchistan" (Ahmad, 1973:164).

But a retrospective review of Nazrul's literature indicates that he was more influenced by Kemal Atatürk's post-World War I Republican Revolution than he had been by the Russian Revolution. If the extent of this influence is explored, Muzaffar Ahmad also will be found to have been mistaken. Muzaffar



Khudiram Bose is one of the Bengali revolutionary leaders who fought against the British rule in India (Indian Culture, 2023).

did not deny that Kazi Nazrul Islam to *some extent* had adopted the ideals of Mustafa Kemal alias Kamal Pasha, the hero of the Turkish Republican Revolution. But he clearly objected to why Nazrul Islam went to drag Anwar Pasha in the poem 'Kamal Pasha' for no reason! For he knows that Anwar Pasha had little connection with the struggle for the restoration of Kemal Pasha's Turkish state, not the empire (Ahmad, 1973:314).

Kazi Nazrul Islam referenced *Anwar* in the poem *Kamal Pasha* because of his political philosophy. He considered Kemal Pasha the successor of the Young Turk Revolution of 1907. That is why he wanted Kemal Pasha and Anwar Pasha to work together for the sake of the Ummah. In this case, he is found to

be favoring the assimilation of Kemal Pasha's nationalism within the cosmopolitanism of the Ummah. This perception will become clearer in the analysis below.

### **Kazi Nazrul Islam's Political Objective Behind Joining the War**

There are intense disagreements over Kazi Nazrul Islam's political philosophy regarding nationalism and patriotism. Sushil Kumar Gupta's dispute with Muzaffar Ahmed is a special example of this connection. There are more points of contention too. In 1966, Abdul Qadir, the editor of *Nazrul Rachnabali Poet* (Works of Kazi Nazrul Islam) delivered some glimpses of this diversity:

“Different people have tried to ascertain the nature of Nazrul’s patriotism in different ways. He wanted the total liberation of the country and the nation from political subjugation plus economic independence. He also directed his way. Some people thought his way of those days as terrorism - because he called upon the youth to open fire by using the example of Khudiram’s<sup>2</sup> self-sacrifice; some thought it as Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Dash’s<sup>3</sup> regularism - because he penned ‘Chittanama’; Some thought it pan-Islamism - because he sang hymns of praise for Anwar Pasha; Others thought it as Mahatma Gandhi’s Spinning Wheel Theory<sup>4</sup> - because he entertained Gandhiji by singing his Spinning Wheel Song” (Qadir, 1966:5).

**This victory of the New Türkiye was hailed as the only victory in the post-war world against European colonialism.**

None of these varied paths was his way. Abdul Qadir said, “But if you look a little deeper, you will understand that none of these ideas help to reveal the full nature of the truth.”

He added, ‘In fact, Nazrul was a Kemalist during the first period of his literary life. He thought that the path of the Orderly Struggle of Kemal Atatürk was the most appropriate way to regain his country’s independence (Qadir, 1966:5-10).

In this case, the word ‘Kemalist’ may be questioned. Was Mustafa Kemal a trailblazer

of anything? After the end of the First World War in Europe, Mustafa Kemal’s number one achievement was to separate and protect the homeland of the Turkish nation from the rubble of the defeated Ottoman Empire. He defeated the Greek forces invading the Turkish homeland in frontal battles. Behind the Greek forces was the British Empire. Therefore, this victory of the New Türkiye was hailed as the only victory in the post-war world against European colonialism. A prominent writer in Bangladesh put it this way:

“When the pleas, cries, indignation, shouts and exultations of the Muslim world, especially of the Indian Muslims, were engaged in entertaining the assemblies of the world’s powerful with a mocking face, then one day in the thundering hand of Kemal there arose a perfectly sharpened sword in a corner of his native land. The curtain fell on the comforts and amusements of the mighty, and the Muslim world began to float aimlessly in a flood of wonder, admiration, and praise. The lively enthusiasm of our young poet that day was:

“Kamal Tu Ne Kamal Kiya Bhai”

(Kamal, you have achieved unbelievable success, brother!)

That was the innermost thing in all our hearts that day” (Odud, 1988:5-10).

During the August and September of 1921, the National Liberation Army, under the leadership of the New Turkish Government, succeeded in defeating and driving the occupying Greek forces away. As far as it is known, Kazi Nazrul Islam’s *Kamal Pasha* was composed during the same period. At that time, this poem was sung to tune in the



joyous procession taken out in Calcutta to mark the victory of the New Türkiye.

Nationalist historiography in Bangladesh and West Bengal portrayed Kazi Nazrul Islam as a non-conformist. Though he might have shared elements of this tendency on his part, his actions suggest that he placed his faith in Ottomanism, which was inherently Islamic in spirit. Moreover, his other hero Anwar Pasha also believed in Ottomanism.

To properly understand Kazi Nazrul Islam's actual position over two Western ideas like *Nationalism* and *Patriotism*, his views on the Mughal Empire and Panislamism must be comprehended within their proper contexts.

### Kazi Nazrul Islam on The Mughal Empire

A popular hymn of Kazi Nazrul Islam, published in 1933, laments for the Mughal Empire thus:

“O ye bro, the Agra and the Delhi,  
Still are there but no king.  
No Kohinoor<sup>5</sup>, no Peacock Throne,  
No world conqueror army is anymore” (Islam, 1933).

His regret over the non-existence of the Mughal Empire is expressed thus:

“We don't know, nobody knows,  
How many waves to count sitting on the shore,  
How much we have witnessed, also to bear witness to

So many Cruel Sports of the Destiny” (Islam, 1933).

This hymn begins with these words:

“Ganges-Indus-Narmada-Kaveri-Yamuna are there,

Still flowing out as before,

Where are the people of previous genre there?” (Islam, 1933)

### “Turan, Iran, Hejaz, Egypt, India, Morocco, Iraq, standing hand in hand at the same row”

The quotes above clearly show that Kazi Nazrul Islam considered the erstwhile Mughal Empire as a single economic, military and cultural power which was culturally Muslim. On the other hand, the India of 1947 was not formed as a successor state of the former Mughal Empire. Rather, it became a successor state of the British-Indian Empire. It’s based on Hindu identity politics, which is why Hindu Nationalism has grown stronger during the past decades.

Pakistan, which was formed after the breakup of the British-Indian Empire, also failed to become the cultural successor of the erstwhile Mughal Empire because of being ruled by the elites of the colonial era. However, there is state recognition and popular support for the Mughal legacies in Pakistan.

### Kazi Nazrul Islam and Pan-Islamism

Roughly by 1931, Türkiye, Iran, Egypt, Morocco, Iraq and Saudi Arabia turned into nation-states. By welcoming the developments

of this era, Kazi Nazrul Islam wrote:

“Look at the huge rally at the Eidgah of Martyrs today.

Islamic Orders would be passed once again around the world.

Turan, Iran, Hejaz, Egypt, Hind [India], Morocco, Iraq,

Standing hand in hand at the same row” (Islam, 1931).

Three points emerge from the quote:

1. The poet accepted the emergence of nation-states, which some may find seemingly at odds with his overt supportive position for the former Mughal Empire and the Ottoman Empire.

2. The poet wished the newly formed Muslim nation-states would maintain a singular position in world politics.

3. The poet expressed hope that those Muslim nation-states would set the promulgation of Islamic Laws worldwide as their national objective.

The third point shows Kazi Nazrul Islam as ideologically nearer to Anwar Pasha. In the second stanza of the same lyric, the poet went on saying:

“There were faint ones with fear and regret,  
You too join this congregation, forget worldliness.

Today, those who were in prison are alive.  
Today, the Brave Heart runs to the field with the sword in hand.

Today, the Fate has changed; the Echo of Takbir has risen” (Islam, 1931).

With these words, the poet penned his dream of avenging the military defeats of the Muslim world in the First World War. That is, Kazi Nazrul Islam ideologically was out-and-out a Pan-Islamist. But at the same time,

he endorsed the republican nationalism of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. He expected Atatürk would not compromise Islam's *Ottoman* philosophical and cultural legacies. It is evident in this lyric:

“The Red Torch of the Religion of Islam has been rekindled from side to side. O ye, the unaware one! You also wake up, light your life-lamp too. The Red Crown of Türkiye has waken up with Gazi Mustafa Kemal, Iran, the desolate country, has waken up today with Reza Pahlavi. Forgetting the slavery, the soulfoul Egyptians have waken up with Jaglul” (Islam, 1931a).

Needless to say that Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Iran's Reza Pahlavi and Egypt's Saad Jaglul Pasha were out-and-out nationalists, and Kazi Nazrul Islam, who simultaneously endorsed pan-Islamic ideas, regarded them as his heroes.

Was it a contradiction, or was there any hidden reason in depth? The reason is revealed in the last stanza of this lyric:

“Faisal is waking Up in the Great Iraq, waking up as the New Haroon-al-Rashid, Look at the Bayt al-Muqaddas waking up, waking up out of broken sleep. The 10 crore unwary Muslims of the Hind (India) alone remain unawakened” (Islam, 1931a).

The next stanza more can didly describes the condition of the Muslims in the then Colonised Hind:

“We only sleep like the Ashāb al-Kahf (Sleepers of Ephesus) for thousands of years, Once upon a time someone of us was a

king, we do boast of that.

If we do wake up, the world will tremble once again” (Islam, 1931a).

There are two points worth noting here:

1. Kazi Nazrul Islam wanted to awaken the 10 crore *Muslims of the Hind*. His country was Hind (erstwhile Mughal Empire), and in his view, the Muslims of latter-day India, Pakistan and Bangladesh together conformed to a single political community.

2. He used to cite examples of politically successful Muslim leaders to awaken the Muslims of the Colonized Hind, and in doing so, he bypassed controversies over their position on the application of the Shariah.


It is evident here that Kazi Nazrul Islam gradually began to plant the seeds of nationalism in the meadow of his own Ummah consciousness out of an extreme urge to oust the British colonialists from the Hind (erstwhile Mughal Empire). In this context, if Kazi Nazrul Islam's understanding of 'Islam' isn't considered, his ideas and vision of Pan-Islamism may be misconstrued. We, therefore, have to turn towards a brief elaboration of Islam as understood by Kazi Nazrul Islam.

### Islam and Kazi Nazrul Islam

It's worth noting that in the view of Kazi Nazrul Islam, the True Vitality of Islam was *mass power, democracy, universal brotherhood and egalitarianism*.

He saw Mustafa Kemal Atatürk not only as the national hero of the Pure New Türkiye but also as the 'new founder of the true vitality of Islam' or reformer. When Atatürk

disbanded the caliphate in the name of the Turkish Republic, Kazi Nazrul Islam asked in a letter to Ibrahim Khan, “Is the superstition and false garbage that has been piled up in the name of Islam - is not calling it Islam a campaign against Islam” (Khan, 1967)? In this awakening song, Kazi Nazrul Islam’s detailed understanding of Islam is concretely manifested:

“We are that nation who become the  
martyrs in the path of religion.  
We have let the world know that we brought  
equality and fraternity.  
We’ve become that nation.  
Those who brought out for the thirsty earth  
scorched by the sins,  
Brought out of the hot bosom of the desert  
the cool fountain of peace,  
Broke the difference between the high and  
the low by letting everyone get chest,  
We’ve become that nation.  
We’ve first endowed freedom to the women.  
We have smashed the man-made walls and  
given them the same form.  
We have brought down the veil of dark  
night and brought out the light of hope.  
We’ve become that nation.  
Islam hasn’t come for the Muslims alone.  
The one, who seeks the Truth and obeys  
Allah, is a Muslim by name.  
No difference between the Amir and the  
Faqr, all brothers are the same partners.  
We’ve become that nation” (Islam, 1933b).  
Here the poet candidly elaborated  
his issues, viz, the universal equality of  
humankind, economic classlessness,  
women’s rights and democracy. He had  
found all these factors in Atatürk’s programs  
of revolutionary reform. 

## Editor’s Notes

<sup>1</sup> Satyāgraha (Sanskrit: सत्याग्रह; satya: “truth”, āgraha: “insistence” or “holding firmly to”), or “holding firmly to truth”, or “truth force”, is a particular form of nonviolent resistance or civil resistance. Someone who practises satyagraha is a satyagrahi. (India Times. Love and Satyagraha. (2023, August 12). Access: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/the-speaking-tree/love-and-satyagraha/>)

<sup>2</sup> Khudiram was one of India’s youngest freedom fighters and in the early 1900s, it was the public speeches of Aurobindo Ghose and Sister Nivedita which prompted him to join the freedom struggle. It is said that in 1908, Khudiram joined the Anushilan Samiti, an early 20th-century revolutionary group that resorted to violent means to force the British out of India. (Indian Culture. Kudhiram Bose The Boy Revolutionary. 2023, 8 of August). Access: <https://indianculture.gov.in/node/2796633>)

<sup>3</sup> Chitta Ranjan Das, politician and leader of the Swaraj (Independence) Party in Bengal under British rule. (Britannica. Chitts Ranjan Das Indian Political Leader. (2023, 8 of August). Access: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Chitta-Ranjan-Das>)

<sup>4</sup> The Gandhian philosophy of spinning-wheel. As an inward spirit, the spinning-wheel, as Mahatma Gandhi introspects, epitomizes man as a divine being. As an outward spirit, it emphasizes self-help, self-service, self-contentment, and austerity. The dream of the spinning-wheel, as he visualizes, is the dream of a better emancipation of man as an individual and social being. (Narayanswami, S. (2000). The Gandhian philosophy of spinning-wheel. Gandhi Marg Journal, 22(3). Access: <https://www.mkgandhi.org/articles/Philo%20of%20spng%20wheel.htm>)



<sup>5</sup> The Koh-i-Noor diamond (also Koh-i-Nur or Kūh-e Nūr) is one of the largest and most famous cut diamonds in the world. It was most likely found in southern India between 1100 and 1300. The name of the stone is Persian meaning 'Mountain of Light'. The British East India Company was the owner of the diamond when it took over the Punjab region in 1849. (World History Encyclopedia. Koh-i-Noor. (2023, 8 of August). Access: <https://www.worldhistory.org/Koh-i-Noor/>)

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Japanese Turkish History Expert  
**Assoc. Prof. Ogasawara Hiroyuki**

**"The Turkish national struggle  
inspires the Japanese as well"**



*Assoc. Prof. Ogasawara Hiroyuki was born in Hokkaido in 1974. He graduated from Aoyama Gakuin University, the Faculty of Letters, in the Department of History. In 2008, he completed his doctorate at the University of Tokyo, the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences. His works have been granted awards, such as the Japan Singular Research Society Award and the Kashiwama Junzo Award. He currently serves at the Institute of Humanities at Kyushu University and is a member of the Board of the Islamic Association of Japan.*

**“After completing my doctoral thesis, I began research on historical writing starting from the Ottoman Empire’s modern period up to the beginning period of the Republic of Türkiye. After researching Ahmet Mithat and Namik Kemal’s thoughts on history and the education of history in the Modern Ottoman Empire after the Tanzimat period, I became interested in the history textbooks written in the first period of the Republic of Türkiye. While a new state named the Republic of Türkiye was being established, an attempt was made to create a new historical narrative to give the nation a new identity. The biography of Atatürk I have written is planned to be published in October 2023, on the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye. Türkiye was in such geographical conditions that it had greater exposure to the intervention of the US and major European states. Ataturk and his comrades overcame all these difficulties and established the Republic of Türkiye. The national struggle process gives the Japanese great courage and hope, too.”**

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**Japanese Modern Turkish History Expert Assoc. Prof. Ogasawara Hiroyuki answered the questions of Inan Öner.<sup>1</sup>**

*You have been working on a biography of Atatürk. What issues have your interests focused on? What difficulties are there? When will it be published?*

**Ogasawara Hiroyuki:** In 2019, as an editor, I published a book about the national formation of the Republic of Türkiye. (Ed. Ogasawara Hiroyuki “The Formation and Transformation of the Nation of the Republic of Türkiye”, Kyushu University Press, 2019). In this book, we discussed history, archeology, music, and similar cultural policies in the first years of the Republic of Türkiye, and we have included articles on broad themes from Atatürk’s funeral to international relations. Ten young

and successful researchers contributed their articles.

Again, in 2020, with the editorship of Prof. Arai Masami and with the translation of Prof. Kakizaki Masaki, M.Şükrü Hanioglu’s book called “Ataturk: An Intellectual Biography”, which discusses the intellectual development of Atatürk in detail, was published in Japanese. (Japanese title: “The Turkish Revolution in Terms of the Civilization History: Atatürk’s Intellectual Development”). In this regard, the Japanese reader can now read about the intellectual development of Atatürk and the formation of the nation in Atatürk’s period in Japanese.

Therefore, while writing Atatürk's biography, I focused on these themes. I discussed Atatürk's development in his youth, his activities as a soldier, and his leadership in the national struggle. I also included the activities of Atatürk's comrades, particularly İsmet İnönü, Ali Fuat Cebesoy, and Kazım Karabekir, and their relationship with Atatürk. I touched on his life with his wife and with the daughters he adopted. I think the memories of Halide Edip especially are important to evaluate Atatürk objectively. As known, she published "The Turkish Ordeal" in English right after Atatürk held power. She had clearly outlined her thoughts about Atatürk. I also benefited from this work.

The biography of Atatürk I have written is planned to be published in October 2023, on the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye.

### The Universality of Atatürk's Thoughts and Actions

*Regarding Atatürk's thoughts and the universality of his actions, we would be pleased if you share your ideas on the lessons we can take from Atatürk and the establishment process of the Republic of Türkiye.*

**Ogasawara Hiroyuki:** Japan aimed to establish a modern state after the Meiji Reforms. Japan is a land of islands, and I think it faces less difficulty as it is geographically distant from the US and the major European states. On the other hand, Türkiye was in such geographical conditions that it was more exposed to the intervention of the US and the major European states. Atatürk and his comrades overcame all these difficulties and founded the

Republic of Türkiye. The national struggle process gives the Japanese great courage and hope, too.

*Together with your colleagues, you translated Yusuf Akçura's "Three Styles of Politics" into Japanese. What are your thoughts?*

**Ogasawara Hiroyuki:** Together with my Japanese colleagues, we translated not only Yusuf Akçura's "Three Styles of Politics" but also the preface of Namik Kemal's "Ottoman History" and Ziya Gökalp's "Turkification, Islamization, Becoming Contemporary" into Japanese. Japan is a major translation country. Many works of Western thinkers and historians have been translated into Japanese. However, we do not often see translations of the works written in the Ottoman Empire. Because of that, I thought that the major works should be translated into Japanese and presented to Japanese readers and young researchers. We translated Yusuf Akçura, Namik Kemal, and Ziya Gökalp because we are interested in their thoughts about Turkism and history.

Prof. Akiba Jun (Tokyo University) and Prof. Ito Hiroaki (Teikyo University), whose areas of specialization were close to the publication of those translations, also participated in the projects as translators. Also, besides me, we see that Dursun Bey's "Târîh-i Ebû'l-Feth / The History of the Father of Conquest" has been translated into Japanese by Hamada Masami (Ryukoku University) in recent years. The historical documents of The Ottoman Empire are now being translated in Japan, too. Through these activities, we hope that the research on the history of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Türkiye will increase in Japan.



Ogasawara Hiroyuki The Republic of Türkiye: Creation of the Nation and its Change.

***When and why did you start studying Ottoman History? We would appreciate it if you could inform us about the historicity of your academic interests.***

**Ogasawara Hiroyuki:** I've loved history since I was a kid. I was particularly interested in foreign countries' history rather than Japan's. This may also be related to my hometown Hokkaido (the island located in the northernmost part of Japan and became a part of Japan in the 19th century).

I did not feel close to the history of Japan as there was no archaeological site or architectural work in Hokkaido related to the central history of Japan. (But of course, I also love Japanese History.)

On the contrary, I found the histories of other countries I read in the books interesting. In my high school years, while I was thinking of entering the history department, I read the book "The Ottoman Empire - 'Soft Authority of the Islamic World'" (Kodansha Publishing, 1992), written by Prof. Suzuki Tadashi (Tokyo University).

This book by Prof. Suzuki dealt with the history from the foundation of the Ottoman Empire to the reign of Suleiman the First. He put forward the thesis that the Ottoman Empire had a superior political and military system compared to Europe at that period. Again, he argued that after the 17th century, there was never a period of weakening but a period of structural changes responding to the new age.

The history of the Ottoman Empire, pointed out by Prof. Suzuki, greatly impacted me as a high school student. The history of the Ottoman Empire written there was very attractive, and I started to want to study the history of the Ottoman Empire by being attracted to that charm.

### The historical narrative of the Republic of Türkiye and the nation-state/national identity construction

*In recent years, you have also been working on the history of the Turkish Republic. What motivated you? What are your impressions?*

**Ogasawara Hiroyuki:** I have always been interested in historical consciousness and historiography. For this reason, in my master's thesis, I discussed the institution of chronology established in the 18th century and the history books written by them. In general, it is said that the chronicling began with Naima Mustafa Efendi. However, as a result of my research, I learned that the chronicling began with Raşit Mehmet Efendi, who is generally considered to be the second generation, and I also learned that there is a possibility that it may even have started in the middle of his duty. (As an English article, I can recommend my following article: Hiroyuki Ogasawara, "The Official Historiographers in the

Ottoman Empire: The Formation Process and Their Ideas", Orient (The Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan), 2007).

Also, in my doctoral thesis, I researched the family tree narrated to the Ottoman Dynasty in the history books of the 15th and 16th centuries. I revealed how people in the Ottoman Empire comprehended their origins, identities, and historical consciousness. In my research, I discussed what importance is attached to the Kayı tribe as the ancestors of the dynasty, how the Ottoman Dynasty family tree, which is connected to the characters in the Old Testament such as Noah and Yafes, underwent a transformation, and how the family tree relations with the Seljuk Dynasty and the Mongols were.

My doctoral thesis was later published as a book in Japanese, and I have published some parts of it as articles in English. (Hiroyuki Ogasawara, "Enter the Mongols: A Study of the Ottoman Historiography in the 15th and 16th Centuries," Osmanlı Araştırmaları, 51(2018); Hiroyuki Ogasawara, "The Quest for the Biblical Ancestors: The Legitimacy and Identity of the Ottoman Dynasty in the Fifteenth-Sixteenth Centuries," Turcica, 48 (2017).) I want to publish my doctoral thesis as a whole in English and Turkish, but I haven't been able to fulfill this wish yet.

After finishing my doctoral thesis, I started researching the historiography from the modern period of the Ottoman Empire up to the beginning of the Turkish Republic. After researching Ahmet Mithat and Namık Kemal's thoughts on history and history education in the modern Ottoman Empire after the Tanzimat period, I became interested in the history textbooks written in the first period of the Turkish Republic. As you know, while a new state was being established under the name of the Republic of Türkiye, an attempt was made to create a new historical narrative to give the nation a new

identity. Such attempts have been conducted in Japan and some other countries.

Therefore, I thought, ‘Thinking about history education in Türkiye sets an important example when thinking about history education in Japan, too.’ I published an article in the book called ‘The Comparative History of History Education’ (Ed. Kondo Takahiro, Nagoya University Press) in Japanese in 2020. It is about the efforts of the Turks to learn their history through writing, starting from the last period of the Ottoman Empire up to the Republic of Türkiye.

*You mentioned that you are interested in “history writing”. What problems have you faced in “history writing” on Turkish history in Japan?*

**Ogasawara Hiroyuki:** Among the history books and history textbooks read in Japan, the history of Japan takes place in the center. In addition, it can be said that Japan followed the history of the West, which Japan took as a model for modernization, and the history of China, under the influence of which for many years. The history of Türkiye and the Ottoman Empire was hardly read. In the last 30 years, significant improvements have been achieved in this situation through the valuable efforts of our Profs Suzuki Tadashi and Nagata Yuzo. Especially this year (2023), Prof. Nagata Yuzo’s two-volume book titled “Turkish History” was published by Tosui Shobo Publications.

However, despite these efforts, the history of the West and the history of China has a dominant share in the history of Japan. Although very important, we cannot say that the history of the Ottoman Empire is read enough. For this reason, we still encounter a lot of misconceptions, such as that the Ottoman Empire was a backward state

compared to the West. For this, I wrote a concise Ottoman History book for the general reader to help Japanese readers become more familiar with the history of the Ottoman Empire. (“The Ottoman Empire – A 600-Year History of Rise and Dissolution”, Chuo Koron Publications, 2018). This book attracted attention and has sold 50,000 copies over six editions. Again, for the general reader, I published “The Lives of Heroes of the Ottoman Empire – Sultans, Artists, and Women Who Kept 600 Years of History Standing” (Gentosha). It is a book of biographies in which I dealt with the heroes of the Ottoman Empire, such as Hürrem Sultan, Mimar Sinan, Mehmet the Second, and Osman Hamdi Bey. The second book I published is “Harem” (Shinchosha, 2022), in which I dealt with the transfer of the harem and sultanate based on the latest research. However, these publications are books written to explain the history of the Ottoman Empire clearly to Japanese readers, and they are based on existing research in English and Turkish. They do not contain my original research results.

To conclude, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to your periodical’s editorial team and İnan Öner, who conducted and translated the interview. 🌸

### Note

<sup>1</sup> (July 1, 2023, at Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan)

İnan Öner was born in Berlin in 1974. He graduated from Ankara University, the Faculty of Language and History-Geography, the Department of Japanese Language and Literature. He completed his master’s degree at Tokyo University, the Institute of Arts and Sciences, in the Department of Language and Information Sciences in 2001. Öner interviewed Ogasawara Hiroyuki in Japanese and translated it into Turkish.

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## MEVLÂNÂ CELÂLEDDİN RÛMÎ\*

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*\*Great sage, great poet Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi was born on September 30, 1207, in the city of Balkh in Afghanistan, and he passed away on December 17, 1273, in Konya, Türkiye. Apart from his masterpiece "Masnavi" consisting of 25,618 couplets, he presented "Divan-i Kebir" containing nearly 25,000 couplets to humanity. Mevlana, who influenced the intellectual world of his time and also subsequent Turkish, Persian, Arab poets, and thinkers, was cherished in both the East and the West. The Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye declared 2023 as the International Year of Mevlana to commemorate the 750th anniversary of his passing. Mevlana's famous 7 pieces of advice exemplify his wisdom rooted in Asian civilization: Be as generous and helpful as a flowing river. Shine with compassion and mercy like the sun. Be as covering of others' faults as the night. Be as lifeless as the dead in anger and irritability. Be as humble as the earth in modesty and humility. Be as tolerant as the sea in tolerance. Either appear as you are or be as you appear.*

Rûmî, M.C. (2011). The Mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi. (Vol. 5). (R. A. Nicholson Trans.). (p.350-351, 3675-3685). University of Cambridge.



## GUEST

Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî

3675 Every day, too, at every moment a different thought comes, like an honoured guest, into thy bosom.

3676 O (dear) soul, regard thought as a person, since every person derives his worth from thought and spirit.

3677 If the thought of sorrow is waylaying joy, (don't worry) it is making preparations for joy.

3678 It violently sweeps thy house clear of (all) else, in order that new joy from the source of good may enter in.

3679 It scatters the yellow leaves from the bough of the heart, in order that incessant green leaves may grow.

3680 It uproots the old joy, in order that new delight may march in from the Beyond.

3681 Sorrow pulls up the crooked rotten (root), in order that it may disclose the root that is veiled from sight.

3682 Whatsoever (things) sorrow may cause to be shed from the heart or may take away (from it), assuredly it

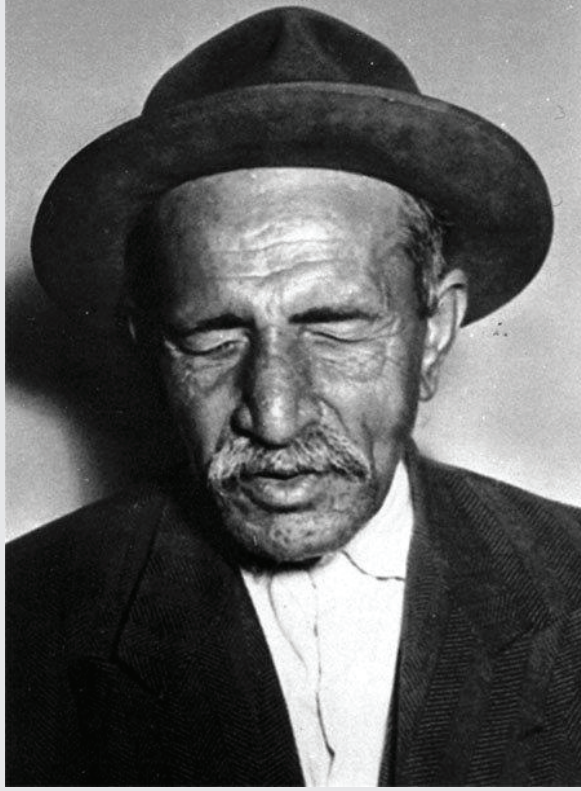
will bring better in exchange,

3683 Especially for him who knows with certainty that sorrow is the servant of the possessors of certainty.

3684 Unless the clouds and the lightning show a frowning aspect, the vines will be burnt by the smiles of the sun.

3685 Good and ill fortune become guests in thy heart: like the star (planet), they go from house to house.

## AŞIK VEYSEL\*



*\*Türkiye's great folk poet Aşık Veysel was born in 1894 as a farmer's child in the village of Sivrialan, in the Şarkışla district of Sivas. He died in his own village in 1973. The great poet lost his sight after contracting smallpox at the age of seven. The great saz poet Aşık Veysel, who matured over time, started to produce works with his fighting and socialist spirit, connected to the Turkish Revolution. He became famous with his poem "Atatürk is Türkiye's Resurrection" written in the 10th anniversary of the Republic. Veysel, who sang his works in the presence of Turkish Revolutionary Leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, processed the idea of unity and solidarity of humanity from tradition to the future with his immortal works produced one after another. The Presidency of Türkiye and UNESCO declared 2023 the World Year of Aşık Veysel, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his death.*

Artun, E. (2009). Aşıklık Geleneği ve Aşık Edebiyatı (p.367). Cağaloğlu, İstanbul: Kitabevi Publishing House.

## IF THIS LOVE DID NOT EXIST\*

Aşık Veysel

Your beauty wouldn't be worth a penny  
if my love for You did not exist.  
Never would I found a place of rest  
if this throne in my soul did not exist.

If I wrote my troubles out, I'd run out of ink.  
My love for you is the only cure.  
Your name would never had spread so far  
if love in lovers' hearts did not exist.

For one person to read, another must write.  
Who among us can untie this knot?  
The lamb might even befriend the wolf  
if opposite purposes did not exist

Your beautiful face would not be seen,  
This love would never take shape in my breast,  
The rose would have no special place  
if love and the lover did not exist.

I received this suffering from Your hand.  
It turns out to be taste of the world.  
Veysel's name wouldn't be remembered  
if this love for You did not exist

## POEM

### HÜSEYİN HAYDAR\*



*\*The master poet of Turkish language, Hüseyin Haydar, was born in the village of Yeşilce in Trabzon in 1956. His poems express the societal struggles of the era we live in, and his famous works have been translated into world languages such as Russian, Arabic, Persian, English, and Chinese. He has authored numerous articles on literature and art in national and international media. For fifteen years, he has been publishing his poems every week in the "Şairin Emeği" column of the Aydınlık Newspaper. With his work titled "Doğu Tabletleri" (Eastern Tablets), he expressed the human tragedy unfolding in Eurasia with intense historical depth. He stood against the attacks of U.S. imperialism on humanity. During his participation in meetings in China, he made efforts to establish the cultural, artistic, and poetic aspects of the "Belt and Road Initiative." His proposal for the establishment of Silk Road Poetry Unions in Eurasia was accepted during his visit to the Shanghai Writers' Association. Hüseyin Haydar, a recipient of numerous awards, has issued manifestos calling upon poets with a fighting spirit, such as "Manifesto to the Great Poets of Humanity", "The Duty of the Poet in Rising Asia", "Establishing the Silk Road Poetry Union", "Call to the Boundless Art Union", and more.*

Haydar, H. (2016, November 5). Doksan Dokuzuncu Tablet, Ata. *Aydınlık Newspaper*.



Atif: How to cite: Haydar, H. (2023). Eastern tablets Ninety-Ninth Tablet, Ata. *BRIQ Belt & Road Initiative Quarterly*, 4(4), 90-91.

# EASTERN TABLETS

## Ninety-Ninth Tablet, Ata<sup>1</sup>

Hüseyin Haydar

Not from the light of the universe, but it rose from  
the fire of the earth,  
Came to the world to work, just like a poor peasant  
who goes to his field to toil.  
Not by divine order, but just like how an easterly  
wind turns into a hurricane  
So much it bewilders the Great Powers with “either  
Independence or Death” ballad.  
It is not the holy spirit of Gökborü<sup>2</sup>, but a grey wolf  
from birth,  
Like the obligatory resurrection of the day, reaches  
the sky army.  
When he came, there was neither a free tree nor a  
brother forest,  
Which created a rose garden from seventy-two  
species of steppe bushes.  
To the soldier in the serge calpac, firstly he placed the  
serge calpac with his hands,  
Awakened his ability in him to die and kill.  
The wise son of proud men coming from the sky, was  
born in the catastrophe,  
Learned at the war loom, how to weave the soul cloth.  
Without knowing how and when he would come,  
with a whole heart,  
The man in the serge calpac who believed in beautiful  
and peaceful days,  
After the blond wolf who knew when and how he  
would come,  
Jumped into the world's brightest, the most  
tremendous darkness.  
The fate of plowed land and cities changed at a dawn  
time:  
As many as ants on the ground, fish in the water,  
birds in the sky,  
Coward, brave, illiterate, dominant and even  
childlike...

At a dawn time when he put his heavy hands on the  
ground and stood up,  
He saw Ata grabbing his arms and lifting him, there  
he roared.  
He had fear, he took away his fear, he had a poison,  
he sucked his poison,  
He gave him the ardent desire, put him on a  
swarthymare,  
Coming from far Asia at full gallop, its mouth foamy  
with fiery red blood.  
Is this the rebellion of science or the art of rebellion?  
Will sew a set of satin clothes to the ragamuffin, the  
auspicious man,  
Laid the century on the tailor's table, he is cutting it  
out like fabric:  
The mind is free, the arms are competent, the  
revolution is fully seated on the body,  
In red blood met the star of salvation with the golden  
crescent.  
The soul is passionate, the desire is winged, the world  
is more than enough for everyone.  
Comrades, we are Turkish organizers of that mighty  
victory,  
Enslaved peoples are learning to stand up and walk.  
In rising Asia, we will run side by side, from era to  
era,  
The East will triumph and share its victory with the  
West.  
In order for the sun of revolution that is equidistant  
from everyone to shine,  
Let humanity rise from the national militia to the  
universal power.  
That's how great leaders are, they move swiftly, once  
the task is done,  
They leave without even tasting a single day of the  
thousand years they have given.

<sup>1</sup> In Turkish, the term “Ata” (meaning “ancestor”) is also used to refer to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

<sup>2</sup> In Turkish mythology, Gökborü is a sacred wolf that has been believed to be a leading guide.

## RGALI - 29 SEPTEMBER 1933



Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Republic.\*

*During the parade held for the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Republic, Turkish state officials, including Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, in the stands. Also, from the delegation of the USSR, the People's Commissar for Military and Navy Affairs K. Y. Voroshilov and Semyon Budyonny, the commander of the Red Army's cavalry and a member of the The Revolutionary Military Council, are seen.*

\* [Photograph]. (1933). The 10th anniversary celebrations of the Republic. Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI).

## AVNI ARBAS



Mustafa Kemal on the horse. (1988)\*

*Avni Arbas, whose father was one of the officers of the National Forces, saw the War of Independence and the establishment of the Republic. National Forces horses and Mustafa Kemal whom he saw in his childhood, occupy a special place in Arbas's paintings. In the works of Arbas, who was attentive not to adhere to any movement throughout his artistic life, we see that abstractions that are deftly detached from the figure and purified from details come to the fore. While being stick by the subject, it would not be wrong to say that Arbas is a master at objectifying an original narrative.*

\*Oil on canvas 72x54 cm.

## KROKODİL - 3 DECEMBER 1922



The dethroning of the sultan by the decision of the  
Grand National Assembly of Türkiye.\*

*The most important weekly humor-cartoon magazine of the USSR, "Krokodil," which began its publication in 1922 and at one point reached a circulation of up to 6.5 million, frequently featured developments in Türkiye in its pages. This cartoon was published in the issue dated December 3, 1922. It depicts the decision to dethrone the sultan seated on a throne labeled "Babı Ali," with the crescent and star bearing the inscription "TBMM" (Grand National Assembly of Türkiye) above it.*

\* Krokodil, 3 December 1922.



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