

US DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENTS ON TURKEY  
IV

**NEW DOCUMENTS ON ATATÜRK**

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**ATATÜRK AS VIEWED THROUGH  
THE EYES OF AMERICAN  
DIPLOMATS**

**RIFAT N. BALI**

**2008**

**SA**

**2630**

**THE ISIS PRESS  
ISTANBUL**









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Foreword by Andrew Mango

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Born in 1948 in İstanbul. Graduate of Sorbonne University Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. Author of numerous articles, editor of several books. His areas of studies are: History of the Jews of Turkey in the Republican period, lobbying activities of the Turkish, Jewish, Israeli and Armenian non governmental organizations, Turkish media. He is the author of the following books:

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	: aide de camp
AKP	: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
Ed	: editor
Eds	: editors
EU	: European Union
H.E	: His Excellency
H.H	: His Highness
H.M	: His Majesty
H.R.H.	: His Royal Highness
Ltqs.	: Livres Turques (Turkish Liras)
MP	: Member of Parliament
NARA	: National Archives and Records Administration
p./pp.	: page/pages
UN	: United Nations
UNODC	: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USSR	: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics







## FOREWORD

Historians of modern Turkey and indeed anyone wishing to understand the present condition of that important and attractive country owe a debt of gratitude to Rifat Bali for his tireless researches into archives and newspaper files. His numerous publications have focused largely on the experience of the Jewish community in Turkey, which he has examined with commendable candour. But he has also given us a delightful and well-documented account of changing life styles in Istanbul, and he has ventured abroad to trace the experiences of migrants of various ethnic origins who had left Turkey in search of a better life in America. Rifat Bali has now added to his researches in the United States with this collection of American archival material bearing on the life of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founding father of the Turkish Republic and pre-eminent Turkish national hero.

The lives of great men are subject to constant re-evaluation as changing circumstances raise questions about their legacy. What we think of Atatürk will depend inevitably on what we think of the Turkey he has shaped. But even if it is the present which determines our view of the past, we need new facts and witnesses to support our changing judgments. I have no doubt, therefore, that the material mined by Rifat Bali will be put to use, which is bound to be sometimes contentious. Bali has presented the historian and the political commentator with new sources. It is up to us to question them before we use them. As I read the accounts of American witnesses to Atatürk's life what struck me was that they tell us as much about their authors as they do about Atatürk. The American Consul General Charles Allen is supercilious, as he dismisses comparisons with George Washington and suggests one instead with the rise of parvenus in the American South after the Civil War. The fact that Ambassador Charles Sherrill gained an entry by raising the hope that he would write a favourable biography of Atatürk on the lines of an earlier biography in which he had compared Mussolini with Bismarck predisposes the reader against him. A convinced Protestant Christian, Sherrill is happy to learn that Atatürk values the ethical teaching of the three great monotheistic religions – soothing words which give nothing away and could be used indifferently by deist and agnostics. Ambassador Joseph Grew is more detached, as he wonders whether Atatürk would become more accommodating towards religious sentiment. The chargé d'affaires G. Howland Shaw is the most appreciative. What I found interesting about his report was that three years before Atatürk's death in 1938, he found that the President's judgment had not been clouded by his excessive drinking and



remained perspicacious on important matters. The German American archaeologist von der Osten is anxious to secure Atatürk's support for his work, but not at any cost – not at the cost, for example, of criticism of his beloved Kaiser Wilhelm. In some cases, the authors cited by Rifat Bali were ill-informed. Lothrop Stoddard was mistaken in asserting that Latife Hanım had been arrested by the Greeks and threatened with court-martial. Nor did Latife Hanım take the initiative in leaving Ankara in August 1925 – her departure was arranged by Mustafa Kemal.

Similarly the importance of some reports is in the light that they throw on official attitudes. The cutting – and ill-informed – remarks of American popular journalists when Atatürk died worried the State Department more than they did the Turkish government. The care taken by the US Embassy in Ankara not to overspend on a wreath for Atatürk's funeral is a good illustration of democratic accountability: the representatives of dictators were much less concerned with the expense.

Then there are sources which are not trustworthy at all. We come across them in profusion in Rifat Bali's chapter on Atatürk and his women. The letter which appeared in a Boston newspaper in 1926 over the signature of Atatürk's divorced wife Lâtife Hanım strikes me as an obvious forgery. One cannot conceive of any Turk, let alone of a person as patriotic as Lâtife, speaking about a "group of young, hysterical, empty-headed Turks" surrounding Atatürk. The passage about the evil influence of "that gifted woman whom we both of us know", who is "a veritable female Mussolini", must refer to the gifted writer and feminist Halide Edip, and must have been penned by someone who did not know that Mustafa Kemal and Halide Edip had fallen out by 1926. Moreover we know that while Lâtife blamed Mustafa Kemal's boon companions for the divorce, to the best of my knowledge she never included Halide Edip in her criticism. There is hardly any need to stress that the British writer Harold Armstrong relied on poisonous gossip in his biography *Grey Wolf*, and that the ever-beautiful Zsa Zsa Gábor – or rather her ghost-writer – was a fantasist. What will strike most readers is that in the inter-war years, even the best-intentioned writers were touched by racist stereotypes of Oriental men. Pretty well all the writers quoted by Rifat Bali were politically incorrect by today's standards, some egregiously so.

Accusations that Mustafa Kemal led a debauched life began to circulate as soon as his rise came to threaten domestic and foreign adversaries. Of course, he never made a secret of his drinking, nor of his fondness for female company. It was also an open secret that on a number of occasions he was seen nuzzling his female companions in public. But the careful biographer will note that after showing affection to his lady friends, Mustafa Kemal did



not hurry to take them to his bedroom. This, of course, did not prevent prudent husbands from making sure that their wives – and in the case of a French ambassador their daughters too – were kept out of the way when Atatürk began to enjoy himself. Embarrassment was not confined to the ladies. Bali's American documents include an account of the well-known hilarious incident when the President removed the fez of the Egyptian ambassador, and of the efforts which were then made to resolve a major diplomatic row. All in all, there is much in this collection of American documents to enlighten and to entertain the reader. But while I commend Rifat Bali for producing new evidence I urge the reader to subject it to critical scrutiny.

Andrew Mango

London, March 2006.







## PREFACE

The present volume is the fourth of a series concerning documents compiled from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) of Maryland on various themes relevant to the social and political history of the Republic of Turkey. The present volume consists of two separate parts. The first part comprises six articles of mine. Three of them are making an exhaustive use of documents from the American National Archives and Records Administration concerning (a) the reaction of the State Department to certain articles from American publications which appeared in 1938 some months prior to Atatürk's death and which were highly critical of him, (b) the State Department's evaluation as to whether or not United States representation at Atatürk's funeral was at the level expected from a great power like USA and (c) how the Turkish government came to the decision in December 1932 to take measures against the country's illicit drug traffic. Atatürk's private life and his views on religion have been one of the most controversial and sensitive subjects in the history of modern Turkey. A recent example of the continued sensitivity surrounding the debate on this subject was the 2005 debate on whether or not to open to the public the private papers of Latife Hanım, the ex-wife of Atatürk. The debate concluded with the family's decision to postpone the opening of the papers to public access. I had also a similar experience when I published a Turkish translation of Ambassador's Charles Sherrill's report on Atatürk's views on religion which is published in this book in the well known journal *Toplumsal Tarih* published by the History Foundation (Tarih Vakfı). My article entitled "The Turkish Press Reaction to Ambassador Charles H. Sherrill's Report On Atatürk's Views On Religion" narrates the reactions to this translation before and after its publication.

The second part of the book comprises selected documents from the American National Archives. These new documents shed light on some aspects of Atatürk's life and personality which have yet to be studied in detail. The documents have been annotated in order to facilitate the reader's comprehension of names and/or events which at first glance are not self-explicit or to provide more background information on the subject treated in the document.



Before beginning, it might be beneficial to provide some biographical informations on the three American Ambassadors who served in Turkey between 1927 and 1936 and whose selected reports are published in this volume.<sup>1</sup>

Joseph C. Grew (1880-1965) served as U.S. Ambassador to Turkey between 12 October 1927-13 March 1932. After this post he was appointed as Ambassador to Japan and stayed there until after the attack of Pear Harbor. Afterward he was special assistant (1942-1944) to Secretary of State Cordell Hull and later on Under Secretary of State (1944-1945). In 1952 he published his two volume memoirs, *Turbulent Era, A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years 1944-1945*. He is also the author of *Ten Years in Japan*, (1944) and *Invasion Alert! The Red China Drive for a UN Seat*, (1956).

Brigadier General Charles H. Sherrill (1867-1936) served as U.S. Minister to Argentina (1909-1910) and as Ambassador to Turkey between 20 May 1932-23 March 1933 after Joseph C. Grew's departure. In 1934 he published *A Year's Embassy to Mustafa Kemal*, a combination memoir/biography of Atatürk that he wrote during his tenure in Ankara. Documents relating to some of his interviews with Atatürk that were used during the preparation of his biography are included in this volume. An article where he sums up his interviews with Atatürk is also included in the "Appendix". Sherrill also authored the books: *Stained Glass Tours in England*, (1909), *Pan-Americanism of Henry Clay*, (1909), *South American Point of View*, (1914), *French Memories of 18<sup>th</sup> Century America*, (1915), *Modernizing the Monroe Doctrine*, (1919), *Korea and Shantung Versus the White Peril*, (1920), *Have We A Far Eastern Policy ?* (1920), *Prime Ministers and Presidents*, (1922), *Purple or the Red*, (1924), *Stained Glass Tours in Spain and Flanders*, (1924), *Bismarck and Mussolini*, (1931), *Mosaics in Italy, Palestine, Syria, Turkey and Greece*, (1933), *My Story Book*, (1937, published posthumously). Ankara was the last posting of his short diplomatic career. He died in Paris.

Charles Edward Allen (1891-?) was U.S. Consular Agent in Adrianople in 1915-1916, Vice Consul in Constantinople in 1916-1917, Consul in Constantinople 1919-1921 and in 1932.

Robert P. Skinner (1866-1960) was U.S. Consul General in Marseilles, Berlin, London (1916-1924), U.S. Minister to Greece, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and finally served as ambassador in Ankara between 16 October 1933-16 January 1936. This was also the last posting of his diplomatic career.

<sup>1</sup> This information has been compiled from <http://www.politicalgraveyard.com>





In conclusion, I would like to thank my friend and colleague Paul Bessemer for his fine work in translating from the Turkish the articles in the first part of this volume and Carren E. Kaston for her assistance in digging out some of the documents from the National Archives of College Park, Maryland. I would also like to express my debt of gratitude to Dr. Andrew Mango, author of the recent masterly and exhaustive biography on Atatürk, for graciously accepting to write an introduction to this volume.

Rıfat N. Bali

Istanbul, 2005 - 2006.







# I- NEW DOCUMENTS ON ATATÜRK

## 1- AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER BY ATATÜRK'S EX WIFE LATİFE HANIM

Latife Uşaklıgil who married Mustafa Kemal on January 29, 1923 was from a well know family of İzmir. One of the foreign journalists who made the acquaintance of 'Latife Hanoum'<sup>1</sup> was Lothrop Stoddard (1883-1950). Stoddard visited Ankara in 1925 to interview Mustafa Kemal and write about the new Turkish Republic. During his visit he met Latife Hanım. In the article describing his visit to Ankara and his meeting with Mustafa Kemal, he depicted Latife as follows:<sup>2</sup>

Madame Kemal is much younger than her husband, being still in her early twenties. The daughter of a rich Smyrna merchant, she has spent much of her life in Europe and has a thorough Western education. The marriage grew out of a meeting under dramatic circumstances. When Kemal entered Smyrna at the head of his victorious army after the smashing of the Greek forces, he was received by the Turkish notables of the city, among them being the merchant and his daughter. The daughter had already shown her devotion to the Nationalist cause, having been arrested by the Greeks on suspicion of espionage and threatened with court-martial. Impressed by her personality at their first meeting, Kemal accepted their hospitality and acquaintance quickly ripened into a romance unexpected by the world, since Kemal had hitherto remained a bachelor. Their marriage took place within a short time.

Madame Kemal is an oriental type, medium statured, with a round face and dark, lustrous eyes. However, she is far from Oriental in her ideas, representing as she does the well-educated, upper-class Turkish woman, acquainted with Western culture and eager to free her countrywomen from the disabilities which have so long weighed them down. Kemal fully shares his wife's ideas, though in this he is no exception, most of the Turkish Nationalists whole-heartedly condemning the old-fashioned seclusion of women as a stumbling –block to progress which must be done away with. In this respect they differ markedly from their Moslem neighbors, among whom the seclusion of women still prevails almost unaltered. The emancipation of Turkish women has, in fact, been going on steadily for

<sup>1</sup> 'Hanoum' is the common English spelling for the old Turkish word *Hanım* meaning 'Mrs.' or 'Lady'. I will use the modern Turkish version throughout.

<sup>2</sup> Lothrop Stoddard, "Mustapha Kemal: Incarnation of New Turkey", *The New Orient*, June 1925, Vol. II, No. 3, pp. 33-41, 40-41. Stoddard belonged to a distinguished New England family and had a Ph.D. in history from Harvard. He was a member of the American Historical Association, the American Political Science Association, the Academy of Political Science and the author of 14 well respected books. (Robert Locke, "Wahhabism, China, Mass Immigration: Lothrop Stoddard Rediscovered", February 21, 2004, [www.vdare.com/locke/stoddard.htm](http://www.vdare.com/locke/stoddard.htm))



over a decade and under the present Nationalist régime it will probably make still more rapid strides. It is a logical part of the movement of modernization to which the best elements in Turkey are sincerely devoted.

Latife's marriage to Mustafa Kemal was ultimately short-lived, with their union being officially dissolved less than three years later on August 5 1925.<sup>1</sup> The American Embassy of Constantinople sent the following report to the State Department immediately after rumors started to circulate on this matter:<sup>2</sup>

As of possible interest to the Department I have the honor to report that there are unconfirmed but well believed rumors of a serious break in the marital relations of the President of the Republic, Moustapha Kemal Pasha and his wife Latife Hanoum. It is stated that since a year their relations have been very strained due to the fact that Moustapha Kemal is addicted to drink. It seems that the President and some of his friends spent their night drinking Douzica to the extent of becoming completely intoxicated. His private physician called his attention to the deplorable results which such a life would have on his health and the effect which it might have on his already weak heart. As a result of this advice he is stated to have almost ceased drinking but about a month ago he fell into his old bad habits even to a greater extent than previously which lead to scenes with his wife who could not bear existing conditions. It is reported that last week there was a violent quarrel between them subsequent to which Latife Hanoum telegraphed her mother Madame Ouchaki Zade at Smyrna that she could not remain at Angora longer and begged her mother to come and fetch her. Her mother came to Angora and remained only one night leaving the following day with her daughter for Smyrna. Latife Hanoum not wishing to see her husband before her departure left alone, though it is stated that all the Ministers resident in Angora with the Prime Minister, Ismet Pasha at their head, were at the station to see her off and Ismet Pasha unsuccessfully urging her to remain. In order to avoid a scandal the reason for her departure was stated to be that she was suffering from fever and that she had need of a change of climate and was therefore going to Smyrna. This she has done before during the summer months but has previously always been accompanied by the President. The morning of her departure Moustapha Kemal Pasha is said to have left for his farm in which he takes a great interest and which gave him an opportunity of avoiding his wife. Political circles in Angora are stated to be disturbed as they believe that now that his wife has left the President will take advantage of her absence to drink more

<sup>1</sup> The marriage of Lâtime and Mustafa Kemal has been researched and documented in several books: Nezihe Araz, *Mustafa Kemal'le Bin Gün*, Dünya Kitapları, İstanbul, 2002 / Nezihe Araz, *Sen Latife Değil Latif'sin*, Özgür Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002 / İsmet Bozdağ, *Gazi ve Latife*, Tekin Yayınevi, İstanbul, 1998 / İsmet Bozdağ, *Atatürk'ün Başyaveri Salih Bozok Anlatıyor: Latife ve Fikriye: İki Aşk Arasında Atatürk*, Truva Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005 / S. Eriş Ülgen, *Latife Gazi Mustafa Kemal*, İnkılâp Kitabevi, İstanbul, 2004 / Oğuz Atay, *Gazi Fikriye ile Neden Evlenmedi?*, Truva Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005 / İpek Çalışlar, "Sırlarıyla Latife Hanım", *Milliyet*, November 10-15th, 2005. İpek Çalışlar, *Latife Hanım*, Doğan Kitap, İstanbul, 2006. A Hungarian writer also published a novel about it. See Rezső Szirmai, *Bir Macar Gözüyle Mustafa Kemal'in Aşkı*, translated by Fethi Vecdet Erkun, (İstanbul: Akis Kitap), 2006.

<sup>2</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910-1929, document dated August 10, 1925, no. 867.001K31/2.



heavily and complicate his position with regard to the direction of the affairs of the State. No notice what so ever regarding the foregoing condition of affairs has appeared in the press although it was announced that Latife Hanoum had left for Smyrna to visit her parents. Another reason which is given as an excuse for the break is the fact that his wife has failed to produce an heir to the President.

Four days after this report a second one was submitted to the State Department as follows:<sup>1</sup>

Confirming my dispatch No. 1640/2 of August 10, I have to honor to report that on August 12, the Anatolian Agency issued the following bulletin:

"The President, Mustapha Kemal Pasha, has informed the Prime Minister in a note dated August 11, 1925, that he had decided with Latife Mustapha Kemal Hanoum to terminate their married life and that the divorce had taken place on August 5. By decision of the Cabinet, the divorce had been officially declared."

There has been no comment in the Turkish press.

From well informed sources I learn that since the departure of his wife the President's drinking has increased to an alarming extent; that he is taking little interest in public affairs, and spending most of his waking hours on his farm; that Ismet Pasha is seriously worried over the situation and genuinely apprehensive over the President's physical condition.

These details are being reported at some length, as should Mustapha Kemal Pasha become incapacitated for work, this might possibly be exploited by the opposition to undermine his prestige with the Army and the public. The greatest factor of strength of the present regime is the personality of the President, and the Government can be counted upon to take all possible steps to hide the clay foot of the idol.

What follows are lengthy excerpts from Andrew Mango's biography relating to the marriage and divorce of Atatürk and Latife:<sup>2</sup>

Mustafa Kemal stayed on in İzmir savouring the fruits of his military victory. When the great fire which swept the city on 13 September threatened his house, he moved to a mansion in the seaside suburb of Göztepe, on the south side of the bay. The mansion belonged to a rich and well-connected Turkish merchant, Muammer Uşakîzade (later Uşaklıgil), whose cousin, the writer Halit Ziya, had served as chief of chancery to Sultan Mehmet V before the Great War. When the Greeks occupied Izmir, Muammer prudently removed himself and his family to France, and waited for the dust to settle. But his 24 year old eldest daughter Lâtife decided to interrupt her law studies in France and returned to Izmir after the Turkish victory at Sakarya. In the family mansion she was chaperoned by her grandmother.

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910-1929, document dated August 14, 1925, no. 867.001K31/3.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Mango, *Atatürk*, John Murray, London, 1999, pp. 350-351, 373, 413-414, 431.



Lâtife was an ambitious young woman, who had received a good education. Along with a pretty face and attractive brown hair, she had a small and rather dumpy body, and a strong will. When Mustafa Kemal decided to move from the house assigned to him in Karşıyaka, he checked over other possible residences, including the Uşakîzade mansion, where he was received by Lâtife. He was impressed by her easy and direct manners and her European accomplishments. But he did not immediately take up her insistent invitation to stay in her house. When he finally moved there, Lâtife so dazzled him with her organizing ability that he referred to her jokingly as 'the lady commander of the headquarters'. Having set her sights on Mustafa Kemal, Lâtife did her best to demonstrate the accomplishment most sought after in Turkish women – the ability to serve a husband. But there is another feminine accomplishment sought by the prospective bridegroom's family and friends – the ability to manage a husband, and keep control over his varying moods. In Turkish as in other traditional cultures, skill in man-management is the essence of feminine wisdom. Mustafa Kemal's entourage considered long and hard whether Lâtife had this essential quality. (...)

There was no honeymoon. Mustafa Kemal had no time to lose if he was to turn military prestige into personal political power. After their first meeting, Mustafa Kemal had described Lâtife as his female ADC, and even addressed her playfully as Lâtîf, the masculine form of her name. This fitted in perfectly with Mustafa Kemal's conception of a wife: a wife was there to help him, to share, applaud and encourage his vision, not to make demands on him. Lâtife was too young and head-strong to play the role for long; but she tried, and at first Marshal and Mrs. Mustafa Kemal were the picture of a modern husband-and-wife team. As in the wedding ceremony, the break with Muslim religious tradition was gradual: Lâtife covered her head in public with a headscarf or the *çarşaf* (the Turkish chador). She appeared at her husband's side, but kept her mouth shut, as her husband hit the campaign trail. (...)

Lâtife was at Mustafa Kemal's side as he toured the devastated eastern provinces. She had insisted on accompanying him, when the wives of other officials returned by ship from Samsun. It was an unfortunate decision. Lâtife was jealous of Mustafa Kemal's companions. Husband and wife quarrelled publicly in Tokat, on the way to Erzurum, when Lâtife tried to break up a convivial gathering and drag Mustafa Kemal away to bed. There was another row at a dinner in Erzurum, where Lâtife accused Mustafa Kemal of paying too much attention to the pretty wife of the local commander. The following day Mustafa Kemal despatched his wife back to Ankara by car, in the company of his ADC, Salih (Bozok). Salih was given a sealed letter to İsmet. It read:

Mme Lâtife is preceding me to Ankara. I decided that it would be wrong for us to continue the trip together, as the experience of the last two years has convinced me that we cannot live together. I have informed her of my decision. She is desperately sad and may ask you or Fevzi Paşa to bring us together again, but my decision is final. However, I do not wish to harm the honour and standing of herself and her family, for whom I retain my respect and my feelings of true friendship. The manner of separation will be decided in Ankara. She must be made to agree to return quietly to İzmir.

Before leaving, Salih had asked Mustafa Kemal's companion, Kılıç Ali, to let him know by code if the president changed his mind. If he did, Kılıç Ali would cable, 'He is in good health'; otherwise, the message would be,



'His sickness continues'. Lâtife wrote an imploring letter to Mustafa Kemal from her first stop at Erzincan. When the car reached Kayseri, Salih was handed an order from Mustafa Kemal to interrupt the journey and await his arrival. He checked with Kılıç Ali and was assured that the patient had recovered. Overjoyed, Lâtife turned back to meet Mustafa Kemal fifty miles east of Kayseri. When Mustafa Kemal arrived, he ordered Salih to tear up the letter to İsmet. Then, changing his mind, he told him to keep the pieces. Lâtife had been granted a reprieve, not a full pardon. Mustafa Kemal had decided on a truce with Lâtife, just as his battle with the opposition, led by his original companions, was about to erupt. (...)

Mustafa Kemal found relief from frantic public activity in the company of his friends. Work on the model farm helped him reduce his drinking, but kept him away from his wife more than ever. Lâtife grew increasingly frustrated. Two years earlier, an Istanbul newspaper suggested that she should be elected deputy; Mustafa Kemal ruled it out, even for the future when women would be given political rights. Lâtife was not content to be a ceremonial wife in public and a companion of last resort at home. While entertaining guests one evening, she complained that she had not been able to complete her university education. 'Madam', Mustafa Kemal interjected, 'you are free to do so any moment you choose'. He himself was capable of spending the whole night reading, if a book interested him. Stories began to circulate that Lâtife spied outside the closed doors of Mustafa Kemal's study, that in her jealousy and frustration she tried to keep out his friends and quarrelled with their wives. One night, Mustafa Kemal returned late to the villa and chatted with the sentries before turning in. Their conversation was cut short when Lâtife appeared on the balcony and shouted: 'Kemal, come in at once. Aren't you satisfied with your chums in the neighbourhood? Do you have to make friends of your sentries too?' The story may be apocryphal, but all accounts agree that mutual irritation had become the strongest feeling in the presidential household. Mustafa Kemal was fond of children of his own. But the marriage was barren.

One evening in August, possibly after the balcony scene, Mustafa Kemal stumped out of his villa in Çankaya and was driven to his old office in the railway station. There he wrote a letter to Lâtife saying that it would be better if they lived apart for a time, and suggesting that she should take a rest in her family mansion in İzmir. An ADC delivered the letter the following day, with instructions to escort Lâtife to İzmir. Meanwhile, Mustafa Kemal and four companions took the train along the uncompleted line east of Ankara. He waited until he heard that his instructions had been carried out and the coast was clear; he then returned to the capital. On 11 August, Mustafa Kemal informed the government that, six days earlier, he had divorced his wife according to Muslim canon law. The divorce documents (talakname) had been served on Lâtife in İzmir and, on the day of the announcement, husband and wife had formally agreed to end their marriage.

Her divorce was an enigma to local and foreign observers. Rear Admiral Francis J. Higginson (1843-1931) in a letter sent to Admiral Mark L. Bristol, U.S. High Commissioner to Constantinople asked the following question:





Why did Kemal divorce his wife? Was it like Napoleon because there was no son and heir or was it for political reasons?<sup>1</sup>

Admiral Mark L. Bristol's answer to this question was as follows:

Various reasons have been given why Kemal divorced his wife. I don't think it was Napoleon's reason though that may have had something to do with it. Kemal has always been a soldier and likes the soldier's life. I think probably more than anything else his wife had not a strong enough character to be a companion for him and actively or unconsciously was an interference in the way he desired to live. She was not the intellectual and intelligent woman that the press tried to make her. It is easier to understand when one knows something of these people out here why Kemal divorced his wife than it is to explain it especially to an Occidental or anyone who does not understand the Oriental character and especially the family life of Moslems. As a seeming contradiction Kemal now is trying to reform the family life and bring about conditions which he himself would find irksome. Still I believe he is honest in desiring the development of family life in Turkey along Occidental lines.<sup>2</sup>

The letter which follows was published in the *Boston Advertiser* newspaper on February 21, 1926. What makes this document very interesting is that it is the only known letter of Latife [Uşaklıgil] which has been made public so far. This article did not pass unnoticed to the leaders of the young Turkish Republic since Moukbil Kemal Bey, a young Turkish architect working in the United States as the official representative of the Bureau of Information of the Turkish Republic,<sup>3</sup> sent a copy of it to Mustafa Kemal's private secretary Colonel Tevfik Bey.<sup>4</sup> The reaction of Mustafa Kemal is unknown.

The letter also passed unnoticed in the Turkish press and did not make the headlines. The eventual reaction and opinion of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs also is unknown, since researchers do not have access for the time being to these archives as well as to the archives of Turkish Embassy of Washington, D.C. There is also no answer to how and why this letter surfaced in the *Boston Advertiser* and who translated it.

<sup>1</sup> Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington D.C. Admiral Mark L. Bristol papers. Box 47. Letter dated March 13, 1926.

<sup>2</sup> Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington D.C. Admiral Mark L. Bristol papers. Box 47. Letter dated April 19, 1926.

<sup>3</sup> Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington D.C., Admiral Mark L. Bristol Papers, Box 45, letter of Moukbil Kemal Bey to Mark Bristol dated June 2, 1925. Mukbil Kemal Taş was the architect of the Gazi and Latife schools in Ankara. Source: *Mimarlık*, May-June 2003, No. 311.

<sup>4</sup> Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington D.C., Admiral Mark L. Bristol Papers, Box 48, document dated May 31, 1926 entitled "Memorandum for Admiral Bristol".



As for Latife's life after the divorce, Andrew Mango writes:

Lâtife, who had no choice in the matter, spent the rest of her life regretting what she called her 'childishness'. First, she asked Mustafa Kemal for an appointment as a teacher or a secretary in a Turkish embassy. When neither was forthcoming, she travelled to Europe, and spent some time in a sanatorium in the Tatra mountains (in Czechoslovakia) and then in the south of France. Returning to Turkey, she appealed to Mustafa Kemal's friend Salih (Bozok) to repair the breach with her husband, which she blamed on another companion, Kılıç Ali. It was no use. Lâtife settled finally in Istanbul, in a flat belonging to her family, which continued to enjoy the Gazi's favour. She never remarried, and died in July 1975, a little old lady, known for her masterful disposition, and praised for the total discretion she maintained even after Atatürk's death in 1938. There were rumours that she had left an account of her thousand days with the founder of the Turkish republic, but no such document has turned up.

It was said that Mustafa Kemal was shaken by the divorce and was heard crying in his room as he played the record of the song 'I have become a distraught nightingale.'<sup>1</sup>

Latife Uşaklıgil died in 1975 and her relatives donated her private papers to the Turkish Historical Society (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*) in 1980. According to the family's wishes, the papers were supposed to be made public and open to researchers after 25 years, which would have meant February 2005. However, when the deadline arrived the family members decided that the seal of secrecy should not be broken.<sup>2</sup> Consequently the private papers, among which there is, among others, a letter from Mustafa Kemal explaining the reasons of his divorce, will continue for an unknown period of time to preserve their secrecy.

\* \* \*

#### The letter from Lâtife Hanım:

### ***DIVORCED WIFE OF THE TURKISH DICTATOR LAYS HIS EDICTS TO FEMALE MUSSOLINI'S" INFLUENCE***

*Latife Hanım, Baring Inner Character of Her Former Husband, Tells Why She Will Contest Divorce He Obtained Under the Old Moslem Law*

Latife Hanım, twenty-two, wife of Kemal Paşa, dictator of Turkey, recently was divorced under the old peremptory Moslemic Law, which provided that a husband need only address his wife before two witnesses in

<sup>1</sup> Mango, *Atatürk*, op. cit., p. 432.

<sup>2</sup> For a short summary of the controversy concerning the debate surrounding the opening of Latife Hanım's papers to the general public, please refer to Cemil Koçak, "Arşivler açıldı ya belgeler?", *Toplumsal Tarih*, March 2005, No. 135, pp. 20-28.





words similar to, "I don't want you any more, get out," provided he gave her a sum equivalent to \$25.

In the communication below, addressed to the editor and proprietor of a former leading Constantinople journal, which has been suppressed, she states her reasons for having changed her mind about contesting the divorce decree secured by her husband.

By Latif Hanoum

Dear Friend and Comrade:

Stunned to insensibility by the sudden change in my late husband's affection and attitude towards me, I was cowed for a time, although the blow was calculated, and I had sensed it coming for at least three months. I then declared that I would accept the dictates of fate and bear it heroically.

I still bear it heroically. But since the fateful day when I was turned out of my Angora home, to which I had gone with childish visions and rapturous dreams, a certain change has come over me. The Gazi (the conqueror) did not abide by the condition I made for holding my tongue and refraining from action against him. Although not directly under his name, he cowardly and indirectly spread the alleged reasons for his "casting me out."

He caused the spread throughout the length and the breadth of the Fatherland, and eventually all over the world, that I was impetuous and domineering.

Little would I have cared for these allegations, although not true, had he not also supplemented this gossip by causing the spread of still another silly tattle that I had no brains and that I was not fit to occupy the position of a wife of a ruler: that I constantly caused his humiliation by persistently interfering with his official acts.

### Pasteboard Napoleon

I feel it is my duty to challenge this once the reputation of this latter-day paste-board Napoleon as a soldier, statesman and husband.

I intend to test the mettle of our new law and the virility and the fearlessness of the judges to whose care has been entrusted the new scheme of government in the Fatherland.

If I can show in open court that our Turkish laws, copied after the Swiss judicial procedure, are supreme enough to be applied to our imitation Napoleon, then he may, like Napoleon himself, boast to the world that the judicial canons of his own making recognize no rank or file in their administration.



But I feel that Gazi's emulation of Napoleon is only skin deep, that he only imitates the words and gestures of the historic conqueror and law maker, and that at heart he is what he is, a child of luck and opportunity.

A few weeks after my marriage, although I still loved him, and, I must confess, I yet have a throbbing feeling for him, I realized how true was our old proverb which says, "In order to know a man you must eat with him, travel with him, and live with him."

It was not many weeks after my marriage that it began to dawn on me that the Gazi, after all was not the wise, heroic, unselfish person that I had visualized. And, still a few weeks later, the suspicion arose in my heart that, even allowing for all human frailties, he was not a great man, not even a near great man.

My early education having taken place in an English school, I began to realize, without being aware of it, that a certain psychological spirit of looking at facts and weighing them coolly and impartially had been inculcated into my then very youthful head. My later education in France taught me to be logical and perhaps, without any disrespect to German culture I attained my argumentativeness in Berlin. So I analyzed my husband with an English psychology, weighed the facts after the fashion of the French, and became articulate like the German.

### Took His Measure

After I had looked at my husband from these three Western psychological angles I was convinced that he was not a great soldier; that he was a poor diplomat and a wily pretender.

Except to my husband I have never whispered the result of this analysis to a living being. I loved him supremely, and I feel that I loved him as only a girl of twenty is capable of loving a blind love that expresses itself in devotion, supreme and sacred. It was six months after our marriage that in the privacy of our home, I begged my husband to accept my analysis of him and prayed that by ceaseless efforts he would be able to live up to the reputation that "fortune" had cast on his lap. At first he exhibited temper, but I turned it into affection.

So to me alone and in secrecy, he admitted that the "great feat" of driving the Greek armies from the Fatherland was not as great, militarily, as was depicted by the outside world, who know very little about the conditions then existing in Asia minor. My husband even admitted to me that even without our armies, the Greeks, within another six months, would have been starved to death, for they had neither ammunition, food nor clothing.



But a few weeks after this confession and self analysis my husband found himself unable to fight against a megalomania, caused by the servile attitude of a group of young, hysterical, empty-headed Turks. Then he came under the evil influence of that gifted woman whom both of us know.

From that moment the Gazi became a changed man, arrogant, ruthless and cruel in his methods.

Yet I still loved him, and wanted to work with him.

From the day he gave ear to this woman, who was the apostle of chauvinism and a veritable female Mussolini, he began the issuance of grotesque, ridiculous and aggravating edicts: such as prohibiting Moslem cults from congregating and the wearing and not wearing, of this and that garment.

### Enacting Foolish Laws

I remonstrated with him that the laws of a country were the accumulation of the experiences of a Nation's life, and that under certain exigencies reforms may be forced from above, but I tried to reason with him that the customs should not be dictated. My own view on the subject was that laws as to whether women should wear or not wear veils, whether they should attend religious ceremonies in the company of a man or alone, and what they should wear, so long as what they wear is not offensive to the public morals, could not be, and should not be, dictated from above.

When I reasoned with my husband in such fashion he conceded the fallacy of his intended acts and promised to follow a more wise and humane course, but on the following day when someone else advised him to the contrary, he changed his mind. I remember his taking strong attitudes and changing them to the contrary on a certain subject on no less than six occasions.

It will surprise you when I tell you that in the coming trial I will not only conduct the case against my husband myself, personally, but just to test his law forbidding the wearing of the veil like the law he has enacted forcing the Western head dress on Turkish heads, and for the disobedience of which he has already beheaded fifty-two religious Turks I shall appear in court veiled, and will challenge the wisdom and constitutionality of such an edict, that a ruler can dictate what people should wear, and not wear.

I know my Gazi is not courageous enough to apply the law and have me hung publicly for having worn the veil. I also know too well that he will succumb to the will of his evil advisers not to make an exception of me. So I will have the pleasure of seeing my noble Gazi in great discomfiture.







## 2- ATATÜRK AND HIS WOMEN

### Introduction

Atatürk's private life has been under assault by radical Islamist writers and politicians who reject the Turkish Republic and its secular character. In this sector, which tends, in strange reflection of the state's official version of Turkish history, to attribute to Atatürk the responsibility for the secular, western-leaning Republic (for them the cause of all of Turkey's problems), all claims concerning Mustafa Kemal's private life tend to be enthusiastically and indiscriminately accepted, regardless of their veracity, so long as they might serve to detract from the person, reputation or intellectual character of the country's founder. In a book he published refuting many of the more groundless rumors about Atatürk, Başkent University faculty member İsmet Görgülü has depicted the efforts of the anti-Kemalists thus:

Those who wish to bring an Islamic *Shari'a* order to Turkey; those who wish to transform the [present] secular, democratic, social *Rechtstaat* that is the Turkish Republic, based as it is on Atatürk', into an Islamic republic or those who wish to divide Turkey, all of these see the 'Atatürk factor' as the greatest obstacle [to the achievement of their objectives]'.<sup>1</sup>

The author goes on to explain why these attacks on the person of Atatürk need to be taken seriously:

And it is for this reason, as [Turkish] citizens who feel a [sense of] responsibility for the country's future, that we have resolved to fight against these attacks. The purpose of our struggle is to show, with proofs, the true nature of these calumnies, lies and fabrications'.<sup>2</sup>

One portion of those rumors and claims that have circulated about Atatürk concern his sex life and his youthful gallivanting. Görgülü also addresses these claims and refutes them, one after another.<sup>3</sup> The question of Atatürk's relations to and with women is one that remains shrouded in mystery and has therefore attracted a great number of journalists and researchers. Two authors who have published works solely on this issue are

<sup>1</sup> İsmet Görgülü, *Atatürk'ün Özel Yaşamı Uydurmalar – Saldırılar – Yanıtlar*, Bilgi Yayınevi, Ankara, 2003, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 72-84.



Süleyman Yeşilyurt and Aytekin Gezici.<sup>1</sup> In the book's forward Yeşilyurt discusses the taboos that have traditionally surrounded this subject, claiming that:

We shall never be able to reconcile the image of Atatürk, who rescued a prostrate nation from the jaws of [subjection and] captivity with the facts of Mustafa Kemal's given over to excessive drink and his fondness for women. While on one hand accepting Atatürk as the eternal leader of the Turkish nation, the most reasonable thing for us to do is to think of Mustafa Kemal as a person walled off unto himself.

While in those civilized, developed countries that operate according to democra[tic principles] even the smallest details of their leaders' lives are pored over, to bring forth the story from the beginning to end of Atatürk, founder of the Turkish Republic as Mustafa Kemal, [the flawed human], to expose the entire panorama of his sentiments can be considered as the beginning of tearing down the taboos of classicism.<sup>2</sup>

When the existence of Atatürk's relationship—whether intimate or merely friendly—with some woman becomes known, the Turkish press has not neglected to make headlines out of such reports.<sup>3</sup> In an editorial written on the Republic Day, *Milliyet* Editor-in-Chief Güneri Civaoglu also took his turn with the subject and touched on the question of Atatürk's relations with women:

Let's start off the lines of [this] 29th of October, with a pleasant memory. An earlier October 29th...Atatürk's table...immediately next to him, a beautiful and vivacious French journalist...<sup>4</sup> Atatürk occasionally raises his glass and toasts her, saying 'To your health'. Gazing into Atatürk's eyes, the journalist lifts her glass and empties it in one draught.

A little later, the same scene...and a few more times after that.

Finally, when one of the diplomats seated around the table leans over to the woman and [whispers] the warning "Aren't you drinking a little fast? You might be the worse for it later on", to which he receives the response "Such is Atatürk's wish".

The diplomat then asks: 'How's that?'

The French journalist explains:

"He tells me 'Chérie finissez', and so I do."

At that point the diplomat understands the situation.

When the [Turkish toast] 'Şerefinize' is spoken, it sounds very much like ['Chérie finissez'], which [in French] means, "Finish it, my dear".

<sup>1</sup> Süleyman Yeşilyurt, *Ata'nın Hayatındaki On Dokuz Kadın*, revised 2nd printing, Kültür Sanat Yayınları, Ankara, 2005. Aytekin Gezici, *Atatürk Bu Kadınları Çok Sevdii Mustafa Kemal'in Büyük Aşkları*, Akis Kitap, İstanbul, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Süleyman Yeşilyurt, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> İsmet Görgülü, *ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>4</sup> The journalist in question must be Berthe George Gaulis the author of *Angora, Constantinople, Londres Mustafa Kemal et la Politique Anglaise en Orient*, (Librairie Armand Colin, Paris, 1922) and *La Nouvelle Turquie*, Paris, 1922.



He explains the misunderstanding to Atatürk, who roars with laughter..  
Nobody knows if this is a true story, but...

I have heard it from from several former diplomats with whom I have spoken.

In his work *Grey Wolf*, H.C. Armstrong describes Atatürk's success with women thus:

"His international reputation, his manliness, his pleasing appearance, his penetrating gazes, drew all women to him from near and far.

They ran to him like moths to a flame."

And what was his attitude toward them?

Here are the lines that he wrote in his first letter to Corinne Lütü as he was leaving Istanbul for Sofia:

'29 November, 1913, Sofia

Dearest Corinne,

On Wednesday evening I departed from İstanbul, with the sweet memory of the day spent in your arms. While acting as if I was reading the newspapers that I had purchased in Istanbul, as if in a dream I relived those beautiful memories [of the time] that we had spent together...'

And yet...

Atatürk did not continue their relationship.

A short while later he entered a new relationship.

And the most interesting of all was that no other man ever entered into the lives of those he left behind.<sup>1</sup>

### The Prohibition surrounding Atatürk's Private Life

In addition to those Muslim opponents of Atatürk and the secular republic he created, another reason for the taboo on discussing Mustafa Kemal's private life are the fact that the harsh criticism leveled against him by radical Greek and Armenian nationalists, who accuse him of having massacred their coreligionists in Anatolia during the Turkish War for Independence, often

<sup>1</sup> Güneri Cıvaoğlu, "Şerefinize – Şerifinise", *Milliyet*, October 29th, 2000. Güneri Cıvaoğlu is somehow fabricating and "embellishing" Armstrong's statements. Armstrong had given quite a contrary view in *Grey Wolf*. Regarding his time in Sofia after the Balkan War, for instance, he writes:

'He learnt ball-room dancing... He frequented the drawings-rooms and tried to become the society gallant, making love to the ladies of Sofia, but they found him excessively gauche... They had no liking for Turks, at any time, and Mustafa Kemal was neither good-looking nor attractive. His manners were crude... He had no small talk, no easy gallantry or ready flattery. He understood nothing of the pleasant play of light flirtation. He bluntly demanded that each lady should be with him; Very soon the ladies found him an uncouth fellow, the traditional Tartar in contrast to Fethi, the suave, polite, easygoing Turk... They found him a prodigious bore and forgot him.' (pp. 43-44).



contains crude critique of Kemal's private life as well.<sup>1</sup>

As a result, a situation has arisen in which legend and rumor prevail, and in which those who have accurate knowledge of the subject prefer either to remain quiet or not to research or publish anything about it out of concern that it will be used by certain circles to sully Mustafa Kemal's reputation; in this way, it has become nearly impossible to conduct or publish any serious research on the subject.

The event which has perhaps best expressed this prohibition on examining Atatürk's private life was the dream-like work by the Israeli artist Michael Blum titled 'To the memory of Safiye Behar'. The piece was put on at the 9th Istanbul Biennial held in the city between September 16 and October 30, 2005, and tells of Mustafa Kemal's love for a young Istanbul Jewess by the name of Safiye Behar.<sup>2</sup> While commenting on Blum's work, Kürşat Bumin a member of the faculty at Istanbul's Bilgi University and a writer for the Islamist daily *Yeni Şafak*, would make some allusions to the question of the 'Atatürk taboo'.

I wonder, did Michael Blum fully realize in which country the Biennial in which he presented his work was being held?!? We sincerely hope and pray that he will be able to return to his own country safe and sound, and without any complications, because there is no doubt that even if nothing happens to him, some sort of uproar surrounding the Biennial is sure to erupt!<sup>3</sup>

This work telling of Atatürk's secret love received a tremendous response. According to Nur Çintay, a writer for the daily *Radikal*, "certain viewers have meticulously struggled to record the remaining secrets of history!"<sup>4</sup> But in contrast the left-leaning Kemalist weekly *Aydınlık* characterized Blum's effort as a "a project of slander".<sup>5</sup> Despite these difficulties, when one considers Atatürk's stupendous charisma, his political and military genius, his attractiveness and the fact that he remained single

<sup>1</sup> For example, during a campaign begun by Greek and Armenian Americans to prevent the filming and production of a movie, based on Lord Kinross' 1964 biography narrating the life of Atatürk, hate mail accusing Atatürk of being, "a molester of children of both sexes" and calling him "a troubled alcoholic" were sent to the movie producing company. Sources: "Questionable tactics", July 11, 1998, *The Greek American*, [www.photius.com/thus/Edit0711.txt](http://www.photius.com/thus/Edit0711.txt); "Ataturk Film Stirs Controversy", *The Greek American*, July 19, 1998, <http://www.photius.com/thus/Int0718.txt>; "Kemal, Letters and Campaigns", *The Greek American*, July 25, 1998, <http://www.photius.com/thus/Int0725.txt>.

<sup>2</sup> Mahmut Hamsici, "Atatürk'ün sevgilisi Safiye", *Radikal*, August 27, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Kürşat Bumin, "Safiye Behar için kimsenin ilgisini çekmedi?", *Yeni Şafak*, September 13, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Nur Çintay A., "Atatürk'ün binal aşkı", *Radikal*, September 25, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Kırız Perinçek, "Bir karalama projesi de binal kapsamında...", *Aydınlık*, No. 947, September 11, 2005, pp. 50-51.



from the dissolution of his short-lived marriage to Lâife Hanım until his death, it is not difficult to admit the fact that his various affairs that he experienced were altogether natural and human. In this article, which shall examine the emotional world of Mustafa Kemal, an attempt shall be made, by assembling the information found in various memoirs and biographies, to sketch out an accurate and objective tableau of Atatürk's relationships with the women he encountered during the various stages of his life.

### Atatürk's Affairs According to H.C. Armstrong

One of the first biographies of Atatürk to appear was H.C. Armstrong's *Grey Wolf*, which was published already in Atatürk's lifetime, in 1932.<sup>1</sup> According to Fatih Rıfki Atay (1894-1971) a famous journalist and a member of the parliament very close to Atatürk, among the many books written by foreigners Atatürk liked *Grey Wolf* the most.<sup>2</sup> This book, which created such a stir in its very first years of publication that it was outlawed in Turkey for decades,<sup>3</sup> did not appear in Turkish until 1996.<sup>4</sup> As will be clear from the

<sup>1</sup> The biography of Armstrong is as follows: "During World War I, H.C. Armstrong was caught in the siege of Kut and captured by the Turks with the whole of the Sixth Army Division. He marched as prisoner from the extreme south of Arabia, through Syria and up into Turkey. While prisoner he tried to escape, was given six months imprisonment for the attempt, told Enver Pasha what he thought of him and was imprisoned in the condemned cell. Subsequently, and as an illustration of the bizarre side of Turkish life, he was released from prison, made Staff Officer for all prisoners of war, and on one occasion acted as prosecutor and interpreter on the Turkish courts-martial which tried prisoners-of-war camp commanders for offences against prisoners. He escaped from Turkey before the end of the War, mainly through bribery. After the War he was posted back to Turkey for some years, during which he was in constant touch with the Turks, including Mustafa Kemal, and watched the rise of New Turkey. He has written *Turkey in Travail*, *Turkey and Syria Reborn*, *Unending Battle*, and *Grey Wolf, Lord of Arabia*." Source: "H.C. Armstrong" <http://www.ourcivilisation.com/smartboard/shop/armstrong/about.htm>. At the time the book was published a serialised biography, highly critical of Armstrong, was also published in the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper. See M. Turhan, "Armstrong kimdir?", *Cumhuriyet*, December 22-26th, 1932.

<sup>2</sup> Baki Suha Ediboğlu, *Fatih Rıfki Atay Konuşuyor*, Berkalp Kitabevi, Ankara, 1945, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> The reactions to this book at the time of its publication have been researched by Salâhi R. Sonyel in his book *Atatürk-The Founder of Modern Turkey*, (Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara, 1989), pp. 163-171 and in the following article: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Mustafa Yılmaz, "Harold C. Armstrong'un 'Grey Wolf Mustafa Kemal An Intimate Study of a Dictator (Bozkurt-Mustafa Kemal) Kitabı Üzerine", *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, Vol. IX, No. 33, November 1995, pp. 721-757.

<sup>4</sup> The translation published in 1996 is: *Bozkurt: Kemal Atatürk'ün Yaşamı*, translated by Gül Çağalı Güven, Arba Yayınları, İstanbul. The same translation was republished in May 2005 by Nokta Kitap, but this time with certain parts left out. The censored parts concerned Atatürk's private life, specifically his various affairs with women and Armstrong's statements describing the leader as "a cruel and tyrannic statesman". The reason for this discrepancy was that after the Turkish translation was first published in 1996, the Republic's Attorney-General for the Kadıköy district of İstanbul began an investigation of the work. As a result, the legal experts who studied the translation deemed that the excluded passages were in violation of Turkish Penal Code Law no. 5816 (passed July 31, 1951), "The Law Concerning Crimes Committed Against Atatürk".



passages from *Grey Wolf* that follow, Armstrong's characterization of Atatürk is of a 'dictator' who had a long series of affairs:

Both [Colonel Arif his aide de camp and Atatürk] enjoyed the same loose talk, the heavy drinking and the wild nights with women. (...)

It was then that with Arif and one or two other men he would disappear on heavy drinking bouts which, with gambling, would last whole nights; or he went whoring with the painted women of the poor brothels of the town. (...)

[Kemal and Lâtife's] quarrels increased. The house was filled with the uproar of the disagreements. At last Mustafa Kemal decided: Latifa must go, and at once.

Always silent and reserved in his private affairs, he discussed it with no one. He wrote out and himself signed a deed of divorce; sent a short message to the Assembly, the newspapers and the Embassies announcing the divorce, and ordered Latifa to leave the house and Chan Kaya at once. Then he went back to the long nights in smoke-filled rooms with his drinking friends - the "desperadoes" as they were nicknamed - his painted women and the life to which he belonged.

After that he became shameless. He drank deeper than ever. He started a number of open affairs with women, and with men. Male youth attracted him. He made advances to the wives and daughters of his supporters. Even important men sent their women-folk away from Angora out of his way. Power brought out in him the brute and the beast, the throw-back to the coarse savage Tartar - the wolf stock of the central steppes of Asia.

He did not seem to care whom he insulted or who became his enemies. He insulted Arif in one of his wild moments, and Arif left him in anger and joined his political opponents.

A certain well-known pasha came to the Gazi's house. He complained that the Gazi was too friendly with his wife; people were talking and he would be grateful if the Gazi would not single her out so often for special attention at public functions; there was probably nothing in it, but people said unkind things.

For answer Mustafa Kemal glared at him.

"I know you", he shouted, "you have been intriguing against me. Yes! it is true. I have had your wife. I took her to punish you for your intrigues", and he shouted for the guard to chase the pasha from the house. Timurlane or one of the savage horde-leaders might have shouted like that.<sup>1</sup>

Armstrong's racy hyperbole has recently been taken to task by the more recent (and infinitely more accurate) biography by Andrew Mango:

*Grey Wolf* was a sensational mixture of gossip and men's club racism. According to yet another apocryphal story, Atatürk had the book translated for his own eyes, and, after listening to the translation, concluded: 'The government has made a mistake in banning the book. That fellow has made too little of our pleasures. Let me complete the account, and then the book can be allowed and everyone will be able to read it.' The fact is that *Grey*

<sup>1</sup> H.C. Armstrong, *Grey Wolf*, Arthur Baker Ltd, London, 1932, pp. 118, 170, 253-254.



*Wolf* remained banned in Turkey, and that a first translation appeared only in the 1990s. A rebuttal of the many mistakes in the book was serialized in the newspaper *Akşam* (The Evening), starting from 7 December 1932. It was written by the paper's owner, Necmettin Sadık (Sadak), an MP of the ruling party.<sup>1</sup> However, in his eagerness to flatter Mustafa Kemal, Necmettin Sadık himself strayed into fantasy. The president's father, he claimed, had been a senior officer; he owned six houses in Salonica, as well as forests and timber shops; the president's mother had come from a rich and famous old family. Had Mustafa Kemal been stung by the imputation of modest origins? Or was it his official advocate who believed that a poor background was disgrace?<sup>2</sup>

### The Claims of Two Women Novelists

In one of his articles for the Sunday edition, Doğan Uluç, the New York correspondent of *Hürriyet* newspaper wrote about two women novelists (one American, one British), both of whom claims to have had an affair with Atatürk:

The recollections and claims about Atatürk—and especially those concerning women—were originally from foreign sources. Two women writers, one British, the other American, had romantic relationships with Mustafa Kemal, with whom they had become familiar while covering the War of Independence in Turkey. The British writer, whom I interviewed during my first years as a foreign correspondent, told me, without going into details, of her 'being together' with Mustafa Kemal. Despite my insistence, she refrained from elaborating, saying instead 'Let your readers imagine things [for themselves]'.

As for the American journalist, she recorded the ideas for the new Turkish state that Mustafa Kemal laid out during horseback rides. In her book, she claims that they took shelter from a downpour in a haystack, where they passed a few 'romantic' hours while waiting for the rain to stop. Nevertheless, when I asserted to these women writers that there was no proof [for their claims] as well as the fact that there were conflicts regarding the 'time and place' [or their alleged romances], they both preferred to change the subject.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These serialised articles were reprinted in the following book: Sadi Borak, (ed.), *Atatürk'ün Armstrong'a Cevabı*, 5th printing, Kaynak Yayınları, İstanbul 2000, pp. 41-76. For another study on *Grey Wolf* the following is recommended: Prof. Dr. M. Naeem Qureshi, "Atatürk and Armstrong's Grey Wolf: Myth and Reality", pp. 973-990, in Mustafa Cöğce, Nilgün İnce, Neşe Çetinoğlu, (Eds.), *Beşinci Uluslararası Atatürk Kongresi 8-12 Aralık 2003 – Ankara / The Fifth International Congress on Atatürk December 8-12, 2003 Ankara, Vol. II*, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, Ankara, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Mango, *Atatürk*, op. cit., p.506.

<sup>3</sup> Doğan Uluç, "Mustafa Kemal ve 'gözde'leri (!)", *Hürriyet Pazar*, February 13th, 2005. I sent two emails to Doğan Uluç asking the names of the two American authors and the dates at which he published his interviews. Uluç did not respond. The British author Catherine Gavin in her novel *The House of War* narrates a relation between an American woman and Mustafa Kemal. It is probable that one of these two journalists was Catherine Gavin.



### Zsa Zsa Gábor and Atatürk

Among those women who had or are claimed to have had affairs with Mustafa Kemal, the one whose name is most frequently mentioned is the former Hungarian beauty queen, and oft-wedded television star Zsa Zsa Gábor.

The main reason for this is that Gábor gives ample room in her memoirs to her relationship with Atatürk. When she was 15 years old, Gábor married Burhan Belge, the Press Director for the Turkish Embassy in Austria whom she met at her grandmother's house in Vienna and with him she would travel to Ankara, where she would live until 1941. After divorcing Belge in that year she returned to her own country. In her memoirs, Gábor states that this marriage was a mere formality.<sup>1</sup> In her autobiography, which appeared for the first time in 1960, Gábor discusses her relationship with Mustafa Kemal:

I had been in Ankara perhaps three months when Burhan, reading his ever present newspaper, gave a short contemptuous laugh. He read aloud: "According to a survey, 85 per cent of Turkey's women admit they dream of Kemal Ataturk."

Ridiculous, Burhan said, and yet Ataturk was an extraordinary figure: half man, half god. In one mighty stroke, Burhan explained, he transformed a feudal state into a modern republic. He had done away with slavery and polygamy and the harem; he outlawed the turban and the veil; he Romanized the alphabet, changed the calendar, moved the capital from İstanbul to Ankara. He was El Ghazi--Great Pasha--he was the Gray Wolf; arrested, imprisoned, exiled--nothing had stopped him. He had made and led a revolution, almost single-handed. As Burhan talked I caught fire, too. Imagine what the women must think of this extraordinary man who told them, "Throw away your black veils. Be beautiful. Wear modern, feminine, bright-colored clothes. Show your legs; be women. It is good for a woman to be admired by a man." What must this have meant to women who all their lives had been told by their husbands, "Cover yourself, hide yourself--", who wrapped themselves in shapeless black robes and thought of themselves as little better than cattle? I could understand why they dreamed of him, fell in love with him, thought of him as a god. I had dreamed of him, too, the night after I had ridden up to his great pink palace high on the hill. In my dreams Ataturk strode into my room like a prince. He said, "Now that I see you, I am not sorry that Burhan married a foreign woman. He chose well."

But I had yet to meet him.

Then one evening I met him.

"We'll take Lehman and Yakob [Kadri Karaosmanoğlu]<sup>2</sup> to Karpıç's," Burhan said. It was to be a farewell diner for Yakob, who had just been appointed Ambassador to Switzerland and was to leave the next day for

<sup>1</sup> Zsa Zsa Gábor, *One Lifetime Is Not Enough*, Delacorte Press, New York, 1991, p.18.

<sup>2</sup> Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, (1889-1974) a diplomat and novelist was the husband of Burhan Belge's sister Leman.





Berne. Karpiç was a Russian immigrant whose restaurant had become a show place in Ankara.

When we arrived, we were ushered into an enormous square room with stately pillars; our table was to one side of a small dance floor. Everywhere was Atatürk's portrait, and above the tremendous entranceway, the Turkish flag. I was studying the menu when the pleasant hum of conversation suddenly heightened, then died away completely. The music stopped. There was complete silence.

I looked up.

The two huge double doors at the entrance had swung wide open and through them poured about ten uniformed police; they immediately took their places on either side, like a guard of honor; then, perhaps half a dozen of the most beautiful women, chatting animatedly, stunning in evening gowns, appeared; then three or four men in tuxedos; and then in their center, a slim man with gray eyes the color of steel. I thought: Prince Serge, the hero of my girlhood!

Everyone rose. Lehman nudged me and I found myself on my feet. The dancing couples stopped where they were; every-one on the floor and at their tables stood facing the entrance. Burhan's voice was in my ear. "Atatürk", he whispered.

I stared at Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the savior of Turkey. He stood, framed in the entrance, suddenly alone: slim, gray at the temples, impeccably dressed in black tie, his shoulders back, his head up, surveying the room as from a great distance as if seeing everyone there yet utterly indifferent to what he saw. He had just drawn a cigarette from a gold case; he held the case in his left hand and was tapping the cigarette gently against it as he looked over the heads of the crowd. The headwaiter scurried up to him, bowed deeply, and led him to an enormous table. The women and police followed. He was the first to take his seat, and until he sat down, no one else in the room moved. It was odd to see a man seated while women stood. I had never before seen anyone entitled to the prerogative of royalty. Then there was a scrape of chairs and a rustle of dresses as we all took our seats; the orchestra leader waved his baton; the music resumed, and the dancers, who had been immobile, like toys suddenly run down, began to dance again.

Yakob on my left, leaned toward me. "Well," he said, almost teasingly, "now you have seen our Gray Wolf. What do you think?"

I turned to stare again at Atatürk, perhaps thirty feet away. Lehman tugged my arm. "Don't look, don't look," she whispered urgently. "Don't call attention to yourself." Yakob looked at his wife – I could never understand how such a lusty, outgoing man could have married so proper a woman – and grinned at me. "She is right," he said. "If he likes you, he may adopt you."

Burhan, opposite me, looked dark.

I had heard these stories. Atatürk was reputed to have many mistresses. When he took a new favorite, the girl who had been discarded became his adopted daughter. He financed her education, even helped her make a good marriage. I thought of the other tales I had heard. He was the greatest warrior, the greatest lover, the greatest playboy. He could outdrink any man; he was rarely completely sober, but even when drunk made effective speeches; he had incredible vigor, he slept only four hours a night; he had once sent Germany's powerful Franz von Papen weeping like a child from an audience with him. He was aloof, brilliant; in military school he had been given the name, "Kemal" – "Perfection" – a man of sudden and awful





decision. Once he was to appoint a fleet admiral. Sitting with his highest naval officers, he announced, "Whoever outdrinks me becomes admiral." They sat ordering raki, the Turkish national drink, which is almost pure alcohol. One by one the men slumped from their chairs. Only a young officer of twenty-five was still able to drink glass for glass with Atatürk. Finally Atatürk was unable to move; the young man downed a glass. At twenty-five, he became Admiral of the Turkish Fleet.

Could I believe these stories? Some Yakob had told me, and I never knew when he pulled my leg. There were so many legends about this strange man who was the idol of Turkey.

I stole a glance at him again. Our eyes met; I felt the blood rush up my face and I turned swiftly away. Yet I knew, as though this were a prearranged script, what would happen next. An aide bowed at our table. The President would like Their Excellencies Burhan Belge and Yakob Kadri and their ladies to join his party.

I glanced at Burhan; his face was even darker. He was jealous! At my side Lehman was so upset she could hardly keep her seat. But Yakob was all smiles, his black mustache almost twitching with delight. He loved intrigue; he nearly burst into laughter, watching his wife's and brother-in-law's discomfiture. "Come, come," he said to me. "Are you afraid? We are all friends."

We rose and went to Atatürk's table. Whether by design or accident, Burhan seated me and himself at the far end of the table. I sat, looking down, as the waiters hastily set places for us. I heard a deep rasping voice, "Bayan Belge, have you ever tasted raki?"

I looked up and said, abashed, "No, Pasha."

Everyone roared. In my own Turkish I had said, "No, Excellency Mister."

"Well," he said, "you will see it now."

He filled a glass with a hand that trembled slightly, and added a little water; it turned cloudy and looked like milk. He sent it down to me. Everyone watched as I sipped. Raki is an anise drink like Pernod, and very powerful. I choked, put it down, and went into a coughing fit.

Atatürk burst into laughter. Everyone followed suit, save Burhan, who sat dour and silent at my side.

"Do you smoke?" was the President's next question.

I said, "Not yet, Pasha Efendi", which brought laughter again. I couldn't understand what I had said that was funny.

"This is a good one to begin on, then," Atatürk said amiably. "With my compliments." He sent down a thin, flat cigarette rimmed in gold, with "K.A." embossed in tiny crimson letters. I puffed, inhaled daintily, and coughed again.

"Burhan Bey, your lady isn't accustomed to us yet," said Atatürk. He seemed to be enjoying himself. Our food was served; we began to eat. Burhan said nothing. Lehman was quiet. Yakob was silent, too. Atatürk sat back, taking no food, but allowing his glass to be constantly refilled.

A few moments later, Atatürk turned to the woman on his left. I heard his question. "Madame, do you dance the waltz?" She hesitated, then said softly, "Regrettably, no, Your Excellency." He went down the line of ladies and received the same reply from each. Is it possible, I wondered, that these sophisticated women don't know the waltz? When he reached me, I said, "Yes, Pasha Efendi."



"Good". He rose, a little unsteadily, and the entire roomful of people rose with him. He escorted me to the floor and we danced. He was a strong man; he held me firmly; I had no idea how much he had been drinking, but he was able to lead me heavily, in the steps. I thought, terrified: the whole room is watching me. This is Ataturk, the hero, one of the great men of history, dancing with me. I am dancing with a god, a drunken god. Yet he could make conversation. "How do you like our country?" he asked. I dared look up into his eyes. The pupils were so light blue as to be almost colorless; it was like looking at a blind man yet one whose eyes pierced you through. "I adore it," I said. "It's so different from Hungary." Was I learning Turkish? Yes, my husband had provided me with a tutor. Had I been able to understand, he went on indulgently, why people laughed when I spoke? I shook my head. When he explained the absurdity of Pasha Efendi and added that Pasha was a banished word which belonged to the old Turkey, I tried to cover my confusion by asking if the waltz was so unknown here. Ataturk smiled. "No, Bayan Belge, but because I specified the waltz my ladies understood; they deferred to our Hungarian guest." I thought admiringly: yes, these women know how to handle a man. I grew a little more confident, but I was wretched because of my dress. Burhan liked simple clothes and so I had come in a long black sheath with a plain white collar; compared with the other elaborately gowned women, I must have looked like a schoolgirl. If only I were wearing décolleté! But Ataturk did not seem displeased by what he saw. And it came to me again with whom I was dancing. If Mother could see me now! Mustafa Kemal dancing with me!

We returned to the table when the music stopped but instead of taking me to my seat, he had an extra chair placed next to his. "Please," he said, still standing. I sat down.

Ataturk surveyed the table. "I have a proclamation to make," he said. "From now on Turkey and Hungary are brother and sister. Is not our history alike?" He pointed out similarities. "We have even the same words. 'In my pocket are many apples.'" Pocket, knife, boot, apples – both peoples, he said, used identical words.

When he had finished he sat down heavily. We all ate in silence. He said suddenly, "We shall leave now." He gestured to Burhan and my husband, unsmiling, left his chair. "Burhan Bey", said Ataturk, "I will drive Bayan Belge home."

Burhan's face was a mask. "If you please, Excellency, I should prefer to do that."

"And you may take home any of my ladies you wish," Ataturk went on, as though Burhan had not spoken. My husband shook his head and said expressionlessly, "If you please, Excellency, I will take my own wife home."

"What?" demanded Ataturk. I was not sure if he was serious or not. "You don't care to escort any of these very lovely ladies?"

Burhan did not reply. Ataturk burst into laughter. "Good, good," he said. "This is a man". He rose, turned unsteadily, the policemen surrounded him, the ladies smiled and bowed a gracious good night, and the President's party left.

We drove home in near silence. Lehman said, "Really, when he is drunk—" Burhan said nothing. He was never to mention this episode. I sensed rather than knew his courage. I had heard that Ataturk had three men beheaded because they would not discard the fez. He was an absolute monarch and completely unpredictable. Not so many years before a Turkish





ruler could have said to anyone, "I want your wife for this night." And the latter would have bowed deeply and replied, "As you wish, Pasha. It is my honor." Indeed, any other man would have served his wife on a silver platter to Atatürk. But Burhan had stood up to him.

In the back of the car Yakob said to me softly, "My dear, you handled yourself well." And then, stroking his mustache as though it were all his doing, "I think he approves of you."

For days I was intoxicated by the thought. But if Atatürk liked me, there was no evidence of it in the next weeks. I was presented to İsmet İnönü, the Prime Minister, and his wife, and to his mother, a bubbling little old lady who refused to give up her veil. "I am an old Turkish woman and I stay as I am," she would say. "If Atatürk wants to behead me; let him. What will he get? Only an old woman's head." On Wednesday afternoons she served tea for the wives of government officials, and I would sit at her feet, chattering in broken Turkish while she listened, chuckling. There I learned that in Turkey one never said all went well; one only complained about one's house, one's servants, one's husband. Otherwise Allah punished you for the sin of pride. Each morning I rode Fatushka, sometimes to the very grounds of the palace, wondering what I would do if Atatürk himself suddenly appeared at a window and beckoned to me. Sometimes I had tea with Sir Percy and Lady Loren and listened entranced as he told me dramatic stories from British history, or of his days in Cairo. Outside Turkey, events moved swiftly. Hitler took Austria, Chamberlain and Daladier went to Munich-Burhan grew gloomier by the day. I received long, chatty letters from Mother. Hungary seemed in another world. Though Europe might be going down the drain, Budapest's night clubs were never gayer.

Her letters made me very homesick.

In front of his shop Numad the Circassian sat taking the sun.<sup>1</sup> As I passed by, he said with a smile, "Come down from your horse, Excellency. I have something that might interest you." I followed him into his rug-draped Office. He clapped his hands and a moment later a small boy hurried in with coffee. Numad opened a drawer and took out a square of white tissue paper, which he carefully unfolded. Glittering in the noonday light was a miniature hand fashioned of gold. Numad bent over it lovingly. He handed me a magnifying glass. "You must see it through this, Excellency-such workmanship, such beauty."

I looked through the glass. It was an utterly exquisite thing. "Not the Afghan minister, I'm sure," I said, watching Numad's face. "He would not have such taste. Who is it this time?"

Numad picked up the tiny hand and dropped it into my palm. "It is yours, because you are so pretty," he said. Half amused, half-annoyed, I began, "Please," but he said solemnly, "Excellency, listen to me. This is no ordinary piece. It is modeled after the hand of Fatima, daughter of Mohammed, and whoever possesses it will be granted good fortune forever."

I stared at it, intrigued. Numad's soft voice went on, "Somebody wants you to have it because it is known that beauty with good fortune is a blessing, but beauty without good fortune is a curse."

I found my voice. "You mean it is mine, to take with me?"

<sup>1</sup> Numad was one of the six Circassian brothers who run an antique shop in Ankara (Zsa Zsa Gábor, *My Story Written for me by Gerold Frank*, p. 64.)





"Well,..." said Numad. I must not jump so quickly. He had a key. The key opened a door in the old city of Angora. He would tell me where the door was, but no more. To possess the golden hand of Fatima, I must show my good faith by using the key. I would not be compromised. "I assure you, it is not what you think," he said. There was nothing more he could tell me. He sat looking at me and I sat looking at him.

"Oh, this is ridiculous!" I exclaimed. "Take back your magic."

He accepted it soberly. "Think it over, Excellency, please," he said, and bowed me out.

That night I could not sleep. Who wanted me to have this magnificent gift--simply because I was pretty? And a secret door in old Angora? This was like the Caliph of Bagdad, and Sinbad, and Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. I was terribly intrigued. Could it be Yakob Kadri's mischief? But he was in Switzerland. Lev Karakhan?<sup>1</sup> I couldn't imagine it. Burhan, testing me? Burhan would never play with me like this. By the time a week passed I was burning with curiosity. Each morning I went riding and on the way I stopped at the shop and looked at the hand of Fatima and went home and thought about it. I could not endure the suspense. I had to know who wanted to give it to me.

All right, I thought. I'll find out. I said to Numad, "Where is the key?"

He produced a small key. On a slip of paper he wrote the address in the heart of the old city. "At four o'clock tomorrow afternoon", he said. "Do not be late."

Surely I was not the cleverest girl in the world then. I was very young; I was bored with my husband; I was not interested in what Ciano said to von Ribbentrop, or that a French mission was to visit Turkey, or in Burhan's dark predictions that Europe was finished and the Japanese would rule the world. I was lost in this strange Moslem country. I had no real confidante. Most wives in the diplomatic colony were at least ten years older than I; Burhan's friends, like him, belonged to Mother's generation, not mine. I was treated as a child and I thought as a child. It was humiliating to be the wife of an important man yet not at home in his society. And Numad the Circassian, with his sad, martyr's face, had said again and again, "Excellency, go. You cannot let this pass--"

I found the address in a tiny street that wound like a corkscrew through the old city. It was hardly more than an alley, so narrow that no automobiles, only carts, could pass through. It shops were litte windowless cubbyholes in the wall, in the depths of which I could barely make out the shopkeeper. As I went by, there were calls to me: "Come in, Efendim, come inside!" The Turks thought it was good luck if a blonde woman set foot in their shop. I passed a butchershop; the carcass of a cow hung head down, blood dripping, almost covered with flies. I shuddered. Then, so narrow that I could easily have missed it, I came upon an ornately carved wooden door. This was the number Numad had given me. I fitted the key in the lock; the door swung open and I stepped over a high wooden sill into a small cobblestoned courtyard, brilliant with sunlight. Lying in the sun, their great green oval eyes blinking, were the cats of Angora--huge, their fleece like fur blue-white as the moon. In the center of the courtyard a gigantic olive tree twisted upward. On the far side, facing me, was a covered staircase. I picked my way among the dozing cats and climbed the wooden steps; at the top a door was ajar. Automatically I pushed it open.

<sup>1</sup> Lev Karakhan was the Russian Ambassador in Ankara. See Zsa Zsa Gábor, *Ibid*, p. 66.





In the gloom at first, after the brilliance of the courtyard, I saw nothing save a huge window whose light was shut out by heavy hangings. Then I made out a table and beyond it, the dim outline of an armchair. Someone was sitting in it, back to me. A voice said, "I knew you would come."

I stood like a sleepwalker. I would recognize that voice anywhere. "Woman was not made to resist temptation," it went on. The figure turned in the chair to face me and it was Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

Of course, I knew it all along, ran through my mind, I have known it all along, but I dared not believe it.

Aloud, I stammered, "Pasha Efendi, it is not the way it appears--" I was deeply humiliated. He had caught me, this man I admired so tremendously. I had taken the bait like anyone else. "I only wanted--" I was on the edge of tears. "It was curiosity--"

He smiled. "I believe you, my dear, but it is well that you are not trying to convince Burhan Bey at this moment. Now come forward where I can see you." I advanced a few steps. "Sit down." He indicated a chair by the table, which had been set for two. On it was a bottle of raki and a large tray of Turkish sweets. "We shall take tea together," he said. He gave a signal and a servant slipped in with tea.

What room this was, I had no idea, save that it must have been a private house he maintained in the old city, a place no one would dream of finding him. "Now, tell me about yourself," he said, pouring a drink for himself. At first I fumbled, trying to explain again, but he swept that aside. "Come, come," he said. "I understand". I began to talk, and he listened as I told him about my parents, my brief stage career, my marriage to Burhan. I told him about my pets Mishka and my Arabian mare Fatushka, about Ali, about the way I had embarrassed Burhan with the baby bear, about the Wednesday afternoon teas at Madame Inonu's and her challenge. He laughed a great deal as I talked. When I had difficulty with my Turkish, I used French, which he understood perfectly. He would stop me. "Speak Turkish. I want to hear you speak Turkish". Then he began to question me about my impressions of Turkey. Which appealed to me more – Istanbul or Ankara? Did I think Ankara modern enough? Did I find the Turkish women well dressed? He had established a school for women to learn make-up and European styles. As he talked, he drank steadily.

After a while he glanced at his watch. I had been there nearly an hour. He seemed suddenly very tired I realized that my audience was over.

He did not rise but watched as I left. "Goodbye, Pasha Efendi," I said. He nodded. For all I knew, he had already dozed off. His glass had never been empty.

As in a dream I descended the narrow stairs and found myself in the courtyard again. It had begun to grow dark, the sudden, swift darkness that falls almost instantly in the Near East. The cats were up now, prowling silently back and forth over the paved stones. I had to be home by 5:30, before Burhan arrived. In the half dusk I hurried through the crowded little streets, smelling of coffee and spices and a thousand and one tantalizing odors, and suddenly, I jumped. A man, passing, had pinched me. I began to run, not afraid, but thinking: little does that man, whoever he is, know that I just came from Atatürk, and that if I told Atatürk, he would be beheaded. I felt a terrific grandeur about myself as though I were a queen who could order a man beheaded.

Then I found a taxi and came home to discover Burhan already there, in his study, reading.





"Where were you?" he asked, from behind his newspaper.

I still see myself standing guiltily by his chair like a school-girl. He was sullen because he had not found me at home, but I knew that whatever he was reading was far more interesting to him than anything I might say or do.

"Where were you, Zsa Zsa?" he repeated.

I said, "Well," I started to stutter. I was so full of Atatürk I could think of nothing but to blurt out, "I was with Kemal Atatürk."

Burhan put down his paper and stared at me. Then he burst out in one of his rare laughs. "Don't tell me such a story," he said.

"But it's true, Burhan," I protested. "I had tea with Kemal Atatürk. Just the two of us. In a secret place in the old city."

Burhan said indulgently, "You're sure you haven't been to one of those silly American films and are pretending you're a movie star again?"

I said--and I couldn't help smiling because it was so unbelievable--"No, no, I saw Kemal Atatürk and he asked me all about Turkey and if I think the Turkish women are modern enough..."

Burhan laughed and said, "I'll find out what you've done", and returned to his paper. I was dismissed. "All right, Burhan," I said, "It's a story. I made it up." I walked away, thinking: if I tell the truth, nobody believes me. If ever I have something to hide, I'll simply tell the truth because people will laugh it off. Why not?

My visit to Atatürk was the first of many. I never spent more than an hour; I always had tea; he would sit in his deep easy chair with a glass; I did nearly all the talking. I spoke about whatever popped into my mind: the costume ball given by M. Poncet, the French ambassador, to which at Sir Percy's suggestion ("In any other century, my dear, you would have been a queen.") I came as Helen of Troy; the behind-the-scenes gossip on Embassy Row, the dinner parties I attended, my latest gowns – Mother often sent me evening dresses because "haute couture you surely won't find in that Godforsaken Ankara" – who our dinner guests were, and what they said, and what I really thought of them. Atatürk laughed a great deal – I always seemed to amuse him. "Do you know," he said, "you have the life of practically all my officials in your hands?" Not because I knew any state secrets but because when he asked me idly, "And what do they say about me?" I told him. He knew I could not lie to him. It was impossible to lie to him; those terrible, colorless eyes looked through you. They had an Oriental cast, for they seemed to turn obliquely upward at the outer corners, and when he laughed his eyes crinkled, the corners turned up even higher, and I was suddenly reminded of a laughing Chinese mask. He loved intrigue. He told me of a busy morning in which he received a steady stream of ambassadors, half of them not speaking to the other half. It required the greatest skill to avoid a diplomatic incident. "But Pasha Efendi", I asked, "wouldn't it be embarrassing if they met?" "That was impossible, my dear. I had each man ushered into a room and the door locked." He took a drink and mused. "I wonder how those pompous men would have felt had they known I had each of them under lock and key?"

I don't think I jeopardized anyone's position by my reports to Atatürk; but my heart swelled at the thought that I was his confidante and had a place so near the throne.

One day, toward the end, I learned that an important mission was to be sent to Cairo, to explain Turkish nationalism to leaders of the Egyptian independence movement. Burhan very much wanted the appointment. For





days he walked about alternately hopeful and dejected. I said to Atatürk, "Please, Burhan dies to go to Egypt. Won't you do this for him?" A week later my husband came home jubilant. No, he would not tell me. "You blab everything," he said. I begged and nagged and finally he almost whispered, "I'm being sent to Egypt on a mission, but don't breathe a word to anyone." Not to tell him what I had done was one of the hardest kept secrets of my life. I thought triumphantly: what have the great women of history – Pompadour, Du Barry, Marie Antoinette – what have they on me?

On Thursday afternoon in late autumn, 1938, I emerged from the Ankara Riding Club and stopped short. Everything about me on the street seemed subtly changed. Then I realized: I was surrounded by silence. People stood in front of their shops, in little clusters on the sidewalk, whispering; some were weeping. As I walked on, like a rustle the words came to me, "El Ghazi – El Ghazi, he is dead."

Kemal Atatürk had died in his Marmara Palace in İstanbul. Burhan came home, pale and wan. "We have had a great loss," he said heavily. I had tears in my eyes. "I know", I said. He looked at me, almost as if I were a stranger. "How can you possibly know?" he asked. "How can any European?"

I went to my room.

A pall of grief fell over Turkey. In the hours that followed I stayed by my radio. A score of people were crushed to death in the hysteria that swept crowds waiting to enter the palace where his body lay in state. He was to be brought by battleship and funeral train to Ankara.

Burhan was at the Foreign Office endlessly, repeatedly on the air, broadcasting to the world in many languages. I stayed in my room, staring at the golden hand of Fatima, with its promise of good fortune forever. I thought he was a weary, tried, sick man, and he wanted to be amused. And I had amused him in the last months of his life.<sup>1</sup>

In a later autobiography, published 31 years later with the assistance of a ghostwriter, Gábor would also mention her relationship to Atatürk, but in a slightly different manner:

I was also bored. My happiest times were when I was not with my august husband, but instead riding my beautiful white Arabian mare, Fatushka, or roaming around the mazelike streets of Ankara, exploring the two-thousand-year-old city, sometimes stopping and dreamily gazing up to a hill high above Ankara on which stood the great pink marble palace of the famed ruler of Turkey, the great demigod Kemal Atatürk. When the legendary hero was in residence, the lights of his palace gleamed brightly, casting a radiant glow over Ankara, and the people below slept peacefully.

As many of the women slept, they dreamed of Atatürk. Burhan, his voice bursting with cynicism, had once read to me from the national paper that, according to their survey, eighty-five percent of Turkish women dreamed of Atatürk. I could quite understand why, because the man whom they called the savior of Turkey was fashioned from the stuff that every woman's dreams were made of.

<sup>1</sup> Zsa Zsa Gábor, *My Story, Written For Me By Gerold Frank*, The World Publishing Co, Cleveland, 1960, pp. 68-81.





Atatürk was one of those rare men whom I believe the Lord sent to save their country. A masterly politician and fearless warrior, he was half man, half god, through his almost supernatural power transforming the entire country from feudal state into modern republic, abolishing slavery, polygamy, the turban and the veil, thus freeing women from servitude. Given the name "Gray Wolf" by his legions of followers, he was a man of sudden and terrifying moods, overwhelming, all-powerful.

Now in his early fifties, his sexual exploits were still the talk of Turkey. Legends abounded of his voracious appetites, his virility, his ability to exist on only four hours of sleep a night and to outdrink, outfight, and outlove rivals half his age. He was the conquering hero of his time, the subject of a million tales, with the eyes of his people always upon him, breathlessly tracking his golden path through boudoir and battlefield alike. At home I'd hear assorted whispers about his exploits: "Now he is in Istanbul." "Now he is in a whore-house." "Now he is in London where he is ordering two dozen silk pajamas from Turnbull and Asser." His palace and his legend dominated Ankara utterly. Soon, too, it began to dominate me.

I'd seen him one night at a restaurant, with a black cloak swirled dramatically over his tuxedo, a man with gray hair, with strange, almost colorless green eyes, impeccably dressed, a man of many moods, a man whose civilized veneer disguised an implacable ruthlessness. At that moment, looking down at the tablecloth as protocol demanded, I remembered the tales I'd heard about him, how he discarded favorite mistresses by adopting them as his daughters, how he'd divorced a beloved wife after she harmlessly asked where he'd been one day, how he considered every woman to be his prey, following his desires with a passion so relentless that he had even once stolen one of Burhan's wives.

Burhan's face had darkened on Kemal Atatürk's entrance. In contrast, however, the face of his brother-in-law, Yakob Kadri [Karaosmanoğlu], Turkish ambassador to Albania, who was with us that evening, lit up mischievously. Sensing Burhan's discomfort, he whispered to me, "Look at him, look at our Gray Wolf." Defying Burhan, defying convention, defying the beating of my heart and nakedly revealing the fire that had swept into my face, I looked up at the idol of all Turkey. And Atatürk looked back at me as if he had known me for a thousand years. Suddenly, everything seemed inevitable.

Laurence Olivier once said, "To one's self inside, one is always sixteen with red lips." Well, looking back at my entanglement with Kemal Atatürk, it is difficult for me not to view it with the eyes, and report it in the voice, of the fifteen-year-old I once was, a fifteen-year-old nurtured on French novels, half in love with her flamboyantly dominant father and ripe for romance and intrigue. A butterfly caught in a net woven with hands motivated by a mind far more cynical and wise than her own and whose goal was, for his own intricate reasons, to capture her. To put it simply: I was fifteen and yearning for romance. Atatürk was fifty-one and searching for a romantic accomplice. From the start, we were destined to be deeply compatible.

It began fairly routinely. Every Wednesday, I would go to the Riding Academy, then after my ride drink Turkish coffee in a small antique shop in the heart of old Ankara run by seven Armenian brothers. Fascinated, as always, by beautiful things, I'd wander around the store, trying on ornately bejeweled bracelets, examining engraved swords, and generally whiling a few hours away. This Wednesday, my visit to the shop began as usual with





me sipping the rich Turkish coffee and gossiping with the young brothers. Then one of them produced the Hand of Fatima.

The hand was the most beautiful object I had ever seen in my life. Fashioned out of gold – with a diamond cuff – holding one perfect diamond, the truth was that the Hand of Fatima was a precious artifact from Istanbul's famed Museum Vieux Sérail. At the time, however, I didn't know that. All I knew was that Ahmed, one of the brothers, was whispering to me in his gutturally accented voice, "There is a man – a wonderful man – who wants you to have luck throughout your life. He wants nothing from you and he does not wish to harm you. All you have to do is take this silver key to an address I will give you, at four on any afternoon and open the door."

At another age, in another life, I might have been skeptical. Or afraid. But since childhood I have always been superstitious. Even today I am ruled by every superstition under the sun. I believe that if you put a hat on your bed, you will have bad luck forever. I believe that if a black cat crosses your path, you must walk, drive, or ride two steps backward. I believe that if a mirror breaks, you have to go to Paris, stand on the Pont Alexandre III, and throw the pieces over your shoulder into the Seine, or you will have bad luck for the rest of your life. Being superstitious is Hungarian Gypsy. I believe in fate, in good luck and in bad luck. And I always have.

I wanted the Hand of Fatima and I was determined to get it. My second husband, Conrad Hilton, a good judge of character, always maintained, "When you want something, you are like a woman wearing blinkers. Nothing will stop you." He was right. Nothing would stop me. Nothing would frighten me. I waited three days. Then I took the silver key and went to the address somewhere in the back streets of old Ankara.

I was throbbing with excitement as I opened the large oak door and found myself in a cobblestoned courtyard shaded by an ancient olive tree. The courtyard was filled with white doves. In front of me was a marble staircase with gilded iron banisters. Almost in a hypnotic trance, I went upstairs. And there, in a room in front of me, sat a man in an oversized carved-oak chair, his back to me, smoke from his hookah drifting high above him. Then he spoke, in a deep, beautifully modulated voice. "I knew you couldn't resist it. No woman can resist the combination of diamonds and luck."

Atatürk turned and faced me and I was struck forcibly by his strong resemblance to my father. Realizing that he had waited for me for three days, I knew that he must be angry and that he would want to make me feel the sting of his anger. I didn't have long to wait. "I knew you could be bought by the promise of good luck", he said contemptuously. But I didn't mind, knowing that his pride demanded that he belittle me to repay me for having made him wait.

His anger didn't frighten me. I was used to Father's anger and it excited me. Just as I was about to speak, Atatürk clapped his hands and, as he had orchestrated it, the dancing girls appeared, their multicolored veils floating suggestively in the coolness of the room. As they danced their slow, sensuous dance, wordlessly Atatürk motioned that I sit on the red velvet and copper-colored cushions next to him. Mesmerized, I complied. He offered me his pipe – and, unquestioningly, I took it. Then he passed me a gold-and-emerald-encrusted cup filled with raki, a potent drink made partly of anise. I sipped from the cup.





Until now, I have never before revealed what happened next, what happened when Atatürk dismissed the dancing girls and the two of us were alone. Sometimes I think it happened in a dream, sometimes that I was in an opium haze, or a stupor induced by the raki. All I know is that that day, Atatürk, the conqueror of Turkey, the idol of a million women and the envy of countless men, took my virginity.

After that, we met regularly every Wednesday afternoon, once I had finished at the Riding Academy. We spent hours together in Atatürk's secret hideaway, locked in each other's arms, while he dazzled me with his sexual prowess and seduced me with his perversion. Atatürk was very wicked. He knew exactly how to please a young girl. On looking back, I think he probably knew how to please every woman, because he was a professional lover, a god, and a king.

I was petrified that Burhan would discover the truth, would find out exactly where I spent my Wednesday afternoons. But he didn't. He didn't discover my infidelity – an infidelity that far transcended sex. For unlike me, Atatürk was not a naive romantic. While I spent most of the time with him in a semi-awake state, a sleepwalker unable to see straight or to focus on reality, Atatürk's mind remained razor sharp.

He would question me ceaselessly about the parties Burhan held for the Young Turks every Tuesday, about the secret meetings held in our house, and about the true allegiance of the ambitious men who visited Burhan, their leader, to talk politics with him. As Atatürk must have known, these men talked quite freely in front of me, revealing their plans and their feelings about the man they called "The Savior of Turkey." And many of them hated him.

So it was that I, Zsa Zsa Gábor of Budapest, Hungary, a coquettish fifteen-year-old who loved dogs, horses, and the admiration of all around her, held the fate of some of the most powerful men in Turkey in the palm of her delicate little hands. Yet, bewitched as I was by Atatürk, enthralled as I was by his might and grandeur, enraptured as I was by my first passion, a part of me remained alert, guarded, prompting me to offer him snippets of information that would not lead to the death of any of the men who had been guests in our house.

My romance with Atatürk lasted for six months and during that time he used me and I, in my own way, in return used him. I gave him information – harmless though it was. And he gave me lessons in love, in passion, and in intrigue. He also ruined for me every other man I would ever love, or try to love. In Turkey, Atatürk was a god. He was a god and he had loved me. For the rest of my life I would search for another god to eclipse him.

Atatürk died in Istanbul on November 10, 1938, at the age of fifty-two, of cirrhosis of the liver. All of Turkey mourned his passing and I felt numb and bereft. At his memorial service, Burhan gave the eulogy. I hid my grief and tried to be a good wife to him. But in my soul I knew that Atatürk's death meant the end of my life in Turkey. The magic had gone, so had the passion. All I had left was drab depression, and the opulence of our life in the corps diplomatique did nothing to change my feelings. I began to plan to change my life.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zsa Zsa Gábor, *One Lifetime Is Not Enough*, Delacorte Press, New York, 1991, pp.19-27.



Burhan Belge's son Murat Belge in one of his newspaper articles would comment as follows on the discrepancies of these two different autobiographies published with an interval of 31 years:<sup>1</sup>

Because Jo Jo [i.e., Zsa Zsa], who managed to marry far more times than my father, was a 'charmer' (for, shall we say, that type of woman who made herself 'pleasant', and also 'intoxicated' those before her), Like the about gunslingers in Texas who would put a notch on the grip of their pistol for every man they shot, she needed to keep a tally of [the 'hits' during] her own career.

When I went to America in the 1960s within the framework of a student exchange program, I came across Jo Jo[Zsa Zsa]'s autobiography. It gave ample space to the list of which I spoke, and she had placed 'The Great Leader' as her 'memories of Turkey', because that would be more interesting for the American reader than my father. In the book, Zsa Zsa recounts that, a young, mounted officer approached her while she was getting on her horse and brought her to a mansion, saying that it was 'very important'.

Years later, [Zsa Zsa] felt that it was necessary to update her autobiography. I suppose her autobiography is rather [ample], even if not as great as the number of husbands she's had. In the new one her 'ghost writer' changed the part that is of interest to us. This time, there is a person who gives [Zsa Zsa] a key and a piece of paper with an address. Unable to suppress her curiosity, when [Zsa Zsa] arrives at the address, she finds the 'Great Leader' sitting there. The more her autobiography takes on a life of its own, the more it acquires the color of a 'Thousand and One Nights' and overshadows the real Turkey that recedes into the background.

Years later the veteran journalist Yılmaz Çetiner would relate in his memoirs the following conversation with Burhan Belge's sister Leman Karaosmanoğlu:<sup>2</sup>

Since she herself lived through that period and knew many [of the] people well, including Atatürk, I asked Leman Karaosmanoğlu: "Was there a love affair between Atatürk and Zsa Zsa, as she claimed [in her book]?"

Leman Karaosmanoğlu laughed: "Zsa Zsa told all manner of lies in order to advertise her self", he said. After that, she added:

"My older brother had already divorced Zsa Zsa. He wanted her to leave Ankara as soon as possible. He wouldn't even meet with her. Nobody knew anything about anyone. It was [considered] highly uncouth to speak of these things. Zsa Zsa Gábor's claim that she had been with Atatürk, that there had been such a romance is simply a beautiful fairy tale that this woman cooked up in her imagination. But it is true that during those years she met and spoke with a great many of the important men of state and their wives in Ankara".

There was the incident at Karpiç [Restaurant] that is spoken of. Let me tell you what I heard from those who were there that night:

<sup>1</sup> Murat Belge, "Tekzip!", *Radikal*, December 1st, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Yılmaz Çetiner, *Nefes Nefese Bir Ömür*, (Istanbul: Epsilon Yayınları), 2006, p. 316.





One night, Atatürk went to Karpiç. Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu and his wife Leman, Falih Rıfkı Atay<sup>1</sup> and his spouse, Burhan Belge and his wife were all there. Kılıç Ali<sup>2</sup>, Salih Bozok<sup>3</sup> and Tevfik Rüştü Aras<sup>4</sup> were all there with Atatürk. That evening nobody dared to get up to dance, because Atatürk was there. When he wasn't there they would crowd the floor. As for Atatürk himself, he both loved to dance and also wanted the men to dance with their wives as a demonstration of civilized behavior. When Atatürk saw that nobody was dancing, he got up himself and invited the wife of Burhan Belge, Zsa Zsa, to dance. She was sitting at a side table and been earlier introduced to him. The orchestra began to play a waltz, because it knew that Atatürk loved waltzes. After that, he invited them to his table; the tables were moved together.

Atatürk asked Zsa Zsa how her Turkish lessons were going and urged her to study and learn Turkish well. Afterward, he drank rakı and noticed that she wasn't drinking; "Come, have a sip", he said. He then offered her a cigarette [from a case] upon which was written in gold gilding 'Kemal Atatürk'. Zsa Zsa said that it was the first time that she had smoked a cigarette, and she began to cough.

Atatürk turned to Burhan Belge; laughingly he said "Your wife has not yet adapted to our customs".

A little later he left Karpiç with his coterie.

Zsa Zsa Gabor has exaggerated this incident. She's written a fantasy scenario in which she's thrown in love and sex. She incorporates Burhan [Belge] into her script as the jealous husband.

Despite the discrepancies between the two versions of Zsa Zsa Gábor recollections of Atatürk, since the publication of the more recent version in 1991, over the following 14 years Turkish journalists never mentioned them, much less wrote stories about them. Finally in 2005 the journalist Doğan Uluç—and subsequently *Milliyet* writer Can Dündar—would make reference to Gábor's autobiography. In his piece, Uluç claims that he had met and spoke with Gábor in New York in 1991 and that he was allowed to read the proofs of her book, and that his jaw dropped from what he read. Additionally, he relays some of the conversation that passed between himself and Gábor:

When I raised the question, saying "Up to this point you haven't said a thing about the topic [at hand]. You are making a claim that will cause more of a sensation than the first time. There [was] always a great throng of people around Atatürk. [Yet] no one has ever come forth and mentioned [anything about] Mustafa Kemal approaching you...", she gave the unsatisfying reply "It's necessary for the book to express it". But she wasn't inclined to give any further information [on the matter].<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Falih Rıfkı Atay (1894-1971) was one of the most important journalists of the epoch.

<sup>2</sup> Kılıç Ali (1888-1971) was a member of parliament.

<sup>3</sup> Salih Bozok (1881-1941) was aide-de-camp of Atatürk.

<sup>4</sup> Tevfik Rüştü Aras (1883-1972) was Minister of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>5</sup> Doğan Uluç, "Mustafa Kemal ve 'gözde'leri (!)", *Hürriyet Pazar*, February 13th, 2005.





Like Doğan Uluç, Can Dündar also expresses his skepticism regarding Zsa Zsa Gábor's 'recollections' of her relationship with Atatürk. Dündar, too met with Gábor and gave his account of their conversation:

With great fondness and nostalgia, she sat in her magnificent Beverly Hills villa and told me about her years in Turkey, about Atatürk, General Press Director Burhan Belge, İsmet İnönü and [İnönü's wife] Mevhibe Hanım, "How is Mevhibe Hanım's younger son Erdal?", she asked.

"Burhan was a very good person. He sent me to school and had someone fix my teeth", she said.

One day later on she made the acquaintance of Atatürk at Karpiç's [restaurant]. And in her own words: "I was smitten from the very first glance; that evening he danced with me and a short while later we began our relationship".

According to her, this affair continued for six months, through a series of weekly rendezvous.

When I mentioned that the information she had given struck me as a little fanciful, she attempted, to the best of her recollection, to describe the mansion where they had met, and the objects inside it.

In all probability, Atatürk quizzed this excited young girl about his opponents who came and went to her house and about that which was said about him there.

She divorced upon Atatürk's death and left Turkey in 1939.

Throughout our conversation, she spoke about Atatürk praise and admiration....

I asked "How would you describe him?", to which she spoke three little unfamiliar words:

"Macho...macho...macho..."

Her truly interesting confession is this:

"I sought him in all of the men that I subsequently married".

At the time I came [to see her] she was married to her 8th husband, no less.

And now we came to the secret in the title of her piece....

When she arrived in America with a Turkish passport in her pocket, Gábor made the acquaintance of Conrad Hilton, the owner of the famous hotel chain. They married in 1942

Gábor continued:

"I am still a Turkish citizen. I am still a big fan of Turkey, but Conrad, he couldn't even find where Istanbul was on a map. The thoughts that he simply must get to know Turkey and open a hotel there kept nagging me. And in the end, I succeeded in persuading him".

Zsa Zsa and Hilton divorced in 1946.

But Turkey got itself a hotel. When writing the love stories of the Hollywood celebrities who came to the hotel, Hilton's reporters missed the real love story that was behind the hotel itself.

These days, the 85-year-old Gábor is near the end of her life.... I still remember those things that she told me 'Write that after I'm dead'....<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Can Dündar, "Hilton'un sırrı", *Milliyet*, August 21st, 2005.



Süleyman Yeşilyurt would also quote Gábor's memoirs in his book entitled *Ata'nın Hayatındaki On Dokuz Kadın* (The Nineteen Women in Atatürk's Life).<sup>1</sup>

### The Memoirs of Arthur Robert von Hippel

In 1933, when the *Dâr-ül-fûnun* was temporarily closed and then transformed into İstanbul University, one of the German-Jewish scientists who arrived in Turkey was the Physicist Arthur Robert von Hippel (1898-2003) and his family. In his memoirs, von Hippel writes the following intriguing lines:

Two nights later we intentionally missed a big festivity given for the foreign professors by the Gazi at the palace in Dolmabadge. We did so for a strange reason. The Gazi had the habit of absconding with any lady he liked especially well and of keeping her for a few days before returning her to her rightful husband. This I did not want to risk.<sup>2</sup>

### Corinne Lütffü and Madame Sophie Goldenberg

While Mustafa Kemal was in Istanbul he would make the acquaintance of the Corinne and Edith, the daughters of Ferdi (Ferdinand) Pasha, a physician of Italian origin in the Ottoman army. Unlike others, Atatürk's relationship with them never became passionate, but instead developed into a deep, heartfelt friendship.<sup>3</sup> Another woman with whom Atatürk carried on a relationship between 1924-1938 was Sophie (1895-?) the wife of Edmond Goldenberg (1890-?), the director of the Istanbul branch of the Deutsche Bank who lost his position after the Nazis came to power due to his Jewish origins.<sup>4</sup> Edmond and Sophie were German nationals who on April 15, 1940 were given Turkish nationality by a decree of the Turkish government.<sup>5</sup> Teddy Kollek, who would later go on to be the mayor of Jerusalem after the birth of the Jewish State, was at the time a member of a Zionist youth group who was sent from Palestine to Istanbul in order to assist European Jewish refugees to reach the Promised Land. He would later mention in his memoirs an

<sup>1</sup> Süleyman Yeşilyurt, *ibid.*, pp. 294-296.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Robert von Hippel, *Life in Times of Turbulent Transitions*, 1998, p. 72, [www.mrs.org/s\\_mrs/sec.asp?CID=3296&DID=141205](http://www.mrs.org/s_mrs/sec.asp?CID=3296&DID=141205)

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Mango, *ibid.*, pp. 122-123. Also Melda Özverim, *Mustafa Kemal ve Corrinne Lütffü Bir Dostluğun Öyküsü*, Milliyet Yayınları, İstanbul, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Steinberg, *The Deutsche Bank and Its Gold Transactions During the Second World War*, C.H. Beck, München, 1999, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> Turkish Prime Ministry Republican Archives, document 030.18.01.02.90.35.11



Ashkenazi Jew from Istanbul named 'Goldenberg' who, together with the Istanbul textile merchant Simon Brod, managed to make the necessary contacts with the necessary Turkish officials in order to facilitate this. Goldenberg was familiar with those 'important' persons that could smooth out matters. According to Kollek, these persons in positions like his, including the 'beautiful spouse' of Goldenberg, who had been 'Atatürk's former mistress', were of vital importance in assisting those Jewish refugees who wished to go to Palestine.<sup>1</sup> Ruth Klüger, a member of Aliyah Bet, the underground organization, which during World War II was helping the escape of Jews from Europe to Palestine, spent some time in Istanbul meeting Turkish Jewish community leaders for arranging the safe passage of the refugees thru Turkey. Among the few people she met was Edmond Goldenberg and his wife Sophie. In her memoirs she describes the Goldenberg couple as follows:<sup>2</sup>

The man, I noted with surprise, was a hunchback. Small, misshapen, like an elegantly dressed Toulouse-Lautrec. The woman with him was tall, olive-skinned and astonishingly beautiful. She had high cheekbones, huge gray eyes, soft dark hair. I assumed she must be Goldenberg's mistress.

Introductions were made. They sat at our table. Her name was Sophie. She was Goldenberg's wife.

### Atatürk and the Rumor of an Eventual Remarriage

In September 1934 *The New York Times* would publish the following news:<sup>3</sup>

The possibility that Turkey's 57 year old dictator Mustafa Kemal Pasha might choose a bride from among the four marriageable sisters of King Zog of Albania was under discussion here today.

Belgrade dispatches to Austrian newspapers said that an announcement of an engagement may be made during the expected visit of King Zog to Ankara shortly.

The 38 year old Albanian once declared publicly that Balkan tradition would not allow him to marry until he, as the eldest son of the ruling house, had successfully married off all his sisters. Two of six are now married.

Mustafa Kemal, who emancipated Turkish women, is said to have expressed a desire to remarry. He was divorced in 1925 by his own decree from Latife Hanoum daughter of a wealthy merchant of Smyrna.

<sup>1</sup> Tedd and Amos Kollek, *One Jerusalem*, Tel Aviv, 1979, pp. 54-55.

<sup>2</sup> Ruth Klüger and Peggy Mann, *The Last Escape The Launching of the Largest Secret Rescue Movement of All Time*, Doubleday and Company, New York, 1973, p. 441.

<sup>3</sup> "Kemal Said To Seek Bride", *The New York Times*, September 30th, 1934.





However this rumor would never materialise.

### Conclusion

In a situation in which the anti-Kemalist and anti-Republican Islamist stream is ascendent in Turkish politics, neutral researchers hesitate to undertake an objective study of Atatürk's private life, because they know full well that every new bit of information that they might discover and bring forth on this subject is liable to be eagerly snatched up with the hope of using it to sully the name and reputation of Mustafa Kemal. Indeed, it is with this concern in mind that, despite the 14-year delay in bringing the relationship between Zsa Zsa Gábor and Atatürk before the Turkish-speaking public, a great number of persons have subsequently and continued to assert that this relationship is a mere fantasy. Atatürk adopted daughter Ülkü Adatepe made the following assessment in regard to her adopted father's relationships with women:

Zsa Zsa Gábor is not correct. Rumors are spoken, such as that he enjoyed himself with the wives of certain individuals. These aren't true either. But in the final analysis, Atatürk was also a human being; he may have been a dandy, and in any case, he was unmarried.<sup>1</sup>

This contradictory response by Ülkü Adatepe, wherein on one hand she asserts that the rumors regarding Atatürk's relations with women are untrue, while on the other, she admits that he was 'only human' and may very well have been something of a rake, may help give a sense of just how sensitive the subject remains in Turkey.

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<sup>1</sup> "Keşke Atatürk Fikriye ile evlenseydi", February 21st, 2002, <http://www.kemalist.org/html/print.php?sid=468>



### 3- THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT DECISION TO SUPPRESS ILLICIT DRUG PRODUCTION

#### Introduction

Drug addiction has always been an international problem and United States is one of the places where heroin addiction became a major problem. For this reason, in 1911 the U.S. Congress passed the Opium and Narcotic Drug Act prohibiting the import of the crude opium used in the manufacturing of heroin. The *Bulletin on Narcotics* of the UNODC gives the following situation after this congressional law was accepted:

The production of heroin by pharmaceutical factories ceased within a very short time. As a substitute for heroin, the factories concentrated their efforts on the production of codeine. The quantity of codeine substituted for heroin must be about two to six times the weight of the quantity of heroin originally used if a similar medicinal effect is to be obtained. Since there is little difference between the quantities of heroin and codeine produceable from a given quantity of opium, the quantity of opium required to be imported into the United States had to be greater after the enactment of the law. This is the main reason for the high opium import of the United States shortly after 1924.

Although the legitimate production of heroin practically ceased after 1924, the addicts' demand for the drug continued to be supplied by smugglers. The heroin traffic in United States reached its peak in the last part of the 1920's. By 1930-1932, there was a sharp drop in the traffic due mainly to international restrictions. The heroin still in the illicit traffic was generally adulterated.<sup>1</sup>

#### Turkey's Decision to Suppress Illicit Drug Production

In 1925 the Convention on Narcotics Drugs was adopted by the League of Nations. This Convention, which imposed stricter controls on the international trade in narcotics, was to go into effect in 1929. Until then, Egypt had been the main heroin supplier for Europe. When these stricter controls were applied to Egypt, Turkey became the main supply source. However, even after the Convention went into effect new legislation was enacted in Turkey which resulted in the closure of three big heroin factories.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.unodc.org/unodc/bulletin/bulletin\\_1953-01-01\\_2\\_page004.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/bulletin/bulletin_1953-01-01_2_page004.html). Bulletin dated January 1, 1953, p. 4



Undaunted, the Turkish manufacturers simply transferred their equipment to Bulgaria, where three or four even larger factories subsequently went into operation.<sup>1</sup> On December 27, 1932 the Republican People's Party, after having debated the question within the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), decided to take further measures to suppress the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs.<sup>2</sup>

### What Was Behind This Decision?

The answer to this question can be found in another document in the National Archives. In a report to the State Department, dated 26 July, 1932, Ambassador Charles H. Sherrill, who had decided to use the time he was posted in Ankara to prepare a biography of Atatürk, brings light on how this decision was taken. Earlier that day Sherrill had lunch with Yusuf Akçura, a deputy in the TGNA and President of the Turkish Historical Society. Akçura had been appointed by Atatürk as his liaison officer for Sherrill's biography project. In his report of his lunch with Akçura, Sherrill described him as being

...very complimentary about the Gazi's opinion of my unworthy self due to his exaggerated appreciation of my efforts as his biographer. Yusuf Akçura Bey had intimated this in a letter written from Ankara before he came down to İstanbul.

Sherrill reflected on how he could use this positive impression of Atatürk:

[The letter] gave me time to consider for which American purpose that good opinion of the Gazi might best be used. Embassy records seem to indicate that chief among our possibilities of service are (1st) care of the interest of our institutions in Turkey, and (2nd) attempts to reduce the illicit trade in opium and similar narcotics.<sup>3</sup>

Sherrill had already made the proposal to Ankara that he translate the new Turkish History that made a very good impression on the influential political circles of Ankara. Therefore, he decided to talk about narcotics with Akçura and the conversation developed as follows:

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.unodc.org/unodc/bulletin/bulletin\\_1953-01-01\\_2\\_page004.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/bulletin/bulletin_1953-01-01_2_page004.html). Bulletin dated January 1, 1953, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> "Fırka grubunda afyon mes'elesi görüşülüyor", *Cumhuriyet*, December 27, 1932 / "Fırka Grubu Uyuşturucu maddeler için yaptığı müzakereyi dün bitirdi", *Cumhuriyet*, December 28, 1932.

<sup>3</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated July 26, 1932, no. 867.114 NARCOTICS/635.





I told Yusuf Akçura Bey that it was my purpose next time I visited the United States to request permission from the Department to make a few speeches before Chambers of Commerce upon the new Turkey and its remarkable President, and for that purpose intended to use much of the historical detail which he, as liaison officer, would provide me for my written history of the Gazi. I remarked that any one making such speeches concerning a foreign country in the United States must prepare himself in advance against interruptions by people in the audience, who might not be well-wishers of that foreign country. He interrupted me at this point (as I thought he would) to exclaim: "That is just what the Armenians will surely do in your country".

I replied that it should not be difficult to prevail against any such Armenian interruption, because that all belonged to a chapter of Turkish history now happily closed, but that a much more difficult point to answer would be if an Armenian objector referred to occasional seizures made in the United States of opium derivatives illicitly introduced from Turkey. He expressed great surprise at this. Yesterday I let the matter drop, and passed on to the chief subject matter of our conversation, i.e. my history of the Gazi. Today upon his departure, when escorting him downstairs, I told him that yesterday I had been much surprised at his surprise at public interest in the United States in the illicit drug trade in Turkey, and briefly elaborated the matter, answering certain questions he propounded. He had suggested that he would shortly like to have me meet with him at the Gazi's summer residence in Yalova to discuss the general plan of the proposed biography. I have now sufficiently informed Yusuf Akçura on the illicit drug traffic matter so that if I can casually bring it up at this joint interview he will be fairly well informed upon the subject and thus enable me through him to follow the matter up with the all-powerful Gazi. A man who wants to have his biography written in a foreign language for publication in a foreign country should be interested in clearing up one or two matters (such as the illicit drug trade) which might prejudice the public of that foreign country against him. It cannot be predicted how useful my efforts may be in this matter, but it certainly seems idle for me, thanks to this biography, to enjoy his favor unless I can turn that favor to the advantage of some American cause.<sup>1</sup>

### Conclusion – The Rationale for this Decision

The rationale for this decision is to be found in the American Consul General's periodic "Digest of the Turkish Press Report", which reads as follows:

It is not possible to say that a desire to offset the unfavorable impression created by the fez incident<sup>2</sup> prompted the Gazi to manifest suddenly on December 25 an interest in the suppression of the illicit traffic

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated July 26, 1932, reference 867.114 Narcotics/635.

<sup>2</sup> This incident is narrated in pp. 146-152.





in narcotic drugs. He did, however, manifest such an interest and personally presided over a cabinet meeting which decided, not only to adhere to the Geneva and Hague conventions, but to take severe domestic measures to eliminate Turkey as an important source of supply of illicit drugs and put both the production of opium and the manufacture of its derivatives under a strict surveillance. The measures, which were approved by the People's Party on December 27, include the permanent closing of the opium derivatives factories now in existence, the licensing of poppy growing, the manufacture of derivatives in a state factory and the repression of the illicit traffic by the special courts in charge of the repression of smuggling. It is a pretentious program and one diametrically at variance with the attitude heretofore taken by Turkey. Naturally, the position taken by the press is that humanitarian considerations alone dictated the decision. It should not be forgot, nevertheless, that the decision involves an addition to the number of state monopolies and that the prospective state factory will obviously have an opportunity to obtain its equipment from the existing factories on very favorable terms, so that the material side of the matter, even if it has been overlooked up to the present, can hardly fail eventually to present itself. Moreover, in Turkey as elsewhere, there is often a discrepancy between alleged intent and execution, with the result that the conclusion that Turkey has eradicated the drug evil should not be jumped to. But the point which is emphasized for the time being is that the Gazi has identified himself with a bang with the forces of good and even that he has placed himself at the head of a great moral movement. An editorial setting this forth mellifluously and published by Yunus Nadi Bey in the *Cumhuriyet* is "dedicated to His Excellency the very honorable General Sherrill, Ambassador of the Republic of the United States of America accredited to the Turkish Republic".<sup>1</sup> In addition to constituting evidence of the esteem in which General Sherrill is held by the inner circle of the People's Party for which Yunus Nadi Bey invariably speaks, it must be apparent that this dedication is an indirect appeal to all those forces in the United States which see in the drug traffic one of the outstanding evils of the present éra, so that the opportunity to make capital out of the Gazi's action has not passed entirely unnoticed. It is this fact which suggests the thought that the great man's coming out so forcibly against sin may not be unconnected with an idea of distracting attention from his recent unfortunate wrestling match with John Barleycorn.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Yunus Nadi, "Ankara'nın yüksek derecede insanî bir kararı", *Cumhuriyet*, January 4, 1933.

<sup>2</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, "Digest of the Turkish Press for the Period December 11 - January 7, 1933", document no. 867.9111/387. "John Barleycorn" is an ancient folksong from Britain. The character "John Barleycorn in the song is a personification of the cereal crop barley, and, more specifically, of the alcoholic beverages made from it, beer and whisky." [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Barleycorn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Barleycorn)





#### 4 – THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION TO ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THE AMERICAN PRESS CONCERNING ATATÜRK

##### News on Atatürk's Health in the Foreign Press

By April 1938 Atatürk's health was beginning to decline significantly and reaching the point of no return. However, both Ankara and the Turkish press refrained from disclosing this truth; on the contrary, almost to a man they continued the policy of rejecting or denying any news or rumors concerning Atatürk's health. American Military Attaché in Ankara, Major Boyden Williamson sent a report to the State Department during this period that would paint an accurate but pessimistic picture of the true situation:

The Turkish press has been reiterating, since the departure from Turkey of the French medical authority who was called in consultation of the state of health of the Gazi, that the Turkish President was simply in need of a rest which he now was taking and that his complete recovery was progressing most satisfactorily. It quoted the French physician to that effect.

This is the view generally accepted in diplomatic circles in Ankara, if the conversation had by me with one chief of mission recently truly reflects the opinion there, as I believe it does. He stated that Atatürk was now on a rest regime of the strictest sort, involving his denying himself to anyone such that the newly arrived Minister of Czechoslovakia, after waiting a considerable time for an audience to present his credentials, was finally received by the Prime Minister instead of the head of state. While this regime would continue for an indeterminate number of months, he said eventual complete recovery was assured.

Now this version does not tally with another I have had in the strictest confidence and from a source which can not be revealed out which is entitled to exceptional credence because of the source whence it comes.

According to my informant, what the French consultant really told Atatürk was:

That his malady was cirrhosis of the liver. That provided he adhered rigidly to the regime imposed refraining from any alcoholic stimulants at all he the doctor would venture to give the patient a probable duration of life of two months.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated April 26, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/43.



Although what Major Boyden stated in his report was generally correct, Turkey's Washington Ambassador Münir Ertegün would continue the policy of denying any negative rumors concerning Atatürk's health and would send a letter to the American press denying such rumors:

Some American newspapers have recently published a dispatch from Beyrouth giving alarming news about the health of President Kemal Atatürk.

These reports are without foundation. On the contrary the President, having had an attack of Grippe sometime ago, and after having taken a rest on the counsel of his physicians, has entirely recovered and resumed the direction of State Affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, reports on the worsening health of Atatürk continued to appear in the American press. A piece that appeared in the *Washington Times* would claim that Atatürk was paralysed:

The London *Daily Telegraph* reported from Bairut, Syria, today that Kemal Atatürk, dictator president of Turkey is suffering from severe paralysis and has given up control of government affairs.

Premier Jelalbazar [Celâl Bayar], said the dispatch, probably will succeed to the Turkish presidency.<sup>2</sup>

In the face of such reports, Wallace Murray, Chief of the State Department's Division of Near Eastern Affairs sent his own assesment to Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles and Secretary of State Cordell Hull:

While the present report is undoubtedly garbled in some particulars, we have been receiving for some time apparently reliable reports, emanating from quarters close to Atatürk, that he is suffering from cirrhosis of the liver. Atatürk's irregular habits and heavy drinking over a considerable period of years are of course facts beyond any doubt. While his iron constitution has stood him in good stead in his earlier years, it seems questionable that, being now in his late 50's, he can keep up his present pace with impunity.

The passing at this time of Atatürk, who has been a great force for peace and conciliation in the Balkans and the Near East, could not beviewed without concern by various European powers jockeying for position in that part of the world – Britain now has the advantage, due in some degree at least to Atatürk's dislike for the Germans, acquired during the World War.

As for a successor there is none in any way measuring up to him in calibre and prestige. Until the break some six months ago between Atatürk and Ismet Pasha, the then Prime Minister, the latter would have been taken for granted as Atatürk's successor. The only other figure of outstanding

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated May 20, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/ 44.

<sup>2</sup> "Kemal Stricken, London advised", *Washington Times*, May 17, 1938.



national reputation in Turkey is Fevzi [Çakmak] Pasha, the Chief of Staff, who however, is now generally regarded as too old to assume the burdens of the Presidency.

If Atatürk is really seriously ill, the situation will bear watching.<sup>1</sup>

While the State Department was concerning itself with the news and rumors concerning Atatürk's health, several articles would appear (in April 1938, one in the *Washington Times*, the other, in the magazine *Ken*, and another one in *Life* magazine at the end of October, only ten days before Atatürk's death), which caused serious concerns at the State Department regarding the potential negative influence of these publications on U.S.-Turkish relations.

### a) Article Published in *Ken* Magazine

The first of these three articles was an anonymous article published in *Ken* magazine.<sup>2</sup> This article's main feature was its subjective evaluation of Atatürk's private life:

If Kemal, the man who defeated the British in the Dardenelles and the Greeks at Smyrna, had been a European and not an Oriental Turk he would today be classified with Napoleon because he is probably the greatest soldier of this century.

If Kemal Atatürk were not dictator of Turkey he would be in jail as one of the worst hoodlums in his country.

If what Kemal has done – good or bad had happened in Europe or America he would today be ranked as more important than Mussolini, Lenin, Hitler, Stalin, Generals Foch, Haig and Pershing, Colonel Lawrence, T. and F.D. Roosevelt.

In his personal history, however, Mustapha Kemal Pasha, the Ghazi or "conqueror of the infidel Christians" now Kemal Atatürk or First Turk, has left a record so depraved, so vicious, so besotted, drunken, cruel, and altogether terrible that the wonder increases that such a contradiction could exist in the mind and body of one man.

In particular Kemal Atatürk has left a vile record of his relationship with women.

There were four important women in Kemal's life and he fought with them all; they made life miserable for him and he made life miserable for them; he loved all four very dearly and one of them he drove to suicide. He has never been faithful to a woman. He is without a doubt the most promiscuous among the noted men of the century.

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated May 18, 1938, reference 867.001, ATATÜRK, KAMAL/42.

<sup>2</sup> "Atatürk, Hoodlum As Hero", *Ken*, April 21, 1938, pp.76-79.



Although hundreds of women have passed through his life and his unofficial harem, Kemal's history so far as important women in it are concerned can be divided under four headings:

Zubeida, Fikriye

Halideh, Latifa

The first woman who influenced his life was of course his mother, but she was also the cause of much of his unhappiness. Zubeida differed from old-fashioned Turkish women who veiled their faces at seven and lived in degradation the rest of their lives. She wore the veil but she also wore the figurative pants in the family. She was boss. Like so many Irishmen who come into public life in England are the Albanians who in the days of the Ottoman Empire came into public life in Turkey. Zubeida was an Albanian, the daughter of a small south Albanian farmer and a Macedonian woman.

Zubeida was tall, muscular, blue-eyed, and had yellow hair. She was a healthy peasant girl with primitive instincts and feelings about religion, patriotism and success. She was a fighting woman, sometimes violent in her quarrels in behalf of her son's progress. Mustapha was the light of her life. Her first child, also a son, had died in infancy, and like all Oriental people, there was not much use for the daughter Makboula.

Mustapha was blue-eyed and sandyhaired, skinny, taciturn, bellicose, and thoroughly spoiled by his mother.

Like Stalin, Mustapha was in childhood trained for the priesthood and like Stalin he was in later life to become the enemy of organized and corrupt religious sects.

The father, Ali Riza, was a clerk and a nobody who died penniless. Mustapha's first job was cleaning stables, feeding the cows, herding the sheep, and he would have remained all his life an illiterate peasant if his mother had not continued her fight to make a man of him. After two years of peasant slavery, he being now 11, he was sent to school at Salonika, thanks to Zubeida's years of nagging of relatives. Mustapha always loved his mother, despised his father, hated his stepfather later.

The Albanians are like the Irish, and Kemal is a fine example. The Irish, known for their defiance of authority, go in for being soldiers, and in America policemen. The Albanians made good Turkish soldiers although their instinct is resistance to all constituted authority Kemal was a rebel. In his youth he dreamed of overthrowing. He became a cadet in a military school and was given the name Kemal because the captain himself was named Mustapha.

At 14 Kemal began running after loose and unclean women in the port of Salonika.

At 20 he was sent to the general staff college in Constantinople and plunged into the night life of the capital. He frequented the Greek and Armenian harlots of old Galata.

Like most promiscuous and careless men he paid for his so-called "gay" life by acquiring what is euphemistically known as a "social disease."

In 1913 Kemal was appointed military attaché to Bulgaria. He took to Sofia the same careless manners, arrogance toward the female sex and casualness which marked his military college life in Constantinople. To drinking gambling and lechery he added ballroom dancing. His flirtations were the crudest. He simply believed he could overwhelm any woman and make her submit after a few drinks, a whirl on the diplomatic ballroom floor



and a few passionate words. He received frequent rebuffs but did not mind them, except in the case of the daughter of the Bulgarian general Kovatchew for whom he felt more than a momentary passion, but this pretty and very proper young lady turned him down cold and sent him on his biggest debauch. He lost huge sums at dice, learned poker and won his money back; stayed out all night and every night for weeks; drank more than he could hold and in desperation tried out all the other less pretty vices.

The result was that he ruined his health.

Because he blamed women for his social disease he became, as an admirer gently puts it, "enamored of his own sex." This abnormality lasted for about ten years.

It was at the time of this display of desperation in adjusting himself to the world that the world went to war. And Kemal became the great Turkish hero. No one in America of course heard of his name. The British censorship controlled the cables and the press of the world from 1914 to 1918, and the British were completely defeated in the Dardanelle although on two occasions all they needed was a little more intelligence to win the whole war. In both these instances it was Kemal who beat them. In one instance the situation was so bad that Kemal and 20 men he rallied held up the whole British advance and made the enemy think a big push was coming from the Turkish side.

In Constantinople Kemal went to his mother's house. But he fought with her. He loved her but he would not stand for her trying to order his life for him. He was glad when he was sent as an attaché to Berlin.

He got drunk at a dinner the Kaiser gave to Prince Vahdettin whom he accompanied, and made insulting remarks to Hindenburg about the campaign in Asia Minor. He, Kemal, knew all about it. He was in fact preparing to fight there when suddenly he was stricken. He was punished by his sins, not for them. He had done what millions of humbler men have done and are doing today; he went to a so-called men's specialist, the advertising kind, the quack doctor. This quack had succeeded only in hiding the symptoms of the disease and Kemal thought he had been cured. But he wasn't. In fact he was more deeply infected than ever.

For months Kemal lay in bed twisted with terrible pains while real doctors in Vienna and Carlsbad worked to save his infected kidneys. The medical treatment was slow and painful and for weeks seemed to have no effect. But there was a moral if not a medical effect. Kemal began to suffer fits of melancholia. He was down in the hell of despair. In later years and even today he suffers these same fits and drinks himself into a stupor in the effort to get out of them.

On his way home he became a victim of the Spanish flu then raging in Europe and his weakened condition almost cost him his life. In fact he was out of the army for the first half of 1918, and got back only in time to halt the retreat through Palestine, Syria and Anatolia.

The disgruntled, unhappy, morose, haggard Mustapha Kemal went to live in Shishli outside Constantinople after the armistice. He had found he could not live with his mother and sister. He couldn't stand having women around. He gave up most of his friends but retained only one, Colonel Arif, with whom he had waged several campaigns against the British and against the night clubs of Salonika and Constantinople. And because the two walked hand in hand and Kemal called Arif endearing terms, gossip was not slow in saying they were more than friends.



There now entered into Kemal's life the woman who was to affect it most profoundly.

Halideh Edib Hanum, the most famous woman writer, feminist and progressive leader in Turkey<sup>1</sup> was well known in the United States for these things long before she became the "Joan of Arc" of Turkey and the "Woman behind the conqueror of Smyrna." She herself refuses either title and never sought journalistic honors. Yet it is true that she was the leader of the emancipation movement and that she did win Kemal over to all her progressive ideas which he later carried out, and it is likewise a fact that in order to help him, especially in those hours of depression when he was a defeatist, Halideh put on the uniform of a corporal and marched with the Ghazi's victorious armies through Asia Minor.

They became friends in the exile of 1920. At this time the British occupied Constantinople and began giving the Sultan orders. The nationalist leaders Ismet and Fevzi fled to Anatolia, and with them Halideh and her husband Adnan, who made their way to Angora – now known as Ankara. The Sultan sententiously outlawed Mustapha Kemal, excommunicated them from the church, sentenced him to death and, moreover, posted the announcement that the Turk who killed Kemal would not only perform a patriotic and sacred act but would be doubly rewarded, financially in this world, and with dancing girls in the next.

Halideh and her husband came directly to the agricultural school where Mustapha was making farm experiments and where he lived. For weeks they met every day, discussing the bad news from everywhere, from Constantinople where the Sultan had agreed to the British suggestion that a reward for the death of Halideh and others should also be offered; and from Smyrna, where the Greeks were advancing in all directions in Asia Minor.

Things looked so black that all the leaders of the future Turkey made preparations to die. Kemal would shoot himself. So would Halideh. She asked for a revolver and Kemal taught her how to shoot. Her husband, Adnan, prepared a deadly poison for himself. The reports on how the Sultan's men treated prisoners and how the Greeks were treating theirs made this preparation logical. Suicide was preferable to the most horrible torture known to western man.

To add to his troubles the National Assembly proved unmanageable. Up to now Kemal had been a democrat. Now he was changing his mind. Up to now he had been completely under the influence of Halideh and her ideals of pure democracy, equal rights for all, the French and American republican ideas, but now he felt that in war time at least there was no place for a democratic body of congressmen interfering with his plans. Naturally this meant a break with the woman who had him under her political wing.

He stormed into the room occupied by Halideh and Adnan and began raving against politicians, mob rule, the stupidity of the common people, the fallacy of democracy and after about 15 minutes of yelling, he turned on Halideh and said:

"What do you think about this?"

"I do not understand you, prince," Halideh replied.

<sup>1</sup> Halide Edib [1884-1964] memoirs are; *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, The Century Co., New York, 1926, and *The Turkish Ordeal*, The Century Co., New York, 1928. Halide Edib was the first Muslim girl to graduate from the American College for Girls in Istanbul. Soon after graduation she married a mathematics professor and divorced in 1910 when his husband married a second wife. She remarried in 1917 Dr. Adnan [Adıvar]. She was active in women's movement and established in 1908 the Society for the Elevation of Women.



"I mean," replied Kemal beginning to shout again, "that I myself shall rule. I will give the orders and the rest will carry them out. I will command. No one will dare criticize. I want no more advice. My word is law. And you too (turning to Halideh) shall do absolutely as I command – without question."

Having thus severed relations completely with the woman who had shaped his political and social thinking and influenced his life more than any other person, Kemal sought out his male companion, Arif, and got drunk, staying drunk for night after night.

Moreover, as if to emphasize a break with the past, Kemal also severed relationship with all the friends and organizations and principles of his youth. He insulted every general he knew, he gossiped about the other leaders, and he would talk for hours about the stupidity of having ideals and especially about the hypocrisy of 20th century morality. He, who throughout his life was incapable of having any loyalty for man or woman, denounced the principle of loyalty.

Knowing that his life was constantly in danger he hired a special bodyguard of wild mountain tribesmen called Lazzes who were commanded by the brigand Osman Agha. Since he did not believe human beings capable of loyalty and his life depended upon these cutthroats he could think only of money as the way to ensure their guarding him against his thousands of enemies.

But, like all persons who defy the world and set themselves up as dictators, Kemal suffered from doubt and confusion, and having no one to advise him not even Colonel Arif whom he suddenly dismissed, he sought the easiest way out: drink and debauchery.

The result was a complete breakdown.

In addition to his old kidney trouble, brought on by sex excesses, he had an aggravated case of malaria, and a mental and physical collapse which would have killed many another man. His old healthy peasant blood however kept him alive.

But what actually saved his life was the appearance of the woman who figures in it most tragically. She was Fikriye Hanum, a distant to the dictator's relationship with women emerges.

Halideh Edib wanted woman suffrage. A great many of her friends were American and British women who had participated in the suffrage movements in both countries. Latifa was in this respect practically American. These two women dictated the emancipation of women to Kemal Pasha, and Kemal becoming dictator, established the Swiss code, giving women almost equal rights with men.<sup>1</sup> Not only was the veil abandoned, but the harem was abolished, and of course polygamy, and the women of Turkey were raised from serfdom to the status of human beings.

And then what happened?

Kemal, successful, grew more dictatorial; he "purged" the party, executing opponents, suppressing the newspaper of the opposition driving opponents into exile. Halideh Edib and Latifa protested such actions. One

<sup>1</sup> The Turkish Civil Code took as a basis the Swiss Civil code which was accepted in 1921. The Turkish Civil Code was accepted at the Turkish Parliament on February 17, 1926 and became effective on October 4 of that year.





day Kemal drew up a list of "the hundred and fifty undesirables"<sup>1</sup> but Halideh fled to England before Kemal's so-called "desperadoes" had a chance to imprison or assassinate her. Latifa also over-rated her power. There were daily quarrels. Latifa hated dictatorship. She opposed imprisonments and executions. She refused to stay in the kitchen. So one day Kemal wrote out a simple note saying he divorced her – an old Mohammedan custom – and Latifa went home just as millions of other unemancipated Mohammedan women had done before her.

This was the end of feminine influence in Turkey. The two women, brought up with American ideals of equality, were defeated although the Swiss code was never repealed.

The final blow was struck in the Spring of 1931. Women who had been given the municipal franchise, and who had expected parliamentary franchise would follow, were astounded to hear that the government had decided against them. Kemal and his group were angry over the municipal elections. "Votes for women" failed in Turkey. Again "the American plan", sponsored by a woman with an American education, was discarded.

After the divorce from Latifa and the flight of Halideh, Kemal said:  
"I am glad I am free. I want to remain alone – forever."

In the great purge of the opposition political leaders in which Kemal signed the death warrants for 18 old friends, he included the name of Colonel Arif. Arif had been closer to Kemal than any woman. He was the only person outside his mother who really knew Kemal, and the only living person. But Kemal held the sheaf of death warrants in his hand, signed one after the other. His staff officers who were present said that when Arif's death warrant came to the top Kemal put his cigaret[te] into the ash tray, hesitated for only a fraction of a second, and signed.

Since then Kemal's only relationship with women has been one of debauchery.

This anonymous article upset the State Department greatly. Wallace Murray, Chief of the Near East Division, sent a copy of it to the Under Secretary Sumner Welles and Secretary of State Cordell Hull with the following comments:

As you will note from a few of the marked paragraphs, the anonymous writer of this article attacks in an almost unheard of and malicious manner the private life of the President of Turkey.

Whatever the facts may be regarding President Atatürk's personal habits – and I may say that our information does not bear out the present allegations- I think there can be no doubt whatsoever that unbridled license of this kind in attacking a foreign chief of state who is the idol of his people, if continued, will seriously affect our present most friendly relations with the Republic of Turkey and gravely compromise American interests as a whole in that country.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The "hundred and fifty undesirables" are 150 people who were against the National War of Independence. They were excluded from the amnesty provisions of the Lausanne Peace Treaty and deported from Turkey. In 1938 they were pardoned and were permitted to return to Turkey.

<sup>2</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated April 20, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/33.



Under Secretary of State Summer Welles' reply to these comments were as follows:

Obviously, I agree with the views that you express in your memorandum, but specifically what do you propose doing about it?

So far as I can make out, this new magazine is to be devoted largely to the publication of scandalous, inflammatory, and improper articles about foreign governments and foreign chiefs of state or statesmen. That would seem to be the selling basis. So far as I know, there is no legislation which would cover cases of this kind. If you think anything is to be gained by making an informal approach to one of the publishers or editors and if you think there is such an individual who would listen to reason in the interest of the country, let me know.<sup>1</sup>

According to Murray, the anonymous author of the *Ken* article had made extensive use of H.C. Armstrong's 1933 biography of Atatürk, *Grey Wolf*:

A biography of President Atatürk written by H.C. Armstrong, a British subject, and entitled *Grey Wolf* was published in Great Britain in 1933. Much, if not most, of the unsavory material in the *Ken* article appeared in *Grey Wolf* but since the latter was a full length portrait of the great Turkish patriot references to unsavory episodes in his career are only incidental in the book, which is, on the whole, a most sympathetic and laudatory account of Atatürk's amazing career.

I am informed that the Turkish Embassy in London made a complaint to the British Foreign Office over certain passages of the book but, in any case, no action was brought against the author or the publisher. It has furthermore been reported (just how reliably I cannot say) by our Embassy in Istanbul that President Atatürk, in contrast to his shocked officials, rather liked the book and chuckled over many parts of it. It is very probable, on the other hand, that his reaction would be entirely different to the concentrated nastiness of the *Ken* article.<sup>2</sup>

In order to reinforce his above statement, Wallace Murray would also prepare a comparison chart between different passages of the *Ken*'s article and their relevant sources as written in *Grey Wolf* for the internal use of the State Department'in:

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated April 21, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/33.

<sup>2</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated April 26, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/36.



*Ken article*

(Column 2, end) "Zubeida was tall, muscular, blue-eyed, and had yellow hair. She was a healthy peasant girl with primitive instincts and feelings about religion, patriotism, and success. She was a fighting woman, sometimes violent in her quarrels in behalf of her son's progress. Mustapha was the light of her life. Her first child, also a son, had died in infancy, and like all oriental people, there was not much use for the daughter Makboula."

(Column 3 top) "Mustapha was blue-eyed and sandy-haired, skinny, taciturn, bellicose, and thoroughly spoiled by his mother."

(Column 3, top) "Like Stalin, Mustapha was in childhood trained for the priesthood."

"The father, Ali Rıza, was a clerk and a nobody who died penniless. Mustapha's first job was cleaning stables, feeding the cows, herding the sheep, and he would have remained all his life an illiterate peasant if his mother had not continued her fight to make a man of him. After two years of peasant slavery, he being now 11, he was sent to school at Salonika, thanks to Zubeida's years of nagging of relatives."

*Grey Wolf*

(Page 18) "Tall and powerfully built, with blue eyes and flaxen hair, she had the vitality of robust health. She lived close to the good earth from which she had sprung and had the qualities of the peasant. She was profoundly religious, patriotic, and conservative. .... Like every Turkish woman, her whole life was concentrated on her manchild an elder son had died at birth, and there was a daughter, Makboula by name."

(Page 18). "She spoils Mustapha without restraint, but he responded very little. He was silent, reserved, weak and bony, with pale blue eyes and sandy hair."

(Page 19). "Ali Rıza had given up his post in the Ottoman Debt and started trading in timber. He wanted Mustapha to be a merchant. Zubeida wanted him to be a priest. They sent him first to the mosque school."

"Suddenly Ali Rıza died. There was no money in the wood business. The family were penniless. Zubeida... claimed shelter with her brother..."

"There Mustapha was put to clean stables, feed the cattle, scare crows and tend the sheep."

.... After two year, when Mustapha was 11, Zubeida persuaded a sister to pay for his schooling. ....Mustapha went back to a school in Saloniki."<sup>1</sup>

The day after the article was published in *Ken*, Turkey's Washington Ambassador Münir Ertegün visited the State Department and conversed with Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles. Welles would report as follows in a 'strictly confidential' marked memorandum the minutes of his conversation with Ertegün:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, undated document, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/37.

<sup>2</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated April 22, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/32 \_.



I immediately stated to the Ambassador that I knew the reason for his call and that I wished, without awaiting any statement from him, to explain to him the deep regret of this Government and my own deep regret that any article such as that appearing in the April 21 issue of the magazine *Ken*, reflecting in the grossest manner upon the character of the head of a friendly state such as Turkey, should have been published in an American magazine. I stated that the Ambassador knew the high regard held by this Government for the President of Turkey and for the Turkish people, and that for that reason it was all the more regretted by this Government that such an article might be construed as reflecting the opinion of any portion of the American people.

I told the Ambassador that at the Cabinet meeting this afternoon the President had instructed the highest legal authority of the United States, the Attorney General, to make an immediate investigation of the powers of the Government of the United States to take action in the Federal courts against the publishers of this magazine, and that the Attorney General had promised me that he personally would undertake the investigation and give the President his recommendations in the immediate future. I said to the Ambassador that the President had particularly requested me to convey this information to him, and that as soon as a decision was reached by this Government I would personally advise the Ambassador accordingly.

The Attorney General would answer the Undersecretary by transmitting to him the legal comments of Golden W. Bell, Assistant Solicitor General of the Department of Justice.<sup>1</sup> Wallace Murray would appraise and summarise these legal comments as follows:

Mr Golden W. Bell, Assistant Solicitor General, is of the opinion that 'there is no federal statute dealing with libel and no basis on which the courts of the United States can exercise common law jurisdiction in criminal cases; therefore the only forums available for criminal or civil libel action are those of the District of Columbia and the states.'

Mr. Bell discusses briefly and practically eliminates the possibility of prosecution of this case in the District of Columbia. He is apparently of the opinion that criminal proceedings can be instituted only in the State of Illinois and that the proper procedure would be for the Secretary of State to transmit the complaint and evidence to the Governor or other officer of that State for consideration and appropriate action.

It will be noted that Mr Bell's statement to the effect that under the statute of Illinois 'truth would be a justification and a sufficient defense' is incomplete. The Illinois statute, according to our text, adds that publication of the truth must be 'for good motives and justifiable ends.'

After this summary, Murray advised as to what course the State Department should follow in the future:

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated April 23, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/35.



(1) To request the Department of Justice, preferably orally in the first instance, to ascertain informally through its District Attorney in Chicago from States Attorney Courtney of Cook County, Illinois, what the procedure and requirements would be under Illinois law in a criminal prosecution of this kind. It is, incidentally, not clear to us here who the complaining witnesses, if any, would be, and if such were required whether they would have to be Turkish officials.

(2) After obtaining the above and other relevant information on the subject, to discuss the matter fully with the Turkish Ambassador, informing him of the procedure that would be required if criminal action is instituted in Illinois. It appears necessary and desirable to take the latter step before proceeding to prosecution in order that we might be relieved of any embarrassment resulting from the far greater publicity that would be given the original libel as well as from the possible failure to obtain either an indictment or a conviction in the Illinois jurisdiction.

Murray was also not very sure whether, in the event that the case went to trial, the jury would decide that there was libel:

There is, of course, always the possibility that any jury called upon to hand down a decision in a case of this kind might give considerable weights to the fact that all or most of the libelous statements of the *Ken* article have already appeared unprotested in *Grey Wolf*.

Finally, the division chief would then conclude:

Since it has been recognized for nearly 150 years in this country that for the proper conduct of our relations with foreign countries the duly accredited representatives of those countries in the United States must be protected not only against physical violence but also against insult, there would appear to be no proper reason why we should not be equally concerned in protecting foreign chiefs of state from gross criminal libel in this country, which may well some day result in grave damage to the interests of our entire people.<sup>1</sup>

Two days after Murray's memorandum a meeting was organised in the State Department. The participants were: Golden Bell, Assistant Solicitor General of the Department of Justice, Wallace Murray, Chief of Division of Near Eastern Affairs, Mr. Ward of the Legal Adviser's Office and Mr. Alling, Assistant Chief of Division of Near Eastern Affairs. Wallace Murray would open the meeting by explaining its purpose as follows:

He [Wallace Murray] said that we were interested first in endeavoring to obtain informally information as to the procedure which would have to be followed in prosecuting the case in Illinois. For example, the question arose

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated April 26, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/36.



as to whether there would have to be a complaining witness and, if so, whether the Turkish Ambassador, one of his assistants or a representative of the Turkish Consulate in Chicago would have to act in that capacity. He added that discussions in the State Department had led us to believe that it was essential to have information of that character before we could decide upon what course to take. It would also be desirable to have an informal expression of opinion from state prosecuting authorities in Illinois whether there was a reasonable chance of obtaining an indictment and thereafter a conviction. Once this information was obtained, the Department planned to lay the situation before the Turkish Ambassador explaining to him informally what would be the chances of obtaining a conviction and cautioning him that the prosecution of the case might involve further dissemination of the original libel.

After this opening, Ward and Golden Bell would discuss how to proceed in prosecuting the magazine:

Mr. Ward said that he found it difficult to believe that if the case were properly presented to the jury a conviction would not follow. He said that it would not be a difficult matter to show that articles of this type endangered the lives and properties of American citizens and was even of vital interest to our citizens in this country in the event the United States should become involved in difficulties resulting from the publication of such libelous articles. Mr. Bell admitted the seriousness of articles of the type under consideration and agreed that every effort should be made to prosecute offenders under the criminal libel laws. He said, however, that he felt there was a good deal in the Attorney General's suggestion that in order to present the case properly to the prosecuting authorities in Illinois it would be essential for a representative of the Department to see Governor Horner personally and the Attorney General of Illinois and repeat to them the considerations which had just been stated by Mr. Murray and Mr. Ward. He said that the Department of Justice would, of course, be glad to cooperate in any way but that, as he had explained before, it was essential that the Department should avoid offending the susceptibilities of the local officials in Illinois.<sup>1</sup>

The day after the meeting Golden Bell, would phone Murray in order to tell him that he had since had the opportunity to talk with the Attorney General about the questions raised in the meeting. Bell reported his conversation with the Attorney General as follows:

The Attorney General told him that Mr. Igoe, the United States District Attorney in Chicago, was in an entirely different political camp from the Governor, the States Attorney General and Mr. Courtney, Prosecuting Attorney in Cook County. Under the circumstances, Mr. Cummings thought it would only prejudice our case if we endeavored to approach the state attorneys through the United States District Attorney. Mr. Bell added that

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated April 28, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/38.



the Attorney General had that very point in mind when, in the final paragraph of his letter of April 23, 1938, he had suggested that the State Department send a representative to Illinois to discuss the matter with Governor Horner, Attorney General Kerner or the States Attorney Courtney.

However the State Department was not sure whether Ambassador Erteğün would push the case for prosecution:

I said that, obviously, if we got the local authorities worked up to the point where they were not only willing but anxious to prosecute and the Turkish Ambassador then decided not to go ahead with the case, we would be placed in an impossible position.

Yet, despite all these discussions and brainstorming the bottom line was that the Assistant Solicitor General was not very sure of the chances of winning the case:

Finally, Mr Bell stated that, after considerable further reflection, he was inclined to doubt very much whether it would be possible to obtain a conviction in this case. He said that his experience with juries tended to convince him that they would not take such a case very seriously. He added that they would probably retire to the jury room and, reading over the magazine, would come across the articles on Mussolini and Hitler, and would conclude that Atatürk was one of the same type and finally decide in favour of the defendant.<sup>1</sup>

While these discussions continued Ambassador Erteğün visited Wallace Murray. Murray reported the minutes of his meeting with Erteğün as follows:

The Turkish Ambassador came to see me yesterday at my request and I presented the situation to him along the following lines:

The Department's investigations thus far in consultation with the Department of Justice appear to eliminate the possibility of prosecution of this case in the Federal courts. The only competent jurisdiction would therefore appear to be the courts of the State of Illinois where the libel originated.

This Department is endeavoring, through discreet inquiry, to ascertain what the exact procedure would be in case it is decided to institute prosecution in the Illinois jurisdiction. It is desirable, for instance, to know how far it might be necessary to draw any officials of the Turkish Government in this country into the proceedings. We would, of course, for obvious reasons, desire to spare the Ambassador and other Turkish officials here as far as possible. It now unfortunately appears that such information cannot be discreetly obtained without dispatching an official of this Government to Chicago to consult with the State's Attorney. This step would doubtless be taken unless meanwhile, and in view of other considerations set forth below, the Turkish Government may not desire the matter pressed.

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated April 29, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/39.



The Turkish Government is doubtless in accord with us in desiring to improve rather than to worsen the situation through any action that may be decided upon. If action is brought the libelous statements contained in the magazine *Ken* will of course inevitably receive widespread publicity. That cannot be avoided. If at the same time in the considered opinion of the Illinois State authorities most competent to judge there is little chance to obtain an indictment, and still less to obtain a conviction, matters would only be made much worse than they now are.

The Ambassador has been long enough in our country to understand the character of American opinion and the operation of our institutions and hence is in a position to realize the unforeseeable reaction of any ordinary Chicago jury in a case of this kind. He would doubtless wish to bear in mind that the average juror in Chicago, remote from the European scene, would probably know little and care less about the President of Turkey. Such a juror, furthermore, is unlikely to react to the reasoning that is second nature to us in Washington regarding the friendly and considerate atmosphere that must attend the proper conduct of foreign relations.

The Ambassador and his Government would also wish to bear in mind that the present libel has been traced in toto to the book *Grey Wolf* written by an Englishman and first published in England. Every effort will doubtless be made by lawyers for the defendant to impress upon the jury that the publishers of this book, which appeared in the United States in 1933, have never been prosecuted and that no protest or representations on the subject are on record from the Turkish Embassy or Government. This fact is mentioned not because of its legal weight but merely because of its possible effect upon the mind of the average juror.

The above considerations are mentioned not for the purpose of persuading the Turkish Government against pressing this suit, but in order that the Turkish authorities might have all the factors and imponderables in mind when making a decision. The Ambassador was assured that if and when requested this Government will cooperate fully with the Illinois authorities and will exert every effort to see that justice is done.

The Ambassador thanked me warmly for this exposition of the situation and informed me that he had already brought the facts to his Government's attention, emphasizing in this connection the gratifying interest taken in the case by President Roosevelt. The Ambassador would meanwhile acquaint his Government more fully with the considerations which we had discussed and he expected a reply early next week. He added in conclusion that as far as he personally was concerned he would be inclined not to proceed with the prosecution of the case.<sup>1</sup>

Eleven days after this meeting Ambassador Erteğün, after having debated the matter with Ankara, would again visit the State Department to give the final position of the Republic of Turkey on whether or not Turkey wanted to prosecute the magazine. In an internal memorandum sent to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Under Secretary of State Summer Welles and

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated April 30, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/45.



Assistant Secretary of State A.A.Berle Jr., Wallace Murray would report the minutes of his conversation with Ambassador Erteğün as follows :<sup>1</sup>

The Ambassador stated that he was instructed by his Government to express, on behalf of President Atatürk, its deep appreciation of the interest, sympathy and courtesy evinced in this matter by President Roosevelt personally as well as by competent officials of this Government. President Atatürk had been deeply touched and impressed by this evidence of friendship and good-will on our part and wished to have an expression of this gratitude conveyed directly to President Roosevelt.

In view, however, of the legal aspects of the case as explained by the Ambassador to his Government, and the uncertainty that prosecution could be instituted and a conviction obtained on the basis of the plain evidence of criminal libel without involving the Turkish authorities, the Turkish Government has decided not to request this Government to take further steps in the matter.

The Ambassador added that in presenting the case to his Government for decision he had personally recommended against prosecution.

After learning that the issue had been resolved with a decision not to prosecute the magazine, Undersecretary Welles reported this decision to President Franklin D.Roosevelt in a letter in which he gave a summary of the steps which were taken and why the Republic of Turkey had decided not to pursue the issue further:

He [Münir Erteğün] has now informed us officially that his Government has directed him to express on behalf of President Atatürk its deep appreciation of the interest, sympathy and courtesy which you personally evinced in this matter. The Ambassador added that President Atatürk had been deeply touched and impressed by this evidence of friendship and good-will on our part and he wished to have an expression of his gratitude conveyed directly to you. At the same time the Ambassador explained that in view of the apparent uncertainty that prosecution could be instituted and a conviction obtained without involving the Turkish authorities, his Government had decided to request us to take no further steps in the matter. <sup>2</sup>

Ambassador Erteğün thus reached the conclusion not to pursue this matter Robert F. Kelley of the American Embassy in Ankara, conveyed his appreciation to Wallace Murray on his handling of the issue:

I think that you handled the situation extraordinarily well. Apparently the incident has been closed to the complete satisfaction of the Turkish authorities since we have not heard a word about it here. The Turkish press,

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated May 11, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/46.

<sup>2</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated May 20, 1938, reference 8657.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/50A.



of course, has not referred to the article in any way and no member of the Embassy staff has heard any mention of it. If some reference to it should eventually appear we will let you know at once.<sup>1</sup>

### b) The Article Published in *Washington Times*

Soon after the debate on the *Ken* magazine's article had died down, another article, this one appearing in the *Washington Times* but still focusing on Atatürk, seized the attention of the State Department:

"Oh, a mighty man is Atatürk and lucky are his people."

So, paraphrasing the Koran, sing the Turks these days when they enthuse over that handsome old ruffian Mustapha Kemal Atatürk – this last meaning "Chief Turk" – who is the first President of the Turkish Republic and who will remain so as long as he lives.

Atatürk is 57 years old, tall, blond and fierce in appearance. His father was a mail carrier. As a youth in his teens he joined the Young Turk movement which sought to rid the country of the Sultans – and did so. His ancestry has been set down variously as Albanian, Greek, Macedonian and Jewish.

He got his real start to power when Turkey entered the World War to fight for the central powers. He rose fast and it was he who whipped the British at the Dardanelles, all though you will never get the British to admit that obvious fact. When peace came he was head of the army and while negotiating for better terms for Turkey he kicked the Sultan off the throne and administered a sound thrashing to Greece.

Such a hell-raiser was Atatürk that the victorious treaty-makers didn't dare to monkey with him as they did with the other countries. He was in fact the first of the dictators to run a bluff on the rest of Europe. After he had whipped Greece, the Allies threw away their first treaty with Turkey, that of Sevres, and substituted the Peace of Lausanne. This gave Eastern Thrace and Smyrna back to the Turks, returned the control of Constantinople and demilitarized the Greco – Bulgarian – Turco frontier. When Atatürk came home with the document he declared himself president.

He spends the most of his time these days getting drunk. He is always more or less intoxicated at public gatherings, but he never allows his condition to interfere with the progress of the ceremony. The mighty man may lurch, spill his drink, insult a foreign diplomat or get fresh with a lady, but the crafty old brain is always working 100 per cent.

Alone of all the bloody opportunists who have climbed to power in Europe over the past 18 years, Atatürk has done his country great good. He has completely westernized Turkey. He has abolished the fez as the national headgear, he has separated Church and State, though permitting complete religious freedom, and he has abolished the office of Caliph as head of Mohammedanism.

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated June 23, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/48.





He has changed the Moslem calender to the Gregorian.<sup>1</sup> He has substituted the Latin alphabet for the Arabic.<sup>2</sup> He has introduced the metric system of weights and measures.<sup>3</sup> He has freed women from sexual serfdom, ordered the veil discarded and has opened to them the professions and suffrage.<sup>4</sup>

Of his bloody ruthlessness one example will suffice. Twelve years ago an assassin attempted to kill him. Atatürk blamed the parliamentary opposition. He had them all arrested and on the same night the president of Turkey gave a state dinner to all foreign diplomats. The guests studied his watch as he got drunker and drunker. At last an aide entered the room, stepped to his side and whispered. The president rose and started to shake hands hurriedly with his guests. They were astonished but the signal could not be ignored and so they departed.

All the automobiles of the diplomats pursued the same way back to town. And as they passed through the square they saw, still futilely kicking at space, the dying bodies of the Turkish parliamentary opposition! Atatürk had timed his show nicely for the benefit of certain international intriguers.

When England, through the League of Nations, decided to impose sanctions against Italy because of its war on Abyssinia, those lesser members of the League who had hoped to do business with Mussolini raised a great hullabaloo. So, in order to get their signatures, England had to agree to under write estimated business losses with actual cash and acceptance of goods which it was figured Italy would have bought.

When Atatürk turned in his estimate there was tacked on the bill, over and above everything, an item of three million dollars for "arms and ammunition."

"What the hell does this mean?" asked the British foreign office, in effect.

"My master wishes to point out that his country is very vulnerable," replied the old highbinder's envoy "and that certain army supplies need renovating. The money is necessary in case Italy should decide to go to war with Turkey for imposing sanctions. If we cannot have the money from England for defense we cannot risk giving offense – to Italy."

Atatürk got the money.<sup>5</sup>

Ambassador Münir Ertegün, after having read this article, brought it to the attention of the State Department. Near Eastern Division Chief Murray then sent a memorandum to Assistant Secretary of State A. A. Berle and Undersecretary Welles in which he gave the following evaluation of the article:

<sup>1</sup> The Law on the acceptance of international time and calendar was accepted by the Turkish Parliament on December 26, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> The "Law on the Acceptance and Application of Turkish letters" was accepted by the Turkish Parliament on November 1st 1928 and to be effective on June 1, 1929.

<sup>3</sup> The Law on the acceptance of International Numbers was accepted by the Turkish Parliament on 20 May 1928 to be effective on June 1, 1929.

<sup>4</sup> On April 3, 1930 the law of Municipalities was accepted. With this law Turkish women got the right to elect and to be elected in municipal elections.

<sup>5</sup> W.A.P. Douglas, "Rollin' Along", *Washington Times*, May 12, 1938.



As will be noted, the article is by no means so vicious as that appearing in the magazine *Ken* which caused us to consider the practicability of criminal libel proceedings against the author and publisher of the article in question. The present article would appear, however, to fall within the category of criminal libel, since it in effect, in the opinion of a member of the Legal Adviser's Office, accuses President Atatürk of murdering the Turkish parliamentary opposition. I may say in this connection that according to our detailed records of the incident referred to by the author as occurring twelve years ago, certain leaders of the opposition were in fact hanged after being convicted by duly constituted courts of Turkey.

It is most unfortunate that this story should appear only a day or so following the helpful and gratifying position taken by President Atatürk with regard to the criminal libel in the magazine *Ken*. While I have not had an opportunity to discuss the present article with the Turkish Ambassador, it would appear, so I understand from Mr. Berle's investigation of the general subject, that in this instance proceedings could be instituted in the District of Columbia against the author and publishers resident here. If the Turkish Government is so disposed, it might possibly be a good thing to make a test case of the present libelous article. If conviction were obtained, which is certainly much more likely in the District than in any State jurisdiction, it might have a restraining effect on the writers elsewhere of scurrilous and libelous articles against foreign chiefs of state.

I shall keep you advised of any further conversation that I may have with the Turkish Ambassador on this subject.<sup>1</sup>

Assistant Secretary A. A. Berle Jr., would reply to the memorandum with the following lines:

I agree with Mr. Murray's memorandum, but I am not altogether clear that, within the District of Columbia law, this is criminal libel. The article says that Atatürk arrested the parliamentary opposition. It later suggests that he hung them. It does not state that this was done without trial or make a direct accusation of assassination.

I am not clear whether a general accusation of being "more or less intoxicated" is criminal libel. In the case of *Ken* there was a much more violent and vile statement.<sup>2</sup>

Wallace Murray's reply to this note was the following memorandum:

Many thanks for your memorandum of May 13th regarding the article appearing in the *Washington Times* of May 12th about President Atatürk.

In my memorandum of May 13th I was quoting Mr. Ward of the Legal Adviser's Office, who feels that the article in question in fact accuses President Atatürk of murder. While it is true that the article does not state that the parliamentary opposition was hanged without trial, it does state that "on the same night" of their arrest the President of Turkey gave a State

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated May 13, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK KAMAL/ 39-1/2.

<sup>2</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated May 13, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK KAMAL/ 39-1/2.





dinner to all foreign diplomats and that the latter upon being suddenly dismissed by their host saw on their way home "the dying bodies of the Turkish parliamentary opposition." The inference is certainly rather strong that the executions took place without trial. As a matter of actual fact the trials were held in both Izmir and Ankara and lasted for many long weeks before those found guilty were executed.

I agree with you nevertheless that the case is far weaker than the criminal libel in the magazine *Ken*, and I hope that the ambassador will be inclined to overlook this incident also. The trouble is, of course, that when attacks of this kind follow each other at such short intervals there is always danger that the patience of President Atatürk will be exhausted.<sup>1</sup>

Since the documents preserved at the National Archives reveal no further sign of discussions on this matter, we must assume that the wishes of Wallace Murray were realised and that Ambassador Ertegun did not persist in his demand to prosecute either the *Washington Times* or the author of the article.

### c) Article in *Life Magazine*

Another article that raised the concerns of the State Department was one published in *LIFE* magazine just ten days before Atatürk's death. The article was also accompanied by numerous photos of Atatürk. Upon its publication, Paul H. Alling of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs immediately sent a memorandum to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, as well as to Undersecretary Welles bringing to their attention the "objectional pictures of and comments on President Atatürk" that appeared in *Life* magazine.<sup>2</sup> He also sent to the Undersecretary a copy of the article and stressed that "the marked passages of the comment on page 24 seem to me particularly objectionable. The shockingly bad taste of the article is accentuated by the fact that it was published at a time when Atatürk was believed to be lying on his deathbed and might very well have appeared almost simultaneously with an announcement of Atatürk's death".<sup>3</sup> The article in question read as follows:

One of the most amazing and least understood stories of the modern world is the 20-year rise of Turkey from a rotten, derelict empire to a humming, powerful, civilized nation. If it can ever be said that one man made a nation, one man did create modern Turkey – a drunkard and roisterer

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated May 13, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK KAMAL/ 39-1/2.

<sup>2</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated October 31, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/58.

<sup>3</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated November 1, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/59.



whose feats make sober men gape. The name of Turkey's Dictator Mustafa Kemal Atatürk means Mustafa, Fortress, Father of Turks. This week, on Oct. 29, falls the 15th Anniversary of the Turkish Republic Atatürk created. But he lay sick unto death of cirrhosis of the liver in Istanbul's Dolma Baghche Palace whence he had chased the last of the Sultans 16 years before. Now 58, he was told when he was 37 that he would be dead in two years, if he did not stop drinking. He notably did not stop. The doctor, a Viennese, died in two years, but not the patient.

A dictator like Peter the Great or Napoleon, blond, blue-eyed Mustafa was born the son of a minor Turkish customs officer and an Albanian mother he adored. His father died and Mustafa did not like his stepfather. His mother tried to train him for the priesthood but he was too bad-tempered a boy. He went instead to military school. He was the Turk responsible for defeating the British at the Dardanelles, under the command of a German general. When Turkey fell with Germany in 1918, it fell so low that it was ready to accept a British protectorate. The quarrelsome young officer Mustafa slipped past the British lines into the interior and raised the Turks. His armies turned like a cornered tiger and drove the Allied armies into the sea. Mustafa and his friend Ismet outbluffed the British and got the best peace treaty of the World War.

During hangovers Mustafa singlehanded made Turkey a nationalist republic. He abolished polygamy, the fez, the harem, the veil and the Arabic alphabet. He revitalized the lazy, stupefied, unpatriotic Turkish peasant. He industrialized and rearmed Turkey, abolished unemployment. He hung the Opposition but presently found absolute power so boring he tried to foment his own Opposition. He played off Turkey's suitors against one another, for Turkey is the Near East's key nation. He took loans and credits impartially from the U.S.S.R., Italy, Britain and lately, Germany.

Long since, he had divorced his equally strongwilled wife, Latifé Hanum, daughter of a Smyrna shipowner. To distract attention from his gallery of ladies, and the occasional consequences, he took to adopting daughters wholesale. Some may well have been illegitimate daughters; others were merely able and ambitious young Turks. Oddly, he did not adopt sons, possibly in the same spirit in which the old Sultans kept their sons in cages. He lived around at his house on the crest of his new capital, Ankara, and his model farm outside the city and his beach house at Florya near Istanbul, where LIFE's photographer Julien Bryan found him with adopted daughters. Late at night, guzzling at Florya, he would decide on a little night life. He would drink and carouse toward high noon, take a swim, a nap and work for the rest of the day. Even when drunk he was not exactly lovable. His system was, like Hitler's, to delegate responsibility as much as possible and to demand results. Thus there are now perhaps a dozen relatively unknown men who might be capable of taking his place. Chief of these is his old partner, deliberate, deaf, stubborn little Ismet who, on Atatürk's order, took for a last name İnönü, name of the field on which he won their 1921 victory over the Greeks.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Turkey's Kamāl Atatürk is the World's Best Dictator", *Life*, October 13, 1938, pp. 23-24. The sentences which are underlined in the text were marked as such in the original document which exists in the National Archives.



The same day Julien Bryan, the New York photographer who took the photos accompanying *LIFE's* article, called Warren Murray. Murray, in an internal memorandum, reported his conversation with Bryan as follows:

Mr Bryan said that a short time ago LIFE had asked him for a series of several hundred pictures of Turkish scenes suitable for incorporation in a series of articles depicting the development of modern Turkey. Mr. Bryan said that he had made a selection of pictures which he thought would be suitable for the purpose and had made certain suggestions to LIFE as to the points which might properly bear emphasis. Mr. Bryan made it clear that in furnishing the pictures he had the definite impression that LIFE had in mind the publication of a serious study of progress in modern Turkey, presumably somewhat along the lines of the film on Turkey which Mr. Bryan made last year and which had served as the basis for an exchange of cordial letters between the President and President Atatürk.

Under the circumstance Mr. Bryan said that he had been shocked, when the above-mentioned issue of LIFE came out, to see the use which had been made of the pictures which he had furnished, particularly in as much as the objectionable pictures in the series (those portending to portray Atatürk in an intoxicated condition) were NOT his pictures, nor did he have the slightest idea who had taken them.

Mr. Bryan said that he had called to make his position clear in this deplorable matter.<sup>1</sup>

Paul H. Alling also wrote to Under secretary Welles advising him to call Ambassador Erteğün:

The Turkish Ambassador has not yet been in to protest about the LIFE pictures and comments, but we have had information that the Turkish Consulate General in New York has seen the publication and has been looking into the matter. The question arises therefore whether it might not be appropriate for us to ask the Ambassador to come in and of our own accord, express regret for the unfortunate publication. If you agree that such a course would be desirable I think it would be helpful if you would see him.<sup>2</sup>

Undersecretary Welles followed this suggestion and invited Ambassador Erteğün to the State Department. Erteğün paid a visit on November 5, 1938--just five days before Atatürk's death. During this visit the ambassador said that "Atatürk's condition was in fact far better and that there was now considerable chance for a permanent improvement." In an internal memorandum Welles reported his conversation with Erteğün on the *Life* article:

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated October 31, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/57.

<sup>2</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated October 31, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK KAMAL/58.



I then told the Ambassador that I had read the October 31 issue of *LIFE*, and that I wanted him to know how greatly I deplored the comments upon President Atatürk contained in that publication. I said that while of course, as the Ambassador knew, this Government had no control, under our constitutional provisions, of the press, it greatly deplored any articles published in the American press which gave offense to the rulers of foreign countries with whom this Government was on friendly terms. In this case, I said, I felt it doubly regrettable because of the fact that the article was published at the very time when President Atatürk was so gravely ill. I concluded by telling the Ambassador that I was writing a personal letter to the editor of the magazine expressing my regret that statements of this character had been published.

The Ambassador said that he fully understood the situation of this Government and that he was most gratified by what I had said to him on the subject. The Ambassador said that no government could have shown greater consideration or more friendly courtesy than had ours to his country and to its representative in Washington, and that he was confident that there would be no misunderstanding on the part of his own Government as a result of the publication of this article.<sup>1</sup>

Undersecretary Welles also sent a letter to C.D.Jackson, General Manager of *LIFE* magazine which read as follows:<sup>2</sup>

My dear Mr. Jackson:

You will recall that when you were associated with *TIME* we sought your assistance on one or two occasions in regard to articles concerning important Near Eastern personalities that had been or were about to be printed by that publication. Your cooperation and assistance proved so valuable in those instances that I now venture to bring to your attention a series of photographs and accompanying comments that appeared in the October 31st issue of *LIFE*. The photographs to which I have reference were of President Atatürk of Turkey and, together with accompanying comments, appeared on pages 23 and 24 of the above-mentioned issue.

I hasten to say that the great majority of the photographs were entirely unobjectionable from any point of view. However, if you will read over certain of the captions on page 23 and certain of the comments on page 24, I believe you will understand why they would prove offensive to Turkish officials. When I tell you in confidence that it was only a few months ago that we expressed apologies and regret to the Turkish Government because of somewhat similar statements that appeared in another publication, I think you will appreciate how disturbed we were to see these statements appear in *LIFE*.

Some months ago in speaking in confidence to the members of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, I bespoke their cooperation in matters of this kind. At that time I explained that we had found that oriental countries particularly are quite unwilling to consider the fact that aspersions

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated November 5, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/61.

<sup>2</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated November 7, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/59.





cast upon the origin or personal habits of their rulers are not the responsibility of the United States Government. I am convinced that American editors do not intentionally print articles that are intended to disturb our relations with nations such as Turkey with which we are on close friendly terms. On the contrary, when such articles do appear I am sure they are oversights. The fact is, however, that such matters often mean a good deal to us in a practical way and if you are ever in Washington I should be glad to give you some details.

In as much as American publications probably are often unaware of the repercussions of certain articles which they print regarding oriental rulers, I venture to bring the Atatürk article to your attention and to express the hope that we may count on your cooperation to assist us in endeavoring to prevent further international misunderstandings in a world that is already sorely troubled.

Jackson replied to this letter a month later, after the death of Atatürk:

The specific problem you raise emphasizes a more general problem which exists in our minds and has been simmering there for quite a few months. TIME Incorporated, unlike most other publishing firms, has existed from the start solely by virtue of a journalistic formula - a formula previously unknown, and a formula apparently highly acceptable to the American public. When our kind of journalist went to a fairly limited audience, it made little or no difference what we said or how we said it to anyone beyond the small intimate circle of enthusiasts. As this small circle expanded and became an increasingly large segment of "the public", what we said and how we said it seemed to make a difference - to business, to politics, to government. And we found ourselves, not always happily, trying to effect the delicate balance between appreciation of our increased responsibility and operation within a journalistic formula, which still is the very life blood of our entire operation.

We have always been able to dismiss the critic who plaintively says, "Why do you say such a thing; it isn't nice". But today it is genuinely disturbing to realize that the person or institution who says to us, "The truth of your statements does not alter the fact that you should not publish them because of the larger issues involved", is frequently speaking with justification.

While I would be speaking optimistically were I to say that our perfection of the technique necessary unfailingly to preserve this delicate balance I referred to is an accomplished fact, I can say quite truthfully and emphatically that we are aware of the problem, that we are constantly looking toward its solution and that our approach has been and will continue to be one of reasonableness.

I am not attempting to go into the specific Turkish problem for the reason that, I believe, Atatürk's death has completely overshadowed any passing references to his life. But I must recall to you *The March of Time*



movie sequence<sup>1</sup> on Turkey and its Leader, which cannot but have given pleasure and a sense of pride to any Turk who may have seen it or heard of it.

May I repeat in closing that LIFE is not only aware of its responsibility, but also of the very special problems that our State Department has with regard to the inability of many foreign countries to understand the relationship between the U.S. Government and a free U.S. press. And I can assure you that wanton publishing is not LIFE's idea of existence under a free press system. I, personally, am only too pleased to cooperate and assist when I can, and LIFE and myself both greatly appreciate your understanding of the situation.<sup>2</sup>

The State Department also asked its embassy in Ankara to report on how Ankara political circles have reacted to the article. The reply of the U.S. Embassy of Ankara was as follows:

With reference to the Department's confidential instruction No. 324 of November 14, 1938, concerning a series of photographs of the late President of Turkey, and comments in respect thereto, I have the honor to report that such enquiries as the Embassy has been able to conduct locally have disclosed that the material in question has failed to cause any particular stir in Turkish circles, either official or unofficial.

It is believed that many Turkish readers were not able fully to grasp the exact sense of the comments, and that the pictures alone were not considered unduly objectionable. Some reports have come to the Embassy, however, of copies of the magazine being removed from circulation or view in order to avoid possible embarrassment. It is likewise learned that the Turkish press did not consider the material sufficiently objectionable to make it a subject

<sup>1</sup> "The March of Time was one of the most well known US weekly newsreel series. The idea for it was hatched in the corporate offices of TIME magazine in its early days. The purpose of the series was to inform and to dazzle with pictorial journalism." ([www.harappe.com/march.html](http://www.harappe.com/march.html).) In 1936 *The March on Time* produced a movie on Turkey and Atatürk. At that time Wallace Murray, who was Chief of the State Department's Division of Near Eastern Affairs, warned presidential assistant C.D. Jackson, about the possibility that such a film would create diplomatic tension between the two countries. In doing so, he recollected an earlier movie of this type produced by *The March on Time* on Albania which had created furor in Albania as the Albanian Government claimed that the movie misrepresented its country and King Zog. Wallace Murray wrote as follows: "During my conversation with Mr. Jackson I took occasion to state that according to information just received from the Counselor of our Embassy in Turkey, who is now in this country on leave of absence, a representative of the "March of Time" has just completed a film on Turkey and was enabled as a result of the assistance rendered by our Embassy in Turkey to gain access in the highest quarters of the country and even to film Kemal Atatürk, the President of the country. I said I earnestly hoped that in the case of Turkey there would be no repetition of the serious embarrassment created by the Albanian film, and observed that, whatever might be the attitude of the "March of Time" regarding Kemal Atatürk, he was in the eyes of the Turks a national hero enjoying the highest respect and devotion of his entire people. Any disposition therefore by the "March of Time" to cast discredit upon him would have a most unfortunate effect upon our general relations with Turkey." C.D. Jackson would reassure Wallace Murray that the movie was "eminently favorable to the New Turkey and to its President and that I cannot conceive of any offense being taken." Source: NARA, RG 59 General Records of the Department of State Decimal File 1930-1939, document dated November 24, 1936, reference 811.4061/March of Time/43 and document dated February 16, 1937, reference 811.4061/March of Time /48.

<sup>2</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated December 12, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/82.



of special articles similar to those written in the case of comments appearing at about the same time in the French weekly newspapers *CANDIDE* and *LE GRINGOIRE*.<sup>1</sup>

### Conclusion

The State Department's approach to the three articles was to assume an overly cautious, even panicky attitude, assuming that, specially in the case of the *Ken* magazine article, the Republic of Turkey would decide to pursue the magazine in court. However Turkey decided not to do so by following and trusting Ambassador Münir Ertegün's advice. Since we do not have access to the Turkish Foreign Ministry archives or those of its Washington Embassy, we can not determine with any certainty that Ankara followed Ertegün's advice. Nevertheless, one must believe that Ertegün, who was well acquainted with the dynamics of American society and understood the workings of its federal agencies, had probably concluded that any eventual legal action against the writers and/or the publications had little chance of producing positive results--quite the contrary, it was more likely give undeserved publicity to the articles in question. Another possible factor in Ankara eventual decision not to sue the publications was that in 1938 Ankara was gravely concerned and preoccupied with the rapidly deteriorating health of Atatürk and of the transition of power which would necessarily occur after Atatürk's death. Thus, regardless of how offensive they may have found the article in question, the matter was simply not foremost on Ankara's list of concerns at the time.

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<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1938, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/84.



## 5- REPRESENTATION OF THE UNITED STATES AT THE FUNERAL OF ATATÜRK

### Introduction

The death of Atatürk on November 10, 1938 was a big shock to the Turkish people and the political ruling class. The funeral of the founding father of modern Turkey naturally had to be conducted as a high level ceremony to which foreign countries will participate by sending delegations to represent them. One of these countries was the United States and the question of the country's level of participation at the funeral would become a matter of discussion in the State Department.

### Announcement of the Death of Atatürk and Initial Reactions

The State Department was informed of the death of Atatürk by a telegram sent from the American Embassy at Ankara and also via oral reporting by the Turkish Embassy at Washington, D.C. Upon receipt of this information the State Department sent a telegram of condolence to Abdül Halik Renda, the Provisional President of Turkey, in the name of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and also a second telegram to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs this time in the name of Secretary of State Cordell Hull. Later on Secretary Hull, accompanied by the Department's Near Eastern Affairs Division Chief Wallace Murray, paid a visit to the Turkish Embassy, during which Hull gave cards of condolence from President Roosevelt, Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles and various Assistant Secretaries to Turkish Ambassador Münir Ertegün.<sup>1</sup>

### Participation of the United States to the Funeral

On November 12<sup>th</sup> the Secretary of the State Department received a note from the Turkish Embassy in Washington informing him that the Turkish Republic would greatly appreciate if the United States was represented at the

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<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document dated November 18, 1938, no. 867.001 ATATURK, KAMAL/73.



funeral either by a special mission or delegation.<sup>1</sup> Upon receipt of this note the State Department's Chief of Protocol wrote to Marvin H. McIntyre, Secretary to the President, that he was recommending that the American Ambassador at Ankara, John Van A. MacMurray be designated as President Roosevelt's special representative and attend the funeral in this capacity.<sup>2</sup> This suggestion was swiftly accepted and a telegram to this effect was sent to the American Embassy at Ankara.<sup>3</sup> Ambassador MacMurray requested from the State Department a special allowance of \$300.- for the wreath to be presented on name of President Roosevelt. MacMurray also noted in his telegram that "prices of those [wreaths] ordered by other missions range from \$125 to \$350 (\$1000 in the case of the Japanese)".<sup>4</sup> State Department in reply to this request allowed only \$200 to be spent for the wreath since it believed \$300 to be too large amount.<sup>5</sup> The State Department on this occasion also reminded the Embassy in Ankara that in the past it had authorised only \$75 to be spent for the funeral of King Fuad and in Cairo the legion had spent only \$245.

### **An Ambassadorial Report of the Funeral Ceremony**

American Ambassador John Van A. MacMurray reported to his superiors that the funeral ceremony would take place on November 21, 1938 as follows :<sup>6</sup>

His body, which according to widespread rumor weighed no more than 38 kgs. when death occurred, was embalmed after a death-mask had been made, and was placed in the Throne Room of the Palace where it lay in state from November 16 until the morning of November 19. During these three days, government and municipal officials, the inhabitants of İstanbul, and visitors from the provinces filed past the coffin, guarded by six<sup>7</sup> officers with swords drawn and framed by six huge torches, to pay their last respects to their late Chief.

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document dated November 12, 1938, no. 867.001 ATATURK, KAMAL/70.

<sup>2</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document dated November 12, 1938, no. 867.001 ATATURK, KAMAL/70.

<sup>3</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document dated November 14, 1938, no. 867.001 ATATURK, KAMAL/71.

<sup>4</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document dated November 14, 1938, no. 867.001 ATATURK, KAMAL/67.

<sup>5</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document dated November 18, 1938, no. 867.001 ATATURK, KAMAL/73.

<sup>6</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document dated December 12, 1938, no. 867.001 ATATURK, KAMAL/85.

<sup>7</sup> The figure six is symbolic of the characteristics of the Republican People's Party, incorporated in the Turkish constitution in 1937 as descriptive of the State, i.e., republican, laic, etatist, nationalist, populist and revolutionary.



The crowds which converged on Dolmabahçe from all sections of the city were far more numerous and far more difficult to handle than the police had evidently anticipated, and the lack of foresight and preparation and the hysteria of the crowds--largely made up of volatile Levantines--occasionally led to situations bordering on panic. On the night of November 17, because of congestion at the palace gates and at the entrance to the palace proper, the overwrought masses were charged by mounted and foot police and a number of persons, variously estimated at from 12 to 40, were trampled or crushed to death.

On November 19, when the President's body was carried on a gun-carriage from the palace to Saray Point, the same degree of uncontrolled emotionalism was noticeable as the cortège passed through the city. Several persons are said to have been killed by troops and police, and many to have died from heart failure and shock. From Saray Point the coffin was placed on a destroyer which carried it to the cruiser YAVUZ (formerly the German GOEBEN), which, with 18 aircraft flying overhead and followed by vessels of the Turkish navy and warships of six foreign governments,<sup>1</sup> steamed slowly to Izmit. From Izmit to Ankara the body was taken by special train which stopped for short intervals at way stations banked with funeral wreaths and lighted by flares, and arrived at Ankara on the morning of November 20. From the Ankara station, Turkish troops and a cortège consisting of President İnönü, the Cabinet, the deputies, and high officials, escorted the coffin to a catafalque which had been erected before the Grand National Assembly. There the body lay in state throughout that day and night.

In Ankara, from November 16 to November 20, preparations were made for the funeral, and during this time also there arrived the foreign delegations and military detachments mentioned in my telegram No. 54, of November 14, 5 p.m. The semi-official news agency, AGENCE ANATOLIE, issued a list of the personnel of the delegations on November 15; this list, a copy of which, made to include the names of warships where applicable, is enclosed for the Department's information, contained no reference to special American representation — nor did any other list published subsequently. The omission may have been caused by the tardiness of our notifications to the Turkish Government, or by an oversight on the part of the Protocol Department of the Foreign Office, which was working under great pressure, without precedents to guide it, and was consequently not entirely free of error. Further comments in this respect will be found below.

On November 15, having received the Department's telegram No. 22, of November 14, 7 p.m., nominating me as special representative of the President to attend the funeral services, I notified the Minister for Foreign Affairs of my nomination. On November 17, after informal inquiries had elicited the information that the Turkish Government evidently entertained hopes that the United States would participate in the ceremonies to a greater extent than that suggested by the nomination of a special representative alone, I informed the Foreign Office that the commissioned members of my diplomatic staff, and the Military and Commercial Attaches, also formed a

<sup>1</sup> H.M.P. MALAYA (which by a strange coincidence was the same vessel on which Sultan Vahideddin was taken from Constantinople to France in 1922), the German cruiser EMDEN, the French light cruiser EMILE BERTIN, the Greek destroyer HYDRA, the Rumanian destroyer REGINA MARIA, and the Soviet destroyer MOSKVA.





part of the American Delegation. Copies of these two communications are enclosed herewith.

In Ankara, where President Atatürk's funeral took place on November 21, special police precautions easily prevented a repetition of the hysteria and panic which had marred the ceremonies in Istanbul, as the population of the former, being principally Anatolian, is more phlegmatic, more controllable and less emotional and volatile. The former President's body was carried over a field gun, drawn by 80 soldiers, from the catafalque before the Grand National Assembly, through the streets of the capital, to the Ethnographic Museum, where it will remain pending the construction of a mausoleum.

Before the coffin marched a detachment of mounted police, a troop of lancers, an infantry battalion, the Republican Guard (1 regiment), the Regiment of Cadets, the foreign detachments<sup>1</sup> in alphabetical order, and a battalion of Turkish fusiliers. After the coffin, which was immediately preceded by the symphony orchestra of the Presidency, and escorted on either side by 10 generals, marched a general bearing a cushion on which was pinned Atatürk's Medal of Independence; then came, in order, Atatürk's sister (Madame Makboule); President İnönü; the President of the Assembly, the Prime Minister and Marshal Cakmak; the Chiefs of the 34 foreign delegations; the subordinate foreign delegates and the diplomatic corps; the Cabinet; the Deputies; high military and civil officials; representatives of the Republican People's Party, of the Halk Evis of the 62 vilayets, of the several youth organizations and, last, a battalion of infantry. Seventeen airplanes flew overhead. On arrival at the Ethnographic Museum the coffin was carried inside by 20 soldiers. President İnönü, the Cabinet, the deputies and members of Atatürk's civil and military households filed past for the last time, and the doors of the Museum were then closed. They will remain closed until the body is placed in a mausoleum to be constructed within the next eight or nine months.

The funeral wreaths presented by the Chiefs of State, including that presented on behalf of President Roosevelt in accordance with the authorization contained in the Department's telegram No. 23, of November 16, 1 p.m., were placed in the room in the Museum which received the coffin. Such information as the Embassy has been able to obtain in respect to the number and cost of the many wreaths received has been incorporated in a separate memorandum attached hereto.

#### CONFIDENTIAL

Unreasonable as it may seem, there can be no doubt that the attitude of our Government toward the funeral of President Atatürk has been officially construed--and unofficially described--as casual almost to the point of being slighting. In view of the distance which separates the two countries, and of the lack of close ties of almost any sort between the two, this may well seem incomprehensible to the Department, as it did to the Embassy until inquiries disclosed a reason for it in the fact that there had grown up in Turkey, and had been much publicized, a belief in a special and indeed almost legendary personal friendship between the Presidents of the two countries. It may be possible, moreover, that publicity may have been

<sup>1</sup> Special detachments were sent from Bulgaria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Iran, Rumania, the U.P.B. and Yugoslavia.



withheld from the announcement of special American representation, because of a hope that a further announcement with regard to the nomination of additional special representatives, or of naval participation, would ultimately be received. That the Department may gauge the extent to which the Turkish reaction has made itself felt, it may be said that American teachers--in both American and Turkish educational institutions--have met with insubordination, that several American commercial concerns have encountered an emphasized lack of cooperation on the part of municipal officials, and that the Embassy has been conscious of a slight but noticeable aloofness on the part of certain of its official contacts who have been more influenced by the sentiment of the moment than by a clear understanding of the actual relative values involved. There is unquestionably a popular feeling that the United States, perhaps in addition to a naval vessel and a naval detachment, should have sent from abroad--as did France (M. Sarraut), Germany (Herr von Neurath), Great Britain (Field Marshal Lord Birdwood and Admiral Sir Dudley Pound), Greece (M. Metaxas), Italy (Baron Aloisi), Soviet Union (M. Potemkine) --a special representative of Cabinet rank or with some previous sentimental association with Turkey.

### Participation of Foreign Governments in the Funeral

Ambassador MacMurray's criteria for evaluating the level of participation of foreign government to the funeral is an interesting one:

Believing that the Department, in view of its telegram No.23, November 16, 1 p.m., to Ankara, would be interested in knowing the extent to which other Governments participated in the funeral of the late President Atatürk through the purchase of funeral wreaths, the Embassy has obtained the following data from the florist whom supplied the great majority of the wreaths presented in Ankara, on the understanding that the information supplied would not be used for publication:

<u>Country:</u>	<u>Ltqs.</u>
<u>AFGHANISTAN:</u>	
H.M. the King	200
The Royal Government	<u>150</u>
	350
<u>ALBANIA:</u>	
H.M. the King	400
<u>BELGIUM:</u>	
H.M. the King	150



<u>Country:</u>	<u>Ltqs.</u>
<u>CZECHOSLOVAKIA:</u>	
H.E. the President of the Republic	50
The Government of the Republic	<u>50</u>
	100
<u>DENMARK:</u>	
H.M. the King	50
<u>EGYPT:</u>	
H.M. the King	350
The Royal Government	<u>200</u>
	550
<u>GERMANY:</u>	
The Fuehrer	300
Feldmarschal Goering	200
Herr Goebbels	<u>200</u>
	700
<u>GREECE:</u>	
H.M. the King	300
H.R.H. the Diadoch	200
M. Metaxas	<u>200</u>
	700
<u>HUNGARY:</u>	
H. E. The Regent	250
The Royal Government	150
The Royal Army	<u>150</u>
	550
<u>IRAQ:</u>	
H.M. the King	200
<u>IRAN:</u>	
The Shahinshah	400
The Imperial Army	<u>300</u>
	700
<u>ITALY:</u>	
H.M. the King	300
Il Duce	300
The Foreign Minister	250
The Chief of the General Staff	<u>250</u>
	1100



<u>Country:</u>	<u>Ltqs.</u>
<u>JAPAN:</u>	
The Emperor	350
The Crown Prince	300
The Chief of the General Staff	250
The Admiral of the Fleet	<u>250</u>
	1150
<u>NETHERLANDS:</u>	
H.M. the Queen	100
<u>POLAND:</u>	
H.E. the President of the Republic	250
The Government of the Republic	<u>150</u>
	450
<u>SPAIN:</u>	
The Nationalist Government	250
The Republican Government	200
<u>SWEDEN:</u>	
H.M. the King	100
<u>SWITZERLAND:</u>	
The Government of the Republic	150
<u>TRANSJORDAN:</u>	
The Emir Abdullah	150
<u>U.S.A.:</u>	
	250
<u>UNION OF SOCIALIST SOVIET REPUBLICS:</u>	
The Government of the U.S.S.R.	500
The Prime Minister (Com. Molotov)	300
The Fieldmarshal (Com. Voroshilov)	<u>300</u>
	1100
<u>YUGOSLAVIA:</u>	
H.H. Prince Paul	250
<u>THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS:</u>	
	300
<u>"THE SAADABAD PACT":</u>	300
<u>THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS:</u>	350



The above data, although probably not complete insofar as locally purchased wreaths are concerned, should nevertheless serve as a fairly accurate indication of the quantity and cost of the wreaths offered by other Governments. It will be noted that no other of the above-listed countries represented in Turkey by an Embassy, gave wreaths whose cost totalled less than Ltqs. 350; and the expenditure of Ltqs. 250 on our part would therefore not appear to be extravagant or ostentatious.

It is of course true that the prices charged for such wreaths by the local florists were fantastically high; but flowers are in any case a luxury in this country except during the natural blooming season, and there was furthermore a shameless exploitation of the occasion by the local florists. Those Governments which sent special missions from home were able to send wreaths with them, as did, for example, the British and the French; but others were not in a position to bring in wreaths from outside, with any assurance of their arriving in time for the ceremony.

The Embassy has learned that slightly over 17,000 wreaths had been received from all sources by the morning of November 21, the date of the funeral.<sup>1</sup>

Ambassador MacMurray's comments marked "confidential", and concerning the level of participation of the United States in the ceremony would be taken seriously at the State Department. During a call received on January 9, 1939 from the Turkish Ambassador Ertegün, Near Eastern Affairs Division Chief Murray seized the opportunity to discuss with him MacMurray's comments and impressions. MacMurray's report on the Turkish Ambassador's reaction was as follows:

During a call from the Turkish Ambassador last Saturday I took occasion to discuss with him the statement made in the concluding and confidential section of the attached despatch No. 900 of December 12, 1938, from our Embassy at İstanbul, to the effect that "there can be no doubt that the attitude of our Government toward the funeral of President Atatürk has been officially construed--and unofficially described--as casual almost to the point of being slighting".

The Ambassador appeared to be genuinely astonished at the above statement and said he was convinced that it was entirely without foundation as far as the attitude of the Turkish Government is concerned. In support of his viewpoint he recalled his visit to the Department shortly after the death of President Atatürk when, acting under instructions from his Government, he requested either that a special representative of this Government be sent to Turkey to attend the state funeral of the President or that Ambassador MacMurray be named for that purpose. As evidence that his Government was entirely content with the decision of the Department to name Mr. MacMurray its special ambassador to attend the funeral, he recalled that he had been instructed to convey to the Acting Secretary of State, and on an appropriate occasion also to President Roosevelt, the deep appreciation of his Government for the prompt action we took in naming a special ambassador for the funeral ceremony.

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated December 12, 1938, no.867.001 ATATURK, KAMAL/85.



The Ambassador therefore was emphatic in stating that no responsible official in the Turkish Government could possibly entertain any feeling of resentment at the action taken by this Government at the Ambassador's request in connection with President Atatürk's funeral. As regards the attitude of private individuals, he wished to point out that the Turkish people were under a terrific emotional strain following their President's death, as witnessed by the tragic death of a number of persons trampled under foot during the services in İstanbul. He said it might easily have been possible that uninformed and unthinking spectators, viewing the extraordinary display made by the special representatives of certain European Powers at the funeral, might have drawn unjustified conclusions as regards our own representation. Such individuals could not of course realize that if for no other reason than the distance from the United States to Turkey it would have been wholly impossible for his Government to have sent special representatives from here, much less warships as was done in the case of other nearby Powers.

The Ambassador therefore expressed the hope that we would give the matter no further thought, but that he would take an occasion to write a personal letter on the subject to the Turkish Prime Minister in order that any steps that might be deemed necessary to dispel such foolish ideas might be taken.<sup>1</sup>

While Ambassador Ertegün was having this conversation in Washington, a similar conversation was also taking place in Ankara between Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Şükrü Saracoğlu and the US Embassy's Chargé d'Affaires, Robert F. Kelley. Kelley's "Memorandum of Conversation" of his meeting with Saracoğlu on February 6 and 10, 1939 went as follows:

I called upon the Minister at his request. He opened the conversation by saying that he did not know whether I was informed about the matter which he was going to take up with me. He explained that recently the Department of State had called in the Turkish Ambassador in Washington and brought to his attention a report which had been received to the effect that the Turkish Government was dissatisfied with the American representation at the funeral of President Atatürk. He inquired whether I knew whence the Department of State had received such a report. He said that the Turkish Government did not have at any time any feeling of dissatisfaction with the representation of the American Government at the funeral of the late President. The Turkish Government fully understood that the distance alone made it impossible for the American Government to send a special delegation similar to those sent by neighboring countries or to send warships and military personnel. Consequently, no one in the Government had expected the American Government to do more than it did. He asked how the American Government could have obtained the impression that the Turkish Government was dissatisfied with the attitude of the American Government towards the funeral. I said that while in so far as the Embassy was aware the Turkish Government had not manifested any dissatisfaction with the representation of the American Government at the funeral of the

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated January 9, 1939 no. 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/85.





late President there had come to the Embassy's attention various incidents which indicated that certain circles of the population had the feeling that the American Government had not done as much as it should have in view of the friendship between President Roosevelt and Atatürk. I said that it was probably such incidents which the Department had in mind in bringing the matter to the attention of the Turkish Ambassador.

The Minister stated that of course it was quite possible that under the emotional strain which the Turkish people went through at the time individuals may have done or said things which they would not have said or done under normal circumstances. He could assure me that the Turkish Government had not been offended in any way by the character of the American representation at the funeral of President Atatürk. The Minister went on to say that the Turkish Government had nothing but the most friendly feelings towards the United States and that it was one of the aims of their policy to develop still closer relations with the United States.

I called on the Minister, by appointment, merely in order to express to him thanks for the assistance of the Turkish authorities in connection with our purchase of land for an Embassy here: but after acknowledging this expression of appreciation, he turned at once, as though the subject were on his mind, to the report from the Turkish Ambassador in Washington that our Government understood that Turkish officials felt that the United States had not been appropriately represented at the funeral of President Atatürk. He recalled his recent conversation with Mr. Kelly on that subject, and assured me that no officials of his Government entertained any such feeling. He went on to say, however, that to certain unthinking individuals who had failed to understand the situation, he had taken occasion to explain that the mere fact of distance made it impossible for the American Government to send for the purpose either a special delegation or contingents of military or naval forces. He ended by hoping that we would dismiss the whole matter from our minds.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime Ambassador Ertegün, after his conversation with Wallace Murray, wrote a personal letter to Şükrü Saracoğlu on this subject without knowing that Minister Saracoğlu had already met Robert F. Kelley in Ankara. Saracoğlu replied to Ertegün by transmitting him the substance of his conversation with Kelley. Upon its receipt Ertegün called Wallace Murray to assure the State Department that

the high esteem in which the United States was held in Turkey had not lessened in the slightest degree and that his Government continued to lay great store on the strengthening of the close relations which now exist between our two nations.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated February 15, 1939 no. 867.001 ATATURK, KAMAL/90.

<sup>2</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated February 8, 1939 no. 867.001 ATATURK, KAMAL/88.



## Conclusion

The discussions of whether or not United States was adequately represented during the funeral ceremony of Atatürk, as already analysed in the article concerning the American publications which contained offending comments on Atatürk, shows once more the importance attached by the State Department to not disrupting United States relations with Turkey. The fact that the State Department and the American Embassy in Ankara attached so much importance to questions which, at first glance, appear trivial, is proof that the American diplomats responsible for the Turkish desk at the State Department as well as the staff in the Embassy in Turkey had an excellent and in-depth understanding of the Turkish political elites' sensibilities and tried to do their utmost in order not to injure the feelings of the Turkish political class, a class which fought its country's War of Independence and which was therefore very proud of its accomplishments.



## 6- THE TURKISH PRESS REACTION TO “AMBASSADOR CHARLES H. SHERRILL’S REPORT ON ATATÜRK’S VIEWS ON RELIGION” ARTICLE

### Introduction

Because of the ideological clashes in Turkey between the secular, Kemalist establishment and the Islamists any scholarly work on the subject of Atatürk and secularism that is published, instead of being evaluated by the press and intellectual elites in a cool headed fashion, and in light of the period being studied is inevitably assessed according to the current political conditions within the country. This phenomenon usually leads to plenty of empty and unproductive debates. A recent example of this can be seen in the heated debates and conspiracy theories that filled the pages of the Turkish press in the wake of the publication of a Turkish translation of the document found in this book titled “Ambassador Charles H. Sherrill’s Comments on Atatürk’s Views on Religion” when it appeared in the journal *Toplumsal Tarih*.

### The Article’s Publication

I originally submitted for publication the aforementioned translation to the editorial board of *Toplumsal Tarih* in the fall of 2004. Approximately six months later I received a reply from the editor, who informed me that, after some discussion, the editorial board had decided not to publish the article because “as a policy, the journal did not want to give space to the question of Atatürk’s views on religion”.<sup>1</sup> In January 2006 the journal’s management changed and I resubmitted the article. This time the board informed me that it had not only accepted the article, but that it would be the piece featured on the journal’s cover for its September 2006 issue.<sup>2</sup>

One week after the translation was published in *Toplumsal Tarih*, the left-liberal newspaper *Radikal*, which belongs to the country’s leading media

<sup>1</sup> E-mail communication from Müsemma Sabancıoğlu, dated March 9, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Rifat N. Bali, “Atatürk’ün Dine Bakışı”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, No. 153 (September, 2006), pp. 14-19.



group<sup>1</sup>, reported its publication as its lead story and devoted an entire page to the document. Although the translation's initial appearance in *Toplumsal Tarih*,<sup>2</sup> which, like other scholarly journals, has a small circulation and does not appeal to a broad audience, did not raise any eyebrows, its reprinting in *Radikal*, with a circulation of 36.000, drew the attention of the rest of the media and became the center of a debate that spanned the entire political spectrum for many days.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Response from the Kemalist Camp:**

The first reaction came from Ruhat Mengi of the Kemalist daily *Vatan*, who wrote:

Can you think of anything WEIRDER than this?

First, they threw out a nonsens[ical term] 'moderate Islam' within the framework of the [Greater Middle East Project]<sup>4</sup> and thought that Turkey would be a good example for the Islamic countries of the Middle East, [so] they planned for it and explained [how this was going to happen].

After that, one of their men, Samuel Huntington came to Turkey and tried to impose their theories of "the Clash of Civilizations" and the "New World Order" on us by brainwashing us: "Anyway, your chances of entering

<sup>1</sup> The Doğan Yayın Holding publishes the newspapers *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Posta*, *Radikal*, *Referans*, *Turkish Daily News*, *Gözcü* and *Fanatik* and also owns the television stations Kanal D, CNN Türk (a joint venture with AOL Time Warner) and Star TV. Source: [www.dyh.com.tr](http://www.dyh.com.tr). Other major media groups in Turkey include the Çukurova Group, which publishes the dailies *Akşam*, *Tercüman* and *Güneş* and owns the television channels Sky Türk and Show TV; Ciner Media Group, which owns the *Takvim* and *Yeni Asır* newspapers and Kanal 1 television stations; the Feza Publishing Group, which owns *Zaman*, *Today's Zaman* and the television stations Mehtap TV and Samanyolu TV.

<sup>2</sup> The Editor-in-Chief Ahmet Akşit stated that some 6,000 copies of the journal were published, of which some 3,500 were sold (including subscriptions).

<sup>3</sup> Over the two days following its reprinting in *Radikal*, the topic Atatürk's attitude toward religion became the subject of assessment and evaluation by a variety of experts and commentators across the political spectrum. See, for instance, "Atatürk dini iskonto eden nesilden", *Radikal*, September 7, 2006 / "Atatürk ne dindardı ne ateist", *Radikal*, September 8, 2006. The translated report was then reprinted by the minor Islamist daily *Yeni Asya* (circulation of 10,000) on September 7, 2006. A. Turan Alkan, a writer for the leading Islamist daily *Zaman* also wrote a piece "Yargılamak için değil, anlamak için" (*Zaman*, September 13, 2006) and even the Doğan Media Group's flagship *Milliyet* did a piece on the report ("Atatürk'le ABD'li elçinin gizli kalmış din sohbeti", *Milliyet*, September 7, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> The 'Greater Middle East' is a political term invented to refer to the Southwest Asian region that includes the mainly Islamic but non-Arab countries of Turkey, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Various Central Asian states and the independent Caucasian entities of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia are also sometimes included. Occasionally Northern India is also included because of the role Islam and Muslim culture play there. This expanded (and expansive) term was first introduced at the G8 Summit in the summer of 2004 by U.S. President George W. Bush, as part of his proposal for sweeping change in the way the West deals with the Middle East. This initiative is primarily aimed at the Muslims of the region and has been promoted heavily by neoconservative think tanks such as the Project for the New American Century. It was designed according to the 1975 Helsinki Accords. Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater\\_Middle\\_East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_Middle_East). A copy of the proposal submitted to the G8 summit can be found at "G-8 Greater Middle East Partnership Working Paper", [www.meib.org/documentfile/040213.htm](http://www.meib.org/documentfile/040213.htm)





the EU are not even a million to one. The best [you can do] is to unite with the countries that are close to your own religion and culture".<sup>1</sup>

And finally, Condoleezza Rice says that "the time has come to give a new shape to the Middle East".<sup>2</sup>

And while America is molding and reshaping like dough the countries of the world that it wishes to reshape and the Middle East [as a whole], Turkey's existence as a *Rechtstaat* that preserves the sensible line of following Atatürk's path of a modern, secular and democratic [state], and its possession of a society that is being realized around his principles, and most of all its desire to join the EU, does not really suit it[s plans].

In order to be able to direct things more easily, to bring about a similar situation above all in the other Islamic countries in the Middle East, it's necessary to play the strategic chessboard well, to make the right moves at the right time, and to retain the right balance. In this first step, secular Turkey, without even fully understanding how it has been transformed, has begun to be the stage for daily religious pronouncements on every [imaginable] subject.

Leaving their own field [of expertise], the men of religion have now moved to [the field of] politics, to the [Turkish Grand National] Assembly and to the daily agenda.

Even the 'amending' of the Article on 'secularism'—the most unchanging article of the Constitution—has now been brought up for discussion.

The understanding of secularism has been attacked and the [subsequent] explanation is that "it has brought certain constraints regarding Islam".

At the hands of the politicians, society has been divided into the very religious and the less religious, it has been polarized along the secular-religious axis.

The only thing that has remained, that has not been weakened as all these things have been going on, the only things that has preserved its ability to unite and solidify society despite all manner of effort [to the contrary], has been [that singular figure of] Atatürk.

### 33 BIG YEARS AND ONE ASSUMPTION!

Atatürk, who created this beautiful homeland out of nothing, who gave the nation a paradise of a country... Apart from him the situation is already prepared. And now it's his turn.

During the years 1932-1933, in which U.S. Ambassador Charles Sher[r]ill was in Ankara, he wrote [a report] that he gave to the [American Secretary of State] and which he claimed [contained things] direct from the mouth of Atatürk, and at the end of the ambassador's report he said that Atatürk had never before spoken about his own personal religious beliefs with a foreigner. (why he should trust an American who only stayed in Ankara for one year, is unknown).

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Huntington, the author of *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* gave a lecture in Turkey on May 24, 2005. During his visit to Istanbul he gave an interview to the CNN Türk television station in which he said that the country's bid to join the European Union was doomed to fail. See: Sami Kohen, "Huntington Haklı mı?", *Milliyet*, May 26, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> During the July 2006 war between Israel and Lebanon/Hezbollah, the American Secretary of State spoke, in her meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of creating "a new Middle East". Jonathan Beale, "Diary: Rice's Mid-east mission", July 26, 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/5205164.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5205164.stm)





It has been 33 years since the end of its "30 Year Rule of Confidentiality [for Secret Documents]", but until now no one has mentioned it, nobody has drawn attention to it and now, all of a sudden, the researcher and author Rıfat Bali has drawn attention to it.

The well-known historian Cemal Kutay<sup>1</sup> (God rest his soul) was someone who knew Atatürk; he frequently told how [Atatürk] had been very respectful of religion and of faith, and that his funeral and burial were performed with the same ceremony done for every Muslim.

But in this report, Sher[r]ill wrote that Atatürk only said that he believed in God. At the same time, while explaining the 'Night of Power' at the Ayasofya Mosque in 1933, when he was still alive, [Atatürk] said about the large scale worship by Muslims, "Here is the Muslim faith in its highest moment, unhampered or unassisted by priestly intervention".

#### EVERYONE IS FREE IN THEIR BELIEFS. HE AS WELL...

Ultimately Atatürk's religion, his beliefs were of course his alone, like any servant of Allah. But if this report is correct (even if it did never did occur to anyone to publish it for 33 years), then what is explained there is that in his time everyone was indeed free in their religion and worship.

If it is to be thought about thoroughly, then let's discuss it again [on the basis of] this assumption; if this report is correct, then who knows: perhaps His [Atatürk's] belief only [generally] in God and his equal distance from all religions is the reason that Turkey is today "the only country with a Muslim majority that possesses a secular-democratic regime".

And [let's] take a look at this matter from a different perspective...imagine just what outdated and anachronistic explanations that those who wish to tarnish his memory will use in exploiting this information (which in any case been sitting around for 63 years)!<sup>2</sup>

In his column on the following day, Mengi corrected a textual error in the previous day's piece and gave the following explanation:

Dear readers, when reading yesterday's piece that I wrote about Atatürk, I noticed that I had made a slight error in calculation. The report was written in 1933, but the reason for the 30 year "rule of confidentiality" was not explained. In other words, it has been a full 43 years (I wrote 33) that [the report] has sat in the [archives of the] U.S. Secretary of State.

And how strange that today it would attract someone's attention.<sup>3</sup>

Mengi's clear implication with this last line was that the translation of Sherrill's report had been published with the intention of damaging the image of Atatürk.

<sup>1</sup> Kutay (1909-2006) in the 1920's was a journalist at the Anatolian News Agency (Anadolu Ajansı) and *Hakimiyeti Milliye* newspaper in Ankara. He was the author of several books on the history of the Turkish Republic. Source: [www.biyografi.net/kisiayrinti.asp?kisiid=964](http://www.biyografi.net/kisiayrinti.asp?kisiid=964)

<sup>2</sup> Ruhat Mengi, "Sıra geldi Atatürk'ün inancına!", *Vatan*, September 7, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Ruhat Mengi, "Cezalandırın bu canileri!", *Vatan*, September 8, 2006. For the response by this author to these two columns by Mengi, see: Rıfat N. Bali, "Ruhat Mengi'ye Cevap – Atatürk ve Laiklik", *Birgün*, September 14, 2006.



*The Response from the Nationalist Camp:*

Another reaction to the report came from Theology Professor and People's Ascension Party (*Halkın Yükselişi Partisi*) Chairman Yaşar Nuri Öztürk.<sup>1</sup> In a lengthy interview with the professor that appeared in the rightist-nationalist daily *Yeniçağ* under the title "One more fabricated report", Öztürk made the following assessment:

A report published in *Tarih ve Toplum* [sic] in recent days once more shows us just how much the West was afraid of Atatürk. In a report published in the most recent issue of the journal it is claimed that Charles H. Sherrill prepared a report in 1933 after discussing the subject of religion with Atatürk and that he sent it to the Office of the U.S. Secretary of State. According to this claim, Atatürk's views concerning the translation of the Qur'an into Turkish are explained thus: "He maintains that when the Turkish people come to know the real meaning of some of the Arabic prayers they have been long reciting they will be disgusted with themselves. He cited one Arabic prayer taken from the Koran in which Mohammad prays that his uncle and the uncle's daughter may be consigned to the infernal regions for something they have done. 'Imagine a thinking Turk taking any interest or getting any religious inspiration out of reciting such a prayer as that' said he".

To the interviewer's question: "Do the westerners always make such attacks on this subject?" Öztürk then replies: "Yes... The moment that you show Atatürk having some connection with Islam, the G[reater]M[iddle]E[ast] collapses. It is necessary to detach Atatürk from Islam so that the GME doesn't disappear. The way for the Islamic world to be brought together is the Atatürk project."<sup>2</sup>

Another reaction to the report's publication came from the unofficial mouthpiece of the rightist Nationalist Action Party. In it, the author Yıldırım Çiçek focused his analysis not on the report itself, but on the decision by *Radikal* to reprint it:

The newspaper *Radikal*, which is known by its publishing policy of believing in the theory of evolution and in equating the creation of humans with monkeys, has now undertaken the effort to present Atatürk as 'irreligious'. The 'general thoughts' of it's Editor in Chief İsmet Berkan has become the concrete policy of the newspaper itself.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Öztürk (1951- ) is a graduate of the Istanbul University's Faculty of Law. He possesses a PhD in Islamic Philosophy, and has been a columnist for the papers *Son Havadis*, *Tercüman*, *Hürriyet* and *Star* and has authored twenty books. Source: Official website of the Turkish Grand National Assembly [www.tbmm.gov.tr](http://www.tbmm.gov.tr).

<sup>2</sup> Fatih Erboz, "Atatürk'e Saldırının Ardındaki Sırrı, Yaşar Nuri Öztürk Açıkladı", *Yeniçağ*, September 9, 2006.



İsmet Berkan is working to show the great leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who has always been in peace with the values of the Turkish Nation, who has always struggled so that our values could be sustained in a comprehensible manner in the modern civilization level, like himself.

The *Radikal* newspaper yesterday published a report with a headline to the effect that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the ever-burning sun of Turkishness, believed in God but was 'irreligious'.

In the document that was the source of this article, there are some exact utterances that Atatürk made to the American Ambassador Charles H. Sher[r]ill, who is said to have written a biography of him.

The essence that can be derived from this conversation is that Atatürk believed in God, but was 'irreligious'.

This conversation, which is claimed to have remained secret and which is now [re]printed in the headlines of the daily *Radikal*, originally appeared in this month's issue of the journal *Toplumsal Tarih*.

But just as it saw in this subject grist for its own mill, by its clever device, *Radikal* has now attempted, through its headlines, to gratify its passion for a type of evolutionary theory.

The great leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had hundreds of positive ideas about the religion of Islam that have passed into [recorded] history. He was someone who believed in religion and was very respectful of it. This is the stuff of documented history.

The publication of these utterances, which are said to belong to the year 1933 and which were published only after many years have passed, has no other purpose than to sully his memory.

The game [that is being played] here is to meddle with the religious beliefs of the Turkish Nations through [those] of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and to differentiate them from the sound Islamic beliefs in Turkey [today] and to [thereby] destroy them.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Response from the Islamist Camp:*

Abdurrahman Dilipak, the editor-in-chief of the radical Islamist daily *Anadolu'da Vakit*, reacted to the *Radikal* report with a lengthy editorial that began with the lines: "So! The real Atatürk was religious? Shall we discuss the things that Rıfat Bali has written in *Radikal* or the things that Yurtsever said in his book?<sup>2</sup> The official history does not write the truth. Many things that we thought we knew are not true. Just as we didn't know the truth, we don't even know that we don't know." Dilipak concluded his piece with the prediction:

<sup>1</sup> Yıldırım Çiçek, "Dinsiz diyen, beynsizdir", *Ortadoğu*, September 8, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to the historian/researcher Cezmi Yurtsever, whose book *Şifre* ("The Code") claims that Atatürk had a passionate love affair with Zsa Zsa Gábor, who was sent to Turkey by British intelligence in the late 1930s in order to prevent the breakout of a war between the two countries, but that she accidentally poisoned him with a 'love potion'.



I view the official history with a deep suspicion...I want the archives to be opened. History is not a book of either praises or curses. It is the accumulation of society's shared consciousness and experiences....I want the truth, and only the truth. History will force us to confront our own past, and set us free...<sup>1</sup>

More criticism of the report came from Ali Haydar Haksal, a writer for the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*)'s semi-official organ *Millî Gazete*, which, along with the party, represented the last political faction holding to the so-called Islamist 'National View' ("*Millî Görüş*").<sup>2</sup> In his piece, Haksal wrote:

-- We live in a geography in which the war is never over.

A careful look, a powerful sense of intuition, an eye that sees can easily see just what's what.

The powers in Turkey took a decision under the guidance of the UN. All right, and who is the UN under the guidance of? The Jews sometimes directly run it, and sometimes have it administered [for them].

They run things from afar by means of those upon they've imposed themselves. They boss around those persons for whom they've voted.

Were they able to maneuver past the murder [at the] İsmail Ağa [Mosque]<sup>3</sup> by sending soldiers to Lebanon on the basis of a Tradition of the Prophet?

It's a strange country we live in.

At the beginning of the previous century the Masonic [Committee of] Union and Progress tried to neutralize religion by embracing the axis of nationalism. As a result, a nation which had for centuries carried the banner for Islam and for Muslims was instead neutralized. Various phases have since been passed through. Why are we repeating these things so frequently? This is the important point [upon which we need to focus].

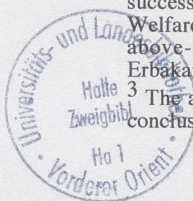
Israel experienced defeat in Lebanon. This is a crushing defeat for the history of Israel. Protests that were held, especially in Turkey, have strengthened this great resistance. [By their actions] the Muslims of the world have had a great effect on humanity.

While the UN remains silent in indirect acquiescence in Iraq, and in many places in the world—and especially in the places in which Muslims live—we have experienced this [before] in Bosnia and Chechnya. It remained silent for a long period in the face of Israel's attack. But when things began to go in the wrong direction the UN entered the fray and

<sup>1</sup> Abdurrahman Dilipak, "Saat 9'u beş gece Atam Dolmabahçe'de!", *Anadolu'da Vakit*, September 9, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> The 'National View' was a theory of political Islam created by Necmettin Erbakan, the founder of the National Order Party (*Millî Nizam Partisi* or *MNP*) in January 1970 and doyen of Turkey's Islamist politicians. Erbakan would subsequently publish a book explaining the 'National View' in greater detail. See: Necmettin Erbakan, *Millî Görüş* (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları), 1975. After the collapse of the MNP in 1971, Erbakan established a number of successor parties, including the National Salvation Party (*Millî Selamet Partisi*, 1972-1980), the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, 1983-1998), the Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*, 1997-2001) and the above-mentioned Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*, 2001- ), all of embraced and espoused Erbakan's 'National View' ideology.

<sup>3</sup> The author here refers to the murder of the imam of İsmail Ağa Mosque as explained in the conclusion of this article.





decided to send a Peace Force. Under the supervision of the US of A (*Abede*), the UN makes sure that its wishes are carried out.

The pro-American A-K-Pee regime<sup>1</sup> has pushed through the assembly a bland resolution calling for the hasty besieging of the Hizbullah in Lebanon, for it to be bound hand and foot, and in this way for it to be disarmed. But by far the most peculiar aspect of the whole affair was their efforts to persuade the parliamentary deputies to pass the resolution by circulating from hand to hand a Tradition of the Prophet. Are all of these things being done under the direction of the US of A in order to render Muslims ineffective? And moreover, is such strangeness to presented to Muslims with an Islamic 'Seal of Approval'?

If you looked in the face of the Unionist media in the wake of the murder committed at the İsmail Ağa Mosque, a particularly strange sight became apparent. Let's try to decipher this image together. First of all, the murder of the late Bayram Ali Öztürk, who was martyred in side the mosque, was ignored and attention was focused on other matters. The martyrdom of the esteemed Islamic teacher (*Hocaefendi*) and the situation that was [subsequently] experienced doesn't seem to bother them at all. Therefore, it must be that they are happy [about it]. For them the elimination of an important symbol means the solving of a problem. Another murder was committed earlier at this very same mosque over which the veil of mystery has yet to be lifted.

Why the Islamic teacher Bayram Ali? Why [at] İsmail Ağa? Why [in the] Fatih [district]? All of these questions are still awaiting answers. The Unionist media casts their attention in an entirely different direction than the murder itself and scampers off [in that direction]. Did they focus on the societal fabric, on the effects [of such], on the branches of Sufiism, on their mosques? Why?

And at the same time as this was going on, the article—or more correctly, a translation of the article—by the Jew Rifat N. Bali is published. A conversation that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had with an American journalist [*sic*] and reports about his view of religion. Why now?

The Unionist media and spirit has now engaged in an assault on Islam from all sides. Even the Muslims' revolt against the US of A, imperialism and Israel are belittled. These, it is said, are not anti-imperialist.

There was an important report in the American media last week. It was reported that the Kurdish people have distanced themselves from Kurdish nationalism and have turned toward Islam.

In the wake of the murder at the İsmail Ağa Mosque [the media] dwelled on the question of which organizations the community was in contact with, and each one of these was [presented as] an excuse [for the murder]. Peculiarities, such as the internal relations of the community, its various strata and rituals were scrutinized at length. With this justification they then dove into the attack itself. [The way they did] this was an attack [in itself]. The solving of this crime from various directions, in other words, the crime being solved indirectly, can still be done like this.

The problem is the Islamic sensitivity that stretches from Lebanon to Turkey. It's the returning of the waters to their original course. It is honor that the US of A has destroyed, it is Israel's defeat. It is the uncovering of the lies of the West.

<sup>1</sup> The author refers here to AKP.





The Unionist process of carving up religion [that began] at the beginning of the last century stands no longer. The Jews wish to place skullcaps on the heads of the Turks—that much is clear. They want to [make them] follow their own lines of behavior. We saw this through their rabbis, their women and their soldiers during the siege of Lebanon. Now the Jew Rifat N. Bali is putting forward a new religious formula for Turkey by using Mustafa Kemal as a pretext. The process into which the Muslims of Turkey have now entered with the murder [at the] İsmail Ağa [Mosque] is being scrutinized. Somehow, yesterday's Islamists—who are today's Advocates for America—have entered on this present course while wishing for an 'Islamic Seal of Approval' for it.

The Masonic Unionist process is again on the agenda. Just as they once destroyed the Ottoman [Empire], they are now in the process of destroying Turkey. Those are its own words.<sup>1</sup>

Haksal would reiterate these views in a subsequent piece:

Both the priests and the rabbis are human beings. [And] human beings are a holy entity, with both sins and pious deeds. [But] murders and murderers cannot be forgiven. They have received the curse of God once [and for all].

The Unionist media does not love Muslims, or Muslim religious scholars, wise men, thinkers or poets. This is clear.

The Unionist media does not like [the] Çarşamba [district], because of the İsmail Ağa community [that lives there]. It takes pleasure from the fact that Bayram Ali Hoca was killed. It doesn't condemn the murderer, it expresses sorrow for his death, because it was a killing. And it finds a thousand and one excused for his action. The members of this oppressed community are blamed [for the murder]. And what's more, by using this murder as a pretext, it does everything in its power to dull Islamic sensitivities and to distance persons from Islam.

Utopias of Argamedon [*sic*] are set up, but with an eye toward the ways that lead to the objectives behind this.

A Muslim looks at the Moment and evaluates the moment. It doesn't calculate how to push humanity into darkness, it seeks paths of salvation.

The Unionist media does not love Mecca and Medina. It doesn't love Fahrettin Paşa, it loves Cemal Paşa. It doesn't love Mustafa Kemal Paşa. He was an anti-imperialist, he closed down the Masonic lodges.<sup>2</sup> The Masons did not love him; they couldn't love him. He died alone.

They don't love Fatih [Mehmet the Conquerer] because of Fatih [the district named after him], this Unionist media. They buy and sell unity.

They consider everybody who isn't Unionist and not of their own to be a religious extremist. But they themselves are members of the religion of Masonry. Ignore all their 'nonsensical prattle about secularism': underneath this is the religion of masonry. They don't love İsmail Haniye. They love Olmert. They love Bush.

They don't love [the] Eminönü [district] because of its mosques and the spiritual satisfaction [that they give].

<sup>1</sup> Ali Haydar Haksal, "Lübnan'dan İsmail Ağa'ya", *Millî Gazete*, September 7, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> A law was passed on October 10, 1935 ordering the closure of all of Turkey's Masonic lodges.





They don't love Üsküdar because of Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi.<sup>1</sup>

They don't love [the] Eyüpsultan [district] because of Eyyüp the Companion of the Prophet.

They love [the] Şişli [district] because of its Dönmes, its Jews and its Masons.

....

Whereas we used to have Moiz Kohen<sup>2</sup> in this Unionist media spirit, today we have Rifat N. Bali. So much so that this spirit has seeped in deeply. This Unionist media gives great importance to the Jews of Israel, to its Catholicos, its priest and its Rabbi.

It even takes pleasure in the crimes [committed] by Israel. They are even sorry for the Lebanese who have died. They are sorry that Bush is sorry. They shared Olmert's sorrows.

They don't like the Arabs because they are Muslims.

They don't like those with Islamic sensitivities because they are Muslims.<sup>3</sup>

### Reactions on the Internet:

Almost immediately after the article was published in *Radikal*, it was quoted by various discussion groups on the Internet and became the subject for a great number of commentaries and analyses. The following messages, which were selected from 17 different ones published on the forum of the group known as the Kemalist Organization of Turkey,<sup>4</sup> are rather interesting in this regard:

'Kadri Kara', 6 September, 2006, 09:51

"Indirect insult!"

It's clear from every line of the report that it is a lie. The [source] that published the report is the newspaper *Radikal*, which refers to our war martyrs simply 'dead'. He who understands, let him understand.

'Gökay Metehan', 6 September, 2006, 10:55

<sup>1</sup> Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi (1541-1628) was a religious scholar who published thirty works (seven in Turkish). He served under eight sultans and gained the respect of Sultan Murad III and Ahmed I. The author refers here to the Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi Foundation which has its center in the district Üsküdar of Istanbul and which gives theological education. Source [www.hudayiyakfi.org](http://www.hudayiyakfi.org)

<sup>2</sup> Moiz Kohen published, under the name Tekin Alp, the books *Türkleştirme* ('Turkification') in 1928 and *Kemalizm* ('Kemalism') in 1937. Islamist ideology and its adherents nurture a special resentment against Moiz Kohen, in large part due to the section in his book *Kemalizm* bearing the title "Kahrrolsun Şariat" ('To hell with the Shari'a Law') and they view him as one of a group whose goal was to break the morale of Turkish society and create divisions within it.

<sup>3</sup> Ali Haydar Haksal, "İtihatçı Medya: Papazsever, Hahamsever, İslâm âlemini sevmeyen", *Millî Gazete*, September 12, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> [www.kemalist.org/showthread.php?t=4021](http://www.kemalist.org/showthread.php?t=4021)





"The journal that the Soros Foundation<sup>1</sup> supports!"

Rıfat N. Bali, the son of I don't know what, who calls himself a researcher-writer, who as a child studied in the Jewish schools, who later on graduated from the Religious Studies Department of the 'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes' University in Paris, which is supported by the American Ford Foundation.<sup>2</sup> Is he a [foreign] agent? A traitor? An individual whose name you should mark. A publication that in these sensitive times is intended to completely confuse and disrupt the country.

'Yorumcu03', 6 September, 2006, 10:55

"Don't believe this report"

Friends, this report is a lie. [In it] it is said that Atatürk's father sent him to a secular school. Don't forget that [Mustafa Kemal's father] Ali Rıza efendi died a few months before Atatürk was born. Don't believe a newspaper that defends the theory of evolution, like *Radikal*.

'Gökay Metehan', 6 September, 2006, 13:38

"The Republic of Turkey must take action immediately"

The authorities must quickly order [an investigative] process to be initiated [against] this journal, the newspaper *Radikal* and the [American] embassy. Regarding Atatürk, the westerners have tried very hard, but never before has history witnessed a calumny so filled with falsity, discord and evil. They are again using Atatürk to attack the most sensitive feelings of the nation, like religion, and it would be correct to say that these types should be killed enough already!

'Tufan Han', 6 September, 2006, 14:05

"It must be researched"

I think that there must be a certain evil intent behind this piece and other similar to it, because in recent times the religious sectors have begun to embrace Atatürk and claim him as their own. Maybe [the publication of these pieces] are intended to prevent the attainment of a condition of peace in the country.

'Serdar Kopan', 6 September, 2006, 14:27

"If the religious people come to possess Atatürk..."

I wrote several times [about] what the West is doing to lower Atatürk in the eyes of Muslims. Because if Atatürk is honored and respected within

<sup>1</sup> George Soros is an investor and philanthropist who in 1991 founded the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary, the country of his birth. In 1993 established the Open Society Institute in New York to support his foundations in Central and Eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union. In August 2001 the institute's Turkish branch office was opened. The institute funds projects and publications which are of value to the advance of democracy, liberalism and freedom of speech in Turkey. As such, it continuously draws the ire of ultranationalists, Islamists and some Kemalists, who see Soros as "a Hungarian-born American Jewish speculator who intends to tear apart the Republic of Turkey". Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/george\\_soros](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/george_soros)

<sup>2</sup> In fact, the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes is a section of the Sorbonne University in Paris and has no connection whatsoever with the Ford Foundation.



[the world of] Islam, it would make it so that the West could no longer exploit the Islamic countries and it would b[ring] an awakening in these countries and resistance against the West. A danger [that is posed] by the religious sector in Turkey coming to embrace Atatürk is that a system of division will be created wherein everyone will operate in their own area, one that won't please a sector known as the secular one, which has been nourished on Atatürk [and his ideology] and has attained a position of making a livelihood [off of him]. In any case, the religious sector in Turkey is not sidling up to Atatürk. If religion and those who parasitically live off of Atatürk are left to the side and a thorough analysis of both Muhammad and Atatürk were to be made, there would not be any secular-religious divides today. The Turks were still the flag[-bearers] of Islam. The super power exists but in no place in the world has it [succeeded in] crushing the Muslims, but the Americans' concern is that we are being corrupted both from within and without.

'İkbal Güzelce', 6 September, 2006, 16:25

If the newspaper [*Anadolu'da*] *Vakit* had written such a piece, it would be declared a provocateur, and [it would have experienced] one attack after another.

[But] when *Radikal* does such, for some reason the approach is [considered to be] intellectual.

This stinks of provocation. This piece calls Atatürk a deist and openly puts people in the position of being stupid.

No attention should be paid to a provocative article [like this].

'Y.A.', 7 September, 2006, 01:09

One more message dished up in order to cool the Turkish nation to Atatürk [and his legacy]. The thing that the circles making these efforts cannot understand is that the Turkish nation loves Atatürk not because he was a completely religious Muslim, but because he was a great revolutionary, a great soldier and a great statesman. Atatürk's beliefs are a matter between him and God—as is true for everybody—and don't interest us in the least, just as they d[idn't] concern an American citizen who served for one year, between 1932-33, as ambassador. If a newspaper like *Radikal*, which is fickle, 'Second Republican' and which has sold its body and soul to the EU, thinks it can turn the Turkish nation away from its great leader with reports like this, it is greatly mistaken, and just shows that it doesn't know this nation at all.

'Berkan', 7 September, 2006, 02:29

The [Turkish] History Foundation<sup>1</sup>, on whose Board of Directors sit

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation for the Economic and Social History of Turkey (*Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı*) was established in 1991 with the "goal of developing the awareness of peace, mutual perceptions and history in Turkey". In 2005 it changed its name to the Foundation for History (*Tarih Vakfı*). The foundation publishes the journals *Toplumsal Tarih* and *İstanbul*, and has up till now sponsored and organized many conferences, symposiums, talks and panel discussions, as well as published a number of books. Source: [www.tarihvakfi.org.tr](http://www.tarihvakfi.org.tr)



enemies of Turkishness and of Atatürk like Murat Belge<sup>1</sup> and Mete Tunçay<sup>2</sup>, went over this subject in the September issue of its journal *Toplumsal Tarih*. The daily *Radikal*, which is right up their alley, probably carried this same subject in its pages, so that they wouldn't miss their chance either. I wonder, how is it that after this many years a report sent by a U.S. Ambassador to the [American] Secretary of State is today dredged up and placed before us by certain known parties? The claims that have appeared in recent years regarding Atatürk, which have been submitted to us on the basis of this or that testimony, which powers' plans are these a part of?

Atatürk's views on religion aren't of interest to anyone. It's clear who the parties are that keep on harping--even until the present day--on the issue of 'Atatürk and Religion: foreign powers who are looking for material that they can use against Atatürk and the adherents of Fethullah [Gülen], those of [George] Soros and the Second Republicans who make use of them. If one looks at this parties and their claims, one cannot help but say about Atatürk: I wished the one who cursed my religion was a Muslim.

Another website<sup>3</sup> that discussed the report registered 149 posts. Among the more interesting ones:

'Mustafa Özkan', 6 September, 2006, 09:47

"Disappointment"

I would have expected better from the USA [, but now] they are working with our great leaders to bring us Muslims into collision with the children of the secular Turkish Republic; who told some American fellow to write a biography of our Father (Atatürk)?

'Ali', 6 September, 2006, 10:35

"Liars"

Friends, *Radikal*, the newspaper that published the report, is a newspaper that argues without hesitation for the theory of evolution within our country. This is to be expected from a newspaper that attacks our national and spiritual values. Some friends have said 'There is a God, but no religion. If we humans can communicate among ourselves, wouldn't the Most High God communicate with his servants? What we call religion is this communication.

'Secular Turkey', 6 September, 2006, 11:45

"Get a hold of yourselves"

Every day in our country, people voice their hatred and enmity for one another on the basis of various [news] reports; take care: all of this is provocation; the Americans write very professionally and correctly; we

<sup>1</sup> Murat Belge is a professor of English Literature at Istanbul's Bilgi University as well as a writer for *Radikal* and a board member of the History Foundation (*Tarih Vakfı*), which publishes the journal *Toplumsal Tarih*.

<sup>2</sup> Mete Tunçay, is a Political Science professor at Istanbul Bilgi University and a member of the History Foundation's board. Both he and the aforementioned Murat Belge are well known for their critical approaches to both Atatürk and Kemalist ideology.

<sup>3</sup> [www.haber3.com/haber.php?haber\\_id=155160&comments=all](http://www.haber3.com/haber.php?haber_id=155160&comments=all)



have embraced Atatürk as our Father not because someone says that our Father believed in God but not in religion, but because he allowed the Turkish race of this country to live in peace and tranquility, because he was a revolutionary and a soldier. A person's religion, his language, his race—these aren't important. Our duty is to build up our country, to educate it and to defend it in the way [that] Atatürk [did]!!!

'Trky', 6 September, 2006, 12:15

"What business is it of yours"

What business is it of yours, punk? Hey, American, who are you cuckold. You haven't been able to confuse this country and you still won't be able to; we know our own history well; why don't you go and write the biography of [President] Bush; for instance: that he's a killer of children, that he's an enemy of Muslims, that he's got a weakness for oil, and such....

'Emre Akyüz', 6 September, 2006, 12:37

"Don't slumber"

As a nation we shouldn't get so quickly carried away by these incitements. Some have become so caught up that they have even spit out the fire of irreligiousness that is in them. The U.S. Ambassador wishes in this way to cause the different groups within the country to clash with one another, just as he brought about the civil war in Iraq, and just as he is now watching from the side, laughing himself silly. He is trying out the same plan on Turkey. In the past times, an English journal too published reports on the people wearing *haşemas* (the Islamic style bathing suit) in an attempt to ignite the internal dynamite within the country. Don't slumber, Turkey; don't get swept up into incitements, Turkey; don't give your enemies any reason for gladness, Turkey.

'Muhammed Ali Esenci', 6 September, 2006, 12:51

Brother, what kind of article is this?! And these pieces that this American writer wrote in which he officially sullied our Father (Atatürk): how can he write such things about our Father (Atatürk)? And how about the Kemalist who supports [what] this American writer [says], are you a half-American or something?! Look here: our Atatürk was a Muslim in his words, in his life and in his blood! How can you speak that way about our Father (Atatürk)?

'Levent Özerk', 6 September, 2006, 12:58

This American writer who says bad things about our Father (Atatürk) must be shown his limits. Who do you think you are? Some American thinks he can just get up and write about my Father (Atatürk), and the ill-mannered lout can somehow say that our Father (Atatürk) is irreligious (he actually said that)...There's a limit and you need to know it, you American!!! Atatürk is ours! He was a Muslim, he was an enlightened leader, he was a patriot....He was a Turkish genius...Look at this American: he's driven me mad [with anger].



'Hüseyin Arıburnu', 6 September, 2006, 13:28

"Ill-mannered louts"

They try to arouse interest like they've always done, these inconsiderate Americans. But this time they've run up against those with sound minds. No one can say anything about our Father (Atatürk). For years, all of the nations have constantly been jealous of such an intellect as this. How lucky we are that Atatürk is ours. They have to prattle on because they can't endure [the thought of it].

'İbrahim', 6 September, 2006, 13:43

"Interesting timing"

From time to time psychological operations against Turkey are conducted in this fashion. No matter how painful it is for people, we diminish Atatürk in the eyes of these Muslim Turks.

It turns out that when he was on his death bed Atatürk is 'alleged' to have requested of an Englishman that he run Turkey. The Turkish people don't swallow these stories. At best, Atatürk explained that he didn't believe in these mindless superstitions "the places against which the Americans repeatedly bang their heads".

[Anonymous], 6 September, 2006, 13:48

The book that defames Atatürk was prepared [for publication] in 1938 by the English and it said that he was a dictator and cruel. All of these missionaries have the same evil intention and there is nothing that these embarrassments won't do to besmirch Atatürk. A person's beliefs are his own. We [can] only bring our beliefs to the rest of the world, no more than that.

'Kaplumbağa', 6 September, 2006, 15:00

Neither the Tropic of Capricorn, nor the Tropic of Cancer, things are different here. Of course we won't be silent when someone arises and says such things about our Father (Atatürk), because no one can keep us silent on this subject. No one can call our Atatürk irreligious!!!!!!

I look at those who support this person from the USA; I wouldn't have expected this from you, guys, not from you.

'Abbas Yolcu', 7 September, 2006, 08:24

"No one expects anything different, because..."

No one expects anything different from these enemies of the Turks, because in order to [actually] know Atatürk it's necessary to first understand his ideas and to evaluate them. As it stands, though, no one expects anything different from these types. How would they partition Turkey? Some would use religious sentiments to create hostility toward Atatürk, while others would use secular sentiments to cause clashes with religious persons. Atatürk was a leader noble enough to say "Happy is he who says he is a Turk".

'Nazan', 7 September, 2006, 08:54



"Gold does not become tinsel simply by falling to the ground"

Let's see what things they'll invent in the future in order to destroy the Turkish nation and Our Great Leader and Father (Atatürk). I think these efforts are justified. Because those who are this afraid and jealous of his great, his magnificent and—although no longer in body—his intellectual presence, have, no matter how long, never been able to destroy it; on the contrary, there is in any case no other leader that with such enthusiasm holds such an unshakable place in the heart of the Turkish nation.

Let them try their best to sully the name of our Father (Atatürk), THEY WILL NEVER REMOVE HIM FROM HIS PERMANENT PLACE IN THE HEART OF THE EXALTED TURKISH NATION.

'Erkan Urash', 7 September, 2006, 08:57

"A Country of Peculiarities"

Before this type of report, in which the conditions in our Father [Atatürk]'s past are constantly being researched and which wish to diminish and corrupt [our] respect for him, we shall always stand firm. First of all, take a look at those sectors that [wish to] again return to our country's Caliphal period and understand! Investments were made and nobody makes even a peep. I hope that things will get sorted out, but I cannot say; I am sad inside. The spirit of my Father [Atatürk] is aching. Ache no longer...! God be praised, within ourselves we are Muslims who resist those who yet would speak evil of my Father (Atatürk). With my regards...

'Erden', 7 September, 2006, 16:19

The U.S. Ambassador is a demagogue. The ugly calumny against Atatürk by U.S. Ambassador Charles H. Sher[r]ill shows that the USA hates the Turkish nation....I am excluding the [American] people here. The USA did not recognize [the 1923] Lausanne [Peace Treaty] and the borders that were written at Lausanne in blood were done so through the courage of Atatürk and the support of the Turkish nation....This is what Mr. Ambassador has been unable to defeat! The USA wants a Turkish man to be a 'submissive' *mankurt*<sup>1</sup>...Why do the traitors among us hesitate to mention the name Turk! Everyone knows who these persons are...

'Müco', 7 September, 2006, 00:31

"You're Great"

Friends, Whatever is said about Atatürk is [part of] a policy of defamation and attrition, but they don't know this, because no matter how great a person he is, even 68 years later they find things to say about his [good] name. You're Great, Father (Atatürk), may this article put a cap on their spider[-web clogged] heads. You know the greatness of our Father, but you can't accept it, so you attack his busts, his statues. Despite the fact that you have dark minds that basically show your weakness, and just how much

<sup>1</sup> The term derives from a novel by the Kirghiz author Chingiz Aitmatov, and refers to a Kirghiz myth about persons made into mindless subhuman slaves. Since the novel's first appearance in 1980, the word has become adopted throughout Central Asia, where it refers to ethnic Turkic persons who know nothing of their own culture and instead have completely adopted the Russian language and culture. Source: <http://www.answers.com/topic/mankurt>



you fear our Father (Atatürk), you know it [to be true] but can you can't accept it, let it be so, let it remain in all of us: LONG LIVE THE FATHER (ATATÜRK), MY FATHER.

'Atos', 7 September, 2006, 00:42

"For shame"

Their whole purpose is nothing other than to disrupt Turkey and to defame our great leader.

### Conclusion

In evaluating the debates that took place in response to the publication of a document of a conversation that took place 73 years ago (in 1933) and which has been available to researchers for the past 48 years, a few conclusions can be drawn.

1. Due to the 'Political Islam' movement in Turkey that is seen to pose a threat to the existing Kemalist establishment, the questions of Atatürk's views of the religion of Islam and that of whether or not he believed in God are one of the subjects that are grouped under the category of "Turkish national sensitivities" and are therefore generally seen as 'taboo' topics. For this reason, the debates that erupted in the press in response to the publication of the Sherrill report and their highly politically charged nature are a phenomenon that is entirely unsurprising in the Turkish context. From the perspective of the Kemalist camp, the fact that this document was published for the first time during a period in which the ruling party was the Islamist Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP)—a party that traced its intellectual origins to the political Islam movement but claimed that it had transformed itself into an 'conservative democrat' party, and a party which, despite the fact that it had been democratically elected was still seen by the Kemalist establishment as 'a government whose legitimacy was in dispute'—made it all the more likely that such a report 'would just serve as more ammunition for the Islamists to defame Atatürk'. In this manner, the warning by *Vatan's* Ruhat Mengi that the article's publication will be followed by "outdated and anachronistic explanations that those who wish to tarnish his memory will use in exploiting this information (which in any case been sitting around for 63 years)!" is a clear example of this mindset.

2. Another striking feature of the debates surrounding the publication of this article are the manifestations of the 'conspiracy mentality' that prevails in much of Turkey and that insists on interpreting every new scientific and scholarly work from the viewpoint of 'Who benefits from this?' This



conspiratorial mindset finds its parallel in the anti-Americanism<sup>1</sup> that has arisen in Turkey in the wake of the attack on the Twin Towers in New York and the U.S. invasion of Iraq that followed closely in its wake and derives from the belief—widespread in Turkey—that the West and the United States in particular have prepared an ongoing plot to destabilize Turkey.

3. An element of anti-Americanism has been added to the division of Turkish society into rival ideological and political camps that has already existed for years between the supporters and opponents of Turkey's membership in the EU. As a result, the Turkish intelligentsia has been seriously divided. Within this division are the liberal/left-leaning History Foundation, which supports the idea of Turkey's membership in the EU and publishes the journal *Toplumsal Tarih*, and similarly aligned *Radikal* newspaper both of which tend to view the history of the Turkish Republic with a critical eye. These organizations and publications is usually seen by both the ultra-nationalist and old guard Kemalists as "institutions wishing to partition the Turkish Republic". In this light some of the website readers' comments that characterize *Toplumsal Tarih* as "the History Foundation journal in which one finds the enemies of Turkishness and of Atatürk" become more understandable. Likewise, the publication of the Sherrill report in this journal was seen by many as part of a plan "by those who wish to destroy the Turkish Republic". In turn, *Radikal*'s reprinting of the document was again described as "part of a plan implemented by those wishing to partition Turkey". Moreover, due to the widespread anti-Americanism and general conspiracy mindset in Turkey in our day, the very fact that Ambassador Sherrill penned the report in the first place—regardless of how solid and friendly Turkish-American relations were in the 1930s—is seen as "yet another American plot against Turkey".

4. The document was not discussed or debated in a particularly stimulating fashion within the Islamist grassroots. The only Islamic newspaper columnist to criticize the report was *Millî Gazete*'s Ali Haydar Haksal.<sup>2</sup> If only to understand his response more fully, it will be advantageous to keep three important facts in mind:

<sup>1</sup> For the most recent publication on this subject see German Marshall Funds of the United States publication *Key Findings 2006* (Transatlantic Trends), 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Haksal (1951- ) was originally a short story writer who graduated from the İmam-Hatip High School in Elazığ in 1975 and subsequently from the Faculty of Literature of Atatürk University in Erzurum (1979). He has also served as the Provincial Chairman of the Virtue Party and as an Advisor to the Mayor of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. His first short story appeared in *Millî Gazete* in 1975. In subsequent years he published other stories and articles in the newspapers and journals *Yeni Devir* (1979), *Millî Gazete* (1980-1986), *Düşünce*, *Mavera* (1980-1986), *Yedi İklim*, and *Yönelişler*. He currently works as the publishing advisor, chief editor and owner of the journal *Yedi İklim*. Source: [www.kultur.gov.tr](http://www.kultur.gov.tr)





a) The Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) was established on August 14, 2001 by the majority of former Virtue Party (FP) parliamentary deputies who, under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, had previously resigned from the party, which held to the 'National View' ideology of Necmettin Erbakan, before its imminent closure. The current AKP government is thus comprised largely of members who were raised on the 'National View' ideology. The only remaining party that openly advocates this view is the Felicity Party (SP), in comparison with which the AKP is seen by the Turkish public as 'reformist', and ever since its founding it has been routinely criticized by both the SP and its semi-official mouthpiece *Millî Gazete* as 'an ally of both America and Israel'.

b) On September 2, 2006 the retired imam, or prayer leader of the İsmail Ağa Mosque in Istanbul's Çarşamba district was knifed by an assailant while he was conversing with others following prayers. The knife-wielding assailant, who was a member of the İsmail Ağa Mosque Community, was lynched and killed by one or more persons in the wake of his deed. As for the imam himself, he was severely injured in the attack and subsequently died from his wounds. Against the backdrop of this incident the Kemalist establishment would take up the question of both the 'tarikats', or Sufi lodges, and the various mosque communities, the two most important forms of Islamist organization in Turkey, and for days following the event the issue was debated and the organizations themselves came in for much criticism.

c) On September 5, 2006 the Turkish Grand National Assembly would pass a resolution proposing that the country's Armed Forces be represented in the UN-mandated Multi-National Peace Force to be sent to Lebanon by contributing a Turkish military unit. This decision would be severely criticized by both the opposition parties—including the SP—and various non-governmental organizations.

The *Millî Gazete* columnist Ali Haydar Haksal's situating of the publication of translation of the Sherrill report against this political backdrop thus allows him to see its 'timely' appearance as a part of some larger conspiracy. Among other things, Haksal succeeds in tying the appearance to *Radikal*'s past defense of Darwinist evolutionary theory, something generally noxious to the Islamist press and their belief in a form of Creationism.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, İsmet Berkan, "İnsanın tarihine yeni bir halka", *Radikal*, October 30, 2004 / İsmet Berkan, "Yaratılış masalları Radikal'e sızmayı başardı", *Radikal*, June 25, 2005 / İsmet Berkan, "Akıllı tasarım nihayet memleketimize de geldi", *Radikal*, August 14, 2005 / İsmet Berkan, "Mahkeme marifetiyle bilim", *Radikal*, September 23, 2005 / İsmet Berkan, "Gericilerin saldırısı", *Radikal*, March 12, 2006 / İsmet Berkan, "Son sözü yargı söyleyecek", *Radikal*, March 13, 2006 / Timur Soykan, "Yaratılış Müzesi açtı: Adnan Hoca Şişli'ye sızmış", *Radikal*, May 27, 2006 / İsmet Berkan, "Bilimsel teori ile dogma arasındaki temel fark", *Radikal*, June 16, 2006 / "Yaratılış Müzesi'nin 'önlenemez' belediye turları!", *Radikal*, August 12, 2006.



### General Conclusion

Throughout the debate on the Sherrill report and the publication of its translation, the actual content of the document itself was never really discussed in a serious and scholarly manner—on the contrary, nearly all discussion tended to occur within the framework of the conspiratorial mindset so prevalent among Turkey's press and intelligentsia (to say nothing of its general population) and/or against the backdrop of the country's ideological and political polarization. As a result, the entire affair merely serves to once again highlight the fact that until now in Turkey it remains impossible to discuss topics dealing with the country's recent history in a calm, detached manner.







## II - SELECTED DOCUMENTS FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### *A – ATATÜRK AS VIEWED THROUGH THE EYES OF AMERICAN DIPLOMATS*

#### 1. AMBASSADOR JOSEPH C. GREW'S REPORT ON ATATÜRK

Strictly Confidential

Constantinople, February 25, 1929

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington

Sir:

With reference to the informal comments by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs on the despatches received from this Embassy during the month of August 1928, I have the honor to submit the following confidential report with regard to the personal prestige private life and habits of the President of the Turkish Republic, Ghazi Mustafa Kemal.

When one speaks of the "moral deterioration of the Ghazi and his immediate entourage" and of their "excesses" first be understood what exactly is meant by these terms.

The private character of the Ghazi's present method of life, to which are admitted only the very limited number of his intimates, combined with the fact that he makes himself almost inaccessible to the great majority of Government officials as well as to all foreign diplomatic representatives, has given rise to a great deal of exaggerated speculation as to what actually occurs of an evening at the President's Çankaya residence. Rumors are afloat that these gatherings, which occur three or four times a week, and which are sometimes attended by his "adopted daughters", are the scene of debauches at which drunkenness and immorality are flagrant. It is certain, however, that these reports are highly exaggerated and it is interesting to add, as an evidence of the loyalty of his followers, that none who are privileged to attend these gatherings will divulge the slightest information with regard to what takes place on these occasions. This fact is undoubtedly responsible for a good deal of the exaggeration one encounters. The Ghazi himself is certainly a very



virile type and there is no question but that he takes more than an average interest in the physical attractions of the opposite sex. The rumors one hears occasionally attributing homosexual tendencies to him and to some of his intimates are not deserving of any credit. Incidentally, in Turkey, as in other Near Eastern countries, there is little or no moral stigma attached to the practice of this perversion but it is certainly more prevalent in war times in all countries of the world and there is no reason to believe that it is a common failing of the educated Turk today.

What is significant, however, about the Ghazi's present method of life is that he is burning the candle pretty heavily at both ends. From a normal point of view he lives a curious existence. According to reports, he seldom if ever arises much before one p.m. After a light lunch he works until the middle of the afternoon and takes a motor drive, returning to work until eight or nine at night when frequently his intimates are summoned and sit down to dinner and subsequent conversation which often is prolonged for the rest of the night and sometimes up to five or six in the morning. At these sessions the Ghazi, who is a brilliant conversationalist, discusses such questions as he considers of immediate importance, frequently elaborating his political theories for the future development of the country. During this time he drinks heavily, his favorite tippie being raki of which it is said that he can consume an unlimited amount. It is not uncommon for him, on these occasions, to become pretty thoroughly intoxicated. It is doubtful whether any man, no matter how strongly he may be constituted physically, can long withstand the amount of drink which the President of the Republic is said to consume daily. Reports are current that he has been warned on several occasions by physicians that he must control the habit, and that they cannot answer for the future condition of his health unless he follows their advice. It is known that on a number of occasions he has "gone on the wagon" for periods of two or three months at a time. It is fairly certain that both physically and mentally he is not the man he was in 1922, and that as a result of his method of life and his fondness for raki he has suffered a marked deterioration. It is of interest to report that of late the Ghazi has taken to afternoon horseback riding and that, in the opinion of those who have had the opportunity of observing him closely, his physical appearance has not undergone any perceptible change in the last few years.

As to whether the personal prestige of Mustafa Kemal is on the wane, it may be of interest to relate in some detail the answer to that question furnished to a member of the staff of this Embassy by the Iraq Minister at Angora, Sabih Neshat Bey. Neshat Bey was for many years himself a Turkish subject, although an Iraq Arab by origin. He served for many years in the Turkish Army, during the World War as an officer, and attended the staff



college with the Ghazi and such high military officials as Marshal Fevzi Pasha. He is certainly the only foreign diplomat in Turkey today who is on intimate terms with the President of the Republic, and who, on greeting him at a ball given recently at Angora, embraced him fondly on both cheeks according to Turkish habit.

Neshat Bey said that in order to answer this question intelligently it would be necessary to divide, in one's imagination, the population of Turkey into two parts. The first part (which is the vast majority) must comprise the entire illiterate element which includes the agricultural class of the country. This class he described as being apathetic, not only with regard to the present régime in Turkey but also with regard to the Ghazi. This apathy he attributed, to a certain extent, to the fatalistic mentality of the people and in a great measure to the spirit of blind and implicit obedience which has always been their heritage. He expressed the opinion that if the Ghazi, and the Republic, were to vanish overnight, through a stroke of magic, and were to be replaced by the former Sultanic régime, this class would accept the phenomenon as the will of Allah and bow to the inevitable. The fact that the country has suffered from two successive years of drought, which has brought untold misery to the agricultural class, has neither served to lessen or to increase the prestige of the Ghazi. Again the fact that both petty tradesmen and agriculturalists have no longer to compete with the more industrious and better educated Armenian and Greek Ottoman subjects, has not served to enhance the Ghazi's position in the land. Neshat Bey summed up by saying that the attitude of these people was simple: "Allah gave us the Ghazi, we must accept and obey him."

The other division of the population, according to the Iraq Minister is the literate class. This group, in his opinion, should again be subdivided into three groups.

The first would contain the great majority of higher Government officials (including especially a great many Army officers) as well as the more important merchants who have all, in some manner or other, benefited either socially or materially by the changes brought about in the creation of the Republic. These people are naturally grateful and are devoted supporters of the President.

The second group, in Neshat Bey's opinion, is a very important one. It embraces the youth of the country, that is those who became of age at the time that Turkey started its uphill fight for independence. This class is heartily in favor of the reforms, although they personally may not have benefited in any direct manner as a result of the changes which have occurred. They are nevertheless imbued with a very fine degree of genuine patriotism which makes them recognize in the Ghazi the man who is leading their country, slowly but surely, from darkness into light. They are willing to accept him unquestioningly as their leader.





The third group contains a class of minor Government officials and merchants who have in no way benefited by the changes and who were probably better off under the old régime than under the new. In this class there exists a leaven of discontent and the Ghazi and his reforms are anything but popular. Needless to say that with the extreme care with which the Government watches even the smallest evidences of discontent in the country it is not advisable for these people to express their opinions in public. Nevertheless, according to Neshat Bey, this class very definitely exists and must not be overlooked in any attempt to pass upon the degree of personal prestige of the Ghazi.

It is felt that in addition to the class of malcontents, mentioned above, must be included a group, which is almost negligible, composed of the old conservative and religious elements which cannot bring themselves to accept the reforms embracing religious, educational and westernization features introduced by the Republican régime. This class is in the minority and need not be taken seriously in the consideration of the degree to which it might possibly affect the new order of things.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Joseph C. Grew

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-1929, Document 867.001 K31/35 dated February 25, 1929.



## 2. CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES AD INTERIM G. HOWLAND SHAW'S REPORT ON ATATÜRK

EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Ankara, March 21, 1931

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

The Ghazi returned to Ankara on March 3. He had concluded his inspection and learned something about Turkey. The station was crowded with Cabinet Ministers, Deputies, minor officials and diplomats – all in top hats and all shivering at one of the coldest and windiest days the Ankara winter has produced. The first official information was that the Presidential train would get in at two o'clock. Everybody assembled therefore a good quarter of an hour ahead of time, only to discover that the time of arrival was three o'clock instead of two o'clock. The diplomats went home for a brief respite; but the Turks turned up their collars and risked pneumonia – fearful lest the train despatcher be misinformed and the Presidential train get in beforehand and they be absent. By 2.45, however, the red carpet had been layed in the mud, Comrade Souritz had taken his place and so had the President of the Grand National Assembly – in close proximity to a switch. The train drew in – two locomotives and goodness knows how many cars: baggage cars, Wagons-Lits-old and new-coaches filled with soldiers and bands and newspaper correspondents, and – at the end – the President. The royal steps were lowered and the Ghazi got down – grimly. He shook hands; walked rapidly by the band, which was playing the National Anthem in a manner calculated to suggest a funeral march gone only slightly wrong and left the station in an automobile accompanied by Ismet Pasha. Immediately, if not sooner, he called a meeting of the Cabinet and the Cabinet meeting was followed instantaneously by a meeting of the Peoples' Party. Like all good politicians the Ghazi understands the immense importance of doing nothing dramatically.



The next day – March 4 – Ankara learned that the Assembly would be dissolved and that new elections would be held at once. Ankara was stunned, the diplomats especially so. The Ghazi wrote a letter to the Peoples' Party telling it what to do. The following day the Assembly convened. The diplomatic gallery was crowded with diplomats eagerly awaiting the making of history. Kiazim Pasha struggled into his official evening clothes; his top hat was correctly parked in a vacant place on his desk; the Assembly was duly brought to order; Comrade Souritz leaned forward, his Counselor by his side with a Turkish pocket dictionary clutched in his hand. The Minister of Hygiene arose and explained why in view of the method of sewage disposal characteristic of Ankara typhoid outbreaks were inevitable. The diplomats were nonplussed and were restored to normalcy only when the Assembly unanimously – naturally – voted to reduce the salaries of Deputies from Ltq. 500.00 to Ltq. 350.00 per month. The announcement of the vote was greeted with a proper manifestation of restrained enthusiasm, which led the more cynical among the observers to conclude that successful Deputies nowadays no longer depend on their salaries and unsuccessful ones of course don't matter. After various other votes – unanimous, it is unnecessary to say – on a variety of routine matters, Hassan Bey, Vice President of the Assembly, ambled up to the Speaker's Tribune with a green paper-covered pamphlet in his hand, which proved to be the Constitution. He read Article 25 and explained the Constitutional background of the proposal that the Assembly should vote the holding of elections immediately. The vote was taken – and proved to be unanimous.

The two weeks which have followed this historic meeting of the Assembly have seen developments. The crude and hard-hitting Recep Bey has succeeded the softer and quieter Saffet Bey as Secretary of the Peoples' Party – Saffet will probably get an Embassy; the elections will be held in April; A Congress of the Peoples' Party will be convened late in April; the new Assembly will be called together early in May and the old Assembly will take a vacation forthwith.

What do these events mean? One explanation is obvious enough: When a Chief of State tours the country for three months for the purpose of finding out what is wrong, he must do something when he gets back to the capital at the end of the tour. That is elementary politics of the most elementary sort. If you're a dictator and you don't want to change your Prime Minister, the obvious thing to do is to find some fault with the Parliament, if there is one. That is what the Ghazi has done. With the system of effectively controlled elections which obtains in Turkey he will rearrange the membership of the Assembly. He may replace a limited number of Deputies with younger



men, as some hold, or he may turn to persons who are locally powerful in their respective political areas. It really makes very little difference what he does in this respect. The Assembly and its present membership – these are to be made a sort of scapegoat. But that is only the negative side. There is a positive side to the Ghazi's plans. Opposition is anathema in Turkey nowadays, and the distinction between the Ghazi and the Peoples' Party which seemed for a moment permissible last summer is now definitely excluded. But the Peoples' Party is to take on new life and to become co-extensive with the nation. Indeed, it is intended that it shall cease to be a Party and shall become the nation – the nation, not only politically but culturally, religiously and in every other sense of the word. This, then, is the program: there is to be a housecleaning; there will be new organizations, new motive power, new drive, new and better coercions, but as to the ideas which it is proposed to inculcate that is a mystery which perhaps the next few months will in some degree clarify – and perhaps not.

Respectfully yours,

G. Howland Shaw,

Chargé d'Affaires ad interim.

NARA, RG 59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document no. 867.00/2059



### 3. CONSUL GENERAL CHARLES E. ALLEN'S REPORT ON ATATÜRK: "THE PRESIDENT" DATED OCTOBER 1931.

Until his departure for Ankara on September 25 [1931], Gazi Mustafa Kemal spent almost the entire month of September in Istanbul and its environs. No explanation of this desertion of Yalova for the Bosphorus is given but the writer, who visited Yalova toward the end of September, suspects that it is a place which after a short time might easily get on the nerves even of a man copiously comforted with "düzico". Like everything else in the new Turkey Yalova is heavily overrated both by the small ring in power and naive foreigners who seem born to be taken in by a bit of paint, grass, shade or other slight evidence of "progress". It is much worse than most of the other "progressive" monuments, except the Ankara Palace Hotel, in that its promoters have tried to give it an air of occidental thermal establishment up-to-the-minute-ness which they themselves understand only imperfectly and which renders ridiculous a spot obviously highly favored by nature. For example, the writer, arriving late in the afternoon hot and dusty after a five hour trip by car from Bursa, was refused a bath by the comic opera attendants in livery on the ground that he must wait until the following morning to be examined by the physician and have the nature of his bath prescribed. Ten miles away the keeper of a rather unspeakable inn did what he could to provide pails of water and the following morning at Prinkipo a Greek hotel-keeper provided a real bath, so that one rejoiced that, despite occidentalization, there is still a Turkey which is human although it boasts no metal store fronts or boulevard lighting.

The Gazi's conduct at Istanbul was, from the point of view of avoidance of the scandalous, what might be called good. He appeared to be imbibing freely and to require frequent periods of undisturbed repose at the palace but he got around and gave the people a sight of him rather often and only once did he give public evidence of high spirits. This was on the morning of September 21 when, not having as yet been to bed, so it is alleged, he conceived the notion of witnessing the sunrise from the heights above Eyub (Golden Horn) and forthwith set off with his companions to do so. At a given point the party abandoned cars and proceeded on foot and en route encountered a peasant with a wagon-load of melons. It occurred to the Gazi that it would be agreeable to conceal his identity and bargain for the melons. He did so and bought the melons for fifteen liras after – according to the manner of



bargaining in the East – certain sharp exchanges of courtesies between himself and the peasant and the latter's brother who had come up and taken, not too politely, a hand in the game. The purchase agreed upon, the national hero struck terror – the press says surprise and embarrassment – to the hearts of the two peasants by giving them his name and address. Thereupon, having seen the sunrise, the party proceeded to Yeşilköy (San Stefano) and took the train for İstanbul, the Gazi being accompanied into the carriage by his dog in violation of the regulations which require the transportation of dogs in the baggage-car. The conductor, like the peasants not recognizing the savior of the country, called attention to the regulations and was invited to himself take the dog to the baggage-car. The dog was a brute, however, who would tolerate no playfulness on the part of strangers and the conductor, to the amusement of the Gazi, his companions and the newspapermen who have written down the story for posterity, came off second best in his effort to enforce the railway company's order. This is the combination of schoolboy and Oriental despot who rules Turkey. Throughout his altercations with both the peasants and the conductor he appears to have stuck strictly to the rôle of amused prank-player and to have borne no ill will and when the peasants actually arrived at the palace with the melons, the press pictures him as giving them a meal and fifty liras each. Is it possible to take this man seriously as an apostle of "progress"? The "thin occidental veneer", which is such a popular phrase in connection with descriptions of Turks, seems much thinner in his case than in most. In fact, he seems to don it for occasions. When he is entirely himself and among his own kind, it is difficult to see anything of the occidental in him. He is not even a snob which is the indispensable mark of the occidental.

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, "Digest of the Turkish Press for the Period September 3-October 14, 1931", document dated October 19th, 1931, no. 867.9111/328.



#### 4. CONSUL GENERAL CHARLES E. ALLEN'S REPORT ON ATATÜRK: "THE PRESIDENT", DATED MARCH 1932.

The past fortnight was marked by the return of Gazi Mustafa Kemal to Ankara on March 4 and by the separation from the Presidential staff of Tewfik Bey, the secretary-general, and Russuhi Bey, the principal side-de-camp. Each of these momentous events happened without previous warning, so that one has to rely upon rumor, where there is anything at all to rely upon, for the causes underlying them. The departure of the great man for Ankara does not call for particular explanation, seeing that Ankara is the capital. At the same time, it was known that he was having a gloriously good time at DolmaBagçe, far from the cares of state and cut off from the diplomatic corps, and only a few days before he left it had been announced that he expected to "continue to honor" Istanbul for some time. It has been heard that this good time was beginning to cause the cabinet some concern and that it was finally deemed necessary, in the interest of decorum and the orderly transaction of the public business, to persuade the President to take his place at the helm. Tewfik Bey, the secretary-general, was separated from the staff while yet at Geneva as delegate to the limitation of armaments conference and where he had obtained considerable applause from local sources by his insistence on discontinuance of the division of the powers into "great" and "small". He returned to Istanbul on March 4 and went to the palace to report. In chronicling this fact, the press chronicled the further fact that "an end has been put to his duties as secretary-general". No explanation is offered and the only reference to his future is a vague suggestion that he may be made Ambassador to Afghanistan to succeed the present Ambassador there, Hikmet Bey, who is apparently en route home to become secretary-general. Should that prove to be the case, the post at Kabul would, to say the least, be a considerable step-down from the post at Moscow which Tewfik Bey resigned to accept the secretary-generalship. As for Russuhi Bey, his dismissal – he was ordered back to the army – is connected by the rumor-mongers with a good turn he endeavoured to do the Gazi. It is reported that the national hero, while enjoying himself at a late hour at a local Russian restaurant, engaged the proprietor's wife in conversation and learned that the business was going badly to the extent of fifteen thousand liras. He is depicted as calling for a piece of paper and writing thereon an order to the İş Bancassi to pay the good lady the sum mentioned. Russuhi Bey is reported to have ordered the bank the



following morning to disregard the order and thereupon is said to have been ordered back to military duty in order "not to lose touch with military usages".

It seems to be pertinent to say here that neither the dismissal of Tewfik Bey nor the dismissal of Russuhi Bey is an event of any true significance. Neither of them is a person of outstanding merit or outstanding demerit. Each is a "yes-men", bent upon making the most of his nearness to the great democrat, and fate seems to have a way of dealing eventually with "yes-men". All that is interesting in these incidents is the fact, clearly brought out, that the Gazi seems less and less willing to control his weakness for carousal and that carousal tends to accentuate his autocratic bent and to cause him to deal ever more arbitrarily with those around him. The incident of the gift of fifteen thousand liras to the Russian lady is similar to dozens of incidents concerning which rumors have been afloat since the Gazi last came to Istanbul and in fact since he emerged into the limelight. The essential facts in every case are that the Gazi drank heavily and grew sentimental. Sometimes when he has grown sentimental he has become benevolent and made presents of one kind or another. At other times, his thoughts have turned to the people and the state he has set up for them and he has grown jealous of his prerogatives and his dignity. At such times, the consequences have ranged all the way from a dismissal like that of Russuhi Bey to a series of hangings. But whatever the details, the central fact has invariably been a drunken man turned sentimental. It seems too much to hope that there will ever be any other central fact so long as this modern Washington is able to keep his hand on the reins. It is improbable that he will stop drinking and the Turk, as all religion-ridden peoples, is so impregnated with sentimentality that it cannot be expected to disappear suddenly.

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, "Digest of the Turkish Press for the Period February, 21 – March, 5, 1932" document dated March 10, 1932, no. 867.9111/353.





## 5. AMBASSADOR JOSEPH C. GREW'S REPORT ON ATATÜRK

Istanbul, Turkey, March 10, 1932.

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Subject: The Gazi

Sir:

The Gazi arrived at Ankara on March 5, having been in Istanbul since January 12. His coming to Ankara was suddenly announced the evening before he arrived and for the first time such an event was not notified to the diplomatic corps. Only a few officials were on hand to greet him. Before most of Ankara knew that he had arrived he had slipped through the town up the empty boulevard which had hitherto been lined with soldiers on such occasions. Nevertheless, in the evening the lights of Çankaya burned brightly and raki was served. At the Polish Embassy tea the same afternoon deputies were so ostentatious in pronouncing that the Gazi had never looked better that one wondered if they were not acting under instructions.

His unprecedented stay in Istanbul has had a certain repercussion in Ankara. In the first place, the Assembly opened on February 15 with hardly a peep and has not been heard of since. One almost forgets that it exists. Secondly, officials and their wives who a year ago would never have dared to breathe a word of criticism against Ankara are now quite open in expressing their feelings on the lack of proper living conditions, high prices, and the miserable lot of the petty official. Thirdly, there is an ominous calm over the capital as if something were happening but no one quite knows what is going on.

These repercussions have been augmented by rumors concerning the Gazi's sojourn in Istanbul where gossip is most unreliable and usually critical of the Government. The Gazi arrived there from Ankara on January 12 and made his residence at Dolmabahçe Palace. He made at least five appearances in public – three times at the theater, at a local restaurant and again at a charity ball. He divided his time between the Palace and going for a drive or taking a cruise on the Marmara. The most current explanation given for his prolonged



stay in Istanbul is that he was there for medical treatment since he is suffering from acute throat infection, said to be laryngitis, but also rumored to be cancer. Indeed, a Cabinet member the other evening said to a member of my staff that the Gazi had a bad throat due to his habit of having his drinks iced. Another story is that he has high blood pressure and that the altitude of Ankara does not suit his condition. It is also said that a certain amount of friction – even corruption – has developed in the Gazi's entourage itself. This is substantiated by the recent dismissal of two of his most trusted aides, Colonel Tevfik, his Secretary, and Major Rusuhi, his Military Aide.<sup>1</sup> The former may exchange places with Hikmet [Bayur] Bey<sup>2</sup> who is Ambassador at Kabul and who served as Secretary during Colonel Tevfik's Embassy to Moscow. There are several conflicting stories dealing with the accepting of bribes. One rumor has it that Abbas Hilmi, the ex-Khedive of Egypt, who was feted so extensively at Ankara last December entrusted his Turkish interests to Colonel Tevfik and Major Rusuhi for a consideration. They are said to have received their pay but to have neglected the interests of Abbas Hilmi so that the latter complained to the Gazi who in due course extracted a confession from his Aide. Another story is that the Major accepted a bribe from a foreign airplane company whose rival complained to Fevzi [Çakmak] Pasha.

Finally, the Gazi's behavior while in Istanbul has been a subject of concern and speculation. There is the well-authenticated story of the recent expulsion from the Palace of Dr. Reşit Galip [Aydın] Bey, one of the inner circle.<sup>3</sup> The incident leading up to this affair was the visit of the Gazi one evening to a local restaurant where he dined and wineed extremely well. At a very late hour, having learned from the proprietress of the establishment that it was shortly to be closed owing to debts, he made out an order on the İş

<sup>1</sup> Major Rusuhi was first aide-de-camp of Atatürk. For his biography please refer to Turgay Tuna, "Tam 11 Yıl Boyunca Seryaver Rusuhi Bey", *Popüler Tarih*, November 2004, pp. 44-49 and Turgay Tuna, "Bir Serginin Ardından Seryaver Rusuhi Bey", *Collection*, July-August-September 2005, No. 26, pp. 14-17. (Ed.)

<sup>2</sup> Ord. Prof. Yusuf Hikmet Bayur (1891-1980) was nominated General Director of Political Affairs of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on October 1, 1920. He was an advisor to the Turkish delegation who participated to the Lausanne Conference. In 1923 he became advisor of the Turkish Embassy in London and in 1925 he was nominated to the Turkish Embassy in Belgrade. In 1932 he became, for the second time, General Secretary of the Turkish President. In 1932 he became a member of parliament and between October 1933-July 1934 he was Minister of Education. He is the author of several books among which *Türkiye Devleti'nin Dış Siyasası* (1934), *Türk İnkılap Tarihi* (1940-1967), *Atatürk Hayatı ve Eseri* (1963). (Ed.)

<sup>3</sup> Reşit Galip (b. 1897, d. 5 March 1934) was elected as member of parliament in 1925. He was a member of the Independence Court (İstiklâl Mahkemesi) established after the Kurdish-Islamic Sheikh Said Revolt of 1925. He was nominated Minister of Education in September 1932 but was obliged to leave his post in August 1933. Until his last days he devoted himself on the study of Turkish history and Turkish language. He was a member of *Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti* (The Society for the Study of Turkish History) and *Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti* (The Society for the Study of the Turkish Language). (Ed.)





Bank to her for the loan of a large sum. Dr. Reşit Galip Bey remonstrated with him and on the following day the altercation continued with the Doctor's subsequent expulsion from the Palace. On two other occasions while in Istanbul the Gazi saw fit to arrive at the Pera Palace Hotel at most unreasonable hours, once at 3 o'clock in the morning and once at 12:30 a.m. The management was awakened, the waiters, cooks, etc., aroused and obliged to prepare food. On the later occasion the Gazi even demanded a full course dinner. These rumors of the Gazi's ill health and the fantastic tales of his recent behavior are nothing new, although they may in the present case explain his protracted sojourn in Istanbul. Indeed, some claim that the Gazi has, through his excesses, lost some of his force and control. On the other hand, those who have had occasion to follow closely his life and activities in Ankara, report that he works with unabated energy and that he continues to dominate as before in the rôle of absolute dictator, consulting no one on major issues and only trying out his plans on his advisers after he himself has formulated them and decided on their merits.

Respectfully yours,  
Joseph C. Grew.

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document no. 867.001 K31/45.



## 6. AMBASSADOR CHARLES H. SHERRILL'S REPORT OF JOURNALIST ASIM US' VIEWS ON ATATÜRK

Istanbul, August 26, 1932

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington

Subject: The Gazi

Sir:

Asim [Us] Bey, editor of the daily *Vakit*,<sup>1</sup> when lunching with me today at the Embassy began telling me about the extraordinary concentration which the President, Mustafa Kemal, displays when working. He says he personally has known him to work two days and two nights without any interruptions for sleep or any sort of repose. Not long ago several editors were invited to dine with the President to discuss a political question and the host hardly ate any dinner, so interested was he in his subject, and they worked together until 4 in the morning. Asim [Us] Bey told me that the President is now concentrating all his efforts upon a linguistic congress which will treat of the Turkish language somewhat as the Historical Congress treated of the latter subject this July in Ankara. He said than the President told him that this new Congress would probably meet in Istanbul during the month of October, and that although its presiding officer was not yet decided, it would probably be Samih Rifat Bey.<sup>2</sup>

He also told me some interesting facts about the distribution of newspapers in this city and throughout the country. It appears that they have a comparatively small number of paid up subscribers, but rely chiefly on sales through the salesmen in shops exclusively devoted to that purpose or else by newsboys. This makes the future income of a newspaper very problematical, for if it chances to lose popular favor its sales may diminish very rapidly. On the other hand, by pleasing the public, large and rapid increases may also be effected. He said that when there came the change from Arabic characters to

<sup>1</sup> The memoirs of Asim Us have been published: *Asim Us, Gördüklerim, Duyduklarım*, Vakıf Matbaası, İstanbul, 1964; and *Asim Us, 1930-1950 Hatıra Notları*, Vakıf Matbaası, İstanbul, 1966. (Ed.)

<sup>2</sup> Samih Rifat was a member of parliament and president of the Institute for the Study of the Turkish Language (Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti) (Ed.)



Latin script (November 1, 1928) the newspapers were badly hit because comparatively few people at that time could read the new script, but that it took only a surprisingly few weeks for their old circulation to return. Now that the Latin characters are universally accepted throughout the country, and education thereby greatly assisted, the newspapers sell a great many more copies than in the old days of the Arabic script.

Respectfully yours,  
CHARLES H. SHERRILL.

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document no. 867.001 K 31/54.



## 7. AMBASSADOR CHARLES H. SHERRILL'S REPORT ON ATATÜRK

Confidential

Istanbul, December 8, 1932.

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Subject: Stability of Present Turkish Government

Sir:

In Paris and other European capitals one hears inquiries, generally friendly, as to what would happen to the Turkish Republic if its creator, the present President, should pass away. But in Turkey this subject is never discussed publicly because people here are sufficiently well informed to realize that the Republic is a going concern, with sufficient hold upon the imagination and respect of the people to continue on its own momentum, even if its creator should unhappily be removed. But the Turks themselves have a still further reason for believing in the Republic's stability, and that is that they realize better than do foreigners, that there is a strong succession available for the post of Chief Executive. This is something which is lacking in Italy. During my ten years of cordial personal relations with Mr. Mussolini, he has spoken to me upon this subject several times, always of course voicing the opinion that Fascism has become permanent in Italy, but nevertheless showing that he is not certain how it would function if he were to die.

Here in Turkey, President Mustafa Kemal enjoys the complete loyalty of three men who, taken together, assure the stability of succession of the Republic, even if its present head should die. They are Marshal Fevzi [Çakmak], Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Kâzım [Özalp] Pasha, Presiding Officer of the Grand National Assembly, and İsmet Pasha, Prime Minister. Both the first and the third are very devout Moslems and meticulously observant of all the details of that religion. I had never seen Marshal Fevzi



until the evening of October 29th (see my No. 189 of October 30)<sup>1</sup> when the President introduced me to him with certain complimentary phrases about my recent speeches on Turkey in the United States. It has been some time since I have been so much impressed by a man's personality as that of Marshal Fevzi. I do not hesitate to classify him with Marshal Hindenburg and General Weygand (Commander-in-Chief of the French Army), both of whom I know. Marshal Fevzi has a fine shaped head and commanding personality, piercing eye, and alert carriage. He is not allowed to receive members of the diplomatic corps and is reported to take little or no interest in politics, but devotes himself exclusively to the improvement of the Turkish Army frequently traveling about the country to verify reports, inspect troops and superintend developments in the various military zones. I believe that if anything happened to the present President, Fevzi Pasha would take over the Presidency either permanently or ad interim or until he had selected a suitable successor. İsmet Pasha, the Prime Minister, is well known to the department from many previous reports. I like him, respect him and admire his many qualities, but I do not rank him as high as many foreigners do, nor do I believe that he would succeed the President in case of the death of the present incumbent, as many if not most foreign observers believe. Let me recall that he was also a general who attained distinction during the Turkish struggle for independence. And so also did Kâzım [Özalp] Pasha (President of the Grand National Assembly), and in my opinion this explains why he was selected for his present office, something which many people cannot understand because he is so indifferently successful as a parliamentarian. I believe he is there because the military machine, in the combined persons of Mustafa Kemal, Marshal Fevzi and İsmet Pasha, wishes to be constantly assured that even so regimented a Parliament as the one in Turkey shall at all times be under the control of one of their own caste and one in whom they have complete confidence.

The best young brains in Turkey are going into the army schools and are not turning to the professions or to business. The result of this is that the group described above can command the active cooperation of the country's most promising young men. There is no doubt that the Turkish private soldier is a fine fighting man, and also that he can operate under privations that would lessen or destroy the efficiency of most other troops. The Government is providing a body of officers worthy of such troops, and furthermore is equipping them in most modern fashion (see my No. 192 of November 1,

<sup>1</sup> In this despatch Sherrill comments on Marshal Fevzi Çakmak as follows: "After the ball was in progress he sent the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs to find me and bring me to him, when he presented me to the commanding officer of the Turkish Army, Marshal Fevzi, who is the finest looking Turk I have seen", Source: NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated 30 October 1932, no. 867.415/8. (Ed.)



commenting on machine and rapid fire gun equipment).<sup>1</sup> All the foregoing combines to convince me that the stability of the present régime in Turkey is assured by an efficient group of successors in case of the death of the present Chief Executive, backed by an army of continually improving organization and equipment. Best of all, the people at large appreciate what remarkable improvements Mustafa Kemal has effected for the country during the nine years of his Presidency, and are responding with popular interest in his nationalistic campaign to glorify the history of the Turkish race and to Turkey the Turkish language.

Respectfully yours,  
CHARLES H. SHERRILL.

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document no. 867.00/2078.

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<sup>1</sup> "Yesterday afternoon at six o'clock during my interview with Tevfik Rüştü Bey, Minister of Foreign Affairs at his Office, I told him of some of the favorable things which General MacArthur had said upon his return to Washington about the excellence of the Turkish troops. He seemed much gratified. I then remarked to him about how fully their infantry was equipped with machine guns and rapid fire rifles. He told me something which he seemed to consider quite a momentous secret. It appears that within the last few months the Turkish Government has been receiving a new type of anti-aircraft gun invented by an Englishman and made in England, which is surprisingly automatic in its action and accurate in its fire. He told me that the Turks have the sole right to the output of these guns for one year, but that the English Government had put in large orders for them at the conclusion of that year, and that then the Turkish and the British Governments will have finer anti-aircraft artillery than any country in Europe. He went so far as to volunteer that, although it was strictly forbidden for any foreigner to see these guns, he was going to try to arrange for me to see them. I suggested that it would be more useful if our Military Attaché, Major Crane, could have that privilege, because I know so little about the technique of artillery, but he said that would be impossible. This offer was based upon his appreciation of my speeches on Turkey in the United States, so consider it merely a compliment and doubt if I ever see the guns." Source: NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, dated 1 November 1932, no. 867.2421/3. (Ed.)



## 8. AMBASSADOR ROBERT P. SKINNER'S REPORT ON ATATÜRK

EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 462

Istanbul, Turkey, December 4, 1934.

Subject: Guiding Policies Attributed to the Gazi.

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

The report reaches me – and I accept no responsibility for its accuracy – that the President of the Republic, M. Kemal Atatürk (I now employ the approved official style) has meditated upon points of policy which should always guide the Turkish people and, as repeated in informal political conversations here, those decided upon run as follows:

1. Turkey should contract no foreign loans under any circumstances whatever.
2. Future Presidents of Turkey under no circumstances should be chosen from among the military leaders.
3. A Sultan must never be re-established upon a Turkish throne.
4. The present policy in regard to religious activities must be continued.
5. Communism must be fought down by every means.
6. Turkey must at all times possess sufficient military power to protect her borders.
7. If a future Government should ever decide to restore to Istanbul its status as capital of Turkey, every monument or statue now or hereafter erected to the Gazi to be completely destroyed.



Whether or not the President has actually composed the above set of principles may be doubted, but they are interesting, nevertheless, as fairly illustrative of prevailing views in governing circles. Respectfully yours,

Robert P. Skinner.

NARA, RG 59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document no. 867.00/2059.



## 9. AMBASSADOR ROBERT P. SKINNER'S REPORT ON ATATÜRK MEETING JOURNALIST GLADYS BAKER

Istanbul, Turkey, May 29, 1935

Strictly Confidential

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I do not know whether I should charge a grave and formal official correspondence with the following matter which, however, is interesting and revealing as to the fundamentally Oriental character of the eminent President of this country. I suspect the Department knows that Mr. Kemal Atatürk is more difficult of access than any Chief of State in the world at the present time. My honored predecessor, Mr. Sherrill, somehow won his confidence and visited him half a dozen times in connection with the preparation of his book entitled, *A Year's Embassy to Mustafa Kemal*, not a little to the irritation of his colleagues who in general carry on their discussions with the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Prime Minister, and see the President himself on rare occasions when they present their hommages and retire. Over and over again more or less distinguished journalists have attempted to interview the President, but up to now he has always denied himself to them. It remained for an attractive young American woman, Miss Gladys Baker, accompanied by her secretary, Miss Hay, to break down and, as one might say, trample the restrictive rules regarding interviews which have prevailed these last eleven years.

I take it to be the case that the Turkish Ambassador in Washington has noted the extraordinary success of Mr. Roosevelt in dealing with representatives of the press, in having them near him and yet at the same time keeping them at a proper distance, and he probably communicated strong hints to Ankara, while at the same time he recommended in warm terms the young ladies mentioned who are now here on behalf of a syndicate of American papers. The Ambassador's representations were so successful that even before



Miss Baker's arrival in Turkey she had received a telegram informing her that she would be received professionally by the President.

Miss Baker was fortunate in arriving in Istanbul at about the same time as the President himself, who is here on holiday, and who frequently passes his evenings at the Park Hotel. Miss Baker sent her letter to the President the first evening he appeared at the hotel and he immediately invited her to join him at his table, the interview beginning at 11 p.m. and continuing uninterruptedly until 8:30 the following morning. This is not an exaggeration. Secretaries and interpreters busied themselves to convey questions and ideas back and forth, and the meeting terminated appropriately with ham and eggs. After a day of rest Miss Baker and her secretary were invited to have tea at the Palace with the President and his party, the tea being followed by dinner, and dinner likewise by breakfast, the interview again terminating at 8 a.m. I wish to add that these protracted sessions were devoted to serious discussion and nothing else. After two further days of repose, Miss Baker was invited to witness the war games going on in the neighborhood of Istanbul directed by the President personally. He arranged a small sham battle for her benefit, and with great gallantry and with photographers at hand to record the fact, caused her to operate a machine gun under his instruction.

Miss Baker and her companion were informed at the outset that they were guests of the Turkish Government, and after the military performances, proceeded to Ankara where they were given a breakfast by the Prime Minister and a tea party at the Chiflik, that is to say, the President's farm, at the invitation of the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs. They were furthermore entertained at the Pink Palace of the President himself by his sister, and on their departure set off on the return journey laden down with flowers. I am told on good authority that instructions from the President to Ankara were that reports should be sent back to Istanbul every hour, setting forth just what was happening, and this was done. Upon their return from Ankara they were taken on the President's yacht for a trip to Prinkipo,<sup>1</sup> and it is now their intention to depart from Istanbul on Saturday evening, and perhaps before.

I hope that it will be understood that our young compatriots conducted themselves strictly in the capacity of competent and appreciative professional woman, whose tact and intelligence enabled them to capture and retain the attention of the President, who supplied a vast amount of information about the New Turkey and his relations to it. I have no doubt that Miss Baker's articles, when published, will be interesting. Certainly she has had an

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<sup>1</sup>Prinkipo is the Greek name of Büyükdada, the biggest of the Princes Islands in the Marmara Sea.



opportunity granted to no other writer of whom anyone here has any knowledge, to obtain good material about modern Turkey.

Respectfully yours,

Robert P. Skinner.

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document no. 867.001 ATATÜRK, KEMAL/12.

Note : Gladys Baker's interview with Atatürk was later on published in the American and European press. A full Turkish translation was also published in the Turkish newspapers.<sup>1</sup> (Ed.)

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<sup>1</sup> "Büyük Önder, beynelmilel vaziyeti nasıl görüyor?", *Cumhuriyet*, June 21, 1935 / "Atatürk'le Mis Baker'in mülakatı", *Ulus*, June 21, 1935. (Ed.)



## 10. CHARGE D'AFFAIRES AD INTERIM G. HOWLAND SHAW'S EVALUATION OF ATATÜRK

### Strictly Confidential

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington, D.C.

Istanbul, September 21, 1935.

Subject: Atatürk

Kemâl Atatürk awaits a biographer who, while doing full justice to his greatness, will at the same time picture the man as he is and place him in his true background. This despatch is an attempt to suggest the main points which such a biographer should develop.

Modern Turkey is literally the creation of Atatürk. To grasp this essential fact it is only necessary to review in one's mind Turkey's achievements of the past fourteen years, to recall what Turkey was in 1921 and make a comparison with what Turkey is today and with those achievements and that change well in mind to try and find an explanation outside of Atatürk. Public opinion is excluded as explanation since it is notorious that in Turkey, public opinion, enlightened or otherwise, exists in only a passive form even among that very small part of the population which is literate. Clearly an individual or group of individuals must be looked for. Still excluding Atatürk, who have we? There are Atatürk's associates during the first phase of the Revolution: the Raufs, Adnans, Kâzım Karabekirs, Ali Fuats, Halide Edips. But they were out of step with the Government as early as 1924 and have played no part whatsoever in the political life of Turkey since 1927. There are the two men who have continuously played leading parts in Turkish affairs from the inception of the nationalist movement down to the present: General İsmet İnönü who has been Prime Minister since 1925 and Marshall Fevzi Çakmak who has been chief of staff for even longer. General İnönü is an honorable and patriotic Turkish gentleman, loyal to his collaborators, conscientious in the performance of his duties, somewhat timid and entirely incapable of taking any large initiative. Marshall Çakmak is a fine example of the older Turkish military leader, a devout Moslem, highly respected by all, but largely a figurehead even in the Army where real



leadership has passed to younger officers trained in the more modern and scientific ways of warfare. Clearly the reform of Turkey has not been carried out by either of these men although they have played and continue to play an important part in the smooth running of the State. There are certain personal friends of Atatürk who have unquestionably had an influence upon him. Of the three or four persons in this category only one is of real prominence – Fethi [Okyar] Bey, former Prime Minister, leader of the ill-fated Opposition Party of 1930 and now Ambassador to London.<sup>1</sup> But anybody who knows Fethi Bey with his studious habits and his moderate and essentially parliamentary liberalism, realizes that by no stretch of the imagination could he initiate any comprehensive and radical movement of reform. Finally there are the members of the Cabinet and the Deputies. Their names are not even worth recording in the present connection. Some have been and are capable administrators, others much less capable; many of the Deputies are conscientious, and there is undoubtedly a tendency nowadays for them to take their duties more seriously, but the decisions of major importance come neither from the Cabinet nor from the Assembly. There can be no other conclusion than that without Atatürk modern Turkey cannot be explained.

If it were possible for Atatürk's biographer to spend a night at the Presidential Residence at Çankaya, Dolmabahçe, Florya or Yalova a detailed answer could be made to the interesting question as to how and where Atatürk gets his ideas. I have had occasion to inspect with some care the library at the Presidential Residence at Çankaya. There are about a thousand volumes, mostly on historical or philological subjects and many in French or German with both of which languages Atatürk is familiar. There is nothing, however, to indicate that he is a great reader and indeed, having in mind that he sleeps a good part of the day and sits up talking and drinking for most, if not all, of the night, it is difficult to figure out how he could find time for any considerable amount of reading.

There are two characteristic forms of Atatürk's contact with the outside world. The first is the night session with a group of followers and friends. What goes on at these night sessions varies considerably. There is much cross-examination some of it carried on to show up some luckless individual

<sup>1</sup> For a study of this opposition movement the reader is suggested to look to the following books: Walter Weiker, *Political Tutelage and Democracy in Turkey The Free Party and its Aftermath*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1973; Cemal Kutay, *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası: Mustafa Kemal'in Önlenecek Demokrasi Girişimi*, İklim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2004. Abdülhamit Aşar, *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası: Bir Partinin Kapanmasında Basının Rolü*, Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1998. Nurettin Güz, *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası Sonrası Basında Muhalefet ve 1931 Matbuat Kanunu*, Gazi Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Yayınları, Ankara, 1993 / Çetin Yetkin, *Atatürk'ün Vatana İhanetle Suçlandığı Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası (SCF) Olayı*, Otopsi Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2004. Cem Emrence, *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası : 99 Günlük Muhalefet*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2006. (Ed.)





and some of it, I feel sure, to find out what is going on both in Turkey and outside of Turkey. Much local gossip is reported and some of Atatürk's boon companions are obviously of a low order of intelligence and retained merely to amuse him. But diplomats on leave and all sorts of officials are also participants in the night sessions and their relentless cross-examination has a different and a more serious purpose. The talk may even deal with music or with archaeology in which case the leader of the Ankara orchestra or the Director of Museums is more than likely to be routed out of bed at two in the morning to set forth views for Atatürk's benefit. To think of Atatürk's night sessions as no more than monologues accompanied by hard drinking would, I am convinced, be a serious error. There is hard drinking and there is monologuing, but in the process Atatürk gets a good deal of information and formulates a good many ideas.

The second characteristic form of Atatürk's contact with the outside world may be likened to the surprise attack in warfare. He suddenly appears somewhere and orders that something shall be done at once if not sooner. The modernization of the beach at Florya is an excellent example. Atatürk last May motored out to Florya to call on a friend. In the course of the visit he decided that he liked Florya and that it must be modernized. Within a few days work was begun on a kiosque, a new road and a new lay out generally. These sudden decisions of course have both a good and a bad side. The Turk is not particularly energetic and if left to himself as a rule nothing much happens. To my certain knowledge the improvement of Florya has been discussed for four years and expropriation proceedings have been dragging through the courts. There are those who claim that Atatürk hopes by these sudden interventions and the feverish activity which results to breakdown the inertia characteristic of the Turk. The bad side of this method is that things are done in haphazard fashion without any planning and the results are sometimes eventually found to be not what is needed or even wanted. There is plenty of waste, but I am not so sure that the psychological stimulus is not a good deal of an offset. Progress by shock, while uncongenial to the European or American, is not to be excluded as a legitimate method when dealing with a country such as Turkey.

Doubtless Atatürk's methods are in part at least to be accounted for by the fact that he is a soldier. The soldier is as accustomed to work at night as during the day time and his relationship with the rest of the world is primarily a matter of giving and receiving orders. His success comes essentially from imposing himself and his personality on others, rather than on any cooperative relationship characterised by a process of give and take. Atatürk gives orders, imposes ideas, and I doubt very much whether he has any grasp



at all of a different type of leadership the essence of which is the stimulation of others to develop their maximum powers. Here I think we are at the root of the weakness of Atatürk and of modern Turkey. The human element is forgotten, the fact that no matter how excellent a program may be it cannot fully and permanently succeed without men intelligent enough to understand it and with the force and enthusiasm to work for it. This fact unhappily is not realized and it is high time that it should be realized, for now that the externals of modern life have been created in Turkey, there is a crying need for the men and women who can use these externals effectively and wisely.

It is not impossible that in time Atatürk will see this problem himself. And this remark brings me to a fundamental fact about the man. He is a soldier, certainly, and a Turkish soldier at that, but his mind is keenly perceptive and essentially dynamic. I am sure that the young cadet at the war college dreamed of the modernization of his country, but I doubt whether at that stage of his career and even much later when he sat in the First Grand National Assembly he saw the Modern Turkey as it has actually become. But he is amazingly quick at seeing the next step and very clear as to when it is practicable to take that step and when it is wise to wait. There is nothing of the doctrinaire, the theoretical reformer about him. It is a case of the soldier who sees one specific objective after another. A careful study of the calendar of the Turkish reforms throws much light on the workings of Atatürk's mind, particularly if coupled with a realization of the careful manner in which the way has been prepared for the more controversial reforms. The procedure often followed is to mention a particular reform in the papers on and off for some time, to give it perhaps a limited application and then suddenly to pass a law and suppress ruthlessly any opposition. The abolition of the fez, of the ecclesiastical costume and of the Friday holiday furnish excellent examples of this technique. Incidentally and as an example of Atatürk's good sense it is interesting to record that while under the law no man can wear a fez, no law has ever been passed against women being veiled. This latter problem has been handled by encouraging women of prominence to go unveiled and to participate in the modernized life of the country and by providing that women in the employ of the Government must be unveiled. The fact is that Atatürk knows his country and knows it well.

There is no use in claiming that Atatürk's personal life is what it should be. It isn't. It is not unusual for him to drink twenty glasses of raki in a night and his relations with women are quite frankly promiscuous.



Armstrong<sup>1</sup> to the contrary notwithstanding, there is no reason for believing that Atatürk is homosexual in the strict sense of the term or even indulges habitually in homosexual practices. At various times in the past ten years he has been warned by his physicians against drinking, but whatever he may have done in response to these warnings for a few weeks or even for a month or two, they have certainly not had any permanent effect upon his behaviour. He should by all the laws of physiology show the effects of his drinking, but the fact remains that generally speaking he does not. Today he appears just as vigorous as ever and nobody who saw him in swimming trunks at Florya this summer can have any doubts on this score. Very rarely does he drink to the extent of becoming incoherent or incapacitated, although he was close to the first on the night of the famous Egyptian fez incident in 1932<sup>2</sup> and very definitely the second at the Hotel Tokatlîan in Therapia a couple of summers ago. After drinking for a certain time he is likely to indulge in behaviour which under any sort of criterion is startling in a chief of State. It may be horse play of a crude sort as when he compelled one of his adopted daughters to dance with a street peddler at Prinkipo<sup>3</sup> last summer; it may take the form of speeches to tourists and embracing the ladies among them as happened last year at the Park Hotel with a group of Italian tourists; or again the destruction of the minaret of a mosque may be ordered; or some unhappy official may receive a severe dressing down; or a boat on which a tea is being given may be kept sailing up and down the Marmara with all the guests on board until five or six o'clock in the morning. This side of Atatürk is shocking to the westerner accustomed to at least a greater discretion and sense of decorum in those who infringe generally recognized standards, but except among Foreign Office officials who at times are quite plainly terrified at what Atatürk may do or say in public, these carryings-on are simply gossiped about and laughed at and have no real effect upon Atatürk's standing in Turkey. The more strict Moslems are doubtless shocked, but their voices are not heard. The very frankness of Atatürk is in a sense disarming. My own personal explanation of this side of Atatürk is that he is often bored. He is accustomed to the ceaseless activity of war or of the heroic phase of Turkish nationalism. These were times which he thoroughly enjoyed since full scope was afforded to his tremendous energies and drive, but nowadays Turkey is an organized State and most of the work is necessarily handled by a large hierarchy of officials and

<sup>1</sup> G. Howland Shaw is making reference here to H.[arold] C.[ourtenay] Armstrong (1891-1943), author of *Grey Wolf: An Intimate Study of a Dictator*, Arthur Barker Ltd., London, 1932. (Ed.)

<sup>2</sup> The "Egyptian Fez Incident in 1932" is described in details in pages 146-152.

<sup>3</sup> Prinkipo is the Greek name of Büyükdada, the biggest of the Princes Islands in the Marmara Sea.





only the most important decisions are dealt with by Atatürk. Important decisions are not everyday occurrences and therefore something new and exciting must be found: drinking at the Park Hotel, modernizing Florya, making some minister look ridiculous in public, Turkish history. But while the use which Atatürk often makes nowadays of his mind and energy is childish, it must not be forgotten that his mind is still a first rate mind and the energy is still a driving force and when anything of importance comes up, both mind and energy are used with the old effectiveness.

I have said that there is nothing of the doctrinaire about Atatürk. In no field is this clearer than in his investigations of the Turkish language and history, his approach to these subjects being far more military than scholarly. There are none of the doubts, the hypotheses of the real scholar. He has made up his mind that history must disclose an ideology for the formerly despised Anatolian peasant and that the language must be simplified and nationalized, and woe to anybody whose findings do not obviously serve these objectives.

Much has been said about Atatürk's attitude towards religion. I doubt whether he has given much thought to the matter or that he has any understanding of what religion is. In his career he has seen much of religion as an obstacle to reform. He has dealt with it as with other obstacles, only more carefully, but there has been nothing in his life that would tend to develop an interest in religion as such and much that would lead him to an aggressive positivist and materialist point of view.

Atatürk sees very few foreigners and his relations with them are usually confined to what is ordained by protocol. I believe that three factors are here at work. In the first place I have long been convinced that General İnönü and the Foreign Office are by no means anxious to have Atatürk see and talk with foreigners, especially with prominent foreigners. They are extremely fearful as to what he may do or say. In the second place – and this sounds ridiculous, but is a fact – because of Atatürk's manner of life it is extremely difficult to commit him to any appointment in advance; he wants to be free to dash off somewhere if the spirit so moves him, or sleep, if that happens to be his wish. In the third place, I have often wondered whether there is not in Atatürk a certain unwillingness to meet on anywhere near equal terms a first rate foreigner, unless by chance he feels sure of the sentiments that foreigner entertains for him. After all when one's will has not been crossed for a good many years and one's opinions never challenged, there is developed a protective instinct which leads to the avoiding of any danger of a different state of affairs. Is it not significant that of the two foreigners who have seen the most of Atatürk recently the attitude of one was frankly that of the hero worshipper and that of the other the sympathetic feminine listener?



I have tried to set forth the points which, so it seems to me, any biographer of Atatürk worthy of the name must cover. As I think over these points the impression uppermost in my mind is that Atatürk is a very great man and has achieved a very great work. His personal life and certain of his methods of action which, particularly when considered apart from the man and his background, may unduly attract the attention of an American or European, must not be allowed to obscure the real significance of Atatürk and of his achievements. On only one point do I entertain serious doubts. Atatürk believes that progress in material things is the only real progress and that this progress can be imposed without thought as to what may or may not be going on in the minds and hearts of individuals. Are there not other and even more important elements in progress and while the framework of a nation's life may be changed by compulsion, can the change really be consolidated without the understanding and the free and varied cooperation of countless individuals?

Respectfully yours,  
G. Howland Shaw  
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim.

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of G. State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document dated 21 September 1935, reference 867.001 ATATÜRK, KAMAL/17.

Note from the author: This report of Howland Shaw<sup>1</sup> was very well received by the Near Eastern Division of the State Department which commented as follows:

Here in the Division all of us have read it over, not once but several times and the points which you emphasize have afforded material for no end of lively discussion, the net result of which is that we are unanimous in agreeing that your analysis of Atatürk is one of the most well-balanced and useful reports which we have had pleasure of reading in many a long day. In short, it is so good as to overcome our instinctive inclination to debate whatever has been set down in black and white, and that, as you well know, is a traditional privilege which we only relinquish under compulsion.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A short biography of G. Howland Shaw exists in *US Diplomatic Documents on Turkey – III Family Life in The Turkish Republic of the 1930's – A Study by G. Howland Shaw*, The Isis Press, İstanbul, 2007, pp. 5-7.

<sup>2</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document dated December 5, 1935 reference 867.001 ATATURK, KAMAL/20. (Ed.)





## 11. "THE EGYPTIAN FEZ INCIDENT", VIEWED BY CHARLES E. ALLEN, AMERICAN CONSUL GENERAL

The whole world, or at least that enlightened part of it which reads the Turkish press, now knows that at the Republic Day diplomatic banquet on October 29 [1932] there occurred something which bore the semblance of an incident involving the fez of the Egyptian Minister. For it is finally admitted both that the fez of the Minister was removed and that the Minister himself withdrew shortly afterward. The cause of these painful disclosures has been, as might have been expected, a perfidious British news agency, the Reuter Agency, which informed the Egyptian press of a contribution regarding the incident sent to the London *Daily Herald* by its Ankara correspondent.<sup>1</sup> Although it is said by the *Milliyet* that no such correspondent is known to exist, the Egyptian press is said to have become enraged and to have launched such a violent attack against Turkey that the Turkish press could no longer ignore the affair. The papers of December 5 were the first to take notice of the matter. They denied, of course, that anything in the nature of an incident had occurred and expressed surprise that a note dealing with the alleged incident was reported to be on the way from Cairo to Ankara. According to the story told by these papers, on the night of the Republic Day banquet it was very hot and the hall was crowded, with the result that the Gazi, in the course of chatting with the Egyptian Minister in "his usual affectionate manner", authorized the latter to remove his fez and make himself comfortable, the regulations governing the wearing of the fez requiring that that headdress may only be removed with the permission of the senior officer present. The papers went on to say that the excitement in Egypt could be attributed to a certain element interested in "breaking the ties of amity and fraternity binding the two countries", adding that the same element had some time ago resorted to the same tactics when annoyed by the fact that "Turkey" (is a) "country where the strictest measures are enforced against the smugglers of narcotic drugs". The latter remark applies presumably to Russell Pasha and his antinarcotic activities and can only be amusing to one familiar with the narcotics situation in Turkey.

By December 7 the Egyptian note had reached Ankara for the capital reported that the reply to it had been discussed at the meeting of the People's Party that day. Neither the note nor the reply was published but it was

<sup>1</sup> "Mısır efkârı umumiyesi aldatılmak isteniyor!", *Cumhuriyet*, December 6, 1932. (Ed.)



admitted that the Egyptian Government had asked for an apology and the assurance that there would be no recurrence of such treatment of Egyptian diplomatic representatives. The Party made much of the occasion or at least is reported by the papers to have done so. After a speech by Mahmut Esat [Bozkurt] Bey, the fiery but ineffectual former Minister of Justice, who protested against the connection of such a matter with the name of "The Great Chieftain" "whose name is the property, not alone of a country and a race, but also of all the coming generations", the Party approved the government's proposed reply.<sup>1</sup> In the course of the report on the Party caucus, the papers said that there was no incident at all in the sense that term conveys; that every state is free to formulate such regulations as it likes governing ceremonious occasions; that anti-Turkish propaganda in Egypt has already led to the loss of important tobacco and fruit markets and that the moment has not only come but passed for putting an end to this situation; that Egyptian opinion has allowed itself to be aroused by "the wilful misrepresentation of a British news agency"; that a "simple gesture of courtesy has been moulded in malicious hands"; that the alleged victim himself, the Egyptian Minister, made no report to his government regarding the matter; that the friendliness of Turkey is made evident by her failure to demand capitulatory rights in Egypt; that what happened constituted in no sense an insult to Egypt or the Egyptian diplomatic representative; and that there can be no apology offered or any future consideration given the subject.<sup>2</sup> How much of this went into the reply, how much was actually said at the Party meeting and how much is mere newspaper material there is no means of determining which is available to the writer. It is probable that the reply was in the language of diplomacy and not in the idiom currently employed by members of the People's Party. It is also probable, however, that, since the incident involved the all-powerful father of the republic, who is as vain as any other popular hero, the Egyptians were given no other satisfaction than that afforded by the opportunity to express themselves convinced by the formal assurance that nothing happened. Ankara says that the text of the reply will be published after its delivery at Cairo which cannot take place before December 20. It is added that the future situation will depend on what attitude the Egyptian Government decides to adopt toward the reply.

<sup>1</sup> "Mısır'a Cevap Veriyoruz", *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, December 8, 1932 / "Mısır Matbuat ve Mehalifinin İki Millet Arasına Nifak Sokmak İstiyen Hareketleri Teessür ve İnfial Uyandırıyor", *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, December 9, 1932. (Ed.)

<sup>2</sup> "Aslı astarı olmıyan bir mes'eleye Büyük Gaz'nin isminin karıştırılmasına Türk milletinin asla tahammülü yoktur!", *Cumhuriyet*, December 8, 1932; "Mısır notasına cevap", *Cumhuriyet*, December 8, 1932; "Türk notası kat'i ve kanaatbahş esasları ihtiva ediyor", *Cumhuriyet*, December 9, 1932. (Ed.)



War is, of course, out of the question but there is, nevertheless, the possibility of a rupture of diplomatic relations. Egypt's international dignity being a matter regarding which doubts are entertainable, she is naturally sensitive on the score of that dignity and this fact may lead to a more emphatic expression of disapproval than might otherwise be the case. But whatever the outcome, the affair can hardly be of grave international importance. It is, of importance, however, in the sense that it gives the world an insight into the manners of the Turkish national hero. Being instrumental in the removal of the headdress of a guest, particularly when that guest is a foreign diplomat and his headdress has a connection with the prestige of a friendly state, is a kind of conduct which constitutes an innovation even in "the Turkey of the Gazi". Heretofore, on formal occasions at any rate, the great democrat and his entourage had been reasonably successful in avoiding anything downright offensive. Here, however, is the action of a small-town "he-man" whose principal obsession is getting "liquored up" and "showing off". In the present instance, he doubtless did not intend to insult either the Egyptian Government or the Egyptian Minister. On the contrary, he probably had neither the one nor the other very clearly in mind at all. He was simply full of alcohol and of the aggressiveness which alcohol gives and he obeyed an impulse to play "smart aleck"<sup>1</sup> just as thousands of intoxicated fraternity members have obeyed impulses to knock out street lights or ring door bells. The difference is that, unlike the fraternity members, he is apparently unready to make amends. He simply turns over such embarrassment as is caused to those who compose the government which he heads and who have now shouldered the responsibility of pacifying the Egyptian Government, subject, it would seem, to the condition that, whatever be the solution arrived at, it shall not reflect upon the sacrosanct cause of the trouble.

This account would not be complete without a word about the Egyptian Minister, Abd-ul-Malek Hamza Bey. He is much better known for his soft amiability and his moonlight pyjama parties than for any deep grasp of international procedure. He is a person who is on terms of extreme cordiality with everybody and one with whom anybody is likely to grow familiar on an occasion when the flowing bowl is much in evidence as it was at the banquet on Republic Day. He appears to have acted on this occasion with even less than his usual strength of character, first allowing his fez to be

<sup>1</sup> "According to G.L. Cohen, author of *Studies in Slang Part I* (1985), the phrase "smart alec(k)" arose from the exploits of one Alec Hoag. A celebrated pimp, thief, and confidence man operating out of New York City in the 1840's, Mr. Hoag, along with his wife Melinda and an accomplice known as "French Jack", operated a con called the "pane game", a method by which prostitutes and their pimps robbed foolish customers". <http://www.straightdope.com/mailbag/msmartalec.html> (Ed.)



removed, then after reflection going home in protest and finally failing to inform his government. The press attributes to him a statement to the effect that he did not consider himself insulted but, being uncertain what his diplomatic colleagues might think (if he showed no spirit at all), thought it better to go home. He appears at this moment to be entirely "on the fence", allowing Cairo and Ankara to fight the matter out without his intervention. He is known to have had a very good time in Turkey, notably at Istanbul, and it is not impossible that he contemplates with no pleasure a prospective separation from his present post, even in the interest of his country's prestige. On the whole, he appears to have been specially made for handling this incident badly. In the first place, he could probably have prevented the removal of the fez by showing average firmness although it must be confessed that the Gazi is described as having been drunk enough to be capable of anything. In the second place, having elected to notice the matter by going home, he should have, one would think, carried the decision out by continuing as far as Cairo, telegraphing his government of his intentions and the reasons therefor. However, apparently in the weak hope that the whole thing would blow over and Cairo never hear of it, he seems to have dropped the matter once he had removed himself from the scene. Unfortunately for him, the Republic Day observance was much too hilarious this year for the foreign correspondents to ignore it entirely. So the news got to Cairo, possibly including mention of the fact that the Great Gazi did not show himself at all perturbed by the withdrawal of the Egyptian Minister but went right on, "in his usual affectionate manner" aforementioned, kissing at least two of his male guests during the subsequent proceedings, the fortunate gentlemen being, according to reports current, the French naval attache and an American surgeon.<sup>1</sup>

The storm caused by the incident of the removal of the fez of the Egyptian Minister during the Republic Day banquet on October 29 would appear to have blown itself out and subsided in large part. Ankara's reply to the Egyptian note of protest would appear to have reached Cairo toward December 17 and by December 28 a second Egyptian note and the Turkish reply thereto were being mentioned by the papers. "The reassuring tone" of the second Egyptian note was emphasized and the Anatolian agency expressed the opinion that with the Turkish reply "the question... is now amicably liquidated".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944 "Digest of the Turkish Press for the Period November 27 - December 10, 1932", document dated December 14, 1932, reference 867.9111/386. (Ed.)

<sup>2</sup> "Fes Hadisesinin hakikati anlaşılıyor", *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, December 18, 1932. (Ed.)





In the meantime, however, the Egyptian Minister had found and seized upon a further opportunity to demonstrate his ineptitude. Coming down from the capital to Istanbul on December 18 to have his ears looked after, he was naturally fallen upon by the reporters and had the misfortune to make a statement on December 19 to a representative of the *Cumhuriyet*.<sup>1</sup> In that statement, he deplored the great amount of publicity the incident had received, and notably the distorted accounts published by the British journalists, reiterated that he had not considered himself insulted and had so reported to his government and asserted that the incident no longer existed. Seeing that these remarks were made while the matter was still the subject of correspondence between the two governments, it is little to the credit of the Minister's diplomatic reputation that, as eventually developed, he made them "not for publication". The *Cumhuriyet* promptly published the statement verbatim and so did the other papers and when the Minister denied in writing that he had made any such statement, or even had granted an interview since October 29, he was dealt with most crudely. The *Cumhuriyet*, "to put an end to any misunderstanding", published the following:

"His Excellency the Minister did positively converse with one of our collaborators on December 19. The fault of the latter consisted, not of inventing a story, but of publishing statements made by the Minister with instruction not to print them in our paper. We again express our regrets for this fault."

A similar item throwing the blame on the *Cumhuriyet*'s representative but taking the most casual attitude toward the latter's conduct appeared in the *Milliyet*. In brief, the unethical action of the reporter was treated as of minor importance whereas the written denial of the Minister was, for all practical purposes, branded as a lie, which it happened to be. To the general run of chief of diplomatic mission this would, to say the least, be an embarrassing, and even a humiliating, situation. The Egyptian Minister cannot, however, be asserted to belong to the general run of diplomat and it is not possible to apply an ordinary rule in attempting to arrive at the state of his official and personal feelings. He seems to have learned one thing, however, namely, that it is well "to lay off" talking and corresponding with Turkish journalists, for up to the close of the period under review there has not appeared a fresh syllable attributing a written or spoken statement to him.

But if these lines seem to deal harshly with the Egyptian Minister, it should not be concluded that he is held not to be deserving of sympathy. On the contrary, he deserves very much sympathy for, not only is he invariably

<sup>1</sup> "Bu dedikodulara devam edilmesini istemiyorum", *Cumhuriyet*, December 20, 1932. (Ed.)



well behaved in public, but in this instance he was in the position of an innocent passerby set upon by a man under the influence of alcohol. That feature of the affair cannot be too much emphasized. Admirers of the Gazi, apologists for Kemalism and, notably, the sycophantic Turkish press would obviously like the facts to appear otherwise and the Minister, undoubtedly bitten by the prevalent contagion of reverence for the great Anatolian hero, and therefore harassed by a hesitancy as to how far a mere diplomat may presume to stand up for his rights under such circumstances, seems to have done his utmost to attract to himself much of the responsibility for what took place. Nevertheless, the only fact about this whole incident to be remembered is the fact that the manners of the court of Çankaya have been shown not to be the manners of civilized courts and that the monarch who reigns over the Anatolian uplands has shown himself to be, to put it mildly, an intemperate user of alcohol and careless of showing appropriate consideration for guests. Ankara may shout down Cairo and Yunus Nadi Bey and the other luminaries of Turkish journalism may complete the task, far advanced by nature, of making an ass of the Egyptian Minister but this cannot excuse the conduct of the great occidentalizer.

In this connection, it has for years been the habit to discover a similarity between the career of Washington and that of Gazi Mustafa Kemal and between the American Revolution and the Turkish Revolution. This is doubtless due to the established practice of endeavoring to promote an American understanding of foreign events by finding for every such event an American counterpart, a practice the soundness of which it is not desired to discuss at this time. But without presuming to disparage the idea of the similarity aforementioned, the writer takes the liberty of suggesting that the emergence following the War of Secession of the poor white element in the states composing the late Confederacy is possibly the true American counterpart if there be such a thing – of the rise to power of the Kemalists. In both the Confederacy and the Ottoman Empire there existed an anachronous state of society which was totally destroyed and the destruction in each instance was marked by the coming forward of an element largely submerged theretofore and, although active, perceptibly lacking a culture of any breadth. For a variety of reasons, the process was slower in the United States than in Turkey but the result, as regards the type which eventually got the reins of government, was not greatly different. As a consequence, the Kemalists, if the writer is not mistaken, have much in common with the leaders of the New South but little in common with Washington and his contemporaries.

Without telling the reading public exactly how it was accomplished, the press treats the incident of the fez of the Egyptian Minister as closed. In an



editorial in the *Cumhuriyet*, Yunus Nadi Bey says that "it is fortunate that the intelligent and tactful government of His Majesty King Fuat of Egypt has... given proof of foresight and sagacity". Toward the end of the same article, Nadi Bey says that "this happy result...must be... accepted with satisfaction in connection with the cause of world peace."<sup>1</sup> It is not clear from this which party actually backed down but it is perfectly clear that the *Cumhuriyet* desires to convey to its readers the idea that the Egyptian Government had the "foresight and sagacity" to back down before "world peace" was endangered. In other words, the editorial in question, which is the only statement on the subject noted, is, though cordial in tone, none the less jingoistic and insolent. The general result of the whole incident is that the Egyptian Minister, after having been thoroughly hazed, slipped off home on leave on January 17, never to return, the gossip-monger say, while the Great Gazi, the cause of all the trouble, unscathed, inaugurated on January 15 one of those triumphal progresses with which he frequently thrills the provincial potentates of the People's Party who are given there by an opportunity to show off before their less favored compatriots. That is to say, although the Turkish diplomatic representative at Cairo may have spoken correctly and even given the apologies and assurances the occasion called for, the Egyptian Minister to Turkey obviously "got it in the neck" and the great Anatolian Washington came off, so far as one can judge, without even a realization of his own boorishness.

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, "Digest of the Turkish Press for the Period January 8-21, 1933", document dated January 25th, 1933, no. 867.9111/389.

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<sup>1</sup> Yunus Nadi, "Kardeş Mısır ve Türk Milletleri", *Cumhuriyet*, January 9, 1933. (Ed.)



*B – AMBASSADOR CHARLES H. SHERRILL'S MEETINGS  
WITH ATATÜRK*

1. AMBASSADOR CHARLES H. SHERRILL'S REQUEST  
FOR MEETING ATATÜRK

Istanbul, June 15, 1932

Subject: The Gazi

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State  
Washington

Sir;

Because of my very agreeable acquaintance with Mr. Mussolini, begun some years ago through my writing *Bismarck and Mussolini*, and also because of the interest which the Gazi took in certain parallels between George Washington and himself, (both were Revolutionary Generals and first Presidents), it occurred to me that continuing and useful contact might be made with him by developing a book on that subject. Some such plan seemed necessary because the Gazi rarely sees members of the diplomatic corps. He is said to dislike meeting any foreigners. Having this in mind, I prepared an Introduction to the book and when in Ankara last week, had an interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs [Tevfik Rüştü Aras], June 15, and submitted for his consideration, a copy of that introduction in French. He does not understand English. He read it and expressed himself very favorably thereon. There had been some pourparlers with his office regarding a possible interview for me to submit this to the Gazi. When I noted the Minister's interest in my paper I relinquished the idea of seeing the Gazi. I asked him to show the introduction to the Gazi and ascertain whether he approved the general idea. Tevfik Rüştü [Aras] Bey returned ten days ago from Italy and not only he, but the entire country, is greatly pleased with the political and financial success of the Turkish mission, headed by the Prime Minister and himself, which visited Mr. Mussolini in Rome. Because of this I gave him a copy of my *Bismarck and Mussolini*, which appeared in Italian a month ago, and asked him to show it to the Gazi (along with the Introduction) so that he might see the kind of book I had in mind about George Washington and himself. This morning, Mr.



Shaw telephoned me from Ankara that Tevfik Rüştü [Aras] Bey had just telephoned him to say that the Gazi wanted to see me June 30th in Ankara. Mr. Shaw said that the place of that meeting was not yet set, but he thought the Gazi would probably receive me at his farm a few miles from Ankara where he has made extensive plantation of trees, and constructed for himself an elaborate prototype of Camp Rapidan.<sup>1</sup> If the Gazi approves the purpose of that book, it should lend to fairly frequent and possibly useful contacts with him during my service here.

Respectfully yours,  
CHARLES H. SHERRILL.

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document no. 867.001 K 31/48

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<sup>1</sup> "In 1929 the Hoovers purchased some land in the Blue Ridge Mountains about 100 miles from Washington, D.C., where President Hoover and Lou could fish, hike and relax. A lodge, two mess halls, cabins and a "Town Hall" were built. The camp was called Rapidan after the nearby Rapidan River.

Many people were guests at Camp Rapidan during the Hoover Administration. Thomas A. Edison and Winston Churchill stayed there. Charles A. and Ann Morrow Lindbergh were subsequent guests. They gave the Hoovers a map lampshade that showed the route of Lindbergh's famous flight across the Atlantic.

After Herbert Hoover left the White House, he and Lou gave Camp Rapidan to the United States government and it is now part of the Shenandoah National Park. Franklin D. Roosevelt found the ground too rough for his wheelchair and established another retreat which is now call Camp David." This information has been compiled from the following website: (<http://www.iowa-city.k12.ia.us/Hoover/rapidan.html>) (Ed.)



## 2. AMBASSADOR CHARLES H. SHERRILL'S MEETING WITH ATATÜRK

Ankara, July 1, 1932

Subject: The Gazi

The Honourable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington

Sir:

Referring to my despatch No. 40 of June 15, 1932, I beg to report that following an invitation from Tevfik Rüştü [Aras] Bey I was yesterday received by the President of the Republic, Gazi Mustafa Kemal, at a few minutes before 5 P.M. at his new mansion on the top of Çankaya hill. The interview lasted about two hours. The reception at the entrance to the grounds and outside the house was formal and military in every detail, but the interview was most informal and held in his spacious library, which consists of two large wings – one devoted to bookshelves and the other containing a large table for cabinet meetings, which also proved useful for laying out maps and large documents during our talk. He speaks no English, but, notwithstanding gossip to the contrary, his French is very fluent and he possesses a large vocabulary. He also knows a good deal of Italian, and commented favorably upon the recently published Italian version of my *Bismarck and Mussolini*, which the Minister of Foreign Affairs had given him for me. He expressed great interest in my proposed similar book comparing him to George Washington, and approved in every detail the introduction thereto (translated into French – English copy enclosed) I had left with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and which had been passed on to him. He wishes to have the introduction published here in Turkish, but I told him that American Ambassadors could not publish their writings during their term of office except with the permission of the [State] Department, but that I would submit the question for your decision, which I hereby do.

I am even more greatly impressed by the man after this two-hour interview than I was during the formal presentation of my credentials. One hears many stories about excessive drinking, but yesterday he showed no trace of any such habit. His eyes were bright, his complexion clear, and although I was constantly close to him – looking over the same book or map – there was



nothing that indicated any basis for those rumors. I can remember two American Presidents, both of whom I know fairly well, concerning whom similar rumors were circulated but with small foundation of fact. No matter what may be his private habits, there certainly do not affect his efficiency, physically or mentally. He is in excellent condition and is evidently a quick thinker and a quick actor. Best of all, because of those two attributes he is a man of great breadth of vision, as shown by several such epochal moves as the introduction of the new alphabet for writing the Turkish language, the translation of the Koran into Turkish, the freeing of women from the yashmak and their increased education, and lastly the effecting of the considerable Eastern friendship bloc, now including Russia, Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, Persia and Afghanistan with Turkey as a pivotal country. He separated Church and State, as he is the Henry the Eighth of Turkey. By translating the Koran he is their Wycliffe and Martin Luther.

He expressed so much interest in the introduction of my proposed book that I ventured to show him a proposed chapter (translated into French) on his causing the Koran to be translated into Turkish (see my despatch No. 61 of even date herewith). He expressed hearty approval of it and kept the French copy, after reading it aloud from end to end and commenting thereon. He then went carefully over my proposed list of fourteen or fifteen chapters from that book. He kindly suggested seeing me again when another chapter is completed, but, pleased as I was with his suggestion, it seemed wise to point out that if he thus frequently received the American Ambassador he might be bothered by other Ambassadors desirous of the same distinctions; this might in turn result in his one day wishing he had never begun with the American! My counter-suggestion was that he name someone both close to himself and also versed in Turkish history, whom I might frequently consult and who, from time to time, could submit my questions for his consideration. He expressed appreciation of this thoughtfulness for him, and asked if I would approve such a man as Yusuf Akçora [*sic*] Bey,<sup>1</sup> a [parliamentary] deputy who is chairman of the committee now preparing the second edition of the Turkish history which so greatly interests the Gazi. I already knew him and think him admirably suited for my purpose.

Just because I knew of his intense interest in this new Turkish history, I entitled my first chapter to treat thereof, so we began to discuss the matter. He said that although he had originally intended to receive me out at his farm a few miles from Ankara – a sort of cross between a Rapidan Camp and a

<sup>1</sup> On Yusuf Akçura the following study is suggested: François Georgeon, *Aux Origines du Nationalisme Turc, Yusuf Akçura (1876-1935)*, Institut Français des Etudes Anatoliennes, Istanbul, 1980. (Ed.)



Mount Vernon<sup>1</sup> – he had decided to change it to the new mansion because he wished to show me a number of large ethnographical charts treating with prehistoric race movements, and that had to be done in his library; but he hoped that later I would visit him at his farm.

He is a great admirer of Marshal Joffre, considering him the only man who all by himself defeated the Germans, just as he, the Gazi, was the only man who alone by himself beat the English and French at Gallipoli and caused their withdrawal. That caused me to tell him of my close friendship with Marshal Joffre (based on having served as his aide-de-camp while in New York in 1917) and Joffre's remark to me that the most interesting day of his American visit was that spent at Mount Vernon. This pleased the Gazi, because the construction and reforestation of his country place is very dear to his heart, and he seized upon the thought that it was his Mount Vernon.

The latter half of the interview was devoted to a study of maps (hung up on great standards or spread out on the cabinet table) showing the prehistoric movement of the Turkish people from Central Asia up toward the Near East and also across the top of the Black Sea as well as up into Finland and Scandinavia. I have always followed Woolley's excavations<sup>2</sup> at Ur and the work on American archaeology, and was surprised to find that the cast knows every detail of both as well as of all recent Hittite explorations. He fits them all into his Pan-Turkish theory.

Our refreshments during this interview consisted of coffee being served twice and lemonade once. I tried twice to withdraw, fearing that I was overstaying my welcome but each time he kept me. When I left, he escorted me all the way down to the door, to the obvious surprise of the attendants, civil and military. I hope that this biographical and historical contact will prove useful to American interests during my service at this post. He seems to have me classified as a historian and especially as his biographer (just as Mussolini had) rather than as a foreign Ambassador. One of the American missionaries at the American Board Congress said to me day before yesterday that the Gazi's wishes in Turkey are not only considered as law, but as Divine Law for the Turks.

Respectfully yours  
Charles H. Sherrill

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document 867.001 K 31/49.

<sup>1</sup> The estate where George Washington built his family home. (Ed.)

<sup>2</sup> Charles Leonard Wooley (1880-1960) was a British archelologist. (Ed.)





### 3. CHARLES H. SHERRIL'S ARTICLE, "MY INTERVIEWS WITH THE GAZI"

A race that produces great men is a great race. Seldom have the Turks produced so great a man as Mustafa Kemal, who today has no superior in the field of statesmanship.

It is interesting that three of the men most in the world's eye at the date of this writing – Mustafa Kemal, Franklin Roosevelt and Mussolini – are about the same age, born in 1881, 1882 and 1883 respectively. When a great statesman is at work upon a great task (and all three of these men surely are) the world is likely to say, "Yes, he is certainly accomplishing much for his people, but how long will he be able to stand the strain?"

All America admires the brave way in which President Roosevelt met and overcame what for most men would be a serious physical handicap. That is the answer for the American. As for the Italian, I have been privileged to know Mussolini for more than ten years and have often been amused by stories about impending physical breakdowns. The fact is that he always keeps himself very fit, by riding, swimming and other outdoor exercise. As for the Turkish President, there is no man in public life whose private life has been more maligned than Mustafa Kemal's – generally by writers having a grudge to work off. Because of this, Western Europe believes his health is precarious. A number of extensive personal interviews with Mustafa Kemal, none shorter than two hours, enable me to testify that here is a rugged man of unusual strength, in excellent physical condition. His private habits do not concern me, but certainly whatever he may do occasionally has neither injured his health, sapped his vitality nor slowed down his amazing mental activity.

There was one feature of my talks with the Turkish President which differed markedly from those I have had with distinguished European statesmen. Occasionally he would take a large sheet of paper from the table and with colored pencils draw diagrams. When describing his last audience with the Sultan before leaving for Samsun, he said: "When I was ushered into the room, the Sultan sat over here next a table," marking it in red on his quickly drawn outline of the room. "I was here [moi] facing him. There," marking it P – Pencere is Turkish for window – "was a window, and as His Majesty talked to me he kept looking out of that window. And what is he looking at, do you suppose?" Then he rapidly sketched in the little boats. "He is looking at the Allied fleet, lying anchored in the Bosphorus, just off the Yildiz Kiosk! That is what every Turkish government had to do so long as it



remained on the Bosphorus, and that's why we moved our capital inland to Ankara." You saw the whole scene: not only was the story simply and clearly developed, but, thanks to the diagram, you actually felt as if you had been in the room, witnessing all that happened. You saw how preoccupied with foreign control of the Straits every Turkish government at Constantinople always had to be.

Indeed, the time for the capital to be withdrawn to a safe inland situation was long overdue. Constantinople was the most beautiful possible window on Europe, but it was dangerously situated. Mustafa Kemal realized this important fact and knew that the real Turkish nation was quite different from that decadent agglomeration of Levantines called the Ottoman Empire. He would lead his people back to the very heart of the land so that the Turk of today, freed from the enervating influence of the Ottoman capital and also from constant threat of foreign fleets, could once more become the Turk of the old days. So he removed Turkey's capital up to the ancient and central town of Ankara, stationed at the crossroads of the old North-south and east-west caravan routes on the Anatolian plateau. Here the government could safely and quietly consider its problems.

Running out from the new government section of old Ankara is a broad tree-lined boulevard reminiscent of Washington's Massachusetts Avenue. It, too, is bordered by many embassies and legations and slopes gently upward to the President's mansion poised on the summit. The first time I mounted the Chankaya hillside at Ankara Mustafa Kemal enlivened his many intimate discussions with Charles H. Sherrill by drawing diagrams with colored pencils. The diagram below at left represents Mustafa Kemal's last interview with the Sultan before leaving for Samsun in 1919. "Moi" is Mustafa Kemal facing "S" – the Sultan – who is looking through "P" – window – at the Allied fleet anchored in the Bosphorus. From his palace window the Sultan saw a view something like the one on opposite page. The diagram at right describes the battle at Sakarya. The Greeks (black lines) tried to cut off the Turks from Ankara, but the Turks forced the Greeks to retire beyond the Sakarya River was in May, 1932, a lovely spring day, proceeding with all the members of our Embassy staff, civil and military, to the official reception accorded all newly arrived chiefs of diplomatic missions by the Chief of State.

The first impression one receives of the Gazi is noteworthy. One grasps at once that here is a man in fine physical condition, strong of frame, quick of eye, clear of sin and with amazingly broad brow and eloquent eyes set well apart in a markedly intelligent face. This hardbitten fighting man is intense of thought and vigorous of speech. It is his custom to speak only Turkish at the first interview, but if interested in something in your brief address he proceeds



(as he did in my case) to develop it in fluent French. His kindly courtesy reminds one born in Washington of most genial days in the White House.

The second meeting a month later was very different. A little beyond the first presidential mansion there was now a far ampler edifice, constructed and equipped in most modern fashion. A great broad hallway runs straight through the new residence; on its left are large apartments for ceremonial purposes; on the right are other rooms, and in their midst a large swimming pool, built in the Pompeian fashion, surrounded by a columned portico and lighted from above.

This time I am not destined for the ceremonial rooms. At the farther end of the long hallway the military aide turns right and leads up a stairway, the walls of which are adorned by soft-toned tapestry. In the left-hand corner of the house a door opens into a pleasantly spacious apartment done in light wood, down the center of which runs a long cabinet table. Beyond, by a very workman-like desk, stands the Gazi, with a kindly smile of recognition. A man who is by nature a student never shows to such advantage as in his own library, surrounded and supported by his own books and, in the Gazi's case, by his own beloved maps.

I wish the reader might have been with me in the Gazi's library while he was giving me the fascinating details of the fight at Sakarya and its strategy – a narrative interrupted only by the occasional sketching of small plans with colored pencils (always red for the Turks). Perhaps these battle discussions lasting from two to three hours were the best of my talks with him. His keen sense of humor caused him from time to time to enrich historical narrative with amusing anecdote aptly describing the characteristics of some leader, military or political. Occasionally cups of delicious Turkish coffee were served, varied with glasses of lemonade. Some cigarettes would be smoked, but he does not use so many as one expects, given the tension of the tale.

The Gazi has a curiously "double-tracked" mind, one track devoted to political history and the other to military, but he never confuses the two. "Now we will turn to the political developments of that moment", he would say, thereupon shifting from battle strategy to a description of how the newly set up political machine was functioning.

Of all the stories I know dealing with Mustafa Kemal's political acumen, there are two which especially illustrate his statesmanship.

Upon my arrival in Turkey, it seemed appropriate for me, as a foreign ambassador, to visit her battlefields. When I intimated this intention to the Turkish authorities, there came the reply that President Mustafa Kemal greatly



preferred Turkey's present cordial relations with Greece, her former enemy on those very battlefields, to reviving memories of victories gained there!

This broad-visioned attitude impressed me even more deeply on another occasion. When I sought to learn why Turkey, after her overwhelming defeat of the Greeks, had not insisted on receiving from them reparations in some form, I was told that Mustafa Kemal had then decided that renewed and perhaps increased commercial relations with the Greeks would pay Turkey better than irksome annual collections, which possibly might later on be discontinued in some such way as to cause friction between the two nations.

These two stories reveal a distinguished battle leader who is at heart such a practical pacifist that he prefers to substitute friendships with all Turkey's neighbors for the animosities of former times. "Remove the causes of war and the war wounds will heal," the Gazi once said. And he was right. Never have the relations been better between Turkey and her two nearest European neighbors, Greece and Bulgaria, than they are today. Equally friendly relations have been established with Iraq, Persia and Afghanistan and finally with Russia and Italy, thus completing the most recent of Gazi's revolutions and safeguarding against violation of the Turkish republic. Another great revolution effected in Turkey by the Gazi has been the substituting of Turkish for Arabic in the Moslem ritual. Even on my way into Turkey I learned something of this. The trip by the Simplon-Orient Express from Paris to Istanbul takes two days and a half, and much of that time I spent in studying Turkish. When I discovered that the sleeping car conductor was a Turk, he was brought in from time to time to help me with the pronunciation of certain words. The last day I asked him what he thought of his government's decision to translate the Koran into Turkish. He replied that, although Moslem, he was not particularly devout in the practice of his religion and that of late years, mainly because of his life on railway trains, he hardly ever visited a mosque and had lost the habit of saying the regulation prayers at stated times.

– "We always had a Koran at home – rather a hand-some one", he said. "We were proud of it and kept it on the center table, but more as an ornament than as a religious book of instruction, since none of us could read Arabic. When I first heard of the plan for translating the Koran, I did not like it. Somehow it seemed wrong, because we Moslems believe that the word of Allah therein recorded was spoken to the Prophet in the Arabic language. But I really thought very little about it; for a sleeping-car conductor hasn't much time to think of anything outside his daily work. Some time after the translation appeared, I bought a cheap copy and read it – mostly out of curiosity. To my surprise, I found it contained a lot of good, workable philosophy, and some of the best of it I have read over several times. You ought to read it, sir. You will find it well worth your while." When he learned that I had already done so, and that, too, back in my university days, he smiled approvingly.



Here was a simple Turk, a man of the people, who never would have been reached by the Koran's message if his government had not dared take the really serious political risk of having it translated into the language of the people. How could I square this fact with the statement often repeated outside Turkey that the Gazi is a man entirely uninterested in religion?

I told the Gazi about the railway conductor during a two and a half hour talk with him at Yalova, where, on the shores of the Marmara, he has a country place far simpler than Mount Vernon, a modern dwelling of modest proportions, built at the water's edge, near several great trees. On the beach not far from the house were set up two seventeenth-century embroidered silk tents which the Sultans had used on their campaigns. Inside one of them we sat at our ease, occasionally sipping tiny cups of delicious Turkish coffee. My host, in spite of my interest in the religious changes, obviously preferred to devote most of our time to political and wartime events.

But the question of religion was destined to come up between us later when I had an interview with the Gazi at Ankara. The then recent "Brusa incident"<sup>1</sup> naturally brought the matter up. To my great surprise, Mustafa Kemal talked freely and at length. He told me his own personal views and also expressed his opinion upon the attitude of the Turkish people of today toward religion. This was the only subject on which, after full discussion, he and I ever agreed to disagree, since I believe the Turks today to be more religious than he does.

It would, of course, be highly improper for me to include here a complete account of the Gazi's personal views upon religion. It seems essential, however, in view of the many absurd stories that he is an agnostic and even antireligious that I set down that he believes in God and in humanity's need for a God and in humanity's need and right to make appeals to God. But by this he does not mean appeals in the form of set prayers. Mustafa Kemal asked me searching questions about my reasons for being a practising Christian. He has an interested as well as an interesting personality; he wishes not only to hear your arguments when you disagree with him but also to understand your point of view. Never have I talked with a fairer-minded man than he; and this trait must have greatly helped him when, beginning first at Erzerum and then moving eastwardly to Sivas and finally to Ankara, he argued to convince the Turkish people of their right to self-government and their fitness for it.

I hurried back from leave of absence in the United States so as to arrive in time for Ankara's greatest day of the year – the anniversary of the Declaration of the Turkish Republic. October 29, 1932, was one of those clear

<sup>1</sup> The details of this incident is in footnote 2 in page 173.





cool days that the elevation of Ankara so often provides. In the afternoon we had witnessed an admirable parade, mostly of Turkish infantry, carrying a full equipment of ultramodern machine guns and rapid fire rifles. The flight of sixty-three airplanes manoeuvring overhead must have caused the Turks to recall the crushing defeats they inflicted on the Greeks in 1921 and 1922 when they possessed only one airplane.

The official banquet to which we sat down one hundred strong in the evening was not different from a similar banquet in any great European capital except for the magnificent gold plate – a complete service dating from the days of Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839).

Mustafa Kemal was that night the affable statesman and perfect chief executive. Last to receive the graceful phrases which the President was dispensing to each and all of us ten Ambassadors was the newly accredited one from Italy, Signor Lojacono. The exchange of compliments between them showed the Gazi at his best. The Italian declared that he hoped Turks and Italians would always work harmoniously together and then added, "Especially the youth of both countries." With a smile the Gazi replied: "Say, rather, the mature minds of both lands. It is all very well for Your Excellency to speak of the youth; for you have the glorious history of ancient Rome behind you. But tall trees must have deep roots, like those of the Italian and Turkish races."

I have tried to give a rapid sketch of this strange combination of a warrior-statesman who, a blade welded in Turkey's schools, tempered in her wars, sharpened by her internal politics, finally cut the Turks loose from the Ottoman tradition and the débris of decadent empire. From Turkey's extreme east to her westernmost outpost, Smyrna, he patiently built up a discouraged people's spirit until it flamed out as a united nation against the Greek invaders and cast them forth. Up in high-perched Ankara, at Turkey's very heart, he constructed an efficiently functioning government of her people, by her people and for her people. Nor was he even then content; for his series of revolutions in his people's life and habits then followed, so that now, with modernized writing, numbers, calendar and laws, Turkey can and does take her fair part in the comity of nations. This remarkable Turk has made Turkey once more proud of her race, her history and her language and vastly more hopeful of her future than she has been for centuries. And with her regained pride has come such an admirable and dignified national poise that today Turkey's outstanding foreign policy seems her desire not only to cultivate friendly relations with all her neighbors but also to form better understanding between them. The countries encircling Turkey have reacted unanimously to Mustafa Kemal's policy of improved neighborly relations, and each of them is prepared to meet



him fully halfway. The peace of the Near East has no more ardent friend than Mustafa Kemal the Victorious.

*Asia*, March 1934, Vol XXXIV, no. 3, pp 140-143.

[The abridged Turkish translation of this article was also published in the Turkish press. See "Gazi Hz. için bir yazı", *Cumhuriyet*, 4th March 1934 and "Gazi hakkında bir Dostumuzun Yazısı", *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, 2nd March 1934] (Ed.)



## C – ATATÜRK, RELIGION AND ISLAM

### 1. AMBASSADOR JOSEPH C. GREW'S COMMENTS ON ATATÜRK AND REFORM IN ISLAM

Istanbul, February 26, 1932.

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

The Gazi has started to reform Islam in Turkey.

On January 21st Hafız Yaşar Bey, the leader of the Gazi's Turkish orchestra, publicly chanted the appropriate verses from a Turkish translation of the Koran at the Yere Batan Mosque in Istanbul.<sup>1</sup> In a country where an understanding as opposed to a memorizing of the Koran was something extraordinary, even among the religious class, this was a sensational event. The papers played it up at first discreetly, then more emphatically. In a few days the Turkish version of the Koran was used in other mosques of Istanbul and personages close to the Gazi – Kılıç Ali Bey, for instance – attended in order to observe. On January 31, Hafız Rifat Bey gave the call to prayer in Turkish at the Mosque at Fatih. On February 3, Turkish was used in the ceremonies of the so-called Night of Power<sup>2</sup> at Aya Sofia. The chanting was broadcasted by radio. A vast throng attended with soldiers and police liberally interspersed. The crowd was unusually large and the arrangements very badly carried out. It was evident that many of those present had come out of curiosity rather than to worship. Previous to the Night of Power the Gazi who has been sojourning at Istanbul for more than a month, summoned a group of religious personages to confer with him at Dolmabahçe Palace. They spent an evening in conversation. Some say that the proceedings were anything but edifying and that raki played no mean part. What was said I do not pretend to know, but that the Gazi should call in to his presence members of the religious class is in itself of significance.

<sup>1</sup> For further information on praying in Turkish, the reader is invited to refer to the following books: Dücane Cündioğlu, *Bir Siyasi Proje Olarak Türkçe İbadet I*, Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1999 and Dücane Cündioğlu, *Türkçe Kur'an ve Cumhuriyet İdeolojisi*, Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1998. (Ed.)

<sup>2</sup> In Turkish it is called "Kadir Gecesi". It is the night when God brought the Koran to the humanity through its messenger the prophet Mohammed. (Ed.)





These are momentous events with possible consequences of so important and far-reaching a character that I do not wish in the present despatch to do more than put them in their setting and suggest in the most tentative sort of way a number of possible explanations.

If there was one policy of the present Turkish Government which all of us considered basic and fixed, so far as such things can be fixed, it was assuredly the policy of laicism. We have so often said that Ankara was anti-religious or at least aggressively non-religious that to discover the Gazi even ostensibly in the rôle of a religious reformer comes as a distinct shock. In the past, we have witnessed a series of events which seemed to leave no doubt as to the ideas of the Ankara leaders concerning religion. The medresses were suppressed, the system of law was secularized, the form of oath was changed in order to divest it of any religious character, the dervishes were done away with, the members of the religious class were limited in number and their activities restricted, the Constitution was modified so as to eliminate any mention of a state religion, the religious class was held up to public opprobrium in connection with the Genç Revolt of 1925<sup>1</sup> and the Menemen incident of 1930.<sup>2</sup> True, no attempt was ever made to interfere with the right of worship and there is and always has been an office devoted to religious affairs under the Prime Minister; true also that for the past two years the mosques during Ramazan have been more and more crowded. In 1927 furthermore the papers wrote of a commission which it was declared was examining the question of religious reform. Plans for a modernized mosque with pews were drawn up by Kemaleddin Bey, the famous architect of the Evkaf. In the light of the events of the past few weeks these facts acquire a new significance, and the probability that the Gazi was thinking of religious reform even at that time is not to be disregarded. Apparently the results were then unsatisfactory; the destruction of the old religious class had not proceeded far enough; the country was not yet ready for religious reform. The gulf between Ankara and Religion seemed to grow ever wider – Ankara was modern, scientific, positivistic, nationalist, patriotic – religion was out-of-date, of the Dark Ages, international, unpatriotic to the point of being treasonable.

<sup>1</sup> The Ambassador is referring here to the Sheik Said Kurdish revolt which started in 1925 in the province of Bingöl, formerly known as Genç. (Ed.)

<sup>2</sup> On 23rd December 1930 in Menemen members of an Islamic sect called Nakşibendis started a revolt against the Republican regime asking for Sharia rule. A non-commissioned officer by the name of Kubilay tried to suppress the revolt but was killed by the insurgents and beheaded. The revolt was suppressed by the Turkish Army and the leaders caught and brought to justice. They were tried and 29 of them were given the death penalty which was swiftly carried out. (Ed.)



In trying to account for what has happened let us first of all take a bird's-eye view of Turkish history since 1920. These twelve years fall into certain natural periods. There was the period of the war against the Greeks and the Lausanne Conference, when Turkey was united against its foreign foes. But 1924 saw the unity broken. There were those who believed in the reforms and those who didn't; those who favored the dictatorship of the Gazi and those for whom the greater equality of the war period still had its charm. There was a moment of hesitation marked by the Fethi [Okyar] Bey Ministry of 1924-1925, but by the spring of 1925 the decision in favor of reform by strong arm methods and the dictatorship had been taken. Ruthless methods were used: Tribunals of Independence, hangings. And one fine day Ankara looked about and could see nothing more to suspect, no opposition to combat – all was apparently quiet, acquiescent, servile. Then Ankara made a great, although a natural mistake – it became complacent: it imagined that the reforms, because they had been legislated, had been achieved; that Turkey had been modernized and westernized. Ankara fell a victim to its own material progress. The Tribunals of Independence were abolished and Ankara reached that stage of complacency when it even seemed to forget Turkey's political immaturity so completely as to bring an Opposition Party into existence – Fethi Bey's Liberal Party of 1930. But that was the end of the period of complacency. The tumultuous demonstrations upon the occasion of Fethi's visit to İzmir in September, 1930, and the Menemen incident of December, 1930, made it clear that Ankara had been mistaken and that if the reforms were to be put across with the general population a tremendous effort would have to be made. Perhaps even concessions to public opinion were in order. Since that time there has been a great scurrying about. There have been elections; the Türk Ocak has been suppressed and a new and more energetic organization to educate youth – the Halk Evi – has been created. And now comes what appears to be a new attitude towards religion.

Probably many factors enter into this new attitude towards religion. In the first place, I suspect that the Gazi as a result of his trips around Turkey of the past year has grasped the fact that the religious sentiment is still a factor to be reckoned with, that anything approaching a policy of hostility towards religion rather strengthens its hold and that a policy of official indifference has no effect one way or the other – outside of Ankara. In the second place, I am wondering whether the Gazi has not at last realized that from a purely political point of view it is exceedingly dangerous to leave to one's opponents the whole religious issue – it is much safer to try and bend religion to the uses of the State. In the third place, the Gazi perhaps hopes to popularize the politics of Ankara through the mosques, especially in the matter of emphasizing the



importance of the Turkish language. Certainly the religious crowd is nearer the Turkish people than Ankara has ever been able to get. Why not try and use this approach for Ankara's own purposes? Perhaps other factors have been at work: the recent Moslem Congress at Jerusalem, for instance, which caused quite a flutter at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ankara. And I have heard one competent observer claim that the Gazi has now quite changed his attitude towards the countries of Asia and favors closer relations with them. As proof of this idea the recent agreement with Persia is cited and also the visit of the Iraqi Prime Minister to Ankara and the appointment of King Faisal's brother Zeit as Iraqi Minister to Turkey. These Asiatic countries are Moslem and perhaps it is thought that a more sympathetic attitude towards religion would be helpful in establishing closer relations.

What of the future? I do not think there can be much doubt that what has been done so far has not been received with general approval. There may or may not have been whistling at Aya Sofia during the Night of Power ceremony and it may or may not have been due to taking photographs by flashlight, but when Turkish was used that same night at the Mosque of Suleimanié, there were, I am told, evident signs of disapproval and a somewhat similar reception was accorded the muezzin who gave the call to prayer in Turkish from the minaret of the Fatih Mosque. The middle class – the small shopkeepers, the petty merchants – is likely to be outraged by any tampering with the sacred text of the Koran which they regard more as a fetish than as a work of religious or ethical instruction. They may feel that there can no longer be any doubt as to the impious character of the present régime. Whether this resentment will assume a serious form remains to be seen, although it should never be forgotten that the force of Government authority in Turkey is tremendous. There are dangers in the Gazi's latest venture.

As to what the next move will be opinions differ. Some say that nothing more will be done for a while, but others forecast a public visit by the Gazi to some important mosque, the use of pews, the building of a modern mosque at Ankara, the use of Turkish in mosques outside of Istanbul (this has already begun in Thrace) and the passage of a law by the Assembly making the use of Turkish obligatory in religious services.

Respectfully yours  
Joseph C. Grew.

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document no. 867.404/199.



## 2. AMBASSADOR CHARLES H. SHERRILL COMMENTS ON ATATÜRK'S VIEWS ON RELIGION

Ambassador Sherrill, in 1934 a year after his meetings with Atatürk, published his book *A Year's Embassy to Mustafa Kemal*. Soon after the book was published a laudatory review was published in *The New York Times*.<sup>1</sup> Sherrill in his book referred to his meeting with Atatürk and wrote that "it would of course be highly improper for me to include here a complete account of what he said of his personal views upon religion". He therefore did not report the complete minutes of his talk with Atatürk. The "complete account" which has not been reported in the book is the document which is being published below. In order to ascertain what Sherrill omitted to mention in his book versus the complete minutes of his meeting with Atatürk the relative passage of the book has also been reprinted below.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Ankara, March 17, 1933.

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.  
Subject: Religion in Turkey

Sir:

During my three-hour interview yesterday afternoon with the President of the Republic, Gazi Mustafa Kemal, (see my No. 420 of today's date) and while discussing eight chapters of my biography of him which he is going over with me, there came up the question of religion in Turkey.<sup>2</sup> I remarked that I had given considerable study to the development under the Turkish Republic of the Moslem religion, and would like to know for the purposes of my biography so much as he was willing to tell me – either for publication or

<sup>1</sup> Walter Littlefield, "Mustafa Kemal and The New Turkey", *The New York Times*, April 22, 1934. The Turkish translation of this review was also published. "O bir inkılâbın kahramanı", *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, May 12, 1934. (Ed.)

<sup>2</sup> Because of the widespread belief among today's Islamists that Atatürk was hostile toward Islam, the Atatürk Research Center has recently published *Atatürk'ün İslâma Bakışı – Belgeler ve Görüşler*, (Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, Ankara, 2005) which addresses this belief and refutes it. (Ed.)



not – of his own point of view upon the subject. He went into the matter in considerable detail, indicating which portions he thought would be of public interest and which not.

It appears that when he was six or seven years old his mother wished to send him to a dame school, where the teacher would not only give him lessons in the three Rs,<sup>1</sup> but would also teach him the Koran, which meant learning long Arabic passages by heart. His father, on the other hand, preferred that the boy should go to a lay school where no religious instruction was given. Although the father finally prevailed, the boy was duly entered in the dame school by his mother with the attendant ceremonies usual in Salonica, where they lived. The next day the father took the boy to the lay school, where he continued his studies. This made his mother so unhappy that she wept a great deal, so at the boy's suggestion the religious instructor at the dame school came to the family home and gave him the Koran instruction which his mother desired. This latter only lasted a month, but at least it satisfied the mother. That was all the religious instruction he ever enjoyed.

He completely denies the generally accepted belief that he is an agnostic, but alleges that his religion only goes so far as to believe in the existence of one God, All-Powerful, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe. He further believes that mankind needs that belief in such a God. To this he adds that it is good for mankind to make appeals to this God in the form of prayers of some sort. He stops there. He then asked in some detail why I was so convinced a Protestant Christian, and I gave him my reasons therefor, which do not belong in this report, except for my general comment that he seemed thoroughly earnest in his questions, all of which showed he had already given considerable thought to religion.

He then went on to tell me of the condition of the Moslem religion as he found it when he came to power ten years ago as President of the new Republic he created. He said that he found it necessary to abolish the Sheikul-Islam, and also the medresses, (schools where little but the Koran was taught) the religious courts and the Cadis who presided over them, the hodjas and all the priesthood, including the various Dervishes. He said that all that remained of this elaborate priestly structure under the Ottoman Empire were the imams, who, as muezzins, give the calls to prayer from the minarets and lead the prayers within the mosques.

I asked him what, if any, religious instruction remained for the youth of Turkey, after he had swept away so completely all this structure he had just described. He said that he had replaced that unsatisfactory medresse with a complete primary and secondary educational system throughout the country,

<sup>1</sup> Three R's are reading, writing and arithmetics. (Ed.)





all leading up to the already existing University, etc.; that in both the primary and the middle schools religious education was given to the extent of telling the story of Mohammed and of his wise principles of better living which the Koran inculcated, and to that religious history he had caused to be added similar information about that other great religion described in our Old and New Testaments, and also that in the Buddhist religious books.

He and I then made a comparison of this modern Turkish religious instruction with the sort given by the average Sunday school in the United States. When I inquired if such instruction as our Sunday schools gave could be usefully afforded by Friday morning classes under women in the Halk Evis, or Peoples' Houses, throughout the country, he seemed very doubtful of success for such an idea, but said that it was a novel one and would receive his consideration. The thought of women teachers for this purpose evidently appealed to him, for thus would be avoided any possibility of politics or the intervention of male partisans of the hodjas, or any other such troublesome possibilities.

In this connection, he spoke freely of the recent Bursa incident, saying that it was engineered not by Turks but by three foreigners, an Albanian, a Bulgarian and a Russian. He even intimated that it might have been instigated by the Third International. I complimented him upon the political skill with which he had changed that possibly bothersome political movement into a merely linguistic question, because it solely concerned substituting Turkish for Arabic in the public call to prayers! This brought him to speak of why and how he had pushed the modern translation of the Koran from Arabic into Turkish, and this opened quite a new vista upon that subject. He maintains that when the Turkish people come to know the real meaning of some of the Arabic prayers they have long been reciting, they will be disgusted with themselves. He cited one Arabic prayer taken from the Koran, in which Mohammed prays that his uncle and the uncle's daughter may be consigned to the infernal regions for something they have done.<sup>1</sup> "Imagine a thinking Turk taking any interest or getting any religious inspiration out of reciting such a prayer as that", said he. The more he developed this line of thought the more I was forced to the conclusion that he is pushing the use of the Koran in Turkish largely to discredit the Koran with the Turks.

<sup>1</sup> Atatürk is making reference to the 111th Sura of the Koran which reads as follows:  
In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

[111.1] Perdition overtake both hands of Abu Lahab, and he will perish.

[111.2] His wealth and what he earns will not avail him.

[111.3] He shall soon burn in fire that flames,

[111.4] And his wife, the bearer of fuel,

[111.5] Upon her neck a halter of strongly twisted rope.

In this sura there is a strong curse against Abu Lahab (uncle of the Prophet Mohammed) and his wife.

My thanks to Dücane Cündioğlu who identified this Sura for me. (Ed.)



He made the broad and somewhat surprising statement that the Turkish people are really not religious in any way, and alleged that the few who still go to the mosques only do so from habit or because attracted to the mosque by the vocal rendering of the prayers. I very respectfully dissented from his conclusions in this regard, and told him of my experience when my wife and myself, on the invitation of two Turkish friends of his, had, on the late afternoon of January 23, repaired to the mosque of Santa Sofia to witness the so-called "Night of Prayer". I told him how crowded it was with the ten thousand worshippers (20% of whom were in military uniform) and of the intense and absorbed devotion which each and all of those worshippers, for one solid hour, gave to the prayers which each one was directly addressing to the God whose existence the Gazi himself acknowledged. My request for an explanation of those numbers, of that devotion, and of that personal absorption only brought from him more statements of his opinion as to the limited part which the Turkish Government should play in affording the youth of Turkey the opportunity to know about religion. It was quite clear by the time he had finished that he does not now believe in going further in that regard than the historical instruction upon the three great religions now being given in the secondary schools and also in the small theological section of the University. But he certainly does not agree with the Soviet idea of abolishing all religion. He insists that the principal mosques should be carefully kept up by the Government and should be used for the purposes for which they were originally consecrated. He believes in the ethical teachings of all of the three great religions, but more as ethical teachings of all of the three great religions, but more as ethics than as religions.

When I commented that I thought that his own religious belief was incomplete without the addition thereto of frequent expression of gratitude to the one God for the blessings he vouchsafed us, he seemed surprised but interested, and said he would certainly give consideration to that idea, if only because of its novelty to him. He expressed the desire to speak with me further upon this subject, which rather surprised me, because such intimate friends of his as Yusuf Akçura Bey have constantly warned me that if I talked about religion with him it would surely impair his relations with me which relations he was kind enough to call "our friendship". He was good enough to say at the conclusion of this part of our conversation that he had never before gone so fully into the matter with a foreigner, certainly not in expressing his own personal religious beliefs.

Respectfully yours,  
Charles H. Sherrill.

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document no. 867.404/218.



## PASSAGE FROM A YEAR'S EMBASSY TO MUSTAFA KEMAL<sup>1</sup>

Soon thereafter, I had an interview with the Gazi upon further chapters of the biography (this time up at Ankara, and lasting three hours) and the then recent Bursa incident<sup>2</sup> naturally brought up the subject of religion. To my great surprise, Mustafa Kemal talked freely and at length upon it. He told me his own personal views, and also expressed his opinion upon how the Turkish people of today felt about religion. The only subject upon which, after many discussions, he and I ever agreed to disagree was this latter matter, for I believe the Turks today to be more religious than he does. My chief reason for that opinion will appear in my description of the famous Night of Power in Santa Sofia<sup>3</sup>, with which this chapter will conclude.

It would of course be highly improper for me to include here a complete account of what he said of his personal views upon religion. It seems essential, however, in view of the many absurd stories told of his being an agnostic and actually anti-religious, that I here set down that he believes in God, and in humanity's need for a God, and in humanity's need and right to make appeals to God. But this does not mean appeals in the form of set prayers.

Here also seems the place to say that he not only showed interest in my own point of view, but also asked me searching questions about why I was a practising Christian, and what we Americans thought we obtained from it. Elsewhere I have already written of another distinguished personage, also of an Oriental race, that his was not only an interesting personality, but also an interested one. Mustafa Kemal is distinctly an interested personality, for not only does he wish to hear your arguments when you disagree, but also to understand your point of view. Never have I talked with a fairer-minded man

<sup>1</sup> Charles H. Sherrill, *A Year's Embassy to Mustafa Kemal*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1934, pp.199-203. (Ed.)

<sup>2</sup> Here is Sherrill's account of the written as indicated in his book (p. 199): "Thereafter, the matter of prayers in Turkish was not rigorously followed up by the Istanbul authorities, but similar laxity was not exhibited in the country districts. Finally, one day early in 1933, in the quiet little city of Bursa, trouble broke out because certain individuals protested against this substitution of Turkish for Arabic in the calls for prayers. The government took the outbreak very calmly, conducted a careful examination into all the circumstances, discovered that the ringleaders were all non-Turks, and applied moderate jail sentences for the disorders created. In 1931 there had been a much more serious outbreak in Menemen, down in the Smyrna district, and there severe penalties had followed the rioters' killing of an officer, etc., in fact, sundry hangings had proved necessary. When the Bursa outbreak occurred, one heard many grave predictions of more hangings, but the ever tactful Gazi ruled that this was a case of linguistics rather than religion, and so popular excitement quickly subsided." (Ed.)

<sup>3</sup> The Haghia Sophia or Aya Sofya Mosque in Istanbul. (Ed.)



than he, and this trait must have greatly helped him when he slowly, beginning first at Erzerum, and then at Sivas, and finally at Ankara, argued to convince the Turkish people of their right to self-government and their fitness for it.

And now for the reasons why I believe that the Turkish people of today, modernized as they have become in so many ways, are still a people of deep religious feeling. All during my stay in Turkey I gave much time to studying the Moslem faith, generally with Kemalist friends or acquaintances, of both sexes and of all ages, all of them understanding that, though of another faith, my attitude towards their was (what the French call) sympathetic. Possibly as a result thereof, my wife and I were invited to attend the so-called Night of Power (the French call it "Grande Prière") in Santa Sofia by Halil Bey, long Director of [the] Stamboul Museum. He, his charming wife, and the local chief of the Evkaf (or Religious Foundation) remained with us throughout the service, and gave highly interesting replies to my many questions.

There are many who say that Santa Sofia is the mightiest House of God in the world. Certainly nowhere else is there such wide swung span of roof, loftily surmounting massive columns, mantled round by capacious aisles, and fronted by two enclosed porticoes or narthexes. Above the great aisles, gallery surmounts gallery, and we shall take you up with us into one of these far at the back of the great enclosure, so you may look out across the huge throng packing the edifice and facing the simple prayer-alcove that points toward Mecca. It is the eve of the twenty-seventh day of the month of Ramazan, and Moslems the world over are taught that from sunset to sunrise the prayers of Moslem believers in the one God we all worship will be heard and granted. Therefore Islam calls it the Night of Power. If it be true (as certain scoffers claim) that one gets nothing from religion beyond what he puts into it, then surely that vast throng below us, over 10,000 worshippers, will gain much from this hour of intensely concentrated prayer that each and all of them are offering to the Creator of the Universe! Here are power and unadulterated personal worship passing directly from the individual to his God. Here is the Moslem faith in its highest moment, unhampered or unassisted by priestly intervention – pure Protestantism – if we judge it from the standpoint of Christian faiths. Personal belief is here raised to the Nth power, and the writer can bear witness that in no Christian gathering anywhere has he ever been so impressed and convinced by the sincere earnestness of worship as he was on the evening of January 23, 1933, in Santa Sofia. There was no eloquent preacher to draw this crowd, no music. Every sort of Turk was there – women crowding the wide aisles beneath the galleries, while in the great central space were rank on rank of men (nearly a hundred ranks), about eighty men shoulder



to shoulder in every rank, each kneeling and rising, kneeling and prostrating himself oblivious of his neighbors, and each intent on completing his own personal contact with the great Power House of God. Here was the place and the moment to sense the soul of the Turkish people. One must see the simple, direct, devout Turk on such an occasion to realize what the Turkish race really is – to appreciate that nation from which can emerge such a leader as Mustafa Kemal, the creator and first President of the Turkish Republic. Yes, the Turkish people are as religious as we Americans, perhaps even more so.



*D – A MEETING BETWEEN ATATÜRK AND DR. HAND  
HENNING VON DER OSTEN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF  
CHICAGO*

1. REPORT OF JEFFERSON PATTERSON, CHARGÉ  
D'AFFAIRES AD INTERIM

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Ankara, June 5, 1930.

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to advise the Department, as of interest thereto, that the President of the Republic, Gazi Mustafa Kemal, has latterly come to manifest a very keen interest in Turkish pre-history, for the evident purpose of enhancing the pride of race of his people and of combatting the "inferiority complex", which seems to be at the base of much of the almost morbid sensitiveness of the Turks.

The President has, for some months past, been occupying the leisure hours of Reşit Galip [Aydın] Bey, Ruşen Eşref [Ünaydın] Bey and other Deputies possessed of literary ability, by causing them to institute researches in works of history (mostly European) capable of shedding light on the origins of the Turkish race. The President, himself, has been active in compiling notes obtained from these writers and, on at least one occasion, personally visited the study of Dr. Jules Mészáros, a Hungarian philologist attached to the Ankara Ethnographical Museum, with a view to enlisting his support to his grandiose theory. This is no other than that all civilization has had its origin in members of the Turkish race.

The Gazi has not been content with elaborating this somewhat audacious belief in conference with his intimates, but on the occasion of the annual meeting in April of the Council of the Türk Ocağıs (attended by some 300 Delegates from all corners of Turkey) inspired an address by Afet [İnan] Hanım (who, it will be recalled from the Embassy's despatch No. 998 of April 8, 1930, had already acted as the President's spokesman in voicing his progressive views on woman's place in politics) This address is given in



summary owing to its interest in revealing the trend of the President's thought in relation to his present preoccupation.

Afet Hanim did not mince words but boldly stated that "The Turk is Civilization! The Turk is History!". Continuing, the speaker expressed the conviction that the first civilized men were Turks of the Altai Region of Central Asia. Thus, those were Turks who laid the foundation of Chinese civilization, while Turks (under the names of Sumerians, Akkadians and Elamites) established the first cultures of Mesopotamia and Persia. Indeed, the founders of Egyptian civilization were Turks, while the celebrated Assyrians merely made history within the general history of the Turkish race. Likewise the so-called Hittites, who should more accurately be known as "Ettis", had the same origin.

As for Greece, the Peninsula was first occupied by Achaians, or "Akas". Then, hardly venturing into philology, Afet Hanim observed that the word "Aka" was derived from "Aga", a Turkish word, while the term "Aegean" is in origin "Eke", or "Egi", a Turkish vocable. The originators of the Mycenaean and Minoan civilizations were these same Turkish "Akas" and "Ekes".

After the Achaian (Aka) civilization had flourished for long centuries on the Greek mainland and that of the related Ekes (Aegeans) on the adjacent islands, savage Dorians from Albania overran, about 1200 B.C., the Peninsula and the Islands, this feat having been the result of an unfortunate confederation of the Turks of Greece with the related Hittites (Ettis) of Anatolia, for the purpose of combatting Ramses II of Egypt. While the attention of both peoples was directed toward the south, the Dorians crossed the northern frontier. The expelled Turkish inhabitants took refuge on the Western littoral of Anatolia and developed the Ionian civilization which in time returned across the Islands to the Peninsula to elevate the still barbarous Dorians and to found the Greek culture of the classical period.

Turkish activity did not pause with Hellas, but crossed to Italy, where the same people, now called Etruscans, laid the foundation for Latin civilization.

In view of the high source of Afet Hanim's fancies, none has dared to dispute them locally and, indeed, so well-known a Deputy and writer as Yakup Kadri [Karaosmanoğlu] Bey applauded the speaker (*Milliet*, May 3) for having, by opening so vast a panorama to the eyes of the Turks, stimulated the "noble idea of Turkism". Moreover, the Türk Ocağı has appointed a Committee on Turkish history, the President of which is Colonel Tevfik Bey, Secretary to the President, and includes, in addition to Afet Hanim, such well-known persons as that of Akçura Oğlu Yusuf Bey [i.e., Yusuf Akçura], Halil Bey (Director of the Istanbul Museum), Reşit Galip [Aydın], Reşit Saffet



[Atabinen] and Vasif Beys, the last-named a former Minister of Public Instruction. Colonel Tevfik Bey, in turn, in assuming office, delivered an address, the essence of which was that whereas in the past Greece and Rome had been considered the principal sources of civilization, the Ionian culture from which those of classical antiquity were derived was actually an expression of Turkish genius.

Not content with having received the acquiescence, if not the assent, of his own people to his flattering theories, the Gazi has latterly endeavored to enlist the support of Dr. H.[ans] H.[enning] Von der Osten [1899-1960], Chief of the University of Chicago's Anatolian Expedition, who returned to Ankara early in May to institute his fourth year of work in Turkey.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Von der Osten's contact with the Gazi was, in a sense, fortuitous and was occasioned by his having expressed to Malik Bey, interpreter of the Embassy, his desire to meet Afet Hanim, who had just delivered the address outlined above. Malik Bey, knowing of Afet Hanim's association with the Gazi, advised the visitor of the desirability of arranging an interview through Colonel Tevfik Bey, the President's secretary, to whom he presented him. Dr. Von der Osten, speaking of his own researches in respect of ascertaining the origins of Hittite civilization, aroused Colonel Tevfik Bey's interest. Subsequently, this official, after having invited Dr. Von der Osten to lunch and dinner, arranged for him to spend an evening at a reunion given by the Gazi at his Çankaya house, this being a privilege very rarely accorded foreigners. Thereat, so Dr. Von der Osten informed me, he discovered not only the President and Colonel Tevfik Bey, but the entire Cabinet, with the exception of Ismet Pasha and Abdul Halik Bey. Afet Hanim and one or two other Turkish ladies were likewise present. The evening was a long one, enduring from seven to two the next morning, and was largely occupied by a dialogue between the President and Dr. Von der Osten, the latter having noted that even the most important Cabinet members behaved like timid school boys in the presence of a severe teacher, assenting to all the Gazi's propositions and by their manner counselling Dr. Von der Osten to do likewise, particularly when he, a German by birth, irritated by the President's expressed dislike for the former Emperor William II, dissented therefrom with

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Von der Osten worked for the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Some of his publications are: *The Alishar Hüyük*, with the collaboration of Erich Friedrich Schmidt and Edward Theodore Newell, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1930, *Discoveries in Anatolia 1930-31*, with the collaboration of Richard A. Martin and John A. Morrison, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1933 / *Explorations in Central Anatolia, Season of 1926*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1929 / *Explorations in Hittite Asia Minor*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1927-1930. Barry Rubin reports that Dr. Von der Osten was "coordinating German espionage operations in Istanbul. He was arrested, interrogated, sentenced by a military court to twelve years imprisonment, and deported." Source: Barry Rubin, *Istanbul Intrigues*, Pharos Books, New York, 1992, p. 51. (Ed.)



some firmness. Dr. von der Osten added, however, that the Gazi did not resent his observations and that, indeed, his demeanor throughout the entire evening was wholly decorous. The President's potations, although repeated, were not excessive and exerted no adverse effect. The President, who spoke almost wholly in French to Dr. von der Osten, albeit with occasional lapses into Turkish, spent most of the evening in elaborating his theories on the spread of civilization throughout the world. He was evidently desirous of obtaining for the Turks, or for some ancestral people described by the same name, credit for the first flowering of ancient civilization.

The Gazi pressed Dr. von der Osten in an endeavor to obtain from him a statement that the ancient Hittites and Mesopotamians were Turkish, but the archaeologist refused to commit himself, stating that his researches, while disproving the theories of his predecessors, had not yet been carried sufficiently far to enable him to formulate a constructive theory of his own. (Dr. von der Osten, in subsequently speaking to me, stated that the Gazi was apparently using the term "Turk" in much the same way that Western ethnologists have employed the term "Aryan" to describe an ancient folk of which little could be stated with definiteness. Dr. von der Osten admitted, however, that the very earliest civilizations of Egypt and of Mesopotamia bore a decided family resemblance one to another and so might possibly have originally been the creations of different branches of the same people. It was nevertheless unfortunate that the Gazi should have chosen the term "Turk" to describe this ancient hypothetical race, since the term has, through association with the Ottoman Empire, acquired a connotation which unfits it for such use.)

One practical result of the evening was the Gazi's expression of a desire that some excavation of a Hittite site in the vicinity of Ankara should be effected. Dr. von der Osten thereupon suggested Giaour Kalesi, an old fort associated with rock carvings some 40 miles from Ankara. Upon his inquiring of me if considered it necessary for him to refer the matter from approval to his headquarters at Chicago, I replied in the negative, in view of the evident desirability of holding the Gazi's interest so opportunely aroused. It seems probable that if Dr. von der Osten is able to hold the President's favor, it may be possible from him to obtain a modification of the present ungenerous law governing export of antiquities and bring about more enthusiastic cooperation with this Expedition on the part of Cemal Hüsnü Bey, Minister of Public Instruction, than has hitherto been shown by that official.

Indeed, Dr. von der Osten, shortly after his first meeting with the Gazi, obtained permission for the shipment to Chicago of ancient skeletons unearthed last year by his associates, as well as a promise that all duplicate



antiques which have been, or will be, discovered by his Expedition may likewise become its property and be exported (both of which privileges were bluntly denied him last autumn).

Dr. von der Osten spent the ensuing week in excavating at the above-mentioned Giaour Kalesi, where he had the unexpected good fortune to discover a hitherto unknown rock chamber, which he believes to have been a Hittite sanctuary upon which the later Phrygians have superimposed a fortress. This discovery was made most opportunely for, on May 31, the President, with an escort, but without any announcement to the archaeologists, arrived by motor car at Giaour Kalesi. The Gazi, however, despite the necessary informality of his reception by them, was evidently pleased with the result of the work of these Americans, since he remained two hours on the site and proved most amiable and unassuming, while Colonel Tevfik Bey has since questioned Dr. von der Osten further in regard to the Hittites. The press has given much publicity to this visit, which has considerably enhanced the local reputation of the Expedition and should tend to facilitate its work.

Although Dr. von der Osten left Ankara for Alişar, the Expedition's central Anatolian base, on the second instant, he has promised to record his conversations with the Gazi and the President's entourage for the Embassy's information as well as for that of his University.

I have the honor to be, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
Jefferson Patterson,  
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim.

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document 867.41/1.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An interview with von der Osten was published in the semi official newspaper *Hakimiyeti Milliye*. See "Alişar Hafriyatının bu seneki tecrübeleri", *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, 18 October 1931. The meeting of von der Osten with Atatürk has been covered as well in the following article: James Goode, "Archaeology and Diplomacy in the Republic of Turkey, 1919-1939", pp. 49-65 in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan, (eds), *Turkish-American Relations Past, Present and Future*, Routledge, London, 2004. (Ed.)



## 2. DR. HANS HENNING VON DER OSTEN'S MEMORANDUM ON HIS MEETINGS WITH ATATÜRK

CONFIDENTIAL

Ankara, June 19, 1930

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

With reference to my despatch No. 1049 of June 5, 1930 recounting for the Department's information the interest latterly manifested by the Turkish President in the archaeological investigations of the University of Chicago's Anatolian Expedition, I have the honor to transmit herewith, for the Department's more complete information on this subject, copies of two memoranda prepared by the Expedition's leader, Dr. H.H. von der Osten, respecting two recent meetings with Gazi Mustafa Kemal.

It is interesting to note therein the President's quoted approval of the American mode of life and, in particular, of the educational methods in vogue in the United States, it being asserted that in his modernization of Turkey, the Chief of State prefers to emulate America rather than Europe.

The second memorandum's final paragraph indicates that the Gazi, who, on June 9, left Ankara for Istanbul and Yalova (a thermal resort being developed at his instance) plans to journey through the interior of Turkey prior to returning to the country's capital.

I have the honor to be, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
Jefferson Patterson,

Chargé d'Affaires ad interim.

Enclosure:  
1/ Copy of two memoranda  
prepared by Dr. H.H. von der Osten.

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document 867.41/2.





MEMORANDUM OF THE INTERVIEW OF H.H. von der  
Osten  
With the President of the Republic of Turkey.

On the morning of May 17th. I was notified by the interpreter of the American Embassy that the President of the Turkish Republic, Gazi Mustapha Kemal Pasha, desired to see me at 6:45 in the evening, for audience and dinner at his home at Chankaya. I arrived at his very modest country home in a beautiful garden overlooking the valley in which Ankara is situated; a few minutes before the scheduled time. The Guards, who had been previously instructed, escorted me directly to the Chief of Cabinet, his Excellency Tevfik Bey. He presented me to the Aides de camp of the President.

About five minutes later I was conducted to the library of the President; where he received me in a very cordial manner. With him were his adopted daughter, Afet Hanum, with whom he works especially on historical questions; three professors of the University of Istanbul; and one Deputy. The President spoke principally French, but at times some Turkish which was interpreted to me by H.E. Tevfik Bey, or later in the evening by H.E. Jemal Hüsnî Bey. I spoke mainly French.

After some preliminary talk about my personality and studies, as well as the work of the Oriental Institute in Anatolia and elsewhere, the President developed in an almost uninterrupted talk of one and a half hours his ideas of early Turkish history and its importance in the historical development of the peoples of the Mediterranean basin. I was surprised to see how much deep and technically accurate knowledge he had, especially as to the recent Archaeological investigations in Central Asia. In general his ideas were sound, but it is a pity that many of his statements were erroneous, being based on impossible philological deductions in which he has been confirmed by amateur linguists, or people who wish to flatter him. The general tendency is to explain the meanings of ancient names of peoples and cities by the old Turkish language: also to prove that the Turkish people of the Osmanlı and Selçuk times were the last offshoot of the old Turanian race from which all the other cultures were derived, with the exception of the Egyptian. He and his collaborators have very carefully secured from the authorities of all nations dealing with Ancient History statements supporting this theory.

After the president had finished I explained that, first of all I was not competent to make any statements concerning the great outline of this theory as I am an Archaeologist and the theory is based on philological and linguistic



deductions; secondly, that archaeologically I could only give my opinions on matter concerning the Near East, exclusive of Egypt and the earlier periods of Iran. Then I stated that a few facts from the early Anatolian cultural history (archaeology) seem to indicate threads of relationship leading toward the northeast, the Caucasus and Turkestan. I also corrected a few mistaken ideas, for instance that the Akkadians and the Sumerians were the same race. Summing up, I said that before any theory of such an extent, based on philological deduction could be accepted definitely, it ought at least be corroborated in some instance by archaeological evidence.

It was very interesting to observe the alarm of the other people present in the room when I did not agree completely with the statements of the Gazi, and my questions as to how he arrived at certain of his conclusions. The President, on the contrary, accepted them, making notes and inquiring about literary source material. Toward nine o'clock he called for his typewritten manuscripts on these subjects and handing me a set he asked me to work them over, making notes to them as well as I would and could adding smilingly, "as an archaeologist".

At nine: thirty we went down to the large reception room where meanwhile the entire Cabinet had assembled, with the exception of the Premier and the Minister of National Defense. The President asked me if I played billiards, and when I replied that I did not he played a short game with one of his Cabinet members. Meanwhile I talked with the Minister of Foreign Affairs whom I had met at the American Embassy in 1926 and who speaks excellent English. We then proceeded to the dining room. The President was seated at the head of the table, with his two adopted daughters on either side. At his right was Afet Hanum, to whose right I sat. Then followed the Cabinet and present Deputies down the scale.

The dinner started with hors d'ouvres and aperitifs, and finally at eleven thirty the meal was served. During the entire dinner the President conversed with me, save that once or twice one of the ministers ventured to ask a question or entered into the conversation. The President first inquired about the American mode of life and in particular about university life. It was very easy to see that in his plan for the modernization of Turkey he strives more for the adoption of American customs than for those of Europe, and he gave the impression that he considers American civilization and America a step higher up the ladder of development of the civilized world.

Toward the middle of the meal the President started to speak bitterly of the former German Emperor. At the end of this dissertation I informed him very politely but distinctly that I did not feel competent in any way to judge any action of the former Emperor, and having served in his army I preferred



not to discuss the subject. Again it was most interesting to note the reaction of the others present, whereas the President lifted his glass to me. He then spoke of his experiences with German officers, especially with the General Liman von Sanders. He could not express highly enough his admiration and esteem.

The conversation then drifted back to our work and the President asked me if I could make a small excavation near Ankara, as he would like to see us at work. I said I would gladly do it but that all of the necessary equipment had been packed and shipped to Alişar, so it would be necessary for me to try to arrange it. He then asked me to let him know through his cabinet minister in the next few days. The next topic was how to get more scientific expeditions into Asia Minor. I suggested a change of the Antiquities Law, and more active cooperation on the part of the Government. I spoke quite a while on this subject, and the President took several notes on it.

At two the President left the table and played another short game of billiards. He then came over to me and expressed his gratitude for the work our Institute is doing in Anatolia, and his hope that we could continue here under circumstances that would become more pleasant and agreeable from year to year. He stated that up to now he had so many more important things to do for his country that he had not been able to look into this important cultural question, but now that he had taken it up he would follow it with the greatest interest. He again stated that he hoped our work would continue, and that he would see to it that we would receive the greatest possible assistance. Then he escorted me to the door and bade me good evening.

I had the impression of being in the presence of a great man who is utterly lonely. He and he alone is the modernizer of Turkey, and I have the feeling that none of his associates follows his plans and visions to any great degree. He did not seem autocratic to me, but I can understand that a man in his position and in such surroundings must become an autocrat.

Original to Professor J. H. Breasted.

Copy to Mr. Jefferson Patterson, Chargé d'Affaires, American Embassy.

Two copies to the Expedition files.

(Signed) H. H. von der Osten



## MEMORANDUM ON THE VISIT OF THE GAZI TO GIAUR KALESSI

On May 31, the President of the Turkish Republic came to visit the test excavation of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago at Giaur Kalesi.

The Anatolian Expedition had been working in this place since May 23 and had practically finished the excavation work. It had secured all the important data as to stratification of the site, and the information necessary to explain and reconstruct the temple and platforms of probable Hittite period, and the palace and fortifications of the Phrygian period.

To secure data on the fortification of the place between these periods, an elaborate excavation would have been necessary which was impossible in so short a time, and would have required a great expenditure.

The members of the staff were at various places on the site, making sketches and supervising the workmen who were clearing a few doubtful spots when two large cars were seen approaching the site through the valley. On their arrival it was seen that their occupants were H.E. Tevfik Bey, two aides-de camp, and several civilians. The staff members assembled at the foot of the site to greet them, and were notified that the President and his suite were coming. Four more cars and a motor truck full of gendarmerie were then seen to be approaching.

In the third car came the President to whom was presented each of the members of the staff, whose greetings he answered most cordially. For nearly two hours they showed him about the site and explained the work of the expedition. His very real interest was demonstrated by the fact that he climbed to every spot of the excavation, not considering difficulty or danger. He asked many questions concerning the historical and technical points, which were carefully answered.

After inspection of the work the President rested in the camp of the expedition and accepted refreshment from the staff. He then gave for those members of his suite who did not understand French a short resume of the work of the expedition. He left visibly pleased with the staff, and expressed again his thanks that the expedition had been able to make this test excavation. He added that he hoped to be able to visit the expedition at its camp at Alishar this year on his annual tour of inspection of the Provinces.

Original to Professor J.H. Breasted

Copy to Mr. Jefferson Patterson.

Two copies to the files of the Expedition

(Signed) H. H. von der Osten.





*E – A SECRET AND MYSTERIOUS CONTACT WITH THE  
STATE DEPARTMENT*

1- FIRST INFORMATION ON SALIH ADIL BEY

MET

This telegram must be

FROM

Izmir

closely paraphrased

Dated March 5, 1932

before being communicated

Rec'd 9:20 a.m.

to anyone.

Secretary of State,

Washington

March 5, noon.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND URGENT.

Salih Adil Bey, bearer of non-immigrant visa granted by this Office December 19th, 1931, believed to be passenger on board BREMEN due at New York, March 6th. Although he bears a good name there is a probability of his endeavoring to see Senator Borah<sup>1</sup> and other statesmen in connection with a plot against the Turkish Government.

BURSLEY

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1930-1944, document no. 867.00/2064.

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<sup>1</sup> William Edgar Borah (1865-1940) was a senator of the Republican Party. In 1924 he became Chairman of the Foreign Relation Committee. He was an unsuccessful candidate for the Republican presidential nomination in 1936.

<http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=B000634> (Ed.)



## 2- SALIH ADIL BEY CONTACTS THE STATE DEPARTMENT

Strictly Confidential

March 10, 1932.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I had a long and very strange conversation yesterday with a former Turkish army officer who, as you may be aware, wrote you a personal and confidential letter requesting an appointment in order to discuss "an important political matter interesting the United States." He stated that he had come all the way from Turkey to talk with you.

Although the person in question showed me a variety of documents clearly establishing his identity as having served as a Captain in the Turkish Army and as a Secretary of Legation and Military Attaché until two years ago in Vienna, I think it is advisable not to mention his name in the present memorandum. If the Turkish Government had any idea of the purpose of his visit to this country there can be little doubt that he would be instantly executed upon his return to his country.

The burden of the remarks made by this person are as follows:

The Turkish people are in the grip of a merciless dictatorship which is slowly bringing the country to ruin. The relations between Turkey and Soviet Russia have necessarily been very close since the rise of the Nationalist movement under Mustafa Kemal. Although the Kemal government would not voluntarily throw itself into the arms of Russia, the eventual Sovietization of Turkey is inevitable unless the present leaders of the country are overthrown and a new régime established capable of saving the country from political and economic disaster. This person sincerely, but naively, hopes that the utilization and exploitation of Turkish resources and the creation of a market for American goods not only among the Turks in Turkey but among the Turkish populations spreading through North Persia and South Russia as far as China, will constitute a sufficient inducement to American captains of industry and commerce in order to bring about the overthrow of the present government in Turkey and the establishment of a new order. A fantastic feature of his plan is the admission into the United States of some fifty or sixty thousand Turks who may become organized into a conquering host to overwhelm the present dictators of Turkey. More fantastic still is the idea of this person that after the overthrow occurs an American should be elected



President of Turkey and the country should be administered by a body of experts and technicians capable of developing to the fullest the national resources of the land.

It is unnecessary for me to state in any detail the comments which I made in reply to the above proposals. While my remarks were received with disappointment, I am not at all certain that they carried conviction in the mind of this person. I inquired of him whether he had discussed this matter with any other person in the United States. He assured me that he had not, although he had expected, after talking with you, to see Senator Borah. I reminded him of how dangerous it would be for him if any intimation of his seditious proposals should reach the Turkish authorities. He caught the point immediately, and said that he obviously desired to do nothing that would prevent his return to his fatherland where his mother and his sisters were dependent upon him for support. He then begged me to return to him the letter which he had written to you.

I told him that he could have full confidence in me and that the substance of our conversation would be made know to no one except yourself. My last word of advice to him was to be patient and to realize that he would be doing the greatest disservice to his people; whom he wished to help, if he counseled violence and revolution at such a time of disorder and distress in the world's affairs.

While the plans which this young man has conceived in order to assist his people are obviously grotesque, his sincerity and enthusiasm were really touching. The fact that any Turk today with very little means should have come all the way to the United States to present such a proposal is truly amazing. His own explanation is that we misunderstand the Turkish people if we believe that they are satisfied today to live in the conditions of ineptitude and corruption which marked the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. He said that dissatisfaction is rife in the entire country with the present order of things and that only leadership is necessary in order to bring about a change. He, curiously enough, assured me, both in opening and in closing his conversation, that he had not come to betray his country or people, or for any personal gain to himself. Just before leaving he let drop what was perhaps the most significant remark in his entire conversation, and that was that if the present leaders could be overthrown he would like to see Abdul Medjid, the ex-Caliph, appointed as Honorary President of the Republic, with an American – as I have stated above in actual authority.

Wallace Murray

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document no. 867.00/206+1/2.

Note : Wallace Murray was in charge of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs of the State Department. (Ed.)



### 3- WALLACE MURRAY'S LETTER TO G. HOWLAND SHAW

G. Howland Shaw Esquire,  
American Chargé d'Affairs ad interim,  
İstanbul

March 17, 1932.

Personal and Strictly Confidential

Dear Howland:

I am enclosing herewith for your eye – and for your eye only – a copy of a strictly confidential memorandum, dated March 10, 1932, addressed to the Secretary, regarding a very strange conversation that I had on the previous day with a former Turkish army officer who stated that he had come all the way from Turkey to talk with the Secretary of State regarding the matter set forth in the memorandum.

As you will note, I have refrained from mentioning the officer's name in my memorandum to the Secretary, although the statements made in the second paragraph would easily lead to his identification if they became known to the Turkish authorities. I would, therefore, request that you either destroy the memorandum after you have read it or see that it is kept properly sealed and safely locked in the Embassy's safe. I even yet cannot imagine how any Turk would dare to place himself at the mercy of foreigners in this manner, since he must have realized what his fate would be if the slightest intimation of his conversation with me became known to outsiders. When I pointed this out to him he did in fact show great trepidation and begged me almost pitifully to return to him his letter to the Secretary together with two calling cards stating his name and his former functions. I did in fact return this letter to the young man but I retained and am keeping in the Division copies thereof.

My first reaction to this person was to regard him as out-and-out crazy, but the more I talked to him the more I was inclined to believe that his mental processes were not necessarily distorted but were merely quite foreign to my own and therefore quite incomprehensible to me. He did not seem to be in the slightest fazed by the arguments which I patiently put forth in an endeavor to



show him how wholly impossible of realization his projects are. I longed at the time for even a slight grasp of the principles of psychiatry and realized that you, and more particularly your brilliant cousin in Baltimore, would probably have found this problem no problem at all. I cannot, alas, hope to imitate you in the universality of your interests, and I therefore had to content myself with counseling the young man to have patience and under all circumstances to refrain from pursuing further his mad project. He promised me that he would not speak to another soul in this country on this subject and that he would leave immediately for Vienna where he expects to study for some time in order that he may give the impression upon his return to Turkey that he has been in the Austrian capital during his entire absence.

If of the two of us he turns out to be the rational one and I the irrational one, and if his plans materialize, I warn you in advance that I intend to propose your name as the first American president of Turkey. It would do you no good to demur in such a situation, as the young Turk and I should be ruthless in imposing our will upon you.

I should add, in concluding, that perhaps the incident is not so amazing as I have represented it to be in my memorandum to the Secretary. It is not at all improbable that this person is in touch with the ex-Caliph and that this accounts for his ability to undertake so long and expensive a journey at this time. Be that as it may, I should not like to be in his boots if the Turks ever find out about it.

Sincerely yours,

Wallace Murray

Enclosure:

Memorandum.

NARA, RG59 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1930-1944, document no. 867.00/206+1/2.



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VERGLEICHENDE STUDIEN ÜBER  
DIE LEBENS- UND TATEN DES  
HERRN VON ...  
VON ...  
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US DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENTS ON TURKEY  
IV

NEW DOCUMENTS ON ATATÜRK

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ATATÜRK AS VIEWED THROUGH  
THE EYES OF AMERICAN  
DIPLOMATS

