



By Ewing Galloway, New York

MUSTAFA KEMAL PASHA
PRESIDENT OF TURKEY

*An intimate photograph of the head of the
Nationalist Government.*

TURKEY FACES WEST

*A TURKISH VIEW OF RECENT
CHANGES AND THEIR ORIGIN*

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WE COME FROM THE EAST,
WE GO TOWARD THE WEST
ZIA KEUK-ALP



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sprang into being on Turkish lands, whose first action, in most cases, was to massacre any minority in its midst, in order to prevent such a minority from setting up any further claims to autonomous government. The era of massacre in the disintegrating Ottoman state started in this way. Any possible solution to a peaceful understanding and arrangement among the small minority in a newly created or an old state was endangered by the constant interference and selfish designs of external Powers who played with minorities in the Near East all the time. The tragedy of the Moslem extermination by the Greeks in Morea and old Greece was the first. The tragedy of Turko-Armenian inter-massacres in eastern Anatolia was the next great calamity. And let us hope that the attempted extermination of the Turks in Anatolia by the Greek army in Anatolia was the last.

The Turk perhaps was never a nationalist in politics. Empire builders rarely are. Their ultimate and highest ideal in politics is inevitably some form of democracy. When the Turk became a Moslem, the democratic side of his nature was strengthened, for democracy is the dominating aspect of Islam. That part of Western Idealism which preached equality among men took hold of the Ottoman mind at once. The Ottomans could not grasp the nationalist side of it, the separation of small groups into independent states. For their lack of understanding in this field they suffered more than any other race by the advent of western ideals in the Near East.

Down to Tanzimat the Ottoman Turks had believed that only Moslems could be politically equal. With Tanzimat they believed that all men could and ought to be politically equal, and once the principle applied in a mixed society of men they could not conceive of the reason for political disintegration. This was their external lack of understanding.

In the advent of western ideals there was a greater and more important question. Islamic society was something different from western society. Could it be possible to effect an all-round westernization without altering the very nature of Islamic society? The Moslem state might reform its army upon modern lines, it might adopt the mechanical side of civilization with regard to transport, it might open special schools for training in certain professions and arts; it might even proclaim the equality of Moslems and non-Moslems—Islam had already proclaimed the rights of man in other lines a thousand years ago. But was it possible to alter the nature of Islamic society without altering Islam in itself? And what was the dominating difference between Islamic society and that of the West which did not allow westernization internally? It was the Islamic law. No change could be made in that aspect. Divine law administered by the Ulema of the realm in Islamic society did not permit change. Hence superficially, the creative and critical faculties of the Turk seemed far behind those of western peoples. But was Moslem Turkish society as immobile and stagnant as the other Islamic societies?

Was there not an objective psychology at work all the time beneath the surface, trying to change or throw off all obstacles to its growth? We can find the right key to the changes in Turkey in recent times, in a study of the Turkish soul, struggling between religious orthodoxy and a freer, more vital racial instinct, in a long effort to express itself. As soon as we penetrate beneath the surface immobility, and observe how he freed himself from the rigid Arab rationalism of the Islamic Middle Ages, and how he threw off the tyranny of the Persian spirit which had tied him down to the repetition of ancient and uncongenial forms of thought, we see clearly the difference between the Moslem Turk and the other Moslems in the world.

The most static aspect of life in Islam is law, and religious law had given its character and shape to Turkish Islamic society. But from the very moment when the Turks had accepted Islam, and originated the class—Ulema—which was to preserve them from stepping outside the Divine Law, they began unconsciously to take those steps for change. In the eyes of the world, modern Turkey has only recently become a secular state, and to the casual observer it looks as though the change had been carried out by a single act overnight, and forced upon the Turks by the power of a terrorist government. But Turkey was not changed by one single step from a theocratic state into a secular one. The change is a logical culmination and result of a series of lesser changes in development. Nor is it yet complete. The final and

latest secularization is only understandable in the Ottoman Empire which has been going on for centuries.

The Arab mind has a metaphysical conception of the universe. It looks upon legislative power as belonging to God, and executive power to the Caliph; and it regards the doctors of law as intermediaries between God and the Caliph, who are to control the executive and see that he carries out the laws of God. If he fails, they are to cancel his contract and elect another Caliph by the consent of the Islamic people. Semites, as well as Arabs, had formulated this conception of Divine Law before Mohammed did so. It was the Scriptures which ruled the Semitic peoples, and it is the Scriptures which rule them still.

It was different with the Turk. In his pre-Islamic state he had been accustomed to be ruled by man-made laws, and he is by nature more inclined than the other Islamic peoples to separate religion from the ordinary business of life. It is true that his laws were made for him by his chiefs, but all the same they were man-made. This streak in his psychology made itself felt immediately during the earliest centuries after his adoption of Islam.

When the Ottoman Turks founded the vast and complicated Ottoman state, Sultans and governments began to make laws outside the Divine Law. It is true that these began as royal enactments and dealt with military and feudal organizations, which were virgin soil and unforeseen by the Sheriat (Is-

lamic law). Nevertheless, the precedent was contrary to the teachings of the orthodox doctors, and no Arab, no other Moslem state, would have dared to do such a thing. This was the first stage. Suleiman, called the Magnificent in the West, is known in Turkish history as the Lawgiver (*Canuni*), the maker of laws. The very name is a direct contradiction of orthodox principles. Suleiman created the embryo of a criminal code which gradually replaced some of the texts of the Sheriat in penal matters. Such primitive measures as the cutting off of a thief's hand, the stoning of adulterers, and the flogging of wine drinkers, were replaced by imprisonment or fines. They are still applied in the kingdom of Ibn-Saud who prides himself on having restored the *Hedjaz* to Islam.

In Suleiman's time the word *Canun* (man-made law) entered Turkish jurisprudence side by side with Sheriat (God-made law). The *Canun* was at first in an inferior position, but it gradually gained ground and expanded until it overshadowed the Sheriat. The very name *Canun* is a direct contradiction of orthodox principles and in those days out of all the Islamic states it existed only in the Ottoman Empire.

The proclamation of Tanzimat, 1839, which declared the political equality of all the church nations, also introduced an entirely new series of man-made laws. A criminal code, taken from the French code of 1810, a commercial code, and a judicial organization copied from France, with a Tribunal

of the first Instance, Courts of Appeal, and a Court of Cassation, all came into existence. After Tanzimat, therefore, two kinds of courts existed side by side in the Ottoman Empire: (1) The Sheriat courts, with only Moslem judges, which were only concerned with family matters, marriage, divorce, and inheritance of the Moslems in the Empire; (2) the *Nizamie* courts, where Christian, Moslem, and Jewish judges sat side by side and judged all the Ottoman subjects according to the laws of the realm. The penal section was derived entirely from the French legal system; the civil section was the codified Sheriat, or *Mejelle*; and the procedure throughout was French. Hence, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire had passed from God-made to man-made laws in a very large section of her jurisprudence.

To all these changes the Ulema, the doctors and judges of Islamic law, made no opposition. With the Turkish outlook on life which is readier to separate this and the next world from each other they accepted changes in the laws which would have made the Ulema of other countries denounce the Turks as heretics. No other believers in the Islamic law but Turks in those days could have permitted a separate criminal code and a separate commercial code without deeming the foundations of Islam shaken. Yet the opposition to these changes had not come from the Ulema but from the rank and file of the army which was reactionary up to the time of Mahmoud. The Moslem Turks of the Ulema class

considered only one feature of the Islamic law as unchangeable, that part which concerned the family, and this they intended to keep within the boundary of God-made law.

The Tanzimat had nothing to fear from the army, which was westernized and well disciplined at the time. The Ulema had accepted all the judicial changes. Hence with those important classes, the army and the Ulema on their side, the Tanzimatists (the reformers after 1839) were enabled to bring about a deeper and more lasting change, a change that went for the first time below external things and the machinery of state.

In order to define the class of men among the Ottomans who went below the surface and began to change the mind as well as the machinery of state, one must think back for an instant. In the chapter, "Imperialist Ottoman vs. Turk," we saw how there were two distinct types of Turks—the simple Turks and the Imperialist Ottomans, who had consciously dropped out everything that belonged to the tradition of the race, including its very name. We also saw that the difference between the two types was much more than what reasonably existed between the ruling classes and the masses in the other countries. In the Turk the Turkish ego remained dominant and all outward influences which colored and affected it were due to unconscious processes of selection and growth. In the Ottoman the ego was more composite, and the process which had made him what he was, deliberate. He thought

other thoughts, spoke and wrote a language which had not only changed in its structure, but also in its spirit. The estrangement was complete. The gap between their egos seemed too deep ever to allow the two to understand each other. The Ottoman never stooped to understand what was going on in the mind and the soul of the Turkish masses from which he derived all his force. The Turk found the Ottoman incomprehensible and uncongenial and did not care about his ideas at all. Now for the first time a class of men among the Ottomans ventured to step into that gap. We call them the Tanzimatists; it would be more adequate to call them the western intellectuals.

The Tanzimatist school is justly called "The Turkish Renaissance" for with the writers of the school the empire stepped out of the Middle Ages. Poets, playwrights, prose writers, novelists, essayists, and statesmen, their effort and its far-reaching result were gigantic. The Ottoman language, which could only express medieval thought, acquired a modern prose. Shinassi and Namik Kemal actually created a medium in the Ottoman language which could for the first time express the new thoughts and ideals of the West. And this new prose with its new message was understandable to a large number of simple Turks. They always kept their school as a medium for intellectual development rather than for the aesthetic side of life. But garbed in a grand romantic dress, it set out to impose a new outlook on life. Thanks to the fire in the minds of the men

new superficial, "doing" western mind that has created the "Boy Scout" type of institution.

The chief result of the "Hat Law" was that it enriched European hat factories at the expense of the already impoverished Turks. Broadly one can say that it could not have been passed without a *régime* of terror. The Islamic reactionaries, the liberals, the people who understood the spirit of the West, were all opposed to it for different reasons. What would have happened was this: The very small number of Turks who wore hats in the summer in Constantinople would have increased gradually and in a generation hat wearers would have been in a majority in the cities. But the Turkish peasant would have stuck to his old headdress.

The adoption of the Swiss code in place of the Islamic family law in 1926 was a reform of a much more serious nature. It could have been put through without much coercion, although there would have been some bitter criticism.

A year after the Sultan's Government had been abolished in Constantinople there was serious discussion whether the revised family law of 1916, abrogated by the Sultan's Government in 1919, should be restored with or without alterations. In 1924 the National Assembly took up the question, and it aroused great interest, especially among the women of the cities and of Constantinople in particular. At a large meeting of women in the Nationalist Club there was elected a committee of women to study the situation and send a petition to

the National Assembly. The committee made a selection of the family laws of Sweden, France, England, and Russia, and having found the Swedish law most desirable it sent a translated copy with a petition attached to it to the National Assembly. Their petition had at the time no definite result. But there was a group of very keenly interested young deputies working for the adoption of a western code rather than the restoration of the revised family law of 1916. Mahmoud Essad Bey, the young deputy of Smyrna who became Minister of Justice in 1925, was one of the leading spirits in the movement. In 1926 the law following the Swiss code was passed. It can be termed perhaps one of the two most significant and important changes that have taken place during the dictatorship. This particular law will mean the final unification of the Turk with the family of European nations, by giving the Turkish family that kind of stability which constitutes the western ideal of the family.

The adoption of the Swiss law, which is entirely western, instead of revision and alteration of the Islamic family law which could have made marriage a freer if a less stable institution and brought it nearer to the present Russian family law, was one more triumph in Turkey of the Western Ideal over the Eastern Ideal, and one of more permanent import than is realized at present.

The educational rights that Turkish women have gained are no longer questioned even by the smallest minority, and the sphere of women's work has

been constantly widening. It is perhaps a blessing that they have not obtained the vote. Thus they have been protected from the danger of being identified with party politics, and their activities outside the political world could not be stopped for political reasons.

In the Turkish home, women continue to be the ruling spirit, more so, perhaps, because the majority contribute to the upkeep by their labor. At the present time, offices, factories, and shops are filled with women workers in the cities; and in addition to their breadwinning jobs, and sometimes in connection with them, women have interested themselves in child welfare and hygiene, and in organizing small associations to teach poor women embroidery, sewing, weaving, and so on. The favorite profession of Turkish women today, after teaching, is medicine. All this is the city aspect of the situation. In the rural districts, women still continue to live their old life with its drudgery, and will continue to live under these conditions until a more up-to-date agricultural system is adopted and the rudiments of education can be given in those districts. It would not be an underestimate to say that something like 90 per cent of the Turkish women are very hard workers; the question is not how to provide more work for them but how to train them better for their work and to give them more leisure. The small percentage of the idle rich (much smaller in Turkey than elsewhere) do on a miniature scale what the idle rich of other countries do. Unfortu-

nately Turkey is judged by the life and attitude of these idlers, who are conspicuous to the eyes of the traveler, rather than by the hard-working majority.

On the whole, within the last twenty years women in Turkey as elsewhere have profited by changes more than men. It has been fortunate for Turkey that the emancipation of women there was the result of an all-party program rather than a sex struggle. The contribution of the Republic to women's social emancipation in the introduction of the new civil code has brought the movement to its highest and historically its most important stage. But a generation at least must pass before its full effects can be seen. The general criticism that with westernization a great deal of evil and western immorality has penetrated into Turkish customs is not very important. The evil affects a small number of the idle, while the good penetrates into the majority, although more slowly.

In 1928 the clause in the Constitution which declared Islam the state religion was abolished. In the foreign press this step was criticized very severely, on the ground that it amounted to the abolition of religion in Turkey. This criticism was not only superficial but inaccurate. If religion, in the best sense, is in any danger of losing its hold on the Turkish people, it is not due to absence of governmental interference but to governmental interference itself. The men who sponsored this measure may or may not have been atheists, but the measure itself does not do away with religion. No secular

state can logically have a basic law which establishes a state religion. The abolition of the clause from the Constitution was therefore in true and necessary accord with the nature of the new Turkish state at its last stage of secularization. "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." The Turks have at last rendered up the things that were Caesar's or the state's; but Caesar or the state still keeps things which belong to God. Unless the Presidency of Religious Affairs is made free, unless it ceases to be controlled by the office of the Prime Minister, it will always be a governmental instrument. In this respect the Moslem community is less privileged and less free than the Christian Patriarchates. These are free institutions which decide upon all questions of dogma and religion according to the convictions of their particular group. The Islamic community is chained to the policy of the Government. This situation is a serious impediment to the spiritual growth of Islam in Turkey, and there is always a danger in it of the use of religion for political ends.

Now that the state has freed itself entirely from religious control, it should in turn leave Islam alone. Not only should it declare, "Every major Turkish citizen is free to adopt the religion he (or she) wishes to adopt," but it should also allow the Moslem community to teach its religion to its youth. Now that the schools give no religious instruction, and the religious institutions are abolished, the

Islamic community, if it is going to last as a religious community, must create its own means of religious teaching, its own moral and spiritual sanctions. Further, in the ritual and in the fundamentals of worship, there are likely to be changes among the Moslems in Turkey. Those changes should be allowed to take place without governmental interference. The occasional proposals by the university professors of new forms of worship in Islam—such as substituting organ music for vocal music, entering the mosques without taking off the shoes, placing benches so that the faithful may pray seated, and doing away with a number of complicated body movements in prayer—have met with profound displeasure. All these changes might take place by the wishes of the people, but governmental interference in this most sacred part of men's rights would constitute a dangerous precedent. It would fetter the religious life of the Turks and bring politics into religion. The fundamental meaning of the long and very interesting phases of secularization is that Turkish psychology separates this world from the next. To take religion out of the political state but at the same time to keep the state in religious affairs, is one of the contradictory aspects of the last phase which must be corrected.

Not only in Turkey but wherever religion is interfered with by governments, it becomes a barrier, and an unremovable one, to peace and understanding. Yet the fundamental doctrine of every religion is peace and the brotherhood of men. If only reli-

gions could be freed from political influences all over the world, the barriers between peoples of different creeds would break down sooner than one supposes.

The change of the Turkish alphabet from the Arabic to the Latin characters in 1928 is as important as the adoption of the Swiss family law, in its future significance. The desire to change the Turkish alphabet showed itself in a much earlier movement, as has been indicated. The serious impediments were: First, that it would impair Islamic unity, as all Moslems used the Arabic alphabet; second, that the Koran is written in the Arabic alphabet, and it might be considered as a sacrilege to write it in other letters; third, that it would impair cultural unity among the Turks inside and outside Turkey, for all Moslem Turks, who speak the same language, use the Arabic letters.

By 1928 the circumstances affecting this question had changed. First, Islamic unity was practically gone during and after the Great War, as far as the Turks were concerned.

Second, the Turks had ultimately altered their conception of Islam by a secularization which appeared unorthodox if not heretical to the other Moslems. The writing of the Koran in Latin letters seemed a very light matter in comparison to the feat of abolishing the Islamic law, especially its family clauses, and abolishing the Caliphate. The trend toward the nationalization of Islam among

the Turks resembled the trend toward the nationalization of Christianity at the time of the Reformation. The Turks have translated the Koran into their own tongue; they have begun to say the Friday prayers in Turkish; and naturally, they will also write the Koran in their own letters, whatever those letters may be. Third, a conference in Baku, with a large number of delegates from Turks all over Russia, adopted the Latin letters in 1925. The Azerbaijan Turks have been writing Turkish in Latin letters for four years, and other Turks in Russia are gradually adopting them. The use of Latin letters would therefore no longer impair the cultural unity of the Turks. It would work just the other way.

There was finally a strong practical argument in favor of the adoption of the Latin letters. The quantitative ideal in education under the Young Turkish *régime* was becoming more important than the qualitative value of education in Turkey, partly due to the general illiteracy of the country. Mass education was one of the undying movements which the constitutional changes in 1908 had brought about. It was natural to seek the easiest way of teaching the alphabet.

From 1921 to 1922, during the year when military activities between the Greeks and the Turks were suspended, the young element in the Turkish army had started an admirable movement to educate the men. Demonstration of the difficulty of