

# HISTORY OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC AND PRINCIPLES OF ATATÜRK

Over the centuries, the Turks established many independent states and developed their own civilizations, in different parts of Asia and Anatolia. The Ottomans created the greatest and most powerful state in Turkish history. At the beginning of the 20th Century, the Ottoman Empire collapsed and after the National War of Independence, today's Turkish Republic took its place among the independent and modern states of the contemporary world.

When the Allied Powers occupied and partitioned Anatolia after World War I, Mustafa Kemal, later surnamed as Atatürk (1881-1938), mobilized the Turks in Anatolia into a cohesive resistance force. The Turkish Nation started its War of Independence in 1919, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal as Atatürk. He and his followers rejected the partition of the country and drove the opposing forces out of Anatolia.

After a victorious defence of the homeland for four years, the Treaty of Lausanne was signed with the Allies on July 23, 1923, which approved Mustafa Kemal's governmental sovereignty over Turkey's present borders. At this historical point, Turkey became internationally recognized as an independent state and on October 13, 1923; Ankara was declared as the capital city of newly independent Turkey.

The Turkish Grand National Assembly proclaimed the Republic on October 29, 1923 and Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, was elected as the Republic's first president.

He claimed that the military victory was not

sufficient and that it had to be followed by profound economic, political, social and cultural reforms aimed at the modernization of Turkey. On the other hand, the ultimate goal of Atatürk's thinking was to make contributions to universal peace, happiness and prosperity.

Atatürk's revolutionary reforms were based on an aggregate of theories called Kemalism and the nature of the Kemalist ideology can be described in terms of six basic principles:

## Nationalism

The main objective of the Kemalist revolution was to create an independent national state whose basis was the national resistance spirit. The last stage reached today in the development of



societies is the nation. Through Nationalism, Atatürk gave his own people a national identity and the Turkish Nation reached the final victory by orientation to the national objectives and common interests. The nation is not a race, but a togetherness of spirits and a moral medium moulded by history. The spirit of nationality, or simply nationalism, appears as a deep-rooted psychological affinity with and respect for the national history and successes and miseries in the past. This spirit does not solely consist of an appreciation of the past and of the things, which occurred in the past. There is another factor of nationalism: the aims, hopes and expectations directed to the future.

### Populism

The principle of Populism symbolizes the contemporary concept of democracy, and the rational nationalism that can develop and flourish only in free and democratic countries. Populism is a cornerstone of the state and is a form of the consciousness of national sovereignty. Individuals elected by the people shall govern the nation. Their duty is to defend the country's independence both at domestic and international levels. Parallel to the essence of this principle it has been guaranteed in the Turkish laws that each Turkish citizen possesses equal rights regardless of race, sex, creed etc. and the state treats them equally.

### Secularism

Secularism, a corollary of democracy, best characterizes Atatürk's modern society and the young Turkish Republic. This principle provides for the administration of the state by contemporary laws based on scientific facts as well as for freedom of thought distinct from the pressure of any type of dogma.

### Statism

Statism was admitted into the political life of Turkey in 1936 as one of the basic characteristics of the Turkish State by a constitutional amendment. The statism adopted by Turkey, retains individual initiative as the basic factor while it commits the state particularly in the field of economics to raise the country to a high level of welfare taking into account the general and high interests of the nation. According to Atatürk, the moderate statism that he had devised is the system best suited to the country's requirements. He made the following priority listing for the duties and responsibilities of the state:

- To act in leading Turkey towards industrialization and the contemporary level of civilization;
- To establish and maintain public order in the country and to preserve individual freedoms;
- To provide the means of political freedom and well-being of individuals;
- To maintain good relations with foreign powers in order to safeguard and guarantee the country's future.

### Republicanism

As for Republicanism, with this principle Turkish reforms find concrete backing in the structural nature of the state. Turkey is a state, governed by democratic principles and democracy itself is basically political, intellectual and egalitarian.

### Reformism

The principle of Reformism is instrumental in following up developments and advances in the world of science. Through reformism, Turkey can reach the level of contemporary civilization.

These six basic principles constitute the roots of the Republic of Turkey.