

DOI: 10.7596/taksad.v6i4.1165

Citation: Izmaylov, R., Fakhrutdinov, R., & Galimzyanova, L. (2017). Kemalism: The Term, Content, and Contemporary Visions. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 6(4), 1253-1259. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v6i4.1165>

Kemalism: The Term, Content, and Contemporary Visions

**Rustam Iskanderovich Izmaylov¹,
Rail Ravilovich Fakhrutdinov², Liliya Rifkhatovna Galimzyanova³**

Abstract

The article highlights some reasons commenting upon the lack of consensus in the scientific research involving the ideology of Kemalism and the reform period of 1920-1930 in the Republic of Turkey. This was largely due to both factors the inability to systematize the reforms and the reluctance of the ruling circles to create structure to the ideology of Kemalism. The comparative historical methodology was used as the leading approach to the study of this problem, because it is exactly the method which gives the opportunity to compare the interpretation of the term "Kemalism" in different historical and political contexts. The results suggest that the ideology of Kemalism is more than the sum of political practices, and is a vector directed to the creation of the modern national state.

Keywords: History, Kemalism, Republican People's Party, Ideology, the reformatory nationalism, Atatürk.

¹ Kazan Federal University, Institute of International Relations, History and Oriental Studies. E-mail: Izmaylov-r@hotmail.com

² Kazan Federal University, Institute of International Relations, History and Oriental Studies.

³ Kazan Federal University, Institute of International Relations, History and Oriental Studies.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, due to the changes in the political situation in the Republic of Turkey, the term "Kemalism" is widely used in academic writings and in the media (Khayrutdinov & Karimov, 2005). It should be noted that before this concept was the object of the increased attention of scientists, but it was located in a different context and, therefore, was discussed in a different discursive field. This is mainly due to the political events of the last decade, that is, indispensable victories of Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) in the parliamentary elections in Turkey since 2002 with the result that Kemalism is rapidly losing the position of the official ideology of the Turkish Republic (Yılmaz, 2013).

The principles of Kemalism were formed in May 1931, at the III Congress of the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP). It was then that the initial points of the program of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk turned into "six arrows" of CHP: republicanism (cumhuriyetçilik), nationalism (milliyetçilik), nation (halkçılık), secularism (laiklik), etatism (devletçilik), revolutionism (inkılapçılık).

Thus, according to Y. N. Rosaliev (1995), "Republicanism" meant that the party defends the republican form of the government in the country, "nationalism" implies upholding of national interests, "nation" - the protection of the rights of all members of the society, "etatism" - state intervention in the economy, "secularism" – separation between church and state, "revolutionism" meant loyalty to the ideas of revolution. Finally, these principles were formed and fixed in the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey in 1937 (Zürcher, 1993: 182).

As it was noted by Y. N. Rosaliev (1995), there are different interpretations of the CHP program in the literature, but as a rule, the essence of things does not change, because the six principles primarily were based on practical actions of Kemalists and indicated the basic direction of reforms.

2. Methods

This study relies on historicism, objectivity and comprehensive analysis of the facts and events in their logical and chronological order. The comparatively historical method was used as the leading approach to the study of this problem because it gives us the opportunity to compare the interpretation of the term "Kemalism" in different historical and political contexts. By using this method, we can neutralize the influence of ideological mechanisms to assess, the way the ideology of Kemalism was treated in different years of the XX century.

Also, it is necessary to highlight the use of structural-functional analysis to examine the ideology of Kemalism as a system of political practices of 1920-1930s. Though the

transformations at the dawn of the Republic of Turkey are quite disparate, they are characterized by general vector of ideological orientation. This fact determines the appropriateness of the use of structural-functional analysis, as it allows to see the overall picture of the modernization process in the Republic of Turkey.

3. Concepts

The very understanding of Kemalism as an ideology and political practice causes many disputes. There are many definitions of Kemalism ideology which are radically diverging. Many scientists do not tend to engage in polemics with respect to the term, avoiding its definition. According to Italian historian Michelangelo Guida, this is due to two possible reasons. Firstly, the national liberation movement, which led to the Kemalist revolution, in political terms was quite heterogeneous and included leaders of nationalist and religious groups, as well as members of the party "Union and Progress". Secondly, Atatürk himself did not systematize his thoughts and political actions which did not allow to create a clear structure of its ideology (Guida, 2011). According to the Turkish researcher Ertan Aydın (2003), inconsistency and fragmentation version of Kemalism, added to the official ideology political flexibility. Such an example of political flexibility during the national liberation struggle is noted by E. Y. Gasanov: "The use of the Islamic factor in the practical, political and ideological work of Kemalists manifested in its appeals to the people to defend Islam and to fight against cross liberate" the sacred person of the Caliph "from" humiliating captivity infidels "and in assigning to Mustafa Kemal the title of Gazi - fighter for the faith, conqueror" (Gasanov, 2002: 73). Atatürk himself to the statement of a prominent Turkish writer Yakub Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, responded "my general, there is no doctrine of this party" replied: "Of course not, my child, if it were, we would not have moved forward" (Ozbudun, 1981: 87-88).

As a result such flexible policy has played a cruel joke with the official ideology. A struggle between competing elite groups for the definition and content of Kemalism spread out. In particular between Ülkü group "conservative modernists" and the group Kadro (Aydın, 2003: 5).

The political insinuations of Kemalism left their mark on the scientific sphere. As a result, one sees in Kemalism what he wants to see. Such imprint is imposed by the fact that reforms of Atatürk were considered by historians and politicians through the prism of the contemporary realities and circumstances, and often were the result of their own political preferences.

4. Discussion

In Soviet historiography 20-30s. a great attention focused on the revolutionary and radical transformation of the Kemalists, highlights the impact of the October Revolution of 1917, on policy of Ataturk was emphasized. Already in 1927, Stalin in a conversation with students of the University by Sun Yat-sen established the paradigm for the study of Kemalism, describing the Kemalist revolution as a "tipping revolution of the bourgeoisie, emerged in the struggle against the foreign imperialists, and whose subsequent development is essentially directed against the peasants and workers, against the opportunities of the agrarian revolution" (Stalin, 1948: 87).

In the 40s A. F. Miller in "A Brief History of Turkey" writes about "the Turkish national identity" (Miller, 1948: 137). Interest to the study of the ideology itself fully manifested itself only in the 60s. It was at this point some solid works on the origins of Kemalism, appeared an analysis to the ideology is given. Thus D. E. Eremeev, describing Kemalism, wrote: "Kemalism was born in the struggle of the Turkish national bourgeoisie against foreign domination, against imperialism and for the integrity and independence of Turkey itself. The progressive, democratic tendencies in the Kemalist movement, especially in its first phase, dominated over those chauvinistic and reactionary, which inevitably exist in any bourgeois nationalism" (1963).

An understanding of Kemalism as a "national-bourgeois ideology" is already beginning to change only with the development of theories of nationalism. Convention, however, in understanding of Kemalism was to no avail. This ideological doctrine continues to tear apart, highlighting one principle or the other: it is studied as secularization policy, and as sort of widespread westernization.

Today a political scientist and researcher of nationalism V. S. Malakhov (2005) gives definition close to the ideal referring to Kemalism reformist nationalism, which serves as collateral modernization and secularization of society. Secularization, in this context, should be understood as a process of reducing the role of religion in society, "the transition from religious regulation of public and state institutions to the rationalization of their activities" (Malakhov, 2005: 293). In this case, individual religiosity is not contrary to the principle of secularism and secularization of public policy, as long as religion remains the free choice of the individual and the state, in its turn, it did not justify their decisions by religious norms. Hence the ideology of Kemalism is primarily a creation of the state on the national principle, it is the replacement of the national religious identity.

However, according to V. S. Malakhov (2005), attempts completely replace the national religious identity led to mixed results. On the one hand, Turkey for several generations has become a secular state, is integrated into the European security structures (since 1952 it is a member of NATO). On the other hand, as the result of the reaction force based on traditional values, some parties and Islamic identity have developed. Their influence on the masses is growing, and the political elites cannot but consider them.

Also, modernization is not only a breakthrough in the industrial era, but also continuously updated, improved according to the new global trends. And six "arrows" of Kemalism symbolize the movement and development of the Republic of Turkey. They pointed out the direction, authoritarian methods were a tribute to the historical and political context. So views of Atatürk, as considered by the Turkish author J. Tanyol, are based on the idea of a period of "childhood" of society, when a pre-given society uses, the power to "educate" him, resorting, if necessary, to the hard training methods. That is the period of hard power which is historically inevitable at a certain stage of the development of the society (Tanyol, 1984: 143-144).

But in practice it turned out that the ideology of Kemalism petrified, turned into a "religion," and six "arrows" were like a bad illustration for the famous aporia of Zeno about the arrow, which in spite of the evidence and logic is in relative peace. The problem is that the historians after the politicians have declared principles of Atatürk as a certain dogma, derogation from which was understood as a departure from the fundamental principles of Kemalism doctrine.

At the last elections, Justice and Development Party won again. This caused another surge of discontent and tension among the supporters of Kemalism. However, according to M. Shahinler, support of Kemalism in modern Turkey – is a mass phenomenon. The choice in favor of secularism and modernization – is people's choice, not just of political elites (Shahinler, 1998). The path of democratization, which Turkey should go, which aspires it to join the EU, forces the state to gradually adjust to the moderate currents within Islam. At the same time there is no radical stiff from basic positions, ideas of nationalism, modernization and democracy meaning the very principles of Kemalism, if we try to understand them as more flexible and modern.

5. Conclusion

Thus, we can say that the term "Kemalism" itself, as a designation of the reforms conducted in the Turkish Republic in the 20-30s of the XX century. For a long time the paradigm of the policy assessments in the domestic and foreign historiography ranged from "bourgeois reform" to "reform nationalism." However, trying to evaluate the political doctrine of Atatürk

and his political practice, it can be concluded that the essence of it is centered in nation building and shaping the political and economic environment for the modernization of Turkish society.

6. Acknowledgements

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

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