Book Review

Ryan Gingeras, *Eternal Dawn: Turkey in the Age of Atatürk*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

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This book analyses the transformation from the late Ottoman period to the modern Republic of Turkey with a focus on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the reforms implemented during the early years of the republic. The book familiarizes the readers with the political, social and economic transformation of the country by focusing on specific cases and examples with a comprehensive historical background. Gingeras focuses on the historical background of major topics (e.g. Reforms, Kurdish Revolts, Turkish Nationalism etc.) in the early Republic of Turkey and connects them with the developments in the late Ottoman Empire. This book is different from previous works because it emphasizes the relations between the new state and the people in Anatolia.

In the introductory part, Gingeras claims that the republic did not sever bonds with the empire and that the exploits and service to the Ottoman state continued to be critical to the upward mobility of Turkey's premiere officials and that the energy behind the reforms of republican administrators was born out of the humiliation experienced before the republic.

The first chapter of the book is titled "Fallen Patriots". In this chapter, Gingeras focuses on the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and how the economic and political struggles of the late Ottoman state led to a transformation in governance. The problems faced by the leaders of CUP during their governance, such as provincial differences within the empire, lack of empathy with the people of Anatolia are considered as important lessons for the rulers of the new republic. The author explains the rise of Turkism as a political resort for the leaders of CUP, emphasizing the Tripoli and the Balkan Wars and the First World War. The chapter analyses how economic and demographic Turkification processes continued within the Ottoman Empire. Gingeras calls the era after First World War a transformation from

“Unionism to Nationalism” and considers the Kemalist uprising in Anatolia as the “rebirth of Young Turk movement”. Gingeras explores how the resistance in Anatolia was formed and how former CUP members have played active roles in the formation of the nationalist movement. He concludes the chapter with the death of three prominent leaders of CUP—Enver, Talat and Cemal—and says that this “vacuum of leadership position” ended with Mustafa Kemal’s rise to power.

In the second chapter, “The Sacred Leader”, Gingeras focuses on the transformation of the state under Mustafa Kemal’s leadership. He mentions how “the myth of Ataturk” was formed and how Mustafa Kemal placed himself as the “saviour” and justified the new regime. The establishment of the Republican People’s Party (RPP) by Ataturk and his inner circle was a crucial point for the fortification of the new regime. Gingeras lists examples of opposition to Ataturk’s leadership, such as the Progressive Republican Party (PRP) led by his former entourage and some remaining CUP members, the Eastern Rebellion in 1925, and the assassination attempt on Ataturk in 1926, all of which were tooled to justify eradication of his opposition.

The third chapter, “A New National Spirit”, covers how the society was refashioned by the new republic; the constitution was revised, European systems of law were adopted, and the role of religion was redefined. After a historical explanation of the development of Turkism and the role of Turkist ideologues in Turkey, Gingeras focuses on the transformation of Islamic institutions into a secular apparatus of the secular state. The legal and economic reforms carried out in the early years of republic are detailed following this context. The cultural part of the reforms with a focus on language and history is analysed with a focus on “unity of education” laws and Turkish language reform. Introduction of the Latin alphabet, translation of the Qur’an and call to prayer into Turkish, renaming of the towns and villages, Surname Law are some examples of these reforms. The Turkish Historical Association and Turkish Language Association were established to solidify these reforms through indoctrination. Gingeras says that Kemalism was introduced as a state ideology and a canon was created through a series of books of admiration about the reforms and transformation of the country. And, when Western authors and societies started to criticize the tendency to dictatorship in Turkey, Mustafa Kemal “asked” his close friends to establish an opposition party, namely Free Republican Party. Gingeras explains how the members of the bureaucratic structure of the ruling party in the country reacted to this new political party and regarded their members as “traitors”, forcing the party to disband itself. Gingeras concludes the chapter by focusing on the ossification of Kemalism as an ideology through the principles of ruling political party (Six Principles), a political journal (*Kadro*), and institutions (Institute of Revolutionary History).

In the fourth chapter, “A Culture of Revolution”, Gingeras examines “the new emerging culture” of the republic, such as adopting new surnames, voting for and joining the ruling party (RPP) or learning to read the alphabet introduced by Ataturk. Gingeras refers to the reports of traveling RPP inspectors and their observation of provincial RPP leaders and organizations. The detailed elaboration of these reports by the author makes it possible for the reader to understand how hard the integration of “citizens” to the “new state system” was, given the diversity of interests, goals, and understanding of people across the country. According to Gingeras, the ultimate solution to the defiance among local elites was to raise and empower young leaders. RPP established the People’s Houses to indoctrinate the public at all levels through education and classes, public lectures and festivals. In this chapter, Gingeras also focuses on the immigrants in new Turkey, the economic problems of refugees and the

distinction between the Muslims and remaining non-Muslim citizens of the country. He examines the status of Orthodox Christians, Armenians, and Jews in Turkey. The “cultural revolution” is explained by giving examples of new public holidays, the importance of sports and physical education, popular and classical Western music, and other components of the culture and emancipation of women. Gingeras concludes this chapter with a negative note as he describes the reforms of this early period as an “incomplete revolution”. Limited resources, personnel shortage, lack of popular support and generation-based conflicts are considered as some of the reasons for this incompleteness.

The fifth chapter, “Defiance and Submission”, covers the “identity” problem and criticizes the policy of the new Turkish state to consider all the Muslims within the country as a “unified entity”. He mentions the Circassians and Laz, two separate groups, who did not immediately regard themselves as “Turks”, but were later integrated into the state system through acquisition of national or provincial leadership positions. Then, Gingeras briefly explores the religious opposition to the idea of republic. Finally, Gingeras gives a very comprehensive historical background of the Kurds in the Ottoman state, their role in the Turkish War of Independence and their status in the early years of the republic. Gingeras says that the Turkish government rejected Kurdish sovereignty, which led to a series of rebellions, such as the Sheikh Said Rebellion and Dersim Uprising.

The final chapter, “The Eternal Leader”, examines the foreign policy of Ataturk under the looming shadow of the Second World War. Gingeras focuses on important events for Turkish foreign policy such as the Montreux Convention, which regulated the status of the Straits (Dardanelles and Istanbul) as international sea passages and the Annexation of Hatay from Syria, which was a part of “The National Pact” declared by Turkish Nationalists at the beginning of Turkish War of Independence. Then, Gingeras explores how the death of Ataturk in 1938 impacted the republic. Gingeras emphasizes how the legacy of Ataturk was protected by his successor Ismet Inonu.

Gingeras makes an important contribution to the field by focusing on the social history of Turkey in its early years. The legacy of Unionists, the need for a new generation of Turkish youth, the ideological apparatus of the state to indoctrinate the people, integration of party (RPP) and the state, the roots of today current problems Turkey faces, such as state-religion affairs, Kurdish nationalism, and other identity-related topics are covered in a very comprehensive way with a thorough historical analysis. The book raises new questions such as how the Unionists were perceived by the founders of the modern Republic and Turkey and how the “identity” problem formed in the early years of the Republic turned into a distinctive feature dividing the Turkish public very strictly.